

WOMEN LEADERS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

The Iraq Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson
International Center for Scholars
Amman, Jordan / 30 May – 1 June 2013

Conference
Report

Conference Report
for

Women Leaders in an Era of Change

Presented by the Iraq Foundation
and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Amman, Jordan
30 May - 1 June 2013

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Conference Overview

The “Women Leaders in an Era of Change” conference explored **how Iraqi and other women parliamentarians in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) can take advantage of opportunities given the regional changes resulting from the Arab Awakening.** This conference, organized by the Iraq Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, was the second to **pair Iraqi women parliamentarians (IWPs) with women members of parliament (MPs) from the region,** following the “Women’s Political Participation” conference in June 2012.

The Iraq Foundation and Wilson Center have cooperated over the last three years in a program **to build the capacities and the effectiveness of Iraqi women members of parliament.** In the context of this program, the Iraq Foundation and Wilson Center have held trainings and networking meetings for Iraqi MPs; conducted research and case studies through surveys, questionnaires, and one-on-one meetings; and held a first meeting with other women MPs in the region in June 2012.

The goal of the conference was to provide a forum to discuss women’s political participation, women’s caucuses and alliances, women’s roles in conflict and post conflict situations, and women and the media, among other topics. The conference brought together Iraqi and regional women MPs to discuss how they can activate their roles as the region undergoes change. Participants focused on **how to take advantage of opportunities and maximize their effectiveness.** Women MPs discussed ways to improve their capacity as MPs in a changing region, sharing their professional experiences, best practices, and lessons learned.

Themes

The “Women Leaders in an Era of Change” conference focused on three broad themes: **constraints and opportunities for women MPs, how women can capitalize on opportunities, and how women can maximize impact.** Participants first discussed how regional changes present both challenges and opportunities for women MPs. They identified the effect of political change on women’s participation and the specific constraints to women’s participation. Women MPs also provided comparative examples of how women can take advantage of political change, discussing the **importance of establishing alliances inside and outside parliament.** Working with other women, as well as men, is vital for women MPs to identify potential opportunities.

Participants also discussed ways that women MPs can seize the opportunity offered by political change occurring as a result of the Arab Awakening to improve the status and participation of women. International experts, Moushira Khattab and Fatima Sbaity Kassem, presented sessions on the

Conference Objectives:

- Assessing the impact of political changes in the region on the status and participation of women leaders in decision-making
- Exchanging experiences on overcoming challenges and capitalizing on opportunities offered during transitional periods
- Presenting strategies for integrating international conventions on women into the legislative and administrative frameworks of the state

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) with discussion about **how women MPs can use their role to integrate or enhance these international conventions in their countries**. Participants also talked about women's roles in drafting constitutions and as peace-builders in conflict situations; both of these topics addressed relevant issues that women MPs face in countries undergoing change.

Participants shared examples of how women MPs can maximize their impact in parliament and beyond. They discussed the usefulness of forming women's caucuses and women's parties—most MPs supported the concept of women's caucuses but not women's parties, which were perceived as unnecessary and counter-productive. In addition, participants reviewed **the importance of women's role in the media and how using the media**, including social media, **can improve an MP's effectiveness**.

At the conference's conclusion, participants addressed the benefits of a continuing, cross-regional dialogue among women MPs, to share experiences and information.

The women MPs built upon recommendations from the 2012 conference as they established a set of 29 recommendations for women MPs to use going forward. These recommendations can assist women MPs in determining how to most effectively leverage the potential of the Arab Awakening. **The full list of recommendations is provided in this report following the conference proceedings.**

Format

Twenty-four participants, facilitators, and international experts conducted the three-day conference structured around **formal presentations followed by group discussions**. Conference **participants represented seven countries** (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia) with backgrounds including current and former members of parliament, former ambassadors, and international and non-governmental organization representatives.

The conference took place at the Amman Marriott Hotel and provided opportunities for informal dialogue and exchanges. The conference was conducted primarily in Arabic with simultaneous English transition. Distributed materials were available in Arabic and English.

The report includes the conference agenda and a complete summary of all conference proceedings followed by conference recommendations. **The participants' biographies and conference photos are in the appendices at the end of the report.**

This conference report was prepared by Kendra Heideman from the Middle East Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Conference Agenda

The Iraq Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

present

Women Leaders in an Era of Change

Amman Marriott Hotel

Amman, Jordan

May 30 – June 1, 2013

Day 1: Constraints and Opportunities for Women MPs

8.45-9:15am **Welcome Statement IF/WWICS**

(This can be followed by a 15- minute overview of “where we are,” presented by an Arabic-speaking expert

9:30-11:15 am **Session 1:** How Political Change Has Effected Women’s Political Participation (Positively and Negatively)

Presenters: Amal Atyah (Iraq) and Dr. Fatima Gouaima Mazzi (Morocco)

Facilitator: Moushira Khattab

11:15-11:30 am **Break**

11:30-1:00 pm **Session 2:** Identifying Social and Political Constraints to Participation

Presenters: Zala Younis (Iraq) and Hind Al Fayez (Jordan)

Facilitator: Fatima Sbaity Kassem

1:00-2:00 pm **Lunch**

2:00-3:30 pm **Session 3:** How Women Can Take Advantage of Positive Political Change

Presenters: Batool Farooq (Iraq) and Ratiba El Mascric (Algeria)

Facilitator: Moushira Khattab

3:30-4:30 pm **Session 4:** Women’s Allies and Alliances in Parliament and Outside

Presenters: Huda Sajad (Iraq) and Rabee’a Najlawi (Tunisia)

Facilitators: Fatima Sbaity Kassem

4:30-5:00 pm **Wrap Up Session**

Facilitator: Moushira Khattab

Day 2: How Women MPs Can Capitalize on Opportunities

9:00-10:30 am	Session 1: The Status of CEDAW in MENA Countries Presenters: Fatima Sbaity Kassem Facilitator: Haleh Esfandiari
10:30-11.45 pm	Session 2: Women MPs and International Conventions, UNSCR 1325 Presenter: Moushira Khattab Facilitator: Rend Al Rahim
11.45-12:00 pm	Break
12:00-1:30 pm	Session 3: Women as Peace-Builders in Conflict Presenters: Iman Al-Wa'eli (Iraq) and Samira Bouras Kerkouche (Algeria) Facilitator: MoushiraKhattab
1:30-2:30 pm	Lunch
2:30-4:00 pm	Session 4: Women's Role in Drafting Constitutions in the Context of International Rights Instruments Presenters: Intisar Al-Jubouri (Iraq) and Rabee'a Najlawi (Tunisia) Facilitator: MoushiraKhattab
4:00-5:00 pm	Wrap Up Session Facilitator: Fatima Sbaity Kassem

Day 3: How Women MPs Can Maximize Impact

9:00-10:30 am	Session 1: Women's Caucuses and Women's Parties: Experiences, Successes, and Challenges Presenters: Shlair Aziz (Iraq) and Sana'a Al-Saeed (Egypt) Facilitator: Moushira Khattab
10:30-10:45 am	Break
10:45-12:15 pm	Session 2: Women MPs and the Media Presenters: Iman Mousa Hammadi (Iraq) and Rula Al-Hroub (Jordan) Facilitator: Fatima Sbaity Kassem
12:15-1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15-2:45 pm	Session 3: Forming and Maintaining a Cross-Regional Network Facilitator: Rend Al Rahim and Fatima Sbaity Kassem
2:45-3:00 pm	Break
3:00-4:00 pm	Wrap Up Session: Presentations of Findings and Recommendations by Facilitators and Experts

Conference Proceedings

Day 1: Constraints and Opportunities for Women MPs

Welcome statements by the Iraq Foundation and the Wilson Center

Conference organizers welcomed participants and provided an **overview of the Iraq Foundation and Wilson Center’s partnership, the proceedings of the 2012 conference in Amman, and the status of women in the MENA region.** Both organizations have a history of coordinating similar conferences for women parliamentarians in the region. This was the second conference for Iraqi and regional MPs.

The 2012 conference with Iraqi and regional MPs, “Women’s Political Participation,” focused on how to empower women parliamentarians: by developing leadership capacity, creating alliances and lobbies, understanding how to use the media, maintaining communication with electoral base, exchanging expertise with women MPs in the region, and utilizing best practices.

Organizers discussed the current status of women and the progression of women’s rights, noting that **women face greater political, economic, and physical insecurity as a result of changes in the region since the beginning of the Arab Awakening in 2011.** There are currently **fewer women in parliament in several countries and fewer women in leadership and government positions.** Algeria and Tunisia have

Country	% of women MPs (number of women)
Algeria	31% (146)
Tunisia	27% (58)
Iraq	25% (82)
Saudi Arabia	20% (30)
UAE	17% (7)
Libya	17% (33)
Morocco	17% (67)
Jordan	12% (18)
Syria*	12% (30)
Bahrain	10% (4)
Kuwait	6% (4)
Lebanon	3% (4)
Egypt*	2% (8)
Oman	1% (1)
Yemen	<1% (1)
Qatar	0% (0)

the greatest percentage of women MPs with 31 and 27 percent, respectively; Iraq has 25 percent of women MPs. Members of Most other countries in the region have some level of representation of women. Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE have Shura Councils with varying representation of women. Despite some improvements to women’s representation in parliament, which is now an average of 13.8 percent, the Arab region is ranked second lowest in the world (just above Pacific Rim countries). (Source: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>)

In addition to political participation, organizers reviewed the **status of women in education, the workforce, and civil society as well as challenges and discrimination that women face.** For example, women’s illiteracy remains a problem in many Arab countries and only 22 percent are part of the workforce (though there is great variance among MENA countries). To address such challenges, and others, many Arab countries currently have national strategies for women in place as a result of work

on women’s issues and awareness-raising that took place after the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

This conference was intended to build upon developments from the 2012 conference and determine ways for women MPs to take advantage of opportunities to improve the status women in the region.

Specific goals were **to strengthen women parliamentarians at three levels: their representation of constituents, their ability to monitor executive bodies, and their capacity to enact and reform laws.**

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Session 1: How Political Change Has Affected Women’s Political Participation (Positively and Negatively)

Participants noted that although political change has provided space for women’s participation, Arab women still face the **problem of translating such change and experiences into meaningful interaction within governments and into legislative processes that support women’s rights.** Women’s issues are the proving ground of democracy and democratic transitions. Thus, when democracy regresses, women are the first to be affected by such changes.

During this session, women MPs addressed several significant themes related to ways in which **women’s participation has been affected by political changes in the region.** While women’s quotas have recently been implemented (or abandoned) in some countries, women MPs need greater capacity beyond quotas to influence legislation. A rise in Islamist governments has led to increased marginalization and made it more difficult for women MPs to reach leadership positions. Legislative processes often exclude women because they are not in leadership positions and are perceived as less capable than male MPs.

Participants argued that **quotas for women’s representation are insufficient—women must be able to use their seats in parliament effectively.** To some, women’s quotas were viewed as “window dressing,” designed solely to present a positive image but without parallel political allowance for women to use their reserved seats to enact change. For example, although the new 2011 Moroccan constitution allocates around 20 percent of seats to women, no women lead political blocs or committees and therefore they have a limited role in drafting legislation. Despite Iraq’s 25 percent quota being in place since its 2005 parliamentary election, there have not been significant changes in women’s leadership roles. The quota has, however, helped pass legislation for women’s economic empowerment. Egypt had a women’s quota for the 2010 parliamentary election (before the change of regime) but no measures for empowering women in parliament. This quota did not require women to actively campaign, so when the quota was repealed under the new post-Mubarak regime, women candidates had little support among voters or experience running campaigns. In Tunisia, a zipper-list system helped women get elected to the Constituent Assembly in 2011, but they received minimal help from their parties in promoting their campaigns or in technical training on legal issues.

Quotas for women’s representation are insufficient—women must be empowered to use their seats

Such negative consequences of women’s quotas leadsome to argue against quotas, saying women should rely on their strength as effective politicians to gain public support. Although MPs acknowledged quotas alone are not enough, all agreed quotas were necessary to ensure women have a chance to pursue participation in the first place. Political changes that allow quotas are one step in increasing women’s participation. Therefore, participants suggested that **quotas should be adopted across the board—in ministries, government, private sector, education, etc.—not just in parliament.**

MPs discussed how political change resulting from a rise in Islamism has negatively affected women's participation, as in Egypt and Tunisia. Some women MPs said the region is suffering from political extremism and exploitation of religion. They noted the increase in political Islamist parties that have recommended legislation encouraging women to stay home as wives and mothers rather than participate in the political, economic, or social spheres. **In some cases political change has resulted in a decline in women's appointments to various leadership positions** and furthered male political dominance. In Morocco, for example, there were seven women ministers from 2007-2011 while there is only one woman minister in the current government. Even in light of Morocco's new constitution in 2011, which included legal gains for women's rights and a parliamentary quota system, men still hold most leadership positions. The same is true in Jordan, which also has only one woman minister (Minister of Social Development); it had three women ministers in the previous government (2010-2013).

Participants also discussed how most **legislative processes bypass women because women rarely hold leadership positions** and because **drafting processes belong to specialized committees where women's voices are often marginalized**. In Algeria, draft legislation is discussed within specific political blocs, in which the party or coalition leader usually makes the final decision. Often, laws are proposed by the executive branch, leaving MPs few opportunities to draft legislation. Although any MP can present an amendment, 10 signatures are needed for it to be considered, and the division of women across political parties makes it difficult for them to work together. Iraq has a similar structure, and women are rarely even included in the discussions. Most legislative decisions ultimately come from the executive branch.

Women MPs are sometimes excluded from decision-making processes because they are perceived as less competent than their male colleagues. In cases where women (and men) are unfamiliar with legal processes, women MPs face trouble accessing the information they need to educate themselves. Because discussions about legislation occur within blocs or committees behind closed doors, women are often not invited to participate and, thus, find it difficult to learn about the details of legislation. Another related challenge is how divisions and **conflicts between political parties, sometimes brought about by political change, have made it more difficult for women to work together**. MPs suggested building women's coalitions across party lines to facilitate cooperation on women's issues, prevent rivalries that undermine the welfare of women, keep women informed on political issues, and empower fellow parliamentarians.

- Implement quotas for women in all sectors: parliament, government, business, education, etc.
- Provide women with greater access to leadership positions, through quotas or political pressure.
- Build women's alliances to facilitate cooperation, minimize conflict, and empower women.
- Increase support for women's participation by presenting it in terms of security and development.
- Conduct statistical studies on the status of women to assist political leaders and civil society organizations (CSOs) in identifying areas for improvement during political change.

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Session 2: Identifying Social and Political Constraints to Participation

Following recent political changes in the region, **women MPs face a significant number of obstacles to their participation in public life, including social, political, economic, and security constraints**. Social

constraints include male-dominated societies, a lack of democratic culture, misguided view of religion, and media and education practices that perpetuate stereotypes. Political obstacles relate to the lack of long-standing political parties, a weak culture of participation, absence of women's committees in parliament and of ministries for women, and the side-lining of women within political parties and from decision-making processes. Women MPs also face economic and security challenges that limit their political participation.

Participants outlined a number of social constraints, focusing on the **problem of traditional perspectives in male-dominated societies that do not support women in politics**. Several MPs from rural or tribal communities discussed the difficulty of gaining constituent support. A few had supportive families who encouraged their campaigns; others had family members who discouraged their participation. Similarly, an MP said some women voters in Tunisia lacked awareness about their political rights and were concerned, for example, that their husbands would know which candidate they voted for. MPs suggested that women elected from rural or tribal areas should focus on issues that matter most to their community; this way women MPs can prove they are effective politicians who can make a difference. The more women show their effectiveness, the more they erode social barriers to women's participation and encourage more women to self-nominate or to vote for other women.

Biased interpretations of Islam can also constrain women's participation. It was noted that interpretations vary among different communities. While many Islamic jurists interpret Islam as supporting women's rights, some MPs said their communities followed rigid interpretations that oppose women's political participation. To address such issues, MPs recommended highlighting the interpretations of progressive jurists, both through the media (to show women can be active in society and still observe their religion) and in the education system (with textbooks that do not portray gender stereotypes). Adding to the complexity of religious interpretation, some women in Islamist parties support restrictive policies against women and refuse to address women's issues.

Many countries lack women's committees in parliament or ministries to provide coordination on women's issues and support for women MPs.

Along with social obstacles, women face numerous political challenges that constrain their participation in society. **Women MPs often are excluded from senior positions within their political parties.** Although parties include women as members, parties rarely

invite—or even allow—women to participate in decision-making. Quotas allow women to gain a seat, but in practice they are excluded from discussions of “serious” issues. Parties may also marginalize MPs who address women's rights, accusing them of not representing the party. This makes it difficult for women to gain experience or demonstrate their abilities to their constituencies, which is vital to addressing social constraints.

Many Arab parliaments lack “women's committees” or coalitions to provide coordination on women's issues and to support other women MPs, further impeding women's political cooperation. For example, 146 Algerian women MPs were elected in 2012 and they have demanded a committee for women's affairs in parliament, but the government has yet to review the request. Jordan has 18 women MPs who were elected in January 2013 and no women's ministry, but women MPs are working to improve women's cooperation through weekly meetings that address issues that are important to both men and

women. **Not all Arab governments have women’s ministries, and those that do exist have limited influence**, as in Iraq and Tunisia. For example, an MP said the Tunisian women’s ministry is used as more of a distraction for women MPs than a mechanism to implement meaningful policy change. Issues brought up by these ministries are often sidelined, as are its members—governments leave ministries underfunded and understaffed. Several MPs suggested **broadening the scope of existing women’s ministries to frame gender policies as a crosscutting topic across other national issues**, such as health, agriculture, education, etc., to show the utility of such a ministry. Women’s ministries should also conduct more research and analysis and educate women about their rights.

Women MPs also face **economic constraints such as financial dependence** on family members. Participants recommended empowering women economically to provide them with greater freedom to voice political views. They discussed the importance of economic empowerment of women as a tool of greater political empowerment. Several MPs discussed **security constraints on women’s participation that make women feel unsafe assuming public roles**, especially in countries that have had violent transitions. Women may suffer physical or psychological abuse from their communities for participating politically. In Iraq, some women candidates were assassinated and others faced threats of assassination. In many other countries in the region, the threat of sexual harassment is a major concern.

Participants said that because some women MPs may lack the necessary confidence to address these social, political, economic, and security constraints, all women MPs need to actively support each other better, form networks, and seek collaborations within these networks.

- Encourage governments in the region to subsidize campaigns for women candidates.
- Broaden the scope of women’s ministries to include interaction with national issues.
- Urge political parties to look at laws that would promote women to decision-making roles.
- Focus on the specific needs of constituents to earn respect and support.
- Set up specialized regional monitoring center for complete analysis about women’s issues.

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Session 3: How Women Can Take Advantage of Positive Political Change

This session, building upon the two previous discussions about the effects of political change and the impact of constraints on women, allowed women MPs to examine how they can overcome obstacles and take advantage of change. **One of the most important benefits of positive political change is the momentum to effect further change.** In this transitional period in the region, women MPs have the chance to take advantage of political opportunities, introduce societal change, use and exploit the media, and establish coalitions and alliances.

Following changes in the region, **women have benefited from significant political opportunities, such as involvement in drafting constitutions and new legislation.** Constitutions are not enough to improve women’s rights, however—the interpretation of constitutions and MPs’ involvement and follow-up are equally important, if not more so. In Morocco,

Positive political change provides the necessary momentum to effect further change.

for example, MPs presented a draft law on the age of marriage for the 2011 constitution to limit judges' ability to interpret a vague existing law. Opposition and majority party women MPs joined together on this. In addition, more women's voices are now accepted and more are advocating for women's issues as a result of political change. Women are more involved in political parties, which provide sustainability for women's political participation. Some women MPs have also developed curricula that advance human rights and women's rights. **In general, it was observed that countries with greater stability allow women to advance politically, though transitions offer valuable opportunities.**

Many participants discussed **recent positive societal changes such as the ability of women to express themselves and share their views**, sometimes for the first time. Some MPs said this change improved their confidence and, in turn, improved their performance and ability to lead. Such freedom of expression brought about the formation of new ideas in many countries in the region. An Iraqi MP mentioned there is newfound acceptance of others in the region. In the transition from totalitarian regimes to democratic governments, parliamentarians can utilize this dynamic to introduce other societal changes as well.

Political change that offers greater **freedom of media is important for women MPs as it enables them to promote their agendas and communicate with constituents.** With better access to a freer media in most countries, MPs are able to combat stereotypes and demand equality for women. Through the media, along with the support of CSOs, women MPs can effectively expose relevant issues to the public. For example, an Iraqi MP used the media to show the inaccuracy of recent studies in the country that significantly underestimated the problem of illiteracy. Because of these opportunities, women MPs expressed the need for training on how to appear in the media.

Women MPs also created alliances, lobbies, and networks as a result of political changes in the region. Coalitions within parliament help women advance further and advance the ambitions of other women in the political sphere. These coalitions should not just include women, however, but also male MPs, CSOs, the media, and religious scholars, among others. MPs recommended developing an Arab network and a female lobby that tracks developments taking place locally, regionally, and globally on women's issues.

- Follow up on relevant legislation to ensure it is being implemented correctly.
- Work to improve women MPs' confidence to improve their performance and leadership skills.
- Train women MPs on human rights and on using the media to share message and expose issues.
- Develop an Arab network to track changes and developments on women's issues.
- Form coalitions with other women and male MPs, CSOs, the media, and religious scholars, etc.

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Session 4: Women's Allies and Alliances in Parliament and Outside

Developing alliances inside and outside parliament is an important way to activate the work of women MPs and increase their effectiveness in parliament. Alliances assist women MPs in moving forward with legislative work; without alliances, it would be difficult to modify or amend relevant legislation. In this session, MPs discussed how they can form alliances, who they should form alliances with, and how to overcome parliamentary obstacles with alliances.

Participants spoke of the importance of women MPs forming alliances to address women’s issues— **uniting around a common issue is a necessary first step in developing alliances among women MPs.** Despite differences of political party, bloc, or ideology, women MPs can collaborate on specific issues to implement strategies and introduce legislation. A women’s bloc also needs to have a role in decision-making processes, and one or two women from the women’s bloc should also be included in other parliamentary blocs. In the previous Iraqi parliament, for instance, women MPs formed a bloc with a number of objectives that supported women’s issues, created unified positions, found common ground for constructive dialogue, and enhanced parliamentary efficiency. Additionally, Algerian women from different political parties worked together to support the idea for a national fund to support widows.

In 2011, women MPs in Tunisia held a forum to discuss the importance of having women constitute 50 percent of political parties’ candidates. They were able to convince women MPs in the Ennahda party (the majority party in post-revolutionary Tunisia) to join them and successfully passed legislation because of this dialogue among women MPs. In Morocco, opposition and majority women MPs joined together to present an amendment that would remove judges’ ability to allow girls under 18 years old to marry (18 years is the age of marriage in Morocco, but judicial exceptions to this had become the rule).

In addition to forming women’s alliances, **women MPs also need to create alliances with their male colleagues in parliament** to achieve their goals. Male champions for women’s rights inside parliament

are important as a means of creating a connection between women and men. Regardless of political party, male MPs can be allies, as experiences in several countries in the region have shown.

Women MPs must find alliances not only among themselves, but also with male MPs, CSOs, religious leaders, and others.

Furthermore, participants noted the **usefulness of developing alliances with religious scholars.** They said it is important to understand the difference between people who are religious and people who are extremist—extremism, not religion, opposes women’s rights. In this region, religious scholars can assist with jurisprudence and interpreting *shari’ah* as it relates to legislation. In Iraq, the Women and Children Committee worked with religious scholars to determine which laws in the country’s constitution and penal code were incompatible

with *shari’ah* and negatively discriminate against women (This was accomplished with the assistance of the Iraq Foundation and discussed in detail later).

Alliances with CSOs represent necessary partners outside parliament that can assist in promoting women’s issues. These collaborative relationships, as well as work with women activists and voters, help women MPs raise awareness about important topics. CSOs can help women gain support, run campaigns, and organize protests, etc. Women MPs also need to support CSOs in this mutual exchange. Women MPs also highlighted the importance of increasing communication with the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and women’s committees.

Women encounter a number of obstacles within their political parties and committees that inhibit attempts to form alliances with other women MPs, male MPs, religious scholars, and CSOs. Several women MPs noted it was difficult to form women’s blocs because they are expected to implement their political party’s agenda. Divisions among political parties have negatively impacted achievements on

women’s issues, which is limit women’s success and has led to criticism. In Iraq, some women on the legal committee objected to the “women-friendly” amendments presented by the Women and Children Committee, an example of how difficult it is to unify women parliamentarians.

- Form women’s alliances based on a specific issue or topic for effectiveness.
- Organize training sessions for women MPs on negotiating and creating alliances.
- Communicate with former women parliamentarians to exchange expertise outside parliament.
- Work with MPs, religious scholars, and CSOs to raise awareness and promote women’s issues.
- Increase communication between the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and women’s committees, rather than create a new women’s organization.



Day 2: How Women MPs Can Capitalize on Opportunities

Session 1: The Status of CEDAW in MENA Countries

Nineteen Arab countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), most with reservations, but Morocco and Tunisia have announced they will lift their reservations. Other countries in the region have also decided to cancel some reservations. The majority of Arab states have reservations on articles 2, 9, 16, and 29, and **most countries hold such reservations to ensure they comply with the convention in a manner that does not contradict *shari'ah*.**

An international expert, Fatima Sbaity Kassem, presented CEDAW article by article to demonstrate **how women MPs can assist in the implementation of CEDAW in their countries.** She reviewed the process of ratification, reporting, reviewing, and implementation. While national committees on women's issues prepare the official country report, some NGOs involved in women's issues prepare a "shadow report" showing how CEDAW is being implemented in the country. Upon request, international organizations, such as UN Women, can provide consultants and help countries remove reservations. Countries sometimes use CEDAW to enhance their image among other countries, and while it is a non-binding convention, countries could be "named and shamed" among their peers for not implementing it. Therefore, **CEDAW could be considered binding in the sense that it reflects the status of a state in the international community.**

Since the 1995 Beijing conference, Arab countries have seen a qualitative leap of greater awareness of women's issues. One is now able to openly discuss violence against women for instance: Jordan was one of the first countries to study violence against women and establish a law to combat it. Despite these developments, countries need to develop mechanisms to implement CEDAW and follow up on it. It is also **important to publish CEDAW in official newspapers to raise awareness in the public.**

Several challenges limit the utilization and effectiveness of CEDAW. For example, courts rarely refer to CEDAW in rulings, and few use it as a reference. (In Iraq, however, a judge ruled three times in the interest of women based on CEDAW articles.) In the Arab world, **human rights conventions have a bad reputation because they are often perceived as part of a Western agenda.** Some believe CEDAW promotes sexual liberty, an incorrect notion that women MPs need to correct in parliament and the media. Moreover, there is no sentence in these conventions that contradict any religion—these conventions are the result of negotiations with government representatives.

Women MPs can challenge their governments to implement CEDAW and address the increasing marginalization of women.

Women MPs need to understand CEDAW because their countries are signatories and they can challenge their governments to address the increasing marginalization of women. Algeria, for example, created a National Women's Council in 1996 that promotes dialogue and conducts assessments on all issues related to women. In Egypt, CEDAW was implemented well before the

revolution (in 1981) and included changes in the civil code on women's custody of children, the age of marriage, and other related laws that were amended due to CEDAW's implementation. An MP said CEDAW is currently the only thing protecting women's rights in the country. Egypt's National Council for Women has been criticized by some because it is associated with Suzanne Mubarak, the country's

former first lady, and the former regime. In 2012, Iraq put a bill in place to establish a national committee to combat human trafficking, an issue addressed in article 6 of CEDAW (Iraq recently lifted its reservation on article 9, which deals with nationality). Iraq's parliament is also discussing a bill on protection against domestic violence. In Tunisia, a female constituent contacted an MP when she was questioned by the police about traveling without her husband's permission; the MP convinced the police officer that he had no right to ask her this. This MP said she would file a case against the Tunisian government for not implementing the articles of CEDAW.

Ignorance about CEDAW and other international conventions remains in the region, among men and women decision-makers. Participants discussed the importance of educating judges and police about international conventions, changing curricula to address gender stereotypes, establishing a 30 percent quota across sectors, and implementing proportional electoral laws. Traditions, customs, tribal thinking, and chauvinism can make the Convention difficult to accept and implement. MPs need to diagnose the areas where there are reservations, especially regarding gender equality, and see how these matters relate to *shari'ah*. For example, the Iraq Foundation worked on a project to change unfair laws, suggesting amended texts and the creation of new laws, and found no contradiction between CEDAW and Islam (full discussion follows later). **While there is no single equation for improving equality, CEDAW is still the best and most comprehensive framework for achieving equality and eliminating discrimination against women.**

- Clarify CEDAW in parliament and the public to increase awareness and gain support.
- Educate judges and police about international conventions on human rights and women's rights.
- Change curricula and textbooks to address gender stereotypes and introduce women's rights.
- Establish a 30 percent quota at all levels, in private, public, administration, political parties, etc.
- Implement proportional electoral laws based on a broad, closed nomination list and proportional nomination for women.



Session 2: Women MPs and International Conventions, UNSCR 1325

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) addresses **women in conflict situations** as well as the **elimination of violence against women** in all situations and **women's participation in peace-building, conflict resolution, and decision-making**. An expert, Moushira Khattab, provided an overview of UNSCR1325, discussing how women MPs can use the broad resolution to improve women's rights and political participation. Parliament has a vital role to play in monitoring and enacting legislation related UNSCR 1325, CEDAW, and other international conventions.

UNSCR 1325 is significant for two reasons: (1) it was established by the UN Security Council, the most important entity to address international security issues; (2) it asks not only for country reports but also **National Action Plans on how to implement UNSCR 1325**. The CEDAW committee also asks that country reports include discussion of the country's plans to implement UNSCR 1325 within the report. In addition, the Security Council can receive complaints about the situation of women, as related to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (while CEDAW cannot receive complaints).

The resolution addresses several important issues: improving women’s participation at all levels of decision-making; increasing women’s participation at regional and international levels to avoid conflict; demanding women’s participation in building peace; enhancing world peace to avoid the greater impact of violence on girls and women; and implementing gender-mainstreaming.

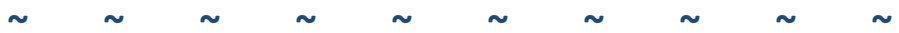
Furthermore, UNSCR 1325 goes beyond looking at violence against women in conflict and **takes into consideration the role that extremism can play in causing violence against women**. Some countries in the region are witnessing revolutions; some are peaceful while some involve exchanges with security forces and incidents of sexual harassment. Most governments have not acted to alleviate the ongoing sexual harassment. MPs discussed sexual harassment in Egypt, including rape and other forms of violence against women, following the country’s political transition since 2011. To address this problem, MPs can file a court case and then file a complaint with the CEDAW committee about the implementation of UNSCR 1325. MPs can also push forward the implementation of UNSCR 1325 to address this issue.

UNSCR 1325 addresses the elimination of violence against women in all situations and women’s participation in peace-building, conflict resolution, and decision-making.

Several difficulties hinder implementing UNSCR 1325— **the language in the resolution is weak and many people do not know about it**. There are also problems of inclusion of and information for MPs interested in UNSCR 1325. MPs need to monitor implementation and thus need more background on the resolution and involvement in discussions about it. Moreover, the legal framework in the Arab world recognizing women’s rights as human rights is very weak. Despite the 2004 Arab Charter on Human Rights, which guarantees equality between men and women, participants noted there should be a stronger culture to support this charter.

Arab countries need to create National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325. MPs should promote awareness of UNSCR 1325 among security officials, the interior ministry, judges, and the public. MPs must also hold workshops to promote awareness about the resolution and use it to advance women’s issues. In Iraq, CSOs started campaigns to raise awareness about UNSCR 1325 and to build confidence among women MPs. The UN assisted MPs and CSOs in their efforts to get political leaders to abide by the resolution. Some women MPs started a campaign called “Iraqis for Peace” that pushed forward the role of women in peace-building. **Women MPs should continue to monitor and increase awareness because CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, and other relevant international conventions are good platforms to combat harassment.**

- Create National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325 and create mechanisms to follow up.
- Provide MPs with copies of CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, and other relevant international conventions.
- Promote awareness of UNSCR 1325 to security officials, interior ministry, judges, the public, etc.
- Monitor and enact legislation related to UNSCR 1325 and other international conventions.
- Work with international organizations, CSOs, and other women MPs to increase awareness.



Session 3: Women as Peace-Builders in Conflict

Most countries acknowledge that women should have a role during conflict resolution and national reconciliation. Women are often the first victims of conflict; they lose family members and may be widowed or displaced, worsening their situation further. Women are directly affected by political instability and, therefore, have an important role to play in maintaining peace. The **involvement of women in decision-making is beneficial to women and men because women's contributions to society advance a country as a whole**. Women in conflict have a necessary strength and a presence to work toward peace-building.

Once women recognize their capacity to present solutions that reduce conflict, their participation becomes more effective. There are numerous ways for women to work as peace-builders in conflict. **Women MPs can draft legislation and provide a roadmap for the empowerment of women**. CSOs that focus on women's empowerment can assist in developing projects to build peace and reduce conflict.

Iraqi and Algerian women have unique experiences as peace-builders in conflict. Iraq in particular has seen consecutive conflicts that impact women greatly. **Because Iraqi women have experienced conflict,**

Women MPs as peace-builders can draft a roadmap for women's empowerment.

they are interested in preventing conflict and bringing peace back to their society. One of the first demonstrations of peace-building by Iraqi women was the 2005 elections: women turned out in large numbers and encouraged their families to vote, hoping this change through the polls would bring about peace. In response to the most recent

escalating political tensions, women MPs from the Women and Children Committee coordinated with the ground movement of the people to resolve the crisis. The MPs demanded to be part of the committee addressing the public protests. These MPs are continuing their conversations with protesters, religious leaders, and tribal leaders. An Iraqi MP discussed her role in resolving a conflict between dairy farm workers whose wages were suspended for two years. This MP communicated with tribal leaders and others in the region to resolve the conflict and end the bloodshed.

Women in Algeria occupy an important status in society because of the prominent role they played in the country's War of Independence (1954-1962)—women fought next to men and died for their country. Since women held positions in state institutions, they have been able to elevate their status and improve their positions. **Algerian women's contributions to the country's revolution and national reconciliation process allowed them to enhance their roles**. For instance, the country recently had three women ministers—culture, communications, and family and national solidarity. Of the 1,300 municipalities, about 30 percent are headed by women. Nevertheless, as in other countries in the region, women still face difficulty reaching decision-making positions. Algerian women have acquired many positions of influence because of their involvement in peace-building, and they continue to contribute to the country's effort to build peace and stability.

These examples provide insight into some countries' experiences with women in peace-building in the region, some of which could serve as models for other countries. Several issues limit women's ability to take part in peace-building processes. Participants discussed the difficulty of working as peace-makers when many political parties are also parties to conflict. It is problematic for women MPs to extricate

themselves from their parties to participate in peaceful projects or movements. The lack of women in decision-making roles also adds to the difficulty of involving women in peace negotiations.

- Draft legislation and provide a roadmap for the inclusion and empowerment of women in peace-building and negotiations.
- Work with CSOs to develop projects that build peace and reduce conflict
- Recognize capacity to present solutions that reduce political conflict to increase effectiveness.
- Understand constituents' needs related to conflict resolution in order to address them.
- Demand action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 and involve women in national reconciliation.

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Session 4: Women's Role in Drafting Constitutions in the Context of International Rights Instruments

Women play an important role in securing women's rights from international conventions, such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, by taking part in drafting new constitutions. This process can help protect women from discrimination, provide expanded rights for women, and promote women throughout society.

Drafting constitutions is full of obstacles, requiring accuracy and depth of analysis. MPs discussed their roles in drafting constitutions and several issues they have had to address. Such issues include: who drafts the constitution, how specific or vague language should be, and how to treat religion. Whether elected officials or legal experts draft a constitution is a significant question, and countries in the region have answered this question differently. In Iraq, the initial agreement in 2005 was that a group of experts and international figures would draft the constitution, followed by a referendum by the people. Eventually, however, the Iraqi constitution was drafted by a committee from an elected national assembly. Tunisia's elected members of the National Constituent Assembly are in the process of drafting a new constitution. A similar process of electing a constituent assembly to write a constitution took place in Egypt, and the constitution was endorsed in referendum in 2012. However, the constitution is now being challenged in Egypt and the process is described by some as flawed.

Another issue is how general or specific a constitution should be. For example, Egypt's new constitution is vague on the issue of women's rights, which some consider a form of oppression: **if a constitution is not explicit, women can lose their rights.** A similar issue in Egypt was the inability of voters to understand the constitution because of the constitution's text and the country's illiteracy problem. Arab constitutions refer to Islam and *shari'ah*, which some find problematic for women's rights. **Women MPs discussed the misuse of religion and the political use of Islamic constitution-drafting.** They said politicians take from Islam what serves their interests, rather than what promotes moderate values and protect the rights of women. Human rights, and women's rights, should not be subject to narrow religious treatment.

Iraq and Tunisia offer two different case studies of women's involvement in constitution-drafting. The women elected to the Tunisian Constituent Assembly drafting the constitution, which will be presented in fall 2013, have roles both as participants and as monitors. **Their participatory role is to include general articles that promote freedom and human rights; their monitoring role is to guarantee that**

Iraqi legal experts recommend changes to legislation to support women's rights

The Iraq Foundation's Women for Equitable Legislation Project (WEL) aims at strengthening women's rights by promoting and facilitating stronger, more effective legislation that protects constitutional rights in line with shari'ah and international human rights standards. The project began with examining gaps in Iraqi legislation through consultations with parliament, members of the judiciary, CSOs and legal experts. IF then worked to prioritize laws and determine which laws need to be amended or repealed. Participants also worked to draft legislation where gaps in existing laws existed. Experts drafted legislation in light of the social, economic, financial, and political impact on women. WEL participants met with regional experts who shared their experiences in building consensus and campaigns, mobilizing support and overcoming cultural and political barriers to reform in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. After determining which laws needed to be changed, legal experts drafted recommended amendments to four articles in the penal code, as follows:

- Article 41: Requested repeal of allowance or man to punish his wife
- Article 128: Requested amendment to regulations on murder under pretext of honor killing
- Article 380: Requested amendment to adultery provisions
- Article 409: Requested amendment to provisions on punishment of wives for adultery suggesting equal punishment for men and women.

WEL participants also looked at Iraq's Personal Status code and labor code and suggested the repealing or amending of laws related to marriage, divorce, harassment in the workplace, and provision of state shelters for women past the age of 18. The draft laws used simple language for readability.

IF promoted advocacy campaigns in 15 governorates throughout Iraq which includes media and signature campaigns in order to enhance understanding of the rationale behind the reform measures, build up support for the suggested improvements and to pressure parliament.

women's rights are protected. Tunisian women have gained broad rights in the past decades that they seek to preserve and build upon. The new constitution should continue to guarantee freedom for women, and MPs need CSOs to support them in achieving this goal. The first draft contained mistakes and vague articles, and drafting members were not satisfied its provisions. While the previous regime was one of the sources that promoted rights for women through legislation, some in the government are now seeking to abolish these laws. Women are not satisfied because some men (and women) are trying to reverse women's achievements. MPs emphasized that men and women need each other, along with political will, to achieve their goals.

In 2005, during Iraq's transitional period, nine women were part of the 71-member Constitutional Drafting Committee. The subsequent Constitutional Review Committee, established by the Council of Representatives in 2006, included two women. **Women's involvement in this transitional period could be considered success, depending upon whether these women were effective and their suggestions were included.** In the drafting stages, CSOs and activists pressured the government to implement a 25 percent quota for women. If not for international assistance and pressure from CSOs, Iraqi women may not have been able to lobby and gain the 25 percent parliamentary quota. In the first post-Ba'th government, six of 31 ministers were women. Because the Iraqi constitution was drafted in a short time, it contains some weaknesses, discrepancies, and vague language related to the rights of women.

While Tunisia and Iraq provide examples of how women can be involved in constitution-drafting, the Moroccan case also demonstrates the power of women in effecting change. The Moroccan family code, the Moudawana, was established after the country gained independence in 1956 when a committee amended the civil code. The code initially allowed for multiple wives and other non-progressive articles on women's issues. Since the 1980s, there were movements demanding amendments to the code. In 1998, women's organizations gathered one million signatures to introduce amendments, which nevertheless fell short of aspirations, so women continued to struggle. A project to integrate women in

development created a divide in the country, leading to one million women protesting in the streets as well as counter-protests opposed to issues in the family code. The government formed a committee to hear from stakeholders and work on amending the code. The committee’s amendments were approved in 2004, representing a major achievement for Moroccan women. **This new code includes some of the most progressive measures on women’s rights in the region, including an increase in the age of marriage, a ban on polygamy unless the first wife approves, and improved ownership rights for women, among other changes.**

- Include women, whether elected officials or legal experts, in constitution drafting, and monitor how women will be affected by constitutional articles.
- Make national policies and practices compatible with international obligations.
- Write constitution text to be specific, clear, and understandable.
- Increase women MPs’ legal awareness to improve knowledge of how to secure rights
- Incorporate CSOs, activists, and other stakeholders in constitutional dialogues.



Day 3: How Women MPs Can Maximize Impact

Session 1: Women's Caucuses and Women's Parties: Experiences, Successes, and Challenges

Following discussions on ways women MPs can capitalize on opportunities in parliament, participants discussed the role that women's caucuses and women's parties can play in the process. While there is no single formula for how to activate MPs' role in parliament, a general outline includes the formation of a women's caucus or bloc and the establishment of alliances based on a particular issue.

Women's caucuses, blocs, or lobbies include women MPs from different political parties working on a specific issue or cause. Some participants said they need to form blocs to advance their goals, agreeing that one of the best mechanisms to support women is the joint effort of MPs exerting pressure on the government. Wherever parliaments have formed women's caucuses, they have become a strong vehicle for action. Several countries in the region, including Iraq, have attempted to form a women's bloc. MPs in Algeria formed a women's caucus in 2008 that was able to push for a women's quota inside political parties; they have not been able to form a coalition recently because they cannot agree on a common issue. Jordan's recently-established women's caucus has also provided a chance for women MPs to achieve certain joint objectives.

Participants recommended the caucus agenda not focus solely on women's issues but also reflect society's needs as well. Some MPs said **women's issues are societal issues and MPs must present women's issues in this context.** MPs must pick an issue then form a caucus on an ad-hoc basis according to need (there cannot be a caucus for all issues). The caucus should focus on two or three agreed-upon issues each year, moving from easy issues to more controversial issues. Caucuses are especially useful for independent women MPs without a political party.

**Women's caucuses:
one of the best
mechanisms to
support women is
the joint effort of MPs
exerting pressure on
the government.**

Most MPs agreed that **women-only parties would not help achieve their goals and would marginalize their male colleagues.** While women's political parties may be formed with goodwill, historically they are rarely able to achieve substantial change. Instead, women should form coalitions within their parties, which can provide women with more opportunities for leadership positions. **Political parties provide support, sustainability, and opportunities for women's political participation.** Women MPs also need to create coalitions with other women within their parties to activate their collective role. Participants noted the difficulty of working with other women MPs because of issues related to competition. Some said this competition was created by men and their political parties. Nonetheless, MPs can recruit men who support women's causes—it is better to have a male proponent than a female opponent. Political parties have diverse opinions regarding women's rights and leadership.

Along with forming coalitions across party lines parties, women MPs need to work to achieve leadership positions in their parties. **Women must be lobby forces within their own parties.** Women MPs need to be active in their party, impose themselves on party leadership, push for a presence, and compete for leadership positions. If not in decision-making roles, women MPs should position themselves close to

decision-making circles (to avoid being window-dressing). In Algeria, women head three political parties, yet despite these leadership positions, these parties did not necessarily fight for women's issues—two even objected to a women's quota in political parties. A woman also leads a political bloc in Kurdistan's parliament. MPs also discussed **how women's placement on party lists affects their leadership advancement**. Several countries in the region require that women be placed on party lists alternately with men, or every third name.

Participants reviewed some accomplishments that women's movements have achieved in their countries. Iraq has seen an increase of women in the judiciary system, and Egypt has many women who serve as judges, ministers, ambassadors, university presidents, and professors. Participants talked about ways that women's caucuses or blocs could advance such change. **Several challenges prevent women MPs from being effective in parliament—these are challenges that women MPs can unite together to address.** Most political parties and blocs do not have women in leadership positions, often as a result of discrimination against women's political participation. Women often have less experience in the political field than men as a result of this patriarchal society. Some MPs said women are included in political parties only to serve as “window-dressing” to exploit the positive image of women's involvement. Women must also battle a media that sometimes portrays negative stereotypes of women, CSOs that do not defend women's rights, and problems of illiteracy and poverty that affect women more often than men.

- Establish a women's caucus with MPs from different parties to work on a specific issue or cause.
- Lobby within own political party to achieve objectives and improve leadership opportunities.
- Establish national center for women's studies to conduct comprehensive studies on women.
- Present needs to international organizations and UN to receive support.
- Work with the League of Arab States' Women's Committee, ArabInter-Parliamentary Union, and Inter-Parliamentary Union's Co-ordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians.



Session 2: Women MPs and the Media

An important **way to maximize women MPs' impact is to use the media to effectively promote one's agenda and influence public opinion.** Women MPs can benefit greatly from the media because of its ability to provide the public with information and thus influence the public. Media also has the capability to influence government decision-making and policy-making. The two types of media—traditional mass communication and social media—each offer advantages. Social media is instantaneous and allows politicians unable to appear on certain media outlets a platform to share their messages. Both offer the means to communicate with constituents and the ability to reach a wide audience. Because of illiteracy in some parts of the region, newspapers and written media are sometimes a less useful tool than radio and television.

But using the media also presents several challenges for women MPs trying to shed light on issues or sharing their messages. The media portrays information in a negative or positive way—the media can “make you or break you.” Moreover, the media tend to focus on a small percentage of information, typically controversial aspects, because they are often non-objective and rarely neutral. Funding sources also influence how media outlets report news; some serve the interests of certain political parties,

which can mobilize society toward these interests. The media focus on sensational topics like political conflict and division. Participants discussed their reluctance to discuss women’s issues in the media because some media channels portray them as partisan, negatively impacting their constituency. The

While the media is not collaborative, it is also not an adversary—it is a tool to advance a message.

media also often stereotype women MPs and attack them for their lack of political experience. Therefore, **the relationship between the media and parliament is not always collaborative**—the media look for deficiencies to exploit. However, **the media are also not an adversary**—MPs must be smart and manipulate the media as needed.

Several MPs indicated they were unaware how to use the media to their advantage. Women MPs must choose their positions as politicians and seize opportunities to appear in the media to discuss issues and share successful stories. **By adopting strong positions, issuing bold statements, and defending important issues, MPs can force the media to come to them.** Although MPs cannot control the media, they can express their opinions and take stances on issues that are of interest to the media. It is **useful to determine what attracts media attention and tailor messages accordingly.** For example, women MPs can use the media to bring attention to issues like corruption and other negative issues occurring in their country. Message must be clear and focused with a defined goal; it is vital to understand the needs of the media and your audience. MPs should not get frustrated or desperate about what the media covers—they must keep sending their messages and sharing their work and achievements. Women MPs should also be more ambitious in how they reach out to the media.

Participants discussed strategies for improving their messages and increasing their media presence. **Maintaining contact with the media is essential—MPs should establish a media or communications office to work with the media.** Political parties can also assist MPs in working with the media because of existing relationships and resources. MPs suggested holding press conferences and issuing press releases to announce parliamentary achievements on women’s issues. Some MPs felt conflicted about wanting to address women’s issues and not wanting to appear as an MP who *only* addresses women’s issues. Participants said it may be best to begin with a focus on women’s issues and then transition to other issues later on; others said there is no problem with choosing to focus on women’s issues.

- Seize opportunity to appear on all media channels to share specific, targeted messages.
- Draw media attention by adopting strong positions and defending important issues.
- Establish a media or communications office to work with and maintain contact with the media.
- Provide women MPs with necessary statistics and information to appear effectively in the media.
- Organize training workshop on how women MPs can deal with various media outlets.



Session 3: Forming and Maintaining a Cross-Regional Network

Participants discussed the need for a cross-regional network to continue the dialogue from the 2012 and 2013 conferences. A virtual, electronic network would allow women MPs to exchange expertise, ideas, and opinions. Organizers noted challenges in forming such a network, including funding, organization, staff, encamps suggested starting a Face book group to facilitate communication among participants.

Conference Recommendations

Conference facilitators and participants collaborated in compiling a set of recommendations, building upon the recommendations from the 2012 conference, “Women’s Political Participation.” These recommendations are designed for women MPs to use in order to enrich their work in parliament and elsewhere.

The final recommendations, which follow, are intended for women parliamentarians to address three audiences: governments, women parliamentarians, and international organizations. These recommendations were agreed upon by consensus from conference participants. Participants also discussed requirements for the success of women MPs, which follow these recommendations.

Recommendations:

Urge governments to do the following:

1. Review periodically and amend laws and legislation in order to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure harmonization with international instruments and conventions;
2. Build, maintain, and disseminate sex-disaggregated databases in all sectors and in line with international guidelines;
3. Provide national mechanisms for women and children with the requisite human and financial resources; encourage education and economic empowerment of women as a means to political participation and leadership;
4. Review the curricula in order to ensure gender-sensitive civic education and avoid reproduction of a patriarchal culture among the new generation;
5. Adopt a “women-friendly” electoral law that enhances female parliamentary representation;
6. Publish in the official papers all international conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UNSCR 1325 on women and peace-building, violence against women, and human trafficking; ensure wide dissemination via the mass media; develop effective mechanisms for full implementation, and withdrawal of reservations;
7. Adopt affirmative action measures including temporary quotas for women at all levels and in all sectors including government committees, legislative, executive, and judiciary bodies;
8. Offer political parties incentives for nominating a higher percentage of women on their electoral lists; and

9. Cooperate with civil society organizations and the media to raise gender-awareness and exert efforts to change mindsets and avoid conflating religious principles with customs and traditions.

Enhance the role of female parliamentarians to:

1. Bridge the gap between the *de fact* laws and legislation and *de jure* implementation by monitoring, evaluating, and following up on implementation;
2. Compile data and information on the status of women and other issues of concern by conducting research, surveys, and opinion polls to support positions, proposals, and draft legislation;
3. Promote enlightened and women-friendly interpretations of *shari'ah*;
4. Identify successful and failed practices worldwide for promoting women's leadership in decision-making positions including in political parties;
5. Maintain outreach to voters and conduct opinion polls to address concerns and interests of constituencies;
6. Propose draft laws to address CEDAW articles and withdraw all reservations thereon;
7. Build strategic alliances to champion women's issues with religious leaders and scholars, politicians, male and female parliamentarians, the media, and civil society organizations; and organize women's caucuses toward that end;
8. Hold press conferences and use modern mass and social media to raise gender awareness and highlight the pivotal role of women in nation and peace-building;
9. Establish a personal webpage on the Internet and a media office in parliament to disseminate success stories;
10. Establish an advisory office to provide free advice to all citizens on rights, issues of common concern, imminent needs, or to help in problem-solving;
11. Mobilize female parliamentarians and caucuses around specific topics; and connect with stakeholders to strengthen advocacy;
12. Network with the female parliamentarians' chapter attached to the League of Arab States;
13. Compile and disseminate sex-disaggregated information and statistics on the status of women.

Request UN organizations and donors, including the Iraqi Foundation and the Wilson Center, to provide technical and financial assistance, if possible, to:

1. Convene and hold seminars, meetings, and capacity-building and training workshops for leaders of political parties, parliamentary blocs, judges, security officials, policemen, and others to advance understanding and promote implementation of international conventions like CEDAW and Security

Council Resolution 1325;

2. Convene seminars and expert group meetings on gender-specific concepts and gender-sensitive terminology, drafting women-friendly constitutions, project proposals, and gender-sensitive laws;
3. Organize capacity-building workshops for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship including training sessions on "how to start your own business" and "how to initiate income-generating projects" with micro-credit financing;
4. Establish national observatories including information and sex-disaggregated statistics on the status of women;
5. Facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned to enhance the effectiveness of female parliamentarians across Arab and non-Arab countries;
6. Convene a special workshop to sharpen skills on how to deal with the media in its various forms, including social media;
7. Organize a workshop on how to submit project proposals to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for technical or financial assistance.

Primary requirements for the success of women MPs:

- Following up on political party law and the participation of women in political parties
- Discussing the media, how women can benefit from using the media, and how women MPs can form a relationship with the media
- Bridging the gap between legislative and executive authorities to provide better services
- Learning about election campaigns and how to run them
- Maintaining communication with constituents and the media
- Understanding the role of women in drafting constitution
- Studying violence against women
- Encouraging international organizations to politically support women
- Understanding international conventions and charters
- Sharing legislation on women's issues, efforts to eliminate corruption, and success stories

Conference Conclusions

The “Women Leaders in an Era of Change” conference connected Iraqi and regional women parliamentarians from the MENA region to discuss how they can activate their roles as the region undergoes change. Women have been significantly affected by such change as they are experiencing greater political, economic, and physical insecurity as a result. **Participants reviewed how the negative and positive changes affect women and women MPs, focusing on how to take advantage of opportunities and maximize their effectiveness.**

While some countries in the region have fewer women in parliament and in leadership and government positions, MPs brainstormed ways to improve their capacity and make the most of their opportunities. They exchanged information, ideas, and experiences in order to extract best practices and lessons learned that can benefit their colleagues.

The **enlightening presentations and constructive dialogue provided participants with a wealth of information to apply to their roles in parliament.** Participants discussed how women can take advantage of political change and the importance of establishing alliances inside and outside parliament. MPs also identified how women MPs can use their role to integrate or enhance international conventions in their countries and women’s roles in drafting constitutions and peace-building. They talked about how women’s caucuses and the media can improve women MPs’ effectiveness and maximize their impact.

Women MPs strengthened their capacity to represent their constituents, to monitor executive bodies (and their implementation of international conventions), and to enact and reform laws. The case studies presented from each country provided examples and models for women MPs to take back to their own parliaments.

The conference was built upon developments from the 2012 conference. This conference’s recommendations include some overlap with the 2012 recommendations, which indicates these are areas of significance for women MPs. Participants discussed the importance of **additional training on topics such as CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, the media, law, negotiation and coalition-building, how to interact with international organizations,** among other topics.

The “Women Leaders in an Era of Change” conference successfully achieved its objectives:

- Raised MPs’ awareness about political changes in the MENA region and how to use such change to capitalize on opportunities.
- Exchanged experiences among MPs to improve legislative abilities in order to focus on international conventions and UN Security Council resolutions related to women’s issues.
- Planned how to form women’s caucuses and how to establish a roadmap for a regional women MP network, including its activities and sustainability.

Appendix A: Participant Biographies

Regional Meeting in Amman 30 May-1 June 2013 Bio summary of participants, facilitators, international experts, and organizers

Iraqi Women Parliamentarians

Ms. Amel Atyah Abdulraheem:

Ms. Abdulraheem is a current member of the Iraqi parliament, and a member of the martyr's parliamentary committee, and the education committee, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language. She is a former Arabic language and Islamic education teacher, and was a specialized educational supervisor, and was a member of the provincial Council of Thi-Qar province during its last session. She was among women political activist during the 80s and 90s, she is currently affiliated with Badr Organization.

Ms. Shlair Azeez Ahmed:

Ms. Ahmed a current member of the Iraqi parliament; a member of the higher education parliamentary committee, she has a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, and Master's degree in Engineering/ Salahaddin University. She was a former chair of the electricity department at the Technical Institute of Erbil, and the accounting manager. She was the dean assistant for the financial affairs of the technical college in Erbil. She is a consultant of the ministry of transportation, and was a member of the teaching faculty at the Ministry of Higher Education. She is affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Ms. Zala Younis Ahmed:

Ms. Younis is a current member of the Iraqi parliament; she holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. She was a member of the Legal committee at the provincial Council of the Kirkuk. She is supportive of the Turkmen's positions concerning important issues especially Article 23. She followed up the issue of Turkmen detainees in the prisons of the Kurdistan Regional Government. She has been the Turkmen representative at the committee of human rights to follow up detainees cases in American Prisons in Iraq, and KRG prisons, she is a member of the Legal committee in the provincial council of Kirkuk for two parliamentary periods. She has been a member of the decision committee of the Turkmen National Movement. She is the head of the Iraqi friendship committee with the Turkish speaking countries.

Ms. Batool Farooq Mohammed Ali:

Ms. Mohammed Ali is a current member of the Iraqi parliament, a member of the culture and media parliamentary committee. She graduated from the Kufa University in 1990, she majored in Jurisprudence, she was employed at the College of Arts / Kufa University, and she obtained a Master's degree in Shari'aa and Islamic sciences in 2007. She obtained her Ph.D. in Jurisprudence Philosophy in 2012. She taught at the Kufa University. She was a former member of the Provincial Council of Najaf Province, and a current member of the Writers and Authors Union in Iraq, She is a dynamic activist about women issues, and a current Member of Parliament. She is women's rights activist.

Ms. Huda Sajad Mahmood Ali:

Ms. Sajad is a current member of the Iraqi parliament, a member the women, family and childhood committee, she is a human rights activist, the head of AnamelAlrehama organization for human rights, and the honorary president of Al-Nejma sports club. She worked previously as a teacher. She is activist in chemical sciences field, and has written researches on environment development and participated to amend laws related to environment.

Intisar Hasan Ali:

Current member of the Iraqi parliament, current member of the education committee, was a teacher and a school headmaster. She is a member of the Islamic Da'wa Party, and was the head of the Martyr Fatima bint Madeeh Association; she participated in several conferences and symposium on both provincial and national levels.

Ms. Suad Jabbar Mohammed Ali:

Ms. Jabbar is a current member of the Iraqi parliament; member of the parliamentary education committee, she was a former professor of the jurisprudence college/ Kufa University. She holds a PH.D in Sharia's and Islamic sciences/ Biographical evaluation (ilmalrijal) science. She is a current member of the general Secretariat of the Independents Block / State of Law coalition/Najaf Province.

Ms. Iman Mousa Hammadi:

Ms. Hammadi, Current Iraqi MP, deputy of the parliamentary committee on services and reconstruction, holds Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering; she worked as a general manager of the Iraq Central Bank. She was a previous provincial council member of Anbar, head of energy committee. She is a member of the National Dialogue Front, Iraqi National List (Iraqi list)

Ms. Ashwaq Al-Jaf:

Ms. Al-Jaf is a current member of the Iraqi parliament, and a member of the human rights parliamentary committee, has a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy in 1996. She is member of the Kurdistan coalition/ democratic Kurdistan party. She was assisting professor at the Sulaimaniya University before. She is currently a civil society activist to minimize the abuse of human rights through monitoring and legislations; she is a member of the Iraqi women pharmacists and the head of the Iraqi organization to develop scientific qualifications/ Kurdistan area, and the head of the scientific competence Kurdish organization.

Ms. Afaf Abdulrazzaq Jubair:

Ms. Jubair is a current member of the Iraqi parliament; a member of the religious affairs parliamentary committee, a member of Tajdeed movement and was a member of the provincial council of Anbar in 2004, she holds an Associate Degree from the Teacher's Training Institute/ Arabic Language Major. She is a founder member of the sports education club in Anbar. She participated in the charity works for several years on social reform, and women's issues. She has multiple participations in USAID program of advancing the Iraqi parliament, and also in NDI's training for Iraqi civil society organizations. She participated also in a training offered by the International Institute for Research and Development, and she received the IREX certificate. She also participated in the program of secrets of negotiation and dealing with media of the Iraqi Center for Creativity.

Ms. Intisar Ali Khudher Al Jubouri:

Ms. Al-Jubouri is a current member of the Iraqi parliament; she is the head of the women, family and childhood committee of the Iraqi Parliament. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Law/1988. She worked at

the president's office of Tikrit University as research assistant, and then she practiced as a lawyer from 1990 to 2010. She participated in several conferences and workshops inside and outside Iraq. She is a member of the committee on legal amendments in the European Initiative to implement Resolution 1325. She is a member of Women for Peace initiative through the women, family, and childhood committee in the Iraqi parliament. In addition to her work in the Iraqi parliament, she works as a member of the high committee of population policies, as well as being the head of the steering committee of the IOM project on providing support for livelihood, and economic and psychological support.

Ms. Nada Al Jubouri:

Ms. Al Jubouri is a current Member of the Iraqi Parliament/ Women, Family and Child committee; MD in Medicine and Surgery. She has worked in her own specialty (medicine) in a number of Iraqi hospitals. She is the head of women and future organization, women's rights activist; she is a member of several women caucuses on women and gender.

Ms. Shatha Hameed Lelu Al-Obaydi:

Current member of the Iraqi parliament, deputy of the IDPs and migration committee of the parliament, previous member of provincial council, holds associate degree in commerce, and was the of women's office of the Islamic Supreme Council in Diwaniya, she has participated in trainings inside and outside Iraq related to women's leadership, and has several thanks and appreciation letters.

Ms. Safiya Al-Suhail:

Ms. Al-Suhail is a Member of the Iraqi Parliament in the current and previous parliamentary sessions. She is a member of the parliamentary committee on Foreign Affairs. She is a liberal politician, a long-time democracy and human rights advocate. She was the former director of the Coalition for International Justice which established a network of 275 International NGOs from more than 120 States to fight former dictatorship regime in Iraq. She started as an independent political activist for the freedom of her people through the Iraqi opposition before 2003. She was elected at the Iraqi opposition congress in London in 2002 as a member of the monitoring and coordination committee of the Iraqi opposition leadership, and then she came back to Iraq in 2003. She was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary of Iraq in Egypt in 2004, and was nominated to be the Iraq Ambassador to Egypt in the same year. In 2005 she was elected as representative in Baghdad, and was re-elected for the current parliament. In 2009, she founded the Safiya Cultural Center in Baghdad. She holds Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Jordan/Amman.

Ms. Iman Abdulrazak Mohan Al-Wa'eli:

Ms. Al-Wa'eli is a current member of the Iraqi parliament, a member of the health and environment parliamentary committee, affiliated with the National coalition/state of law block. She holds a bachelor's degree in veterinary, and was the head of the department of epidemical diseases in the public company of veterinary. She participated in several trainings and workshops inside and outside Iraq, and worked in civil society organizations on women's rights especially the ones related to women in rural areas on the economic, health and social affairs. She also worked on child's rights.

Regional Parliamentarians

Algeria

Samira Bouras Kerkouche (FLN):

Ms. Samira is the vice-president of the Hussein Dey Assembly in Algiers. A member of the National Liberation Front (FLN) party, she was the first woman to be elected at the provincial assemblies. In 2011, she pointed out the necessity for women to “communicate better” because “there already are issues of communication between men and women.”

Ratiba Ayad El Mascri:

Member of National Rally for Democracy (RND), Constituency in Oran

Ratiba is a founding member of the National Rally for Democracy (RND) and was the first woman in Algeria to be elected president of a Popular Wilaya Assembly in June 2007. She served two terms as a member of the Oran Popular Wilaya Assembly under the banner of the RND from 1997 to 2007. She began her career as an activist in the Union générale des étudiants algériens (UGEA) (General Union of Algerian Students) when she was studying business. In 1994, she served in the wilaya offices of the UGEA, in charge of communications and student membership. She did her first steps in politics in 1995 as a member of the support committee for the former president Lamina Serial and then as founding member of the RND, for which she was elected to be in charge of women’s status and communications in the party’s Oran wilaya offices. She is popular at the grassroots level and is a member of the National Council of the RND. She holds a degree in business and prepared in 2007 a magister in international trade.

Egypt

Ms. Sana Ahmed Mohamed Gamaleldin Al Saeed:

Ms. Sanaa Ahmed Mohammed Jamal Al-Deen Al-Saeed who is known as (Sana Saeed) is a member of the Egyptian Parliament, member of the National Council for Women, a member of the high commission of the Egyptian Social Democratic party, an auditor of the Development and Agricultural Credit Bank, and a board of directors member of the Association of Rural Family Development in Asyoott. She is also an important activist in the field of women's rights.

Jordan

Ms. Hind Al Fayez:

Ms. Al Fayez is a General Manager at Sama Amman, Jawaher Media Agency, Sakher Ground Handling Services – “Her goal, she said, is to persuade Jordan's Bedouin that participation in the private sector, which is currently dominated by Jordanians of Palestinian descent, is the path to economic prosperity and political influence.” -- She is well-educated, comes from an affluent family and her cousin, Faisal Al Fayez was the Prime Minister of Jordan, from 2003-2005. -- a 2009 graduate of “SEEDS”, a *women’s entrepreneurship program* that Thunderbird runs in partnership with the Business Development Center in Jordan; Funding comes from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Ms. Rula Al Hroob:

Ms. Al Hroob leads the “Stronger Jordan” list (OrdonAqwa) that won two seats in Parliament. She said that she would devote her efforts to fight for women’s rights in addition to addressing national

concerns. Dr. Hroub is a journalist and also the Director of the Media, Public and Cultural Relations Unit at the University of Jordan in Amman. Before being elected in the Lower House, she presented a TV talk show broadcasted by Josat satellite in which she sometimes openly criticized the regime.

Morocco

Dr. Fatima Gouaima Mazzi:

Dr. Mazzi is a current MP from Morocco, an MD, public health major, and has Diploma in health administration. She held several posts at the Ministry of health, Morocco. She teaches at the National Institute of health administration, she has been in charge of the Therapeutic measure, for more than 10 years. She is the national consultant in the UNICEF, the rural development program. She is the national consultant of the World Bank to formalize the final report on health within the Social Priorities program (BAJ/ **Volet Santé**), assessed the national program on mother's and child health as a consultant with FNUAP. She is a current MP of the National People's Movement on November 25, 2011. She is a member of the parliamentary committee on equality and elimination of all types of discrimination. She is the head of studies and researches committee. She is a founder, and board member of the Moroccan Network for economy and health, the network includes medical doctors, economy specialists and professors from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. She is the head of "Work for Life Society".

Tunisia

Ms. Rabiaa Al-Najlawi:

Ms. Najlawi is the youngest member of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (24 years old), a member of two committees and the first one is constituent committee, the constitutional committees, and the second one is legislative committee (service sector). She is a member of the executive office of Nidaa Tunis party. She holds a master degree in English. She is a member of the Women of Africa Development and Communication Network organization. She has participated in several demonstrations calling for women's rights, equality and human rights.

Facilitators\Experts

Ms. Moushira Khattab, Egypt:

Dr. Khattab is a former Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. She currently leads the women foreign policy group at the Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs and a Visiting Professor on gender issues and human rights at Perugia University in Italy. Khattab is the former Minister of Family and Population of Egypt as well as Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ambassador of Egypt to South Africa during the Nelson Mandela era, and Ambassador of Egypt to the Czech Republic and Slovakia during their formation. Khattab is a strong activist for human rights, especially those of women and children. Her achievements include criminalizing female genital mutilation and child marriage in Egypt. She also initiated and led a comprehensive legal reform process by the adoption of Child Law 126 in 2008. She spearheaded the development and inauguration of 1,167 girl-friendly schools which provide quality, active learning to thousands of girls in the poorest quintile of Egyptian society. In November 2009, Khattab hosted a conference on Islamic Sharia and the Rights of the Child in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic States. The conference encouraged emerging consensus to adopt a rights-based approach to

controversial human rights issues. Khattab has received three decorations, some of which are the highest civilian orders to be bestowed upon a foreign national. These honors include The Order of Good Hope from the President of South Africa and The Knight of the Grand Cross and Decoration of “Commendatory” of the Order of Merit by the President of the Italian Republic. Khattab holds a Doctorate in International Relations and Human Rights Law from Cairo University, a Master’s degree in International Relations from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Cairo University.

Ms. Fatima Sbaity Kassem, USA/ Lebanon:

Former Director, UN-Centre for Women/ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) in Baghdad, Amman and Beirut. Free-lance consultant on gender and women’s issues in the Arab countries. Author and editor of numerous studies, articles and publications on developments in the status of women; feminization of poverty; implementation of CEDAW; history of the women’s movements in the Arab countries. Main research work on women in politics; the inter-linkages of religion, women and political parties. Dr. Sbaity Holds: Bachelors Degree in Business Administration; and Masters Degree in Development Administration from the American University of Beirut (AUB) -- M.A Thesis entitled “*Labor Market Opportunities for Women Graduates and National Development in Lebanon*”. She holds Master’s Degree in International Economics; M. Phil Degree in Political Economy; and Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University -- PhD Dissertation entitled ‘*Party Variation in Religiosity & Women’s leadership: Lebanon in comparative perspective*’. Membership in Professional Associations & Advisory Boards: She holds membership in Professional Associations and Advisory Boards including: American Political Science Association, Association of Lebanese Women Researchers (Al-Bahithat), Board of Trustees, Centre of Arab Women for Training & Research (CAWTAR) Advisory Board, Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World (New York, United Nations Development Program -UNDP) and is cited in the 56th Edition of Who’s Who in America, 2002.

Organizers

Iraq Foundation

Ms. Suhaila Al-Assadi:

Suhaila is a lawyer and judicial expert from Iraq. She worked for Iraq Foundation in April 9, 2005. She is now the Senior Program officer in Baghdad office. She helped to implement several projects, conferences, workshops inside and outside Iraq. She worked as a lawyer and judicial expert in the Iraqi courts, and was as a legal consultant for many institutions. She has a legal trainer certificate from the International Lawyers Union in Dubai. She has legal expert certificate from Freedom House. She is a member of Arab Lawyers Network. She attended several conferences and workshops related to Human Rights, Women Rights, legal education, Anti-corruption trainings including: The workshop on rule of law in England / Oxford/October 2004. She attended several workshops to combat corruption in Amman, Beirut and in Washington, DC in April 2010. She participated in the transitional justice conference in Tunis in July 2012. She wrote a research on CEDAW.

Ms. Selwa Gailani:

Ms. Gailani, an Iraqi-American, is the Iraq Foundation’s *Deputy Director*. Also, Ms. Gailani has managed several projects in Iraq, such as the Iraq Foundation’s Iraqi Widows Empowerment Project (WEP), Provincial Accountability and Governance (PAG), and Empowering Iraqi Widows to Thrive (EIWT). She

oversees the implementation of IF's other projects and activities. Ms. Gailani was a member of the Iraq Reconstruction Development Council (IRDC), worked with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), where she worked as an advisor to the Office of Ministries Affairs at the Iraqi Governing Council. Ms. Gailani holds a Bachelor's of Science in Architecture from Baghdad University, College of Engineering. She worked as an Architect / Urban Designer with the Municipality of Kuwait from 1980-1984. She resided in Saudi Arabia from 1998 to 1999 and Dubai from 1999-2005, where she worked as an advisor to a leading real estate developer and managed her own business.

Ms. Dhefaf Al-Jarahi:

Ms. Dhefaf joined the Iraq Foundation (IF) on April 9, 2005. She is the *Manager of Operations* for Iraq Foundation Office's in Iraq. She also worked in the Provincial Council from November 2003 and March 2004 during the transitional period in Iraq. Ms. Al-Jarahi worked also in the Egyptian Embassy Mission in Iraq as *Office Director of the Egyptian Charge D'affairs, from 1996 to 2000*. She organized many of IF's workshops and conferences inside and outside Iraq. In addition to her work, she participated in many training courses, women rights conferences, and legal education courses, mainly the held educational workshop in *Casablanca, Morocco* in December 2006 as well as the Human Rights ToT workshop that was held in *Al-Manama, Oman* in October 2009. Ms. Dhefaf is also articles writer in Al-Nass, "*the people*" *Newspaper*. She writes on women issues and about education sector in Iraq. She participated in an intensified training on administrative and financial issues at the Iraq Foundation's Office in Washington D.C during 2011.

Ms. Rend Al Rahim:

She is the Executive director and co-founder of Iraq Foundation. She has obtained a Senior fellowship from the US Institute for Peace, Jennings Randolph program for international peace. She was also representative of Iraq and head of the diplomatic mission at the USA from November 2003 to December 2004. Mrs. Rend Al Rahim represented the Iraq Foundation at international and governmental levels in all parts of the world and was the co-author of many research articles and books about Iraq. She drafted policies and reports for the IF. Thanks to her management skills, the Iraq Foundation was able to build relations of cooperation with many NGOs and research institutions. Ms. Al Rahim made a testimony on Iraq before the US Congress. She is a permanent commentator on Iraqi issues with the US media and publishes articles in many major US newspapers. She is also a co-author of the book on "Arab Shi'a: the forgotten Muslims", published in 1999. Ms. Al Rahim has a degree from the British University of Cambridge and the French University of Sorbonne.

Ms. Inaam Al-Sultani:

She joined the Iraq Foundation in February 2012; she is now a Program manager on capacity building for new parliamentarians. Before the IF, she had worked as a legal advisor to some companies. As a member of the Bar Association since 1992, she has been working as a human rights activist lawyer, through her work as executive director of the Public legal center. She has many contributions in conferences on democracy building and human rights advocacy. She participated in many sessions inside and outside Iraq in building democracy, fighting administrative corruption and monitoring Government performance. She is the author of many research studies on the development of the legal system. She has a degree in Law/University of Baghdad.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Ms. Haleh Esfandiari:

Ms. Esfandiari is the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. Her writing has appeared in *Foreign Policy*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies*, *New Republic*, *Wilson Quarterly*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Middle East Review*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Review of Books* as well as the *Daily Beast* and the blogs of the *New York Review of Books*, the *New Republic*, and *The Iran Primer*. Esfandiari received her Ph.D. from the University of Vienna and holds an honorary degree from Georgetown University Law Center (2008). She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Esfandiari serves on the Board of the Peace Research Endowment in Oslo and on the board of advisors for the Project on Middle East Democracy. She is also a member of a MENA Advisory Panel to the World Bank. The paperback edition of her latest book, *My Prison, My Home: One Woman's Story of Captivity in Iran*, based on Esfandiari's arrest by the Iranian security authorities in 2007, was released in October 2010.

Ms. Kendra Heideman:

Kendra Heideman is a program assistant for the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. She received her BA in international relations from Creighton University and is working to complete an MA in international affairs from George Washington University. Heideman's interests are primarily in women's issues in the MENA region, particularly related to political, economic, and social rights.

Appendix B: Conference Photographs

