

“Providing participation opportunities for young Palestinian women in political factions”

Attendance (without distinction)

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Introduction

This session was held as part of the “Supporting young Palestinian women political leaders”, Phase III, implemented with support from UNDP/PAPP. Discussion revolved around providing opportunities for young Palestinian women to participate in political factions. A group of young Palestinian women from the West Bank and Gaza first presented the challenges that hinder their political participation and involvement in factions after which practical approaches were posed to revive this participation among youth and to support women and youth in reaching decision-making positions.

Discussion

The participation of young Palestinian women in political factions and in decision-making centers is especially important at this stage in which the political climate is continuously changing. This demand by these young women, therefore, reflects legitimate aspirations and is not limited to the already decided quota, which grants women’s participation of up to 30% and lowers the age for candidacy. Still, some factions are opposed to this participation, which reflects a lack of confidence in the abilities of the youth. It also shows the gap between these factions and young leaders, which affects the ability of both young men and women to participate in decision-making.

This situation has resulted in the creation of active youth movements after the gap between them and their factions and political movements further expanded given that they did not offer the opportunity for these youths to participate in the decision-making process.

In light of this situation, it is important that focus is put on the character-building of each individual, both male and female and to think ponder the idea of equal opportunity in everything, first and foremost within factions.

The CEDAW agreement granted equal opportunity for men and women without discrimination. This agreement could be benefited from in promoting political participation among women irrespective of the women's quota, which is compulsory and should be used as a launching pad for the participation of young women.

The current situation of Palestinian women points to an increase in sexual and economic violence against them. This calls for their protection from exploitation and the elimination of violence in all forms against them. Economic challenges which stand in the way of their development must also be confronted.

This reality necessitates that the political leadership listens more closely to the problems of the youth. It needs to grant young men and women a fair quota for political participation so that factions can regain their true role after society also exercises its role in building a complete factional structure. This can address the current state of division and disassociation youth are suffering from and is a responsibility that lies with political factions and movements. The factions no longer give ample attention to the youth and a leadership directed towards these young men and women is lacking.

Regardless of this reality, which points to such a large gap between the youth and various political movements, factions and movements is the only way to reaching decision-making positions. Furthermore, the active youth groups are part of factional and political entities.

Recommendations

One: The need to support the demands of youth and for political leaders to interact with them at a practical level, to be manifested in specific mechanisms that guarantee their participation in decision-making.

Two: A call to political factions and movement to take their vanguard role in recruiting the people and to regain their role which was usurped by the authority after they merged with it.

Three: To raise the women's quota to 50% including fair participation of men and women

Four: The need to develop and detail the position paper presented by young women leaders regarding political factions and movements and their platforms

Five: The need to consider setting a national law for factions and for political movements to determine the status of youth and the ratio of their participation; each faction and movement should have a department for youth that is financially endorsed, which requires a change in the structure of the faction and the formulation of certain criteria for the membership of these youths.

Six: To enact a separate draft law that gives equal opportunity for youths in everything and which focuses on individual character-building, all of which will be handled by the political movements themselves.

Seven: The need to redirect the compass towards political forces and the Palestinian political system.

Eight: To adopt a quota for youth; the need to determine the percentage of this quota from within political movements, not from without.

Nine: To demand laws to protect women in the face of growing sexual and economic violence against them.

Ten: Cancellation of subscription fees for women candidates

Eleven: A call to factional and party institutions to exercise the quota system and the need for them to regain their usurped role.