

Equality without Reservation Coalition

Statement regarding the *Libyan Women and Participation in the Drafting of the New Constitution*

July 2013

The “**Equality without Reservation Coalition**” (**EWRC**) which is formed of feminist organisations from Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia Jordan and Bahrain, discussed the situation of Libyan women notably in relation to their participation in decision making and state building processes.

EWRC is particularly concerned with the growing practice of excluding Libyan women from the processes involving the discussions and the drafting of the new Libyan Constitution. Libyan women are now threatened from being totally sidelined from taking part in the membership of the Constituting Council which will be entrusted with the drafting of the Constitution since the law petition regarding the setting up of this Council, and which is currently under discussion, has failed to embrace a women quota which would have guaranteed the participation of women in the said Council.

This exclusion will undoubtedly lead to the subsequent exclusion of women from participating in decision making and political posts thus undermining their rights and status as full-fledged citizens.

In addition, **EWRC** would like to point out to carelessness expressed by representatives of international organisations in dealing with issues related to women’s rights and equality. According to reports by Libyan and international women activists, the special United Nations Representative to Libya, Mr. Tarek Mitri, qualified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**) to be “Wala Shi” (i.e. nothing). This is indeed an alarming position especially coming from a high ranking UN representative entrusted primarily with the implementation of international conventions (of which CEDAW is one) and with securing gender equality in all political, social and economic processes currently taking place in Libya.

As such, the **Equality without Reservation Coalition** calls on all feminist, human rights and civil society organisations in Libya, in the Arab region and internationally to express their solidarity with women in Libya and provide all kinds of support for this landmark struggle of Libyan women. This is of particular interest since the struggle of Libyan women is an integral part of the larger struggle of Arab women for equality, justice and inclusive citizenship.