Regional Platform on the Economic Empowerment of Women
Cairo - 16 - 17 September 2015
The Regional Platform on the Economic Empowerment of Women

Cairo - 16-17 September 2015
League of Arab States Headquarters - Cairo, Egypt

Overview

The Family, Women, and Childhood Department (FWCD) at the League of Arab States and UN Women have joined efforts within the framework of the joint programme of the European Union and UN Women, “Spring Forward for Women”. This partnership enables the gathering of regional stakeholders from public, private, and social sectors to discuss how to enhance women's access to and effective participation in economic life in Arab states region. Such a platform can also support governments in designing policy commitments made on a range of regional and international agreements (i.e. Cairo Declaration, Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women – CEDAW, the Arab Human Rights Charter, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals/ Sustainable Development Goals).

The platform aims to enable the realization of The Cairo Declaration, it is necessary to bring together experts and key actors from the Arab States region and to launch a platform, which can inform the process of realising these goals.

Primary Objectives

- Prioritize issues and necessary actions implemented at the regional level to ensure the presence of women in the general economic policy-making bodies, among these are central banks and ministries of finance bodies in the region.
- Design the necessary measures and develop an action plan to implement the mechanisms of the Cairo Declaration.
- Identify constraints on capacity and challenges at the country level that the regional level can contribute to addressing them.
- Identify the following steps and stages of action.

Keynote Speakers

- H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Bin Heli, Deputy Secretary-General - League of Arab States
- Ms. Inas Mekkawy, Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department - League of Arab States
- Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director - UN Women - Regional Office for Arab States

Discussion Topics

- Facts and figures, challenges and goals agreed upon in the Cairo Declaration for Arab Women "The post-2015 Development Agenda for Arab Women" and other international agreements.
- National policies regarding Women's Economic Empowerment
- Organization policies and workplace safety
- key issues and actions to conduct at the regional level to realize the objectives and mechanisms of the Cairo declaration
Delegate Biographies

Ambassador Inas Sayed Mekkawy
Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department
League of Arab States

Ambassador Inas Mekkawy is a high-level diplomat at the League of Arab States. She has an experience for more than 25 years in Arab and international affairs, sustainable development, women’s empowerment, setting and implementing the developmental projects at national and regional levels.

She has worked with regional and international organizations on planning, implementing and evaluating programmes in the fields of social development, governance, and women’s empowerment.

She has a long experience on Arab and African affairs, strategic planning, policies making, and regional partnerships on women’s empowerment with the United Nations. Also, with implementing Millennium Development Goals, participating developing the sustainable development agenda for the post 2015, expanding partnership and cooperation between the Arab region and other regional groups, especially African and South American countries on promoting and advancing women and childhood rights and conditions on the regional and international levels.

Ambassador Mekkawy is currently Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States. She worked as a Coordinator for the second Arab African Summit in 2010. She had a pioneering role on holding the first Arab Women’s Summit, in Cairo, and all subsequent regional forums to empower women at the Arab level. She has a deep knowledge and understanding of the status of women’s rights, in Egypt, as well as, on the issues of women, peace and security during armed conflicts at the regional level. In addition, she is the founder of Bahia Ya Masr movement and the Standing Committee for Egyptian Women.

She worked at different political, social and cultural levels, and on issues of human rights, gender equality, empowerment and advancement of women and childhood conditions at regional and international levels. This is addition to her work in projects of civil education and awareness, promotion of cultural cooperation, and the Arab international cooperation with UN organizations, EU, European Parliament and some of the other Arab, regional and international organisations and institutions in the different sustainable development fields.
Mr. Mohammad Naciri
Regional Director - UN Women - Regional Office for Arab States

Mr. Mohammad Naciri is currently the Regional Director of UN Women - Regional Office for Arab States. Mr. Naciri has an extensive experience in the areas of development and gender in the Arab States region. Prior to joining UN Women, Mohammad was the Deputy Country Director of UNDP in Yemen, where he supported the country in the formulation of its Gender Strategy and the Gender Responsive Budgeting process. Prior to that, he was the Deputy Regional Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kuwait, where he helped in the formulation and implementation of the equality in political participation programme and supported the right of Kuwaiti women to vote and participate in the Kuwaiti parliament. In the period from 2003 to 2006, he held the post of President of the International Organization for Migration mission in Kuwait. He has worked in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Cambodia, dealing with issues from human trafficking to ethnic cleansing. A national of Morocco, Mohammad holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and International Development from the Harvard University, as well as a Master's Degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford. He also has a Master's degree in Business Administration from the Arab Academy for Science and Technology in Alexandria-Egypt.

Dr. Amani Asfour
Egyptian Businesswoman

President of the Society of Egyptian Businesswomen (Central), Chairperson of the Business Council of COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), Honorary President of the Egyptian Federation of Business and Professional Women in Egypt, President of the African Association for Women’s Empowerment, President of the Mediterranean Conference of Business and Professional Women, Global Vice President of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, chairperson of the human resources, science, and technology committee of the Economic, Cultural, and Social Council of the African Union, Secretary General of the African Assembly for Scientific Research and Technology, President of the African Heritage and Culture Association, Founder and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hatshepsut Centre for women and youth capacity-building and support of small and medium enterprise.
H.E. Ameera Abdelrahim bin Karam
UAE Businesswoman

Since 2010, Ameera bin Karam has been the Chairperson of Sharjah Businesswomen's Council. She is also the President of the Board of Trustees and a founding member of Friends of Cancer Patients Society (FoCP) established in 1999. (The FoCP is sponsored by the wife of the Ruler of Sharjah, H.E. Sheikha Jawaher bint Muhammad Al-Qasimi, president of the High Council on Family Affairs, founding president of the FoCP, ambassador of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to the World Cancer Declaration, ambassador of the UICC for childhood cancer.) Since 2011, Bin Karam has been the chairperson for the Emirates Women Award and in 2012 she was honoured to be awarded the UAE’s “Humanitarian of the Year” by the Arab Woman Award. Since winning this award, she has been invited to head the judging committee to review the nominations and select each year's winner.

Ms. Asmaa El-Naifar
Foreign Relations Director, responsible for the Innovation Program and support of social responsibility strategy of Orange-Tunisia.

From the time she assumed the task of supervising the Foreign Relations Department of Orange Company in Tunisia in the summer of 2010, and following many years as the communications, media, and public relations at Tunisian Airlines, Ms. Asmaa El-Naifar has finally succeeded in entering a new life experiment that equals her qualifications and long experience. Since 2012, she has striven to create a social responsibility and charitable activities department. This department has become the backbone of Orange's activities in Tunisia, because it is a socially responsible, committed, and cohesive company, strengthened by technological innovation and social solidarity. For this reason, Ms. Asmaa El-Naifar believes that the economic dimension of seeking profits and the dimension of social responsibility complement each other. This has led her to believe that Orange-Tunisia is not merely a telecommunications company, but rather much more than that. For Ms. El-Naifar, all the projects that she has supervised are at the heart of the social and economic challenges that we live through today: employment of university graduates and post-graduate certificate holders; support of projects in technology, rural women's independence, and equitable development of organizations; dissemination and exchange of knowledge based on digital technologies; and the promotion of cultural tourism.
Erum Mazher Alvie
Senior Advisor, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Al Qasimi’s Executive Office, Sharjah, UAE

Erum Mazher Alvie, has had a distinguished career in the social sector overseeing a variety of initiatives under Her Highness’ patronage. As Senior Advisor at Her Highness' Executive Office, Erum has managed the creation of new entities based on Her Highness' vision and has overseen realignment and development of existing organizations to ensure Her Highness' vision is realized to the highest standards. Erum served as the Director of The Sharjah Ladies Club until 2010 after which she joined Her Highness' Executive Office (HHEO). At HHEO she created and managed initiatives under Her Highness' patronage which ranged from social sector organizations serving the community to managing philanthropic campaigns launched by Her Highness. She has served on the board of Sharjah Ladies Club and leads the Executive Committee of the Board of Sharjah Children's Centres. Erum received her Bachelor's degree with honours from Smith College, Massachusetts, USA and completed her earlier education in Sharjah where she graduated with a Baccalaureate Diploma from the International School of Choueifat, Sharjah, UAE.

Dr. Heba El-Laithy
Professor of Statistics, Cairo University

Dr. Heba Farida Ahmed Fathi El-Laithy is currently a Professor of Statistics at Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Political Science. She is a key expert for micro-data analysis and socioeconomic impact assessment for development programs. Dr. El-Laithy has a strong background in statistical analysis. She received her doctorate degree from Sussex University in the United Kingdom. She is an expert in measuring poverty and inequality and has contributed her expertise to several poverty assessments and poverty alleviation program evaluations in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. She has authored and co-authored seminal reports on poverty, inequality, poverty alleviation, and social safety net development in the Middle East for governments, research centres and national and international organizations such as the World Bank and ESCWA. Dr. El-Laithy has helped prepare human development reports in Egypt and has published papers on issues including the gender dimension of poverty, social risk management, and monetary poverty, multidimensional poverty, and food security. She designed, prepared manuals, and delivered training courses on measuring monetary and non-monetary poverty, gender statistics, human development indicators, inequality and targeting mechanisms. She led the team for developing poverty map for Egypt, using the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2012-2013 and Population and Housing Census 2006. Recently, she participated in designing target mechanisms for the new cash transfer programs of the Ministry of Social Solidarity, based on geographical targeting and proxy means testing.
Dr. Heba Handousa
Human Development expert, advisor, and educator

Founder of the Egypt Network for Integrated Development (ENID) in 2012. She was the lead author of the Egypt Human Development Report (EHDR) 2010, which was the best report across over 50 countries, and director and lead author of three previous EHDRs. She was founder and director of the Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran and Turkey. She taught at the AUC. She has consistently served as an advisor to the Egyptian government. She has served on the board of international and regional research-related institutions including CEDEJ, IFPRI, UNRISD and the WBI Advisory Board of the World Bank. She has been selected to become a member of the World Bank Chief Economist’s Council of Eminent Persons (CEP) in 2015.

Her Excellency
Sheikha Dr. Hissah Saad Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah
Kuwait Businesswoman

Her Excellency – Sheikha Dr. Hissah Saad Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah is the Chairperson of Narcotics Control Committee – Kuwait Volunteers Women Society – for Community Service - since 1995 and the Deputy Chairperson of "Kuwait Narcotics Control Committee – March/1997. She was honoured many times by the UN Representative to the Regional Office for Narcotics Control & Crime Prevention of North Africa and Middle East, honoured as the First Lady due to her hard works in this field in March 2002. She was selected as "Best Businesswoman" in the Middle East region in U.A.E., March 2002, during the M.E. Distinguished Woman Conference. The Arab Federation of Non–Governmental Societies for Addiction Prevention honoured her for her efforts in this field in 2002. This is further to her efforts to establish the Arab Businesswomen Council under the patronage of the Arab League in Sept. 1999. She was awarded a Global Leadership Award for her efforts in Women & Community Development Sector, Malaysia 2012. Gusi Peace organization awarded her for her effort to empower women in the Middle East in the Philippines, 2012. She was elected as a Goodwill Ambassador for the FCEM organization for the Gulf region in 2013, Southwest Asia Coordinator for the International Federation of Business & Professional Women in Sept. 2014, and elected as the first Economic Activist from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), March 2015.
Dr. Heba Nassar
Professor of Economics, Cairo University

Dr. Heba Nassar is professor of economics at the College of Economics and Political Sciences, director of the College of Economics science magazine, and member of the high committee for research at the National Council on Women. Dr. Nassar has held the position of Vice Rector of Cairo University for social services and environmental development, as well as headed the economics department at the College of Economics and Political Sciences (CEPS), and previously assistant dean of the CEPS at Cairo University for social services and environmental development. She has also held the position of director of the Centre for Economic and Financial Research at the CEPS/CU. Dr. Nassar has worked as the national coordinator for the Job Opportunities in Africa project under the International Labour Organization (ILO). She has been a member of the committee to select deans at Cairo University since 1 July 2014. Since 2002, Dr. Heba Nassar joined the Centre for Social Research at the American University as a part-time associate professor and associate researcher in the Economic Research Forum for Middle East countries. She is currently an associate of the forums policy section. Dr. Nassar is a member of numerous important national and international committees and organizations in the field of development, such as the Group of Universities in Service of the Community, the advisory council for the Migration Policies Centre at the European University in Florence, Italy, and the permanent committee for promotion of economics professors. She is a founding member of the World Bank Development Research Initiative in Paris, founding member of the Middle East Health Policies Forum, and was a member of the board of directors of the Electricity Holding Company, Electricity Regulation Organization, World Energy Council, economics committee of the National Council for Women, Executive Committee on Population, economics committee at the Scientific Research Academy, and advisor to the economics committee of Parliament until 2008. Dr. Heba Nassar has presented numerous scientific papers in national and international forums and conferences on a variety of subjects. These include issues such as the labour market, skills development, education, small enterprises, structural reform, development of human resources and women's economic participation, poverty, privatization, population, commerce, and migration. She has published numerous articles and studies in scientific journals and international conferences in the field of analysis of socio-economic policies.
Ms. Nevine El-Taheri
Founder, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and Managing Director – Delta Shield Investment Company
Founding partner, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and Managing Director – 138 Pyramids Enterprise Management Company.
Founding partner, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Delta Inspire Enterprise Management Company.

Ms. El-Taheri has more than 33 years of experience in financial markets and businesses. Her work life began at Chase National Bank of Egypt (currently the International Commercial Bank (ICB)) where she headed the petroleum and tourism department. With the revitalization of the Egyptian financial market in 1994, she turned towards the world of entrepreneurship by establishing one of the first companies in the field of securities trading. This company is Delta Egypt Securities Trading Company. She also founded Delta Financial Investments, Delta Financial Investment Holding Company, Delta Financial Investments, and Noun Management Services Company. She is the first women to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Egypt Exchange for two periods in a row. She also held positions on the directorial boards of a number of companies in both the public and private sectors, such as Telecom Egypt and the General Investment Corporation, and others. Ms. El-Taheri has also worked as representation office director and member of the advisory council in the Middle East of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS, formerly ABN AMRO). She has won many local and international awards, earned the title of “Greatest Businesswoman of Egypt” from the American Chamber of Commerce in Cairo and from nine Arab countries in December 2013. She was also nominated by Forbes Magazine Middle East as one of the 200 most powerful Arab women in October 2014.

Mariam Al Hammadi
Accountant

Mariam got her Bachelor Degree in accounting from Higher Colleges of Technology in 2007. In 2008, she joined Emirates Airline in the Credit Risk Management Department. She was monitoring the Airline receivables and striving to reduce the company’s risks for 4 years. In 2012, Mariam worked as assistant manager in Salam Ya Seghar, one of Her Highness’ initiatives to support children. She was recently promoted to director of the Salam Ya Seghar initiative.
Mohamed El-Sherif
CEO - LOGIC – Management Consulting

Mohamed El-Sherif is the CEO of LOGIC Management Consulting, Egypt's largest management consulting firm with operations in Egypt and the region. He has professional working experience across Egypt, USA, UK, Qatar, UAE and KSA. His experience covers working with multinationals (BP, Bain & Co.), governments (Egypt's Ministry of Industry, Qatar's Ministry of Economy) as well as quasi government (EDC, EMC, QD). Mohamed worked across several functions including business development, business planning, performance management, mergers and acquisitions, as well as management consulting. Mohamed is active in the entrepreneurship arena, where he is a member of an angel investor group and provides lectures and training on the same topic to several entities (AUC, Nahdet Elmahrous). He has a BSc in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA, both from the AUC.

Shereen Allam
Founder of NGO

Born in Alexandria, Egypt and studied business administration in the American University in Cairo and graduated with highest honours. She worked in the corporate world for five years in various positions and resigned her last post in the United Nations to start her own company. In 2008, believing in the power of the people in Egypt, she established an NGO, AWTAD, and moved on to improve the environment supporting the economic empowerment of women and youth. Today AWTAD is supporting young start-up entrepreneurs, women in their quest for economic freedom, artisans in their fight to break the glass ceiling they live under, and youth in finding their path. In 2013 she established a new company called JEZOOR to work with young entrepreneurs to stand tall during the first three years of their incorporation to ensure that the survival rate of start-ups is on the rise. It also offers simulations and trainings on behavioural change and breaking stereotyping in Egypt and managing teams. She is a businesswoman, mentor, consultant, designer and dreamer of making things happen for others as much as for herself.
Dr. Yumn Al-Hamaky
Economics Expert

President of Liberal Forum Egypt (NGO); Economic and Technical Advisor for Ethraa Company; former El Shoura Council member-Vice President of Economics Committee; head of women’s committee related to policy secretary (NDP) (2003-2005); former chairperson of the Economics Dept. at the Faculty of Commerce, Ain Shams University; chairperson of the Economic Studies Dept. at the Centre of Middle East Research and Future Studies (until 2001); former member of education, training, and scientific research committee (National Council of Women); former head and founder of the Human Resource Unit which aims to upgrade skills of student for employment and prepare them for opportunities to enter the labour market.

Contacts :

Omran Fyad
Communication Officer
League of Arab States
Tel: +20 11 0065 9096
Omran.fyad@hotmail.com

Emad Abou-Elgheit
Media and Communication Expert
UN Women – Regional Office for Arab States
Tel: +20 2 2768 7412
emad.abouelgheit@unwomen.org