

## Concept Note and Agenda

### **Launch Event of Regional Research Report *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Institutional Actors on Paternity Leave and the Role of Men in Childcare in the Middle East and North Africa Region***

**Date :** 25th of September, 2023

**Venue :** Marriott Hotel, Amman, Jordan

#### **Background and Objectives:**

Existing evidence from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the world shows<sup>1</sup> that men's involvement in childcare is key to achieve healthy and thriving families, communities and societies. Data reveals that engaged and positive fatherhood leads to more empowered women and girls; additionally, it can contribute to children's physical and mental health, better cognitive development and higher educational achievement, and to reduce prevalence of violence against partners and children. At the same time, research demonstrates that men themselves benefit from greater engagement in caregiving by improving their physical and mental health.

Official data documented by UN Women indicates that the gender gap in unpaid care work responsibilities is considerable in the MENA region and in Jordan, where women spend 17.1 more time than men on unpaid care work, while the global average is 3.2 times. Concurrently, men spend 6.5 more time on paid work than women, while the global average of 1.8 times.<sup>2</sup> This evidence supports the fact that this double burden on women is one of the main challenges that hinder women's economic participation, resulting in low women's participation in paid labor force in the MENA region and in Jordan, where this rate didn't surpass 14 percent for years.

Since 2015, and with financial support from Sweden, UN Women has extensively worked in the MENA region in partnership with national governments, private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, labour unions and other UN partners in order to promote the involvement of men and boys in gender equality and in shared unpaid care. One of the key milestones achieved has been the production of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in six MENA countries. These unique studies, which surveyed over 14,000 men and women, have paved the ground in the region to undertake evidence-based legal reforms in favour of paternity leave as well as programmatic interventions to surge

---

<sup>1</sup> Namely: [International Men and Gender Equality Survey \(IMAGES\) conducted in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine](#) (2017); [IMAGES Tunisia](#) (2022); [IMAGES Jordan](#) (2022); and the [State of the World's Fathers reports](#) (2023, 2021 and 2019).

<sup>2</sup> UN Women (2020). COVID-19 and Women's Economic Empowerment: Policy Recommendation for Strengthening Jordan's Recovery.

the participation of men and boys in caregiving and in support of broader gender equality and women’s empowerment.

With the goal of expanding the evidence base and offer new perspectives, UN Women – in partnership with the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD)- has now undertaken a new groundbreaking regional study that collected information from 1,154 decision makers and staff members from governments, private sector and CSOs from five MENA countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. This research data was obtained through an anonymous online survey with 878 respondents, 23 focus group discussions that targeted 187 research participants, and 89 in-depth interviews with key informants and decision-makers.

The new piece of research aims to increase the public understanding on the importance of men’s childcare and paternity leave and to strengthen the evidence-base for governments, parliaments, private sector, labour unions, CSOs, media, academia and other relevant actors across the MENA region. The launch will serve as an opportunity to discuss experiences, lessons learned and best practices that will be presented by key experts and stakeholders from inside and outside the MENA region.

## Agenda

Time	Session	Description
9:00 – 9:40	<b>Opening and Welcome Remarks</b>	<p>Ms. <b>Susanne Mikhail Eldhagen</b>, UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States</p> <p>H.E. <b>Maha Ali</b>, Secretary General, Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)</p> <p>Ms. <b>Camilla Redner</b>, Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden</p>
9:40 – 10:30	<b>Research Methodology, Findings and Recommendations</b>	<p>Presentation by the research team from Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. <b>Nader Said-Foqahaa</b>, Team Leader and Main Research Author, Palestine</li> <li>• Dr. <b>Latifa El Bouhsini</b>, Research Author, Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Hedia Belhaj Youssef</b>, Research Author, Tunisia</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Suzan Barakat</b>, Research Author, Jordan</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Raghida Ghamlouch</b>, Research Author, Lebanon</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Phantina Sholi</b>, Research Author, Palestine</li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:15	<b>Q&amp;A / Discussion</b>	

11:15 – 11:45	Coffee Break	Coffee Break
11:45 – 12:45	<b>Panel Session</b> Q&A / Discussion	<p><b><i>From data to action: Best practices to promote the role of men and boys in child care in the MENA region and beyond, and the way forward</i></b></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Radwa Tarek</b>, Regional Programme Analyst, UN Women’s Regional Office for the Arab States</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lessons learned from evidence-based policy and programmatic interventions in the MENA region-</i> By Mr. <b>Rodrigo Montero Cano</b>, Regional Programme Manager, UN Women’s Regional Office for Arab States</li> <li>• <i>Global best practice: A success story to achieve equal and 100% paid paternity leave by law in Spain –</i> By Dr. <b>Cristina Castellanos Serrano</b>, Professor at National University of Distance Education of Spain (UNED) and member of the Spanish and International Platforms for Equal, Non-Transferable and 100% paid Parental Leave (PPIINA-PLENT)</li> <li>• <i>Working with key stakeholders: Lessons learned for the future of engaging men in childcare in the MENA region -</i> By Dr. <b>Latifa El Bouhsini</b>, AWRAD Team, Professor – College of Education Sciences, Kingdom of Morocco; and Dr. <b>Nader Said-Foqahaa</b>, President of AWRAD and Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies, Palestine</li> </ul>
12:45 – 13:00	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	Mr. <b>Nicolas Burniat</b> , UN Women Representative in Jordan
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	

**Notes:**

- Agenda of workshop is subject to change without prior notice.
- Interpretation in Arabic/English will be available during the workshop.