



# Women and Democratic Transition in Egypt

Dialogue Forum Report

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**Bibliotheca Alexandrina**

Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies (CDSPPS), Bibliotheca Alexandrina

The Egyptian Feminist Union

PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG)





# CONTENTS

Foreword.....	5
Introduction.....	7
Opening Session.....	9
Session One.....	13
Session Two.....	19
Session Three.....	27
Conclusion.....	37

# ANNEXES

Annex 1. Participants.....	39
Annex 2. Program.....	44
Annex 3. About PeaceWomen Across the Globe.....	46
Annex 4. Facilitation Committee .....	47



## FOREWORD

In recent years, the world has witnessed an increasing concern for women's rights and their status in society. Many international conferences were held, aiming to identify the obstacles that impede the full and effective participation of women in all political, economic, and social arenas.

Despite all the international conventions and treaties that support the role of women, in his message on International Women's Day, 8 March 2006, held under the title "The Role of Women in Decision-making", the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that while achieving some progress in the representation of women around the world, the international statistics show that the extent of women participation in the process of political decision-making remains weak. The representation of women in politics and in high-level posts around the world remains an objective that has not been yet adequately fulfilled.

No one can deny the importance of the effective participation of women in all aspects of social life; for women who are well aware of their role, committed to their responsibilities, and keen on practicing their rights, greatly influence life in their societies, pushing them toward more advancement and development.

Women in Arab societies have been among the most deprived of their rights, due to different aspects of cultural heritage. Culture, with its sometimes rigid cultural perceptions, plays a major role in pressuring women and limiting them to specific roles, forming a pattern for women in the perception of societies, and in the perception of women themselves.

During the past three years, Egyptian women have played a major role in political life, being effective participants in the electoral process. We have all seen the extent to which women were present during Egyptian elections, seriously participating in the parliamentary elections, the constitution referendum, and the presidential elections.

Women have fulfilled their responsibilities to the fullest, it is therefore only fair that they should enjoy the rights granted to them by the constitution and the existing laws. Article (11) of the Egyptian Constitution for 2014 states that “The State shall ensure the achievement of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women in the houses of representatives, as specified by Law. The State shall also guarantee women’s right of holding public and senior management offices in the State and their appointment in judicial bodies and authorities without discrimination...”<sup>1</sup>

In 2012, the PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG), in cooperation with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) and the National Council for Women (NCW), held a conference titled “Women and the Democratic Transition in Egypt”, which was followed by a series of dialogue forums focusing on the enhancement and support of the political participation of Egyptian women and their appointment to leading posts.

The dialogue forums were held in four locations in Egypt: Alexandria, Luxor, Tanta, and Mersa Martouh. The locations were selected according to geographical distribution, as each location has a different cultural nature. The dialogue forums aimed to collect the views and recommendations of the participants concerning the challenges that face Egyptian women in public life, and how to face these challenges.

The recommendations resulting from these dialogue forums will be showcased in the closing conference that will be held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in May 2015, under the title “The Empowerment of Egyptian Women: From Recommendations to Strategic Implementation”. The conference will witness the participation of many stakeholders, whether governmental or affiliated with the entities concerned with women and individual rights, with the aim of consolidating all efforts to develop a work plan and a national strategy to support and empower women at the national level as to decision-making and political participation. Turning this strategy into a reality is a true translation to the concept of the democratic transition that Egypt’s revolutions sought, for the establishment of a new society founded on freedom and equality, guaranteeing all rights stated in the international conventions for human rights.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2014.

## INTRODUCTION

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies, in cooperation with the Egyptian Feminist Union and PeaceWomen Across the Globe, held a dialogue forum entitled “Women and Democratic Transition in Egypt” that lasted for two days (23-24 November 2012) at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. One-hundred-and-fifty participants experienced and interested in this issue attended the meeting.

The Forum mainly aimed at reinforcing the participation of, and the dialogue between the different sectors of society and people interested in women’s issues through holding sessions and discussion boards that aimed at offering suggestions and a practical work plan. The Forum had three main objectives:

- Reinforcing the effective participation of women in democratic transition and identifying how to overcome the challenges that might face the process
- Emphasizing the importance of peaceful dialogue and societal communication
- Preparing a realistic and effective work plan through cooperation with a group of women’s rights activists, decision-makers and representatives from the Egyptian Government.

These objectives were discussed from three perspectives:

- Women’s pursuit of peace; in terms of rights and freedoms.
- Gender equality in the Constitution and legislations.
- Women’s voices: Fields and forums.

An exhibition was held parallel to the Dialogue Forum entitled “1000 PeaceWomen across the Globe: No Women, No Peace”. A number of contemporary Egyptian women who contributed to the positive change of their society participated in this Exhibition.

This Forum was organized in cooperation with:

- The Alliance for Arab Women
- Karama Foundation
- The Enlightened Egypt Initiative
- The Women and Development Society
- The Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights (ECWR)
- Appropriate Communication Technologies for Development (ACT)
- The Association Village of Hope for Development and Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

The Forum was held under the sponsorship of the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

A general opening session and two specialized sessions were held on the first day. In the first session, the rights and freedoms that support women’s pursuit of peace and security were discussed, whereas the second session focused on gender equality in the Constitution and legislations. These were followed by the inauguration of the Exhibition entitled “PeaceWomen across the Globe: No Women, No Peace”. On the second day of the Forum, a summary of the discussions of the previous day was presented in a general session. This was followed by another session entitled “Women’s Voices: Fields and Forums” in which the reinforcement of a real representation of women in decision-making was discussed.



## OPENING SESSION

The first session included keynote speeches which focused on the following points:

### Welcome word by

- **Dr. Azza El-Kholy, Director of The BA Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies**

Dr. Azza El-Kholy welcomed the participants and emphasized that Egyptian women have always had a role in building and developing Egyptian society, and that she hopes that they will have an effective role in the current democratic transition in Egypt.

### Keynote speeches

- **Dr. Hoda Badran, Chairperson of the Arab Alliance for Women and the Egyptian Feminist Union**
  - This Forum is of special importance as it coincided with the President issuing the Constitutional Declaration on 21 November 2012, and the main decisions that were taken in the country. This is because women's issues are part and parcel of public decisions.
  - This Forum includes men and women who are not only intellectuals, but also actively involved in public life. These people also play a role both on the local as well as the national levels, and Egyptians are in dire need of this combination of intellect and work.
  - We are at a crossroads, and we are in need of reviewing what we have accomplished, as well as what we will be doing in the coming stage. Should we apply the same methods we used before, or should we change these methods in the next stage?

- The role of women in civil society has been marginalized following the 25 January Revolution, but women must work to end this marginalization. However, following the President's recent Constitutional Declaration on 21 November 2012, we must stop and question if decision-makers listen to us at all. Should we change the mechanism we are employing? We must analyze the current state of affairs to fully understand the whole situation, know who our allies and enemies are, and identify the main players that are currently on the scene.
  - A number of pioneering women in Egyptian society met with the President to discuss women's issues. They felt that he took what they said into consideration, but afterwards this proved to be incorrect.
  - We are facing a new situation, and we need to go back to the reasons that led to it so that we can rectify this.
  - We all united to achieve the same goals since the beginning of the 25 January Revolution; and as women, we are part and parcel of these goals.
  - We must identify the main players on the scene, and their goals, and whether these goals match ours and those of the Revolution, or otherwise.
  - We never imagined that a new autocracy would be created in post revolution Egypt.
- **Safaa El-Adam (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Sudan)**
    - Women are effective and influential during change and transitional periods, but they face many difficulties and obstacles in their pursuit for change.
    - We believe that women have the abilities and potential to lead the process of democratic transition and they have an effective role in the process of building peace as they are influential and should not be viewed as merely victims.
    - Women cannot make the desired changes without the support of men.
    - Difference in opinion has to be respected, to reach a civilized and constructive dialogue and achieve the objectives of such dialogue.
    - We all work in one society to achieve economic and social prosperity, as well as social justice and gender justice.

- **Ambassador Mervat Al-Tallawi, Head of the National Council for Women**
  - Women’s issues are international, as they are part of human rights, and hence, international support for them is needed.
  - Women participated in the 25 January Revolution as men did.
  - Women made important achievements in the two years following the Revolution.
  - Women opposed the attempts to change the laws in the Parliament that lasted for four months, and among those most important objectives were the elimination of laws that grant women their rights such as the laws of *khula*’ (the right of a woman to file for divorce and compensation paid back to the husband from the wife), the marriage age, the custody of children and female circumcision.
  - Thanks to Al Azhar scholars, Dar Al-Ifta, the Ministry of Justice and the State Council, these attempts were opposed and finally stopped. However, there are attempts to embed such laws within the Constitution. In addition, the proposed constitution does not provide women with adequate rights, and if Articles concerning women’s rights are added, they are explained in terms of Islamic *Sharia* according to individual interpretations.
  - Women’s rights cannot be associated with *Sharia* as this in reality belittles *Sharia*. Since Islamic *Sharia* is not against women, and women’s rights are not incompatible with *Sharia*. In fact, we have always applied *Sharia* since Islam came to Egypt.
  - The media exaggerates the issue of *Sharia*, as if we are non believers to whom *Sharia* is a novelty.
  - Several institutions and civil society associations opposed certain articles in the proposed Constitution. Moreover, they did not only object to Articles dealing with women, children and the family, but they also objected to the Articles that have to do with public issues, since the Constitution concerns all of us.
  - All this makes us strongly believe that the current Draft Constitution in contrary to the logic that is generally followed in drafting constitutions. Moreover, Egyptian professors of constitutional law are currently assisting in drafting the Constitution of Yemen, but sadly, they are not part of Egypt’s Constitutional Committee.

- There are several attempts to ostracize women from leading positions, and transferring them to administrative positions, although they have held these leading positions for decades and have gained the experience needed for such positions.
- There have been demands for a just and unconditioned representation of women, regardless of whether they belong to a particular party since the first constitutional committee was formed. However, these demands were overlooked, both in the first and the second constitutional committees.
- It was agreed with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar that Al Azhar would issue a document on the Rights of Women in Islam.
- A campaign was launched in an attempt to eliminate violence against women in 27 Egyptian Governorates. The campaign included holding a number of conferences in all Governorates, and these were attended by many men and women. In addition, the Minister of the Interior promised to focus more on the departments concerned with cases of violence against women and harassment, but there were attempts to thwart this campaign.
- There are 1000 pioneering women in rural areas, and we try to help them through establishing associations, since they are the link between us and other rural women; and through them we are informed of the problems and needs of such poor women.
- It is important to note that the role of Egypt protecting women and children during war is undeniable.
- In 1992, Egypt led the Conference of Violence against Women.
- Security Council Resolution 1325, which was passed in 2000, tackled the issue of wars since it was proved that 70% of the people in refugee camps during conflicts were women and children. This is because men take the decision to declare war, and it is women who suffer from the consequences of such a decision, without having the right to take part in deciding.
- Women are everywhere, so they should be a positive, assertive force that must support the nation. Egyptian women will triumph despite all the negative attempts to direct them backwards.

The following is a summary of the points that were discussed in the sessions of the Forum and the outcome of each session, as well as a concluding statement of the results and the recommendations of the Forum.

## Session One

### Women's Pursuit of Peace and Security in Terms of Rights and Freedoms

The session began with participants' speeches which can be summarized as follows:

- **Ambassador Naela Gabr, Chairperson of the National Committee on Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings**
  - There is an internal, as well as a national dimension of rights and freedoms.
  - Due to misunderstanding, some believe that such human rights values are novel or imposed on Egyptian society, despite the fact that religious institutions were always consulted in all the international agreements that Egypt ratified.
  - Egypt belongs to Africa, the Arab world and the Muslim world, all of which have ratified the international agreements.
  - The first international convention on Rights and Freedoms is the International Declaration of Human Rights, which was the beginning that inspired negotiators later on.
  - One great problem that we face in Egypt is the high rate of illiteracy, especially among women.
  - The quota system, or temporary measures, are constitutional as they are associated with certain cases, and not infinite. In other words, they are time-bound.
  - Social peace and development cannot be achieved without women.
  - It is always the poor who are exploited, and it is indeed time to discuss social justice, especially after the Revolution.
  - Many questions are raised concerning illiterate women, how they participate in elections, and the pressures that are exerted upon them, and these are all points that need to be discussed.
  - Turkey was the first country to join a European agreement for the elimination of violence against women.

- Egypt’s ratifying of any international agreement renders this agreement part of national legislation that and will be acknowledged by courts of law.
  - Negative stereotypes constitute one of the gravest threats to women, and violence against women takes different shapes, and all sectors of society share this responsibility.
  - Norway has the second oldest written Constitution in the world, and it includes Articles that have to do with societal care for women.
- **Stella Sabiiti’s speech (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Uganda)**
    - All institutions should consider the human dimension, because this will help us activate what we aspire to.
    - In Africa, there is a discrepancy between women who hold high positions, and women who live in poor areas who complain from neglect by those responsible for them.
    - We can learn from birds how to soar together. This could be achieved through cooperation and leadership within a work group. If we had learned from birds, we would have soared together. For although there is a leader, we still need some cooperation and encouragement.
    - Cooperation is the solution. Birds support each other if one misses the swarm; and likewise, we need to support each other.
    - Women holding high positions should not forsake underprivileged women.
    - Cooperating and coordinating individual efforts are of great importance. Groups whose members are united and have a unified aim are more likely to succeed than others. When the leader of a swarm of birds gets tired, it moves backwards. It is difficult to be a leader all the time, and therefore, we need to learn cooperation and exchanging experience and positions in times of difficulty from birds.
  - **Diana Francis’ speech (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, England)**
    - We are born responsible and powerful, as responsibility and power are two faces of the same coin.
    - I believe peace is freedom from violence, oppression, poverty and all negative circumstances. It is a condition for a happy life in which a person can be who he/she is destined to be.
    - Positive peace is all about freedom and justice. Without them, no peace could be achieved.

- When we resort to violence, we fail in our human duty of taking care of each other.
- Egypt has inspired the world with its peaceful Revolution, which is the beginning of a story that can be happy at times, sad at others and full of challenges.
- We need to be in a state of human solidarity, but this is different from interfering in the affairs of others.
- Control got us nowhere. Cooperation is our way to rise together.
- We, as women, are responsible for spreading peace in our societies.
- I believe peace has two faces: a positive face and a negative one. The positive face of peace takes the forms of freedom from violence at home and in one's homeland, freedom of oppression and the ability to prosper and develop one's society in cooperation with other individuals. A person can prosper and improve only if freedom and justice prevail. Without them, no genuine positive peace could be achieved.
- Violence has a negative impact, not only on the victim, but also on the person who exercises it, as it strips him of his humanity and his ability as a human being to take care of others.
- Egypt has inspired the whole world with its ability to make a peaceful Revolution, but it should be taken into consideration that the way to achieve peace and the different demands is hard and full of frustration and intimidation.
- Only citizens of a country can solve their problems and achieve their own peace. Other countries and their citizens are required to cooperate with and encourage them without interfering in their affairs or trying to control them. This is always my message to the Government of my country Britain.
- The gender differentiation that we impose on each other is unfair.
- Men have a mixture of compassion and understanding, and women are both powerful and responsible. Control did not help us much, so we should seek mutual understanding and cooperation.
- I have great hope in this Forum. Despite the challenges and difficulties that you are facing currently, your views and the devotion that you and the people who share your views and aims show to your causes will enable you to change your country and the whole world.



The session focused on three main points:

1. The challenges that face women in terms of rights and freedoms.
2. Facing these challenges through:
  - Laws and legislations.
  - Civil society initiatives and campaigns.
  - The treatment of women in police stations.
3. Reinforcing social responsibility for supporting women's rights.

### 1) **The challenges that face women in terms of rights and freedoms**

The discussion of the challenges that face women in terms of their rights showed that familiarizing women with the rights that are guaranteed to them by law is the first step upon which all the other steps depend. This should start in childhood. The participants agreed that families should be obliged to teach their daughters their rights and obligations, as well as their role in the development of the society so that they would be able to obtain their rights later on, support each other and resist the negative ideas that face women in Egyptian society as a result of cultural norms such as regarding women as inferior to men. The participants agreed that interpreting religion properly can correct this common view, and that implementing international agreements and making them part of the laws in accordance with the culture of society will help much in changing the common view. Undoubtedly, the Constitution is the basis of all legislations that guarantee women's rights, and thus, laws and legislations should be updated to suit the current stage. In addition, the gap between legislations and their application should be eliminated.

### 2) **Facing these challenges**

#### a) **Laws and Legislations**

Discussions in this respect focused on the necessity of finding a legislative shield to protect women from several violent practices, as well as establishing institutions that support all women's rights and that include volunteer lawyers and legal, social and psychology specialists. In addition, women should be familiarized with their rights and the laws that guarantee these rights so that they could resort to them in case they face violence or harassment. The participants demanded that the Constitution state that the treaties ratified by the country should be part of its laws once ratified. In addition, the Constitution and international agreements should be abided by, and the rights that women gained according to the 1971 Constitution, before it was amended in 2005 and 2007, should be preserved.



Social, feminist and media organizations should be founded to supervise the mechanisms of activating and implementing these laws.

The participants demanded that laws that discriminate against women be changed, and that academic curricula be modified, and that students should be introduced to women's rights, and the laws that guarantee these rights. This will help in facing imperfect citizenship and the negative discriminating culture that women suffer from in our society, as manifested clearly in the implementation of laws. The participants agreed that the best way to decrease the discrimination against women is not to allow discriminating views to dominate public opinion.

#### **b) Civil Society Initiatives and Campaigns**

Civil society plays an important role in changing many negative aspects in society. Discrimination against women is one of these aspects that civil society can face by following a number of effective steps. These are:

1. Reassessing civil society organizations and the resources.
2. Creating a network that connects civil society organizations so that they would not only be concentrated in cities, and can cover different fields and areas.
3. Demanding gender specialization in civil society, and linking between public work and the distribution of responsibilities in a way that results in a spirit of cooperation.
4. Establishing legal centers to support women within civil society organizations.
5. Changing the regulations of the centers for protecting women under the Ministry of Social Affairs and applying these changes to all Governorates.
6. Activating the social responsibility of individuals and large companies through training and employing women.
7. Observing successful feminist experiences around the world by civil society organizations so that we can apply them in accordance with our culture.
8. Merging the individual work of youth into civil society.
9. Limiting the legislations that reduce the role of civil society.
10. Monitoring the activation and implementation of the plans set by civil society organizations.

#### **c) Treatment of Women in Police Stations**

Many discussions were held about the way women are treated in police stations, and the amount of attention they normally receive when they file a complaint. The committee submitted a number of recommendations that must be taken into consideration so that the police would be an institution that helps women in attaining their rights. The participants suggested familiarizing policemen with women's problems, as well as employing females in the police force, since

they are familiar with such problems and can deal with them better than men. This can be achieved through granting gender equality within the police force. The participants also emphasized the necessity of giving policemen legal and psychological training courses in treating women, and employing a number of volunteers to familiarize women with their rights. They suggested that policemen who do not fulfill their duties towards women should be penalized.

The participants emphasized that there should always be legal and women's support groups to assist and protect females in police stations. Also, cooperation is needed between the police, civil society and decision-makers to change the stereotypical image of women, because this deprives them of their rights in police stations most of the time.

### **3) Reinforcing Social Responsibility to Support Women's Rights**

There is no doubt that social responsibility can be an effective tool in supporting and reinforcing women's rights. Social responsibility differs from one class, institution or organization to another. Civil society and the media are probably the most important mechanisms since the focus of the media on women's issues will increase social interest with this problem. Therefore, the guests who appear in the media should be selected carefully. These guests should be fully aware of women's problems in order to have a positive impact. Thus, the media could be a tool of pressure that influences decision-makers, because it is considered the fourth power in any country.

The discussions also highlighted the importance of having a new mechanism to achieve coordination among women's movements to form a democratic forum for women that could change the political will so that women could participate effectively in democratic political coalitions. In addition, the recommendations of this session stressed the importance of the participation of the private sector in supporting women's rights and the activation of the work of a great number of associations that support women, especially the association of protecting women in Cairo and Alexandria whose work has been suspended because of the regulations that need to be amended. The participants also stressed the importance of forming associations concerned with women farmers. In addition, it stressed that women should be fully supported by men who belong to the same social group (such as Sinai, the countryside) through contacting influential people in villages (sheikhs, mayors), and these men should be trained in order to raise awareness in targeted areas. Sheiks in mosques should also be trained to learn more about the role of women.

## Session Two

### Gender Equality in Constitutions and Legislations

This session started with participants' speeches, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Dr. Georgette Kellini (Lawyer, Human Rights Activist and former Member of Parliament)**
  - When we discuss the Constitution, we do not just discuss the articles, but the limitations imposed by these articles as well. For example, the legislator intentionally did not include an article that prohibits trafficking in human beings on the ground that there is no trafficking in human beings in Egypt. However, the Constitution includes an article that prohibits slavery although there is no slave trade in Egypt. There is no logical explanation for that, and this increases our fears of tricking us to allow child marriages which civil society organizations have been struggling to end for many years.
  - We have no objection whatsoever to the Article (2) of the Constitution, but what raises our fears is the article which explains this article and states that *Fiqh* and *Qiyas* (deductive analogy) are two sources of *Sharia*. We are concerned because this may allow for extremist *Fiqh* or *Qiyas*. In addition, it is the first to see an article explaining another in the same Constitution.
  - Thirty percent of the articles in the Afghani Constitution are concerned with women. Germany has recently amended its Constitution to add new articles that support women. We will never be able to achieve gender equity without real and continuous support that should be stated clearly in the Constitution so as not to allow interpretations and personal opinions.

- **Ms. Aida Nour El-Din (Lawyer and Human Rights Activist)**

- Women’s rights in Egypt have always been associated with the political, economic and cultural conditions of the era in which they were issued. For example, in Pharaonic Egypt, during Queen Hatshepsut’s reign which was characterized by prosperity in economy and trade, there was real equality between men and women. Moreover, sometimes women were considered men’s passport to rule Egypt.
- Islamic rule is considered a legal revolution for women’s rights. This period set a legal system that guaranteed everybody equality and dignity without discriminating between Arabs and *Ajam* (non-Arabs), men and women, or Muslims and non-Muslims.
- Under Ottoman Rule, the status of Arab women started to deteriorate as they started to be regarded as a taboo (*a’wrah*) that should not be approached.
- Unfortunately, we are still suffering from the consequences of this era, as women are still commonly regarded as inferior in the Arab world. This view is mistakenly associated with Islam, and incorrect interpretations of religious texts are referred to promote this view.
- Some regard the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as an “ill-reputed” convention that infringes upon *Sharia*, and they have reservations against some of its articles, especially those that have to do with adoption. In fact, Egypt is not forced at all to apply adoption. On the contrary, the Convention states that each country should take the measures that it finds suitable. Therefore, opponents of the Convention should read it carefully, as Egyptian females should not be deprived of the gains they would achieve if the Convention is put into practice on the ground of some unjustified fears.
- Many laws that are unjust to women have not been amended although civil society organizations have demanded this for many years and proposed alternative articles that would be just to women, and more compatible with the requirements of women and society in modern times.
- There is a huge discrepancy between the law and its application, especially with regard to measures such as litigation and the implementation of provisions which are usually subject to personal whims and circumstances, not to the law.
- The Law of Organized Labor completely ignores large segments of society like women working as farmers and housemaids. These people are not protected by the legislations of the country, although they constitute the largest number of people who work in the non-governmental sector.

- **Visaka Dharmadasa (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Sri Lanka)**

- **\* Gender Equality in Sri Lanka**

- ó The Sri Lankan Constitution states that no one must be discriminated against on the basis of gender.
- ó Sri Lanka ratified several international conventions on women's rights and gender equality, among which are CEDAW, the conventions of International Labour Organization, the United Nations Convention against Trafficking in Women, and the United Nations Convention on Violence against Women.
- ó The Sri Lanka Convention on Women, following CEDAW, reflects the State policies that have to do with women's affairs and fears. Both the State and Non-governmental Organizations participated in forming this Convention as it includes most of women's rights and freedoms.
  - This Convention has no legal force.
  - To carry out the Beijing Labor Program, the Sri Lankan Government set a national work plan based on consultation with national Non-governmental Organizations. This plan was updated in 2001 to be applied 2001-2006. The following measures were taken to implement the plan:
    1. Centralizing women's work in ministries to promote policies and effective programs of gender.
    2. Collecting, analyzing and explaining classified gender data and emphasizing the impact of the programs and policies on gender.
    3. Setting sectoral plans that are compatible with the national work plan, allocating resources for gender and monitoring all programs.

- **\* Legal Reform**

- ... Sri Lankan Penal Code no. 18 was amended due to the pressures of the National Committee on Women, which was formed under the sponsorship of the Sri Lanka Convention on Women following CEDAW, and rape penalties have been increased.
- ... For the first time, the Law recognized the crime of marital rape (between spouses who are judicially separated) and sexual harassment. These amendments were first made to recognize the crime of incest. Also, trafficking in women was recognized as a crime for the first time.
- ... A law preventing domestic violence was passed in 2005. This Law is concerned with protection requests in the cases of domestic violence. Domestic violence was broadly defined to include physical and emotional abuse.

... Concerning women's participation in political life, Sri Lankan women have equal rights as men to vote in all elections, be elected and participate in public and political life. However, the definition did not include equality between men and women in political representation.

**\* Education Policies**

Education policies have greatly helped women. The educational amendment in 1998 stated that education is compulsory between the ages of 5 years and 14 years, which led to the education of a great number of girls. In addition, more females joined universities, but only a low percentage of them enroll in science programs.

**\* Expanding Free Health Services**

Such services benefitted women from all segments of society, and increased their access to health services. The programs concerned with women and children were of great importance in the State's sectoral health programs.

There is evidence that having a job and an independent salary contributed to empowering women economically and promoting more gender equity.

The rate of women's participation in legislation- and policy-making is still low despite the increase of the number of women in leading academic positions and as specialists in other fields.

With regard to marriage, the age of valid marriage was fixed at 12 years for non-Muslim girls in the Kandyan Law, whereas public laws have raised it to 18 years for both sexes. This does not apply, however, to the Islamic Law of Marriage and Divorce which states that a girl can get married when she reaches puberty even if she is not 12 years old, on condition that her guardian consents to this marriage.

Women's right of inheritance depends on the legal system. According to civil marital rights and the inheritance act, a widow is entitled to half of the inheritance, and the rest of the inheritors, including sons and daughters, are entitled to the other half. In 2009, the Institute of Rural Development issued a report stating that Islamic law discriminates against women with regard to property as it grants a Muslim woman a smaller share than that of the man. After the father's death, the Kandyan Law links a daughter's inheritance to the traditions of marriage; girls who get married in *diga* (where the wife lives in the husband's house) must transfer all their inheritance to their brothers and sisters who get married in *binna* (where the husband lives in the wife's house). On the other hand, widows and widowers are not entitled to the property of the person inherited.



Despite the great legal achievements, the actual implementation of the law has some negative aspects. The judicial behavior insists on supporting the suits of female victims. Usually, a woman should get the testimony of an independent person to confirm the rape crime, although the Sri Lankan Constitution guarantees equality between men and women.

The session focused on three main points:

1. The impact of the Constitution on women's rights, and enforcing equality between both genders in rights and obligations.
2. The challenges that hinder the actual implementation of laws.
3. The amendments needed:
  - In the Constitution
  - In the laws
  - In the application mechanisms.

### **1. The impact of the Constitution on women's rights and enforcing gender equity in rights and duties**

The discussions that tackled this issue emphasized the necessity of activating the laws, respecting the judiciary and eliminating the gap between legislations and their implementation. This could be achieved through effective means that monitor the implementation of laws, especially those that have to do with gender equality. Therefore, the constitutional committee needs to be reformed so that it would include the different political and public forces and groups, and express the spirit of the Egyptian Revolution. In addition, women's representation needs to be increased, and women with experience in public work need to be selected. With regard to the Articles of the Constitution, they need to be specific and clear so that they would not be interpreted in more than one way in order to prevent different and numerous interpretations. In addition, the Constitution must treat women as citizens with autonomous citizenship who are entitled to all rights and freedoms regardless of their relationships with men. The Articles of the Constitution should be amended, and decision-makers should respect international conventions and agreements emphasizing gender equality that Egypt has ratified. Moreover, the Articles which have to do with women in the draft of the new Constitution need to be amended and rewritten so that the State would be committed to taking all the necessary measures for unconditional equality between men and women in all fields.

## 2. The challenges that hinder the actual implementation of laws

Undoubtedly, there are many obstacles in Egyptian society that hinder the application of laws and putting them into effect. The patriarchal culture that dominates Egyptian society with all its rigid cultural frameworks, plays a significant role in putting pressure on women, depriving them of many of their rights and imposing certain roles on them. The actual implementation of the law faces a number of obstacles, among which are:

### a) Societal reality

Societal reality is the most important obstacle that hinders the implementation of the law. The customary social classification of the roles of men and women still governs the laws organizing the lives of both sexes.

### b) Distorted culture

The dominant culture in Egyptian society includes many stereotypes that distort the image of women. This culture derives such stereotypes from religious principles and religious texts interpreted by narrow-minded people. Inaccurate interpretations of religious texts have degraded women and deprived them of benefitting from many true commandments of *Sharia*, as well as many laws.

### c) Members of the society

Although the State and many institutions concerned with women have previously exerted great efforts in order to improve the conditions of women and allow them to benefit from the laws passed for them, the problem is that those responsible for implementing such laws are members of the society and belong to the negative patriarchal culture dominating society as well as their own thoughts and attitudes. Therefore, they fail to implement such laws, which leads to depriving women of their rights that the law guarantees as well as the protection they are entitled to as women and citizens.

## 3. The amendments needed

Many amendments are required to grant women the position they deserve. For example:

### - In the Constitution

The discussions highlighted a number of amendments that need to be made in the Egyptian Constitution with regard to women's rights. These are:



1. Reconsidering the articles that deal with women in the new constitution and reforming them so that they would commit the Government to take the measures that would guarantee unconditional equality between men and women in all fields.
2. Including an article in the election law that forces political parties to allocate a quota for women on their electoral lists.
3. Including a clear article that defines the principle of citizenship in the Constitution.
4. Writing the constitutional articles accurately, and not giving them a religious forum, as well as emphasizing the importance of not fragmenting the feminist movement.

In the law. The following needs to be carried out:

- Amending the Labor Law so that it would oblige the private sector not to discriminate between men and women in salary and jobs.
- Including articles protecting women when they deal with different institutions, especially the police and other institutions that practice violence against women.
- Passing a law to observe the power of women's domestic work in official statistics as a huge part of the national income in the general budget that the government spends on the projects that the society needs. This law should be regarded as a right, not as charity.
- Amending all the articles discriminating against women in the penal code and Personal Status Law (adultery, child custody, alimony).

#### - **Mechanisms of Implementation**

The mechanisms of implementation are the tools that can be used in order to implement the suggested policies. There were many views regarding this issue, but they all focus on a number of mechanisms, the most important of which is probably raising people's awareness and developing media programs to combat the customs and traditions that run counter to the law. In addition, Al Azhar, which is a major institution, should play a genuine role in raising awareness, defining equality and correcting the mistaken understanding of the term. Schools, too, have an important role to play as they can be an important mechanism for raising cultural awareness and advocating for the respect of women in school curricula, as well as presenting the successful experiences of women throughout history.

The session focused on the necessity of concentrating on the areas that need more awareness such as the countryside and remote desert communities. There should be cooperation with the elders in the villages, teachers and sheikhs who need to be prepared adequately to raise awareness in their communities.

The participants demanded the issuing of a statement to all feminist movements in Egypt urging them to cooperate together, as well as presenting the successful experiences in Arab, Islamic and foreign countries so that we could benefit from them. Finally, there was an emphasis on demanding the activation of the suggestions presented by the women's delegation to the President. In addition, there should be regulations on justice so that women's cases be decided within 6 months. Moreover, women should be exempted from judicial fees in cases of personal status. The participants also emphasized that the judicial, legislative and executive authorities should be independent.

## Session Three

### Women's Voices: Fields and Forums

The session started with the speeches of the participants. These can be summarized as follows:

- **Dr. Amna Nosseir (Professor of Fiqh and Islamic Sharia, Al Azhar University)**
  - Knowledge has no home. Whoever learns and works hard has the right to speak, as no one should monopolize speech, even God said to his messenger (PBUH), “You are not a warden over them”. Unfortunately, a serious problem that we face now is the continuous attempts to impose guardianship and certain attitudes on the whole society.
  - Islam opposes all sorts of despotism, but unfortunately, man likes to exploit his fellow humans for his personal interests. Islam cares for the humanity of women to the greatest extent, and states that men and women are equal. It is the society that treats women unfairly because of selfishness or in an attempt to control them.
  - God says, “I am setting in the earth a viceroy.” The meaning of “viceroy” here embraces men and women, not men alone, and female *Sahabas* (companions of Prophet Muhammad) represent us and gave us the best example. They enjoyed rights that we are denied today. Unfortunately, this spirit is now absent, and women are giving up the status they deserve in most areas, like they are abandoning societal participation. Therefore, we as women should regain confidence in our abilities as we are viceroys on earth just like men. God has granted us dignity and the necessary qualifications for that.
  - Women should be fully aware and confident that Islamic *Sharia* does not treat them unfairly and that it considers them equal to men. However, extremist religious discourse, influenced by inherited traditions that have nothing to do with religion, deny them their rights and treats them as inferior.

- Knowledge is the weapon to fight extremism. Women should educate themselves, especially with regard to *Sharia*, so that they would be able to argue with whoever exploits women's ignorance of the teachings of their religion to dictate misinterpretations that are in keeping with personal whims and interests. Islamic history and *Sharia* present us with numerous positive examples that reinforce the role of women, and how important they are in the society.

- **Sylvia Aguilera (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Mexico)**

Mrs. Sylvia Aguilera presented some experiences of women in the public domain in Mexico.

It is not easy to discuss the role played by women in Mexico in 10 minutes, so I will shed light on some examples:

**The first example: The victim's movement**

- Mexico faces one of the highest violence rates in the world.
- Accordingly, many movements were formed to support the victims of violence. These movements do not focus on the despotism of the Government, but on revealing the passivity of the Government that does not try to eliminate this violence.
- I work for three movements that represent the victims of violence and human trafficking. What these movements have in common is that they work on disseminating the active participation of women, as they mainly include mothers and sisters.
- Civil society plays a vital role in registering violent crimes to present them to local institutions in an attempt to highlight the dangers that Mexico faces.
- Lawyers and academics support these movements via presenting a new legal framework for dealing with such cases.

**The second example: Rights related to reproduction**

- Catholic principles sometimes clash with the demands of the members of feminist movements. However, their efforts have succeeded throughout the years to grant women the right of abortion in 2007.
- This achievement was gained after several feminist movements agreed on the same aim.
- These movements have also made other achievements such as improving health services for women, decreasing the number of deaths among women during childbirth and combating AIDS.

- The Mexican Parliament now records the allocations of health expenditures to emphasize the transparency of spending and distributing them fairly among men and women.

### **The third example: Political participation**

- It is very common for Mexican women to run for elections and resign after they win to be replaced by men.
- To combat this phenomenon, civil society groups form a pressure group to uncover the expenditures of Parliament allocated for reinforcing women's political participation as these funds are usually spent on other things.
- A law has been recently passed to guarantee that this money will be spent on reinforcing women's political participation, and a coalition has been formed to monitor spending.

### **The lessons learned**

- It is very important to form pressure groups of people with different backgrounds. This is the best way to put real pressure on decision-makers. The more diverse a group is, the more influential it is likely to be. We need to find common ground in order to achieve our common aims.
- The law might be a means to guarantee women's rights, but the real challenge lies in changing the culture that excludes great numbers of people on the ground that they are not part of the influential elite like women, youth, immigrants and minorities. If we do not change this culture, no law can make real changes.
- You should take into consideration the fact that democratic transition takes a long time to be completed. Be patient and never lose hope.

- **Dr. Fayhaa Abdel Hady (PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Palestine)**

In her speech, Dr. Fayhaa highlighted a number of points that can be summarized as follows:

#### **Gender Equality: The Concepts of Peace and Security for Palestinian Women**

On 25 November 2012, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we commemorated launching the international campaign "16 Days for the Elimination of Violence against Women". The 16 days start on 25 November and end on 12 October, and 1700 institutions from 135 countries will participate in the campaign whose slogan this year will be:

“From peace at home to peace all over the world: Let’s challenge military thought and put an end to violence against women.”

How do Palestinian women challenge military thought? What is their idea of peace? How do they define equality?

The concept of feminist peace is not only restricted to putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine; it also embraces eliminating violence and the control of resources (legal rights, education, work and health) as well as achieving security. In addition, it includes achieving just peace.

Gender equality is considered another decisive dimension of women’s definition of peace and security. This dimension includes treating boys and girls equally, and admitting that a woman has her own private life that is not a mere part of the lives of her husband and children. Moreover, equality means respecting women’s status and importance in society even if they become widows, and also supporting women in captivity.

... *Belief in Genuine Peace*

Women’s belief in peace has been greatly affected since the second Palestinian uprising in 2001, particularly after the Israelis overran Palestinian areas in 2002 and 2003. Concepts were distorted, and revenge became a demand, and a main aim for women who went through such terrible experiences, which runs counter to any peace process. Consequently, peace does not seem possible for many women as we realize from the testimonies of 30 Palestinian women who were interviewed in 2003.

... *Liberation from Physical and Psychological Violence*

Women have suffered from all forms of violence, including beating, killing, the destruction of their home, insults, humiliation and deprivation of the right to work and education, as we understood from the above testimonies. Violence was, and still is, a major factor in daily life. The effect of a shock on a person lasts for a long time, and fear and worry remain.

Example: Manar Hassan (born in Rafah, in 1975, and a mother of four; whose daughter, Somaya, was 11 years when the Israeli soldiers killed her) narrates her terrible experience when a sniper shot her in the head.

... *Physical Safety*

The women linked the elimination of violence with safety, and they all agreed on the importance of putting an end to the occupation in order to achieve security.

Example: Sobheyya Gaber Aideya from Al Am'ary Refugee Camp (evacuated from Ramla in 1948, married and a mother of five) explained the grave dangers faced by the residents of the camp who, accordingly, feel extremely insecure.

... *Controlling Resources*

Many women mentioned that there aren't enough job opportunities or resources for their families as a result of the occupation.

Example: Fotoum Daloul (born in the Zaytoun Quarter/Gaza Strip in 1945, and a mother of six boys and five girls) described how the Israeli occupation forces killed two of her daughters and injured her daughter-in-law on the same day, which affected the family's income greatly. The occupation is also responsible for injuring two of her sons, leading to their paralysis.

The testimonies of these women clearly indicate that individual and collective security could only be achieved through eliminating violence and preventing the control of resources.

... *Gender Equality*

Palestinian women criticize societies that do not show appreciation for women.

Example: Rola Eshte (born in 1973, in Balata Camp, Nablus) mentioned that many advised her not to file a lawsuit against the occupation for killing her daughter, who was born on the borders, since she is a girl, not a boy. She mocks the judicial system for that.

From such testimonies, we notice how a woman's life is associated with that of her family and how personal issues, as a result, overlap with public issues. When a woman answers a question about her role or the value of her work, she underestimates her achievements and the efforts she has exerted. Moreover, she credits men for helping her with these achievements.

Example: Soaad Elyan talks modestly about her role in supporting and protecting her husband, children and the whole family.

... *National Unity*

Through their experiences and testimonies, women have reached some new definitions of the above-mentioned concepts, especially security, support, belonging, martyrdom and freedom.



Example: Soaad Elyan mentions how martyrs and militants belong to the same cause and the same land. Rawda El-Tamimi Ouda presents a new definition of “belonging” that links the immediate family with the extended family and the nation.

She concluded her speech with this call

“No women, no peace”

No women, no human security

Let us challenge militarism and put an end to violence against women.

If we challenge militarism, we will save women, men and children the woes of war.

If we challenge militarism, we will create peace both in the private and the public spheres.

If we challenge militarism, we gain our humanity and reap human security.

The session focused on three main points:

1. Methods of overcoming the obstacles that hinder women’s participation in public work
2. Mechanisms of reinforcing actual representation of women in official decision-making
3. The image of women in the media and how it influences the status that women deserve as major partners in building the society.

### **1. Methods of overcoming the obstacles that hinder women’s participation in public life**

Some unfair cultural traditions have contributed to the dissemination of ideas that led to decreasing the importance of women as major partners in the development process. Although religions, history and literature are fair to women, we need to challenge several concepts that marginalize women, and whose effects still constitute obstacles to women’s future in our society.

There were discussions about how to overcome the obstacles that hinder women’s participation in public life, and most participants agreed on a number of steps and mechanisms. As a start, everybody agreed on launching campaigns to raise awareness in schools and remote areas, and familiarize people with the importance of women’s issues, and the necessity of women’s participation in developing their society. In addition, there should be cooperation with the institutions concerned with women’s issues to reinforce and disseminate the culture of gender and equality and break stereotypes. Also, we should disseminate and respect pluralism and stop reducing women to objects of pleasure.



The National Council of Women has a great responsibility in supporting women's issues, as it can establish many agreements and partnerships with civil society organizations and governmental institutions to enable women to get involved in public work without facing obstacles. The discussions revealed that women need the law to protect them and reinforce their status in society. Therefore, there should be a law that prohibits disdaining women as well as an article in the Constitution that defines citizenship, as well as mechanisms to prevent anyone from breaking these laws. Moreover, the phrase "not for women" should not be included in job advertisements in accordance with a new article to be stated in the labor law.

There is no doubt that if the different institutions support women, this will help them in their productive and professional roles. This can be achieved through providing nurseries, health care centers and maternal leaves for women. To protect women at the workplace, there should be a law that incriminates sexual harassment at work. In addition, there must be steps to solve the problems of law implementation and change the status of women so that they can be regarded as partners, rather than assistants, to men.

Due to the importance of the institutions concerned with the rights of women and children, these institutions should be activated and reinforced by the State so that they could act without being hindered by any obstacles. Political parties should adopt women's issues and activate the related laws and must ensure that there is fair representation of women in the branches of these parties in the different governorates. In order for women to play a positive and constructive role on the professional level, the discussions stressed the necessity of emphasizing promotion criteria, enhancing equal opportunities in the different governorates and setting specific criteria that would apply to everybody. This way, an efficient working woman would not be deprived of her rights because of her gender.

The participants demanded that 30% of the workers appointed by companies should be female. They also demanded the creation of a database illustrating the participation of women in the public sector to avoid inaccurate data and to assure that women always have an adequate share in the public sector and its different jobs. All these mechanisms and policies will eliminate the obstacles that limit women's participation in public life. Moreover, they will motivate women to benefit their society even more.

### *Mechanisms of reinforcing actual representation of women in official decision-making circles*

Women in the Egyptian society suffer from participation in official decision-making circles due to many obstacles and policies. The most important mechanism for reinforcing their status and genuine representation in decision-making would probably be adding a specific constitutional article that cannot be changed and that states the right of women to hold decision-making positions (editors-in-chief, local administrative posts, ministries).

The participants also demanded that the efficiency of women should be raised through establishing leader preparation programs so that they could join Parliament. They also believe that this could be achieved by including an article in the Constitution stating that women should be represented in each electoral constituency.

In addition, there is another important dimension that needs to be taken into account. Men in the different parties and institutions should be familiarized with the importance of women's participation in decision-making and understand that this does not threaten the positions that males hold. This dimension will greatly contribute to correcting the concepts that many have, and changing the negative inherited cultural norms towards women, which will lead to accepting them at work as decision-makers and not only as subordinates.

The efficiency of women should also be raised by establishing leadership programs in the different governorates and empowering women via activating temporary positive discrimination in decision-making circles.

## **2. The image of women in the media and how it influences the status that women deserve as major partners in building society**

The media, as a fourth authority, plays an important role in directing public opinion in any society. Thus, it can contribute to eliminating the negative image that regards women as inferior. The great potential of the media should be activated. In addition, we should be able to make use of the strong ties between members of society and means of communications, especially television and its programs, among the most important of which are drama and media campaigns. These can be directed to make the needed changes, and after people's attitudes in order to eliminate the negative stereotypes of women.

Furthermore, while planning its role, the media should take into consideration that the problem does not lie in the lack of laws, but in the inherited cultural norms at times and in societal contexts at others. In addition, illiteracy, lack of information,

and misunderstanding affect people's attitudes. Therefore, it is necessary to activate the role of functional communication on its different levels so that it would be of use in dealing with, and serving, women's issues as these are societal concerns that affect and are affected by the different aspects of life.

The Egyptian media includes several works of drama which emphasize the stereotypes of females and males. As such, attention needs to be paid to what the media presents about women, so that the programs and shows would empower women and involve them more effectively in social development.

The participants also stressed the necessity of forming media forums concerned with women's issues. These forums are needed to train media staff in dealing with women's issues, and highlight the importance of women in society in order to end stereotypes. The participants also called for creating a network of media staff supporting women's issues and a society of feminist associations to monitor the image of women in the media. As for talk shows, women should be represented in most of these programs, rather than limiting their appearance to family, women and children's programs, because limiting women to such programs reinforces the stereotypical image of women. Also, successful examples of women and their experiences should be presented so that they would benefit TV viewers.

In addition, media coverage of women's issues should be concerned with the development of human resources as women constitute half the numeric, and hence the productive, power. Thus, the media should emphasize the strong relation between the development of women and the development of the whole society.

Civil organizations and institutions should cooperate with the media to prepare materials and programs that reinforce the role of women and raise public awareness through holding seminars and lectures. They should make use of the media to raise public awareness of actual women's issues without underestimating them.

Finally, the media should adopt the status of women in moderate religious discourse that stops the overlap between traditions and *Jabili* (ancient/daled) heritage and eliminates the slanders against women that are attributed to Islam. Therefore, religious institutions must monitor the *Fatwas* (legal opinion) presented and discussed in the media. Finally, works of drama should start presenting examples from history which include bright and positive examples of women in Islamic, Arab and Egyptian history.



## CONCLUSION

The Dialogue Forum Conference on Women and Democratic Transition that was held in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 23-24 November 2012. was attended by female leaders from peace movements in different countries, as well as Egyptian female leaders. The Conference focused on three main topics, which were:

1. Women's pursuit of Peace: In terms of Rights and Freedoms
2. Gender Equality in the Constitution and Legislations
3. Women's Voices: Fields and Forums

The Conference concluded with the following recommendations:

1. The First Dimension: **Rights and Freedoms** which can be achieved by:
  - a) activating the international conventions on human rights, including the rights of women and children, to protect women's rights and freedoms, while demanding the commitment of the State to implement these conventions.
  - b) Exchanging experiences and making use of the successful experiences in the field of women's rights and freedoms worldwide.
  - c) Expanding and reinforcing the role of the police in protecting women's rights, and appointing female officers in police stations.
  - d) Encouraging the participation of men in all the initiatives that women call for in order to achieve gender equality.
2. The Second Dimension: **Gender Equality in the Constitution and Legislations**
  - a) Reforming the constitutional committee to include females representing the different segments of society
  - b) Ensuring that the constitution includes articles that guarantee gender equality in all fields

- c) Setting effective mechanisms to monitor the implementation of gender equality on the ground.
  - d) Ensuring non-discrimination against women in all laws and legislations.
3. The Third Dimension: **Women's Voices and their Impact in the Public Domain**
- a) Taking temporary measures such as positive discrimination and including the quota system in the constitution, and in the formation of parties, as well as focusing on the representation of women from different geographical areas.
  - b) Adopting electoral lists in which women are represented, both in the elections of national councils and parliamentary elections.
  - c) Reinforcing the national councils concerned with women's rights, such as the National Council for Women, expanding its branches in the different governorates, and providing it with the funds necessary for the different activities.
  - d) Rejecting the use of religious misinterpretations that are quoted and circulated to underestimate women and their role in society.
  - e) Using visual and print media to advocate women's issues, and increase the number of females in the media.

## ANNEX 1

### List of Participants of the Forum on Women and Democratic Transition in Egypt

No.	Name	Organization or Affiliation
1	Dr. Afaf Marey	Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE)
2	Ahmed al-Senghary	Justice Center for Human Rights and International Law in Tanta
3	Ahmed Muhammad	Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance
4	Dr. Aisha al-Kholy	Alexandria University
5	Dr. Aisha Muhammad al-Saudi	Projects Evaluation Specialist
6	Alaa al-Deen Abdul Baset	Alexandria University
7	Altaf al-Sabah	Women's Rights Activist
8	Dr. Aly Abdul Azim	Al-Azhar University
9	Aly al-Dossouky	German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ)
10	Dr. Amal Shafik	Consultant at the World Bank
11	Dr. Amena Naseer	Al-Azhar University
12	Amir al-Naggar	Political Reform Activist
13	Dr. Amira Nowaira	Alexandria University
14	Anissa Hassouna	Enlightened Egypt Initiative
15	Ashgan Farag	Karama Organization
16	Ashraf al-Bahrawy	National Front for Egypt's Women
17	Dr. Asmaa Farag	Organization for General Social Services
18	Ayat Kandil Badawy	Al-Abrar Charity Association
19	Aziza Helmy	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)
20	Aziza Hussein	Expert in Development and Women's Affairs
21	Azza Abdul Kawy Fahmy Muhammad Elesh	Al-Karama Association for the Development of Society and the Environment and Consumer Protection, Sohag

No.	Name	Organization or Affiliation
22	Dr. Azza Kamel	Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development Center (ACT)
23	Dr. Azza Muhammad Helmy al-Kholy	Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies (CDSPS)
24	Azza Suleiman	Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance
25	Badria Serry	Bibliotheca Alexandrina
26	Dr. Bahia Shaheen	National Council for Women, Alexandria
27	Bothaina Kamel	Media Person and Political Activist
28	Cecilia Sternemo	Swedish Institute (SI)
29	Dalia Abdul Hamid	Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
30	Dalia Gamal Saeed	Political Activist
31	Dalia Ziada	Ibn Khaldun Center for Developmental Studies
32	Dr. Diana Frances	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, England
33	Dr. Dina Abdul Salam	Alexandria University
34	Enaam Muhammad	Former Member of the People's Assembly, Gharbia
35	Entesar Khalil	Women and Society Association
36	Dr. Faiha Abdul Hady	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Palestine
37	Farida al-Nakash	Women's Development Forum , Leftist Tagammu Party
38	Fatema al-Zahraa	Egyptian Family Planning Association (EFPA), Cairo
39	Dr. Fatema Khafagy	Alliance for Arab Women (AAW)
40	Fathia al-Assal	Writer and Author
41	Fawzia Motlak Gheth	Civil Rights Activist, North Sinai
42	Dr. Georgette Kelleni	Lawyer and former Member of the People's Assembly
43	Ghada Ezz al-Deen	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
44	Gomhuria Abdul Rahim	Women for Change Association
45	Dr. Hala Abdul Khalek	National Council on Disability (NCD)
46	Hala Fawzy	Future Business Women Association in Fuwah
47	Hamed Mahmoud	Al-Jazeera TV Channel
48	Dr. Hanaa al-Sayed Ahmed	Egyptian Social Democratic Party
49	Dr. Hanaa Ismail	Alexandria Regional Center for Women's Health and Development
50	Hanan Awwad	Women and Development Association
51	Hany al-Gebaly	Lawyer and Human Rights Activist
52	Hany Loutfy	Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance
53	Hazel Haddon	Researcher
54	Hazem Gouda	Al-Masry Al-Youm Newspaper
55	Dr. Heba Makram	Alexandria University



No.	Name	Organization or Affiliation
56	Helen Adgoury	Alliance for Arab Women (AAW)
57	Hisham Kassem	Journalist and Publisher
58	Dr. Hoda Abdul Monem	Member of the National Council for Human Rights
59	Eng. Hoda al-Mikaty	Bibliotheca Alexandrina
60	Hoda al-Saaty	Al-Shorouk Newspaper
61	Dr. Hoda Badran	Egyptian Feminist Union
62	Dr. Howida Fouada	Knowledge Sharing Project
63	Iman Darwish	Egyptian Feminist Union
64	Dr. Iman Khamis	Menoufia University
65	Inas Edward Shoukry	Upper Egypt TV Channel
66	Karam Lamei	Ibrahimia Evangelical Church
67	Karim Mahrous	Welad al-Balad Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign
68	Khawla Mattar	United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)
69	Lamia Abdul Fattah	Bibliotheca Alexandrina
70	Dr. Madiha al-Safty	American University in Cairo
71	Magdy Abdul Hamid	Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (EACPE)
72	Dr. Maha Ghanem	Tanta University
73	Dr. Maha Mouaz	Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies (CDSPPS)
74	Dr. Mahmoud Azab	Al-Azhar Al-Sharif University
75	Mahmoud Mohamed al-Sayed	Selmeya Movement
76	Dr. Mai Abdul Kader	Organization for General Social Services
77	Mai Nabil	Egyptian Social Democratic Party
78	Dr. Makarim al-Deery	Al-Azhar University
79	Dr. Manal Abu al-Hassan	Freedom and Justice Party
80	Manar Ammar	Women News Network
81	Mariam Salem	Women and Development Association
82	Marina Jossef	Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW)
83	Marwa Adam	Constitution Party
84	Maya Morssy	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
85	Mervat Abu Teeg	My Mother Association for Rights and Development
86	Dr. Mervat al-Ashmawy	Alexandria University
87	Ambassador Mervat al-Tallawy	National Council for Women
88	Mona al-Hakim	Rotary Club of Alexandria
89	Mona Anis	Al-Shorouk Newspaper

No.	Name	Organization or Affiliation
90	Monira Sabry	Helwan Center for Social Services (Bashayer)
91	Eng. Moustafa Adel	Political Activist
92	Dr. Muhammad Mahgoub	Alexandria University
93	Muhammad Mourad	Social Media
94	Muhammad Wael	Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development Center (ACT)
95	Mukhtar Shoaib	Political Researcher and Journalist
96	Myriam Zaki	Media Person
97	Nabil Mitry	National Council for Women, Alexandria
98	Nada Tantawy	Sawiris Foundation for Social Development
99	Nadia Takla	National Council for Women
100	Ambassador Naela Gabr	National Coordinating Committee on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking
101	Dr. Naglaa Abu Agag	Alexandria University
102	Nermeen Fouad	Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW)
103	Neveen Kameel Naguib	Al-Watan Newspaper
104	Nihal Samy	Al-Wasat Party
105	Dr. Noha Adly	Bibliotheca Alexandrina and Alexandria University
106	Noha Omar	Bibliotheca Alexandrina
107	Passant Sahmoud	Alliance for Arab Women (AAW)
108	Radwa Ibrahim al-Sekhely	Ambassadors for Dialogue Project
109	Dr. Rady Attallah	Attareen Evangelical Church
110	Randa Hafez	Swedish Institute (SI)
111	Rania Ibrahim	Sout al-Nobaa
112	Dr. Ruth Gaby Vermot	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Switzerland
113	Safaa al-Adam	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Sudan
114	Safaa Mourad	Socialist People's Alliance Party (SPAP)
115	Sahar al-Dossouky	Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs
116	Sahar Hegab	Misr Party
117	Saleha Awwad	UN Certified Expert in Social Work
118	Salima Abdul Rahman Khalil	Former Member of the People's Assembly, Matrouh
119	Dr. Salma Galal	Health and Environmental Culture Society
120	Samia Moustafa al-Sayed	National Council for Women
121	Dr. Samiha Nasr	National Center for Social and Criminological Research
122	Samir Abdul Baky	Political Activist
123	Sanaa al-Saeed	Former Member of the People's Assembly, Asyut

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization or Affiliation</b>
124	Sawsan Hassan Hegab	Sinai's Woman Rights Association
125	Sayed Fawzy	Future Business Women Association in Fuwah
126	Shahdan al-Gharbawi	Legal Services Association for Women and Children
127	Shahenda Maklad	Secretary-General of the Egyptian Farmers' Union
128	Shahira Mehrez	Socialist People's Alliance Party (SPAP)
129	Silvia Aguilera	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Mexico
130	Souad Abdul Hamid	Nasserist Party
131	Dr. Stella Sabiiti	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Uganda
132	Suheir Konsowa	Expert in Development and Gender
133	Tania Mirabel	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Switzerland
134	Treza Samir Moussa	Political Activist
135	Visaka Dharmadasa	PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Sri Lanka
136	Yasmeen Ramadan	Selmeya Movement
137	Yasser Saleh Moussa	Ministry of Education, Red Sea
138	Yehia al-Attar	Constitution Party
139	Dr. Youmna al-Hamaki	Arab Region of Learning for All, Ain Shams University
140	Youssef Mansour	Ibrahimia Media Center
141	Zahra Radwan	Karama Organization
142	Zeinab Affy	Organization for General Social Services
143	Dr. Zeinab Shaheen	Expert in Development, Family Issues, and Society

## Women and Democratic Transition in Egypt

23–24 November 2012

Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Friday, 23 November 2012

9:00–9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30–10:30	<p><b>Opening Session of the Dialogue Forum</b></p> <p><b>Opening Session and Welcoming the Guests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr. Azza El-Kholy, Director of the Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies</li> <li>- Dr. Hoda Badran, Chairperson of the Egyptian Feminist Union</li> <li>- Mrs. Safaa El-Adam (Sudan), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> <li>- Ambassador Mervat Al-Tallawi's speech, Head of the National Council for Women</li> </ul>
10:30–12:00	<p><b>First Session:</b> Women's Pursuit of Peace and Security: In terms of Rights and Freedoms</p> <p><b>Opening the Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ambassador Naela Gabr speech, Chairperson of the National Committee on Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings</li> <li>- Stella Sabiiti's speech (Uganda), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> <li>- Dr. Diana Frances' speech (England), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> </ul> <p><b>Dividing the participants into work groups</b></p>
12:00–14:00	Lunch break
14:00–15:30	Proceeding with the first session
15:30–16:00	Coffee break

16:00–19:00	<p><b>Second Session:</b> Gender Equality in the Constitution and Legislations</p> <p><b>Opening the Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr. Georgette Kellini speech, Lawyer, Human Rights Activist and former Member of Parliament</li> <li>- Mrs. Aida Nour El-Din speech, Lawyer and Director of Women and Development Association</li> <li>- Mrs Visaka Dharmadasa speech (Sri Lanka), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> </ul> <p><b>Dividing the participants into work groups</b></p>
19:00–19:20	<p><b>Summary of 23 November Discussions</b> Dr. Hala Yousry, General Coordinator of the Forum</p>
19:20–19:45	<p><b>Inauguration of the PeaceWomen Across the Globe Exhibition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mrs. Aziza Hussein speech, An Expert in Development and Women's Affairs</li> <li>- Dr. Ruth-Gaby Vermot speech (Switzerland), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> <li>- Dr. Fayhaa Abdel Hady speech (Palestine), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> </ul>
19:45–21:45	Dinner outside the Bibliotheca Alexandrina
<b>Saturday, 24 November 2012</b>	
9:30–10:00	<p><b>Summary of 23 November Discussions</b> Dr. Hala Yousry, General Coordinator of the Forum</p>
10:00–11:30	<p><b>Third Session:</b> Women's Voices: Fields and Forums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr. Amna Nosseir speech, Professor of Theology and Philosophy, Al Azhar University</li> <li>- Mrs. Sylvia Aguilera speech (Mexico), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> <li>- Dr. Fayhaa Abdel Hady speech (Palestine), PeaceWomen Across the Globe</li> </ul> <p><b>Dividing the participants into work groups</b></p>
11:30–12:00	Coffee break
12:00–13:30	Proceeding with the Third Session
13:30–15:00	Lunch break
15:00–16:30	<p><b>Concluding session</b> Dr. Hala Yousry, General Coordinator of the Forum</p>
16:30–17:00	Coffee break
17:00–18:00	Announcement of the Work Plan
18:00–18:30	Press Conference

## ANNEX 3

### **About PeaceWomen Across the Globe**

PeaceWomen Across the Globe is an international organization of 1000 women, who were nominated for the Nobel Prize in 2005. These women are courageous and creative, and they work to achieve peace and social justice. The Organization seeks to make the daily work carried out by women in order to achieve peace recognized and spread around the world. The Organization aims at establishing a forum through which women can communicate locally, discuss various topics, share work strategies and develop common projects. It also aims at combining women's specialized fields of knowledge that have to do with decision-making and achieving peace.

#### **Activities**

The Organization reinforces the work of women for peace through practical programs, and assists women to communicate through networks and develop their abilities.

#### **Team**

PeaceWomen Across the Globe is run by an international board. The General Secretariat in Bern, Switzerland; with a team of 21 coordinators, and six regional offices, reinforce the cooperation.

#### **Projects**

PeaceWomen Across the Globe focuses on the involvement of women in the work that aims at achieving justice and sustainability. The Organization also highlights women's work for peace, on both the national and international levels.

## ANNEX 4

### **Facilitation Committee of the Dialogue Forum “Women and Democratic Transition in Egypt”**

The Committee consists of

- Dr. Anisa Hassouna, Enlightened Egypt Initiative.
- Tanja Mirabile, PeaceWomen Across the Globe.
- Rania Mohamed, BA Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies.
- Aida Nour El-Din, The Women and Development Association.
- Dr. Azza El-Kholy, BA Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies.
- Dr. Azza Kamel, Appropriate Communication Technologies (ACT) for Development.
- Dr. Fatma Khafagy, The Arab Women’s Association.
- Dr. Maha Moaz, BA Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies.
- Naglaa Sarhan, BA Center for Democracy and Social Peace Studies.
- Nada Thabit, Association Village of Hope for Development and Rehabilitation of the Disabled.
- Nihad Aboul Komsan, The Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights.
- Dr. Hoda Badran, The Egyptian Feminist Union.
- Hibaq Osman, Alkarama Foundation.
- Helen Adgory, The Arab Women’s Association.

**WOMEN AND DEMOCRATIC  
TRANSITION IN EGYPT**