



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The League of Arab States, Karama, and UNIFEM to Commemorate 30 Years of the CEDAW Treaty to End Discrimination Against Women

CAIRO, EGYPT, December 9, 2009 – On December 15-16, 2009, in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Karama, together in partnership with UNIFEM and the League of Arab States, will host a Regional CEDAW Celebration for the NGOs in the Arab region to launch a retrospection on the history of CEDAW advocacy in the Arab region, as well as to form commitments for the future.

Twenty-two experts and activists from NGOs throughout the Arab Region will come together for a two-day event to discuss the track record of CEDAW advocacy throughout the region and create strategies for future initiatives. Representatives will use *CEDAW After 30 Years*, a book commissioned by Karama in close consultation with UNIFEM and the League of Arab States and written by Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Senator to the Jordanian Upper House of Parliament, as a launching point to discuss CEDAW with regard to what has been implemented and how it has succeeded in advancing women's rights and empowering women within the Arab States. Following a presentation by Dr. Abu Ghazaleh, each set of representatives will have an opportunity to reflect on the contents of the book and CEDAW as it relates to their national records of advocacy and progress.

In commemorating CEDAW, participants will highlight plans for future advocacy which will build on past momentum and discuss key strategies, challenges, and perspectives. On the second day of the workshop, representatives will gather in groups to discuss next steps and formulate a comprehensive set of recommendations for the region. The final recommendations will be presented at the meeting's conclusion as priority suggestions for the next five years of activism within the region in addressing CEDAW and making progress in fulfilling the commitments of related international treaties and initiatives including the Millennium Development Goals.

This regional meeting comes as a first stage and will be followed by a second stage in 2010 which will involve presentation of and consultation on the CEDAW book to the Arab National Machineries of Women at the League of Arab States that will result in a agenda owned by the League of Arab States joined with the National Women Machineries in the Arab Region.

Since it was adopted by the UN 30 years ago, CEDAW has been ratified by 186 member countries, including 20 out of the 22 countries in the Arab League with the exception of Somalia and Sudan. However, of those in the Arab region, only Comoros and Djibouti have ratified CEDAW without reservations which restrict its implementation.

CEDAW is a key tool of advocacy related to the Beijing+15 Declaration and Platform for Action and has been successful in lobbying governments to propose and adopt changes to legal codes that are discriminatory against women.

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