



United Nations Development
Program (UNDP)
Center of Arab Women for
Training and Research (CAWTAR)
National Democratic Institute
(NDI)
UN Women
iKNOW Politics

Conference Report

The First Summer University for Women in Politics

Preparation for an Electoral Campaign

Ibero Star Saphir Palace Hotel

June 18 and 19 2011

Hammamet, Tunisia

OVERVIEW

Context:

For the first time in the Arab world, a country has decided that political parties as many women as men on electoral lists. Tunisia will hold historical Constituent Assembly elections on October 23, 2011. Gender parity on Tunisia's political party lists was adopted April 11, 2011 by the High Commission charged with election preparation, validated by the interim government and officially announced May 12, 2011. According to Article 16 of the decree-law related to the National Constituent Assembly, "candidacies are presented on the basis of the principle of parity between women and men by alternately ranking women and men candidates on the lists." There are presently more than 100 political parties in Tunisia who will compete in the October 2011 elections. The majority of their women members have never before carried out an election campaign.

Within this context, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the United Nations entity for gender equality and women's empowerment (UN Women) through their project "strengthening women's political participation in the Maghreb," the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) and the knowledge network iKNOW Politics brought together their finances and expertise to support women in Tunisian political parties and civil society likely to run as candidates for the Constituent Assembly.



Summer University participants established links to exchange experiences with peers from different parties and countries

From June 18 to 19, 2011, 53 women from different regions, representing 43 political parties, as well as representatives of civil society, participated in the first summer university for women in politics in Tunisia. Practical training sessions and opportunities to exchange experiences with women politicians from other countries helped prepare potential women candidates with the necessary skills and confidence to organize effective campaigns for October's elections. Guest speakers and trainers included Senegalese parliamentarian Ndèye Fatou Toure, former Canadian parliamentarian and provincial party leader Elizabeth Weir, Tunisian communications expert Moncef Ayari, chairwoman-elect of Tunisia's National Journalist Syndicate (SNLT) Najba Hamrouni and UNDP Gender Program Team expert Randi Davis. Each facilitator shared her and his personal experiences in politics and public life and led sessions on: strategies for organizing an electoral campaign; promoting effective coalition-building among women; developing a message and communicating effectively; building relationships with the media; creating channels of mutual support for women between political parties and civil society; and accessing useful tools and resources to promote women's political participation and equality. The two-day summer university promoted dialogue among women candidates from different parties and created opportunities for women political activists to exchange experiences and meet counterparts in civil society.

Specific Objectives:

This first summer university aimed to strengthen potential women candidates for the Constituent Assembly elections. The university constituted a first step in supporting women in Tunisian political life. Specific objectives included:

- Strengthen women candidates' communication and campaign organization techniques
- Establish a strategic campaign plan for each participant
- Promote multi-party and intra-party dialogue among women
- Create opportunities for exchange and sharing of experiences
- Encourage discussion and exchanges between women in political parties and civil society
- Indirectly assist Tunisian political parties to identify future candidates

Conference Outcomes:

- Dissemination of information relative to best practices for election campaign planning to ensure greater chances of success
- Creation of strategic campaign plans for future candidates
- Establishment of links that facilitate exchange of experiences among peers from different parties and countries and inter-party dialogue

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Speakers:

Hon. Ndèye Fatou Toure, Senegalese activist and parliamentarian

Hon. Elizabeth Weir, former Canadian parliamentarian and leader of the New Democratic Party of New Brunswick

Randi Davis, UNDP Gender Program

Soulef Guessoum, UNDP



Using online networks to share global experiences



Elizabeth Weir of Canada shares lessons from past campaigns



Together for equality: women learn about support networks for women in politics

Participants of the summer university exchanged experiences and lessons learned from women political activists from around the world, discovering common challenges from Ottawa to New York to Dakar to Tunis. Hon. Elizabeth Weir emphasized that the constituent assembly election represents an essential time for Tunisian women to be full partners at the table as they write their constitution and ensure it reflects democratic values and full equality rights. Recounting Canada's constitutional reform experience of the 1970s and 1980s, Weir described a successful national campaign that galvanized women from different political parties, legal backgrounds, associations and universities who together fought for a constitutional article guaranteeing equal rights. *"Notwithstanding anything in this charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons"* – this simple text has guaranteed equality for Canadian women in more than 100 legal cases.

Hon. Ndèye Fatou Toure announced that women in Senegal – and all over the world – are watching the progress of women in Tunisia. She described the challenges she has overcome as an activist and woman in politics, above all social and cultural stereotypes. Toure shared lessons learned from her political experiences in Senegal, including movements to mobilize political parties and voters for gender parity, positive actions to promote women in politics and legal measures to promote human rights and honor international agreements. She also imparted practical campaign advice based on her own campaign experience. *"Remember not to say you are going to fix everything at once,"* she warned, *"you need to have a planned solution and strategy based on rationality."* Toure reminded participants that their campaigns should focus on the priority issues of the country and should be carried out in the language that will resonate with the average voter. *"Your discourse needs to be articulated on the national and the local levels. Keep a good rapport with journalists and remember that YOU can control the direction of the debate!"*

UNDP's Randi Davis acknowledged that women everywhere face common challenges. *"We have skills being women, mothers and leaders in our communities of any culture. But in every single region where we work, every culture has an excuse about why women shouldn't participate. It's so important to network with women who have done this in other countries so we can avoid being tokens and ensure we are meaningfully represented and participating in politics."* Davis also underscored the importance of pushing political parties to put women at the top of the lists. *"Parity [through alternating lists] is good,"* she said citing experiences of other countries, *"But list heads are critical for getting women elected."*

COOPERATION AMONG WOMEN

"It's not only desirable, but necessary for political parties to work with civic associations. Civil society consolidates participatory democracy, transparency and good governance, and it's necessary that civil society collaborate with political parties to strengthen democracy and stability of the country."

- Hon. Ndèye Fatou Toure



Tunisian women party activists meet with women from civil society



Mrs Dudziak UNDP-Tunisia Deputy Resident Representative with one of the participants

Drawing on her personal experience as both an activist in associations and in her party in Senegal, Ndèye Fatou Toure highlighted the important and complementary roles of political parties and civil society. She insisted that while civil society does not aspire to achieve the same objectives as political parties, their work is meant to complement and not compete. Civil society associations have a proximity to citizens and are able to detect the needs of the population—something that is not always the strength of political parties because citizens sometimes distrust the nature of politics.

Former Canadian parliamentarian, provincial party leader and activist Elizabeth Weir also stressed the importance of the synergy among political parties, associations and networks in establishing principles of good governance and democracy and human rights. According to her, it's a win-win approach that benefits the entire society.

Participants raised important questions about how to ensure the neutrality of activism and independence of civil society, which was both suppressed and manipulated by the former regime. One participant asked if it is even possible for political parties to work with civil society associations when they remain highly suspicious of parties.

Toure recalled that all democratic states eventually see their autonomy and efficiency widely questioned by civil society and political parties. State management has shown its limits and therefore civil society organizations, infused with principles of justice and democracy, have emerged. These organizations operate with political parties as monitoring and watchdog bodies, but not intend to seize power from the state altogether. Toure insisted that there is a strong complementarity and synergy of actions between the political parties and civic associations. Indeed, in many places, civil society is better established than political parties and more likely to know the concerns and challenges facing local communities. For this reason, civil society can help political parties make better decisions and policies by shedding light on citizens' needs and priorities. *"It's not only desirable, but necessary for political parties to work with civic associations,"* she concluded. *"Civil society consolidates participatory democracy, transparency and good governance, and it's necessary that civil society collaborate with political parties to strengthen democracy and stability of the country."*

Weir further emphasized the need to build partnerships between civil society and political parties when goals are complementary, but to avoid pursuing permanent alliances to ensure independence of associations. She reiterated the successful example of collaboration among elected officials and civil society partnerships between women politicians and advocacy organizations for women's rights in Canada.

ASWAT  أصوات

French and Arabic resources for women in political parties and civil society available on www.aswat.com

PRACTICAL TOOLS

Election communication techniques :

Moncef Ayari, trainer
Najba Hamrouni, trainer

Principles of organizing an election campaign:

Elizabeth Wier, trainer

iKNOW Politics online knowledge network:

Mariam Diallo, trainer

Networks promoting dialogue and support for women in politics:

www.iknowpolitics.org

www.undp.org

www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org

www.ndi.org

www.aswat.org



Participants receive certificates for completed practical skills-building workshops

iKNOW
politics

International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) www.iknowpolitics.org



Participant with communications expert
Moncef Ayari

Tunisian communications expert Moncef Ayari and journalist and chairwoman-elect of the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNLT) Najba Hamrouni led a series of practical workshops on campaign communication techniques that covered elements of a political message, as well as tips for effective communication. Participants learned about the importance of using a single language avoiding showing hesitation in speech, that communication can be face to face or through media outlets, that the candidate has to show gratitude to her audiences and that she must listen carefully to her constituency and manage the unpredictable.

"When addressing the public: 1) be simple, 2) talk naturally; 3) use effective eye-communication; 4) control hands; 5) be passionate about what you say; 6) use human stories; 7) avoid frustration; 8) do not exceed the time that has been given to you!"

Elizabeth Weir simultaneously led workshops on the principles of organizing an electoral campaign, and the elements of a *winning* election campaign. Citing examples from her own successful campaigns, Weir elaborated the steps for a winning election campaign: 1) planning; 2) anticipating problems and addressing them in advance; 3) remembering the work for the next election starts the day before the election day; 4) volunteers are the lifeline of the campaign.

Weir underscored the importance of a written campaign plan, which represents a living document developed through consensus among you as candidate and the campaign team. Participants also discussed campaign budgets, profiles of effective campaign managers, candidate schedules and event calendars and the critical role of volunteers – who need to be thanked regularly!

"An election campaign is about: 1) the candidate, 2) people who support the candidate, 3) money, 4) information that you give as a candidate, 5) civil society, 6) time."

Throughout the summer university, participants received presentations on various websites containing training guides and resources to support them in their campaigns. Mariam Diallo, regional coordinator for the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics or www.iknowpolitics.org) also led daily training sessions on how to use the site to access resources and participate in discussions with women political activists from around the world.

Annex I: Agenda



Agenda

The First Summer University for Women in Politics: Preparation of an Election Campaign
Iberostar Saphir Palace Star Hotel, Hammamet June 18 and 19 2011

June 17, 2011

16h	Arrivals and Check-In
19h	Dinner at Restaurant « Yasmine »
20h30-21h30	Film Presentation: Who is Fatima followed by a debate at Cafe « Esplanad »

June 18, 2011

8h	Participant Registration Room « Voile d'Or »
9h-9h45	Official Opening Ceremony of the Summer University Room « Voile d'Or » Mr. Mohammed Belhocine, Resident Representative of UNDP Soukeina Bouraoui, President of CAWTAR Nicole Rowsell, Director of NDI in Tunisia Moderator: Mr. Nicolas Garrigue
9h:45-10h:45	Importance of Networks and Programs on Equality: Room « Voile d'Or » www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org by Giorgia Depaoli www.iKnowpolitics.org by Mariam Diallo-Drame www.undp.org by Randi Davis www.ndi.org/www.aswat.org by Gabriella Borovsky Moderator: Soumaya Ben Cheikh
10h45-11h00	Coffee Break
11h-12h30	The Role and Challenges of Elected Women : Exchange of Experiences Room « Voile d'Or » Hon. Ndèye Fatou Toure, Hon. Elizabeth Weir Mechanisms that Allow for Greater Participation of Women in Politics : Randi Davis Moderator: Soulef Guessoum
12h:30-14h00	Lunch
14h-18h	<u>Group 1 - Room « Voile d'Or »</u> Principles of Organizing an Elections Campaign By Elizabeth Weir <u>Group 2 – Room « Hawaria »</u> Message and Techniques for Election Communication by Moncef Ayari and Najba Hamrouni Rapporteur : Donia Ben Romdhane. (simultaneous coffee break)
18h00-19h00	iKnowPolitics: Individual orientations for using the electronic portal in the hotel reception
19h	Dinner

June 19, 2011

8:h30-12h:30	<p><u>Group 1 – Room « Hawaria »</u> Message and Techniques for Election Communication by Moncef Ayari and Najba Hamrouni</p> <p><u>Group 2 – Room « Voile d'Or »</u> Principles of Organizing an Elections Campaign By Elizabeth Weir Rapporteur: Donia Ben Romdhane</p>
12h30 -14:00	Lunch
14h-14h30	<p>Communication and Election Organization: Question and Answer Session Room « Voile d'Or » Elizabeth Weir, Moncef Ayari and Najba Hamrouni Moderator: Soulef Guessoum</p>
14:30-15h30	<p>Panel: Civil Society and Political Parties Room « Voile d'Or » Ndèye Fatou Toure, Elizabeth Weir Moderator: Gabriella Borovsky</p>
15h30-16h00	<p>Certificate Ceremony Room « Voile d'Or »</p>
16h00	Closing