

Tunisia: GEM Follow-Up Visit

Special points of interest:

- Publication of GEM Mission Report.
- Exclusive interview with Ms. Jouini (Gender Expert of LTDH).
- Consultation with LTDH, AFTURD and ATFD.
- Breakfast meeting: Review of the current activities and future strategies

May 14-May 17th 2012: Having officially launched the Tunisia GEM Report in the Hague-Holland on February 2, 2012 Ms. Bano was in Tunis-Tunisia to meet with local partners and Her Excellency Ambassador Weijers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to publically release the report in Tunisia, to discuss the outcome of the report and to establish follow-up activities in Tunisia.

The Tunisian Gender Elections Observation Report published in January 2012 confirmed that that women's political participation in Tunisia remains constrained by a number of social, economic, cultural and traditional factors.



Although this is widely cited knowledge the report revealed certain obstacles and challenges that specifically affected Tunisian women voters and candidates before, during and after the voting process. On the basis of this analysis the local and international team of observers issued four recommendations addressed to the national and international community:

Gender Election Observation Missions must be prepared within a month of national elections to allow sufficient time for training, lobby and advocacy activities and voter awareness campaigns.

To combat discrimination against women's political participation, civil and political rights must be understood within a wider context of social, economic and political rights. A women's access to resources directly and indirectly affects her ability to take part in decision making.

To guarantee the success of this transitional process it is crucial to include the youth (young women and men alike) in the ongoing political dialogue and developments.

International and national actors alike should encourage regional and international dialogue.



Exclusive Interview with Ms. Jouini (Gender Expert of Ligue Tunisienne des Droit de l'Homme-LTDH)

The Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH) is an association founded in 1976 and to the observance and protection of human rights in Tunisia. It is the oldest league of human rights in Africa and the Arab world.

Ms. Jouini discussed her recent involvement in the creation of a Tunisian Constitution through the eyes of women. The core objective of the project is to construct a draft constitution with articles specifically addressing women's rights which will be adopted in the final Tunisia Constitution.

The project aimed at defending woman's socio-economic and political rights in the new Tunisian Constitution includes the views and ideas of 400 women from across the country. The document which has been recently published will be presented to the Ministry of the Prime Minister and widely distributed to members of civil society, human rights activities, women's organizations and associations who have also been encouraged to give feedback and input at a seminar held later this year.



Consultation with LTDH, AFTURD and ATFD

Gender Concerns international had the honor to be invited to the office of the LTDH to assist in a educational discussion hosted by the LTDH in cooperation with the Election Network in the Arab Region. The discussion which sought to encourage regional learning between the Tunisian women's movement and a delegation from Amman-Jordan featured a number of prominent women's rights activists including Ms Mechri and Ms Jouini.

The delegation of women from Jordan included teachers, lawyers, health specialists and gender experts all of which were completing a training on Leadership for Women. The discussion featured around the strategies, methods and ways of addressing women's political participation at the national and regional level.



Ms Mechri and Ms Jouini shared with the trainees their experience and current work in the department of women's rights in Tunisia offering examples of the progress made to women's right to date and highlighted the role of women as revolutionary fighters in the intensive campaign of resistance and demonstrations that led to the downfall of Ben Ali.



Breakfast Meeting: Review of the Current Activities and Future Strategies



As follow up to the meeting held at the offices of LTDH and ATDF on May 15th a meeting was requested by Gender Concerns International to review the partnership and future strategies regarding Gender Concerns International activities in Tunis with local partners (ATFD & LTDH).

The meeting was officially opened Ms. Bano who thanked the partners for their enduring support and cooperation concerning the success of GEM Mission in Tunisia. It was agreed by all participants of the meeting that the GEM Mission was a fruitful and enriching experience to monitor the elections from a gender perspective. It is hoped that the lessons learnt from this experience will help to form a solid basis for future cooperation between Gender Concerns International and its Tunisian partners.

Ms. Bano emphasized that beyond election monitoring, Gender Concerns International also works on female leadership and inclusive governance within the broader framework of the Gender and Democracy program. Other areas of focus include Peace & Security, Minority Rights and Women's Social & Economic Development.

Exclusive Meeting with UN Women

Gender Concerns International also had the honor of being invited by Ms. Trabelsi the UN Women Representative to Tunisia to discuss the possibility for future cooperation. Ms. Bano expressed the need for international and regional support to ensure women's political participation in the construction of the new Tunisian Constitution.

