



“Tunisia Declaration”

For the 62nd Session of the Commission on Status of Women

By the Regional Preparatory Meeting for CSW (62nd Session)

2 March 2018, Republic of Tunisia

We, the ministers and representatives of the Member States participating in the regional preparatory meeting for the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women which was held on the sidelines of the meetings of the 37th session of the Arab Women Committee under the auspicious of the President of Republic of Tunisia Beji Caid Essebsi, met in Tunis, Tunisia on 2 March 2018 in cooperation with League of Arab States and UN Women to coordinate the Arab position and determine the priorities of the region concerning the issues which will be discussed during the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to be held from 12-23 March 2018 in New York.

We are aware of and appreciate the unprecedented circumstances which the Arab region is going through due to Israeli occupation and settlement, wars, armed conflicts, terrorism and the implications of refugee crisis, displacement and migration, as well as the economic circumstances that hinder women’s full access to opportunities.

We confirm what is contained in the Arab and international conventions on the advancement of the status of women. In particular reaffirming our commitment to the sustainable development goals and agenda 2030 especially goal 5 gender equality and empowering all women.

We call for intensifying efforts towards supporting and protecting women and girls subjected to violence in times of armed conflicts, wars, displacement, asylum, and to continue to work on implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, to ensure prevention and protection, and to support provide ways Support and empowerment,

We emphasize the importance of stipulating violence against women and girls in times of armed conflict, terrorism, war and occupation as terrorism against women in the Arab region and tool of war,

We appreciate the magnitude of the responsibility placed on the shoulders of the Arab countries to implement the sustainable development goals in light of these circumstances, we confirm the commitment of our countries to work to achieve an Arab agenda falling within the framework of the implementation of the goals of sustainable development.

We know that empowering women and girls living in rural areas is a key indicator for achieving successes of Arab countries, and we are aware that rural communities have tremendous natural resources that if harnessed properly can lead to the advancement of the society and nation as a whole.

We fully emphasize the mutually reinforcing relationship among the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights and gender equality and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

We stress the urgency of eradicating poverty and fulfilling the rights of women and girls in rural areas to an adequate standard of living, to a life free of violence and harmful practices, to land and productive assets, food security and nutrition, decent work, education and health; and to be granted the space for leadership and voice;

We call upon strengthened coordination between national gender equality mechanisms and other governmental institutions and collaboration with non-governmental organizations, private sector, and civil society organizations;

And being appreciative of the efforts expended by the League of Arab States and UN Women in the support of Arab cooperation and integration and the strengthening of the unity of the Arab position in international forums; and being in solidarity at the regional level to promote gender equality and empower women, we affirm commitment to the following:

- 1. To undertake legislative and administrative** reforms to protect and promote the right of rural women and girls to land and land tenure security and ensure their equal access to and control over productive resources and assets, other forms of property, sustainable natural resources and financial services and technology; and to foster inter-State dialogue and enhance cooperation between states to better protect women migrant workers, and promote migration policies that takes into account women's needs.
- 2. To enact economic and social policies** to eradicate rural poverty, provide women in rural areas with equal opportunities, decent work, income and social security especially women headed households, and to ensure climate-resilient agricultural production and food security and nutrition;
- 3. Place particular focus to** economic and social development programmes especially in rural areas, ensure equal rights for women in rural areas same as in urban areas, strengthen networks of social welfare and social security and health programmes and to support programmes for women headed households.
- 4. Invest in education and life-long learning for women and girls living in rural areas:** women and girls living in rural areas are at the greatest disadvantage in terms of schooling, literacy

and adult education. Greater and more systematic investments are required to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure women's and girls' full and equal participation and completion of quality education (primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and technical). This means providing access to good school infrastructure and technology, reducing the distance to school, and ensuring safe environments, quality teachers, school retention programs and the eradication of sexual harassment in schools; ensuring re-entry and other educational means for girls and young women who dropped out of school because of early marriage and pregnancy, child marriage, poverty, conflict and other factors in rural areas. Adequately resourced initiatives targeted at girls living in rural areas should be implemented to expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and literacy training;

5. ***Invest and avail essential infrastructure and technology***: including sustainable energy, safe and sustainable transport, safely managed water and sanitation, and ICT. These services tend to reach women and girls living in rural areas last. But these are vital for enhancing their economic and educational opportunities and reducing and redistributing their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. To address these inequalities, increased investments and innovative partnerships are needed, increase women's participation and decision making and ensure women's economic participation in these sectors;
6. ***To undertake targeted measures to recognize and measure unpaid work*** performed by rural women and girls and reduce and redistribute their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, conduct time use surveys and systematically incorporate the value of this work in the calculation of GDP and the formulation of economic and social policies. Ensure the provision of infrastructure, such as sustainable energy, sustainable transport and safely managed water and sanitation, technology and public services, including accessible and quality childcare and care facilities for other dependents;
7. ***To ensure the full and, active and equal participation and leadership*** of women and girls in rural development and governance, including in decision-making at all levels in policies and institutions that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience;
8. ***To Accelerate efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and harmful practices*** against women and girls in rural areas, such as domestic violence, physical and physiological violence, and social and economic violence in private and public spheres as well as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; and to promote safe migration for women in rural areas, including prevention of trafficking in human beings;
9. ***To ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights*** as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences (SDG 5.6 and 3.7) and promote migrant workers in rural areas access to affordable health and social services

10. **To Strengthen the capacity of women and girls** in rural areas to respond to economic, political and social shocks, conflicts and humanitarian crises by providing essential infrastructure, services, decent work and social protection;
11. **To Promote financial inclusion of women and girls living in rural areas:** Acknowledging women's access to finance and their financial inclusion is key to their empowerment, meaningful participation in value chains of productive sectors and eradicating financial illiteracy. Efforts should be exerted to promote women's financial inclusion through raising financial awareness, knowledge and culture of savings and loans and to support them in initiating small, medium and large-scale enterprises;
12. **To ensure the right to work and rights at work of all women and girls in rural areas** the informal and formal economies, and that all rural women workers are equally protected by international labor standards and national labor laws; and support the economic empowerment of women in rural areas, including on remittances;
13. **To build the resilience of rural women and girls to climate change and environmental degradation,** such as deforestation, desertification and loss of agricultural biodiversity, by strengthening access to financing, sustainable energy and other technologies, information and social protection;
14. **To encourage men and boys** to take an active part in, and to engage fully as agents and beneficiaries of change in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.
15. **To Increase the capacity of national statistical offices** and other relevant institutions to collect, analyze and disseminate sex- and age-disaggregated data and produce gender statistics to support policies and action for rural women and girls and to monitor and track progress towards the Goals;

**Arab Delegations Participating in the 37th
Session of Arab Women Committee and the
Regional Preparatory Meeting of CSW 62nd
Session.**

Tunis, Republic of Tunisia
March 2, 2018