

Sharing the experience of the Kingdom of Morocco,

By Hon. Ms Aatimad ZAHIDI, President of the Prefectoral Council of Skhirate-Temara, Morocco.

Under the Royal Orientations and visionary Leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI -May God Assist Him, and based on the strong Constitution of 2011 and legal framework, Morocco has demonstrated a strong political will and commitment to advancing women's rights through participation in various international programs and by signing several key agreements. Notable initiatives and commitments include:

I- Some International Agendas, Programs, Action Plans and Initiatives:

- 1.** Implementation and localization of the Global Agendas 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs, in particular the SDG 5 and its different Targets.
- 2. UNFPA's ACCESS Project:** Launched in 2022 with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, this three-year project aims to empower women and girls in Morocco. It focuses on ensuring the continuity of essential services related to sexual and reproductive health, protection against gender-based violence, and enhancing economic independence for women and girls, particularly those in vulnerable situations, including survivors of violence, individuals with disabilities, and migrant populations.
- 3. Leadership for Gender Equality Program:** Implemented by the British Council, this program seeks to address gender disparities in leadership by providing dialogue and capacity-building opportunities to civil society and higher education leaders. It aims to strengthen skills and networks for gender equality and increase women's participation in leadership roles across social development and education sectors.

- 4. UN Women's Initiatives:** UN Women has been actively involved in Morocco through various programs, including the "Safe Cities" initiatives in Marrakech and Rabat, which aim to create public spaces free from violence. Additionally, programs like "Enhanced Prevention and Response to Violence Against Women" and efforts to improve access to judicial services for women and children victims of human trafficking have been implemented to promote women's rights and provide essential services to survivors of violence.
- 5. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security:** In March 2022, Morocco launched its first national action plan in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This plan focuses on preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, promoting a culture of peace and equality, preventing violent extremism, and combating violence against women. It reflects Morocco's commitment to involving women in peace and security processes.
- 6. Promotion of Women's Rights in the Workplace:** In July 2021, Morocco's Ministry of Labor and Professional Insertion and UNFPA signed a Memorandum of understanding and a joint action program focused on health and safety in the workplace. This agreement aims to empower women and strengthen their rights in professional settings, highlighting Morocco's dedication to gender equality in the Labor market.

II- Existence of Strong and continuous efforts to harmonize the National Laws with the international and regional commitments

Some examples:

- The 2011 Constitution which recognized gender equality and the need for parity.

- 2004 Family Law (Moudawana) – Strengthened women's rights in marriage, divorce, and child custody, and which is under reform to protect more women's rights.
- 2018 Law 103-13 – Criminalized gender-based violence and introduced protection measures.

III- Existence of robust Institutional Arrangements

Morocco has several institutions and organizations dedicated to promoting and defending women's rights. Hereafter some of the key ones:

A- Governmental Institutions

1. Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family – Oversees policies related to women's rights, social protection, and gender equality, led by a female Minister.
2. The Authority for Parity and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination (APALD) – Established under the 2011 Constitution to promote gender equality and fight discrimination against women.
3. The National Human Rights Council (CNDH) which has a specific commission for equality and women's rights, advocating for legal reforms and monitoring human rights violations, led also by a woman who was recently elected by an unanimous vote President of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).
4. The Public Prosecutor's Office (Parquet Général) – Enforces laws related to violence against women and family law.

5. The Supreme Council of the Judiciary (CSPJ) – Ensures gender-sensitive justice and monitors the application of laws protecting women's rights.

B. Civil Society Organizations

1. Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF) – Advocates for women's rights, including reforming family law and fighting gender-based violence.
2. Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM) – Works on legal reforms, gender equality, and economic empowerment.
3. L'Association Marocaine des Droits des Femmes (AMDF) – Focuses on protecting women from violence and providing legal and psychological support.
4. Association Solidarité Féminine (ASF) – Supports single mothers and promotes their economic independence.
5. Women's Learning Partnership (WLP Morocco - ADFM) – Focuses on women's leadership and political participation.
6. Mobilising for Rights Associates (MRA) – A feminist NGO that works on legal advocacy and strategic litigation for women's rights.

And Women and Girls are very active actors in the Civil Society in my Country.

All of these are achievements at the national level as well as at the legislative and judiciary levels, but regarding three years of work within the Prefectural Council that I chair, here are some examples of achievements in this regard:

1. Based on the Law, the implementation of the Equity, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Approach body within the Prefectural Council, which enabled the Council to work on several issues related to the gender approach, particularly in terms of awareness-raising, training and capacity-building.
2. A Rural School Transportation Program, which we called "Madrastti," to combat school dropout. This allows girls to complete their schooling and their mothers to work and no longer worry about taking them to school, as women generally take care of that. The Prefectural Council of SKHIRATE-TEMARA also carried out a similar project in Nigeria in partnership with the Municipality of Zaria, in Kadouna State, in order to combat school dropout.
3. The signing of an Agreement with the Municipality of Mansakonko, in The Gambia, to implement a project aiming to create a women's cooperative, for the establishment of agricultural production units and development units to empower and strengthen the financial independence of African women.

4. The youth platform that encourages entrepreneurship and economic autonomy: 60% of the beneficiaries of this project are women, who were supported and trained in partnership with the National Program “INDH” to carry out their own projects.