

## **Final communiqué of the Second meeting of women parliamentarians , Khartoum, Sudan, 18-19 March, 2012**

To enable women in Africa and Arab world to contribute to national development and elimination of obstacles thereto, in recognition of the role being played by the meeting of women parliamentarians as a think-tank for womenfolk, and under the auspices of Lt. Colonel Adam Hamid Moussa, Speaker of the Council of States of Sudan, the second meeting of women parliamentarians of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab world was held at the friendship hall, Khartoum, Sudan from 18-19 March, 2012.

The meeting was attended by delegates from 17 Arab and African countries, including Sudan, Gabon, Zimbabwe , Burundi, Egypt, South Africa, Mauritania , Morocco, Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen , Jordan, Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Niger.

The meeting was also attended by a representative from the African Union Organization (CEDO).

H.E Field Marshal Omar Hassan Al-Basheer, President of the Republic of Sudan, delivered the inaugural speech, indicating that Afro-Arab relations are deep-rooted. He further pointed out that women parliamentarians are playing a key role in enhancing relations among nations, as women, he said, represent half of mankind.

He highlighted that women parliamentarians shoulder onerous responsibilities in terms of improving political, economic and legal conditions and achieving peace, security and stability.

He explained that women parliamentarians also play a major part in enhancing democracy and involving all social segments, particularly women in development-related decision-making.

The president finally called upon all women parliamentarians to contribute to the elimination of the root causes of instigation, sedition and inter-fighting.

For his part, Lt. Colonel Adam Hamid Moussa delivered a significant speech in which he welcomed delegates to their second country, Sudan. He touched upon the march of peace in Sudan as well as the challenges taken up by the Sudanese people in terms of embodying the values of solidarity and cohesion. He pointed out that the meeting of women parliamentarians is being held at a time when Africa and

Arab world are facing fluctuating political and economic conditions, which necessitates serious efforts to tackle such negative developments.

He voiced hope that the event would contribute to creating sustained interaction among women parliamentarians in Africa and Arab world. He asserted that women MPs are playing a major role in ASSECAA, which is regarded as a think-tank contributing to the reactivation and enactment of legislation, and focusing on the issues of inheritance, health services, women education and participation in the political process.

H.E Secretary General of ASSECAA, Abdul Wasie Yusuf addressed the delegates, pointing out that women's rights are being recognized by all and that relations between men and women are based on full partnership. He called for rectifying past mistakes in order for women to be treated on equal footing with men.

The Chairperson of the committee on the meeting of women parliamentarians, Wedad Ya'acoub, addressed the participants and warmly welcomed them to the meeting.

She confirmed that the meeting was intended to achieve cohesion among Afro-Arab women MPs and to set out mechanisms for attaining peace, security , development, literacy , poverty reduction and bringing about the desired social change.

The chairperson the meeting was also designed to exchange views and experiences among Afro-Arab women parliamentarians, particularly in respect of political and democratic developments that tremendously contribute to the enhancement of constitutional construction and the achievement of peace, security and development in the two regions.

The meeting reviewed the following work-papers:

1-Women's legislation and ways of revitalizing them. This paper was presented by Awatif Al-Ja'ali from Sudan.

2-The role of women parliamentarians in achieving socio-economic renaissance. This work-paper was presented by Dr. Ba Baker Mohammed Toum from Sudan.

3-The Role of Women Parliamentarians in achieving peace and security in Africa and Arab world. Dr. Joseph Shilinqi from Zambia addressed the delegates on this topic.

Following elaborate deliberations on the above topics, taking into account the experiences of some Arab and African countries, including Sudan, Yemen, Morocco and Ethiopia, the meeting arrived at the following recommendations:

First : women-related legislation:

1-Boosting the role of women parliamentarians in enacting legislation, setting out policies, plans and programmes and follow-up of the implementation thereof, in addition to participation in all intellectual and negotiable activities.

-Enacting the legislation that meets citizens' basic needs in respect of fighting poverty, redistribution of income among social segments and fulfilling the needs of women and children.

3- Consolidating the role of women leaders in Africa and Arab world to enable them engage in decision-making process.

4-Enacting legislation on women in order to enable them balance their family work with the jobs they used to do outdoors.

5- Stressing the importance of formulating a mechanism for reviewing family-related laws.

6-Introducing the proportional representation system (Quota) and including same in the applicable laws in order to enable women MPs assume their regulatory and legislative role.

7-Revitalizing women-related laws to help them exercise their political rights.

Secondly: Socio-economic renaissance:

1-Strengthening friendship bonds and reactivating the role of women MPs in Africa and Arab world through political platforms, constitutional development and exchange of parliamentary experiences.

2-It is necessary to train women parliamentarians in order to elevate their competence in all social, economic, political , cultural and intellectual aspects.

3-Involving women in the process of setting out priorities and needs, and working out plans and programmes, and achieving the third millennium development goals.

4- Formulating and facilitating the policies that enable women obtain credit loans.

Thirdly: Achievement of peace and security:

-Reinforcing the role of women in attaining peace and security and working towards ending conflicts and violence committed against women, tackling the effects of natural disasters and helping communities co-exist peacefully and getting rid of the impacts of civil wars in order to create a strong society.

-Implementing security council resolution 1325 stipulating that peace and security must prevail, especially in countries whose governments have so far to make any progress in this respect.

-providing assistance to women who fell victims to violence and disputes.

-Creating a sub-committee within the association to cater to the issues of peace and security.

Fourthly: General Recommendations:

-Stressing the importance of evaluating the previous conferences and following upon their recommendations and outputs.

-It is necessary to encourage small and middle women enterprises, including cooperatives and other social institutions, and to make use of the experiences of Gabon, Sudan, Ethiopia and Yemen with respect to family bank and textiles.

-exerting concerted efforts and creating bridges of communication among Arab and African nations (creation of friendship society).

-Emphasizing the importance of engaging women parliamentarians in the various activities of the Association.

-The meeting of women parliamentarians should be held annually.

Fifthly: Conclusion:

The participants expressed their immense gratitude to the Speaker of the Council of States of Sudan, the sponsor of the conference, for the genuine efforts he exerted in order to make the meeting a success. Thanks are also due to all the delegates for their attendance and the valuable presentations they made during the event.

The delegates also thanked all those who made the above-mentioned recommendations, which came out during a critical stage of Afro-Arab history.

**Khartoum**

**19 March 2012**