

8 March 2014

G-Concerns

Newsletter

International Women's
Day Libya Special

Inspiring Change
Our Revolution, Our Constitution





103 candles to fly in recognition of 103 years of International Women's Day

In celebration of the 103rd anniversary of International Women's Day, Gender Concerns International is holding an event on 8 March in Tripoli, Libya: 'Inspiring Change: Our Revolution, Our Constitution'. Prominent guest speakers will be featured including H.E. Nataliya Apostolova, EU Ambassador to Libya and Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, by video message. To further display pride in 103 years of women's progress and participation, Gender Concerns will release 103 flying candles into the skies of Tripoli at the event.

International Women's Day is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world and also commemorated by the United Nations. When women of all continents bridge their national, linguistic, cultural and political differences to come together to celebrate their Day, they become a part of tradition that represents more than 100 years of progress in working for equality, justice, peace and development.

March 8, 2014 at Hotel Al Waddan, Tripoli, 15:00

Welcome Note: "Change and Inspiration" by Ms Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International

- Speech by Guest of Honour: Inspiring Change with Focus on Libya by H.E. Nataliya Apostolova, EU Ambassador to Libya
- Video message for Women's Day from EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton
- Multimedia presentation: "Our Revolution, Our Constitution" Panel Discussion: Inspiring Change – Our revolution, Our Dastoor, Shadow Constitution by 4 Libyan activists and lawyers
- Vote of Thanks by Ms Hykmat Elhamishi, Coordinator of the Women for Democratic Platform (Dastoor)
- Releasing of 103 flying candles to mark 103rd International Women's Day, followed by reception



Dastoor Project

Looking towards the new constitution

The Women's Day event, in coordination with the EU Delegation in Libya and Gender Concerns International, is the official launch of the **DASTOOR PROJECT**. In Libya's revolution, the women of the country made their voice heard and it is now vital to carry their participation forward in a new constitution and elections. This interactive event is a great opportunity to discuss women's full political participation in the Libyan democratic transition, constitutional process and beyond.

The **DASTOOR PROJECT** by Gender Concerns International, supported by EuropeAid, will be implemented in Tripoli and Benghazi. With the project, Gender Concerns aims to support Libyan women and civil society organisations in the drafting and implementation of the new constitution. The project focuses on these organisations because of their interest in promoting female political participation. It is essential that the organisations progress their campaign for a political voice with new opportunities for increased engagement in a strong women's and civil society movement. The project will give ownership to local initiatives through networking, capacity building, dialogue, lobbying and advocacy.

Gender Election Monitoring Mission

Following our successful GEM Mission in Libya in 2012, Gender Concerns International is working together with the Libyan Women's Union and the Libyan Forum for Civil Society to strengthen the position of women before, during and after the country's 2014 elections.



Although women in Libya can participate in politics, they are still underrepresented in government and in influential representation positions.

Gender Concerns International's Electoral Assessment Team visited several polling stations in the Tripoli area on 20 February during the voting for the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA). Our team was pleased to find stations to be well organised and adequately staffed. The Team also noted that the staff was predominantly female. The presence of female staff at male polling stations was a welcome observation.

Although the first polling hour revealed a rather limited attendance, the number of voters at polling stations increased after 10:00. However, many election booths remained unattended. The Electoral Assessment Team observed significant differences between male and female voter participation rate, as male polling stations were busier than female polling stations.

Gender Concerns multi-media campaign promotes Libyan women's democratic participation



Gender Concerns International Libya was pleased to mark the third anniversary of the Libyan Revolution last month by supporting women's role in the upcoming elections with the **Women for Democratic Transformation (WDT)** platform, a multi-media campaign launched on 16 February. The aim of the campaign is to send out a call to support Libyan women's participation in upcoming elections and their collective action in the Constitution Committee, and to strengthen the influence of women's decision-making in political representation.



The WDT campaign kick-off was supported by 50,000 SMS messages, formally launched by the German Ambassador to Libya, H.E. Christian Much. Ambassador Much also addressed an audience of 200 participants reaffirming his support for the empowerment of Libyan women and their increased representation at decision-making levels.

(Ambassador Much – centre in above photo and left in photo below)

Workshop for strategic communication

Management skills and strategic communication were focus areas of a Libya workshop for women held last December, in coordination with the Ministry of Culture and Civil Society. The three-day workshop with 28 women participants from around Libya aimed to develop the Libyan women's platform for action, promote inclusion of women's groups and organisations, and to build solidarity among women's groups as a strategic tool. That same month, Gender Concerns held a three-day training session at its office in Tripoli for enhanced role in political processes for young activists.



Women's voices heard on Marboua project

Gender Concerns Libya held an event at the organisation's political cafe in Tripoli on 6 February. The Marboua Dialogue on 'Women in the Constitution making, why vote for them?' was well received in the community and media. The event was covered live on the Al-Jazeera news network.

Over 30 participants actively shared their views on women in the democratic process. Candidates for the upcoming constitution committee, a GNC member, prominent lawyers, university professors and civil society activists were present. Discussions highlighted women in the Arab Spring, the culture of male leadership, women's role in the constitution, and in society as an equal half of the country's population. (photo, Marboua café)



UPCOMING EVENTS 2013 AT MARBOUA CAFÉ

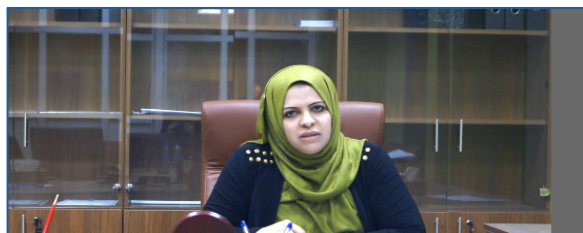
Address: Sharah Abdusalam Ben Yunis, Nofleen, Tripoli

- **10 March** - A dialogue between lawyers and the Tawargah women on the land rights of women and post conflict zones: UNSCR 1325
- **13 March** – Swiss Embassy's session on Peace and Security with other implementing partners
- **20 March** - Gender Task Force meetings every three weeks
- **TBC** - A dialogue on rights of Libyan women married to foreigners

Interested in holding an event at Marboua Café? Want to know more about these events?

Contact our Libyan office at +218 (0)21 3400796 or email nyghat@genderconcerns.org

Moving forward in film and in the public eye



Gender Concerns has produced a short documentary film interviewing women who are standing up for their place in government and society. Leading women spoke about their participation in decision-making, current challenges, and encouraging women to vote.



Our message to the women of Libya on public billboards in Tripoli and Benghazi:

***Stay involved in decision making and elections
Make this a constitution for EVERYONE!***

***'After the Arab Spring you cannot cage people and
their thoughts. There are no borders for thoughts and freedoms. Inclusion is important
and fundamental. History has shown that nations can only progress if there is inclusion'.***

Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International



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