

Technical Working Group on Elections

Wednesday January 22, 2014 from 9:30 till 11:30

UNDP Country Office

Attendees

The following organizations attended:

- Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- UK Embassy
- SMART center
- LADE
- CCER
- Swedish Embassy
- IFES
- Women in Front
- RDFL
- LCW
- Women in Parliament Coalition
- Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace
- Canadian Embassy
- EU Delegation
- NDI
- UNSCOL
- UNDP LEAP

Agenda

- A. Electoral developments,
- B. Presentation from LCW, RDFL, Women in Front, SMART Center, Women in Parliament Coalition, and LEAP on electoral activities related to gender,
- C. Updates from TWGE participants.

Minutes

A: Election developments

(i) Sub-Committee on Electoral Law

LEAP gave an overview of the work of the subcommittee and mentioned that it hasn't been meeting lately due to a lack of quorum. The next item that should be discussed in the subcommittee's meeting is the formation of candidates' lists which may lead to discussing women quota.

B: Electoral Activities Related to Gender

Richard emphasized on the importance of this TWGE meeting as it intended to discuss women's political participation after a brief presentation by the 5 organizations advocating and lobbying for women rights. This TWGE was also equally important as it included representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities by the person of Mrs. Faten Abou Hassan, Director General of Political Affairs and Refugees in charge, and Mrs. Zeina Abdel Khalik from the Ministry of Social Affairs who is the National Project Coordinator for Promoting Women's Participation in Local Governance and Development Project.

The Lebanese Council of Women (LCW) is currently involved in a 10 months project which aims at promoting and empowering women candidates and voters. The activities of the project will be implemented via 66 regional NGOs, 11 in each governorate. These NGOs will have to identify the women candidates and the potential candidates in order to raise their awareness on how to run for elections, how to vote and so on. Another component of this project will be buy airtime on TV in order to give an equal chance for all women candidates to be interviewed and present their electoral campaign.

The goal of the LCW project is to make the women candidates known and publically accepted in order to be elected.

The Rassemblement Democratique des Femmes Libanaises (RDFL) is currently working on 4 projects.

The first project is a regional project which aims at promoting the role of political parties and syndicates in enhancing women's political participation especially after the Arab Spring.

The second project is based in Lebanon and aims at observing elections from a gender perspective. This project is part of the EU consortium.

The third project is continuously being a member of CCER and advocating for the same reforms including women quota.

The fourth project is Women's right project which stretches over the regional offices of RDFL in Bekaa, Tripoli, Zouk, Saida, and Beirut.

The fifth project is entitled Women Can Do It, which is being implemented in Lebanon and Palestine.

Women in Front presented their two projects; the first entitled Women in Parliament 2014 and the second entitled Women in Municipalities. The activities vary from a legal aspect to an awareness campaign and to a communication strategy.

SMART Center is working on 3 projects related to women participation in political life. The first one is entitled She Leads. The second project is entitled Her Excellency Madame Deputy. And the third is a specialized media campaign.

The Women in Parliament Coalition was attending the TWGE for the first time. For this reason the presentation included information about the establishment of the coalition, its members, and its mission statement. Then the representative of the coalition presented the activities of the coalition in addition to their future plans.

LEAP presented its activities pertaining to promoting women participation and representation in the Lebanese elections.

After the time given for the presentations, the attendees were concerned about the overlap in the activities conducted by the organizations, and many suggested further cooperation and collaboration among the NGOs.

On behalf of the **MoIM**, Ms. Faten Bou Hassan acknowledged the initiatives undertaken by the NGOs to promote women participation in the political life. At the request of the attendees, Ms. Bou Hassan clarified the responsibilities of the MoIM in promoting women participation as candidate, as SCEC member, and as polling official. She also clarified the obstacles that the ministry faces given the current electoral law.

On behalf of **MoSA**, Ms. Zeina Abdel Khalik presented the ministry's project entitled Promoting Women's Participation in Local Governance and Development which focuses on advocating political parties to nominate women as candidates by using a media campaign. It also works on building women's capacity in the political parties. The project will also work on training media professionals about responsible journalism and how to cover gender issues in a proper manner. There are 18 micro-funds projects benefiting women members of the municipal councils.

MoSA's representative also mentioned that there is a gender mainstreaming unit at the ministry.

C: Other Updates

- Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace: currently working on two projects. The role of the constitution council in the post-election period, mainly in the media and campaign finance components. The second project is a dialogue between the citizens of Jounieh and Beirut, and their respective elected bodies.