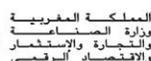
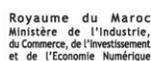


Promoting women empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the Middle East and North Africa region

Amman, Hotel Le Meridien, 20th July 2016



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Draft Concept Note

Background

The Conference is organized by UNIDO as part of the projects “*Promoting women empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA region*” and “*Development of Clusters in Cultural and Creative Industries in the Southern Mediterranean*”, under the auspices of the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat.

The project “*Promoting women empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA region*” seeks to enhance women’s economic inclusion and promote a sustainable and inclusive growth by harnessing the great potential of women entrepreneurs within the region.

Funded by the Italian Government, the project started in February 2015 and an extended version was labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in November 2015. During the first phase of the project, the activities have been implemented in the following countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Other countries such as Algeria will be integrated in the project implementation during the second phase which will start in August 2016. The main stakeholders of the project are the Ministries of Industries of the 6 countries, as well as the following Women’s Business Associations: Association for Women’s Total Advancement and Development-AWTAD Egypt; Business & Professional Women Amman – BPW-A, Jordan; Al Majmoua, Lebanon; Association des Femmes Chefs d' Entreprises du Maroc – AFEM, Morocco, Business Women Forum-BWF, the State of Palestine; and Femmes et Leadership, Tunisia.

The project targets: 1) the promotion of the policy dialogue between public key actors and national business women’s associations to create a more conducive environment for women entrepreneurship; 2) the implementation of more efficient demand-driven services by the national business women’s associations to support women entrepreneurs in the region on a continuous and sustainable basis; 3) the development of more sustainable women-led businesses within the South Mediterranean region.

As part of the project’s activities, an assessment report of the situation of women entrepreneurs in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and a benchmarking analysis of the best practices in the field of women entrepreneurship with Australia, Italy and Turkey have been carried out. The preliminary results of these two researches were presented on 14 October 2015, during a conference on “Women Economic Empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia” organized at EXPO Milan 2015 by UNIDO in cooperation with the Italian Development Cooperation and the NGO *No Peace Without Justice*.

The Milan Conference provided a forum to initiate the dialogue at regional and country level between the various stakeholders involved in the promotion of women entrepreneurship. The Conference provided a list of final recommendations, highlighting in particular the importance of: (1) promoting the image of women entrepreneurs in the region through role-models, (2) implementing funding guarantee schemes and targeted financial services for women to facilitate their access to bank loans, (3) reinforcing networking among women entrepreneurs as a means to facilitate investment mobilization and access to markets as well as a way to enhance advocating power vis-à-vis Governments and Members of Parliament and (4) the role of governments to facilitate public-private partnerships and to support legal and regulatory reforms to facilitate women entrepreneurship.

The Conference in Jordan will build on the achievements of the Milan Conference with the objective to further develop the analysis on the situation of women entrepreneurs in the region and to stimulate the exchange of good practices of women cluster development and women role’s model in Europe and the South Mediterranean region (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia).

The project “*Development of Cultural and Creative Industries and Clusters in the Southern Mediterranean*” is funded by the EU and also benefits from a financial contribution of the Italian Development Cooperation and from the labelling of the UfM. The project is implemented in 7 Southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) and provides technical assistance to clusters, in order to support the resilience of the population in the region. It follows UNIDO’s Cluster and Creative Industries (CCI) methodology by working on factors of competition and sources of innovation of companies working in CCI value chains, through business development services, creativity and design development, marketing and communication, quality and market access capacities.

The aim is to harness the creativity of craftsmen and SMEs, and encourage them to create new brands and modern collections using traditional designs and techniques of production that are distinctive to the region. Cultural and creative industries are for the majority composed of SMEs in the region, and the project enables these to regroup, and supports them in overcoming the challenges and in improving their competitiveness, in order for them to develop their activities and access new markets.

Finally, the Amman Conference will share the first results of the Second Regional Dialogue meeting on women empowerment organized by the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat that took place on 25-26 of April 2016 in Barcelona, in preparation of the fourth UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society foreseen to take place during the first semester of 2017. The dialogue aims at reviewing the implementation of the UfM third ministerial conference and increasing the coherence, synergies and the complementarity of actions of various stakeholders in this field. This Conference will focus in particular on the first conclusion reached by the Working Group on Women’s Participation in Economic Life, which is part of the dialogue and will meet in Jordan on 19 July 2016.

Within the topics which are particularly relevant for women empowerment in the region, the Conference will focus on the support needed for policy dialogue and share of good practices to accelerate women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship ecosystem at national and the regional level.

Objectives

The objectives of the Conference are:

1. To enhance the dialogue between governments and the concerned stakeholders on the topic of Women Entrepreneurship and self-employment in the South Mediterranean Region;
2. To deepen the discussion on the policies and measures that can promote women's participation in the economy;
3. To demonstrate the potential of Cultural and Creative industries in creating economic opportunities and empowering women;
4. To facilitate sharing of best practices of successful women entrepreneurs as role model with female entrepreneurs of the region.

Outputs:

1. Priority policies and measures needed to boost women entrepreneurship in the 7 South Mediterranean countries are identified (at least one per country)
2. Recommendations on how to boost the creation and the expansion of successful women-led enterprises in key sectors such as CCIs are issued

Morning session on Raising Women’s Participation in Economic Life through entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region

In the 2030 Agenda and standalone Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls), most of the key strategic elements of women’s human rights are set as targets including: 5.2 elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, in both private and public sphere, 5.6 full and effective participation and leadership at ‘all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life’, 5.5 women’s equal rights to economic resources including land.

However, some targets are complemented by others such as the target on unpaid domestic and care work is a target for achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water under Goal 6 (6.1). Other strategic element such as full and productive employment/decent work for all women and men and equal pay for work of equal value appear under Goal 8 (8.5) while access to social protection for all appears under Goal 1 (1.3).

Furthermore, the session will also identify how initiatives in the South Mediterranean Region can promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, at the heart of Goal 9 and UNIDO’s mandate, especially target 9.3: increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

In the South Mediterranean region, the progress made by the countries in supporting women empowerment in the economic and political spheres is globally recognized. Still, the constraints faced by women at work and women entrepreneurs in the region, remain a tangible problem causing a slow – speed effect on the national economic growth. As shown in the UNIDO Assessment Report on Women Entrepreneurship in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, the constraints faced by female entrepreneurs in those countries varies from family responsibilities to limited access to financial services and markets.

Most legal frameworks, with particular reference to the personal status laws in the countries analysed do not grant the same rights to women and men and they rarely have policies fostering women’s participation in the economic life.. For example, balancing between motherhood/care and work remains a major challenge for most women, including women entrepreneurs, as revealed by UNIDO’s survey. Institutional support could be more gender sensitive by integrating developed access to childcare and other facilities into national policies to help ease the work-life burden of working women, particularly women entrepreneurs, especially those who cannot rely on their family support system.

This session will start with a presentation of the *interim* results of the UfM dialogue on Women’s Participation in Economic Life, whose Working Group will meet the day before the Conference. It will be followed by a presentation of the July 2016 results of the ongoing survey carried out by UNIDO among women entrepreneurs of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Leading questions during this roundtable will be:

- What policies can be adopted to encourage women participation in the economic life?
- What is the current situation in the region on topics such as child-care, land owning regime facilitating access to finance and markets to boost women entrepreneurship?
- What are the success stories and best practices on policies promoting women economic empowerment also in other regions? What are the lessons learned? How can we build upon these lessons to create a more enabling environment for women entrepreneurship?

Afternoon session on Innovative sectors for women entrepreneurship development: opportunities and success stories in the Cultural & Creative Industries (CCIs)

Access to the labor market for women is often very limited because of the lack of technical competencies, specific educational skills and capital stock. The cultural and creative industries represent an important jobs pool for women and can favor their integration while developing opportunities of employment, equal salaries and decent working conditions.

In this regards, clusters in cultural and creative industries can create a more dynamic and conducive environment for female employment and entrepreneurship while, at the same time, representing a well established platform to support women empowerment and the lack of specific technical skills in the related sectors. The project, Creative Mediterranean, aims at harnessing the creativity of craftsmen and SMEs, while encouraging them to create new brands and modern collections using traditional designs and techniques of production that are distinctive to the region. In terms of job opportunities, it is estimated that over 280 000 people are employed in the sectors in which the clusters are established, 155 000 of which, informally.

Under this framework, creativity acts as a key tool to facilitate women empowerment and their economic development; at the same time, creativity strongly contributes to increasing regional economic opportunities and, thus, resilience. In this regard, success stories of women entrepreneurs, operating in different sectors within the region, will share their experiences together with their European counterparts to showcase best practices and discuss on how to support women business related initiatives.

The afternoon session will be divided in two sub sessions: The discussion will start with a presentation of the methodology through which CCIs can play an inclusive and empowering role for women in the Middle East and North Africa region by providing them with self-employment and business opportunities. As such, the session will bring together a qualified panel composed of designers and professionals from the beneficiary clusters as well as European designers and creative entrepreneurs so as to discuss the main gaps and technical assistance that could be tailored to women in the South Mediterranean Region.

The floor will then be given to entrepreneurs coming from cultural and creative clusters in the region to discuss tangible key success factors and challenges they have faced in developing their business in the South Mediterranean context

Leading questions during the discussions will be:

- Why are CCIs conducive for women empowerment in the region? How can women be supported in creating and growing their businesses/activity in these sectors?
- How can creativity and innovation improve socio-economic resilience and how can design become a tool for economic development?
- What can be learned from the experience of successful women entrepreneurs in the region?
- How can best practices become accessible to the largest number of women entrepreneurs?

Draft agenda of the Conference

09: 09:30 *Registration of participants*

09:30-10:00 **Opening session**

Chair: Monica Carcó, UNIDO Senior Industrial Development Expert

Speakers **Italian Ambassador** in Jordan, H.E. Giovanni Brauzzi
Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply of Kingdom of Jordan, H.E. Jawad Anani (t.b.c)
UfM, Delphine Borione
UN Women, Mohammed Naciri
Business Professional Women Amman, Haifa Najjar

10:00-10:15 *Coffee Break*

10:15 – 13:00 **Morning session: “Raising women’s participation in economic life through entrepreneurship”**

Chair: Monica Carcó, UNIDO Senior Industrial Development Expert

Keynote Speakers Serena Romano - Representative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

Presentation of the UfM interim report of the Working Group on “Raising women’s participation in economic life”

Neila Amara, UNIDO Expert – Presentation of the UNIDO Assessment Report on the situation of women entrepreneurship in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and benchmarking analysis of the best practices in the field

Speakers Anis Zahraz, Member of the Management Unit of the Tunisian National Program on Women Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Women Affairs

Pierre Omran, Head of the Beirut Permits Committee, Ministry of Industry, Lebanon

Latifa Chihabi, Secretary General Ministry of Industry, Trade, Investment and Digital Economy,
Morocco (t.b.c)

Sandra Rey, Founder & CEO Glowee, France

Rita Assogna, President ITWIIN, Italian association for inventors and innovators women

Nawzat AlQudsi, Ahli bank Amman

Q&A

13:00-14:30 *Lunch*

14:30-17:00 **Afternoon session: “Innovative sectors for women entrepreneurship development: opportunities and success stories in the Cultural & Creative industries”**

14:30-15:30 ***Panel 1: Cultural and Creative Industries: from handicraft to design, innovative solutions for women entrepreneurs***

Chair: Giuliana Zoppis, Architect and journalist, co-founder of *Best Up*

Keynote Speakers Gertraud Leimüller, Head of Creative Economy Austria, t.b.c.

Speakers Esraa Fathy, Designer from Cairo Cluster and Head of *Alf wa Noon* brand, Egypt
Monia Rassâa, Product Designer from Tableware Cluster in Nabeul and Head of *Ekho Design*,
Tunisia
Aida Ghanem, expert in traditional embroidery, Head of Design Atelier in Amman
Wafaa Kiran, Morocco

15:30-16:00 *Coffee break*

16:00-17:00

Panel 2: Testimonials for women entrepreneurs: key success factors and challenges

Chair: Nahla Kamal, UNIDO National Project Coordinator in Egypt

Speakers

Souad Melouli, Jewelry Designer and Art Gallery Director in Algiers, Algeria

Amira Ramadan Abouseria Nasrallah, CEO and Founder of *Sensey* startup, Egypt

Nehaya Abu Khater, Palestine

Q&A

17:00-18:00

Plenary: Highlights of the discussion and recommendations

Speakers

UNIDO, UfM, Ministry of Industry of the Kingdom of Jordan

19:00-20:30

Cocktail dinner and exhibition of products from the Amman Fashion Cluster