

**WOMEN IN GOVERNEMENT: ENGENDERING  
PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE MENA REGION  
DECEMBER 1-2, 2011 - GRANADA**

IMPACT OF LEGISLATION ON WOMEN'S CAPACITY TO  
EVOLVE AS ECONOMIC ACTORS

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OECD-MENA WOMEN'S BUSINESS FORUM

# OECD-MENA WOMEN'S BUSINESS FORUM PRESENTATION

- Created by MENA Ministers to strengthen women's economic empowerment in the Region
- Represents a network of over 200 leaders from the private and public sector, government, international organizations and civil society
- Helps to improve women-led businesses through conferences, capacity-building workshops and policy analysis
- Mainstreams women's issues into international policy fora

# OECD-MENA WOMEN'S BUSINESS FORUM UPDATE

- Inventory of Policies, Institutions and Programmes Supporting Women's Enterprise
- Setting up national task forces in the 18 MENA economies to complete the Inventory
- In September 2011, the 10th meeting of the WBF was held in Paris on Policies and Services to support Women's Entrepreneurship Development

# **BARRIERS TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYEES**

- Limited capacity to own and manage wealth (land is a crucial issue)
- Labor laws restrict hours and sectors in which women can work
- Procedures more burdensome (licenses and registrations)
- Resolving conflicts can take longer
- Access to finance is very difficult
- When women considered legal minors (authorization to travel or sign contracts)

## HOW CAN LAWS ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

- Gender parity should be promulgated in Constitutions
- Labor laws should find the right balance between the protection of maternity and need for women to participate as independent and autonomous actors of the economy
- Legal reforms where women's property rights are restricted
- Expansion of access to formal credit (beyond microfinance) combined with training
- Transport and Security (Gender- Sensitive Budgeting)

*World Development Report 2012 - Gender equality and development - World Bank*

## **CAN LEGISLATION ALONE ADDRESS THESE ISSUES ?**

- Enforceability of the law
- Greater involvement of women in key positions in government, parliament and administrations
- Women to become interlocutors of government for the improvement of their conditions
- Cultures can evolve with professional women as role models in the media

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN  
CAN ONLY OCCUR IF  
GENDER ISSUES BECOME A PRIORITY OF GOVERNMENTS  
WHO WILL PROMOTE PROGRAMMES  
TO ADDRESS ALL MARKET FAILURES**

**EXAMPLES CAN BE DRAWN FROM  
THE LEY DE IGUALDAD IN SPAIN**

**AND**

**THE GENDER EQUALITY BILL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**THANK YOU**

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