



“Entakhebo El Setat - Vote for Women” Campaign Launches in Cairo

Cairo, EGYPT (October 13, 2014) – In response to the deterioration of women’s rights in Egypt, particularly the dramatic decrease in women’s political participation and role in decision-making, Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development (ACT), in cooperation with Karama and with the support of the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality, launched Entakhebo El Setat (“Vote for Women”), a campaign aimed at ensuring support for women's political participation and representation in Egypt's next parliament.

The launch event was held in Cairo on October 13th 2014, and relayed key messages of the campaign to an audience of over fifty, including representatives of political parties and female political candidates, as well as members of the National Council for Women, civil society organizations, and the media.

Despite the involvement of women in the political transformation of the country, Egypt witnessed severe deterioration on the level of political rights of women retreating to 125 out of 133 countries all over the world, as shown in the World Economic Forum Report for 2012. Egypt also fell to 128 out of 131 countries regarding women’s representation in parliament as the percentage of female parliamentarians in Egypt decreased to 2% in the 2011 parliament, after reaching 12.5% in 2010.

In 2014, political rights law supported the individual system and stated that 80% of the representatives in the parliament should be individuals, while only 20% should come from lists. Furthermore, it stipulated that three women must be included on each party list, with no emphasis as to where on the list they are to be fielded. This law created a huge obstacle for women’s political participation, heightening the hurdles they would have to overcome to even participate as candidates, much less win elections.

In response, the National Council for Women and civil society organizations in Egypt lobbied for greater representation for women. The number of women candidates was amended to require five women per party list, a nominal increase which does not go far enough for women's inclusion.

In lieu of these challenges, the Entakhebo El Setat campaign seeks to ensure there is ample support for and awareness of the importance of women's political participation, from encouraging political parties to include women on their lists and field them in top positions to encouraging citizens to vote for women in their constituencies and to volunteer to support women candidates' campaigns. The campaign also seeks to encourage more women to run for office.

Next in the campaign are a set of roundtables to discuss the challenges and threats to women's political participation. As a result, a policy memo will be issued to decision-makers to inform them better of the major obstacles that hinder women's political participation.