

**The Second Conference of Women Parliamentarians
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A Paper Titled
**The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Social and Economic
Uprising**

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The Sudanese women strived through decades to realize their objectives represented in creating awareness and having the will to join education and to work. The beginning was education in Quranic (religious) Schools during Al-Mahdia era, then modern education in 1907, Teachers College in 1921 and then joining universities to have the first Sudanese female doctor from University of Khartoum in 1952. After that many women were graduated in many fields such as law, pharmacy a matter that is considered as a radical change in women education and gaining of society confidence in order to work in all fields.

Hence, education was the key that enabled the women and paved the way for them to gain political, economic and social rights and to emerge from the traditional role—managing the house- to wider fields. Hence the practical participation in all other activities of the society, as an equal participant and effective element in work and production in all fields.

The important factor in this issue is the will and determination of women and their different organizations. Progress of women in getting their present gains was due to efforts of pioneer women who went forward and grouped in women societies and different political parties, and also due to their conviction by their ideas and their determination.

A group of honorable ladies played an important role in supporting "graduates conference" and established women club in Medani in 1944 for promoting the role of women and combating bad habits. Their political support helped the role of men in demanding autonomy in 1994 and getting independence in 1956.

Women promotion societies were also established in 1952 in many towns in order to give opportunities of work and training for women. Workshops for sewing, societies of protection of mothers and children a matter that shows the double role played by women and their participation in crystallizing thoughts for developing the country and resisting bad conditions and obstacles, hence charity societies, civil society organizations, different media means were established in order to be in good contact with the society a matter that

deepened the awareness and understanding of the contents of international conventions and agreements that concern women and their affairs. Hence they were the pioneers in the world.

Social Uprising and MDG Objectives:

Due to development in relations between countries, peoples and organizations, women are no longer away from what is happening around them on regional and international level. They continued to participate effectively in all their activities, after representation of women in parliament by 25% in national and state legislative organs. Today in the National Assembly we have 112 women who represent all regions in Sudan among which is the deputy speaker of the National Assembly, chairperson, deputy chairperson in many important committees and consequently they are in the position of decision taking of legislative and monitoring resolution, suggesting different initiatives and consequently setting policies, plans and programs and follow up implementation. One of the most important elements of social uprising on the country, regional and international level is commitment to implement programs of poverty combating, provide clean drinking water, spread basic education, combat endemic diseases, empower women economic wise and socially and then reduction of mortality of women during delivery and children. These objectives were approved by the United Nations to be realized in all developing countries by 2015. These are eight main objectives:

- 1- Poverty reduction.
- 2- Provision of clean drinking water.
- 3- Reduction of mortality rates of infants and mothers.
- 4- Spreading basic education.
- 5- Combating endemic diseases, Aids and malaria.
- 6- Women empowerment.
- 7- Development partnerships with the world.
- 8- Preservation of the environment.

Consequently the opportunity was given completely to women parliamentarians to adopt these objectives and to set a plan, in collaboration with all concerned bodies, in order to implement, and this is done through effective participation in state general policies and adopting programs of provision of basic needs to the society, especially in rural areas, where the last statistics showed that poverty rate is more than 54% and women are even poorer there, hence care given to these policies which lead to implementation of these development objectives, is a priority and a responsibility of the women parliamentarians.

Women parliamentarians, through their political, parliamentary and social participation, should push policies that realize these objectives, follow up different programs of poverty combating especially microcredit. A lot of institutions among which is Family bank which is supervised by women from the parliament itself and hence they give preference of employment to women, and in having financing, acquiring experiences and skills that lead to women success in this field, in order to combat poverty through concentration on capacity building of women, organizing them in order to facilitate access to financing as traditional guarantees are not available to women in rural areas, and to find new means (collective) for guarantees.

The state prepared a strategy to combat poverty and identified a particular map for this and endeavoured to provide the necessary resources to alleviate poverty, but the strategy is still being studied and may need more coordination between economic organs – Ministry of Finance – Bank of Sudan – Zakat Chamber and institutions of social welfare in order to have a successful strategy that agreed upon. And in order not to be considered as a paper meant to exempt debts on the country (Requirements to exempt debts from poor and heavily indebted countries).

Women parliamentarians are to initiate policies that respond to basic needs, redistribute income between society categories and direct resources to that end. Adopt policies of helping the poor and urgent needs for women, family and

children, more involvement of women in productive activities and suitable opportunities. Creating contact with electoral bases, returning programs, fulfilling promises made during the election, bridging the relationship between state legislative councils and women civil society organizations. Building women parliamentarians' capacities and giving the opportunity to women parliamentarians to participate in all intellectual and parliamentary activities inside and outside the country especially workshops, debates, seminars and other training means and to gain negotiating skills and training on good parliamentary business.

Sudanese women parliamentarians achieved a lot of success since entering the parliament in 1965. Now the women parliamentarians travel across all states of the Sudan to solicit women opinions on the coming constitution through the association of women parliamentarians that plays an important role in mobilizing women parliamentarians to increase their effectiveness in parliament activity and consequently make her voice be heard loudly and endeavour to consolidate peace, reject violence and resolve conflicts peacefully. This activity is done transparently through open dialogue and listening to all opinions without bigotry to a party. Concentration on women objectives benefiting from other countries experiences in caring for family and child issues.

Role of Women Parliamentarians in Economic Uprising:

Women have honorable presence on economic level. The number of students (girls) in higher education institutions is more than the boys. Last statistics indicate that women represent 53% from total students in universities and higher institutes and all of them, of course, are looking for jobs after graduation in both sectors: public and private and self employment and consequently the women became productive not depending on any one but on themselves (economic wise), not only that but a contributor to supporting the family and economics. Today a woman is a minister, a manger of a bank and a successful business woman. Many women parliamentarians are active (economic wise)

and have good knowledge about economic policies and their evaluation. They participated in the national economic strategy 2012/2016, they also participated in preparation and passing of three years emergency program to rebalance the current economic situation 2012-2014. They also participated in discussing the state general budget 2012 where they had substantial opinions and good suggestions and amended some items of the budget. An example of women parliamentarians initiatives is their endeavour to make the budget more responsive to women concerns that they demanded to increase financial allocations to health insurance (motion of Dr. Samia Habani – current Chairperson of Health Committee and motion of member Awatif Aljali to decrease the remunerations of constitutional post holders in order to make the budget more rationalized (resources wise) and other motions presented during the budget in which women parliamentarians had the leading role include the motions to increase resources allocated to general education, poor students subsidy and social subsidy with all its forms. These are ideas and motions aiming at increasing resources pertaining to developmental objectives that we talked about at the beginning of this paper the most important of which is poverty combating women empowerment economic wise and socially. Also the women parliamentarians contribute through a lot of studied initiatives through different council committees and other participations. This is quite normal as a woman has become Chairperson of Human Rights Committee in the parliament, chairperson of commission of human rights on the national level all this is considered as honoring the women acknowledging their role and paving the way to her to get all her rights to consider at first place women concerns and their empowerment economic wise especially after having financial resources through micro credit and spread of banks in all parts of the Sudan. Women parliamentarians are to participate effectively to communicate with the women at the base and explain bases and concept of micro credit to use it especially women in rural areas that work on farming, animals breeding, taking care of capacity building of women in rural areas. Having meetings, listening sessions and to enlighten them on sound bases to run projects successfully.

Educate popular people at the base level, take care about the national and local media and to benefit from all media means and training institutions.

Women parliamentarians realized a lot of gains to women that extend to political, executive organs and the civil society. And they are moving seriously to more empowerment to women in legislative and monitoring business. If we want to realize the required uprising and the parliamentarian woman to do her tasks perfectly and in all fields, we require good selection of competent women leaders and women that possess the ability of taking initiatives who are bold and qualified. And after that put a strategies that starts from entering the parliament and cover all parliament duration and then translated into plans and programs for each parliamentary session provided that the business is followed through the parliamentary corporation of parties and to enlighten each member on his duty and to set a clear road map for this in order to enable the woman parliamentarian to measure her performance during performing the tasks in the parliament.

The women parliamentarians are to take total responsibility by understanding and being courageous and enduring criticism and accountability when in contact with people at the base periodically and respond whenever possible to demands of people, asking of questions, enquiries, urgent matters and to combat honestly, taking care of national issues that confront women, solve problems of economic and social backwardness, cooperate with all other institutions to realize common objectives and important issues like balanced development, justice, freedom and equal wages, solving problems of unemployment among women, vocational training and cooperation with the concerned institutions with women issues at the regional and international levels.

Women parliamentarians are to lead the change and to be present in the society as a leader and a guide and to fulfill their mandate.

Conclusion:

- 1- Considering the historical development for the participation of women parliamentarians during half a century we notice the great revolution that took place. There was one women parliamentarian in 1965 and on the national level only. Today we have 112 women parliamentarians on the state level.
- 2- Women parliamentarians participate effectively and adopt all MDGs objectives.
- 3- Women parliamentarians play more effective role in setting economic and social policies through participation in discussing general budget and following its implantation, monitor it and encouraging policies of redistributing income.
- 4- Women parliamentarians participate effectively in contacting state legislative councils and giving enlightenments about important national topics, women affairs especially the issue of coming constitution by doing so we will have contact with people at the base level and take care of the women in rural areas.