
Women Journalists: Trade-Union Work and Leadership Regional Cooperation in the Arab World and Iran

Tunis April 17-19, 2008

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women journalists representing national journalists unions from the Arab World and Iran met in Tunis on April 17-19, 2008, to discuss trade union work and leadership challenges that women journalists face in the region. This regional meeting, supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), was organized by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens (SNJT). It presented IFJ gender equality policies and discussed the subject of women journalists and trade union work from a regional perspective. Experiences and status of women in each union were introduced on this basis.

This regional meeting, the first of its kind, follows a series of previous meetings and the recommendations that stem from them, notably: Seoul in 2001, Rabat in 2005, Amman and Beirut in 2006.

After an extensive debate, the following priorities and recommendations were adopted:

1. Increase rate of representation of women in unions' leadership positions and consider the introduction of quota systems
2. Develop trade union work capabilities for women through training
3. Involve male colleagues in all gender equality related issues
4. Strengthen trade-union policies protecting women's trade-union rights (Charter of Ethics, Constitution, etc.)
5. Ensure safety of women journalists and trade-unionists in conflict areas
6. Protect women journalist against violence and harassment at work
7. Insert gender equality provisions in collective bargaining agreements
8. Encourage women's solidarity in the union to strengthen their role in the union

Next to these recommendations, it was agreed to organise a campaign under the slogan "Women Partners in TU leadership" with the aim to encourage women journalists to engage in trade-union work and decision-making bodies in the unions through training, networking, communication campaigns and lobbying .

Letter to the Casablanca meeting:

The participants at the Tunis meeting expressed their deep regret for not being sufficiently represented at an important regional meeting being held in Casablanca from May 19 to 21st. They declared their disapproval of all exclusion and marginalisation of women with the hope that the meeting will take decisions and make recommendations to support the participation of women journalists in decision-making bodies within the unions.