



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE**

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3rd Standing Committee

on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights

Special Task Force on Gender and Equality Issues

Rapporteur: Mrs. Aşkın Asan (Turkey)

*Resolution on Gender and Equality Issues [endorsed by consensus
by the 3rd Plenary Session on 14 November 2008, Monaco]*

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean,

- Having regards to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - Having regards to the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),
 - Having regards to the 1995 Barcelona Declaration,
 - Having regards to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in the Fourth World Congress on Women in 1995 as well as the outcomes of the three world conferences organized in 1975, 1980 and 1985,
 - Having regards to the 1999 Optional Protocol to CEDAW,
 - Having regards to the Political Declaration and outcome document entitled "further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", adopted in the twenty-third special session of the UN General Assembly "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",
 - Having regards to the 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals,
 - Having regards to the Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society", held in 2006, in Istanbul,
 - Having regards to the Conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of Organization of Islamic Conference Member States, held in 2006, in Istanbul,
1. *Bearing in mind* that gender equality is an inalienable and integral component of human rights and democracy, and that a strong and sustainable democracy is possible only when Parliaments are fully inclusive of the population they represent,
 2. *Aware* that gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life,

3. *Confirming* that gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but a prerequisite for reaching all the other international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,
4. *Reminding* that despite international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and malnourished due to structural problems such as unequal distribution of income and access to productive resources and market,
5. *Welcoming* the rapid change in the level of involvement of women in workforce in the past 20 years,
6. *Stressing*, however, that practical and cultural barriers, as well as factors ranging from economic power sharing and access to capital continues to hinder women from fully realizing themselves in the economic field,
7. *Pointing out* to the fact that some of the Mediterranean countries face problems related to maternal mortality figures, lack of information on access to affordable health care services and lack of access to clean water as well as gender-specific health research, while *not ignoring* the fact that awareness-raising programs contributed to increased life expectancy in the Mediterranean region,
8. *Underlining* that education is the most significant asset in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and a prerequisite for better employment opportunities,
9. *Recognizing* that in a number of countries, economic hardships, social and infrastructural barriers result in lower enrolment rates for girls, and thus illiteracy of women,
10. *Noting* with concern that despite the increasing awareness and commitment of governments, UN entities and other organizations, women continue to be victims of various forms of violence,
11. *Underlining* that the lack of data on the sources, prevalence and incidence of the various types of violence and inadequate understanding of root causes hinders effective policy-making, and thus elimination of violence against women,
12. *Stressing* with concern that women increasingly bear the major burden of armed conflicts due to violence against them, distinctive economic and financial problems they face and the various hardships they encounter, like inadequate living conditions, risk of accidents, injuries, disease and pregnancy following the process of evacuation when the hostilities break out,
13. *Stressing* that a balanced participation by women and men in society's major political and economic decisions is vital to developing real democracy,
14. *Acknowledging* that although most Mediterranean countries apply affirmative and positive action policies to promote role of women in decision making, representation of women in Parliaments worldwide is much lower compared with that of men.

Agrees to:

- a. Call upon the Parliaments to incorporate gender equality at the core of formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Mediterranean countries' development policies.
- b. In accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, call upon the States which have not yet done so, to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, and withdraw reservations and declarations to CEDAW,

- c. Invite developed countries to fulfil their promises under the Eighth UN Millennium Development Goal to allocate 0.7% of their GDP to the development of poorer countries,
- d. Encourage statistical studies on poverty to be pursued not only on the basis of household surveys but also on individual level in order to capture the real differences in poverty between women and men,
- e. Enhance women's participation in economic life, efforts towards creating equal opportunities for men and women through the use of certain positive measures, such as microcredit and gender-sensitive budgeting,
- f. Invite the Governments (FRANCE) to pursue vigorous policies to counter reproductive health problems and to launch awareness-raising campaigns targeting women and children in order to address the lack of information on availability of and access to appropriate, affordable primary health care services of high-quality,
- g. Invite governments to institute or develop actions aiming to empower women by allowing them to take complete control over their fertility by giving them complete information about the various existing contraceptive techniques,
- h. Call upon Parliaments to allocate sufficient resources in the national budgets in order to eradicate illiteracy of women and to increase their access to all levels and types of education and encourage cooperation between public institutions, private sector and civil society organizations in overcoming the social and infrastructural barriers,
- i. Initiate special training programs for security forces, health care personnel and other public servants who deal with women subject to violence,
- j. Encourage Parliaments to conduct reliable statistical surveys on the root-causes and types of violence against women,
- k. Calls upon international community and the civil society organizations to be strict in their request from the occupation forces and the parties to the armed conflicts to respect the international law concerning the right of women, particularly the obligations stated in the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its protocol of 1977, the 1952 Agreement on Refugees and its protocol of 1967 and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and its optional protocol of 1999 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on Children Rights and its two optional protocols from the 25th of May 2000,
- l. Call upon Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced persons including Palestinian women and children to their homes in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions,
- m. Call upon the international community to facilitate the return of all refugees and vulnerable persons, including women and children, to their countries of origin in compliance with relevant UN resolutions,
- n. Call upon the international community to continue to provide urgently need assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families and to help in the reconstruction of relevant Palestinian institutions,
- o. Invite the Parliaments to formulate a holistic approach to increase women's participation in political decision-making process by encouraging girls from a very early age to participate actively in social and political life, integrating gender equality and issues related with women into the educational system at all levels, dealing with other relevant structural problems that hinders women from being involved in politics, encouraging political parties to formulate open-door policies, backed, if necessary, with positive measures, initiating a multi-dimensional web of exchange of good

practices and experiences and last but not least, establishing Parliamentary committees on gender equality and/or caucuses of women parliamentarians,

- p. Suggest Parliaments giving support to efforts for organizing the Fifth World Congress on Women, to discuss the current backlash against gender equality and relatively unaddressed topics of HIV/AIDS, human trafficking and women's access to information technologies in gender perspective,
- q. Incorporate comprehensively the gender-perspective within the composition of the various bodies of the Assembly and the Secretariat,
- r. To exhort the media to play a more important role in the dissemination of the culture of human rights, based on universal values and principles as well as gender equality, and contribute to modifying negative stereotypes while giving a more positive image of women.