



Lebanese Republic  
National Assembly



Regional Workshop for Arab Parliaments on  
**Implementing CEDAW and ending violence against women**

Beirut, 27-29 July 2010

organized by

*the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Lebanese Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme-Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region (UNDP-PDIAR)*

## INFORMATION NOTE

**1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Lebanese Parliament, the United Nations Development Programme-Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region (UNDP-PDIAR) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN-ESCWA) are pleased to organize a Regional Workshop for Arab Parliaments on implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and ending violence against women. The Workshop will be held at UN House in Beirut from 27 to 29 July 2010.**

### 2. Background

All Arab States, with the exception of Somalia and Sudan, have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Nevertheless, most Arab countries still have reservations on some of its crucial articles, such as Articles 2 and 16. Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are committed to implement the instrument through national legislation and policies. They are bound to submit national reports on the measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women monitors implementation of the Convention and makes recommendations to help States to bring their national legislative and political frameworks fully in line with CEDAW.

The adoption of laws remains a critical step for addressing all forms of discrimination against women. Parliamentarians are key to establishing an appropriate legal framework insofar as they can identify and amend discriminatory provisions and enact requisite legislation.

Violence against women is among the major legislative priorities to be addressed in the region. To respond effectively to such violence, the overall context within which women's rights are protected must be taken into account. These rights are reflected in and guaranteed by several international and regional instruments, including CEDAW.

### 3. Objectives

The Regional Workshop aims to inform legislators about CEDAW, its content and monitoring body. It seeks to highlight the role of parliament in the reporting process to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Workshop will serve to assess progress made and address remaining challenges. It will help identify parliamentary mechanisms and means to ensure and oversee the effective implementation of CEDAW at the national level and key actions that parliaments and their members can take to contribute to the process.

One of the key actions which will be highlighted is ending violence against women. The Workshop will help analyse how violence against women is addressed by the national legal frameworks in the region. It will identify existing gaps and recommend practical measures to ensure that national legislation conforms to CEDAW and prevents violence against women, penalizes it and provides effective protection to victims.

The Workshop will provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between men and women legislators, parliamentarians from countries outside the region, international and regional experts and concerned national, regional and international institutions (government, UN agencies, civil society, etc.).

The Workshop will endeavour to identify national follow-up activities in support of parliaments of the region.

#### **4. Themes**

The workshop will address the following themes:

- CEDAW: content and monitoring body
- Arab States and CEDAW: achievements and challenges
- The role of parliaments in implementing CEDAW
- CEDAW, other legal international frameworks and violence against women
- Forms of violence against women in the Arab world
- Legislation to combat violence against women and other elements of a comprehensive response to violence against women
- Parliamentary experiences from the region and abroad
- Key follow-up actions for parliaments and their members

#### **5. Participation**

The Workshop is open to men and women members of parliament and parliamentary staff from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Parliaments are invited to send delegations of not more than four members.

Letters of invitation, convocations and further information will be sent in due course by the IPU to the invited parliaments on behalf of all partners.

#### **6. Venue and dates**

The Workshop will take place from 27 to 29 July 2010 at UN House in Beirut.

#### **7. Resource persons**

The IPU, in consultation with the organizing partners, will select resource persons, including independent national, regional and international experts. These resource persons will make presentations and lead interactive discussions on each of the themes of the Workshop.

#### **8. Languages**

The proceedings will take place in Arabic, English and French. Simultaneous interpretation in the three languages will be provided throughout the meeting.

#### **9. Documents**

Written texts of the presentations by the resource persons will be distributed to participants as they become available.

To the extent possible and for the information of participants, the organizing partners will make available background documentation on the issues under discussion. Participants wishing to distribute relevant documentation will be required to provide papers in sufficient quantities and place them on a table set aside for that purpose.

## 11. Registration of delegates

The parliaments participating in the Workshop are kindly requested to indicate the composition of their delegations before 10 July 2010 using the attached registration form. This information should be sent to the IPU, the Lebanese Parliament and UNESCWA at the following addresses:

<b>Lebanese Parliament</b> Attention: Mr. Rachid Samaha Parliamentary Relations Division Address: B.P:2011 - 9002 Lebanese Parliament Nijmeh Square Beirut, Lebanon Tel/Fax: +961 1 981 474 e-mail: rsamaha@lp.gov.lb	<b>Inter-Parliamentary Union</b> 5, chemin du Pommier, case postale 330 1218 Grand-Saconnex Geneva, Switzerland Tel.: +41 22 - 919 41 50 Fax: +41 22 - 919 41 60 e-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org	<b>UN-ESCWA</b> Attention: Ms. Rania Al Jazairi Center for Women UN-ESCWA Beirut, Lebanon Tel.: +961 – 1 981 301 Fax: +961 – 1 981 510 e-mail: al-jazairi@un.org
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## 12. Travel arrangements

The parliaments participating in the Workshop are responsible for the travel arrangements and travel and living expenses of their delegates.

They are kindly requested to inform the Lebanese Parliament of the arrival and departure dates and times of their delegations.

## 13. Accommodation

The Lebanese Parliament will arrange hotel reservations and ground transfers for participants and resource persons.