



Bijeenkomst Gender Meerpartijeninitiatief

28 juni 2016

Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Den Haag

Opening

Present: Ingrid de Caluwé (VVD), Harry van Bommel (SP), Roelof van Laar (PvdA), Joel Voordewind (CU), Stientje Veldhoven (D66)

Ingrid welcomes the key note speakers, Members of Parliament and audience. She briefly introduces the goals of the GMPI and introduces the key note speakers.

Keynote speakers:

Mr Sven Koopmans is the Senior Mediation Expert to the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria. He will briefly present on how women are involved in the peace negotiations.

Ms. Mouna Ghanem, coordinator of the Syrian Women's Forum for Peace and member of the Women's Advisory Board, an initiative initiated by the United Nations Special Envoy De Mistura.

Presentation Mr Sven Koopmans:

Mr Koopmans starts by saying that he today speaks on personal title. He will first explain the framework of the peace negotiations that he strategically helps to shape. Secondly he will discuss the gender aspects of the negotiations and in the latter part of his presentation he will focus on the negotiations itself.

Since January there have been several speaking rounds between government and opposition groups (excl. IS). The most important issue right now is getting the humanitarian assistance in place. Mr Koopmans explains that women should be represented in all forms of transition. We are dealing with several UN Resolutions.

In terms of gender we have seen a long fight for women's rights in Syria (yezidi/Taliban). Women have not been very involved in history. Still, the role of women is limited. However, why should we involve women? Because women are a huge part of society. Women have distinctive social, economic assets. In a lot of conflict areas they are often the main providers to sustain the livelihoods of the family. They are not the ones going to the battlefield. Furthermore, we should not only look at the figures and numbers at the table but look beyond.

Nevertheless, which women should participate in the peace negotiations? And why? There are so many NGO's and gender experts. All gender trainings.

Within the European Union: a code of conduct has been developed (identity papers, special economic programs, gender based violence). Where do we stand? Mr Koopmans wants the women to speak up. He is happy with the Syrian Women Initiative that brings together twelve independent advisors (women).

The Civil Society Board Room offers a platform for a lot of female participation, more than 40% of the representatives are women. Mr Koopmans concludes by saying that it is important to focus on the gender agenda. Even though the fact that the Syria talks are at the moment not the best place, it is good to go beyond the numbers.



Presentation Ms Mouna Ghanem:

Ms Mouna Ghanem is part of the Women advisory board within the Syria peace talks. The establishment of this Board is the result of struggle that has been going on for at least 20 years. Within the Board you see that most important feminist of the past 30 years are represented. We are women with the feminist agenda and we need the critical mass of women for social and democratic change. We bring together women from different political background. Most importantly for this Board is that we work with women that are pro peace, only then we can create peace.

Furthermore, it is important to work with women's rights organisations at the ground. We should empower women to become political active and fight for their rights.

Roelof van Laar: very important to pay attention to this issue and it is sad that it is still a point of discussion whether or not to include women at the negotiation table.

Stientje van Velthoven: what is needed to create the peace gender sensitive? How do you deal with trauma? According to Mouna Ghanem peace processes should be inclusive. We should only overcome revenge to give them a future. We should all support the peace process. Gender sensitive agreement: we have to support feminist. Vice president should be a woman. We need to create a women movement that will be led by feminist.

Why a women advisory board: the influence is limited. The Board gives advice and does not fully participate. Men don't want women at the peace table. The advisory board was the best what we could achieve. We appreciated the step of the advisory board. We need to empower women politically so they can participate fully. Women advisory board it's just one part.