



**Partners in Participation
Women's Regional Campaign School**

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PRESS RELEASE

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**HISTORIC FOUR DAY CAMPAIGN SCHOOL FOR WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS
FROM MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA ENDS TODAY**

KUWAIT -- After four intensive days, a groundbreaking gathering in Kuwait of more than 50 women from across the Middle East and North Africa wraps up today with a special closing ceremony.

U.S. Congresswoman **Jane Harman**, senior Democrat on the House Select Committee on Intelligence will deliver the keynote address to participants in the *Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School*. Before receiving their certificates of completion, participants will also hear from **Dr. Rola Dashti**, President of the Kuwait Economic Society, **Shaikha Al-Nusf**, President of the Kuwait Women's Social and Cultural Society, and **Les Campbell**, NDI Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

Over the course of the program, participants shared experiences, learned how to run political campaigns and worked towards building a regional network of women with the skills to succeed in politics over the long term. They also heard from keynote speakers, including **Massouma Al-Mubarak**, Kuwait's Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative Development, **Kim Campbell**, former Prime Minister of Canada, **Samia Moualfi**, Member of Parliament from Algeria, and **Amina Ouchelh**, Member of Parliament from Morocco.

Participants included elected members of parliament, cabinet members, civil society leaders and journalists from **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, West Bank/Gaza and Yemen.**

The campaign school was organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), in cooperation with the Kuwait Economic Society's Women's Committee, the Women's Social and Cultural Society in Kuwait, and the International Republican Institute (IRI).

It was held against the backdrop of upcoming elections throughout the region, including Iraq, Jordan, Algeria, the West Bank and Gaza, and Kuwait, where women won the right to vote earlier this year. While there are more women than ever before running for office and being elected in the region, obstacles remain. Many of the participants who came to Kuwait are themselves candidates in election campaigns.

Participants commented on their experiences:

Samia Moualfi, Algeria

Member of Parliament

“This workshop has pushed me to work harder in my struggle in my country in coordination with women from my own and other parties. We are working together with men, because I believe our work should complement each other.”

Participant, Iraq

“It has been very rewarding to be with women from all across the region. This is something new for us. The trainings have been very intensive and substantive.”

Khawla Al- Ateeqi, Kuwait

Senior Advisor, Arabic Literature, Ministry of Education, women’s activist

“Even though I have attended other trainings, this one has provided me with greater confidence and given me the push I needed to decide to run for office.”

Shamael Al-Shareekh, Kuwait

Member, Women’s Social Cultural Society

“The quality of the sessions has been extremely high, and I have learned a lot not only from the trainers but also from the other participants, many of whom have more experience than I do.”

Heyam Hasan Salem Al-Hweitat, Jordan

Member of Al-Wasat

“ I am new to such programs, but the most important thing I learned is how to organize a campaign and a media strategy, and to speak in public, something I was not comfortable with before.”

Amina Ouchelh, Morocco

Member of Parliament

“These four days have passed very quickly – I feel I have benefited enormously from being able to discuss various perspectives, and find ways to overcome the limits that we are faced with.”

Rahma Mohamed Saleh Sharaby, Yemen

Director of the Women's Committee of the General People's Congress (GPC)

“It has been very helpful to us to hear from other women what strategies they have used in their campaigns that have worked, and those that have not.”

The *Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School* was the fourth in a series of events sponsored by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The first three – in Qatar, Tunisia and Jordan – trained more than 150 women from the Gulf, North Africa and the Middle East to take active roles in political life.