

## Excerpts from

# The Tunis Declaration

### *The Second Mediterranean Women's Forum 2-4 June, 1995*

We, the women of the Mediterranean Forum, meeting in Tunis from 2-4 June, 1995, at the invitation of the Minister of Women's and Family Affairs, organized by CREDIF, UNESCO, Institut Valencia de la Dona, the ItaloAfrican Institute of Rome, the Forum of Mediterranean Women of Marseilles, and KEGME, addressing the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women

#### **Declare**

**1.** The reinforcement of democracy, human development based on the respect of ecosystems, and negotiated solutions to conflicts are the necessary conditions for peace, the reconstruction of social ties and the defense of the Mediterranean identity. These cannot be obtained without equality and shared rights and responsibilities between women and men.

**2** It is by the acknowledgement of their power and the achievement of economic autonomy that women can obtain and implement equality in law and the recognition of their identity. These objectives cannot be reached without the political, economic and social transformation of the region.

**3.** Mediterranean countries have common cultural roots, and in their diversity constitute a global space. It is the wealth of some which causes the migration of others; it is the exclusion of some which provokes the violence of others. Racism, xenophobia, occupation and wars divide the region and threaten its security. The Mediterranean never was and will never be a border, in spite of all the decisions and measures aimed at fragmenting it.

**4.** The defense and reinforcement of the Mediterranean identity of diversity, and the respect of its components is a guarantee of the stability, democracy and development of the region ...

#### **Ascertain**

**6.** Conflicts have intensified and the logic of violence, including violence against women, dominates the sociopolitical dynamics of the Mediterranean. The Arab-Israeli conflict, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, terror and acts of terrorism against the civilian population in Algeria, the occupation of Cyprus, racism and xenophobia in Europe, the rise of extremism everywhere, make of this region a geopolitical area of paramount importance for peace worldwide.

**7.** However, one should hail the Arab-Israeli peace process for having raised hopes, for the first time in 50 years, of a real peace founded on respect of sovereignty, the right to self-determination and mutual security for all the peoples and countries of the region. Nonetheless, this promise of peace is facing substantial difficulties ...

**10.** Alienating the South will not solve the major problems besetting the North. The ties between our countries are so old, so strong and so numerous that the exclusion of the South will entail dangers for the stability and development acquired by the North.

#### **Affirm**

**11.** The economic crisis and the globalization of the job market call into question women's right to salaried jobs and destabilize their work conditions.

**12.** The number of working hours for the satisfaction of collective needs (health care, the aged, children, institutional relations, etc.) increases while the number of hours considered as productive and paid work diminishes. Informal work has ultimately to be considered as an integral part of the global economy.

**13.** The discrimination faced by women in the access to information in sciences and technology, to professional development, and their conspicuous absence in education, at all levels, are an obstacle for development and one of the main causes of poverty in the Mediterranean.

**14.** Inequality, de facto or de jure, in work opportunities is multifaceted. Inequality in access to careers and employment, a gendered

division of jobs and unequal salaries persist in all Mediterranean countries, both south and north. The special case of young women who have difficulties finding a first job, irrespective of their education level, should be noted. We strongly object to the idea that women's work is an obstacle to the full employment of men.

15. The instability of work for women, exacerbated in the Mediterranean by the weight of tradition, results in the increasing incorporation of women into the informal sector and black market employment.

16. Certain solutions proposed to women, such as leaving business, accepting seasonal work, at home, or even part-time, risks confining women to unstable and marginal jobs. This would result in the exacerbation of the exploitation of women at work, characterized by inadequate salaries, the absence of syndicated or collective protection, and inexistent or insufficient social security.

### **The Women of the Mediterranean Urge**

- The recognition of their contribution to lasting development and the respect of the cultural diversity of the region.
- The introduction, application and follow-up of laws and equal opportunities between men and women of the Mediterranean in all areas.

### **Request**

- The introduction of national and multinational awareness programs for the reinforcement of democracy, peaceful coexistence of Mediterranean countries, respect of cultural and sexual differences, tolerance for diversity, recognition of unity and advancement of peace through the negotiation of conflicts.
- That the international community make sure that, in the event of an embargo, conditions of survival, health, education of the civilian population in general, and of women and children in particular, are safeguarded. They strongly uphold the international community's action aimed at censuring the direct or indirect perpetrators of rape as a weapon of war.
- The creation of infrastructure and social services which permit conciliation between the family, professional and sociopolitical lives of men and women.
- The appreciation of women's reproductive function, which must be recognized as a productive activity, by the adoption of a new methodology of measuring women's contribution to national revenues, especially in the informal sector and domestic tasks.
- Information, training and development awareness programs to produce a symmetrical distribution of tasks in the family and in society.
- The stimulation and intensification of education and cultural and professional development, to facilitate women's access to the world of employment.
- The insurance of the right to a free and conscious motherhood.
- The establishment of support mechanisms aimed at the long-lasting development of movements for the protection of nature, in cooperation with women's organizations.

### **Undertake**

- To make contact with all women, organized or not, of all the Mediterranean people involved in conflicts, in order to reach a negotiated solution favoring the respect of every individual's rights and dignity.
- To support the efforts of Israeli and Palestinian women for the implementation of the Oslo accords in accordance with the agreed timetable and the commencement of negotiations on the final status. They also endeavor to enhance the participation of Palestinian women in the building of their country's social and economic institutions.
- To encourage partnership and joint development in order to create a zone of economic, political and sociocultural dynamism, and to reinforce solidarity, security, stability and progress in the Mediterranean.
- To motivate women and associations to present projects to international bodies in order to enhance the economic capabilities of women. The European Union, during its planned meeting in June 1995 in Cannes, as well as the participants of Mediterranean countries in the encounter to be held in Barcelona in November 1995, will recognize the importance of both women's work and their contribution, and will provide the means to permit them to partake actively in the social, economic and political life of their respective countries.