

Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'edat)



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An abstract graphic featuring three large, overlapping circles. The top-left circle is red and contains the text. The bottom-left circle is green. The right circle is red. The background is a solid beige color. The overlapping areas create various shades of the primary colors.

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Who are we?

The Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality "Ra'edat", or "Pioneers" in English, is a regional parliamentary network that advocates gender equality and the fair participation of women in policymaking in the Arab States region. The Network aims to unite the efforts of present and former parliamentarians to achieve parity in decision-making positions by 2030. It also aims to change the legislation that regulates the political environment, in particular the election laws for the houses of parliament, municipal councils and local governments, and the laws for political parties.

The Network operates as a pressure group on government policies to adopt strategic agendas and plans supporting women and encouraging transformation towards gender-sensitive policy. It also seeks to activate funds and programmes dedicated to the economic, political and social empowerment of women. The Ra'edat Network is supported by the Spring Forward for Women, a regional joint programme by the European Union and UN Women which is funded by the European Union.





Vision

“Achieve Arab communities where women enjoy equal rights with men in all political, economic and social fields, and where democracy, justice and equality prevail without marginalization, exclusion or weakening of any community component or class.”

Mission

“Eliminate the gender gap in the Arab region, advocate the values of equality, justice and human rights, and root women's rights as foundation and condition for the renaissance of the communities.”



Objectives

- Propose and amend legislations to remove all forms of discrimination against women
- Ensure that women have equal opportunities in all fields
- Eliminate the gender gap by 2030
- Call on Arab governments to adopt a common agenda and strategies to support women for the period 2015-2030
- Propose appropriate gender-responsive budgeting
- Highlight and promote women-friendly achievements, practices and legislation to Arab communities
- Monitor, document and address women's rights violations
- Influence government policies and programs to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women
- Provide financial and logistical support for the programs and funds that support women and contribute to the political, economic and social empowerment of women.

Why is it Important to Join Ra'edat Network?

Size and growth

By the end of 2015, the Network already includes nearly 80 members from 12 Arab countries. Members comprise nearly 25% of the total women parliamentarians in the Arab States region. The goal is to exceed 50% by the end of 2016.

International exposure and recognition

The Network's members frequently engage in regional and international debates through attending and speaking at leading conferences and forums. Engaging with other politicians and international key players is valuable to create an impact at the national level.



Knowledge exchange and networking

Members of parliament, especially those who have been recently elected, have the opportunity to connect with other experienced women lawmakers. This provides quick access to practical knowledge that enables effective legislation and gender-responsive policymaking. The Network also fosters networking, learning and interregional cooperation opportunities.

Learning and capacity building

Members are invited to regional and international workshops and training events on advocacy, policy evaluation and governance. Members also have access to the latest information, reports, case studies and publications on national, regional and international good practices in policymaking. Members can take from and adapt regional and global success stories whilst preserving a rationale for designing relevant national policies.

Why is it Important to Support Ra'edat Network?

An established presence

International development programmes and projects need pre-intervention situational analysis and studies to determine feasibility and effectiveness. Having an already established regional network advocating women's political participation with a clear mandate, vision and mission and a large membership base is an opportunity to build on success and avoid duplication of efforts.

Combined long-standing experience

The Network's founding members combine long decades of experience and diversity of generations in policy and public service over the last 60 years. They have been struggling to carve a space for women's participation in the public sphere. Some members have even played vital roles in the struggle against occupations and building peace and security in their respective countries. These figures' collective efforts can greatly accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals at this historical crossroads for the Arab States region.

Opportunities for significant impact

The share of women's representation in parliaments in the Arab States region remains low compared to the world average. While significant improvements have taken place in the last few years, opportunities for growth still exist considering the formulations of new constitutions and laws in many Arab countries. Gender-balanced parliaments help reduce violence and polarization, and improve the quality of national policies, leading thereby to sustainable development.

Solid strategic alliances

With its strong regional and international alliances, the Network is empowered with effective tools to influence national policies and create local change. The growing alliances include the Arab Parliament, the European Parliament, the European Union, UN Women, regional and international networks, groups and high-level politicians and influencers.



Network History

Within the framework of the Regional Programme for the Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region (Spring Forward for Women), the European Union and UN Women organized an international conference at the European Parliament in Brussels on 5 and 6 November 2014. The conference brought together women parliamentarians from the Arab States region and members of the European Parliament. The European Parliament Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee hosted the conference, which provided

the basis for establishing a regional network of women parliamentarians in the Arab States region. The aim was to advance gender equality issues and to support the exchange of knowledge and experience in parliamentary work from other successful initiatives related to gender-responsive policies.

At the Brussels Conference, the Arab States Women Parliamentarians Delegation decided to establish a regional network of women members of parliament; five members from the delegation were nominated



by the larger group to conduct the preparatory work. Six months later, in late May 2015, members of delegation met in Cairo (Egypt) to discuss, review and endorse the Network's internal governing rules, charter, establishment declaration, structure and the mandates of its committees. The founding members also agreed on the Network's logo and elected heads of committees to start the implementation of activities. By the end of the two-day meeting, a press conference was held to mark the official launch of the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality, "Ra'edat", in the region.



The women members have elected an interim Executive Office that consists of five members: Rep. Dr. Rula Alfarra Alhroob from Jordan as the Chairwoman, Rep. Fatima Kaïima Mazi from Morocco as the Deputy Chairwoman, the former Rep. Magda Al-Nuwaishy from Egypt as the Rapporteur, Rep. Dr. Nawal Al-Faouri from Jordan as the Spokesperson, and the former Rep. Ebtisam Hajras from Bahrain as a member.

Network Charter

We, the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality "Ra'edat", declare our commitment to advocate all human rights, and women's rights in particular, as a priority in Arab communities; and our pledge to remain faithful to these noble human values and advocate the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly; and strive hard to achieve gender justice, equality and equal opportunities in our Arab communities; and to work hard to achieve a

quantum leap in our Arab communities towards the state of citizenship and law, which protects individual and group freedoms, maintains human rights and prevails integrity, transparency and accountability values: The state of welfare, justice and dignity for all citizens. Since our slogan is "We meet to develop," we pledge to the openness to all constructive views and positive dialogues that deal with women's rights, as a noble human right that worthy of care; to support all laws, programs and policies that tackle women's empowerment; to cooperate with all the agencies and institutions concerned with women's rights; and to work sincerely with local, regional and international leaders to promote these rights and spread the values of justice and equality in our Arab communities.

Network Committees

The Network consists of a number of permanent and temporary committees, whose formation and election processes are overseen by the Executive Office. Each founding member or staff shall be entitled to get the membership of the committees and to enter the competition for its presidency. The supportive members are also entitled to attend committee meetings and make suggestions and views on their work. These committees are as follows:

Legal Committee

This committee shall study everything related to the constitutions, laws, regulations and instructions related to women to make comparisons and propose amendments in line with the main objective of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and achieve gender equality and equal opportunities in all fields. The functions of this committee shall include the proposal of amended draft laws to be submitted to the Network members in the Arab countries.

Monitoring and Follow-up Committee

This committee shall oversee and review all reports on women's issues, which are issued by organizations, bodies, associations and governments; to address and monitor everything published in the media or the complaints about women's rights violations in Arab communities; to monitor the achievements of women in Arab communities; and to receive suggestions from members and local communities in any of the issues that contribute to the advancement of women status.

Labour and Economic Development Committee

This committee shall study all economic affairs related to women, and it is primarily concerned with proposing legislation, mechanisms, means of action and methodologies needed to remove barriers to women's employment and economic empowerment of women in Arab communities and the integration into government strategies and programs. To achieve this goal, it cooperates with other relevant committees within the Network, each of which within its competence.

Media Committee

This committee shall cover and follow up all media affairs of the Network, including the Network logo, website, publications, information and news by it or around it in the media, and everything related to the provision of an integrated media file about the Network and its achievements, publications about its work, handbooks that serve its objectives such as women fair laws and regulations guide in Arab countries, membership forms for new members, etc.

Social Committee

This committee shall examine the issues that deal with women in Arab communities in social, cultural, educational, media, artistic and sports fields; provide practical suggestions to change the stereotypes of women; propose measures and actions to modify the prevailing social and cultural patterns; and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

Research and Studies Committee

This committee is concerned with the establishment of a database for all the references relating to women, carry out field visits to oversee women status in various fields and write reports about them, and prepare research on the issues assigned by the Executive Office or any of the permanent or temporary committees of the Network.

Political Committee

This committee shall support the participation of women in the political field; study everything in this regard; propose measures, actions and policies needed to raise the proportion of women's participation in political life; and maximize their impact and role in decision-making in Arab communities.



How to Join the Network?

The Network consists of four types of membership as follows:

Founding Membership: An exclusive membership that consists of founding members who attended the Spring Forward for Women Conference in Brussels 2014.

Working Membership: An open membership to any current or former woman parliamentarian. Candidates shall be entitled to apply (in paper or electronically) to request enrolment from the Executive Office. The Office shall consider the application and give their decision within a period of not more than one month, provided working member's commitment to the Network vision, mission, objectives, charter and regulations.



Supportive Membership: An open membership to all public figures (men and women). Candidates shall be entitled to apply to request enrolment from the Executive Office, provided the commitment to the Network vision, mission, objectives, charter and regulations.

Honorary Membership: An exclusive membership, where the Executive Office is entitled to select public figures who have distinct contributions to the advocacy of human and women's rights to be honorary members.

To join, please complete the membership forms on the Network's website:

www.womenparliamentarians.net

and send the applications to:

info@womenparliamentarians.net

To support the Network, please contact:

info@womenparliamentarians.net



Spring Forward for Women Programme

European Commission and UN Women joint regional programme for the Southern Mediterranean region
"The Spring Forward for Women", programme implemented with funding by the European Union

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