

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt Lisbon

Remarks by

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**Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Seminar on the
“Women in the Euro-Mediterranean, first monitoring report of
the ministerial commitments”**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Portuguese Platform for Women Rights (PPDM) for organizing this important seminar on the “Women in the Euro-Mediterranean, First Monitoring report of the Ministerial commitments of the Third Ministerial Conference which took place in Paris 2013 on reinforcing the role of women in society”.

The Egyptian people have demonstrated through the Revolution of January 25, 2011 and June 30, 2013 that they are determined to work towards establishing the democratic system they aspire to. In this regard, the political roadmap has achieved the adoption of the new constitution, holding the presidential elections and culminating in parliamentary elections currently taking place. The House of Representatives will assume its duties in coming December. Egyptians are aware that a healthy democracy must be based on sustainable economic and social development and on social justice.

Egyptian women have been playing an important role in the ongoing political transformation process. The government of Egypt attaches great importance in ensuring the strengthening of the role of women and promoting and safeguarding their full participation in the political, economic, civil, social and cultural spheres of life.

At the political level, the National Council for Women took part in the meetings of the constitution drafting committee of 2014, also Hearing Sessions have been organized for women with special needs. They submitted their proposals and affirmed women's rights in healthcare, education and cultural aspects and the role of the government to ensure supremacy of law, justice, equality, freedom and equal opportunities between all citizens, men and women.

Moreover, the new Egyptian Constitution approved in a referendum on January 2014 - Part II, Basic Components of the Society, Chapter One, Social Components, Article 11 - provides that *"The State shall ensure the achievement of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women in the houses of representatives, as specified by Law. The State shall also guarantee women's right of holding public and senior management offices in the State and their appointment in judicial bodies and authorities without discrimination. The State shall protect women against all forms of violence and ensure enabling women to strike a balance between family duties and work requirement. The State shall provide care to and protection of motherhood and childhood, female heads of families, and elderly and neediest women."*

The new electoral law has provided a quota of a minimum number of women within each electoral list in the parliamentary elections that are currently taking place in Egypt. Also, there is a quota for women in the municipal elections.

In fact, there was a higher percentage of the participation of women in the referendum held January 2014 on the new constitution and in the Presidential elections of May 2014.

The national council for women is taking part in drafting the national plans for social, economic and cultural rights and the right to development, to integrate gender perspectives and to ensure that women rights are included and also allocation of adequate finance for the projects and programs which focus on empowerment of women as a key element of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Last 13th October, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry participated in New York in the discussion session aiming to revise the implementation of Security Council Resolution no. 1325 adopted in 2000 on Women, Security and Peace; he stressed that Egypt has worked to achieve its goals due to the importance of this resolution in women issues during and after armed conflicts, adding that Egypt is one of the 17 African countries that has developed a national plan to implement this resolution and organized a number of events to promote it in cooperation with the United Nations and the Arab League.

Regarding violence against women and girls, the government has launched unprecedented efforts to ensure the rights and freedoms of women a top priority, including combating the important issue of sexual violence and full implementation of new laws criminalizing sexual harassment.

Recognizing that the problem requires a national wide response, H.E. President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi formed a cabinet level committee to work with community and religious leaders to develop a national strategy to combat sexual assault.

Regarding the empowerment of women and enjoyment of their civil, political, economic and social rights, I would like to refer to some statistics which prove that a lot of progress is being done. The percentage of women in the Diplomatic Corps is 22.5%, in the public management offices in general is 27.5%. At the level of senior positions it is 36.7%. In the political participation those that are registered as voters are of 48.3%. The percentage of women in professional syndicates is up to 40.5% and it is worth mentioning that the percentage of women in the teaching staff across Egyptian universities is of 45.9%.

Finally, the government of Egypt attaches great importance in taking the necessary steps to implement the international obligations and commitments including the agreed recommendations of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Union of the Mediterranean on strengthening the role of women in society. Thank you.