

**Best practices identified in the framework of  
UN-INSTRAW/CAWTAR Project on  
“Strengthening women’s leadership and participation in  
politics and decision making process in Algeria, Morocco  
and Tunisia”**

Conducted in the framework of the project called “*Strengthening women’s leadership and participation in politics and decision making process in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*”, initiated by the United Nations’ International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), a mapping of the situation of Women Participation in Politics in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia has been implemented during September 2008 - May 2009 to put the light on women participation in politics and in the decision making process in all three countries, to identify issues raised in each country and good practices initiated to promote women political empowerment.

Two specific cases have been identified as good practices initiated by the political parties regarding their effect and impact on women participation in politics both on the national level and the regional level:

**I- Algeria: Presentation of a woman-President of a party to the Presidential elections**

Algeria is the first country in the Arab World where a woman President of a political party was twice candidate for presidential elections (April 2004 and April 2009).

Louiza Hanoune, a leftist activist has always campaigned for dialogue without exclusion. Along with its Labor Party (PT), created in 1990, she took great political initiatives which had an impact on the political Algerian context: she called for the boycott of the December 1991 elections, but also rejected in 1992 the cancelling, of the second round of elections, in favor of FIS. Due to her charisma, between 1997 and 2002, the PT (Labor Party) grew from 3 to 21 seats in the Parliament.

In 1999, she was unable to collect the 75000 required signatures for her candidacy to presidential elections, but succeeded twice: in 2004 and then in 2009.

It should be noted that the nominee of Louiza Hanoune as the head of her party opened the way for a social dynamics accepting the presence of more women in politics as leaders within their parties:

- In Morocco, Z'hor Chekkafi has been elected, in 2006, Chairwoman of a political party, the Socialist and Democratic Party (PSD).
- Similarly, in Tunisia, Maya Jribi, an activist from the Democratic Party for the Progress, has been elected head of the party, in 2007.

Furthermore, 46% of candidates representing the Workers Party (PT) during the last legislative elections were women. Of the 26 elected members, 11 were women. The Congress decided to place women candidates as Chief Candidates or in second positions of electoral lists. The party's men and women made a lot of mobilization and awareness raising works with citizens, families, etc...

Besides, women are present with the party in all various decisional structures. All PT elected women are members of parliamentary commissions and inter-parliaments friendship commissions.

## **II- Tunisia/ positive discrimination towards women from the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD):**

The Tunisian political willingness usually takes temporary special measures to accelerate the participation of women in public life. Such was the case of the measures taken by the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD), the ruling party, to reinforce women participation in the last decade:

- 30% of the RCD grassroots base is made up of women ;
- All Coordination Committees' General Secretaries are men;

- In 1992, decision was made to appoint in every committee a Deputy to the Secretary General in charge of women affairs;

- Since 1992, the RCD's Permanent Secretaries have included a Secretariat for women affairs, which promoted to become Deputy to the Secretary General in charge of Women's Affairs. In the party's hierarchy, this position comes immediately after the Secretary General's position; it is tasked with coordinating 1500 women units at the grassroots level with the collaboration with the regional committees' women general secretaries.

The presence of women was consolidated in the party's management structures, the party's central committee which included only 3.1% of women in 1957, then 21.2% in 1998, 26,4% in 2004 and 37,9% en 2008.

- A woman was appointed member of the Political Bureau, the highest structure of the ruling party;

- A woman was appointed Deputy to the Secretary General in charge of the RCD's external relations.

- The RCD reserved a quota on its lists to the legislative and communal elections. This was reflected in a 11.5% rate of women elected at the Chamber of Deputies for the (1999-2004) legislature and 22.75 % (for 2004-2009). The number of female deputies has therefore doubled in the Parliament.

- As for the (2000-2005) period, a similar measure has been taken to integrate a rate of 20% of women on municipal elections' lists and 25% for the 2005-2010 mandate.

- The President of the RCD decided to reserve 30% of the seats for women in the forthcoming legislative (2009) and municipal (2010) elections.

- In the occasion of its periodical congresses, the RCD dedicates a special motion to "women and family", which, designed from the roots, contains clear objectives.

- The (1999-2004) and (2004-2009) electoral programs include an important *Woman component*; initiatives have been taken in the framework of these programs to grant women the place corresponding to their potential and consolidate their participation to political life and their presence in decision making and managerial positions.

- Point 5 of the (1999-2004) Presidential program entitled "new horizons for women" enabled the access of more than

20% of women to decision making positions and to electoral structures.

- Point 16 of the (2004-2009) electoral presidential program entitled “Women from Equality to Active Partnership” aims at reaching a minimum rate of 30% of women’s presence in decision making and managerial positions before the year 2009.

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