WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT: ENGENDERING
PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE MENA REGION
DECEMBER 1-2, 2011 - GRANADA

IMPACT OF LEGISLATION ON WOMEN’S CAPACITY TO
EVOLVE AS ECONOMIC ACTORS

SERENA ROMANO
OECD-MENA WOMEN’S BUSINESS FORUM
OECD-MENA WOMEN’S BUSINESS FORUM PRESENTATION

• Created by MENA Ministers to strengthen women’s economic empowerment in the Region
• Represents a network of over 200 leaders from the private and public sector, government, international organizations and civil society
• Helps to improve women-led businesses through conferences, capacity-building workshops and policy analysis
• Mainstreams women’s issues into international policy fora
OECD-MENA WOMEN’S BUSINESS FORUM UPDATE

• Inventory of Policies, Institutions and Programmes Supporting Women’s Enterprise

• Setting up national task forces in the 18 MENA economies to complete the Inventory

• In September 2011, the 10th meeting of the WBF was held in Paris on Policies and Services to support Women’s Entrepreneurship Development
BARRIERS TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYEES

- Limited capacity to own and manage wealth (land is a crucial issue)
- Labor laws restrict hours and sectors in which women can work
- Procedures more burdensome (licenses and registrations)
- Resolving conflicts can take longer
- Access to finance is very difficult
- When women considered legal minors (authorization to travel or sign contracts)
HOW CAN LAWS ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

• Gender parity should be promulgated in Constitutions
• Labor laws should find the right balance between the protection of maternity and need for women to participate as independent and autonomous actors of the economy
• Legal reforms where women’s property rights are restricted
• Expansion of access to formal credit (beyond microfinance) combined with training
• Transport and Security (Gender- Sensitive Budgeting)

World Development Report 2012 - Gender equality and development - World Bank
CAN LEGISLATION ALONE ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

• Enforceability of the law

• Greater involvement of women in key positions in government, parliament and administrations

• Women to become interlocutors of government for the improvement of their conditions

• Cultures can evolve with professional women as role models in the media
EMPOWEREMENT OF WOMEN CAN ONLY OCCUR IF GENDER ISSUES BECOME A PRIORITY OF GOVERNMENTS WHO WILL PROMOTE PROGRAMMES TO ADDRESS ALL MARKET FAILURES

EXAMPLES CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE LEY DE IGUALDAD IN SPAIN AND THE GENDER EQUALITY BILL IN SOUTH AFRICA
THANK YOU

SERENA ROMANO

jserena.romano@gmail.com

www.correnerosaroa.org