

## **Launching Statement**

### **The Forum for Women in Politics, the Arab Region**

6-9 May 2016 Beirut- Lebanon

The Arab Region is currently going through various transformations and changes on the political level, particularly throughout the last five years. This is due to diverse forms of popular movements taking place in the region, either in the form of revolutions that overthrew heads of state or in the form of international military interventions in other countries. These transformations in the state structure resulted in the growing impact of some terrorist, extremist groups that committed sectarian and racial cleansing. In addition, the occupation against the Palestinian people continues. These developments formulated new security threats in these contexts, where the pursuit of democratic transition was imposed, in order to try avoiding popular uprisings that started in 2011, through establishing the rule of law and enforcing a democratic system that depends on new constitutional processes or substantial constitutional amendments, passing more democratic electoral laws, as well as combating violence and discrimination against women.

With these transformations, the role of women in seeking to create a democratic space that consolidates values of equality and human rights in the Arab Region was quite significant. The masses of women engaged in the public space and in politics have increased. These women are leaders of their societies who have presented- and continue to present- a distinct image of women engaged in the political arena who stood in support for the democratic peaceful movement. They fought through democratic mechanisms in order to enforce values of justice and equality in their nations. Such a role was our drive: as a group of women living in this region who believe that sharing our experience and continually standing in solidarity with our diverse, continuous struggles is what helps keep the voice of freedom, justice and equality evident in our societies where women face different forms of violence and marginalization.

Driven by our belief in the impact of this role and those experiences, we held several preparatory meetings throughout last year, the last of which was held in Beirut, Lebanon on 6-9 May, 2016 for the aim of launching "The Forum for Women in Politics- The Arab Region" to become a voice of democratic feminists of the region; those who are concerned with the realities of their societies and sharing experience among them, while manifesting the value of solidarity to women who struggle with violence, and help empower them in diverse arenas and elaborating their political role as a major tool in establishing a democratic, participatory society.

**Long live Women's Struggle and Solidarity**