
THE WAY FORWARD

CONFERENCE

15-17 JULY 2019

Syrian women have gained political, economic, social and cultural leadership roles thanks to their constant strive and struggle. However, they have not yet achieved a minimum of 30% participation as requested throughout the current negotiation process.

“The Way Forward” conference, held in Beirut on 15 - 17 July 2019, included more than 80 women and men to discuss the political participation of Syrian women. Participants deliberated common strategies to empower women and enable their efficient participation as decision makers in negotiations, conflict resolution, sustainable peace building, democratic transition and reconstruction. The conference championed coalition-building among women-centered and feminist networks, which will promote women’s participation throughout the political process including the constitutional process.

Participants in “The Way Forward” conference urge all stakeholders to find an inclusive political solution for Syria in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254. After all, reaching sustainable peace in Syria requires women to actively participate in the political process, and at the local level, as prescribed by UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security and all other related Security Council Resolutions.

OUTCOMES

PARTICIPATION OF SYRIAN WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS

- Make effective use of the UNSCR 1325 to promote meaningful participation of Syrian women at all stages of the political process from the local to the national level.
- Support the democratic transition in accordance with UNSCR 2254 and other relevant UN resolutions to achieve justice, equality and human rights, especially for women.
- Strengthen the role of Women Advisory Board to the UN Special Envoy to Syria by establishing mechanisms of communication and feedback with all three tracks; create a supportive framework around it, and utilize it as a channel to influence advancing the political process including the constitutional process and establish feedback loops.
- Ensure meaningful and direct participation of Syrian women in the political process as mandated by UNSCR 2254 with a minimum 30% quota aiming for equality.
- Deepen and improve communication mechanisms between all three tracks by, among others, conducting regular meetings between negotiation delegations and members of track one and two.
- Strengthen the understanding of gender equality and women political participation among local communities.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF SYRIAN WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

- Continue building a critical mass of women politicians from all backgrounds ensuring a strong and effective involvement of Syrian women at all levels of political and public administration. To this end establishing a Feminist Political Academy as mechanism to build capacities and educate women politicians.
- Establish an entity to monitor women 'participation and gender equality in all stages of the political process.
- Engender the legal framework covering political life, focusing on laws covering the right of association, elections, political parties and local administration.
- Enforce a quota system of at least 30% for women's political participation to be guaranteed in the constitution and relevant secondary laws ensuring that Syrian women reach decision-making positions at all local, regional and national levels.
- Mobilize more local support for the feminist agenda and women politicians.

ENGENDERING THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

- Establish an official effective communication channel with the Constitutional Committee members to ensure engendering the constitutional process.
- Organize advocacy and public campaigns to gain support for the feminist agenda in the constitutional process.
- Utilize existing bodies and mechanisms (Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room) to monitor the Constitutional Committee outcomes ensuring they are gender sensitive.
- Advocate to engender the constitutional process based on solid existing Syrian research, and using new methodologies to disseminate them among all Syrians.
- Make visible local Syrian experiences and incorporating lessons learnt on engendering the constitution.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Expose any political body that does not include women and pushing for a minimum 30% quota for women.
- Strengthen a more meaningful role for women in the three tracks.
- Engage men and women, especially youth, in women and human rights' programming.
- Support local and national feminist/women's initiatives and conduct advocacy campaigns for that.
- Establish mechanisms to protect women human rights defenders and the rights of women politicians, and creating an enabling environment to participate at all levels.
- Promote the adoption of gender sensitive policies and procedures within Syrian civil society organizations.
- Conduct advocacy efforts by civil society actors to adopt gender sensitive Confidence Building Measures to address the root causes and consequences of the conflict. Examples of such issues are the detainees, abductees and enforced missing persons, processes for reparation and accountability, and the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs.