

A Pilot Project

A Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa region

On

Strengthening the Knowledge Hub of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

In November 2023, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco (CNDH), co-organized a workshop in Rabat with religious actors, women's rights experts, academics and parliamentarians, from the Middle Eastern and North African region, following up to the use of the "Faith for Rights" framework by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in dialogues with States parties and in its concluding observations¹.

This pilot project under the CEDAW Knowledge Hub focused on advocacy and peer-to-peer learning on cases where culture, tradition or certain religious interpretations might impede women's and girls' equal rights in all spheres².

The conference focused on exchanging experiences and exploring initiatives that national human rights institutions (NHRIs) can adopt to this context; in addition to reflecting on pioneering interventions and evaluating the mechanisms for involvement of male and female parliamentarians in the CEDAW knowledge hub, while analysing their role in strengthening women's rights in national legislations and formulating recommendations for lifting the reservations on the Convention in the Arab region and Africa North.

The sessions of the conference, covered topics that are related to: (a) the CEDAW Convention and international human rights law, (b) religion and women's rights, (c) the OHCHR Faith for Rights Framework, with emphasis on the interconnection with the CEDAW Convention and its impact on women's rights in the Arab region, and (d) the role of the National Human Rights institutions and faith based actors in supporting the CEDAW Knowledge Hub, and how this role can positively influence the development and protection of women's rights in the Arab region and result in lifting the reservations on the Convention.

The conference, which offered an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and regional cooperation through networking, was marked by the participation of Ms. Amna Bouayyash, President of the National Human Rights Council, Ms. Nahla Haidar, member of the CEDAW Committee, Dr. Ibrahim Salama, Chief of the Treaty Bodies Branch in OHCHR, with the participation of representatives from the national human rights institutions, human rights defenders, academics, parliamentarians, media personalities and religious actors from the Middle East and North Africa region.

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Religion/CEDAW_Excerpts.pdf.

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/framework-action>.



