MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF LOCALLY ELECTED WOMEN AND TERRITORIAL LEADERS OF AFRICA (REFELA)
Cairo, Egypt, June 17, 2019

Press Release

Local Elected Women of Africa in the spotlight in Egypt

The first meeting of the Bureau of the Network of Locally Elected Women and Territorial Leaders of Africa (REFELA), was held on June 17, 2019, in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development of Egypt, in the presence of Mrs. Manal Awad, Governor of Damietta; Mrs. Fatna El Khiel, Secretary of State for Housing in Morocco and Vice-President of North Africa for REFELA; Mr. Mohamed Boudra, Vice-President of UCLG Africa for North Africa; and Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa.

The meeting’s agenda included:

- The adoption of REFELA's three-year work plan for the period 2019-2021;
- The participation of REFELA members in the UCLG World Congress, to be held from November 11-15, 2019 in Durban, South Africa;
- The election of the President of REFELA;
- The election of the Vice President of REFELA for the Central Africa Region;
- The installation of the national chapter of REFELA in Egypt.
The REFELA Three-Year Plan for the period 2019-2021 provides for:

- The broadening of the implementation of REFELA national chapters in all African countries.
- The launch of activities of the three campaigns adopted by the Network's General Assembly at the Africities Summit held in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2018, namely: (1) The campaign for African Cities without Street Children, sponsored by Princess Lalla Meryem of Morocco; (2) the campaign for African Cities’ Zero Tolerance to Violence Against Women and Girls; and (3) the campaign for African cities in favor of women's economic empowerment and female leadership;
- The elaboration of the Charter of Local and Regional Authorities for Gender Equality in Africa;
- The mobilization of funding for the implementation of activities provided for REFELA’s Three-Year Plan (2019-2021).

REFELA had 23 national chapters at the close of 2018. The objective is to increase this figure to 36 by the end of 2020 and to have chapters in all African countries by the end of 2021.

In order to comply with the requirements to include at least 30 per cent of women on the lists of candidates for the UCLG World Council, it has been proposed to include the 15 members of the REFELA Executive Board amongst the 45 candidates that Africa intends to present to sit on the UCLG World Council for the period 2020-2022.
In accordance with REFELA's Internal Regulations, **Mrs. Dao Macoura**, Mayor of Foumbolo in Côte d'Ivoire, Vice President of REFELA for the West African Region, was elected President of REFELA for the period 2019-2021, replacing Mrs. Célestine Ketcha-Courtes who became a member of the Government in Cameroon. **Mrs. Mboula**, wife **Essame Elise Henriette**, was elected Vice President of REFELA for the Central African Region for the same period.

The REFELA Bureau installed the national chapter of REFELA in Egypt, whose President is **Mrs. Manal Awad**, Governor of Damietta.

![Mrs. Macoura Dao, President of REFELA](image)

In her inaugural speech as President of REFELA, **Mrs. Dao** stated:

"First of all, let me thank the people and authorities of Egypt for the quality of the welcome we have received since our arrival in Cairo. I would particularly like to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Egypt and convey to him the sincere congratulations of the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa for his brilliant election as President of the African Union. I would also like to thank the Egyptian government for encouraging and supporting the establishment of a national chapter of REFELA in Egypt (...)."

"I would like to recall that the leitmotif of REFELA is to promote greater participation of women in the governance of local authorities and a better integration of women's concerns into the policies pursued in our cities and territories (...). The statutes of UCLG Africa stipulate that wherever there is a national association of local authorities, the national chapter of REFELA must be considered as the permanent "Gender Equality" commission of the said national association. The fact that Egypt has accepted the establishment of a national chapter of REFELA reassures us of Egypt's willingness to take better account of women's place and concerns in the governance of Egypt's cities and territories. We would like to congratulate the women leaders and members of the territorial assemblies of Egypt for this noble initiative and assure them of the constant support of the REFELA Executive Board."

REFELA Egypt was officially installed by the new President of REFELA, **Mrs. Macoura Coulibaly Dao**; **Mrs. Fatna El Khiel**, Secretary of State for Housing in Morocco and Vice-President of North Africa for REFELA; and **Mr. Mohamed Boudra**, Vice-President of UCLG Africa for North Africa. They congratulated its President, **Mrs. Manal Awad, Governor of Damietta**, for the extraordinary work accomplished since the 8th Africities Summit in Marrakech, November 2018, to unite Egyptian women leaders from local authorities within REFELA Egypt.
Dr. Maya Mosi, President of the National Council of Women of Egypt, has made commitments to improve the representation of women on the executives of Egypt’s governorates and in all elected councils of Egyptian cities and local authorities, following the example of other African countries.

To mark the event organized in Cairo, Mrs. Chrystel Limbourg Iwenga, 2nd Deputy Mayor of Libreville in Gabon, President of UCLG Africa, presented a memoir on behalf of all the women mayor leaders and local elected representatives of Africa, to the President of REFELA, Mrs. Macoura Coulibaly Dao; Mrs Fatna El Khiel, Secretary of State for Housing in Morocco and Vice-President of North Africa for REFELA; Dr. Maya Mosi, President of the National Council of Women of Egypt, and Mrs. Manal Awad, Governor of Damiette, President of REFELA-Egypt.