

Women for the Mediterranean

Driving force for development and stability

Barcelona, 10-11 October 2016



The Third Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) High-Level Conference on Women Empowerment will gather main stakeholders fostering women's empowerment around the Mediterranean to share ideas, experiences, initiatives and recommendations regarding the essential role that women play in promoting **peace, development and stability**.



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

CONTEXT

The 2016 Euro-Mediterranean context and increasing challenges lead more than ever to address cultural, security and development issues in an integrated manner. First affected by economic crisis, climate change, as well as conflicts, violence and discriminations, women are also enablers and actors for positive changes. They foster sustainable development and inclusive economic growth, they nurture education and health and they promote mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

OBJECTIVES

1. Think about **women as actors of change and solutions to the regional challenges**.
2. Examine how to strengthen their positive contribution to **development and stability**.
3. Highlight women's role in **enhancing sustainable development and inclusive growth, in promoting tolerance** and mutual understanding and address the issue of women and migrations.

Get inspired from **testimonies and concrete experiences**.

4. Formulate recommendations in terms of **policy decisions, exchange of experiences and good practices** from the field and identify regional projects and initiatives.
5. Explore how **strengthening regional cooperation** contributes to improving women's situation and living conditions.

CONTENT

4 different plenary sessions dealing with current and critical issues in the Mediterranean region:

- ◇ Women as drivers for sustainable development and inclusive growth
- ◇ Women as key actors against extremism and radicalization
- ◇ Women, mobility and migration
- ◇ Preparation of the Ministerial Conference On Strengthening The Role Of Women In Society: A Gap To Close

PARTICIPANTS

250 key stakeholders involved in gender equality and women's empowerment in the Mediterranean region: representatives from governments, international organisations and development agencies, private sector, projects promoters, personalities with an outstanding commitment towards gender equality.

AGENDA

Monday 10th October

15:00-15:30

Registration

15:30-17:00

Official Opening

- ⇒ Opening round table
- ⇒ *Women Can* – Inspiring testimonies from women and men engaged towards gender equality

17:00-17:30

Coffee Break - Networking

17:30-19:00

TOWARDS THE 4th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY: CLOSING THE EQUALITY GAP

This session will present the state of play of the implementation of the UfM Ministerial commitments on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, and the ongoing work in the framework of the UfM regional dialogue on women empowerment. It will focus especially on the following issues: participation of women in economic life, fight against gender-based violence and discrimination, women's access to leadership and the change of stereotypes through education and the media.

19:00

Cocktail Dinner – Networking



Tuesday 11th October

09:00-11:00

Thematic Session 1 - Women as a driver for sustainable development and inclusive growth.

As small business owners or CEOs, employees, business school professors or association heads, members of boards of directors, shareholders, advocates for investment climate reform or consumers, women play an increasingly important role in the economy and help drive business success and development impact. Women also demonstrate a huge potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and create more sustainable, low-carbon food, energy, water and health systems.

Progress is being made in increasing women's participation in the economy and recognising their key role in achieving sustainable development. But there is still a considerable gap in women's participation. Women remain a largely untapped resource in addressing the pressing challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region, and it is more than time to harness their great potential.

The session will address the following questions:

What is the contribution of women to the region's inclusive growth and sustainable development? How to make it more visible? How to harness women's full potential and overcome barriers that still hinder equal participation? How could regional dialogue and cooperation help to achieve these goals?

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30-13:30

Thematic Session 2 - Women as key actors against extremism and radicalisation

Throughout history, women have been both the vehicles and the drivers of positive change as peace-builders and mediators, and they have a key role in counter extremism and radicalisation.

Women are often the first to observe the early warning signs of extremism in families and at the community level. They can be voices of tolerance and provide a strong counter narrative message to extremism. Educated and empowered women, as teachers, mentors, journalists, faith leaders, civil society actors and political and community leaders, can act as role models to build resilience to the influence and spread of extremism. At the regional level, women's networks and women leaders can play a critical role by voicing their position to counter extremism and radicalisation and to influence strategies and programmes locally, nationally and regionally.

The session will address the following questions:

Is there a specific contribution by women to prevent extremism and radicalisation? How can we develop their full potential as peace builders and mediators, promoting mutual understanding and inter-cultural dialogue? What is the role of women leaders and women's regional networks in fighting against extremism? What are the capacity-building needs to support their efforts and to develop their knowledge and skills to reject the influence of extremism and to prevent radicalisation?

13:30-14:30 *Networking lunch*

14:30-16:00 **Thematic Session 3 - Women, mobility and migration**

Women have always played an important role in international migration. International organisations estimate that women are half of the global migrant population, peaking as high as 70 to 80 percent of migrant populations in certain countries.

Along the migration route and on arrival in the country of destination, women and girl migrants face specific challenges as they are particularly vulnerable to situations of trafficking in human beings, exploitation, violence and discrimination. This is primarily due to their status as women, reflecting gender inequalities existing in both origin and destination societies, as well as their condition as foreigners. It is important to recognise the particular vulnerabilities of women migrants to afford them full respect for their human rights.

Once established in the host countries, women migrants can be an important factor for positive integration within their family unit and communities. Women have a growing role in the economic development of both the host country and their countries of origin.

The positive contributions of women and migration can be enhanced and the risks decreased in many ways. A consistent, comprehensive long-term strategy that maximises the benefits of women's migration and mobility is necessary. Partnerships, cooperation and synergies should be strengthened and multilateral and regional dialogues should be promoted with the involvement of all stakeholders including women migrants themselves.

The session will address the following questions:

What is the scope of women's migration and mobility in the Mediterranean region? How can we better take into account the specific needs of women refugees? What practical solutions and pathways are there to overcome identified threats and ensure full respect for women's rights? How does the gender perspective on migration relate to policy responses on education, health and the environment? How can we maximise the benefits of women's migration and mobility? What role can regional partnerships and regional cooperation play?

16:00-16:30 *Coffee break - Networking*

16:30-17:30 **COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY:
ANNOUNCEMENTS, AGREEMENTS, PLEDGES BY
REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**

17:30-18:00 **WRAP-UP SESSION AND WAY FORWARD**

