United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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The Palestinian CEDAW Coalition and Representatives from the Palestinian Government get Ready for the First CEDAW Review

Amman, 02 March 2017 - On the verge of the first CEDAW Committee review of the Initial Report of the State of Palestine expected in 2018, UN Women organized a 3-day regional exchange workshop. Representatives of Palestinian Ministries, women and civil society organizations, and women organizations from the Arab Region convened from 20th to 22nd February in Amman, to exchange knowledge about CEDAW reporting cycle, advocacy and lobbying. The workshop also included a Mock session for the forthcoming official UN Review which will assess the compliance of the State of Palestine under the CEDAW treaty to fulfil its commitment towards equality rights for women. "At UN Women, we see this exchange as an excellent venue to enhance this partnership and we commend the efforts of the Palestinian Government and the National Coalition, led by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) which has resulted in drafting the Initial State Report and the Shadow Report by NGOs in line with CEDAW Committee Rules". Ms. Blerta Aliko-Deputy Director Regional Office for Arab States.

Building the capacity of the State for its commitments under CEDAW is timely, where in the context of the political development taking place, the human rights and the equality of women must form a critical agenda right from the start.

"The ratification of human rights treaties such as CEDAW by the State of Palestine, at the time of its formation, signals the recognition by the State that advancement of women as full and equal citizens is essential criteria for the progress of the state". Ms. Shanti Dairiam, Director of International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW) – Former CEDAW Committee Member.

The presence of representatives of civil society from the Arab region that finalized their Shadow Reports and went through the review process, enabled in parallel confronting the draft Shadow Report with hands-on experience, and get feedbacks on strengths, gaps and challenges, which will support finalization.

"We will share the experience we gained in this workshop with the colleagues in Palestine to raise their awareness on the CEDAW convention. We will also follow up on the implementation of the CEDAW coalition's action plan. On the other hand, we will look into the possibility of building a regional network to follow up on the CEDAW Convention. "Ms. Muna Al-Khalili, CEDAW coalition member.

From her side, Ms. Sa'eda Al-Atrash, from the Ministry of Social Development said "Engaging in the Mock session provided us with the necessary tools and knowledge that will help us to be prepared towards our commitments as a government to implement the CEDAW treaty".

Often referred as the international women's bill of rights, CEDAW opens possibilities for legal reform and further advocacy in countries on ending discrimination against women. The initial draft of the Shadow Report presents in this regard a few issues ranging from definition of discrimination in the legal framework, political participation, economic empowerment, women health rights, family law, violence against women, and other entrenched discrimination.

It is worth mentioning that the workshop culminated the series of sessions organized by UN Women in the past year to build reporting capacities of both government and the civil society coalition, starting with the

development of the Initial State Report, as well as the Shadow Report from Palestinian women's and human rights organizations.

This regional workshop is implemented under the "Protecting and Promoting Women's Human Rights through the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reporting and implementation in the State of Palestine", funded by the Government of Spain.