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Terms of Reference for thought-provoking short films in the framework of the project:

“Strengthening women’s leadership and participation in politics and decision-making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia”

Background and Rationale

UN-INSTRAW (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) and CAWTAR (Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research) believe that democratic processes cannot ignore or exclude women and as such, they are implementing a project, financed by the Spanish Government, titled “*Strengthening women’s leadership and participation in politics and decision-making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*”, which aim to contribute to the incorporation of women into political and decision-making processes in these three countries.

Women indeed represent at least 50 percent of the population in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia but they face great obstacles in engaging in political, social and economic activities, with the result that they are barely represented in decision-making processes. Therefore, in order to enhance women’s political participation, the project activities cover research, capacity building, and advocacy in three broad areas: (i) creating and sharing knowledge on women’s political participation on a national and regional basis; (ii) strengthening capacity for women’s participation in politics and decision-making through the exchange of experiences and best practices among key stakeholders; and (iii) fostering policy dialogue and debate on women’s participation in politics and decision-making.

The project will take into account the cultural, political and religious differences that exist between and within each country aiming to incorporate the diversity and richness of the region and to joining efforts in spite of these differences in favour of common goals.

Communication and advocacy will be considered crosscutting issues to be addressed in all phases of the project, with the aim to promote a change in mentalities, attitudes and behaviours that undermine a greater rate of participation among women in political life. This component will therefore be taken into account not only as a factor for the dissemination of project results, but also during the research and capacity-building phases.

Media is without a doubt very central in the citizens’ lives, considering the wide scope of social, political and economic issue it covers, and the effect of the gender images it portrays to the public at large. Therefore communication and communication tools, such as mass media, play a crucial role in the processes of women’s participation in economic, social and political life and decision-making.

From the exposure to different types of media, people adopt behaviours, assume attitudes, and build stereotypical images that affect their actions in real life. Depending on the way media present women, women’s stories and news, many explicit and implicit messages about female



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status and conditions in specific circumstances are conveyed. Moreover, media can foster or, on the contrary, hinder women development and participation in socio-political life.

Objective

In the framework of the above mentioned project, UN-INSTRAW and CAWTAR with the financial support of AECID (Spanish Agency for International Development), consider fundamental to run awareness campaigns at local level on women's political participation. The campaign will include innovative tools such as video and podcasts. Within the project, three thought-provoking short films about women political participation, one in each of the three countries involved in the project (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) will be produced. The films are to be used in connection to capacity building activities, awareness campaigns, a media campaign, seminars and conferences conducted in the framework of the project. The thought-provoking short films will be used as a tool to promote, at local level, open discussions on the topic of women's political participation and be completed by the production of instant podcasts with citizens' messages to central authorities/international agencies/actors on this issue.

Tasks and Responsibilities

The idea is that the short films will stimulate discussion, provoke new thoughts and constitute a basis for dialogue about the meaning - and possible expressions - of political participation, and particularly women's political participation. The films will be shown during film projections on a local level and the projections and debates will be followed by the possibility for the participants to produce instant podcasts with specific messages to high level political decision-makers. Both the projections and the debates arising from the films will contribute to a greater understanding concerning the conditions of governance as well as women's role into the community. The production of podcasts will facilitate the communication between "central" and "local", "center" and "periphery", starting a communication in two directions.

The thought-provoking short films could include some of, but not exclusively, the following components:

- a) *Testimonies from, interviews with, and opinions from women and men participating in political life at different level*
Interviews with women (and men) politicians at parliamentary level, local level, activists in NGOs, civil society and political parties; interviews with common people (old, young, etc..) about what they think about women participation in politics; interviews with journalists on how they see media role in conveying a positive imagine about women participation in political life; interviews with business women on how they see women political participations and links between politics and economy, as well as other relevant interviews or quotes.
- b) *Positive experiences about women's political participation*
Examples of networking or successful project/initiatives, individual or institutional.



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- c) *Obstacles to women political participation and ways to overcome them*
- d) *Opportunities and future challenges to enhance women political participation*

It is important that the films are not only a compilation of testimonies, or so called “talking heads,” but rather give a picture of the contexts around the issue of women’s political participation through a real life story, an experience, description of an event, etc. The film does not have to be documentary, more artistic narrative lines or genres such as cartoons, soap opera or some other genre in the feature film or motion picture areas will be preferential. The important feature is that the film can be a stimulus to debate about a serious issue and that it works within the cultural context. For an example of thought-provoking films in the documentary genre, please visit the project website www.whymdemocracy.net.

The film company/organization/association will be expected to identify the thought-provoking short film contents and to propose an attractive and effective “narrative line” of the film itself. Best narrative lines will be selected and their realization will be financed. Throughout the realization of the short film, the film-maker is supposed to show the work-in progress to be reviewed by UN-INSTRAW and CAWTAR. The project coordinators will be providing overall support by guiding the film company/association/organization selected, adding ideas and inputs and by validating the short film.

For an organization or association working in the development field or with related issues, there is the possibility to take a greater part in the project and be responsible for the local projections and prepare the administrative/logistical steps and authorization necessary to carry out the events and realize local podcasts. This active role will be object of further financing.

The film association/organization should provide a minimum of five facilitators who will be trained by the project staff to better animate the debates.

The final product (maximum 15 minutes long) should be submitted on CD-rom and as the original version to UN-INSTRAW/CAWTAR. The final product can be in Arabic or French, but with subtitles so that it can be seen by audiences speaking one of the two languages.

Possible aspects of the thought-provoking short film:

1. The key actors: who is participating in political life and how (men, women, old persons, young, etc.)? Which are the formal and informal modalities and levels of being active in political life and decision-making (are they subscribed to electoral list, do they vote)? Do they have networking experiences?
2. The identity/vision/mission of key actors: why did they enter into activism or political participation? With which mission? Which has been their way to political participation (success stories)?



3. The non-actors (journalists, common people, adolescents, women entrepreneurs, citizens...): what do they think about women's political participation? Do they have any remarks, expectations, suggestions, etc?
4. The opinions: what is the perception of media consumers about the image of women participating in political life? Is there any kind of discrimination to women? What is the perception of a common citizen in looking at/thinking about women participation in political life?
5. The obstacles and way of overcoming them: which are the main obstacles women face their political participation? Which are the solutions adopted? Which role can networking and exchange of experiences have in women's political participation?
6. The opportunities and challenges: which are the strategic aspects to be taken into consideration in order to enhance more political participation among women? Which suggestions, ideas and challenges towards a gender balance in politics?
7. The voices: which are the messages from grass roots to high level political decision-makers about enhancing gender balance?

The above mentioned aspects can be developed and enriched by the film-makers artistic view, under the supervision of UN-INSTRAW/CAWTAR.

Deadline for the delivery of the short-film:

The thought-provoking short film should be produced within a period of three months, starting with the signature of the contract, and including shooting period, revision of the semi-finalized product and delivery of the short film. The local projections (ten per country) and the production of podcasts (at least 15 per country) should be carried in a period of four months and a final selection of podcasts will be delivered at the end of the seventh month.

Application process

Please, send by email, fax, or mail a proposal with a narrative line and a quote for the cost of the production and/or the production together with the costs for conducting the events of film projections and production of podcasts, together with a presentation letter, to:

UN-INSTRAW - CAWTAR

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Deadline for the presentation of proposal submission is **the 5th of December 2009**