



Dear Colleagues, partners, and supporters,

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the advancements made towards gender equality and women's empowerment world-wide. It is an occasion to honour the women whose strength, courage, and determination is the driving force behind advancements towards a gender equal world. It is a day to celebrate women's struggles against subordination and discrimination, and their demands for change. Today, we need to honour these proud women by taking the opportunity to reflect on the status of women everywhere and the challenges they are facing. Today is the day to reaffirm our commitment to support global gender equality.

Gender Concerns International will continue to be on the frontline to promote global gender equality together with our partners, colleagues, and supporters.

The Jasmine Revolution has inspired our belief that change is imminent and that revolutions are but the beginning of a long struggle to protect people's human rights. It is high time to review these developments from a gender perspective, and it is also time to realize that the political participation of women must be a top-priority when building democracy all around the world. Increasing women's political participation is an imperative in order to empower women politically, economically, and culturally, and it is an important step towards ensuring that women's rights are respected in the creation of democratic institutions.

Gender Concerns International reaffirms the continuation of its long-standing practice of working to increase the political participation of women globally, and we further reaffirm to continue to:

- Stand strong in unwavering support of the Dutch NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- Ensure that the women of Tunisia and Morocco make significant progress in their gender-sensitive electoral reform processes.
- Continue our support for a gender-sensitive constitution in Libya.
- Support inclusive governance in Myanmar's and Sierra Leone's emerging democracies.
- Promote public support for human rights, peace-building and female leadership in Afghanistan.
- Work towards gender-inclusive governance in Pakistan, and encourage female leaders to take leading roles in gender-sensitive policy formulations.

To Gender Concerns International, the above mentioned activities and many more is not something we can opt out of. After all, if in any kind of development efforts, if one gender is left behind, there cannot be real development.

I wish you a happy International Women's Day!

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