



prevention,  
preparedness,  
response to  
natural  
and man-made  
disasters

للوقاية  
من الكوارث الطبيعية  
والناجمة عن النشاط  
البشري  
والاستعداد  
والاستجابة لها

prévention,  
préparation,  
réponse  
aux désastres  
naturels et  
humains



**Recommendations of  
The Round Table on “Women’s Added Value in Civil Protection”  
26 March 2012  
Algiers, Algeria**

The EU-funded Programme on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters (PPRD South) together with the Algerian General Directorate for Civil Protection organised a round-table in Algiers on 26 March 2012 to allow female representing the Civil Protection/Defense Authorities in the Arab Partner Countries and the EU Member States - to exchange ideas on how best women can contribute to Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection enhancement in their countries.

The warm welcome and hospitality offered by the Algerian hosts contributed significantly to the success of this event. 30 female Civil Protection Officers from Algeria, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Portugal and Tunisia along with EU Delegation representatives attended the Round Table.

## **PURPOSE OF THE ROUND TABLE**

An increasing number of national governments are making efforts to mainstream gender in disaster management policies in order to value better female potential to contribute to disaster management, although these efforts vary in extent and effectiveness from country to country. However, women’s involvement remains still low in disaster management.

With no intention to be ambitious, this event was envisaged as a good opportunity to exchange views on how to value better women knowledge and experience and, more concretely, to present some good practices which could also be shared international fora. The event did not aim at changing disaster management directly, but it was used as a reference to help build a better understanding on women’s contribution in disaster related operations, mainly within Civil Protection/Defense Authorities.

In particular, the event aimed:

- to analyse women’s role within the overall civil protection activities in the Arab Partner Countries;
- to present women’s professional experience and track good practices;
- to elaborate recommendations to be addressed to decision makers;
- to launch a Euromed Women’s Network in Civil Protection sector.

## **PROGRAMME**

The Round Table was an all day event which was divided into three parts: introduction, country presentations and work in groups.

*Introduction* - The Round Table was opened by Col Mustapha El Habiri, Director General of the Algerian General Directorate of Civil Protection, and Mrs Laura Baeza Giralt, Head of the EU Delegation to Algeria followed by a video message of Mrs Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Response.

*Country presentations* - Each participant presented the position and the role women occupy in their respective Civil Protection/Defence systems which vary from country to country. In the sixties and seventies, women started to be engaged in Lebanon, France and Algeria while in other countries like Jordan, Tunisia and Portugal, they entered the civil protection/defence in the eighties while Morocco and Palestine in late nineties. Women are still engaged in administrative work while a very small percentage is fully integrated into the operational activities.

The female officers at the round table clearly expressed their wish and readiness to be equally engaged in all phases of the Disaster Management cycle.

*Work in groups* - The main goal of the work in groups - that saw a high interest, participation, commitment and responsiveness - was to exchange ideas on progress made so far in each country to draw up a number of recommendations on how gender issues may be further mainstreamed in the overall disaster management activities.

The plenary session that concluded the works resulted in drafting and agreeing on the final document with a ten-point Recommendations addressed to Directors General and Decision-Makers of Civil Protection/Defence Authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS ON HOW TO VALUE BETTER FEMALE POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

- 1. Recognise and promote** the important role and capacities women have in understanding the impact of disasters on their social roles, personal well-being and needs;
- 2. Request Decision Makers to integrate Gender** in Disaster Risk Reduction, Response and Recovery policies and planning to provide for a commitment in including gender diversity at all levels;
- 3. Promote equal employment opportunities** and working conditions for female and male staff (e.g. recruitment, quota, legislation, facilities);
- 4. Ensure active participation of women in decision-making** at all levels in Disaster Risk Reduction, Response and Recovery, including in humanitarian interventions and in the access to appropriate humanitarian aid;
- 5. Encourage both men and women participation** in all gender related issues;
- 6. Empower women** to actively contribute not only to prevention, preparedness and response but also to disaster risk reduction, in particular in strengthening community resilience and reducing the impact of potential disasters and bring **Gender sensitive issues** in **school curricula**;
- 7. Ensure equal access** of women and men **to information, training and education** on Disaster Risk Reduction, Response and Recovery; Produce and promote gender sensitive information, education and communication materials;
- 8. Organize training** at all levels on gender and diversity issues. Gender sensitivity training will help better understanding of gender integration in all aspects of emergency management;
- 9. Establish co-operation and partnership with Civil protection/Defence Authorities of the PPRD South Programme** and other stakeholders at national and international level to share good practices and lessons learnt in the process of strengthening gender sensitivity approach in all aspects of Disaster Management;
- 10. Encourage women to self-capacity and confidence building** also with the support of a network of female professionals in civil protection/emergency management organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

## COMMENTS FROM THE PPRD SOUTH AND THE ROUND TABLE FACILITATORS TEAM

- The level of participation, commitment and responsiveness of most of the participants was high. Having in mind that this round table, with gender issues as a topic, was the first of this kind ever organized in the region, the PPRD South Programme was very satisfied with the interaction of participants, inputs, comments, presentations, questions and explanations that were provided during the event.
- Despite different level of experience and knowledge, as well as length of involvement in Civil Protection, the participants showed openness to each other, especially during the work in groups.
- The participation of representatives from different services with different background, broadened the perspective which could contribute to a possible intra-country cooperation on gender issues in the future.

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