



News Release

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Contact: Elisabeth Crum, (202)785-0186

New IWPR/IFES Survey Reports on Women's Political, Economic, and Social Status in Morocco

RABAT—A national survey of the political, economic, social and legal status of women in Morocco released today by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) shows a mixed picture of women's status in the region.

The survey was conducted as part of IFES and IWPR's Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA) project, which seeks to propel the efforts of local nonprofits working to improve the standing of women in the MENA region. The first phase of the project is to acquire scientific survey data in three countries- Lebanon, Morocco, and Yemen- to identify and address the areas of greatest need for women. The second phase of the project is to deliver the data to local nonprofit advocacy groups and individuals who focus on women's issues and train them to use the information to advance their goals. The survey findings were presented to local groups on June 21 and 22 in Rabat. Participants included representatives from NGOs and Ministries, as well as academics and parliamentarians.

Survey results indicate that there is a gender gap in voter participation in Morocco. Women's participation in Morocco's municipal elections in June 2009 was lower than men's, with less than 45 percent of women surveyed report having cast a vote compared with 57 percent of men. The majority of Moroccan women (54 percent) did not participate in the June 2009 municipal elections.

The survey also found relatively high support for the system of gender quotas that is currently in effect in Parliament, with seven in 10 women versus six in 10 men in favor of the gender quota system. Over a third of men are opposed to the system of gender quotas compared with only 17 percent of women. The survey, however, indicated that knowledge of gender quotas remains significantly low among ordinary Moroccan citizens at large.

Women showed much higher support than men for the Family Law (Moudawana) which provides a set of guarantees and assurances to women (85 percent of women vs. 59 percent of men support the law). Most men who oppose the Moudawana believe the law negatively impacts them, exaggerates the spouse's demands, and is opposed to their religious beliefs. The top two reasons women gave for their dissatisfaction with the law involve their disappointment with the practice and enforcement of the Family Law and the feeling that its slow implementation does not do enough for the rights of women.

Restricted movement remains an issue for a substantial portion of women in Morocco. Thirty percent of women report that they are limited in their ability to leave the house without permission. Restricted movement is greater for young women (44 percent of 18-24 year olds) than older women (18 percent of those age 55 and older), as well as for women who do not work for pay (31 percent) compared with women who do work for pay (15 percent). Although relatively fewer women work for pay (10 percent) compared with men (69 percent), the wages paid to women and men are virtually the same.

Women in Morocco have much lower educational attainment than men, with 48 percent of women, and 23 percent of men, having received no formal education. Women are also much less likely than men to

participate in the paid labor force, with 69 percent of men and ten percent of women reporting having worked for pay in the previous week.

Although women are more likely than men in Morocco to report receiving medical care, access to medical care varies tremendously by education and income levels, with only 16 percent of low-income women having access to a formal health care provider.

Men are more than three times as likely as women to believe that it is acceptable for a woman to be beaten by her husband (30 percent of men and 9 percent of women), and more than one-third of men and women feel that domestic violence is at least sometimes justified when a wife “is disobedient or did not follow [her husband’s] orders” or “if she went out without telling her husband.”

At the end of the Rabat workshop, participants issued numerous recommendations that included: creation of targeted public awareness campaigns to inform women about new or existing laws; urging women’s advocacy NGOs to use media as a tool to reach out to women; and to combat illiteracy by working to make education more inclusive and accessible to women. Additional recommendations will be included in the comprehensive country report which will be issued later this year.

Focus on Morocco Topic Briefs can be [viewed here](#).

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women's studies and public policy programs at The George Washington University.