



Media Release  
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### **International Community Supports Security and Rights of Libyan Women at Women's Day Event**



**International Women's Day conference Tunis 2015**

Activists and key international diplomats spoke out in their support of Libyan women at a commemoration of International Women's Day 2015 for Libyan women organized by Gender Concerns International and the Women and Youth Empowerment Forum. The 8 March event was held in Tunis this year because of the serious ongoing security situation for women activists and international organisations in Libya.

A moment of silence marked the start of the event, for those Libyan women who have lost their lives in the past year while working towards gender equality. After welcome remarks by Ms. Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International; the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Libya, H.E. Hans Sandee, addressed the women activists present to make it clear the EU and its Member States stand with Libyan women and support their struggle to be able to enjoy their rights.

A panel discussion of activists, including members of Libya's General National Congress, was moderated by Ms. Hikmat Kmishi, the coordinator of the Women for Democratic Transformation Platform. The discussion addressed what support is needed from the international community to help realise women's rights in Libya, and the role of women in peace and security issues. It was stressed that the first and immediate need is for personal security to be assured – in order to be able to enjoy any other rights.

Ms. Salima Alfakhari, Chairperson of the Women and Youth Empowerment Forum, presented the first public copy of the "Gender-Sensitive Constitution" document to Ambassador Sandee of the Netherlands. This document contains the recommendations of Libyan women for the Constitution of

Libya to adequately guarantee and implement their rights. Ms. Alfakhari also spoke about the process in which the Libyan women developed these recommendations. The “Gender Sensitive Constitution” was presented to the Constitutional Drafting Assembly of Libya in December 2014.

The International Women’s Day event concluded with statements by representatives of the international community in support of the women of Libya. The importance of a political solution was noted, in which women have to play a significant role. Gender Concerns Director Sabra Bano said about the event, “We must continue to engage more support of the international community for overall stability, and especially women’s security in Libya. With such attention and support, we can continue with solid progress in the constitutional equality of Libyan women and the positive results this can bring to Libyan society as a whole”.

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