

Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women

in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine

تعزيز العمل الانتاجي
و العمل اللائق للمرأة
في مصر و الأردن و فلسطين



Concept Note & Agenda

Joint Programme Steering Committee Meeting

Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine

Background

Despite having achieved near equal rates of primary school enrolment and a dramatic drop in illiteracy rates for both women and men, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has struggled to translate this into participation in all aspects of political, social and economic life. The Global Gender Gap Report of 2018 ranks the region last globally in the overall index and fifth, ahead of South Asia, on Economic Participation. The region has the world's lowest female labour force participation rates, estimated at 19.7% in 2018 compared to 73.4 for men (ILOSTAT, 2018). There is a need for further progress in a number of interconnected areas to increase the economic participation of women. These areas include improvements required in the legal regulatory frameworks, enhanced access to skills training, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work (reduce the high cost of child and elderly care, household chores), improved access to decent working conditions, ensure social security coverage (maternity and pension), enhance access to resources (land, property, finances), to mention a few.

Expanding women's economic opportunities is important and such the process is much broader and requires women gaining voice and agency in many other areas of their lives. This should be understood in the context of women and labour rights, social justice and inclusive sustainable development that encompasses social, economic, and environmental dimensions in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Policies and Programmes that seek to increase women's economic empowerment must start by addressing gender-based discrimination that operates at the individual and household level and that disempowers women and entrenches gender inequalities in society.

It is against this background that UN Women and the ILO in close consultation and building on the partnership with national counterparts joined efforts and developed a multi-country programme promoting productive and decent employment opportunities for women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.

The three countries have been selected based on the ongoing work of both agencies, government commitments towards gender equality, and civil society engagement. Strategies include promoting equitable labour market related laws and policies; engaging public, private and community actors with attention to involving men; and reducing the unequal burden of unpaid care work. The programme is designed to work at three levels, macro, meso and micro, reflected in the three outcomes:

- Outcome I: Gender responsive labour laws and related policies in place and effective
- Outcome II: A gender responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women is supported
- Outcome III: Gender stereotypes about women and men's responsibilities concerning unpaid care and household work are challenged

UN Women and ILO bring a distinct comparative advantage to this programme: UN Women can leverage its global leadership for gender equality and women's empowerment, its triple mandate of normative support, UN coordination and operational activities, the strategic relationships with government institutions, civil society organizations, in particular the women's rights movement, as well as private sector through the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The ILO has a unique tripartite structure and the mandate to promote Decent Work for All Women and Men through international labour standards and the promotion of social justice including gender equality in the world of work. The two agencies bring on board extensive experience at the global as well as in the Arab States region.

The proposed joint programme is in line with the government priorities of the three countries as laid out in their strategic policy documents and programmes. In Egypt, the joint programme contributes to the country's Sustainable Development Strategy/Vision 2030, in particular to three out of four pillars of the 2030 National Women's Strategy (NWS), namely (a) women's economic empowerment, (b) women's social empowerment and (c) protection of women, with 'prevailing cultural norms' and 'legislative change' as enablers of the strategy's vision and approach. In Jordan, the programme is in line with the vision of the Jordan National Employment Strategy 2011 – 2020 aiming at improving standards of living for Jordanians through increased employment, wages and benefits and productivity improvements. It is acknowledged that such a vision to materialize requires concerted and coordinated efforts on the demand side (creates jobs), on the supply side (provide skilled labour), and in the institutional framework (provision of the rules, regulations, and incentives within which markets operate). The Jordan 2025 – A National Vision and Strategy aims to achieve balanced growth through a more diversified and competitive economic system and to strengthen the role of women in political, economic and social spheres. In Palestine, the Joint programme contributes to the National Policy Agenda 2017 – 2022, specifically priorities under Pillar 2 and Pillar 3 on Government Reform and Economic Independence respectively as well as to the Labour Sector Strategy 2017 -2022.

The proposed programme will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, namely to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Moreover, women's right to access decent work and equal pay are enshrined in the Agenda 2030 through Goal 8: regarding "full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value" (Target 8.5). Also notable in the Sustainable Development Goals is the aim to, "protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment" (Target 8.8). The joint programme is partially financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and directly contributes

to the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 2016–2020.

The joint programme duration is four years and the implementation started in January 2019. In order to validate the proposal in terms of its relevance and efficiency at its time of initiation, as well as to obtain consensus of national stakeholders on priority areas of action in the three countries an inception phase was conducted. The purpose of the inception phase was also to document the inclusive development of the joint programme, develop country-level results frameworks, monitoring framework and work plans.

Joint Programme Steering Committee

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) is the main decision-making body for the joint programme. The committee is composed of the representatives of the national counterparts, the two UN agencies and the joint programme donor(s). The JSC is the group responsible for making consensus-based recommendations for the programme when guidance is required, including endorsement of annual work plans, budgets and recommendations for programme revisions that are submitted for the final approval of the donor(s). More details on the roles and responsibilities of the JSC, the voting members and observers are enclosed in the draft Terms of Reference governing the work of this committee. UN Women as the lead agency of the joint programme will co-chair the JSC with representatives of the lead government agencies. The JSC is established at the regional level and is expected to meet once per year. The first Steering Committee is generously hosted by the National Council for Women in Egypt.

When: 03 October 2019, from 10.00h to 16.00h

Where: JW Marriott Hotel Cairo, Ring Road-Mirage City, Cairo, Egypt

Who: Members of the Steering Committee

Language: Arabic and English

AGENDA

Chair: H.E. Dr Maya Morsy, President, National Council for Women in Egypt

Co-chair: Mr. Moez Doraid, Regional Director a.i., UN Women Arab States

Facilitator: Ms. Janneke van der Graaff - Kukler, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Arab States

From	To	Topic:	By:
09:30h	10:00h	Registration of participants	
10:00h	10:10h	Welcome remarks by the host	H.E. Dr. Maya Morsy , President, NCW, Egypt
10:10h	10:20h	Welcome remarks by the host	H.E. Mr. Mohamed Saafan Minister of Manpower, Egypt
10:20h	10:30h	Sida's Development Priorities for MENA region	H.E. Mr. Jan Thesleff Ambassador of Sweden to Egypt
10:30h	10:40h	Remarks by the implementing UN Agencies	Mr. Moez Doraid Regional Director a.i., UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States, Co-chair of the JPSC Mr. Frank Hagemann Deputy Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States
10:40h	11:40h	Remarks by guests from national public institutions from Jordan and Palestine	H.E. Dr. Amal Hamad Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestine Mr. Samer Salameh Deputy Minister of Labour, Palestine Dr. Salma Al Nims , Secretary General, NCW, Jordan Mr. Abdalla Al Jbour , Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Labour, Jordan Representative (TBC) Minister of National Economy, Palestine
11:40h	12:15h	<i>Break</i>	
12:15h	12:30h	Role of the JP Steering Committee	Ms. Janneke van der Graaff – Kukler Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States
12:30h	13:00h	Presentation of key findings of the inception phase of the Joint Programme	Mr. Edward Lawton , External consultant/Gender and Employment Expert
13:00h	14:00h	Reflections of Steering Committee Participants on the Joint Programme	Steering Committee Participants - Representatives from national institutions, trade unions, employers' organisations, and civil society

14:00h	14:15h	Recommendation for endorsement of the Joint Programme inception report	Steering Committee Members
14:15h	14:30h	Recap and closing remarks	Ms. Janneke van der Graaff – Kukler Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States
14.30h	16.00h	Lunch & networking	

The joint programme is generously financed and implemented in partnership with:

