



Social Affairs Sector  
Women, Family and Childhood Department

*Empowered lives  
Resilient nations*

Cairo, 20-21 November 2019

# Report of the High-Level Ministerial Conference

on Strengthening the Role of Women in  
Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region





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Note: The scientific and/or honorary titles as well as the job titles of each participant appear in the conference agenda. As for the report's body content, it only appears in the headings; while in the report's paragraphs, the titles of Mrs. and Mr. are given before the name of any participant in order to avoid repetition.

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# Executive Summary

This report is a summary of the works of the High-Level Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region. The conference aimed to shed light on ways to activate relevant international resolutions in order to enhance the participation of women in the Arab region in both the peace process and recovery and reconstruction stages. The Conference also aimed to draw the most important lessons learned from the conflict stages in relation to women's status, which should be taken into consideration in order to complete safe and sound transit to the post-conflict stage and the stability stage, and thus consolidate the pillars of this stability.

The report also includes a definition of the project, represented by the Conference as its final stage. It also contains a summary of the efforts exerted by the League of Arab States in supporting women's issues in the region. The Conference is one of a group of activities that falls within the project "Enhancing the capabilities of the Arab League in responding to crises" 2019, resulting from the cooperation of three entities:

the Arab League, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project's goal is to enhance the General Secretariat's capabilities in terms of meeting the challenges posed by crises in the region, whether during conflicts or post-conflicts, and to support early warning methods that can address the risks of crises.

The essence of the intellectual foundations of the Conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region is that strengthening the roles of women in post-conflict phase should be based on four basic pillars, namely (1) participation, (2) prevention, (3) protection, and (4) relief, recovery and reconstruction. These four areas are specifically characterized as crucial areas on which are based most of the components and factors that enable women to attain their rights and perform their duties. These pillars are complementary and were chosen specifically in light of the nature of the suffering endured by women and girls during conflict.

# Foreword

## **H.E. Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazleh, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector**

On behalf of the League of Arab States, the EU, and UNDP, I have the honour of writing this introduction, which reviews the report that reflects the work of the Conference on enhancing women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region. The executive summary details the Conference objectives and the nature of the project of which the conference is the summary event. Therefore, I will focus here on one of the implicit lessons learned from this project. This project has confirmed that long-term projects with combined efforts made by a number of partners, which include various successive activities, are more beneficial than circumstantial projects that only include one activity. The crisis management project spanned nearly six years. As mentioned above, the project was designed and implemented by three partners: the Arab League, the EU and the UNDP.

The project included a range of diverse and integrated activities at the same time. These activities were carried out in different cities in the region and beyond and have mutually benefited all stakeholders. The partners working together on the project were able to build new bridges of cooperation among them and to strengthen over time, the foundations of these bridges. The staff working in these international and regional institutions and non-governmental organizations were also able to gain new extended experiences on the project's topic and its various dimensions in terms of understanding the needs of the Arab League and its Member States. Member States and national institutions concerned with strengthening the roles of women and local and regional organizations have been able to see the development of efforts to strengthen women's roles in peace and security endeavours globally. The new generation that has taken responsibility in those institutions during the transitional stages experienced by most of the countries of the region were able to accelerate the learning process and keep up with the rapid pace of international dialogue and debate.

The first section of this report includes an overview on the efforts of the Arab League in strengthening the roles of women in the region and the most important outcome of these efforts. In this respect, the first thing that comes to our mind is the establishment of the Arab Women Committee in 1971. Consequently, a series of efforts were made in the context of

the conflict management project, with the gender integration perspective topping its list that includes the preparation of the strategy and operational action plan on the "Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace", and the call to establish the Arab Women Network for Peace Mediators.

The second section of the report contains a brief review of the conference's intellectual outlook. The executive summary included a statement in this respect. Therefore, I will only stress here that the call to focus on the principles of participation, prevention, protection, and relief, recovery and reconstruction as pillars of efforts to enhance women's roles in post-conflict stages must not be understood as a call for lack of attention to other principles. On the contrary, we affirm that there is a close connection between all other principles that abound in the agenda of women, peace and security, and these four principles. We also encourage maintaining and strengthening this connection.

Lastly, the third section of the report contains a summary of the Conference agenda. The first part of this section includes the opening speeches. The second part includes the presentations carried out by the participants during the sessions, as well as the discussions held during the sessions. I might highlight some of the most important outcomes of the conference and its sessions, including speeches and presentations they contained, which are reflected in this section of the report.

## **Interaction between participants and exchange of lessons learned**

The Conference provided an opportunity for Arab League members to renew their interactions with regard to policies for enhancing women's roles in peace and security, and the mutual benefit from experiences and coordination of efforts. The speeches, presentations and discussions have allowed for the setting forth of member countries' achievements on this topic. The participants were able to view the experience of the Member States that issued a national plan on implementing their women, peace and security agendas, in places such as Iraq, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon.

Member States were also able to note that some countries have adopted a strategy to prevent violent extremism based on a gender perspective, such as Lebanon. Arab countries that have been increasing

the participation of women in security and military institutions have displayed their experiences, such as Algeria. Moreover, countries that have been increasing the share of women as UN peacekeepers, such as Egypt and Jordan have also shared their experiences. Countries facing existential risks and challenges overshadowing women's conditions presented their experiences, i.e. oPt, whose people are facing the worst forms of repression under the Israeli occupation. Countries that have been subjected to severe economic pressure in conflict which has adversely affected the situation of women also provided their experiences, such as Jordan, which hosted a large number of refugees from both Syria and Iraq, a situation which has inflicted unprecedented pressure on resources and services in that country.

These countries have offered specific packages of regional support actions. Countries that experience a constitutional-political transition where women participated in political dialogues at the national level, such as Libya, summarized some features of this participation and how to encourage it. Countries that have witnessed women's initiatives to instil a culture of peace in children, whether boys or girls, have explained these initiatives, such as Nigeria, where women launched the initiative to establish formal and informal peace clubs and mediation networks in post-conflict societies, within the context of sustainable community development efforts.

### **Consensus on the importance of mediation and the importance of the Arab Network for Women as Peace Mediators**

A consensus emerged among the participants that during post-conflict phases, there is an urgent need for new women's initiatives, and that the Arab League's initiative to launch the Arab Network for Women and Peace Mediators is at the core of such initiatives in the field of female participation in consolidating peace and security. During conflict phases, women in the region exerted great effort in peace mediation whether locally, nationally or regionally, and launched serious initiatives in this context that enabled significant results in post-conflict stages. In addition to the efforts carried out by women pertaining to mediation, there is an urgent need for institutional frameworks to ensure the sustainability of the feminist act in mediation and the settlement of disputes through friendly means. This might have motivated the Arab League to launch the initiative to establish the Arab Network for Women Peace Mediators during this decisive phase. Therefore, Member States should support the Arab Network for Women Peace Mediators. Participants stated that it is worthwhile in Member States to combine between

the regional path and the national path, by introducing national networks for women mediators. However, it is necessary that all of this be implemented on the grounds of cultural and scientific efforts that establish the idea of mediation and the resolution of conflicts amicably in collective consciousness. Fortunately, the origins of this idea are deeply rooted in the culture and heritage of the region.

### **High-level and serious participation is a sign of renewing the commitment to support women**

In general, high-level participation from all stakeholders represents a renewal of the commitment to fulfill all of its obligations towards women in the region. The Conference activities were characterized by seriousness, sobriety and depth. The attendees felt it and expressed this fact.

Consequently, I might conclude by saying that I am very optimistic about the situation of women in the region during post-conflict periods. This optimism is based on full confidence in women in general and in the region, in their ability and determination, and in the complete confidence in younger generations, including young girls and adolescents, in particular.

Finally, on behalf of the Arab League, the EU and the UNDP, I extend my sincere thanks to all the members of the team for organizing the Conference and preparing the report.

**Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazleh,  
Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League  
and Head of the Social Affairs Sector**

# Conference Key Messages

The following statements represent some of the most prominent comments and summaries contained in the participants' speeches and presentations\*

*Studies indicate a close relation between the participation of women in peace agreements and the persistence of the success of the agreements.*

**Maya Morsi - Chairperson of the National Council for Women, Egypt**

*The wars in Yemen deepened social and economic problems, along with weak health services and other services.*

**Ibtihaj Al-Kamal - Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Yemen**

*Jordan has also embraced refugees who came from conflict-stricken Arab countries, particularly in Syria and Iraq. The number of refugees reached 2.7 million, and Jordan has endured pressures and restraints in resources and services. The international community has to increase assistance to refugee-hosting countries in the region.*

**Basma Ishaqat - Minister of Social Development, Jordan**

*In Algeria, women played fundamental roles in restoring peace and civil harmony during the decade of conflicts. Two decades later, women played fundamental roles in consolidating civil peace, preventing a setback or sliding back into violence. Lessons should be drawn from these experiences.*

**Ghania Eddalia - Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, Algeria**

*Accomplished justice, reconstruction, and the criminalization of violence are at the top of the list of challenges and areas that should be a priority in strengthening women's roles during post-conflicts.*

**Francis Jay - Representative of UNDP**

*Enhancing women's roles, especially in relation to peace and security, supporting full participation and protecting women requires building partnerships, and there is a need to increase partnerships with the international community in general, UN organizations and NGOs in particular.*

**Ivan Surkos, Head of the EU, Egypt**

*There is a gap in resolution 1325 pertaining to the non-resolution of Palestinian women and girls' sufferings, and existence of risks and dangers, including security and peace, resulting from the reality of the oPt as a state under occupation.*

**Amal Hamad - Minister of Women Affairs, oPt**

*The traditional vision of women and a lack of political role are two of the most important challenges facing women. Moreover, despite the fact that women are the victims of armed conflict, they are the most capable of building their societies in the post-conflict stage due to several reasons, including the patience and ability of women to listen to others and understand the situation.*

**Khawla Matar - Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Syria**

*Some of the ongoing peacebuilding processes in the region, in countries that witnessed a constitutional transition did not form a link between basic and super structures in conflicts and was not concerned in the creation of peace matrix in different stages and levels of conflicts.*

**Naima Jibril - member of the Libyan Political Dialogue to the United Nations (UN) Mission**

*Women should make sure that their efforts are clearer and more visible in general, and specifically during the peace negotiations in which they participate. It is the right of any society to know what is going on during negotiations. We must shed light and put a strong focus on how to communicate and reach out to all citizens.*

**Birgitta Holst Alani - Consultant to the Women's Consultative Council of the UN Secretary-General's envoy to Syria**

*Women bear more burdens during conflicts and instability. Therefore, preventive measures must be taken to protect women and girls from all forms of violence and to give priority to this issue.*

**Dina Douay - Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States**

*When talking about Security Council resolution 1325 concerning women, security and peace, women are considered victims and not an active party, and this is a mistake. It is equally important that women retain a leadership role in implementing resolution 1325, since they are the first concerned.*

**Reem Abu Hassan - Former Minister of Social Development, Jordan**



Women should have an important and effective role in developing plans during the post-conflict stage, including during the stage of implementing transitional justice. It is important to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in providing free legal services to inform women of the procedures that must be taken in order to render protection and rehabilitation, and give them legal information to reach solutions. Refugee women and women under occupation are part of the system that needs legal protection.

**Samah Marmash - Executive Director of the Women's Legal Network**

Peace cannot prevail on the basis of side-lining women who have lost their homes, families and all the basic needs of life. Women have a pivotal role to play in conflict and in post-conflict phases, and it is important for women to accrue achievements and to maintain them.

**Wafa bani Mustafa - Head of the Alliance of Arab Women Parliamentarians**

There is a need to derive good practices for strategies to reduce dependence on relief assistance for sustainable development of beneficiaries.

**Marina Varela - Head of the Political Department of the EU Mission to Egypt**

There is a need to develop compensation for women who have experienced sexual violence during conflict, at the level of plan, implementation and impact, so that compensation becomes a transformational impact.

**Shivan Simujuki - Member of the International Organization for Migration**

Relief and recovery operations must be based on a gender perspective and be based on a local basic approach.

**Raidan Al-Saqqaf - Social Affairs Officer at the Center for Women in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Women should be included in the infrastructure building process at all levels.

**Anna Sawaf - Project Manager, UN Human Settlements in Iraq**

The integration of a gender perspective into the security reform process, collecting weapons, dismantling battalions and rehabilitating militants should be strengthened.

**Moez Doraid - Acting Regional Director of UN Women**

Violent extremism has evolved into a complex phenomenon, which has given rise to the conviction that it should prioritize preventive strategies that prevent

violent extremism by following a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the underlying conditions that lead individuals to become radicalized and understand relevant gender dynamics.

**Zahr'a Lanqi - Expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building**

The importance of the Arab Network for Peace Mediators lies in the participation of women in peace process, and this participation clearly represents the comprehensive and integrated approach. In addition, support of women's needs in conflict and post-conflict periods can only be represented by women. It also provides opportunities for women to participate in the decision-making process, especially in light of the fact that the representation of women in mediation and negotiation processes is modest. Men dominate this field due to the dominance of male society and the culture of exclusion towards women.

**Haifa Abu Ghazaleh - Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector**

Mediation is a framework that has been present in the Arab region for hundreds of years as a peaceful means. It has played an important role in avoiding and resolving conflict. Mediation in the East is based on achieving reconciliation and equilibrium.

**Soad Shalaby - Member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network**

The essence of the experience of friends of mediation in Nigeria is that it directed talks between the parties to the conflict, and granted opponents an opportunity to present their concerns and explore possible options for satisfactory solutions. It is important to deal with mediation before and after conflicts and that mediation works on issues that divide us and issues that unite us.

**Amina Hassan - Mediator and Executive Director of the Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development, Nigeria**

The integration between mediation networks provides a number of opportunities represented in cooperative messages, advocacy and pressure.

**Alexander Parambel - Researcher from the Mediators Institute of Higher Studies in Geneva project**

# The Conference Agenda

Day 1: 20 November 2019

Time	Session
9 a.m. – 10 a.m.	Registration
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.	<p>Video “I participated in the Change” Opening speeches Mrs. Dina Douay - Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Francis Jay - Representative, UNDP</li> <li>• His Excellency Ambassador Ivan Surkos - Head of the EU, Egypt</li> <li>• Her Excellency Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh - Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector</li> <li>• Dr. Maya Morsi - Chairperson of the National Council for Women, Egypt</li> <li>• Mrs. Amal Hamad - Minister of Women Affairs, oPt</li> <li>• Mrs. Ghania Eddalia - Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women’s Affairs, Algeria</li> <li>• Mrs. Basma Ishaqat - Minister of Social Development, Jordan</li> <li>• Mrs. Ibtihaj Abdelkadir Al-Kamal - Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Yemen</li> </ul>
12 p.m. – 12.30 p.m.	Group photo and coffee break
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.	<p>First session: The vital role of women in building peace and mediation during the political transition and the conflict stage in determining the priorities of post-conflict phase. Facilitator: Dr. Maya Morsi, Chairperson of the National Council of the Woman, Egypt</p> <p>The participation of women in peace negotiations and political dialogues in both Libya and Syrian Arab Republic: gaps, challenges and lessons learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Khawla Matar, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Syria</li> <li>• Mrs. Counselor Naima Jibril, Member of the Libyan Political Dialogue to the UN Mission</li> <li>• Her Excellency Ambassador Birgitta Holst Alani, Member of the Nordic Women Mediators Network and Consultant to the Women’s Consultative Council of the UN Secretary-General’s envoy to Syria</li> </ul>
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.	Lunch break
3 p.m. – 5 p.m.	<p>Second session: Integrating gender in the post-conflict phase: building the state and providing basic services and commodities in the post-conflict phase. Facilitator: His Excellency Mr. Jan-Thesleff, Ambassador of Sweden to Egypt</p> <p>The role of the Emergency Committee for Women Protection in armed conflicts. Mrs. Dina Douay - Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States</p> <p>Women, security and peace agenda and integrating a gender perspective when planning the provision of essential services. H.E. Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, former Minister of Social Development, Jordan</p> <p>Reforming the legal structure on gender in post-conflict: challenges and lessons learned. Mrs. Samah Marmash, Executive Director of the Women’s Legal Network</p> <p>Strategies for combatting violence against women, protection mechanisms, shelter centres in the Arab world, best practices, challenges and gaps. Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa, Head of the Alliance of Arab Women Parliamentarians</p>

## Day 2: 21 November 2019

Time	Session
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.	<p>Third session: Integrating gender in relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts</p> <p>Facilitator: Her Excellency Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, former Minister of Social Development, Jordan</p> <p>Incorporating a gender perspective in relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts and linking the theory to actual application. Her Excellency Mrs. Marina Varela, Head of the Political Department of the EU Mission to Egypt</p> <p>Considerations in planning and implementing compensation for survivors of sexual abuse related to the struggler in Iraq. Her Excellency Mrs. Shivan Simujuki, Member of the International Organization for Migration</p> <p>UN Relief Efforts in the Arab Region: Policies, Implementation and Gender-related Dimensions. Mr. Raidan Al-Saqqaf, Social Affairs Officer at the Center for Women in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)</p> <p>Integration of the social perspective in the infrastructure during post-conflicts: Reconstruction Challenges in Mosul and other cities. Mrs. Anna Sawaf, Project Manager, UN Human Settlements in Iraq</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming in tackling violent extremism and the issue of returnees: What are the policies that address the issue of returnees from a gender perspective in the Arab region? What are the best practices/challenges/gaps, possibilities for regional cooperation and dialogue in the Arab region? Her Excellency Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi, Expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building</p> <p>Role of the UN Women in supporting the implementation of resolution 1325 in the Arab region and its relationship to the security reform process collecting weapons, dismantling battalions and rehabilitating gunmen. Mr. Moez Doraid, Acting Regional Director, UN Women</p>
11 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Coffee break
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<p>Fourth session: Regional mechanisms and tools to enhance the role of women in conflicts and post-conflicts.</p> <p>Facilitator: Her Excellency Mrs. Makfoula Aqat, former Minister of Women Affairs in Mauritania, Head of the Center for Women, Development and Peace</p> <p>The Arab Network for Peace Mediators H.E. Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector</p> <p>What are the opportunities provided by regional peace networks? Mrs. Soad Shalaby, Member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network</p> <p>Creating post-conflict public and non-public peace clubs and friends of mediations in our communities. Mrs. Amina Hassan, Mediator and Executive Director of Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development</p> <p>Reflection remarks on international mediation networks. Mr. Alexander Parambel, Researcher in the project on Mediators Institute of Higher Studies in Geneva</p>
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<p>Measuring progress in women, peace and security agenda in the Arab region – workshop (division of participants into working groups).</p> <p>Facilitator: Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi, expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building</p>
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Recommendations and Final Communiqué
3:30 p.m.	Lunch break

# Introduction

In the past decade, the Arab region has witnessed severe crises resulting from the emergence of conflicts in some countries and the rise of instability in others. All Arab countries have been negatively affected by these crises. As a result, women in the Arab region are being confronted with very difficult conditions thus increasing their suffering at various physical, social, economic and political levels. Women and girls have experienced a level of violence disproportionate to the level of violence experienced by men. At the same time, we find that women in the Arab region have made very important contributions related to suppressing the flames of conflicts, building peace and restoring civil peace at local, national, regional and international levels. During the past two years, the scope of conflicts has become more limited, and one can say that the region has entered a post-conflict stage.

In this context, the League of Arab States convened a conference to strengthen the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region. The conference aimed to shed light on means to enforce the relevant international resolutions in order to enhance the participation of women in the Arab region in the peace processes, recovery and reconstruction stages. The conference also aimed to derive the most important lessons learned from the conflict stage in relation to the status of women, which should be taken into consideration in order to enable the completion of a safe and sound transition to the post-conflict stage and then the stability stage, and to consolidate this stability.

The conference aimed to evoke the largest possible number of insights and opinions that respond to the following questions: What are the priorities of the post-conflict stage in relation to enhancing women's participation and protection? What are the most important strategies that need to be formulated in the post-conflict phase? In order to acquire relevant answers to these questions, the Arab League invited experts known to have contributed in the production of such events during conflict stages and had concise insights and opinions. They represent the largest possible number of Arab countries. Several of these experts have UN experience, a measure to ensure an interaction between people with regional and international experience occurred, in order to reflect on all-inclusive, lessons learned experiences.

The Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region constituted a concluding endeavour to the project on "Enhanced Response Capacity of the Arab League to Crises" 2019, inaugurated with the cooperation of three parties, namely the Arab League, the EU and

UNDP. The objective of the project is to enhance the Arab League Secretariat's capabilities in relation to confronting the challenges imposed by crises in the region, whether during disputes or after, and to support early warning methods that can address the risks of crises. This required the restructuring of crisis management to monitor regional developments. It also necessitated the development of the operational capabilities of the Arab League, where a working group from the General Secretariat was prepared to be deployed when needed as a field mission to support the affected countries during post-conflict stage. Furthermore, the project aimed to establish a new platform for Arab cooperation, that is cooperation between governments and the enhancement of official capacity building, in terms of confronting crises in Arab countries. Moreover, one of its goals was to also strengthen the political dialogue between the Arab League/Member States and the EU.

In addition to the above, the project is a new outcome of the efforts of the Arab countries and the General Secretariat of the Arab League to support the condition of women in Arab countries. It is worth noting that during the first phase of the project, the Crisis Management Department of the League was established in March 2012. The first phase of the project began in 2010 to strengthen the capacity of the Arab League. Consequently, the second phase commenced on 3 November 2015 with the signing of the letter of commitment between the General Secretariat of the Arab League and the EU. The project was funded by the EU, with a total amount of US\$3 million. UNDP participates in the financing and implementation of the project. It is worth noting that the project is compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16).

Finally, among the project activities is to deepen public understanding of what relates to the role of women in crises. This was achieved through the organization of a conference on the role of women in the post-conflict phase, whose participants were officials of various countries witnessing armed conflicts, in addition to their neighbouring countries; the conference is the subject of the present report. The resulting recommendations will help in taking steps to enable women to play a greater role in the post-conflict phase.

The Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region focused on the roles and participations of women in relation to security and peace in general, and the role of peace mediators in particular. Thus, the conference will be a platform for further implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 of 2000 pertaining to women, security and peace, which reflects recognition by the

international community of the importance of women's participation in security and peace. The conference aimed to promote the integration of a gender perspective in terms of quantity and quality in all Arab countries policies in general and related to security and peacekeeping in particular.

The Conference coincides with several important issues related to supporting women in general as well as specifically in relation to peace and security.

The Arab League, which will celebrate its 75th year in 2020, endeavoured in convening a conference, which strengthens the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region and reflects a novel pledge indicating that strengthening women's participation in security and peacekeeping and protecting women is at the top of its priorities. In March 2020, seventy-five years will have passed since the founding of the Arab League. The founding of the League represented a starting point for a new phase of the development efforts on the regional and the Joint Arab Member States' cooperation level. The year 1945 is considered a qualitative shift in the efforts of national independence, coinciding with the end of the Second World War, and the establishment of the Arab League.

The Conference also concurs with the preparations for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of UN@75. In 2020, seventy-five years have passed, and marked a new phase of socio-economic integration regarding Arab countries and the UN's technical expertise. The year 1945 also witnessed the establishment of the UN, and witnessed the resumption of the Arab countries to benefit from UN experience in development. In 2045, they will celebrate one hundred years of such cooperation. On 14 June 2019, the UN General Assembly issued resolution 299/73, titled "Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations" adopted by consensus, and launched by the initiative of the Secretary-General in July 2019. The resolution and the initiative call for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the UN to convene dialogues aimed at restoring partnerships, collective and interconnection between citizens and institutions within the context of the pursuit of building a promising and stable future aiming at a global vision for the year 2045.

The Conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region also coincides with five-year review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in the span of twenty five years.

The Beijing Platform for Action Declaration is a document that emanated from the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, held in Beijing, China in September 1995. The fruit of the

efforts of a number of civil societies from all over the world in light of the conflicting progress made and new requirements to accelerate the global march towards achieving gender equality and empowering women. The purpose of the Declaration is to embody the international community's commitment to enhance the roles of women and implement the Platform for Action, ensuring that the gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. The Platform for Action identifies measures for national and international action in areas of concern critical to the advancement of women for the five years preceding the year 2000. Since the issuance of the Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, it has been subject to reviews every five years; in 2019 the fifth review started. In 2020 the world will commemorate the twenty-fiftieth (25th?) anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the completion of the fifth review.

The Conference "Strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region" also corresponds with the preparations of the twentieth anniversary of the issuance of Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 specific to women, security and peace. This resolution is the first Security Council resolution formally recognizing that the full and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes is necessary to prevent and resolve conflicts effectively. Since the issuance of Security Council resolution 1325 of 2000, some 58 countries have adopted national strategies to advance the integration of women in the creation of more peaceful societies.

Moreover, the Conference coincides with the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Convention is an international treaty adopted by the General committee of the UN in 1979 and includes a package of international obligations to safeguard a wide range of women's rights. More than 189 countries signed the Convention while other expressed reservations about some of its articles. The Convention affirms the principle of equality between men and women. It also affirms human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil fields, and other areas. It also urges member countries to adopt a set of measures that contribute to strengthening women's rights and their protection. The Convention obliges the member countries to take all necessary measures to amend their legislative structure that discriminates against women. The agreement also binds Member States to prevent trade and exploitation of women, ensuring the ability of women to vote in elections on an equal basis with men. It also obligates states to ensure women

access to education including in rural areas, and equal access to health care, etc.

The Conference also concurs with preparations for the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the issuance of the sustainable Development Goals 2030. In 2020, five years will have passed on the proclamation of the UN of these goals. The eighteen goals represent an integrated plan of action for the countries of the world and organizations working in the field of development. These goals reflect the aspirations of the people in various fields, including ending extreme poverty, ending chronic diseases, providing primary

education to all children by a year 2015, attaining peace and strengthening the role of women and girls and protecting children. Since the adoption of the sustainable development goals, constitute a main reference in the field of global development .

In fact, this Conference continues a series of activities by the Arab League in its endeavour to implement its perpetual commitment in support women issues, to protect them and enhance their participation. it is therefore, necessary to start to review some of these activities with their outcome.

## Section I: Overview on the Efforts of the League of Arab States related to the Conference topic

Since its establishment, the Arab League has remained committed to supporting women in the Arab region. In facts, the League made vigorous efforts in various social, political and economic fields to end marginalization of women, and to end the moral and material violence practiced against women. The Arab League has continuously exerted efforts in the context of protecting women and enhancing their roles in peacekeeping and security in the region, and these efforts have resulted in a number of achievements. In the following paragraphs, some of these achievements are addressed.

### 1. The Arab Women Committee (1971)

In September 1971, the League established the Arab Women Committee by virtue of resolution 2828 adopted by the council of Arab League at the foreign minister-level. The Arab Women Committee is a specialized technical committee grouping Member States of the League. The committee has been constituted as part of the efforts to deepen the official Arab joint cooperation in the social and economic fields during the seventies, after most efforts were focused on the political field during the fifties and sixties. It was also the starting point for coordination between Arab states in the field of promoting women in the region and supporting their issues in various dimensions. Since that time, coordination and cooperation between Arab states has expanded in this field to include many other secondary issues.

### 2. Integration of Gender Perspective in Conflict Management Project

The Arab League integrated a gender perspective

into the conflict management project prepared in partnership with the EU and UNDP . As mentioned earlier, the project aims at supporting the capabilities of the General Secretariat concerning confronting the challenges posed by crises in the region, whether at conflict or post-conflict stages, and to strengthen early warning capabilities so that the General Secretariat can address the risks of crises. Also, the project seeks to establish a new platform for Arab cooperation, i.e. cooperation between governments, to enhance official capacity building in relation to confronting crises in Arab states.

After launching the project, the Arab League embarked on integrating a gender perspective into all project components. This integration process was based on the fact that the level of exposure of women and girls to risks in general and to the effects of conflict in particular is much higher than that of men, due to many factors. This many tend to be overlooked and requires strengthening legislation, policies and measures to protect women and girls. It also involves providing physical protection tools.

### 3. Holding the Regional Symposium on Gender Equality in Emergency Situations

Within the framework of integrating a gender perspective in conflict management, the Arab League organized, in cooperation with other partners, the regional symposium on gender equality in emergencies. On 3 December 2014, the regional symposium on gender equality in emergency situations, organized by the League in partnership with the EU and in cooperation with UNDP and 'Karama' organization, was held in Amman, the capital of Jordan. The symposium brought together women activists from 11 countries

in the Arab region to identify ways to support the participation of women in peace-making and to ensure the protection of women from all forms of violence during times of conflict and emergencies. The symposium brought together a number of defenders of rights of women, academics and leaders from the countries of the region that suffered from conflicts and instability in the past years.

During the symposium days, the regional activists worked closely with UN experts and trainers in the field of gender equality from the Institute of Human Rights Studies at Columbia University to study the challenges and opportunities faced by women in conflict, post-conflict and emergency situations. In addition, methods of negotiating gender equality were discussed and set forth in peace operations, as well as the development of national plans of action for civil society regarding women, peace and security within the region. Civil society participants in the symposium called on the international community to support the role of women as agents of change in building peace rather than treating them as victims, and to ensure that women's voices and their priorities are an integral part of post-conflict negotiations, national reconstruction and peacekeeping efforts. They also called for the adoption of gender perspectives, which take into account the experience of women at times of conflicts and emergencies and reveal them in all these efforts and initiatives. The symposium was based on the work of the Arab Regional Network for Women, Peace and Security, launched by 'Karama' organization in October 2013, in coordination with the UNDP and the UN Fund for Gender Equality.

#### **4. Gender and Conflict Forum (2015)**

In the context of integrating a gender perspective into the conflict management project, the Arab League organized the Gender and Conflict Forum in cooperation with UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (UNDP - RBAS) and 'Karama' organization. The Forum was held in 2015 in New York. The Forum coincided with the commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The Forum highlighted the importance of addressing the systematic violations committed against women and girls in conflict areas throughout the Arab region with great firmness. Participants noted that these violations against women have increased at an unprecedented rate and with various forms of physical and sexual violence - including murder and rape - due to limited efforts to prevent and provide relief, recovery and rehabilitation services for victims.

The Forum, hosted at the UN Headquarters in New York, attracted wide participation of experts and

high-level officials from the UN, the Arab League and their Member States. As mentioned earlier, the Forum was held as an extension to the efforts that flow into the implementation of the project aiming to achieve a preventive and effective response to crises. It also marked a milestone in cooperation between the Arab League with the Arab Regional Network on Women, Peace and Security. This network includes women leaders from 12 Member States, which include: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, oPt, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), Tunisia and Yemen. UNDP and 'Karama' organization assisted in the constitution of this network in 2013.

#### **5. Preparing a Strategy and an Operational Plan of Action for "The Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace"**

The Arab League prepared a strategy and an operational plan of action entitled "Protection of Arab Woman: Security and Peace." The strategy was adopted by virtue of resolution number 7966 by the League of Arab States Council at the ministerial level in its regular session 144 that was held on 13 September 2015. The essence of the ruling vision of the strategy is "to ensure the right of the Arab woman to be protected from all forms of gender-based violence in times of war and peace, and to obtain all her rights without discrimination, and enhance her role in a society where prevail justice and equality." The preparation of an Arab strategy on women, security and peace also aims to develop a general Arab framework that aims to create a gender-sensitive environment, motivate all relevant Arab parties and decision-makers at the Arab regional level and at the national level in various Arab states to act effectively to protect them from gender-based violence, to which they are exposed, especially in times of war, occupation and armed conflicts.

The strategy and operational plan of action titled "Protection of Arab Woman: Security and Peace" constitutes the cornerstone of the League's efforts to strengthen the situation of women in terms of security and peace in the Arab region. In fact, the conference sought to strengthen the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region as a direct extension and interpretation of the aforementioned strategy. Therefore, in addition to highlighting strategy's vision and general objectives in the previous paragraphs, an appendix to the report includes a statement of the strategy: participation - prevention - protection during these three stages.

## 6. Constitution of an Emergency Committee for the Protection of Women in March 2019

As the League of Arab states also swiftly interacted with the efforts of women in mediation, the League also interacted immediately with the efforts of women in protection, so it launched an initiative to establish an emergency committee to protect women during armed conflicts in the Arab region. The emergency committee meets when events against women are exacerbated in conflict areas in the Arab region. The committee is composed of Member States and experts specializing in the protection of women during armed conflicts both on the regional and international levels. The committee acts as an observatory that monitors the situation of Arab women in conflict areas and documents violations encountered by women, girls and children in armed conflicts, in cooperation with regional and international agencies. It works to develop preventive, relief and legal programmes to confront such violations and hold them accountable, and to issue periodic reports for follow-up and analysis. The committee represents a form of support in the implementation of the regional strategy and operational action plan for "The Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace" and the implementation of resolution 1325.

In cooperation with the UN Women Entity, a concept note was prepared about the work mechanism of the emergency committee that guarantees the ruling vision, mission and its general goals, and the tasks it should implement. The essence of the vision is to enhance and implement the UN and Arab resolutions specific to respecting women's rights during armed conflicts, informing the international and regional community of the problems and effects on women as a result of asylum, displacement and homelessness, and urged to provide financial aid and technical assistance. The Commission's message pertains to the transition from relief to development stage to achieve psychological, moral and physical stability for women during armed conflicts in order to reduce the negative effects associated with asylum, displacement and homelessness, and prepare and encourage affected women to return home when conditions are favourable. The ultimate goal of the committee is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for women in armed conflicts by providing necessary assistance to ensure their rights to protection from various types of threats that directly/indirectly affect their security, psychological and physical well-being.

The Committee's tasks included the following:

- Provide advice to Arab women's committee and

support the documentation of hardships faced by women and girls during armed conflicts, and to submit its recommendations in this regard to the Arab women's committee.

- Issue periodic data reports as follow-up and analysis in order to contribute to the development of preventive and relief programmes and legal measures to confront violations and hold them accountable.
- Develop recommendations on urgent humanitarian needs for women and girls, taking into account best practices and innovative solutions to develop methods to provide humanitarian aid in times of crisis.
- Facilitate research and adjust policies in main areas of concern, including asylum, displacement, irregular migration, human trafficking and sexual violence against women and girls, protecting them from all forms of violence, and countering terrorism.
- Mobilize and strengthen diplomatic efforts to deliver aid to populations affected by conflicts.

## 7. Call to establish the Arab Women Mediators Network for Peace-Keeping

In addition to the above, the Arab League interacted with the efforts and initiatives of women in the region in connection with mediation to resolve disputes at the local and national levels during conflict stage and at the beginning of the post-conflict phase, and thus launched the initiative to establish the Arab Women Mediators Network for Peace-Keeping in July 2019. The objective of the Network is to take advantage of women's capabilities and their distinctive ability to negotiate in mediation and conflict resolution situations by peaceful means, and strive to enhance women's participation in mediation and enhance its effectiveness, impact and community visibility. The network consists of nominees by Member States in accordance with the nomination criteria. During the establishment of the network, it was emphasized that the nature of the network's work and its success in achieving its mission and goals require women's inclusion and participation in peace talks committees, local and national dialogues, consultative forums, as well as in preventive diplomacy and in monitoring and implementing agreements. This should be achieved during the two stages of preparing and implementing peace operations, and it should not be limited to a specific round of negotiations or national dialogue. The network's success also requires performing its duties, providing equal opportunities for women in making decisions related to all areas of peace and security, including conciliation, negotiation and mediation processes to ensure that issues of special concern to women are addressed and to ensure that special measures are taken and that the necessary financing structures are fully effective, and eliminate



any obstacles hindering their participation whether by law or practice. There must be cooperation between this network and International network for peace mediators, and regional networks whose activities are interconnected with activities of all networks, aiming at cooperating and exchanging information and expertise.

## **8. Designing capacity-building programs for the member countries concerning National Plans for Women, Peace and Security**

The Arab League has designed capacity-building programmes for member countries concerning national plans for women, peace and security. These programmes were designed to contribute to enhancing women awareness and security, and inform them of the national plan for women and security concept. It was also designed in order to contribute in enhancing women's perception to challenges they face and conflict risks, and their contribution in raising official protection and prevention for women.

In conclusion, as previously set forth, the League's efforts in connection with the women's peace and security agenda were interconnected with the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The most important of these resolutions is the Security Council resolution 1325 dated October/31 December, 2000 concerning women, security and peace. The League's efforts also intersected with the subsequent resolutions of resolution 1325 relating to women, security and peace, which stressed on the importance of the participation of women in all stages including conflict prevention, peace-keeping, conflict resolution and peace-building. Among these important resolutions, resolution 1820 dated 2008, resolution 1888 dated 2009, resolution 1889 dated 2009, resolution 1960 dated 2010, resolution 2106 dated 2013, resolution 2122 dated 2013, resolution 2242 dated 2015 and resolution 2467 dated 2019.

After explaining the most prominent efforts made by the Arab League to protect women and enhance their role in building peace and security in the region, we will now turn to explain the intellectual outlook on which the Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in

## Section II: Intellectual Outlook of the Conference and its Relation to the Current Reality of the Arab Region

The essence of the intellectual outlook of the conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region is that strengthening the roles of the woman in the post-conflict phase should be based on four main pillars: (i) participation (ii) prevention, (iii) protection, and (iv) relief, recovery, and reconstruction. These four fields are mainly characterized as pivotal areas on which most constituents and factors that enable women to enjoy their rights and fulfil their duties. These pillars are also characterized by their complementarity. These areas were specifically chosen in light of the nature of the damages incurred by women and girls during conflicts. The following paragraphs include an explanation of these concepts in relation to the status and roles of women. They also include an indication to the extent to which the four pillars have dropped during the conflict stage and the period following the conflict.

### A- Participation

Participation refers to the full participation of women in all fields. This includes participation in the public domain in general. It also includes participation in political affairs in all its dimensions, including political representation internally and externally, negotiation and mediation for peace building. It also includes participation in the economic life. The participation of women should reflect the number of women in society and their educational qualifications. It should also be proportional to the participation of men.

With the start of conflict stage and public stability unrest, a sudden setback occurred, as women were subjected to multi-dimensional aggression and violence, and among the goals of this aggression and violence was to put an end to contributions of women and their roles in all fields. Due to the lack of full security and personal safety for women during conflict stage and during post-conflict period, participation of women in the national economy remains disproportionate, and conflicts have led to the widening this gap. In some cities and villages, violent forces of extremism and terrorism restricted the movement of women and prevented them from going to work. It also prevented women from public participation, including social participation. Women were prevented from launching public initiatives of any kind. Women activists and leaders of the community who participated in demanding constitutional reforms were also threatened on social media pages and campaigns of defamation, personal deformation and moral assassination to force them to move away from

public work. Public platforms led by women halted. A significant number of women subject to violence were unable to participate as a result of the continued impact of the moral trauma resulting from violence they were exposed to.

Although restrictions were imposed on the participation of women during the conflict stage, women in the region made efforts to mediate within the context of peace building. This included the negotiation of a ceasefire. Sometimes, women made these efforts in coordination with local government councils. Women also made extraordinary efforts to demand the release of the detainees. In addition, women negotiated with the armed men who set up security barriers in some areas, to allow the entry of relief and assistance supplies. Women in the region have also contributed to negotiating with youths who participated in armed violence and with women who belong to violent extremist networks to surrender their weapons and to engage in society and official institutions.

There are many areas in which participation of women is limited or unrealized. The majority of these areas are directly related to the situation and security of women. The lack of participation of women, and their safety. In other words, these areas increase the risks and harms to which women are exposed and the severity of those risks, and vice versa. We may limit ourselves to mention only some of these areas as examples.

One of the areas in which there is an urgent need to raise the level of women's participation in it is the area of negotiation within the peace-building context. Women remain largely excluded from peace negotiations<sup>1</sup>. The peace processes supported by the UN have not improved inclusion of women in negotiating delegations in past years. In 2018, among six active UN-led operations, 14 out of 19 women delegates participated. Global data trends show a slight progress in this respect. In 1992 and 2018, women represented 13 percent of negotiators, four percent of mediators, and only four percent of signatories in major peace operations followed by the External Relations Council<sup>2</sup>.

The field of preventing illicit arms is another area that needs to be questioned, in terms of participation of women. In 2018 the total global military spending reached 1.8 trillion dollars<sup>3</sup>. It is worth noting that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 stipulated a strategic objective represented in "reducing excessive military expenditures and

controlling available weapons.” According to a review conducted on national reports on the implementation of the programme of action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at all levels, and the international instrument tracking report submitted in 2018, shows that most countries (117 countries out of 120 countries that submitted reports) have legal frameworks for illegal combating of small arms and weapons. Among these, 54 countries took into consideration the gender perspective in the elaboration of policies, and planning and implementation of the programme of action, and 16 countries have collected data disaggregated by gender to identify and respond to gender-related risks associated with illicit trading and its response<sup>4</sup>.

## B- Prevention

The concept of women’s prevention refers to all steps whether of moral or material nature that grants women immunity and fortification against risks and starts by avoiding any harm to them. A long list of steps includes building structures and institutions and formulating policies and procedures that contribute to achieving prevention. One of the most important steps in women’s prevention relies on continuous reform of the legislative structure so that it is integrated, and to ensure that all forms of harmful acts against women are criminalized, including moral and material violence. In addition, steps in the prevention pertaining to women includes empowering women economically and providing them with adequate employment. These steps also include reform of cultural, education and upbringing scope, by incorporating a gender perspective. This is complemented by a complete, impartial and flexible judiciary system, ensuring women access to justice. It is also complemented by the existence of efficient policies and executive procedures to ensure the implementation of laws, enforcement of judicial rulings, imposition of penalties for perpetrators of crime, and the prevention of impunity.

Last but not least, among women prevention methods from harm and violence includes achieving community and women’s prevention against violent extremism. Prevention from violent extremism means providing society immunity against radical notions to prevent accentuation of these ideas. Prevention against violent extremism also means uprooting extremist ideas through open dialogues and discussions based on inclusion, non-exclusion and marginalization.

Realizing the need for a more comprehensive approach to deal with violent extremism, the prevention of violent extremism strategy<sup>5</sup> was officially adopted in 2016 with a focus on a community-based approach from bottom to top and emphasizing the need to integrate a gender perspective. On 24 December 2014, the Secretary-General of the UN adopted an action plan on the fourth revision of Preventing Violent Extremism in Response to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is included in General Assembly Resolution 68/276 and Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). On 15 January, the Secretary-General presented the plan of action that he proposed to the General Assembly. On 12 February 2015, the General Assembly adopted the aforementioned resolution, which stipulates on “welcoming the initiative of the Secretary-General and takes note of his plan of action to prevent violent extremism.” The General Assembly decided to “grant additional concern to the action plan to prevent violent extremism.”

The General-Secretary’s action plan determined seven priority areas for action to prevent violent extremism.

- 1) Dialogue and prevent struggle.
- 2) Promote good governance and human rights and the rule of law.
- 3) Engage societies.
- 4) Empower youth.
- 5) Gender equality and empowerment of women.
- 6) Education, skills development, and employment facilitation.
- 7) Communications, Internet, and social media.

In the Arab region, during the decade of conflicts, women have lost as many of the gains they have achieved at the level of prevention during the period prior to the decade of conflict. The implementation of many agreements and treaties that are important in achieving prevention were impeded. The process of reforming the legislative structure that aimed at raising the existing level of prevention and extending its scope was also hindered and regressed. In some countries, efforts in many judicial institutions have been disrupted, resulting in women being denied access to complete justice. In addition, economic empowerment and economic empowerment programmes have diminished in particular because a large number of civil society organizations have stopped working. The dropout rate for girls and boys has also increased. Violent extremism has also spread again among generations of young men and women and between families in many cities and localities, especially after the emergence of a new

<sup>1</sup> Women’s meaningful participation in peace process. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)

wave of extremism and terrorism. The deteriorating security situation and restrictions imposed by violent extremist and terrorist organizations have resulted in many women losing their jobs in the public and private sectors. Conflicts have led to the birth of new forms of violent extremism with more distorted concepts on the economic roles of a woman inside and outside the home.

In addition, the legislative structure of most countries in the Arab region is characterized by being incomplete, as it does not contain sufficient laws to criminalize violence against women. In fact, the number of Arab countries that contain laws criminalizing violence against women are very few. Most of the legislation in Arab countries do not contain ascending sanctions that are appropriate with the types of crimes committed against women.

At this stage, it is important to remember that although prevention levels for women from harm and violence have declined in most countries of the region during conflict stage, the women themselves have continued to make efforts aiming to provide prevention. As a result of these efforts, Arab countries, such as Lebanon, have formulated national strategies and action plans to prevent violent extremism, and have incorporated a gender perspective in these strategies in a broader way. Civil society platforms concerned with women issues played a leadership role in proposing, preparing and formulating these strategies.

## C- Protection

Protection refers to ensure the existence of moral and material elements that secure women and girls in facing violence in all its forms to enjoy safety and security equal to which men are subjected, but rather it should be even more so. As we have previously stated, one of the facts overlooked by many is that the level of exposure of women and girls to risks in general and the effects of conflict in particular, is much higher than that of men, due to many factors. In other terms, there is an asymmetry between the harm caused to women and girls during conflict and that caused to men. This necessitates making the general environment a safe and protective one for women. It also requires strengthening legislations, policies and procedures to protect women and girls. It also requires the provision of physical protection tools.

World statistics regarding attacks against women during conflict settings raise serious concerns regarding the level of protection of women. As of 2018, cases

listed in the Security Council agenda, are suspected to reflect that more than 50 parties to the conflict have committed or incited patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence. A former study carried out in 2014 also estimated that at least one in every five women refugees in a complex humanitarian situation had experienced sexual violence. These figures are a clear indication that women do not enjoy the minimum level of protection that they should be entitled to.

During the years of conflict and general instability, the protection that women enjoyed was undermined. This wave of extremism and violence has targeted these women specifically. Radical and terrorist organizations have created new patterns of aggression and violence. In some areas, women were abused, and undergo slavery, rape, forced marriage, imprisonment, detention, torture and kidnapping. Women suffered displacement and forced eviction from their homes, their villages and cities, and were housed in refugee centres. In refugee centres, women, girls and children headed the list of refugee sufferers. In these centres, women and girls have been robbed, harassed, raped, stabbed and killed. Women doctors were deliberately killed in violation of the most basic rules of humanity and all human knowledge and charters.

Members of representative councils were also assassinated. In one of the Arab countries, even though the conflict had relatively decreased during the middle of the year 2018, the number of gender-based violent incidents increased by 70 percent <sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the frameworks of violent extremism and terrorism have made adjustments to their approach to women by presenting the personal and sexual slavery approach and using it as a means to introduce panic in society's conscious, and as a way to enhance the approach to attracting new members. Systematic individual and gang rape were also practiced for the same purposes. Women were bullied on the Internet. Women, especially women activists and militants, were also subjected to insult, blackmail, intimidation and threat <sup>7</sup>.

Here, we can but point out that, although women are not adequately protected during the conflict stage, they have taken the initiative to provide the means to secure and protect themselves and their society. Women continued to put pressure and call for legislation to give more protection to women, girls and children. In fact, some legislative reforms were carried out incriminating some violent practices that were not considered as a crime, and an emphasis on the penalties imposed on some of these practices, as is the case with regard to harassment and the marriage of minors. The pressure

<sup>6</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (Yemen 2019) p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Libyan National Report, Beijing + 25, p. 5 (2019)

applied by women in the legislative and political arenas yielded clear results in expanding and strengthening the scope of protection, in terms of quantity and quality. Because of women's societal efforts, a good number of Arab countries issued a National Action Plan in implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000; amongst which are oPt, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon. Several Arab countries have also taken steps towards the implementation of programmes calculating the economic impacts of violence against women and the national economy.

## D- Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction

Relief and recovery refer to providing services and measures of a moral and material nature, until the elimination of the effects of moral and material damages caused to women within the context of disputes, many of which are continue during the post-conflict period. This includes continuing to provide services to displaced and refugee women who are still in refugee camps. It also includes exerting efforts to complete return of displaced women and refugees to their homes. There is also an urgent need to provide hospitalization and medication means for patients, and to provide medical services for the most challenging women among them. Psychological care for those suffering from psychological trauma as a result of various forms of violence remains essential. In addition to integrating restoration of women's civil society platforms and women's work networks that were negatively affected by conflict.

Efforts to relief those affected by conflict, especially women and girls, and transfer them to a state of recovery, are still not commensurate with the global scale, and not proportionate to the suffering and damage of conflict victims with women and girls on top of the list, and although recent years have witnessed a slight improvement, nevertheless it still is limited. In 2019, approximately 132 million people needed/required humanitarian assistance and protection, including an estimated 35 million women, young women and girls who needed life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, and interventions to prevent gender-based violence and respond to the needs of survivors. In 2018, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted its new policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which contributed to the advancement of gender equality in humanitarian work. Before 2018, less than half of the humanitarian responses included gender analysis and relevant data. In 2018, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicated that

95 percent of humanitarian evaluation reports refer to gender-based violence or include some form of gender analysis. However, only 28 percent of these reports expressed that the preferential impact that women, men, girls and boys face in crises, as well as the underlying factors affecting vulnerability.

As for the Arab region, statistics show the need to double the relief and transit efforts of citizens who have endured suffering to recovery, while noting that the most vulnerable citizens to suffering are women, and that they also bear the biggest part of suffering than other members of their families, including children. In Syria, in addition to 6.1 displacement cases recorded in 2018, there are about 2.6 million displaced, most of whom live in five governorates (rural Damascus, Idlib, Aleppo, Damascus and Latakia). About 150.871 (or 14 percent) of the total displaced from 968.9 centres sheltering displaced including 946.5 informal gatherings and 031.2 camps and 801.1 collective shelter centres and 181 welcome and transit centres<sup>8</sup>. In December 2018, the number of displaced persons in Iraq is estimated at 2 million<sup>9</sup>. Explosive devices and mines have been dispersed in the heart of the cities. Hundreds of citizens with children and women were killed and injured as a result of landmine explosions and the remnants of war explosives. In the city of Benghazi, landmine explosions and remnants of war explosives killed dozens of persons including girls, women, children, civilian men and soldiers, and resulted in numerous permanent disabilities and handicaps for large segments of the population of all ages. In Syria, one in two people is at risk of explosives exposure. According to the current population estimates, 2.1 million men, women, boys and girls in 980.1 communities that reported pollution emanating from dangerous explosives during the past two years<sup>10</sup>.

In Yemen, the society was subjected to a collapse in food security, leading to starvation. According to the information obtained by the World Food Organization in 2019, children were exposed to severe acute undernutrition. About 67 percent (20 million people) of the total population counting 29.9 million will need urgent help to save their lives and the livelihoods. In fact, approximately 7.4 million people suffer from malnutrition, or nearly a quarter of the population, most of whom are in acute stage. Acute malnutrition rates exceeded the emergency threshold set by the WHO by 15 percent in five governorates, and about 30 percent in many administrations where critical levels of malnutrition were recorded. Furthermore, one million children under the age of 5 and 1.1 million pregnant and breastfeeding women need urgent

<sup>8</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Syria, 2019) pp. 20, 22

<sup>9</sup> OCHA (2018)

<sup>10</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Syria, 2019) p. 54

treatment to survive. 400,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition<sup>11</sup>. One of the most affected sectors is the agricultural sector and local food production has been severely at risk. In Iraq, studies conducted at the end of 2018 concluded that large decreases in the water quantity and its quality in 2018 had affected 25 percent of total population (about 1.9 million individuals), and contaminated water supplies in the city of Basra resulted in more than 110 thousand people to enter hospital suffering from problems in the digestive system. It is reported that in 2019 in Syria, the number of individuals suffering from food insecurity in the whole country is about 5.6 million<sup>12</sup>.

In addition to all the above, epidemics and serious diseases such as cholera have led to the death of numbers of civilians while causing extensive damage to others. According to WHO, the Ministry of Public Health and Population in Yemen<sup>13</sup> revealed that the cumulative total number of suspected cholera cases from 1 January 2018 to 16 June 2019 is of 779,489 among which 1178 are related to death cases (CFR 0.15 percent). Children under the age of 5 represent 22.7 percent of the total suspected cases during 2019. In 2019, outbreak of the disease affected 22 out of 23 districts, and 299 out of 333 governorates in Yemen. In 2019, the Ministry of Health reported 20,264 suspected cholera cases with 15 deaths associated during the epidemiological week 24 (10 - 16 June) of 2019, with 14 percent of cases reportedly severe. During week 8 of 2019, cases of weekly reported cholera increased and reached its peak with more than 29,500 cases during week 14. During weeks 15 to 21, the number of suspected cases decreased, but during weeks 22 to 24 trends changed once again. In Syria, in 2019, "the number of those in need in the health sector increased from 11.3 million to 13.2 million people<sup>14</sup>." During 2018, "measles, acute bloody diarrhoea and typhoid fever were reported in Haskeh, Rukka, Deir el Zor, Aleppo and Idlib districts. Furthermore, hepatitis cases (8) were reported in Aafrine in November 2018, in Daraa during the second half of the year. The crisis has led to the resurgence of Leishmania disease across Syria<sup>15</sup>."

Moreover, major problems occurred in the health service sector structures. Many hospitals, health units and medical laboratories were partially or completely destroyed. Health services and many essential medications have been interrupted, especially those used for treating common diseases. In Iraq, according to the Ministry of Health data, at the end of 2018, 32 percent of hospitals and 14 percent of primary health care centres were destroyed in Nineveh, while 35 percent of primary health care centres in Kirkuk are not operational, and 17 percent of hospitals in Anbar are only partially operational<sup>16</sup>. In Syria, studies conducted at the end of 2018 showed that 46 percent of health facilities in Syria - including maternal health services - "partially work or not at all and reveal that 167 healthcare facilities have been completely destroyed. Similarly, the displacement contributed to reducing the number of qualified medical staff in some regions by 50 percent, which led to more drawbacks in providing good medical assistance."<sup>17</sup> A recent evaluation on disability among adults in west Aleppo, Raqa and Idlib governorates showed an increase of 30 percent, which is twice the global average. In addition, the evaluation reveals that 45 percent of those covered by the survey on average and who were injured during the Syrian crisis, are expected to suffer from permanent disabilities such as amputation, spinal cord injuries and brain damage.<sup>18</sup>

Considering reconstruction, the reparation of the damaged architectural structure must be accompanied by a population-based societal reform that ensures the restoration of the damaged habitats and at the same time the restoration of the social ties of the communities that inhabited those habitats. Reconstruction is a process in which women and men must participate on an equal basis, both during the planning phase and strategy development or during the implementation phase. Women should be broadly involved in the governance of reconstruction. Reconstruction alone may extend over a period of 10 to 20 years.

11 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Yemen, 2019)

12 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Syria, 2019) p. 28

13 WHO (2019)

14 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Syria, 2019) p. 31

15 Previous reference p. 27

16 OCHA (2019), p. 10, 33 (Iraq)

17 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Syria, 2019) p.27

18 Previous reference p. 29

**Table (1): Reconstruction costs in 4 Arab countries (in billion dollars)**

Country	Reconstruction costs	Source	Date of estimation
Syria	400	UN and Syrian government	2019
Yemen	100	Yemeni government and experts	February 2019
Libya	100	World Bank	2019
Iraq	88	Iraqi Ministry of Planning	February 2018
Total	688		

The Arab countries face significant governmental challenges that cannot be underestimated in relation with the reconstruction file that will be implemented in countries that have witnessed conflict and their infrastructure and architecture have been destroyed. There is no doubt that the reconstruction efforts constitute a crucial matter for these countries, and it will have major repercussions extending over their future and their regional status. According to estimates, issued in 2018, 2019, the estimated cost of reconstruction in only four countries is about 688 billion dollars

Conflicts have destroyed a large part of the architectural infrastructure in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Somalia. According to the World Bank, more than one third of the infrastructure in Syria has been completely destroyed, and this includes education and health care facilities. The infrastructure in Gaza is also dilapidated and destroyed as a result of previous invasions. The destruction has reached unprecedented levels. As a result of the regional neighbourhood, economic interdependence and the nature of regional

capital surpassing countries, all Arab countries will be concerned with the reconstruction processes in one way or another. Moreover, a large number of countries in the world and international institutions will engage in the process, whether by providing aid and/or designing reconstruction, monitoring and/or implementation. The local private sector and the external private sector, represented by foreign and transnational companies, will also be involved in the reconstruction process. It is evident that if the implementation of the reconstruction operations is not based on the highest standards of corporate governance, the level of formal and foreign institutions, the domestic and external private sector, thus the weakness of management and the lack of governance experience and corrupt practices may lead to corruption. As such, what increases the severity of this governmental challenge is the sharp governmental backlash previously mentioned in the official institutions and private sector companies.

After reviewing the intellectual outlook of the conference, we now examine the conference works, the speeches addressed and the outcome of its sessions.

## Section III: Conference Agenda / Opening Speeches

### **1- H.E. Mrs. Dina Douay - Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department in the Social Affairs Sector at the League of Arab States**

Mrs. Dina Douay delivered a welcome speech that included a definition of the conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region. The speech commenced by explaining the context in which the conference was held. She explained that in 2010 and 2019, the Arab region had witnessed crises on the peace and security levels, with the outbreak of conflicts and renewed conflict in other countries, and instability in some countries that lasted for years. As these crises intensified, women in the region faced unprecedented challenges. Women were subjected to unprecedented violence, both qualitative and quantitative. Despite all of this, women insisted on facing conflict stage challenges. Women have embarked on various roles in the service sector of their communities and launched countless initiatives. Most of these initiatives focused on alleviating suffering, protection, resolving local security problems, settling national and local disputes, and empowerment. With the conflict receding and the entry of the region into post-conflict stage, women began to face new challenges and risks.

Mrs. Dina Douay reviewed some of the conference goals. She mentioned that the conference aimed to explore means for women to participate in building a sustainable peace. The conference also aimed to formulate policies that contribute to the non-recurrence of violence and the slide back into violence.

Mrs. Dina Douay highlighted the intellectual groundwork of the conference to enhance the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region. She also mentioned that strengthening the role of women in post-conflict phase should be based on four main pillars: participation; prevention; protection; relief, recovery and reconstruction.

### **2- H. E. Mrs. Francis Jay, Representative of UNDP**

At the beginning of her speech, Mrs. Francis Jay considered the direct relation between strengthening the role of women and development. She said that strengthening the role of women and empowering them is very important during times of conflict and its aftermath, stressing on the importance of this subject to development events and pointing out to Security Council's resolutions pertaining to the role of women

and demanded its members to support the role of women in the Arab region during peace phase and after the end of conflict and ensure their support in the social and economic capacities, noting that these resolutions stipulate protection for women. Mrs. Francis Jay explained that the role of women will continue to be a sensitive subject, and certain priorities must be rendered unto women to meet their requirements.

After that, Mrs. Francis Jay tackled the most important challenges and aspects that should be prioritized in relation to strengthening the role of women during post-conflict phase. In this regard, she said that there is a need to exert efforts to implement the principles of justice, reconstruction and criminalization of violence against women, and to improve women's condition, explaining that the emphasis on the right of women is not sufficient. She drew attention to the fact that the world has seen many examples of women in post-conflicts, and assisting them to face challenges must be encouraged. She added that there are programmes to assist victims, and which encourage women to play important roles through which they help in the progress of societies. She also stressed the importance of the political will needed to achieve women's aspirations.

### **3- H. E. Mr. Ivan Surkos, Head of the EU, Egypt**

At the beginning, Mr. Ivan Surkos indicated that cooperation with the Arab League is a priority of the EU. He made it clear that the foreign strategy of the EU is based on peace and security in the world, warning that conflicts threaten common interests. He added that the common goal is stability and security, explaining the commitment of the EU to peace and the achievement of sustainable development on a permanent basis, and that this will be achieved only by committing to the rights of women.

Mr. Ivan Surkos highlighted the importance of determining the essential needs of women, creating positive change, empowering women, achieving recovery to build peace and creating sustainable development during and after conflicts. In this regard, Mr. Ivan Surkos emphasized the importance of women participation in key issues and engaging with men on equal basis in issues of mutual concern to their societies. He made it clear that the EU's commitment to women issues is an essential part of the commitment of their Member States on peace and security and in supporting the full participation and protection of women, calling for the establishment of partnerships in these areas as an important step to support the national action plan for those countries



and organizations. He said that the EU seeks to support women in conflict and post-conflict phases through transitional justice and mobilize resources that protect women's rights in the social and economic spheres and confront violence against women.

After that, Mr. Ivan Surkos addressed the issue of violence against women. He reviewed the efforts of the EU in cooperation with many Arab countries, and international community and organizations, which could be used to combat violence against women. He mentioned that a portion of the resources are allocated for protection and empowerment programmes for women and development programmes in the areas of conflict and post-conflicts.

#### **4- H. E. Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League for Social Affairs Sector**

Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh began her speech by focusing on a methodological issue, which is the need to balance between considering the issuance of related resolutions on the one hand, and considering practical applications in terms of an integrated gender perspective holistically. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh said, "while our region awaits the end of this difficult stage and transition to a post-conflict phase, we see the necessity of overcoming the idea of issuing new international decisions that support the role of women, and focus on several intersects, among which are integration and national establishment." She clarified that supporting the capacity of women in the economy in the post-conflict period is a priority and should have the attention of the international community and the Arab region in particular during peace building operations and formulating sustainable development programmes. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh has called to integrate a gender perspective in economic cooperation programmes, in addition to the rehabilitation and training of women to increase their opportunities to improve their economic conditions.

Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh also highlighted the need to include strategies to enhance the role of women after the end of conflicts, with a special section related to the intensification of training programmes for the participation of women in various activities. In this regard, Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh addressed the importance of formulating training programmes for new generations, entrenching ideas of non-discrimination and women's participation in society. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh also indicated that it is necessary for countries that witness conflicts in the Arab region to benefit from the experiences of other countries that were able to give women a greater role in post-conflict stages. In

this respect, Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh said that the exchange of experiences and best practices will enable the region to draw a clear road map to overcome all difficulties in this field.

After that, Her Excellency addressed the most important challenges facing strengthening the roles of women. She said: "there are numerous challenges facing the implementation of those strategies that grant women a greater role after the conflict ends, and these challenges include the scarce financial resources, lack of awareness on gender issues in light of the dominant cultures in the society. According to Mrs. Abu Ghazaleh, these challenges include the weak coordination between the various UN organizations, civil society and states, in addition to the distinct difficulties due to the lack of available qualitative and quantitative information about the problems and violations faced by women in conflict zones, as well as the limited role of activists and NGOs at local levels. She mentioned that these known challenges to gender experts and activists can be overcome by concerted efforts and teamwork for a better reality for the Arab women. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh also said that "in the Arab context, the Arab woman has faced great suffering in recent years in light of the armed conflicts that some of our Arab countries are witnessing. Perhaps the practices adopted by some terrorist organizations against women in our region clearly show the degree reached by these violations in the region targeting women."

Mrs. Abu Ghazaleh also pointed out that these organizations followed systematic practices of captivity, slavery, rape, forced marriage, imprisonment, detention, torture, and kidnapping. "We bear in mind the suffering of the Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation that paints the worst picture in the record of human rights against the Palestinian people in general, and the Palestinian woman in particular." She also added: "despite women's suffering during the armed conflict, her role in the activities and programmes that are carried out in the post-conflict stages is still ignored; statistics indicate that woman's participation rate is modest in the negotiation processes in peace operations, disarmament, release and integration operations, reconstruction operations, and post-conflict economic construction." She added that Security Council resolution 1325 of (2000) could correct this imbalance and urge countries to increase the representation of women in national and regional institutions and mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving conflict. This resolution was followed by many other decisions all aimed at the protection of women during conflicts and enhance the role women will play in post-conflicts.

At the end of her speech, Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh

recalled the efforts of the Arab League and highlighted its major achievements in promoting and protecting the role of women. In this context, she mentioned the establishment of the Arab women committee in 1971. She also noted the preparation of the Arab Regional Strategy and the operational action plan entitled "Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace". She also commended the establishment of an emergency committee to protect women during armed conflict in the Arab region. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh explained that the conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region comes as a conclusion to an extended journey of joint work between the Arab League, the EU and UNDP within the framework of a joint project to reinforce the capacities of the General Secretariat to confront crises in the Arab region; this conference also represents part of the continuous efforts of the Arab countries and the General Secretariat to support the role of women in general and during armed conflicts and wars in particular.

### **5- H. E. Dr. Maya Morsi – Chairperson of the National Council for Women in Egypt**

In her opening speech, Mrs. Maya Morsi stressed that "the implementation of the agenda of woman, security and peace requires women participation in peace efforts not in terms of numbers and percentages, but should exceed women's symbolic representation, and this participation must be worthy and valuable." She mentioned that the studies indicate a close correlation between the participation of the woman in the peace agreements and the persistence and success of these agreements for fifteen years at least by 35 percent, and by 25 percent for two years. Furthermore, Mrs. Maya Morsi highlighted the economic impact of violence and wars, indicating that it reached globally to 14.1 trillion dollars in 2018 with calculations equivalent to the purchasing power in 2018 equivalent to 2.11 percent of global economic activity, global gross output, and equivalent to \$1,853 per person.

Mrs. Maya Morsi also discussed Egypt's pioneering experiences at the regional and international levels in interacting with women's agenda in peace and security. In that respect, she explained that Egypt had anticipated the issuance of resolution 1325 through its active interaction in shedding the light on the gravity and seriousness of the violations sustained by women during the nineties in Bosnia and Rwanda and Somalia. In this perspective, Mrs. Maya Morsi made sure to emphasize that women's security and peace agenda is implemented in an international, regional and local context and that its application varies from one country to another and through the basic intersects of prevention, protection and relief, since work is done through intersects based on two principles of

participation and mainstreaming a gender equality perspective.

Finally, Mrs. Maya Morsi stated that Egypt stresses the importance of adhering to the mandate of women in peace and security. Leaving such a stance and tackling other topics will empty the agenda of its content, and thus will be difficult to implement, taking into account the cultural and social characteristics of each country and geographical region, with an emphasis on the involvement of national departments upon implementation.

Mrs. Maya Morsi's speech also hinted that Egypt submitted in the 2016 to the General Assembly a resolution aiming at creating a new item entitled "Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse" in implementation of a zero-tolerance policy. Egypt also pledged during the ministerial conference to preserve peace that was held at the UN in March 2019 to increase women workers in the peace-keeping forces and in police units by 10 percent by 2020, the deployment of problem units within the peacekeeping mission, and the number of peacekeepers effectively reached 18 Egyptian women, 10 of which are first rank officers. Egypt organized in October 2018 in the UN headquarters in New York, the first meeting to discuss Women Mediators around the world to ensure the exchange of experiences between these networks and to benefit from these experiences, in order to enhance and support women's participation in the negotiations. Egypt also actively participates in the work of the African and Mediterranean network and also supports the efforts aiming to establish the Arab Network for Women Mediators, and Egypt has joined the network of national focal points on women, peace and security established in Spain.

### **6- H. E. Mrs. Ibtihaj Abdulkadir Al-Kamal – Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Yemen**

Mrs. Ibtahhaj Al-Kamal confirmed that the Arab League's initiative and plans regarding the women and the launch of the Arab Network for Women and Peace Mediators is a serious step in the field of enhancing the role of women and achieving social justice. Mrs. Ibtihaj Al-Kamal indicated that the wars in Yemen deepened social and economic problems, along with weak health services and other services. The Yemeni Minister reviewed the negative repercussions experienced by the Yemeni women due to armed conflicts that arise there demanding the UN, international and regional organizations and bodies to provide support to women issues in Yemen.

## **7- H. E. Mrs. Basma Ishaqat, Minister of Social Development, Jordan**

Mrs. Basma Ishaqat discussed the role of Jordan in supporting security and peace in the region. It has shown that Jordan faced severe confrontation with terrorism and violent extremism. Moreover, Jordan's government has seriously considered to empower women. Jordan has also embraced refugees who came from conflict-stricken Arab countries, particularly in Syria and Iraq. The number of refugees reached 2.7 million, and Jordan has endured the pressures that this resulted in resources and services.

Mrs. Basma Ishaqat also explained that Jordan activated the Security Council's resolutions on strengthening the role of women and protecting women from violence. Besides, Jordan has taken the initiative to enhance the role of the woman, empower her, and enhance her participation and ensure equality between women and men in all fields. Mrs. Basma Ishaqat explained that 15 percent of armed forces in peacekeeping operations are women. Jordan also called on the international community to increase assistance to refugee-hosting countries in the region. It also called for an end to violence against women and girls in the areas of conflict, and reconstruction on the basis of equality and women's participation in these actions.

## **8- H. E. Mrs. Ghania Eddalia - Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, Algeria**

Mrs. Ghania Eddalia started her speech by announcing that the Conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region represents an opportunity to dialogue and emphasize what has been achieved in the fields of enhancing women's roles and benefiting from the experiences of countries in promoting the role and status of women in bringing peace to societies in general and Arab societies in particular. After that, Mrs. Ghania Eddalia reviewed Algeria's experience in this respect. She mentioned that Algeria developed legislative and organizational mechanisms to render its goals, strategies and plans, interpreted into programmes and activities for women's progress and institutional structures that ensure protection and improvement of women's condition. Algeria also maintained a stable society through preventing discrimination between men and women in various fields and spreading a culture of equality in the development of the country.

Furthermore, Mrs. Ghania Eddalia evoked the historical roles of women in Algeria. In this regard, she addressed

the roles of women during the French occupation that lasted 132 years. She insisted that the necessity of integrating the roles of women and men in facing the challenges and difficulties of the occupation. She highlighted the fact that during that period, some women assumed leadership roles in resisting the occupation, and the best example is the revolution of Lalla Fatma N'Soumer. Mrs. Ghania Eddalia also recalled the effect of the wave of extremism that struck the country during the 1990s. She showed how women contributed to resisting this plague, and how they played a fundamental role in the comprehensive national reconciliation and spreading the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness.

Mrs. Ghania Eddalia went on to clarify that Algeria committed to implementing the agenda of woman and peace by encouraging the presence of women in various security areas and the people's national army. In this regard, she mentioned that women have shown that they are worth holding the highest positions in various institutions. She also declared that Algeria's unique experience in preparing elite of girls from the new generation aims at enhancing the conservation of peace, security and stability in the future and engage in building the homeland, by opening military schools for young girls, similar to military schools for boys. Mrs. Ghania Eddalia addressed the participation of women in representing Algeria through their participation in the diplomatic corps. She said Algeria hosted the Fifth General Assembly of the International Conference in Kigali in March 2016, which was an opportunity to enhance sensitization efforts on the phenomenon of violence against women and girls, and it was a chance to present the reforms that the police forces in the African continent have made in the fight against this phenomenon.

She added the Statute of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) launched an effective solidarity mean in order to prevent these forms of new crimes and promote cooperation of African police through the exchange of good experiences and practices. In this context, and to encourage the efforts of women in peace negotiations, Algeria organized in December 2017 the first general assembly of the African Network for Women for Conflict Prevention and Mediation "Fam Wise - Africa" in partnership with the African Union. This meeting falls within the framework of the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the December 2016 and ratified by states and governments of the African Union in July 2017, which calls in particular to establish the status of women and their role in peace negotiations. Moreover, Algeria launched the initiative suggesting "the international day to live together in peace" corresponding to 16 May of every year, that

was adopted by the UN General Assembly by virtue of resolution 130/72 issued on 8 December 2017.

## **9- H. E. Mrs. Amal Hamad - Minister of Women Affairs of oPt**

Mrs. Amal Hamad started her speech by clarifying the legal and political status of oPt, stating that it is still undergoing a modern colonialism. This is evident in the Israeli occupation on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, the settlers' worship, the denial of international legitimacy such as the rights of the Palestinian people to life, the human dignity, the right of return, the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and its capital Al-Qods.

Mrs. Amal Hamad went on to explain the most prominent occupation practices that involve violations of UN resolutions. In this regard, she mentioned that the occupation forces imposed severe realities on the ground and unilaterally, such as setting up the annexation wall, expansion and devouring 64 percent of areas classified (c), as well as the use of some areas in the Palestinian Territory as a landfill for biological and chemical waste. This has had a negative impact on the environment and has had catastrophic implications for the lives of Palestinian women and girls. She also showed that the occupation established 257 illegal settlements and settlement outposts, in opposition of Security Council Resolution 2334 issued on December 23, 2016 in condemning and expanding settlements, including the confiscation of lands, the destruction of Palestinian homes, and the displacement of civilians in the territories of the Palestinian state, including East Jerusalem.

Mrs. Amal Hamad also dealt with the exposure of Palestinian women, girls, and families to unique forms of suffering. In this context, she said that what women are exposed to in East Jerusalem is a systematic policy of intimidation, fear, blackmail, and the possibility of losing their work due to loss of residency, which has had severe economic and social repercussions on women and their families, in addition to the policy of house demolitions, forced displacement, arrests, pursuits and exclusions whether directly or indirectly. It dealt with the Palestinian population as immigrants in their country and most dangerously forcing the women of Jerusalem to condemn their children to forced house arrest (home prison) by the occupation, knowing that some 62 families undergo the ugliest forms of violence.

Mrs. Amal Hamad also reviewed the suffering of the Palestinian people, families and women in besieged Gaza. She warned that Gaza is rapidly sliding towards an acute humanitarian crisis. With the pace of

construction slowing down, 22 thousand Palestinians are displaced and still can't return to their homes, which were destroyed during the Israeli aggression. 53 percent of the population of the Gaza Strip live below the national poverty line and more than a 1.2 million people suffer due to the lack of safe drinking water, not enough electricity to treat or pump wastewater, which led to the spread of various diseases and epidemics; furthermore, the sector witnessed new disfigured agendas because of the usage by the occupation of internationally prohibited weapons. Mrs. Amal Hamad said that a feeling of persistent insecurity, grave violations, consecutive wars, and direct targets of unarmed civilians without distinction and the continuing violations of the right to life, water, food, had huge negative consequences on their lives. The UN has described the situation in Gaza as one of the worst humanitarian crises of the modern era and that by the 2020 it will not be viable.

She then talked about violations against men and women prisoners and repression of media professionals. In this regard, she mentioned that Israel is still practicing the policy of transferring Palestinian civilian prisoners outside the occupied Palestinian territories, in violation of the Geneva Convention. There are 5050 Palestinian prisoners in the occupation prisons, among which 43 are female prisoners and 120 are children.

Mrs. Amal Hamad, continued by describing the underlying "gap" in resolution 1325. Israel still deals with the policy of transferring Palestinian civilian prisoners outside. Thus, the gap of this resolution lies in the nonresolution of Palestinian women and girls' sufferings, and existence risks and dangers, including security and peace, resulting from the reality of the oPt as a state under occupation. Accordingly, Mrs. Amal Hamad extended an invitation to the participants in the Conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region to put pressure towards a decision to address the gap in the Palestinian situation during the meeting held at the UN in 2020.

Mrs. Amal Hamad then reviewed the most prominent achievements of the oPt in relation to the implementation of the resolution 1325. Among which, the decision to establish the National Committee to resolution 1325 of 2012 with the participation and representation of governmental and civil society institutions. Consequently, Palestine became the second state in 2016 after Iraq to develop a plan in 2016. The plan was based on national and international orientations that emphasize on prevention, protection, participation, and accountability, since an integrated protection system based on the existence of a number of patriotic centres has been established with the presence of a protection

system, the police, the health and the Ministry of Social Development, in addition to the governorates and civil society institutions. It issued the Unified Procedures Manual and constitution of existing communication committees in all governorates, and all government sectors and civil society organizations involved. A specialized media network has also been established, and work is underway to follow up the implementation of this resolution and carry out voluntary report specific to resolution 1325. On the other hand, it was decided to approve an advisory committee of all units on gender in the security services under the umbrella of the Ministry of Women, that led to six percent of women reaching positions in the security forces. The Family Protection Act and the Family Protection Police were also established and work was done with the community reconciliation committees and the list goes on within the framework of national policies towards social and moral responsibility in the implementation of this resolution, which indicates the political and governmental commitment to implement it, despite the specificity of the Palestinian case.

Concerning the second generation plan, Mrs. Amal Hamad indicated that oPt is exerting utmost efforts to improve and integrate women in political life and through lessons learned and evaluation, to implement the national plan of resolution 1325 to develop the national plan for a four-year plan with the direct partnership of all local and international partners of the institutions of civil society, including the Muftah Foundation, in the framework of unifying efforts and optimal utilization of financial resources. Similarly, it is requested to establish a national observatory to monitor violations against women by the occupation and use the expertise of human rights institutions in this field, and unify the documentation forms in the model and feed the Euromed Observatories and others with the results. Data can then be used as tools to expose violations and increase accountability of perpetrators. International platforms and the use of media networks can be used to highlight these violations, while networking and linking with regional and global networks and forums to can be done to start international movements to support their causes. She stated that much remains to be done by oPt because it is a state that is monitored in the UN and remains under occupation, it was not possible for them to increase the participation of women in international institutions and peace-keeping forces and efforts to resolve the conflict; but they achieved progress to prevent and protect internally to a certain extent due to combined efforts between the government and civil society and human rights institutions.

Mrs. Amal Hamad concluded her speech by listing the following recommendations:

1. Demand that the Security Council issue a resolution completing resolution 1325 and deal with the specificity of oPt that is under occupation and that these efforts should be reflected on the twentieth anniversary of the issuance of this resolution.
2. Demand the opening of an investigation on Settlement and expedite the preliminary procedures later regarding the settlement file that was submitted to the International Criminal Court in 2018.
3. Demand accountability of crime perpetrators in international platforms and the provision of high protection and prevention services according to social justice and equity principles.
4. Endeavour to find clear mechanisms for Palestinian women to hold positions in various UN and international committees and bodies, in particular in international peace and security.
5. Demand the establishment of a funding pool in the administration of the National Committee to recruit the financial and human resources necessary to implement the second generation of the plan, with a view to unifying Palestinian efforts and the ability to measure the required impact.
6. Enhance networking and linking networks with regional and global networks and forums, and the creation of an Arab network to advocate, sustain and unify Arab efforts to support the Palestinian woman in regional and international forums and hold the occupation accountable for its crimes against Palestinian women.
7. Demand the issuance of a resolution condemning the statement of the US Secretary of State that legitimizes settlements and legitimizes war crimes in a clear breach of the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and a flagrant violation of the international moral order.

## Conference Sessions

After the opening session, the Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region resumed in the form of dialogue sessions. During the first session, the vital role of the woman in building peace and mediation during the political transition and conflict stage was determined to define post-conflict priorities. During the second session, gender integration in the post-conflict stage was addressed: building the state and

providing services and basic commodities in the post-conflict stage. During the third session, integrating the gender perspective, relief, recovery and reconstruction was discussed. As for the fourth session, the topic of regional mechanisms and tools to strengthen the role of women in the conflict and post-conflict was addressed. The following pages of the report include a summary of the most important discussions that took place during the sessions.

## First Session: The vital role of women in building peace and mediation during the political transition and conflict stage to determine priorities of the post-conflict phase.

H.E. Dr. Maya Morsi, Chairperson of the National Council of the Woman in Egypt, facilitated this session.

The members of the panel discussion in this session are:

Dr. Khawla Matar, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Syria.

Mrs. Counselor Naima Jibril, Member of the Libyan Political Dialogue to the UN Mission.

H.E. Ambassador Birgitta Holst Alani, Member of the Nordic Women Mediators Network and Consultant to the Women's Consultative Council of the UN Secretary-General's envoy to Syria.

The main discussion points that were discussed by the three speakers were:

- The reality of women's participation in local and national mediation and peace building in the Arab region for the past decade, whether the participation was official, societal, or representative of a civil society institution.
- Challenges of women participation in the UN-led peace negotiation process and the commitment to Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security: gaps, challenges and lessons learned.
- Response of the forces involved in conflict, violence, and disputes between women's mediation and peace-building initiatives.
- Obstacles that hinder women's participation in mediation and peace building.

While addressing the topic of women's vital roles in building peace and mediation during the political transition and conflict stage and to determine the priorities of the post-conflict phase, the focus was

specifically on the dimension related to women's participation in peace negotiations and political dialogues in Libya and Syria: gaps, challenges and lessons learned.

Mrs. Maya Morsi started the session by providing a brief summary and sharing relevant figures of the general context between 1992-2011. She mentioned that the ratio of women as negotiators in peacekeeping operations reached 9 percent, which is a small percentage with regards to the issue at hand. Since the adoption of resolution 1325, 27 percent of peace agreements referred to women, and out of six agreements issued from peace negotiations or national dialogue operations, 67 percent included references related to women, peace and security. Moreover, the Arab region witnessed about 18 percent of conflicts and armed conflicts during the period (1940-2014).

Mrs. Maya Morsi continued questioning Mrs. Khawla Matar about the reality of women's participation in local and Arab mediation. She also enquired about the challenges of women's participation in peace negotiation processes. Mrs. Khawla Matar replied that the traditional stereotype of women and her knowledge relating to lack of political female role are two of the most important challenges facing women. Moreover, despite the fact that women are the victims of armed conflict, they are also most capable of rebuilding their societies in post-conflict stage, due to several reasons, including the patience and ability of women in listening to others and fathoming the situation. For example, in the Syrian model, for the first time, civil society organizations were included in solving the political

crisis, the common pain of women also contributed to unifying dialogue and lessening accusations among the different parties. Considering the large number of men on the battle front, Syrian women found that they had exercised a greater role than before, which can be summarized in a gathering society, healing all its wounds and addressing all forms of violence.

Mrs. Maya Morsi then asked Mrs. Naima Jibril about the experience of Libyan women in the different stages of peace negotiations and political dialogue, the obstacles they faced, and their future vision. Mrs. Naima Jibril confirmed through her presentation that the participation of women in the official Libyan political dialogue is an effective and distinctive participation, but it is the first and unique of its kind in the world and is similar to the participation of Mrs. Hanan Ashrawi in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Mrs. Naima Jibril dealt with the legal framework through the following points: The UN Mission and its commitment to resolution 1325, strengthening the participation of women in the political process, resolution 2040 (2012) and providing advice and support of the Libyan efforts, and support of the civil society women institutions.

Mrs. Naima Jibril further explained that the dialogue mechanism was divided into three paths, namely the political Libyan dialogue with the participation of two women, the unofficial path with the participation of 40 women from all specialities, and the permanent original political dialogue of parties with the participation of three women. There was no participation of women in the municipalities path. A political agreement had emerged from the Woman Empowerment Unit, a technical unit that specializes in the formulation of public policies, especially since the previous three constitutions had refused to establish a national council for women. A pressure group also emerged demanding the right of women to participate in public politics as an inherent constitutional right and that women be represented in government by 30 percent, since she was an original partner in the resolution and settlement of conflicts. and this finally resulted from the Libyan forum for peace in which 70 women had participated in the "Libya Campaign for Peace" and which included special committees in every region for the purpose of unifying efforts.

Mrs. Naima Jibril explained that, given the analysis of the achievements, women succeeded in many reconciliations, especially in the south with reunifying clans, in addition to submitting their demands at the negotiating table from the beginning. As for the nature of the challenges faced by women, they were limited to societal perception, the dominance of the male society, the comprehensive mindset, the absence of political will, weak political awareness, the fragility of parties, the lack of political experience for women, the growth of

obscurantist thought, and the women activists' political exposure to assassination and kidnapping.

With regard to the participation of women in peace making, the struggles for power and violence included the absence of a unified mechanism that articulates the vision and goals of women, the lack of consideration to the participation of women as a priority, the question of the women's ability in peace building, the absence of a unified and strong women network, the non-acceptance of dialogue parties to let women join in and the non-prioritization of women issues on the agenda, the reflection of the political division on the status of women and the division of women's political actors around the key issues, and the absence of the majority of the members who were chosen for their dialogue and negotiation skills in order to settle the dispute.

However, challenges pertaining to the extent of the commitment of the UN Mission to resolutions of the UN and the Security Council were represented in the absence of a national council of women that is concerned with the nomination of members for dialogue in a formal or informal path, and the its failure to observe transparency conditions in the selection of memberships, restriction of the peace building mission perspective in time and according to its programme, to post armed conflict arrangements. Mrs. Naima Jibril stated that the peace building process did not form a link between the basic and super structures in conflicts and the creation of peace matrix in the different stages and levels of conflicts. She also highlighted the limited number of members at the negotiating table in the official path. She criticized the focus on formal political dialogue without focusing on the path of women and their role in local communities.

Mrs. Maya Morsi questioned Mrs. Birgitta Holst Alani about the most important challenges facing Syrian women. Mrs. Birgitta Holst Alani indicated that through her work with Mr. De Mistura, the former Secretary-General's special envoy to Syria, and during the Geneva talks that took place in 2016, an advisory council for the Syrian Women was established, which had included 12 Syrian women as representatives of the civil society. They had come from different regions and backgrounds, and their role was not limited to the study of issues related to women, but rather to the integration of a gender perspective in all other major political issues. She also emphasized the importance of the role of women in the pre-peace agreement stage and not only in the stage of writing the constitution.

Mrs. Maya Morsi also questioned Mrs. Khawla Matar about the UN's move and the percentage of women attending peace negotiations in particular, as no

woman has served as special envoy to any peace negotiations from the UN. She sought clarification as to whether the UN was aware of the situation. Mrs. Khawla Matar indicated that women's representation in the Constitutional Committee reached 30 percent despite the quality of the various representation, but all participants concluded that the representation remained restricted to the elite group. Participating women were also able to integrate the gender perspective in all points of the constitution, which is specifically intended to cover the specific needs of women in the constitution. She emphasized that the UN is witnessing an internal conflict and needs more time to raise the issue of women. She recommended that there will be no realistic political solutions unless women are involved, changing the world's view of Arab women, changing the outlook and strengthening their historical role.

Mrs. Maya Morsi enquired about the essence of the division of groups leading women's work in Libya and whether the division is due to the difference of visions or for the purpose of appearing in the forums. In response, Mrs. Naima Jibril explained that the division was in the political structure i.e. a tribal territorial and extended to all government agencies. The division is not in the general demands, but remains in the dialogue until a peace agreement is reached.

Mrs. Maya Morsi then directed a question to Mrs. Brigitta Holst Alani about the mediation challenges in the Syrian case. Mrs. Brigitta Holst Alani confirmed that some members of the Consultative Council of Syrian Women were deported to Geneva and were not allowed to return once again to Syria, in addition to the refusal to hold meetings with network representatives. Besides stressing the importance of the role of women in society, it was also necessary to emphasize the importance of her role in the peacekeeping process.

Mrs. Maya Morsi asked Mrs. Khawla Matar about the message that can be addressed to women in any peace negotiations and how the role can be emphasized. In response, Mrs. Khawla Matar explained that women should have confidence in themselves because the war was against women, and that during war, their role was reduced, unlike men. Women must maintain and defend their views. Mrs. Naima Jibril stressed that women should understand that they are at the negotiating table to negotiate and not just to discuss issues on the table. That is, they have to work on two tracks together. The first track consists of raising their special demands; whereas the other track lies in decision-making at the negotiating table. Women are keener than men for peace, maintaining peace and preserving the nation, while men have tribal, clannish, and political interests. Mrs. Brigitta Holst Alani

insisted that women should ensure that their efforts be more transparent and distinct, any society has the right to know what is going on during negotiations. Light must be shed, and a strong focus must be stressed on, how to communicate and reach out to all citizens. In conclusion, Mrs. Maya Morsi stressed the importance of hearing the voice of women in negotiations, and that any negotiations or any, democratic transition must be led out by nationals, referring to citizens.

The most prominent recommendations of the first session: The vital role of women in building peace and mediation during the political transition and conflict stage to determine the priorities of the post-conflict phase:

- The necessity to make society realize that the role of women is important and vital in the pre-establishment stage of peace agreements, and its importance is not limited to the stage of writing the constitution.
- Women must have self-confidence, self-control and balance during the conflict stage, because women come to the top of the list of targeted parties during conflicts and the harms they cause are more harmful than others. The targeting of women includes two types ; the first aims at them personally and the second at their public roles. Women should continue to show these during the post-conflict phase.
- Women must simultaneously combine the claiming of their own demands with decision-making at the negotiating table.
- Women must ensure that their efforts are more transparent and that all components of society and the state examine these efforts. There must be a strong focus on how to communicate with and reach out to all segments of the society.
- All efforts must be exerted to ensure that women participate in negotiations, that they fully participate and that their voices are heard on all issues. Nationals, i.e. the country's citizens and owners, are the ones who carry out any negotiations and any democratic transformations; this means that they must achieve national ownership



## Second Session: Integrating gender in the post-conflict phase: building the state and providing basic services and commodities in the post-conflict phase.

H.E. Mr. Jan-Thesleff, Ambassador of Sweden to Egypt facilitated this session.

The members of the panel discussion in this session are:

- Mrs. Dina Douay, Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States
- H.E. Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, former Minister of Social Development, Jordan
- Mrs. Samah Marmash, Executive Director of the Women's Legal Network
- Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa, Head of the Alliance of Arab Women Parliamentarians

### **Speech of the session's facilitator, H.E. Mr. Jan Thesleff, Ambassador of Sweden to Egypt**

Mr. Jan Thesleff addressed the topic of the Conference: Strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region very briefly and concisely reviewed the policies pursued by Sweden in terms of strengthening the roles of women. He stressed the importance of the conference and the integration of women in the post-conflict phase. He also praised Sweden for its leadership in achieving gender equality. He emphasized the importance of men's participation in conferences and sessions that discuss issues related to the rights of women. He also referred to the Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, security and peace, which dealt with multiple intersects on participation, prevention, and reconstruction. He further insisted on the importance of women's participation in building states and peace-making.

### **Presentation of Mrs. Dina Douay - Director of Women, Family and Childhood Department in the Social Affairs Sector at the League of Arab States: Role of the Emergency Committee for Women's Protection during Armed Conflict Periods**

Mrs. Dina Douay presented on the topic of the role of the Emergency Committee for women's protection during armed conflict periods. During her presentation, Mrs. Dina Douay answered the question as to whether there are sufficient regional implementation mechanisms to monitor violations of the rights of women and girls in the region. Ms. Douay also addressed policies to protect the most vulnerable groups, such as girls, displaced

women, and refugees. After which she tackled the topic of mechanisms for investigating social and she reviewed the role of the Emergency Committee to protect women during armed conflicts in the Arab region, what goals they have achieved, what challenges they face, whether they meet a response from the states, how they manage to get funds, and if there is a way to cooperate with international organizations in this respect.

Mrs. Dina Douay continued her presentation and brought to the fore that women bear greater burdens during conflicts and instability. She revealed that in light of the Israeli occupation and the increase in refugee and displacement waves in the Arab region, women bear the greater burdens in terms of challenges, as they are exposed to various forms of violence, whether physical or psychological. Preventive measures must be taken to protect women and girls from all forms of violence and to give it priority. Mrs. Dina Douay also noted the efforts of the Arab League in relation to issues related to protecting and empowering the Arab woman at various levels. She highlighted the reliance of the Arab League on the ministerial level in its regional strategy session (144) and plan of action on "Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace." She made it clear that the strategy and action plan represented together a comprehensive framework for the protection of women in times of peace and war.

In her presentation on the emergency committee, Mrs. Dina Douay said that the Arab women's committee has taken a recommendation to form an emergency committee that meets whenever the conflict worsens, in order to consider how to deal with these events. Members of the committee are from the Member States of the Arab League. The functions of the Emergency Committee include (1) provide advice and recommendation and a document of what women and girls are subjected to in emergency situations, (2) issue data and analyse the situation, (3) set recommendations regarding urgent needs during armed conflicts (4) facilitate research on the protection of women during armed conflicts. The emergency committee shall submit its recommendations to the technical secretariat of the committee for women (Women, Family and Childhood Department). The committee developed a concept for specific activities, and it was generalized on Member States to formulate for approval and adoption.

## **Presentation of H.E. Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, former Minister of Social Development of Jordan: Women, security and peace agenda and integrating a gender perspective when planning the provision of essential services**

Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, carried out her presentation on the women, security and peace agenda and integrating a gender perspective when planning the provision of essential services. During this presentation, Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan focused on several intersects that include the extent of the success of the Arab countries on integrating a gender perspective when planning the provision of services and ensuring access to basic services for women and girls during and after the conflict, in addition to gaps and best practices in this regard. Another axis she tackled was the extent of success in Arab countries in reaching marginalized population groups such as women immigrants and refugees, and women in humanitarian situations. Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan also focused on the priorities for reforming social protection programmes in the Arab region. Finally, Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan revealed the extent of success in providing low-cost legal services for women who live in poverty and the most prominent obstacles, especially in times of conflict and post-conflict.

Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan presented a set of statistics of substantial significance in relation to asylum in the world, and sought to reconsider the definition of the term 'refugee'. In this context, she indicated that 80 percent of the world's refugees were forced to flee their countries and are now in developing countries. She also mentioned that there has been an evolution in the quality of refugees, which necessitates the redefinition of the refugee contained in the Refugee Status Convention of 1951.

She continued talking about Jordan and the issue of refugees. In this regard, she mentioned that Jordan is one of the major host countries for refugees and counts 58 nationalities among refugees. One third of the Jordanian population are refugees and displaced persons, in addition to Palestinian refugees. There are also 700,000 Syrian refugees registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Jordan. She added that the biggest burden of the Syrian refugee crisis is borne by Jordan. At the same time, resources are limited. Moreover, the UN support provided to Jordan to contain the refugee crisis is minimal and does not commensurate with the size of the burdens. Furthermore, Jordan only received 6.9 percent of the total funding value that it was supposed to receive from the international community. Nevertheless, Jordan has provided basic services to Syrian refugees, including

educational services. In fact, in light of the Syrian crisis, Jordan was confronted with high birth rates. In this context,

Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan asked what other countries had offered to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis, with the exception of Lebanon, which also hosts a large number of Syrian refugees. In answering the question, she stressed that it is extremely necessary to share responsibility and provide various forms of support, not just financial support.

Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan went on to deal with some conceptual and practical issues related to women, peace and security. She said that when talking about Security Council resolution 1325 concerning women, security and peace, women were considered as a victim and not as an active party. She said that this is a mistake. She also said that it is very important to raise the participation rate of women in the field, and in doing so, women must have a leadership role in the process of building and making peace. It is equally important that women have a leadership role in implementing resolution 1325, since they were the first concerned by this issue.

## **Presentation of Mrs. Samah Marmash, Executive Director of the Women's Legal Network: Reforming the legal structure on gender in post-conflict: challenges and lessons learned**

Mrs. Samah Marmash addressed more than one axis. She dealt with the post-conflict, gender-sensitive legislative reform component, and the steps to be taken towards reforming the legislative structure, including the integration of a gender perspective. She also examined the axis of the potential benefits from the constitutional transition and the constitutional amendment that has taken place in a number of Arab countries in the constitution of protecting women from sexual violations related to armed conflict and impunity, and more political representation in decision-making.

Mrs. Samah Marmash started her presentation with a demonstration of a centralization of the role of women, whether in conflict or post-conflict stages. She said that wherever there is a conflict, women must have a primary role in reaching a solution. Mrs. Samah Marmash also affirmed that women should have an important and effective role in developing plans during the post-conflict stage, including during the stage of implementing transitional justice.

Mrs. Samah Marmash highlighted on women's access to completed justice during and after the conflicts. Mrs. Samah Marmash underlined the necessity of paying attention to linking the right to reparation and ensuring

that it is not repeated, and on women's access to justice. She also said that achieving justice requires focus on a number of intersects: (1) A national criminal trial. (2) Searching for the truth and studying it (amending or drafting new laws) in order to reach best trials. (3) Reparation of damage: rehabilitation, reintegration and integration into society; and to consider women as survivors and not victims. (4) Training government representatives whether in monitoring, providing services, legislation or the judiciary (gender awareness). She mentioned that some Arab countries allow a rapist to marry the victim and thus avoid any form of punishment. In some cases, a woman that was subject to rape refuses, but her family puts pressure on her. (5) Spreading awareness on the importance of these measures.

After that, Mrs Marmash shed some light on the experience of the Women's Legal Network in Syria the previous year. She mentioned that in the Women's Lawyers Conference, women lawyers who had participated, affirmed that it is necessary to have a sufficient number of women lawyers who knew how to formulate laws in a way that satisfy their needs. In this regard, Mrs. Samah Marmash stressed that it is important to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in providing free legal services to inform women of the procedures that must be taken in order to reach protection and rehabilitation and give them legal information to reach solutions.

Mrs. Samah Marmash then focused on the issue of legislative reform. Mrs. Samah Marmash highlighted the importance of taking a gender perspective into consideration and that this has an important role in the actions of legislative reform. According to her, there is an urgent need to have laws stipulate that all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of race or gender. She gave the example of countries that integrated a gender perspective, Tunisia for instance, where the law of equity in the judicial, legislative and executive branches, had a clear impact on the laws issued against women and family violence. This confirms the importance of women's representation in various fields in general, and in the legislative field in particular.

### **Presentation of Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa, Head of the Alliance of Arab Women Parliamentarians: Combatting violence against women, protection mechanisms, shelter centres in the Arab world, best practices, challenges and gaps**

Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa presented a presentation on combating violence against women, protection mechanisms, shelter centres in the Arab world, best

practices, challenges and gaps. The presentation examined the axis of the comprehensiveness of policies to address violence against women in the Arab region, and the extent of the complementarity of legislation and laws for combating violence against women in the Arab region. The second theme in the presentation was reflection of the policies to address violence against women, on women and girls in the Arab region. Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa also discussed the priority measures adopted by some countries in the Arab region to tackle issues of violence against women and girls and their feasibility, and whether the Arab countries addressed the phenomenon of marriage of minors, early marriage, forced marriage domestic violence including sexual violence, rape within the context of marriage, and what are the parameters for addressing violence against women in politics. In addition, the presentation discussed the feasibility of a regional Arab strategy, to put an end to violence against women, its achievements and existing gaps.

Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa started her presentation with a central statement on women's role, whether in conflicts or post-conflict stages, and the importance of marking achievements. Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa said that the Arab region faces multiple and varied challenges, and that it was important for women in the region to maintain the gains they have obtained and to benefit from the successes they have achieved. For example, the Arab strategy on "Protecting the Arab Woman: Security and Peace" reflects an important achievement on the regional and global levels. Likewise, the constitutional amendments in Egypt regarding confronting violence against women are a further achievement. She added that Jordan has witnessed many developments that contributed to making the protection of women from violence a matter that can be implemented through prevention by focusing on education and awareness of society, and equipping it and providing the necessary tools for that.

Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa then tackled issue of law between theory and practice. In this regard, she indicated that it is extremely important to equip the state from a legal standpoint and that the legal text is enforceable. Then she asked a question: in the Arab region we may have accomplished achievements in issuing laws, but are there financial resources that allow the application of these laws? Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa said that the Alliance of Arab Women Parliamentarians took the initiative to demonstrate the importance of an Arab agreement to combat violence against women and girls, and to demonstrate that an international agreement that addresses violence is not available. In the Arab region, a draft Arab convention to combat violence against women is in the making, taking into account the specificity of the Arab region and dealing

with the protection of women in times of peace and times of conflict.

Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa then shed light on certain images showing the suffering of women in the region and revealing the need to special attention. Women in the area are identified as refugee women and women under occupation need legal protection. She added that there is no peace based on ignoring the

women who have lost their homes, their families and all the necessities of life. Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa also talked about early marriage, stating that the rates of early marriage rose in light of conflicts, wars and conditions of instability. In this regard, Mrs. Wafa bani Mustafa summoned that Jordan has decided to adopt exceptions for the marriage of girls under the age of 18, and whose husbands should not be married to another woman, and not to interrupt their studies.

## Public debate after speakers' presentations

The speakers then drew out a number of necessary steps to enhance the roles of women and empower them during the post-conflict phase. Speakers considered that there is also a need to support the emergency committee. As for issuing laws, it should be carried out through consultation with women organizations. There is also a need for consolidating the relation between resolution 1325 and transitional justice.

Furthermore, the issue of societal awareness, and perceiving the social components on the importance of the role of women have attracted the attention of speakers. Society must be aware that integrating women in leadership positions and decision-making positions is necessary and beneficial. The media must play an effective role in enhancing women's role and status. It is also necessary to emphasize on education, culture and the creation of societies to empower women and girls; Agenda 2030 also stressed on good education and the quality of education. Also, it is necessary to focus on the concept of human rights in educational curricula, and to concentrate general awareness on rightful culture. Overall, women must be empowered and have a clear path to reach political leadership positions. At the same time, a woman must impose herself because she will help overcome the difficult stages. Without women, countries will not be able to achieve development, progress and economic well-being. The idea that women have equal rights with men and that every woman has rights as well as responsibility must be established. In order to ensure a real equality for women, the laws must reflect what is happening at home and in the workplace, so that these laws are issued in response to women's needs. Reform has to come from within. The state is responsible of confronting violence against women. Furthermore, it is necessary to raise children who reject violence and do not accept it.

Civil society must assume its responsibilities in enhancing the role of women, and to be an effective and influential actor. In this regard, there is an imperative

need to enhance cooperation between governments and civil society organizations in the region. Civil society is a cornerstone of the development process.

### Findings of the second session on gender integration in post-conflict stages: prevention.

1. Urge Member States of the Arab League to support and activate the emergency committee.
2. Focus on the importance of education, awareness and building societal gender-sensitive societal culture and civil peace.
3. Urge countries to ensure fair representation of women in political sectors, parties, unions and the judiciary, provided that representation is not less than 30 percent.
4. The importance of increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions and decision-making positions, which benefits them and all members of society.
5. Activate Security Council resolution 1325 specific to women, security and peace; and work to support countries in adopting their national plans to activate it, integrate women in leadership, field work, in the security and military sectors, raise their representation effectively, and raise their representation rate from 3 percent to 6-10 percent so they will have more roles in armed forces.
6. Support and endorse the Arab Convention for the elimination of violence against women by Member States and put them into practice, especially with regard to impunity.
7. Activate the mechanisms of early intervention and anticipate the outbreak of conflict, especially in the countries that are likely to develop towards armed conflicts.
8. The importance of burden sharing and providing all forms of support to the host country for large numbers of refugees and displaced persons.
9. Emphasize the importance of empowering women in various areas.

## Third Session: Integrating gender in relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts

H.E. Mrs. Reem Abu Hassan, former Minister of Social Development of Jordan facilitated the session.

The discussion board members for this session are:

H.E. Mrs. Marina Varela, Head of the Political Department of the EU Mission to Egypt

H.E. Mrs. Shivan Simujuki, Member of the International Organization for Migration

H.E. Mr. Raidan Al-Saqqaf, Social Affairs Officer at the Center for Women in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

H.E. Mrs. Anna Sawaf, Project Manager, UN Human Settlements in Iraq

H.E. Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi, Expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building

H.E. Mr. Moez Doraid, Acting Regional Director of the UN Women

Mrs. Marina Varela gave a presentation on the topic of integrating a gender perspective into relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts and linking the theory with actual implementation. The points she discussed included bridging the gap between theory and practice. She also tackled the extent to which relief and humanitarian assistance programmes deal with the elements of multidimensional poverty and critical poverty. Finally, Mrs. Marina Varela discussed whether there are good practices for reducing dependence on relief assistance strategies to achieve sustainable development for beneficiaries.

Mrs. Shivan Simujuki gave a presentation on the topic of considerations in planning and implementing compensation to survivors of sexual abuse related to conflicts in Iraq. Among the points discussed were the efforts made in the Arab region in terms of providing compensation to survivors of sexual violence related to the conflict. Opportunities, challenges, and gaps related to providing compensation to those subjected to conflict-related sexual violence were also discussed as part of their right to reach an effective prompt remedy.

Finally, and more importantly, Mrs. Shivan Simujuki dealt with how to develop compensation at the level of design, implementation and impact so that compensation becomes a transformational effect.

Mr. Raidan Al-Saqqaf discussed how to localize the gender-sensitive humanitarian aid programme. He also examined the role of civil society in relief programming that takes into account gender differences in the Arab region. Mr. Raidan Al-Saqqaf also tackled the most important challenges in this regard and the

achievements of humanitarian aid in the Arab region.

Mrs. Anna Sawaf presentation focused on the topic of integrating the social perspective in the infrastructure during post-conflict period: the challenges of reconstruction in Mosul and other cities. She addressed the role of the woman in the reconstruction programme including exploring how to design gender-sensitive programming. Mrs. Anna Sawaf addressed challenges and most important good practices.

Mr. Moez Doraid presentation addressed the role of UN Women in supporting the implementation of resolution 1325 in the Arab region and its relationship to security reform, collection of weapons, dismantling of battalions, and rehabilitation of militants. The points that were discussed included the integration of a gender perspective in the security reform process, the collection of weapons, and the dismantling of battalions and rehabilitation of the militants. He also reviewed the topic of the special needs and priorities of both women and men and girls with regard to security. Also, Mr. Moez Doraid discussed the issue of whether security policies and measures are based on the approach to gender integration in the Arab region. He also reviewed the most important challenges in this regard and best practices in the Arab region. Finally, Mr. Moez Doraid covered the existence of programmes dealing with issues of conflict-related violence, such as disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation from a social perspective, and relevant best practices in the Arab region and challenges.

### **Presentation of Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi, Expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building: A gender sensitive approach to preventing violent extremism: policy priorities and returns**

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi's presentation was entitled "A gender sensitive approach to preventing violent extremism: policy priorities and returns, comprises of a set of themes. The first theme of the presentation relates to the importance of gender in countering and preventing violent extremism. The second theme was on the basic steps to integrate a gender perspective in tackling the issue of violent extremism and terrorism. The third theme is the prospect of regional coordination and cooperation in the Arab region with regard to integrating a gender perspective in preventing and combating violent extremism.

At the outset of the presentation, Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi stated that we have to realize that violent extremism is a complex phenomenon that has considerably widespread. Considering the complexity of the problem, a growing awareness has arisen specifying that preventing violent extremism requires a multidisciplinary approach that focuses on perceiving the multiplicity of stakeholders to address the basic conditions that lead to individuals becoming extremists and understanding the gender dynamics involved. She added that the development of the violent extremism phenomenon requires coordinated efforts to confront it. Hence, confronting violent extremism and terrorism must not be limited to focusing on repressive measures. Rather, it must also include addressing issues of development, good governance and marginalization.

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi also said that terrorism and violent extremism are considered to be highly influenced by gender differences. Organizations of terrorism and violent extremism exploit gender stereotypes that cause gender inequality in the first place. She continued that terrorism and violent extremism fields, as well as efforts to counter their threat, are still considered a male domain; in spite of evidence indicating that women and girls are directly affected by these phenomena. Therefore, if you ignore programmes to combat violent extremism, prevention, a gender perspective, and violent extremist organizations' exploitation of gender stereotypes, this will weaken the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes.

After that, Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi discussed the huge impact of violent extremism and terrorism in the Arab region in particular. She said that in the past few decades, the Arab region has witnessed waves of violent extremism and terrorism. However, since the transformations which began in 2011, the human cost and the devastation caused by violent extremism have become more tangible and tangible throughout the region. In 2016, the Arab region ranked first in terms of number of attacks and deaths perpetrated by terrorist organizations and violent extremism. In 2016 which is considered the bloodiest year, more than 9132 individuals were killed or died, most of them in Iraq by ISIS.

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi explained that the first effect of a wave of extremism and terrorism in the situation of women was the practice of an intentional brutal exclusion against them in the public and private spheres and the practice of unprecedented moral and material violence against them. Such exclusions had great impact, and cannot be compared to those affecting men. Examples are clear and evident throughout the Arab region. In Syria and Iraq, thousands of Yezidi women were subjected to sexual slavery by ISIS. In

April 2016, the Islamic State reportedly executed at least 250 people, including girls and women, in Mosul, for refusing to marry ISIS fighters.

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi continued that while women were victims of violent extremism and terrorism as mentioned above, on the other side, other women appeared as "actors" in the field of violent extremism and terrorism. Organizations of violent extremism and terrorism have been able to recruit dozens of women and men from Tunisia, Algeria and Libya to join ISIS. While most of the contributions of women in organizations of violent extremism and terrorism in the field of social upbringing and entrenching extremism are focused on the awareness of new generations within the context of the family, today they are used as terrorist elements, in the full sense of the word, and by sharing in the recruiting, collecting funds and disseminating theses of violent extremism.

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi added that it is the result of violent conflicts throughout the Arab region with the destruction of cities, violations of human rights and the displacement of millions, that have made the challenges facing countries and societies greater than ever before. The most important of these challenges is to raise the awareness of the people associated with violent extremist groups from the seeds of extremism, their disengagement from those organizations, and their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In this regard, Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi said that we must recall that the situation of women and children in particular opens the door to major challenges and countries currently are not prepared to confront. The second key challenge tackling the reverse flow of foreign fighters from Syria and Iraq to other countries in the region, dominated the discussions of policy makers at the local and international levels as well as at the regional level. According to estimations, the number of foreigners who joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria has reached approximately 41490 individuals, among which 4761 women, i.e. about 13 percent. In Iraq and Syria, some 256 of them only returned to their countries of origin. The fate and numbers of these women returning from violent extremist groups are still unknown. According to the Ministry of Women and Children in Tunisia, about 200 children and 100 women were detained abroad without charges and they are from ISIS families, for a period of up to two years, most of them in Syria and the vicinity of Libya, and some of them in Iraq.

Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi then declared that there is an increasing recognition by Arab governments of the need to take long-term, preventive measures and an integrated, comprehensive approach based on integrating a gender perspective, and that there are major steps that should be taken in this path. One of

these steps is the participation of women in policies and programmatic interventions to prevent violent extremism. A second step is to foster synergies between the agenda of combating violent extremism and the agenda for prevention of violent extremism and the agenda of women, peace and security. National plans to implement the agenda of the woman, peace and security should be used as a starting point to enhance the integration of a gender perspective into the agenda of prevention against violent extremism. She said that good practices should be utilized in the Arab world to take into account gender differences in relation to combating terrorism, combating violent extremism and preventing violent extremism. In this regard, we can benefit from the experience of Algeria, Morocco and Lebanon. Also, good practices should be utilized in the Arab world to promote harmony and synergy between the agenda of combating violent extremism and the agenda of preventing violent extremism on the one hand and the agenda of women, peace and security in the other hand. In this regard, it is worth benefiting from the experience of Tunisia and Jordan.

At the end of her speech, Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi referred to a series of recommendations. She said that there is a need to raise awareness and to address the underlying conditions leading to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism and the need to highlight that these two phenomena are characterized by a high degree of gender discrimination and are exploiting gender stereotypes. Furthermore, the scope of research on the role of women in preventive strategies related to how to provide early warning should be expanded systematically, and to help isolate past extremism from extremists and hinder the recruitment of new arrivals. Similarly, harmony and synergy on the agenda of women, peace and security and the prevention of violent extremism agenda should be strengthened. This can be achieved through exploring shared priorities, tools and strategies. It is also necessary to strengthen participation of local religious organizations in building resilience and reducing the threat of violent extremism in local communities by building alternative stories of violent extremism.

Moreover, women must be involved in security sectors, in designing, monitoring, and evaluating anti-terrorism policy, the policy of preventing violent extremism, and programmatic interventions. Besides, there is an urgent need to provide a platform for discussion and coordination among Member States in the Arab region across many stakeholders: relevant ministries, national women institutions, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, media, human rights national institutions. Religious leaders to guarantee a comprehensive, integrated and gender-sensitive approach towards the prevention of violent extremism. Finally, there is

a need to share lessons learned and challenges on various topics related to the importance of human rights, gender equality, the participation of women and youth, rehabilitation and reintegration in tackling violent extremism. There is also a need to adopt best practices and innovative gender-sensitive approaches in developing national strategies, experiences and tools to prevent violent extremism effectively.

## **Summary of the discussion that took place after the speeches and presentations**

During the discussion that followed the speeches and presentations of the third session, the speakers identified a number of lessons learned. Speakers mentioned that one of these lessons is that gender indicators are absolutely necessary. Accordingly, gender and age considerations must be integrated by using the relevant tools. There should also be a link, stability and consistency between the nature and size of the assistance and the development agenda and its priorities; as well as the causes and origins that lead to the existence of these problems. Any solutions proposed must be first of all sustainable. Speakers also focused mainly on flexibility/suppleness as a personal and community tool. The speakers advised that when implementing the projects, it is also advisable to start launching the project in an experimental manner to fully demonstrate its feasibility, provided that the implementation of this project expansion is followed by the results of the experiment. As for the concept of fragility, there is a need to realize that women are an integral part of the solution. In the event that women do not initiate real initiatives, and without action, things will worsen, and negative consequences will follow.

Speakers talked about the phenomenon of sexual violence in Iraq during conflict periods, especially after the rise of ISIS. Speakers have alluded to the importance of working with the Iraqi government to counter this phenomenon. They also highlighted the role of compensation, frameworks and mechanisms for reparation during the transitional periods. Finally, they called for an urgent need to formulate appropriate and rapid treatments.

Speakers addressed the issue pertaining to the need of building effective bridges, linking theory to practice. In this regard, the speakers stated that it must be recognized that while women are exposed to hazards and risks, they are often not part of the solution and in fact are kept excluded. Speakers also stated that the application of shared experiences in other countries has major challenges and difficulties. Speakers also recalled the importance of equality and unification of policies towards men and women, and the formulation of unified programmes that target the two genders

equally.

Speakers then moved on to discuss the impact of conflict in the situation of women in light of comparing this impact to the impact of conflict in the situation of men. In this context, the speakers said that the general crises are not gender-neutral in terms of its impact on both genders. Women are more vulnerable to the negative effects of crises than men. Accordingly, we must not only take care of confronting crises immediately, but rather consider the differences between each of the immediate effects of both sexes on the repercussions of crises. For example, there is a need to take into account the differences between the two genders on sharing prepared food packages for women to carry easily to reach home. Such simple procedures have very strong impacts.

The speakers then diagnosed the extent of integrating a gender perspective and the gender-specific considerations in the actual policies in the Arab region, and they highlighted some statistics with serious implications. Speakers noted that in countries such as Yemen, Iraq, oPt, and Syria, there are confrontations with crises and accusations without incorporating a gender perspective. Furthermore, the speakers mentioned that between 2 to 20 percent only of aid plans are based on age and gender considerations, while 80 percent do not. 44 percent among these 20 percent of aid include mechanisms to deal with sexual violence, whereas the remaining 66 percent lack those mechanisms. This gap has negative effects on the lives of millions of individuals. 56 percent of the 44 percent of aid focuses on consulting and talking to affected persons. Therefore, the urgent question is how to verify that the aid is actually directed to those who are entitled to it. This is a major challenge. We must rely on institutional frameworks and take into account the specific contexts of each country.

The speakers added that the emergency crisis committee may be useful in dealing with challenges.

Finally, speakers noted that most of the exerted efforts are in fact carried out by volunteers. These volunteers face problems that are represented by the limited margin available to them and the limited capabilities and abilities available to meet all challenges.

In conclusion, speakers addressed the need for the infrastructure to be gender sensitive. In this regard, the speakers stated that all donors should put foremost among their priorities, helping people to return to their homes and repair homes damaged or destroyed during the conflict. Speakers also discussed that the donor authorities must contribute to providing livelihoods due to the absence of employment opportunities in both public and private sectors. In this context, the

infrastructure investment plan must be comprehensive and seek equality. The role of data on gender and gender-sensitive issues must be used. We should also take advantage of community consultations.

Recommendations of the third session: integrating gender in relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts

- Increase awareness and the role of women in the transitional stages.
- Search for solutions and build capacities according to the situations of each country separately.
- Participate in discussions that listen to all those affected in order to better learn about the various needs.
- Endeavour to achieve the peaceful dimension in the post-conflict, and not only during conflicts.
- Endeavour to hold perpetrators accountable.
- Design and implement rehabilitation and repair programmes that are appropriate to the needs of the affected and the survivors.
- Design qualification programmes that respond to short-term and long-term problems.
- Identify and measure the gender gap, use and promote this knowledge and tools that enable monitoring of progress made in the peace and security agenda.
- Adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach that is not only limited to the security approach.
- Approve on issues related to enrolling women in security.
- Create a regional platform for the Arab region dealing with the best practices and experiences in supporting women in security reform and counterterrorism and violent extremism strategies.
- Enhance the role of women in renewing religious discourse.
- Integrate women in the infrastructure construction process.
- Conduct gender-based analysis to respond to demands in affected communities and take into consideration age and gender of the vulnerable.
- Importance of incentives to encourage the participation and integration of women in the security apparatus, through a valid environment for the work of women and incentives in the professional path.
- Develop a regional strategy to prevent violence and violent extremism, taking gender into account.
- Develop legal systems in Arab countries in a way that absorbs the consequences of ISIS and focus on the human aspect when dealing with this new phenomenon.



# Fourth Session: Regional mechanisms and tools to enhance the role of women in conflicts and post-conflicts

H.E. Mrs. Makfoula Aqat, former Minister of Women Affairs in Mauritania, Head of the Center for Women, Development and Peace, facilitated the session.

The discussion board members for this session are:

- H.E. Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector
- Mrs. Soad Shalaby, Member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network
- Mrs. Amina Hassan, Mediator and Executive Director of Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development
- Mr. Alexander Parambel from the Mediators Institute of Higher Studies in Geneva project

The session included four presentations as follows:

## **Presentation of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Head of the Social Affairs Sector on the Arab Network for Peace Mediators**

Mrs. Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh confirmed that the idea of creating an Arab network for peace mediators must be aligned with UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Its establishment also came within the framework of implementing the strategy and executive action plan for "Protection of the Arab Woman: Security and Peace". Its establishment stems from the need for a regional framework for the efforts of women in the region in the field of mediation, especially in light of the fact that the Arab region is one of the areas that is currently witnessing conflicts. This is in addition to its consistency with global and regional efforts to establish networks of peace mediators. The process of establishing the Arab Network for Peace Mediators at the Arab League level included numerous stages. These stages included the presentation of the proposal to establish the network to the Member States at the session meeting (38) of the Arab League Committee. Consequently, it was proposed that Member States make observations. It also prepared a conceptual paper on the establishment of an Arab women's network in the mediation field that includes Arab women who are skilled to negotiate. The paper contained selection concepts and formations and was disseminated upon Member States in the Arab League. The League asked its members to nominate Arab women for membership in the network. The League also stated that the next stage will depend on the

Arab countries providing the General Assembly of the Arab League with the names of women candidates, as it is expected to submit the "statement" to the Arab Women Committee during its next meeting in December 2019, to inaugurate the establishment of the Arab Network for Peace Mediators.

Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazala tackled the importance and objectives of the network. She clarified that the importance of the network lies in the participation of women in peace process, and this participation clearly represents comprehensive and integrated approach. In addition, the support of women's needs in conflict and post-conflict periods can only be presented by women. She also mentioned that the network aims to provide opportunities for women to participate in the decision-making process, especially in light of the fact that the representation of women in mediation and negotiation processes is a very modest example. Men dominate this field due to a number of factors, including the dominance of male society and the exclusionary culture of women in Arab societies. However, this biased situation is witnessing urgent changes. Women were able to impose themselves in this context. Women's representation in the field of mediation and negotiation is being further strengthened. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh also mentioned that the network attaches importance to building the capabilities of women in the fields of negotiation and peace by providing them with special training programs in cooperation with the UN and the EU in order to gain the necessary skills allowing women to put forth and interact at the negotiating tables. The presence of women with training in negotiation enhances their presence at the regional and international levels and seeking them for assistance when needed. In the context of benefiting and exchanging experiences, Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh stressed the importance of networking and cooperation with regional networks for peace mediators such as the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the network of African women to prevent conflicts and other networks, most importantly its affiliation to the global alliance of mediators. Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh pointed out that the establishment of an Arab regional network for peace mediators is a step to enable the members of the regional network to contribute to the establishment of national networks in their countries for peace mediators.

## **Presentation of Mrs. Soad Shalaby, Member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network: What are the opportunities provided by regional peace networks?**

Mrs. Soad Shalaby pointed out the importance of an organizational entity for Arab women in the field of mediation to catch up with the global trend. Accordingly, she noted the efforts of the Arab League in the field of enhancing women's role and mainly the strategy for protecting the Arab woman: security and peace, and the current efforts to establish the Arab Network for Peace mediators, and the Arab League attempts to have an effective international presence at the women representation level. She also emphasized that the level of progress in the level of representation of women can be measured in various political, economic and social cultural fields. She explained that mediation is a framework that has been present in the Arab region for hundreds of years as a peaceful means. It has played an important role in avoiding and resolving conflict. Mediation in the East is based on achieving reconciliation and equilibrium, and is in line with Islamic law, and it is the only path to avoid disputes before unfolding.

Mrs. Soad Shalaby tackled the challenges facing mediation in the Middle East, which include the absence of rules or criteria for selecting mediators, lack of confidence in the body that makes the choice, absence of a legal framework that protects the agreed upon solution, and considering the international framework she indicated the attention of the UN on the topic of peace in peace and security through the adoption of a number of international instruments that enhance the role of the woman in society as well as its role in the area of peace and security, among which are the Beijing Declaration (1995), and Security Council resolutions, the most important one being resolution (1325), and the adoption of the agenda of women and peace, in addition to the efforts exerted by the Secretary-General of the UN, Mr. Antonio Guterres, to strengthen the role of women in peace and security.

Considering the regional efforts, Mrs. Soad Shalaby indicated that since the end of 2015 the regional arena witnessed a trend towards establishing regional networks for mediators, starting with the Nordic network of regional mediators in 2015, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Commonwealth Mediators Network, and the African Women Network for Prevention and Mediation in 2017. She also specified that the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network includes women from Arab countries, and that the Arab region is first to benefit from these experiences.

In terms of coordination between these regional networks, Mrs. Soad Shalaby indicated the establishment of a global contact group to become the point of contact between these networks. She also stated that the establishment of a global women alliance and its approval on a list of 250 names of women mediators who have the required skills to carry out such missions, noting that the international coalition will launch a website that includes all regional networks in order to benefit from the experiences of each region in the field of mediation, explaining that a request has been submitted to the Secretary-General of the UN to appoint a percentage of women in mediation operations.

She also reviewed the issue of protecting mediators and the importance of considering such protection, stressing the importance of providing the political will and communication with the higher authorities, especially in the selection of mediator. She added there is a need to have women mediators at the UN level and a greater need for mediators in our Arab societies.

## **Presentation of Mrs. Amina Hassan, Mediator and Executive Director of Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development: Creating post-conflict public and non-public peace clubs and friends of mediations in our communities**

Mrs. Amina Hassan clarified that creating public and non-public clubs for children was to help women in Nigeria realize the importance of involving children in conflict resolution initiatives that are often aimed at adults. She mentioned that these clubs include clubs for boys and girls (of 7-11 years old), clubs for boys and girls (12-16 years old). In order to establish these clubs, it is necessary to define the target area by conducting a questionnaire or needs assessment, and manuals are being prepared to train and build the capacity of the members of these clubs, and designing special activities in mediation, stressing on the importance to analyse conflict prior to negotiations, and training of club members is carried out by experts in "analysing conflict", indicating that the goal of these clubs is to prepare children to become mediators.

As for the nature of the dispute, she stressed the importance of "knowing what is really going on" and a good understanding of the causes, people and issues raised, and taking the required time to understand the conflicts that affect the people before the establishment of the clubs. She also stated that establishing public clubs in governmental schools, while non-public clubs have been established for children who do not attend public schools or have access to

non-public education. She mentioned that the nature of polarization in Nigerian society has cast a shadow over the establishment of clubs in terms of Islamic and Christian schools and Muslim and Christian areas. Accordingly, periodic visits to clubs are organized, meetings are organized to discuss how to address disputes, and working with Islamic and Christian schools to generalize peace clubs. She also indicated that there is monitoring/follow-up in schools for gender issues through using students to report any transgressions that they may notice in this regard. Considering friends of mediations, she indicated that they are directed talks between parties at conflict and gives the opponents an opportunity to present its concerns and interests and to search for possible options for satisfactory solutions. She also stressed the importance of mediation before and after conflicts and that mediation works on issues that divide us and others that unite us.

### **Presentation of Mr. Alexander Parambel, Researcher in the project on Mediators Institute of Higher Studies in Geneva: Reflection remarks on international mediation networks**

Mr. Alexander Parambel reviewed the objectives of the international mediation network project that aims to create the first mapping of mediation networks, international mediation, and the clarification of their powers, the structure, and their mandates. In this context, in terms of the nature and scope of the states, he pointed to the existence of a wide diversity of powers for mediation networks with different interpretations, and a difference in priorities. These differences are due to the different understanding of mediation and mediator, the difference in work processes, and the different political goals. From a structural point of view, he pointed out that there are clear differences in the organizational structure between the various mediation networks ranging from the complex structure to more simplified structures, and that may be due to the level and nature of political financing and support. With regard to membership, all networks to some extent have criteria and procedures for selection, and all networks differ from each other depending on either thematic or regional focus (or both), and most of these networks focus on women. Moreover, Mr. Parambel has indicated that there is likely to be competition between mediation networks as a result of several elements, including overlapping and contradiction in the mandates of the various networks, and we may find that between networks that work in building capacities by transferring successful experiences from outside to inside, which may be viewed as doubtful by those who believe that regional/national efforts may be made; while at other times, organizations can be accused of being linked to external agendas. In addition, funding is

itself a reason for competition, some networks might compete for the same funding sources. There is also a tendency to prioritize the creation of new networks rather than direct funding to the established networks.

Considering opportunities, Mr. Parambel explained that the integration between mediation networks provides a number of opportunities represented in cooperative messages for example cooperation, advocacy and pressure in order to pressure the presence of female envoys or focus on supporting female candidates. Moreover, the exchange of information and successful experiences through the organization of meetings is one of the great opportunities to support and enhance the experiences of members. He also talked about the existence of specific opportunities related to the women's mediation networks to enhance the authority of the feminist movement in certain regions and globally through solidarity and mutual support.

He also made a number of recommendations to the Arab Network for Peace Mediation, which included emphasis on the importance and clarity of objectives to ensure that mediation networks represent prevention from conflicts, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace, and the importance of setting selection criteria, procedures, and affiliation that help focus on goals and ensure cohesion, and work to measure progress and exchange experiences. Furthermore, twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 it is suitable to enhance equality in peacemaking and render a more gender-sensitive approach to peace-making efforts.

### **Recommendations of the fourth session: Reflection remarks on international mediation networks**

- Transparency of objectives for mediation networks, clarity of criteria for the selection of their members and the procedures for their selection.
- Institutionalizing experiences and sharing women's experiences.
- Measuring progress made in terms of women mediation.
- Develop an agenda for the year 2020.
- Develop a regional strategy for the Arab Network for Peace Mediators, in cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations.
- Support at the national levels to establish a network of peace mediators.
- Initiate cooperation between the Arab network for peace mediators and other similar regional networks.
- Ensure capacity building programmes for women in the field of negotiation.
- The need to change some elements of discourse and strategies for promoting the integration of women into the peace process.

## Progress Achieved

Before the conclusion of the conference on strengthening the role of women in post-conflict societies in the Arab region, a session was assigned to assessing progress achieved in terms of strengthening the roles of women in societies during the post-conflict phase in the Arab region.

The session was facilitated by Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi, expert on gender, social conflict resolution and peace building.

During the session, Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi reviewed the main topics discussed in the conference sessions, women, security and peace: women's participation in peace building, negotiations, and mediation; the topic of women and state-building efforts: institutional reform and the provision of services; the topic of gender violations towards women related to armed conflicts, impunity; and the topic of women, relief assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

She also shed light on the outcome of the conference discussions and linked it with the four pillars of the agenda on women, security and peace, namely

participation, prevention, protection, and relief, recovery and reconstruction axis. Mrs. Zahr'a Lanqi reviewed the recommendations of the sessions, as well as the progress achieved on the various dimensions of the conference, its challenges and gaps. Participants were divided into four groups to amend the formulation of recommendations emanating from the conference sessions to prepare the final recommendations that will be attached to the final communiqué.

The first group dealt with the progress achieved, challenges, gaps and recommendations regarding the axis of participation.

The second group dealt with the progress achieved, challenges, gaps and recommendations regarding the axis of prevention.

The third group dealt with the progress achieved, challenges, gaps and recommendations regarding the axis of protection.

The fourth group dealt with the progress achieved, challenges, gaps and recommendations regarding the axis of relief, recovery and reconstruction.

## Final Communiqué Issued by the High-Level Ministerial Conference

Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region: Lessons Learned from All Parts of the World  
Cairo, 20-21 November 2019

Considering the framework of the conference titled Strengthening the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Societies in the Arab Region: Lessons Learned from All Parts of the World held by the General Secretariat of the Arab League in partnership with the EU and UNDP, ministers and representatives of the Arab League met in Cairo on 20 and 21 November 2019 members to discuss how to support the role of women in the region in the political, economic and social levels during post-conflict stages.

We are aware,

- The major challenges facing the Arab region during its transition from conflict stages that spanned nearly a decade, to the post-conflict stage, as well as the resulting challenges faced by the Palestinians as a result of the continued occupation.
- That all countries of the region were affected by the conflicts and their effects, directly or indirectly, and that there are countries that are still witnessing

confrontations, even if these confrontations are gradually declining, while there are countries that have suffered a great deal of insecurity, and that the Palestinians are still exposed to daily harm due to the repressive occupation practices.

- The suffering of women in the Arab region during the decade of conflict, particularly women who have been subjected to flagrant violations of their rights at the hands of terrorists and violent extremist groups in conflict areas.
- The suffering of women in oPt and the Golan Heights after violations of the Israeli occupation, and the difficulties they face at various levels.
- The negative effects of conflicts on the economic and social development of women and girls in conflict areas.
- The crucial role that women play in building their country's economy, and the necessity to highlight it.
- We appreciate,
- The steps taken by the Arab countries to support and protect the rights of women during conflicts, and provide support by taking further steps,
- We affirm,
- Our commitment to international legitimacy and

the UN's resolutions concerning the end of the Israeli, the establishment of oPt according to the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and ending illegal settlement and the right of return to Palestinian refugees.

- Our readiness to implement the decisions of the covenants and agreements and the regional and UN resolutions aimed at protecting women and enhancing their roles in all areas, especially in the field of peace building.
- Our readiness to implement the decisions of the agenda of women, security and peace, the Beijing Declaration and agreement to terminate all kinds of discrimination against women, and the sustainable development agenda 2030.
- Our concern about women, peace and security agenda as an action plan to ensure the participation of women in a post-conflict period, knowing that with the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Security Council resolution 1325 on women, security and peace, it is considered to be the key element of this agenda.

**Recommend to ministers and representatives of Arab countries the following:**

## **Final recommendations**

### **First: Recommendations of the working group on participation**

- Invite the Security Council to issue a new resolution subsequent to resolution 1325 and other resolutions based on it, in order to tackle gaps found in women, security and the peace agenda, such as not addressing the conditions of Palestinian women and the rest of the Arab region that are still under occupation; challenges, risks and problems related to security and peace faced by women in these communities of a unique nature and that differ from challenges, risks and problems that women in other communities and Arab countries have, including the communities and countries undergoing transitions from a conflict phase to a post-conflict phase.
- Build a regional strategy for the Arab Network for Peace Mediators established by the Arab League, in coordination with Member States.
- Encourage Member States to establish national networks of peace mediators.
- Effective participation of women at all levels, in all peace negotiations, mediation processes and national and local dialogues.
- Involve civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in programmes for mediation training and women working in the field of mediation for peace and decision-making

operations, and in the design, implementation and governance of reconstruction strategies.

- Develop local, national and regional programmes to build the capacity of women in the field of peace building, mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution and community dialogue management.
- Promote the active participation of women in local dispute resolutions in a friendly manner.
- Implement the strategy of the Arab women for peace and security through practical steps in enhancing the role of women towards spreading a culture of peace and security and combating violent extremism.
- Promote the economic participation of women and their participation in the national formal economy, and the promotion of women working in the informal economy as a result of conflicts to move to the formal economy, in particular by facilitating the relevant procedures.
- Adopt positive non-discriminatory policies to ensure access by women to high positions in all formal institutions and decision-making departments, including legislative, executive, and judicial bodies (with a minimum of 30 percent), while ensuring that all public institutions adopt human resource policies guaranteeing sustainable integration of gender in nomination, retention and promotion.
- Strengthen women's access to leadership positions in police and security institutions, and their representation in all sectors.
- Increase women's access to leadership positions in all regional and international bodies, raising their level of representation in all sectors of these bodies, and overcoming the obstacles hindering this process.
- Participation of women in the formulation of programmes, policies, and procedures for restructuring security institutions, collecting weapons, dismantling armed battalions, and rehabilitating members of armed groups, while ensuring that the programmes, policies, and procedures are based on integrating a gender perspective.

### **Second: Recommendations of the working group on prevention**

- Urge Member States of the Arab League to support and activate the Emergency Committee, particularly at the level of prevention.
- Focus on the importance of education, awareness and building culture-community gender-sensitive and civil peace, and urge countries to ensure fair representation of women in political sectors, parties, unions, and the judiciary, provided that female representation is not less than 30 percent.
- Activate Security Council resolution 1325 on women,

security and peace, and support states in adopting their national plans to activate it, integrate women in leadership roles, and in security and military sectors, to actively raise their representation.

- Support and endorse the Arab Convention for the elimination of violence against women by the Member States and putting them into practice, especially in terms of impunity.
- Activate mechanisms of early intervention and anticipate the outbreak of conflicts, especially in countries that are likely to develop towards armed conflicts.
- Develop a regional strategy to prevent violent extremism, that focuses on integrating a gender perspective into it, encourage countries in the region to adopt it, and formulate a national strategy to prevent violent extremism based on integrating a gender perspective.
- Build a regional platform to exchange experiences among Member States of the Arab League in relation to the prevention of violent extremism and terrorism, and in the integration of a gender perspective.
- Make efforts to ensure that women are able to protect all achievements made by other women in the Arab region. and restore what they have lost due to conflicts and instability.
- Review the positions of Member States on international agreements and reservations that prevent the implementation of such agreements and limit the effectiveness and implementation of the agreements.
- Reform the legislative structure and reviewing laws, policies and procedures that lead to the exclusion and marginalization of women at all levels.

### **Third: Recommendations of the working group on protection**

- Endeavour to provide protection for women and girls who live under the Israeli occupation and in armed conflict areas during conflict, reconstruction and activation of international resolutions.
- Condemn all statements that legitimize settlements, war crimes and other violations and breaches of international laws and covenants.
- Establish national mechanisms for the protection of women, without discrimination.
- Establish consistent mechanisms to ensure women's access to positions in the civilian police and ensuring their participation in the formulation of security and community protection strategies at the national and local level, and their implementation and governance.
- Establish an observatory to provide data and information, follow up on violations during armed conflicts and post-conflict to facilitate law

enforcement, accountability and responsibility and end impunity at the national, regional and international levels.

- Urge countries to develop programs and policies to protect refugees and displaced people.
- Activate the role of the Emergency Committee to protect women in the Arab region, with the support of Member States.
- Call upon the Security Council to include the resolution required to be issued among these recommendations, to ensure the issuance of the protection of women and girls who reside in societies that are under occupation.
- Demand the opening of an international investigation on settlement and expediting the preliminary procedures related to the settlement file submitted to the International Criminal Court since 2018.

### **Fourth: Recommendations of the working group on relief, recovery and reconstruction**

- Call upon Arab countries to adopt policies and programmes to ensure consultation with women in local communities on reconstruction priorities, to achieve better results.
- Draft policies that ensure the documenting the ownership of assets for women in their names.
- Incorporate a gender perspective in all relief policies and procedures and inform relief workers and stakeholders of the added value.
- Support countries hosting refugees and the countries in which they are displaced: moral and material support to enable them to withstand the social, economic and political pressure resulting from the refugee movement and displacement.
- Design rehabilitation and reform programmes that are appropriate to the needs of those affected by the conflicts that the Arab region has witnessed, including the incorporation of a gender perspective in those programmes.
- Respond to the humanitarian needs of the returnees who have refrained from engaging in violent extremist organizations and facilitating their reintegration into their societies.
- Find specialized programmes for risk insurance, including obtaining compensation for moral and material damages sustained by women during conflicts.
- Facilitate the safe return of refugees and displaced women from refugee and displacement camps and survivors to their countries, assist them in recovering their identity papers and documents of their ownership, provide the foundations for them to have a decent life, career, health care and education.

- The necessity of providing psychological treatment for women who have engaged in terrorist organizations and had thereafter deserted the organizations, and to seek clarification from official bodies as to the form of punishment for them i.e. rehabilitate and reform.
- Endeavour to develop a regional strategy to address the effects of extremism and terrorism and its victims, women and children (file of women who returned), and rehabilitate and integrate them into their societies.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the most prominent stage of post-conflict challenges is the challenge of completing the restoration of peace, and that there are broad prospects for women to benefit from their achievements in building peace, and in restoring security and civil peace, particularly in the level of mediation, peace and power. Women should increase their initiatives in this area. Women have built on the achievements we have made in mediation and peacebuilding, in building bridges between the forces of society and ending societal polarization and the rupture that occurred during the last stage. Every Arab country can benefit from these efforts and improve the employment of the enormous women's capabilities in this field. The official authorities in the region should give women a greater role in the early warning system and prevent wars and their participation in peace operations, peace building, reconstruction and transitional stages that societies witness in post-conflict situations.

There are broad prospects for the participation of women in responding to the challenge of reconstruction, which is a long-term challenge. As a woman plays a role in peace building and protection for her society during the conflict stage, she exercises her role as a "development factor" in the broad sense of the term during the post-conflict stage. This was confirmed by the sustainable development goals, specifically SDG5 that stipulates gender equality and the empowerment of women, and SDG16 that provides for justice and peace and building strong institutions. As we have previously indicated, it should be clear that what is meant by reconstruction concept. It is human and societal reconstruction, with its moral and material dimension. The significance of it is not limited to the physical concept of reconstruction. In the Arab region, women struggle to have a voice in formulating and implementing reconstruction policies. There is a need to assign large-scale supervisory tasks to women in reconstruction efforts and related issues.

## Strategic Areas and Operational Action Plan "Protection of the Arab Women: Security and Peace" (2015)

Strategic areas: participation – prevention – protection  
Through 3 phases:

First: Security and stability phase

The strategic objective: Creating a social gender-sensitive environment that guarantees the active participation of women in all aspects of life and protect their rights in accordance with relevant international, regional and Arab resolutions and agreements related to providing security and protection for women from all forms of violence.

### Actions:

*Participation level:*

1. Enhance the participation of women at all levels of decision-making and design national policies and programmes by providing the appropriate infrastructure for the growth and development of women and her empowerment in all social, economic and political aspects.
2. Participation of women in the international, regional and national mechanisms to monitor the implementation of agreements and strategies aiming at strengthening the role of women, and their protection from all forms of violence.
3. Establish women empowerment programmes in all economic, social and political fields and their implementation.
4. Work to integrate the budget intended for gender issues in the public budgets, as well as in the implementation of public policies in various fields.
5. Participation of women's organizations in the drafting of the legislative system, specifically in strengthening women's rights and equality with men before the law.
6. Increase women representation in the judiciary at all levels, including in international tribunals.

*Prevention level:*

1. Develop national strategies, policies and action plans to combat violence against women, foster a culture of non-violence against them, and protect their rights.
2. Ratify international agreements related to security and peace.
3. Preparing programmes to enhance awareness

on the rights of women and their effective role in building society.

4. Work to spread the culture of peace by setting up educational programmes for girls and boys.
5. Work to integrate the principles of human rights and the values of equality and justice and gender approach in policies, programmes and projects.
6. Find and implement a systematic system for research and protection of women against gender-based violence through the setting of priorities, the effects of violence and its economic costs.
7. Increase awareness of the military forces and other military and security forces regarding human rights and the international mechanisms, and agreements guaranteeing them.
8. Formulate programmes to consolidate the concepts of citizenship, the protection of the nation, and the concepts of justice and peace.

*Protection level:*

1. Strengthen the institutional capacity of community organizations to protect women from violence and provide comprehensive health, social and legal services that cover the needs of assaulted women.
2. Provide qualified human cadres to deal with cases of assaulted women at all health, social, educational, and legal levels.
3. Improve ways for women who are exposed to violence to have access to information about services and methods of prevention and protection against violence, as well as to have recourse in cases of violence against women or girls.
4. Review laws and legislations that involve discrimination against women, updating them and aligning them with the existing approach and protecting women from all forms, with regards to human rights and violence.
5. Establish laws that protect women in times of emergency and armed conflict from all forms of violence and ensure that perpetrators are punished.
6. Promote coordination and partnership between the formal and private sectors concerned with the protection of women, in regards to achieve an integrated planning that adopts the participatory approach.

Second: The stage of emergencies or the outbreak of wars or armed conflicts

The strategic objective: Ensuring the provision of care and protection for women and girls in areas where conflict and armed conflict prevail from the practices



and effects of rape and violations resulting from them, and all other forms of violence.

## **Actions:**

### *Participation level:*

1. Participation of women in all levels and stages of decision-making, which are related to negotiations, conflict resolutions, peace building and peacekeeping.
2. Form Arab women's alliances to follow up on violations against women and monitoring them in countries experiencing conflict and wars.
3. Educate and train women in the skills of leadership, advocacy, and conflict resolution.
4. Participation of women in Arab and international mechanisms to monitor implementation of international human rights conventions and international agreements related to armed conflict and those related to the protection of civilians, especially women and children during war, armed conflict or any emergency.
5. Participation of women in the design and management of women's humanitarian activities and events in times of war and armed conflict.

### *Prevention level:*

1. Raise the level of awareness regarding humanitarian laws, human rights and gender equality for humanitarian workers and peacekeepers.
2. Launch health and legal awareness campaigns for women during war and conflicts, and in refugee camps.
3. Provide information for women in the context of armed conflicts about the services provided and the methods of accessing them.
4. Increase awareness on the nature of sexual and psychological violence during armed conflict and its health, psychological and economic dimensions and its impact on women through the spread of a culture of protection.
5. Increase awareness of refugee host communities on human rights in general and on refugee women and displaced women, and their special needs.
6. Train workers (who are in the fields of legal, medical, and social affairs), the police, military, and immigration officials, through programmes on the rights of the woman in particular and human rights in general, in order to protect women from any violation of their rights to ensure the prevalence of fairness.
7. Prepare periodic monitoring reports on the reality of women in conflict and war zones, and linking them with intervention and relief programmes at the Arab and international levels.

### *Protection level:*

1. Provide health, legal, and psychological protection and assistance to displaced women, women refugees, and those in need of protection.
2. Enact and implement legislations, strengthen legal and judicial systems, and provide the necessary resources to prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence against women in general.
3. Provide food, shelter, education, and social and health services for women in the context of conflicts and refugee women.
4. Ensure specific mechanisms to protect the most vulnerable groups to violence, such as unaccompanied children by their families or those who have lost contact with their families, and individuals with special needs.
5. Establish mechanisms and frameworks for preventing and punishing women trafficking operations and assaulting women, or forcing them to engage in prostitution or any harmful and degrading acts of dignity, or using them as objects or as sexual symbols in times of war and armed conflicts.
6. Develop procedure guides for all workers and service providers that ensure the privacy of each sector in the field of support, protection and security in situations of armed conflicts.
7. Establish legal frameworks that guarantee the reunification of family members who have separated as a result of conflicts and wars by providing protection for displaced women and children and searching for missing persons.
8. Take all necessary steps and actions to ensure quick and effective investigations by independent bodies for them to look into complaints by women about violence in all its forms and to ensure protection measures for victims and witnesses from intimidation and reprisals.
9. Appoint a special representative of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, whose task is to adhere to procedures that ensure protection for women and children from all forms of violence, particularly in Arab regions that are witnessing wars of armed conflict.

### Third: Post-Armed Conflict Phase

The strategic objective: Ensuring the active participation of women in all efforts of conflict resolution and reconstruction, and to formulate programmes, policies and legislations that guarantee the building of a gender-sensitive society.

## Actions:

### *Participation level:*

1. Participation of women in all mechanisms of applying peace agreements and their implementation, or supporting regional peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes at the Arab level.
2. Participation of women in peace building and all related peace building efforts at the Arab, regional and international levels.
3. Confirmation of a full and effective participation of youth and women, and other individuals from among the most vulnerable population, including internal refugees and displaced persons, when developing national plans of action in addressing sexual violence against women.
4. Participation of women through all phases of reconstruction and planning at national level.

### *Prevention level:*

1. Develop and disseminate research on the physical, psychological, and social impacts of armed conflicts on women.
2. Raise awareness of refugee women in general about their legal rights and their rights to a non-forced return, or to deny them the rights to return to their country or place of residence.
3. Increase the awareness of security forces pertaining to human rights in general and the rights of women in particular.

### *Protection level:*

1. Address violence against women in all its forms in the planning and financing of humanitarian assistance, peace building, development, and political dialogue, provided that this is funded by relief and development to ensure continued prevention of sexual violence and ways to respond to it.
2. Strengthen mechanisms for regional cooperation among governments, donors, international organizations and civil society to address sexual violence against women, with particular attention to high-conflict areas.
3. Implement social and economic empowerment programmes for refugees and abused women and providing them with life skills and capabilities.
4. Provide impartiality assistance to victims of sexual violence and torture survivors and provide them with legal aid.
5. Enforce international laws for the protection of women in times of conflict and wars, punish perpetrators of attacks against women of all kinds, and bring them to trial.
6. Prepare and develop gender-sensitive national policies and programmes and be more aware to the needs and rights of women, and enhance their role in building society.
7. Prepare and implement women empowerment programmes at all levels: social, economic and political.





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Resilient nations*

Social Affairs Sector  
Women, Family and Childhood Department