



National Commission for Lebanese Women

Annual Report

2012



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PREFACE

Dear Partners,

True to its annual tradition since 2009, it is with great pride that the National Commission for Lebanese Women invites you to take a look at its annual report for the year 2012. The past year has been a year of achievements for NCLW, of which:

- › Three landmark legal achievements:
 - Equal entitlement to the maternity leave period between female employees and female civil servants in the public sector.
 - Equal entitlement to the family compensation and assistance benefits between female and male civil servants in the public sector.
 - The amendment of the National Defense Law in the allocation of retirement/pension plan benefits to male and female spouses of deceased volunteers in the armed forces (in the case of remarriage).
- › In the context of formulating the National Strategy and Action Plan to implement the strategy, and having secured in 2011 the initial endorsement of the Council of ministers regarding the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon, NCLW proceeded in putting forward the principles of the “National Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy” in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, as well as concerned ministries and civil society associations. The National Action Plan will be publicized in February 2013.

› As far as economic empowerment is concerned, NCLW has been keen to publicize its issuance of a loan entitled “Najah” or “Success”, launched in cooperation with Fransabank. This was possible following the decision by the Central Council of the Central Bank of Lebanon which effectively granted NCLW permission to issue small loans through banks (micro credits). As such, NCLW has widened the scope of its economic empowerment activities, seeing as it continues to offer small loans, in cooperation with United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA), within the framework of the WEPASS Project: The Women Empowerment Project: Peaceful Action for security and stability. Indeed, there are many women who benefited from this project, principally in rural villages.

› As far as general social, cultural and economic empowerment of women is concerned, NCLW collaborated with Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation in equipping and renovating a number of women training centers at various locations across Lebanon: the Qayteh Federation of Municipalities-Akkar, the Municipality of Hadath Baalbeck, the Jezzine Federation of Municipalities, as well as the Municipality of Chiyah (due to be launched in early 2013).

› In the context of consolidating the adoption of gender sensitive policies at public administrations, NCLW organized a number of seminars aimed at building the capacities of the Gender Focal Points appointed at Lebanese public administrations. More details regarding this initiative, aimed at consolidating the concept of mainstreaming gender, are included in this report.

› Within the framework of networking with international and regional organizations as well as local associations, cooperation between NCLW and these bodies is multi-faceted, with the commission acting as a helping hand in many fields, such as the articulation of civil society honorable causes and egalitarian demands. Examples include the amendments of the Nationality Law, the draft law to protect women from family violence, as well as the electoral law.

› As it relates to the preparation of the CEDAW report (due to be submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), NCLW was entrusted by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the responsibility to prepare the official Lebanese report. Since then, the commission has spared no effort in preparing a report that meets the highest standards of excellence and professionalism.

The above is an overview of the various projects and programs NCLW has been keen to develop in 2012. It is hoped that public agencies and civil society associations will assist NCLW in its effort to fulfill many other achievements it aspires to, of which:

- › A Nationality Law that does not discriminate against women
- › An Electoral Law adopting the female quota system as a temporary mechanism to ensure women representation
- › A law to protect women from family violence
- › Following up on the amendment of the legal provisions that discriminate against women, within the framework of the National Campaign for the amendment of legislation that discriminate socially and economically against women (The Long Road Ahead...)
- › A Penal Code that does not discriminate against women

In the end, I would like to express my appreciation to civil society women associations that are active in Lebanon, and stress on the importance of a joint collaboration between NCLW and these associations, as a key factor to success.

NCLW SECRETARY GENERAL
ATTORNEY AT LAW FADY KARAM

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) undertakes various activities to improve the status of women and to establish equal opportunities for both men and women in Lebanon. Since 2009, NCLW has been publishing an annual report of its achievements in a bid to bolster communication with its local, regional and international partners and supporters. The 2012 report begins with a highlight of last year's activities and achievements, and presents a summary of the activities planned for the future.

For more information about NCLW, please visit the website at: www.nclw.org.lb



AT A GLANCE...

NCLW is an official body that was formed in 1998 by law 720, and is directly affiliated to the presidency of the Council of ministers which appoints its members by decree for a renewable three-year term.

The general assembly of NCLW is composed of 24 members. Women members of parliament and ministers are considered ex-officio members of NCLW and are granted a consultative status during their term.

The general assembly is entrusted with the responsibility of electing 8 of its members to occupy posts in NCLW's executive bureau. The First Lady of Lebanon, Mrs. Wa'faa' Sleiman chairs the Executive Bureau. Mrs. Randa Assi Berri and Mrs. May Mikati occupy the positions of Vice-Presidents.

NCLW members work through permanent and ad hoc committees in submitting program proposals to the Executive Bureau, as well as following up implemented projects and activities.

The following represents the permanent committees: Legislative Committee, Economics and Labor Committee, Education and Youth Committee, Studies and Documentation Committee, Media and Public Relations Committee, Health and Environment Committee, and finally Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The budget of NCLW is allocated from the budget of the Presidency of the Council of ministers as well as from financial aid and donations received international organizations.

NCLW MISSION

As defined by law, the mission of NCLW comprises 3 scopes of activities : consultative, coordinative and executive).

CONSULTATIVE

NCLW acts as the consultative body of the Lebanese government and of national councils and institutions on all issues relating to the status of women, of which gender-based issues. Of its primary focus are recommendations to the government on policy and decision-making, on the development of strategies, and on the development of frameworks for activities related to women empowerment and gender equality.

Coordinative activities

NCLW is the policy coordinator on gender-based issues between public institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Executive activities

NCLW's role on the executive level includes:

- The development of national strategies and plans for the advancement of women in collaboration with different stakeholders, of which public institutions and civil society organizations;
- The implementation of gender-sensitive projects;
- The elaboration and publication of studies and researches addressing women issues;
- The organization of workshops, conferences and events on the national, regional and international levels.



II. ACHIEVEMENTS OF NCLW DURING 2012

The 2012 NCLW Annual Report addresses the following issues:

- A. National strategy and policy work
- B. Initiating legislation for women's rights
- C. Networking with international, regional and local organizations
- D. Gender mainstreaming in policy making and programs
- E. Economic empowerment of women
- F. Monitoring the status of women and preparing related reports

A. National strategy and policy work

1. FOLLOWING UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN IN LEBANON 2011-2021: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

- a. A thorough look at the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021

NCLW proceeded to update and revise the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon, in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA).

This initiative aimed at identifying priorities as well as areas of improvement, relying on a collaborative and comparative approach in all the domains. The opinions of civil society stakeholders as well as those of local and international experts in the field of women issues were solicited. Based on the received feedbacks and the ensuing discussions, the final text of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021 was adopted in Beirut.



- b. Achievements in 2012

- The Council of ministers gave its initial endorsement of the 'National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021' on 12 June 2012. Meanwhile, it requested from ministries feedback on the document (in the form of recommendations and suggestions), according to procedures.
- NCLW worked on a National Action Plan to implement the objectives of

the National Strategy. This plan of action was devised in cooperation with UNFPA, civil society representatives, as well as representatives from public institutions and ministries. To this end, NCLW held focus group discussions that addressed in detail each of the objectives of the national strategy.

- A series of meetings aimed at discussing the objectives of the national strategy and its implementation mechanisms were held at various regional centers that offer developmental services. These meetings were organized by NCLW in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and UNFPA, and took place at the following service centers: Halba, Tripoli, Hawch Al Oumara, Baalbeck, Sidon, Tyre, Tariq Al Jadida, Bint Jbeil, Burj Hammoud, Chiyah and Aley.
- The concluding remarks made by participants at the above mentioned focus group meetings and consultative meetings were collected. These formed the basis for writing the first draft of the 3-year Action Plan to implement the strategy. The draft was sent to the meeting participants in a bid to collect final remarks.
- The second draft of the National Action Plan was completed. Subsequent steps include the identification of the performance indicators and the writing up of the final draft of the National Action Plan, in preparation for its implementation.
- c. Future plans
- The next step is to hold a number of meetings with experts who will advise on the formulation of the performance indicators to be used in measuring the implementation process of the 3-year action plan.
- The plan of action is to be adopted and endorsed on a national level, by civil society associations as well as public sector institutions concerned with women issues.



B. The legislative framework

1. FOLLOW UP ON THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO AMEND PROVISIONS IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LEGISLATION THAT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST WOMEN; "THE LONG ROAD AHEAD..." (WAYN BAADNA')

a. An overview of the National campaign

NCLW launched the National campaign on March 8, 2011 on the occasion of International Women's Day. The objective of the campaign is to amend the provisions in existing legislation that carries an economic aspect and that discriminates against women.

To achieve this objective, NCLW surveyed all related legislation and decrees, of which:

- > Labor Law
 - The aims are to:
 - Extending the maternity leave period for women working in the private sector from 49 days to ten weeks, including the access to full salary rights;
 - Including female and male agricultural workers and domestic workers in the labor law provisions (currently, these categories are excluded);
 - Develop a legal clause that penalizes sexual harassment in the work place;
 - NCLW called upon the Ministry of Labor to issue a decree effectively entering into force the Maternity compensation benefits stipulated by the Social Security Law (SSL).

> Social security Law

- The aims are to:
 - Grant employed female spouses that are covered by the SSL the right to unconditionally grant this SSL coverage to their unemployed male spouses. Currently, employed male spouses that are covered by the SSL can unconditionally grant this SSL coverage to their unemployed female spouses. (NCLW prepared a bill that was submitted to the Lebanese parliament on 26/7/2011)
 - Cancel the 10-months waiting period for employed women who join the Social Security Fund and who wish to benefit from maternity benefits.
 - Grant employed wives the right to benefit from a family compensation plan, should their husbands be unemployed. Currently, employed husbands benefit from a family compensation plan if their wives are unemployed. The aim is to achieve equal rights.
 - Grant working women full salary rights during the maternity leave period.

- Grant women covered by the SSL the right to receive child benefits, so they can also take advantage of this compensation right, just like their male counterparts. Currently, fathers who are covered by the SSL receive child benefits only.

> General Code for employees in public institutions - Decree law No 94/5883 Amendment of Article 15:

The objective is to extend the duration of maternity leave for female employees in public institutions to a period of ten weeks.

> Decree Law No 3950 relating to the family compensation and assistance benefits extended to civil servants- Amendment of articles 3, 5, 6 and 7:

The objective is to achieve equality between husband and wife who are both civil servants in terms of the entitlement to family compensation and assistance benefits.

> Civil servants Law - Amendment of Article 38

The objective is to extend maternity leave to a duration of ten weeks for female employees in public institutions, just like female civil servants.

> National Defense Law

Amendment to Paragraph (8) of Article (94): Male and female spouses (of deceased volunteers in the armed forces) shall lose the benefit from a retirement/pension plan (of the deceased volunteer) should they remarry. The objective is to grant this pension benefit in the event of a second marriage (after the death of the first pair).

> Commercial Law and Bankruptcy

The elimination of discrimination against the wife in the event of bankruptcy. The current restrictions that are imposed on the wife in the event of her husband's bankruptcy ought to be lifted, as they prevent her from reclaiming her rights. This is in light of the fact that such restrictions are not imposed on the husband in the event of the wife's bankruptcy.

> Income Tax Law

The below article was amended in 2011:

- Article (31): In the case of a married couple, only the father can claim the family abatement allowance relating to the children. The mother can claim this allowance if she is a widow or if the father is disabled. Hence, the objective is to establish equality between the father and the mother by aligning the conditions for benefiting from this allowance.

- > Inheritance Law
 - The below article was amended in 2011:
 - Article (9): A male heir benefits from an additional exemption from duties in inheritance law. The objective is to grant this exemption right to include the female (spouse) heir.
- b. Achievements during 2012
 - > The allocation of retirement/pension plan benefits to male and female spouses of deceased volunteers in the armed forces (in the case of remarriage)
 - Paragraph (8) of Article (94) of the National Defense Law was amended: male and female spouses of deceased volunteers in the armed forces can now benefit from this pension benefit in the event of a second marriage (after the death of the first pair).
 - The Lebanese Parliament approved this amendment. The new Article (239) was published in the official Gazette (Volume 45 dated 25 October 2012).
 - > Equal entitlement to the family allowance between the husband and his wife
 - The Council of ministers approved parts of the amendment of Decree Law No. 3950 (proposed by NCLW) during a session held on 12 January 2012. Entitlement to these family allowances shall be decided based on the higher rank of the civil servant, whether they be the husband or the wife.
 - > Equal entitlement to a 10-week maternity leave period between female employees in public institutions and female civil servants
 - The Council of ministers approved the amendment of Article 15 of Law No.5883 dated 3-10-1994 during its session held on 10 October 2012. This proposal came at the request of NCLW. Upon the delivery of their child, female employees are entitled to the same rights (maternity leave period with full salary rights) that female civil servants receive.
 - > Entitlement to a 10-week maternity leave period instead of the customary 7 weeks in the private sector and 60 days in the public sector
 - The Council of ministers approved the amendment. The Prime Minister had sent a letter on 25-04-12 to the Parliament Speaker regarding this issue. Moreover the Women and Child Committee of the Lebanese Parliament approved the amendment of the maternity leave period in the labor law and for the civil servants on 5 June 2012. The Administration and Justice Committee of the Lebanese Parliament did the same on 9 August 2012.

- > Request to extend the provisions of Labor Law to domestic workers and to female agricultural workers. Both categories are not included in Labor Law
 - NCLW called upon the Ministry of Labor on 13 September 2012 to amend Article (7) of Labor Law so that both categories of workers (domestic workers and female agricultural workers) are added to Labor Law so that they can benefit from the provisions of the law.
- > Request to draft an article that penalizes sexual harassment
 - NCLW called upon the Ministry of Labor on 13 September 2012 to introduce an article that penalizes sexual harassment in the workplace.
- > Request to the Minister of Labor to issue a decree effectively entering into force the maternity compensation benefits stipulated by the SSL so they can also take advantage of this right
 - NCLW sent a letter to the Minister of Labor dated 13 September 2012 regarding the issuance of this decree.
- > The implementation of an equal opportunity policy in the provisions of the SSL so that employed female spouses that are covered by the

PARTNERS OF NCLW IN THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS IN LEGISLATION THAT DISCRIMINATE ECONOMICALLY AGAINST WOMEN 'WAYN BADNA':

- Lebanese Council of Women
- National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues
- League for Lebanese Women's Rights
- National Coalition for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Working Women League in Lebanon
- Association of the House of women in the South
- Lebanese Democratic Women Gathering
- Women's Committee of the Beirut Bar Association
- Lebanon Family Planning Association
- Association of the Lebanese women in Universities
- Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon
- Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World – LAU
- Commission to encourage the role of women in the National decision making process
- Lebanese League for Women in Business- LLWB

SSL can themselves unconditionally grant this SLL coverage to their unemployed male spouses
The Board of Directors of the Social Security Fund approved the recommendations of NCLW on 14 May 2012. The decision is pending law amendment by the Lebanese Parliament.

- > Networking and cooperation with Lebanese civil society associations and partner institutions
The Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) joined hands with the institutions that are participating in the national campaign to amend the provisions in legislation that discriminate economically against women. LLWB's cooperation efforts with NCLW are centered on the following aspects:
 - Contributing to the advocacy campaign;
 - Particularly as social media networking is concerned, LLWB and NCLW will create a Facebook page entirely dedicated to the promotion of the advocacy campaign.

c. Future plans

In the future, NCLW will continue to follow up its campaign to amend the remaining provisions in social and economic legislation that discriminate against women.

2. PROMOTING AND GAINING SUPPORT IN FAVOR OF THE DRAFT LAW TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

a. Project overview

In 2009, a number of civil society associations formed the 'National Alliance for Legalizing the Protection of Women from Family Violence' and prepared a draft law to protect women and children from the violence they are subjected to within the household and family.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW collaborated with the National Coalition in order to align demands regarding the call to adopt the draft law. Having established contact with the Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, NCLW expressed its wish to attend parliamentary deliberations and discussions regarding the adoption of the draft law. As a result, NCLW attended the meetings organized by the parliamentary committee entrusted with studying this draft law and pushed forward for the draft law prepared by the National Coalition.

Furthermore, NCLW shed more light on major points relating to the importance of adopting this draft law in a letter addressed to the President of the parliamentary committee and dated 17 May 2012. Below are the major points highlighted in the official statement:

- The importance is given to the title of the law: "the law to protect women from family violence" and the necessity of granting women special protection measures, in addition to the protection that is already provided by the Penal Code.
- The emphasis laid on the ability of the law to protect women and their children, through special measures, irrespective of the age of the children of the victim.
- Cancelling Article 26 of the draft law. The article 26 gives precedence to the jurisdiction of personal status codes and spiritual and doctrinal courts over the law. Hence, the recommendation is to cancel this article. Keeping the current article in the draft law runs against the principle of the draft law and defeats the purpose behind it, that is, the protection of battered women. (At the time when the National Coalition submitted the draft law to parliament, the government added article 26 to the draft law).
- The creation and supervision by NCLW of a special fund for the protection of battered women and extending assistance to them.

c. Future plans

Following up the advocacy campaign in order to push forward for a law that protects women from family violence.

3. CAMPAIGN TO AMEND LEBANESE NATIONALITY LAW

a. Project overview

NCLW prepared a study regarding the right of women to pass their nationality on to their children, as is the case for Lebanese men who can pass on their nationality to their wife. Based on the study, NCLW prepared a draft law calling on the need to grant women this right. This draft law was considered after a comprehensive study was carried out regarding the issue by Judge John Azzi. A panel of peer experts also carefully reviewed the above-mentioned study.

Panelists include: Ziad Baroud, Bahij Tabbara, Lina Abou Habib, as well as a number of NCLW members.

Prior to launching the advocacy campaign regarding the adoption of this law by the Lebanese Parliament, NCLW has called for a meeting of peer experts where the draft law can be further debated in preparation for the campaign.



b. Achievements during 2012

- On 13 June 2012, NCLW called on the Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Council of ministers to refer the draft amendment to the Nationality Law to the concerned ministerial committee (the request is registered in the Secretariat of the Council of ministers under number issued 2261/ ms)
- NCLW followed up on the meetings of the special ministerial committee entrusted with the task of amending the Lebanese Nationality Law. The committee issued its rejection of the amendment proposed by NCLW and suggested instead the introduction of a number of life facilitating conditions that the family of the Lebanese woman (her non-Lebanese husband and children) could benefit from. In return, NCLW issued a statement expressing its regret for the failure of the ministerial committee to eliminate the discrimination faced by Lebanese women and noted that the failure to do so was due to demographic and sectarian considerations.

c. Future plans

- NCLW is pursuing its efforts in calling upon Lebanese legislators to recognize the rights of Lebanese women to grant Lebanese nationality to their children as a first step. In a subsequent step, the aim is to call upon a comprehensive elimination of all aspects of discrimination Lebanese women face in this regard.
- NCLW will seek to propose to the Lebanese Parliament the introduction of a law recognizing the right of the Lebanese woman to grant her nationality to her children.

4. CREDIT ACCOUNTS

a. Project Overview

NCLW prepared a study regarding the possible mechanisms to implement in order to consecrate the right of the Lebanese woman to open a bank credit account where the beneficiaries are her children. The study was presented to the Association of Banks in Lebanon which endorsed it and issued a general memorandum to all Lebanese banks, hence communicating publicly its approval of this step.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW surveyed Lebanese banks who have expressed their willingness to accept requests from mothers wishing to open credit accounts for their minor children.

c. Future trends

NCLW will continue to follow with the administrations of the remaining banks to offer this service to Lebanese women.

NCLW will seek to standardize a special contract to be adopted at banks regarding the opening of credit accounts.

BASED ON THE SURVEY ELABORATED BY THE TEAM, NCLW ISSUED A CIRCULAR TO ALL ASSOCIATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, LISTING THE NAMES OF THE BANKS THAT STARTED OFFERING THIS SERVICE. THESE ARE:

- Banque Pharaon et Chiha
- Banque du Liban et d'Outre-Mer
- Banque BEMO National
- Bank of Kuwait
- Ahli Bank
- Banque de L'industrie et du Travail
- Syrian Lebanese Commercial Bank
- Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce
- Credit Libanais

C. Networking with local, regional and international organizations

1. NETWORKING WITH UN AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- > Cooperation between NCLW and UNDP (natural disaster management and risk reduction program) as part of the Hyogo Framework for Action

a. Project overview

The global community has been active in developing mechanisms and programs for natural disaster management and risk reduction after a series of climate changes that took place across the world. In this regard, an action plan for Hyogo 2005-2015 Framework for Action was put in place. It aims to assist countries in institutionalizing national efforts to manage natural disasters and limit their damage.

In this regard, the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon includes among its objectives, the goal of protecting women and girls in situations of emergencies, armed conflicts and wars as well as in cases of natural disasters. NCLW was and



continues to be keen to ensure that a gender based approach is adopted in drafting national plans, studies and documents as well as in organizing programs and projects that fall within the Hyogo Framework for Action.

In this context, the Lebanese government adopted a special program to develop the existing national capacity to manage natural disasters and reduce the damages they cause. This was done in cooperation with UNDP. This program aims to strengthen the capacity of the national institutions concerned with monitoring the advent of natural disasters, preventing their occurrence or limiting their damage. In the course of studying natural disasters, the program took into account women's needs and concerns. Similarly, this approach was adopted in the stages of disaster monitoring, as well as the preparation of relief and assistance programs to those who need it. Additionally, this approach allows women to assume a greater margin of direct responsibility in managing as well as avoiding natural disasters.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW collaborated with UNDP and the Crisis Management Unit at the Presidency of the Council of ministers in order to implement the Hyogo risk reduction program.

c. Future plans

Organizing training sessions to raise awareness regarding disaster risk reduction for:

- Gender Focal Points at ministries and public administrations;
- Key staff in municipal councils.

> Cooperation between NCLW and UNOHCHR to raise awareness of staff at public administrations regarding the concept of gender sensitive approaches and the analytical frameworks for gender issues

a. Project overview

NCLW seeks to activate a 'gender sensitive network' which consists of Gender Focal Points appointed at ministries and public administrations. This is achieved by strengthening the abilities of the network members.



b. Achievements in 2012

In 2012, NCLW organized training sessions on:

- The gender approaches,
- The international conventions aimed at improving the situation of women (of which CEDAW),
- The functioning of national mechanisms that are concerned with women issues, such as NCLW.

c. Future plans

NCLW will continue to cooperate with the UNOHCHR in this regard.

> Cooperation between NCLW and UNFPA in the project to support gender mainstreaming in public policy and programs

a. Project overview

Cooperation between NCLW and UNFPA dates back to the 2006 Israeli aggression on Lebanon, within the framework of a project entitled: "Women Empowerment: Peaceful Action for Security and Stability" (WEPASS). This project was implemented in various regions in Lebanon, including South, Bekaa Valley and North.

NCLW continues to collaborate with UNFPA within the framework of a project entitled "Enhancing NCLW's capacities for promoting gender mainstreaming in sector plans and programmes (National and Periphery)". The "National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021" was updated within the framework of this particular project.

b. Achievements in 2012

Organizing focus group meetings with representatives of civil society associations as well as representatives of public organizations and ministries.

Organizing consultative meetings in various regions across Lebanon with the objective of discussing all the objectives of the National Strategy, in preparation for drafting the National Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy Objectives.



Preparing the first draft of the National Action Plan to implement the Strategy, as well as inviting remarks from all participants of the above-mentioned meetings.

c. Future plans

NCLW will continue to cooperate with the UNFPA with the objective of preparing the final draft of the National Plan to implement the objectives of the strategy.

2. NETWORKING AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL (WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS)

> Cooperation between NCLW and AWO

a. Project overview

"Landmark rulings of the Arab Judiciary"

AWO is active in eliminating discrimination against women in the legal field. Quite important to the rule of law and legal texts are the various legal interpretations, in that the latter have an influence on legislation. Keeping this in mind, AWO proceeded to gather and classify a number of influential judicial interpretations that have had an impact on court proceedings in the concerned countries.

b. Achievements in 2012

In cooperation with AWO, NCLW launched a project entitled: 'Landmark rulings': It comprises a collection of legal interpretations formulated in the Arab world. These judicial rulings have contributed in amending or annulling legal texts or legal procedures that were discriminatory against women.

c. Future plans

NCLW seeks to continuously network with AWO through the organization of activities and trainings.

d. Other activities

NCLW participated in a training course entitled: "Principles of planning, management and evaluation of women-oriented projects". It was organized and held in Cairo in April 2012.



The AWO was established as an intergovernmental entity under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. Its headquarters are in the Arab Republic of Egypt. Its creation was approved on the basis of the "Cairo Declaration" issued by the First Arab Women's Summit held in November 2000. The summit was jointly organized by the National Council for Women in Egypt, the Hariri Foundation in Lebanon and the League of Arab States. The establishment of AWO has entered into force in March 2003. It is active in the field of women empowerment and in strengthening the capacity of Arab Women in all spheres, such as the political, social, economic and legal areas.

> Cooperation between NCLW and the League of Arab States

a. Project overview

The cooperation between NCLW and the League of Arab States is mainly in the field of social affairs as well as the building of the managerial abilities of women. This is achieved through the various studies and trainings that the League of Arab States organizes.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW cooperated in the process of updating the existing database on illiteracy, specifically in the following study entitled: "A developmental approach in combating illiteracy amongst women of the Arab region".

c. Future plans

NCLW will continue to cooperate with the League of Arab States.

> Cooperation between NCLW and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

a. Project overview

In 2012, the Permanent Independent Human Rights Committee affiliated with OIC identified 4 priority areas for its operations:

- Women rights
- Children rights
- Raising awareness regarding Human Rights
- Right to development

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW's cooperation with the Permanent Human Rights Committee

occurs through the exchange of information regarding the achievements of Lebanon in the field of women rights.

c. Future plans

The continuation of cooperation between NCLW and OIC.

3. NETWORKING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL (WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS)

- > Networking in the context of drafting and implementing the National Action Plan of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon
NCLW cooperates with various developmental and women associations, as well as public institutions and administrations for the purpose of compiling the National Action Plan to implement the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021.
- > The launching of a national campaign entitled: 'Supporting women in decision-making positions and peace building process' through networking with civil society associations.

a. Overview of the campaign

Of importance to the NCLW is the encouragement and support of women to reach decision-making positions. In this context and within its planned activities for 2012-2013, NCLW focuses its efforts on the preparation for the parliamentary elections due to be held in June 2013.



b. Achievements in 2012

- On the occasion of International Women's Day which falls on 8 March of each year, NCLW launched on 8 March 2012 its national campaign aiming to support women in decision-making positions and peace-building process.
- NCLW monitored the activities of all associations in order to build its database on the projects being undertaken to support women in decision-making positions and peace-building process.
- A conference was organized on the subject of: 'Women and power in patriarchal systems'.



- NCLW organized the conference in cooperation with Institute of Political Studies at the University of St. Joseph and with the French Institute of the Near East (IFPO). The conference was followed by a round table discussion on the following subject: "A discussion of Women and Power in patriarchal systems- case studies of Lebanon and France". Mrs. Hind El Soufi was the moderator, the guest of honor was the French researcher, Mrs. Christine Delphi, also the following researchers: Jane Makkessi, Ilham Kallab and Marina Calculli presented papers.

The discussion addressed the historical development of the situation of women in patriarchal societies, from past to present. It noted that the exploitation of the work of women can be found in all societies, albeit in different ways. As far as French society is concerned, discrimination took a number of faces; in fact, up until the beginning of the previous century, the work of women fell under the realm of men property. Similarly, the salaries of women were substantially lower than those of men, for the same job.

As far as Arab societies are concerned, the patriarchal system is most apparent in political speeches, whereby political leaders or presidents tend to address their people as being their "children", rather than citizens. When it comes to the legal system, discrimination between men and women is most apparent in a number of fields such as personal status codes that are derived from traditions and religious rulings, the laws to grant nationality, as well as a plethora of other laws that need to be amended (in order to remove their discriminatory clauses).

c. Future plans

- NCLW organized a number of conferences centered on the most appropriate laws that can be adopted in the effort to implement political reform, and to facilitate the access of women to political activism.
- NCLW organized a number of training sessions for women wishing to run for public office.

> Cooperation project with the University of St. Joseph (USJ)

a. Project overview

NCWL signed a memorandum of cooperation with USJ on 27 June 2012.

The memorandum of cooperation includes the organization of sensitization programs as well as training in the following fields:

- Women and health: Designing a module for health workers
- Women and law: The establishment of a legal centre to enhance cooperation between it and the respective partners
- Activities for working women: Organizing training sessions to encourage women to obtain small-grants

b. Achievements in 2012

The launch of a series of training sessions on "women's health: needs and priorities".

NCLW and USJ jointly organized multiple training sessions on women's health topic on October 30, 2012. This activity falls within the framework of implementing the cooperation program agreed upon between both institutions. It also seeks to develop health services to women in Lebanon.

The sessions were also designed to assist workers in the field of health (such as nurses, social workers and certified midwives) at their place of work (health centers as well as dispensaries). Such sessions are also meant to develop and update the knowledge acquired by health workers, especially in women health at various stages of women's lives. The sessions were moderated by experts from USJ and were attended by 74 health workers who were also acting as representatives for primary care health centers and dispensaries located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.



The sessions emphasized the need to raise awareness among women regarding the importance of carrying out routine medical tests. The sessions also enhanced the skills of the participants as far as providing advice on preventive care for health beneficiaries at medical centers and dispensaries. The fields that were covered include: dentistry, women reproductive (especially during pregnancy) and mental health.

The sessions also aimed to raise awareness regarding preventive methods to avoid domestic poisoning, as well as the treatment of osteoporosis and urinary incontinence in women. The sessions stressed on the important role that nurses and social workers play in their primary assessment of women's mental health and offered clues as to observation methods these workers could rely on. The workshops also stressed the importance of maintaining good dental health for pregnant women and for children.

Additionally, NCLW distributed questionnaires to the concerned health centers aiming at assessing the health of women, assessing the needs of health workers at these centers and the help the centers may benefit from. The training sessions facilitated the creation of a communication network between the health centers and the various faculties at USJ; a network that will ensure follow up of the needs of various local communities.

c. Future plans

- A next step is to organize similar sessions at regional academic centers in Tripoli, Sidon and Zahle.
- Another step is to organize additional sensitization programs as well as training in 2 other fields: women and the law as well as training working women.

> Networking with Basil Fuleihan Institute for Economy and Finance in the context of gender mainstreaming

a. Project overview

NCLW seeks to cooperate with experts in gender sensitive issues from many local organizations. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of Gender Focal Points within the framework of its policy of gender mainstreaming at public administrations and organizations.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW collaborated with the Basil Fuleihan Institute for Economy and Finance in organizing training sessions for Gender Focal Points at ministries and public administrations. The training conducted in 2012 focused on the principles of strategic planning at public administrations from a gender perspective.



c. Future plans

Future steps include a continued cooperation between NCLW and its partners at the public administrations in the light of the objectives of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon.

- > Networking with the Alwaleed Bin Talal Humanitarian Foundation and the opening of training centers in the regional areas

a. Project overview

This cooperation between both institutions aims to equip training halls at various regions across Lebanon. These are dedicated to developing women's personal as well as professional capabilities.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW contacted a number of municipalities and federations of municipalities in order to establish at their headquarters specialized centers dedicated to hosting training sessions and activities.

c. Future steps

Future steps include the opening of training centers in various Lebanese regions and organize training programs at these headquarters.



- > Networking with International Organization and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

a. Project overview

Within the framework of coordination activities that NCLW undertakes with various civil society associations, NCLW cooperated with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). NDI in cooperation with Lebanese NGOs who works for women's rights launched its campaign entitled 'Women in Parliament 2013' and aimed at encouraging the participation of women in the 2013 parliamentary elections.



b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW participated in the meetings held by NDI and that were aimed at outlining the principles of this campaign and at ensuring the participation of women in the public and political life of the country, either as candidates, as part of the electorate or as workers in the field of elections. These meetings included the presence of civil society organizations as well as stakeholders concerned with promoting the participation of women in elections.

c. Future plans

Future steps include a continued participation with civil society associations in order to promote women's access to decision-making positions, either through elections or appointment in the higher administration positions.

d. Various activities

- Participation in the "Forward" exhibition

For the third consecutive year, NCLW participated in the 'Forward' Exhibition that was held at the Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Center (BIEL). This initiative aimed at raising awareness regarding NCLW and the causes it defends.

- Meeting with the students of political science at USJ



In an effort to implement the cooperation memorandums signed between NCLW and a number of academic institutions, and in line with NCLW's desire at improving its communication channels with Lebanese youth, NCLW welcomed a student delegation from USJ's Institute of Political Sciences. During this meeting, the students were introduced to NCLW's activities in the fields of eliminating discrimination against women and gender equality.

- Meeting at the Bar Association regarding the introduction of the women quota in parliamentary elections
- NCLW participated in a meeting organized by the Bar Association and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The meeting discussed the pro and cons of adopting a women's quota system in the parliamentary elections.

D. Gender mainstreaming in policy making and programs

- > Creating a gender-perspective network at institutions and public administrations
 - a. Project overview

Throughout 2012, NCLW developed a strategy aimed at mainstreaming gender in public administrations and institutions. This was possible by activating the role of staff and appointees at ministries and public administrations to serve as focal points to cooperate with NCLW in mainstreaming gender in their respective administrations. The strategy includes:

 - Strengthening cooperation with the gender mainstreaming network,
 - Expanding the network and institutionalizing its organization and operations,
 - Developing the capacity of members of the gender mainstreaming network and maximizing their professional potential,



THE CONCEPT OF "GENDER FOCAL POINTS"

The Beijing Platform for Action points to the following remark: "In order to implement the Platform for Action, governments will need to establish effective national devices necessary for the advancement of women at the highest political level, or improve the effectiveness of these devices. The same requirements apply to the need to establish the appropriate procedures and provide the necessary elements (staff within and among ministries). Finally, institutions responsible for expanding the participation of women and the adoption of gender mainstreaming policies and programs should also have resources at their disposal."

- Strengthening the position and role of the members of the gender mainstreaming network within their respective departments,
 - Seeking to sensitize public departments and institutions on the importance of gender mainstreaming within their programs and policies.
 - b. Achievements in 2012
- NCLW sought to expand the network of Gender Focal Points to include additional ministries and departments. As such, NCLW updated and developed its network database. Additionally, it organized a series of workshops regarding the need to enhance the existing knowledge of the network members about the concept and the requirements of gender mainstreaming issues. These workshops were organized in cooperation with the UNOHCHR.
- c. Future plans
- Future steps include holding the workshop series in accordance with the 2013 scheduled programme put in place by NCLW.

E. The economic empowerment of women

- > The WEPASS project: The Women Empowerment Project: Peaceful Action for security and stability
 - a. Project overview

The Women Empowerment Project: Peaceful Action for security and stability- is organized in cooperation with UNFPA. The project started



in 2006 in a number of areas, particularly in the South, the Bekaa Valley and the North of Lebanon. The activities of the project are mainly aimed at the economic empowerment of women, at activating the contribution of women in the economic life of the country, at increasing the family revenue as well as instilling some sort of balance within the household.

NCLW organized a number of activities, of which the provision of small loans to the ladies wishing to start their own business across various regions in Lebanon. In the context of this project, and in cooperation with the Lebanese Association for Development (Al Majmou' al), NCLW gave away incentive prizes to the women who were beneficiaries of small loans. This was aimed at assisting them at staying in business (i.e., in continuing the projects they started).

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW follows up on the progress of women who received the small loans, in its effort to provide them with the needed support to maintain the running of their projects.

c. Future plans

NCLW plans to continue to provide small loans so that the largest possible number of ladies can benefit from this provision. NCLW will continue to organize activities with its partners aimed at supporting women's initiatives in the economic sector.

- > The Najah or "Success" Loan

a. Project overview

With the decision of the Central Bank of Lebanon allowing NCLW to issue small loans through banks, NCLW launched in cooperation with Fransabank a loan entitled "Najah" or "Success" and designed to economically empower women wishing to finance various activities (mainly economic, industrial, agricultural, touristic, service-based

and technical activities). The provisions of this loan are as follows:

1. Small loans (micro credits) ranging from L.P.750000 to L.P.10 Million. The terms of the loan vary between 6 months and 3 years with an interest of 3% regressive. Under this scheme, Fransabank also provides free life insurance.
2. Kafalat loans worth up to L.P.50 Million. The duration of the loan varies between 3 and 7 years, with a grace period between 6 and 12 months. As of the interest, it amounts to 40% of 1 year Treasury bills rate +3%. Under this scheme, potential women beneficiaries receive a discount on life insurance. Lastly, Fransabank bears 1% of yearly Kafalat commissions.

a. Achievements in 2012

NCLW started implementing the project by providing loans to ladies wishing to establish or develop their own economic activities. As of the contributions of these loans to business creation or expansion, these include traditional crafts such as embroidery, as well as small modern professions such as sewing dresses.

b. Future plans

NCLW plans to continue to provide small loans so that the largest possible number of ladies can benefit from this provision.



F. Monitoring the status of women and elaborating related reports

- > Preparing the CEDAW report

a. A glimpse of the report
CEDAW states in Article 18 that all states parties to the Convention

must submit a report every 4 years regarding the legislative, judicial/ legal and administrative measures they adopted in order to enforce the provisions of the convention. The report should also provide an update on the progress made in this regard.

b. Achievements in 2012

NCLW was entrusted by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the responsibility to prepare the official Lebanese report on the implementation of CEDAW. The report is due to be presented to the United Nations in 2014.

Based on the above, NCLW established a special committee responsible for preparing the report. It also requested the concerned ministries to assign a ministerial representative that will participate to the elaboration of the report parts. NCLW also designed a working plan for the special committee and contracted a number of experts in this field. These would be responsible for preparing research papers that would, in turn, be discussed by the committee. The research papers will form the backbone of the report. The experts will also address each aspect of the convention in order to best describe the situation of women in the various fields specified by the Convention. The report will also address the efforts of the public sector as well as those of civil society in implementing the Convention.

c. Future plans

Future plans include having the report ready by the due date in preparation for its discussion with the CEDAW committee at the UN organization.



III. FUTURE WORK ORIENTATIONS FOR 2013

- Finalizing the National Action Plan for the “National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021” in conjunction with public administrations and civil society organizations, as well as beginning its implementation.
- Following up on the national campaign to amend provisions in economic and social legislation that discriminate against women, “The Long Road Ahead...”, ‘Wayn Badna’.
- Following up on advocacy campaigns in favor of amending all legal provisions that discriminate against women.
- Implementing the activities of the Annual Work Plan of the National Campaign in order to promote women’s participation in the 2013 parliamentary elections.
- Raising awareness of the Lebanese legislator on the need to recognize the right of Lebanese women to grant their nationality to their children as a first step.
- Updating the study on the outcomes of the proposed legislation for the development of the situation of women in Lebanon.
- Activating the process of gender mainstreaming in public policy through the institutionalization of the relationship between NCLW and the Gender Focal Points network appointed at public administrations and ministries.
- Activating the various memorandum of cooperation signed with NCLW’s partners.

IV. LIST OF INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS THAT COOPERATE WITH NCLW

AGENCIES THAT COOPERATE WITH NCLW	MECHANISM OF COOPERATION
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIONS	
Basil Fuleihan Institute for Economy and Finance	Organizing training sessions for Gender Focal Points at ministries and public administrations.
Lebanese Parliament	Follow up on the laws being reviewed by parliamentary committees
ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS	
St. Joseph University	A cooperation memorandum specifying common projects (legal, environmental, economic and health).
Institute of Political Sciences (ISP) at St. Joseph University	Joint cooperation with ISP, IFPO and NCLW regarding the National Campaign to enhance political participation of women in Lebanon .
Lebanese American University	A memorandum of cooperation to activate the relation between the libraries of LAW and NCLW

WOMEN ASSOCIATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lebanese Council of Women -National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues - League for Lebanese Women's Rights -National Coalition for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women -Working Women League in Lebanon - Association of the House of women In the South - Lebanese Democratic Women Gathering - Women's Committee of the Beirut Bar Association - Lebanon Family Planning Association - Association of the Lebanese women in Universities - Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World - LAU - Commission to encourage the role of women in the National decision making process -Lebanese League for Women in Business- LLWB 	Partners of NCLW in the national campaign to amend the provisions in legislation that discriminate economically against women "Wayn Badna".
Lebanese Council of Women	A cooperation memorandum to implement projects aimed at improving the situation of women.
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSOCIATIONS	
CRTDA	Cooperation aimed at preparing a draft law recognizing the right of the Lebanese woman to grant Lebanese nationality to her family.
Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation	A memorandum of cooperation aimed at equipping training centers affiliated to NCLW.

UNIONS

Bar Association
A cooperation memorandum to organize projects on women and the law.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE

Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon.
A memorandum of cooperation to promote the participation of women in the economy.
Partner of NCLW in the national campaign to amend the provisions in legislation that discriminate economically against women "Wayn Badna".

BANKS

Fransabank.
A cooperation memorandum to finance small and medium loans in the context of the "Najah" program.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arab Women Organization
Cooperation takes place through projects and training seeing as NCLW is a member of AWO.

UN AGENCIES

United Nations Fund for Population.
GEM Project: Gender mainstreaming project (to include a gender perspective in project and policy).
The National Action Plan to implement the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon.
Participation in the National Plan to combat gender based violence.

V. NCLW MEMBERS

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2. **MS. Randa Assi Berrri**
VICE- PRESIDENT
3. **MS. May Doumani Mikati**
VICE- PRESIDENT
4. **MR. Fady Karam (Lawyer)**
SECRETARY GENERAL
5. **MS. Sossi Boladian (Pharm. D)**
TREASURER
6. **MS. Mirna Azar Najjar (Lawyer)**
HEAD OF LEGISLATIVE-ISSUES COMMITTEE
7. **DR. Leila Azoury Jamhoury (Lawyer)**
HEAD OF CEDAW COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER
8. **MS. Carol Chammas Kareh**
MEMBER OF ECONOMY AND LABOR COMMITTEE
9. **DR. Azza Cherarah Beydoun**
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10. **MS. Wafa Dika Hamze (Former Minister)**
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER
11. **MS. Hayat Erslan**
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- 17. MS. AIDA NAAMAN**
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