

High-Level Roundtable Discussion of Experts:

“Promoting an Agenda for Engaged Fatherhood and Paternity/Parental Leave in the MENA Region”

In Celebration of Father’s Day

Date and Time: Monday 21st June 2021, from 2:00 pm to 3:35 pm Cairo time

Zoom registration link: [Click here](#)

Background and Objectives:

Global evidence shows¹ that males and females sharing caregiving responsibilities in the household 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, while making men and boys more likely to take their share in household work and less likely to perpetrate violence against partners and children. Additionally, research demonstrates that men themselves benefit from greater engagement in caregiving and health: men report improved physical and mental health and state that their role as a father is one of the most important sources of well-being and happiness in their lives.

Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)² conducted in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine and launched in 2017, shows that the majority of men and women in these four countries are in favor of paid paternity leave. Moreover, almost half or more of the men surveyed reported that their work takes time away from being with their children and families and many of them would like to that to change. And while almost two-thirds of women surveyed in the four countries saw their husbands’ role in childrearing as primarily that of a financial provider, only 40 per cent of men agreed with this assessment. This suggests that men desire involvement within their families beyond breadwinning, more so than women seem to acknowledge. Additionally, this groundbreaking research found that approximately 85 per cent of men whose spouses are working reported participating in domestic work.

Currently, UN Women is working with governments and other partners in Tunisia and Jordan to conduct the IMAGES research in both countries and it is also undertaking an innovative research to analyze and understand better the knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and practices on men’s caregiving and paternity/parental leave from state and non-state actors across the MENA region. Further, the “Because I am a man” regional campaign jointly led by UN Women and partners is promoting a higher involvement of men in unpaid care and domestic work within families, a successful initiative that has reached out to 35 million people across the MENA region only in 2020.



¹ State of the World’s Fathers report 2019: <http://stateoftheworldsfathers.org/>

² IMAGES research in the MENA (2017) can be downloaded here: <https://imagesmena.org/>

As part of the commemoration of Father's Day³ in 2021 and under the framework of the "Men and Women for Gender Equality" regional programme - funded by Sweden-, UN Women is organizing this high-level multi-stakeholder event to discuss the importance of men's caregiving and stimulate further legal, policy and organizational changes in favour of men's caregiving and paid paternity/parental leave across the region. This discussion will bring together government and regional intergovernmental representatives, experts and practitioners, CSOs and private sector companies across the MENA region and beyond.

Specific objectives of the event:

- Present global and regional evidence on how men's caregiving and paternity/parental leave benefit individuals, families, communities and societies at-large;
- Share good practices and vision from governments, private sector and CSOs on promoting engaged fatherhood and paternity leave;
- Discuss possible concerns and bottlenecks in countries from the MENA region to promote men's caregiving and paternity/parental leave and the way forward.

Participants/audience:

- Government and CSO representatives and experts from the MENA region
- Representatives from intergovernmental regional bodies (i.e. League of Arab States)
- Representatives from private sector companies in the MENA region
- UN partners (IBC on gender justice)

Technical Services:

- **Audio (Zoom Webinar):** Yes
- **Interpretation:** Yes (English, Arabic, French)

³ Fathers' Day is commemorated in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan on 21st June; while in Morocco and Tunisia is celebrated on 20th June.

Agenda	
14:00 – 14:02	Welcome and logistical notes Display of one-minute video of the “Because I am a man” regional campaign
14:02 - 14:07	Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Susanne Mikhail, UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States (5 min)
Session 1	Panel of Global Experts: Evidence on benefits of men’s caregiving and paternity/parental leave - Moderated by Rodrigo Montero, UN Women’s Regional Office for Arab States
14:07 - 14:17	Presentation from key expert: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How does engaged fatherhood and men’s caregiving benefit families and societies? Why promote paternity/parental leave?” – By Ms. Nikki van der Gaag, Co-author of the State of the World’s Father report (10 min)
14:17 – 14:27	Presentation from key expert: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “From the scratch to the sky: A success story to achieve equal and 100% paid paternity leave by law” – By Ms. Cristina Castellanos, Expert from PLENT – International Platform for Equal, Non-Transferable and 100% paid Parental Leave (10 mins)
14:27 – 14:42	Q&A for Session 1 (15 min.)
14:42 – 14: 45	Display of two-minute video of the “Because I am a man” regional campaign
Session 2	Panel of Experts from MENA region: Good practices from governments, private sector and CSOs to promote men’s caregiving in the MENA region - Moderated by Rasha Abouelazm, UN Women Egypt
14:45 – 15:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Imen Houimel, Minister of Women, Family and Seniors of Tunisia (TBC) (6 mins) • H.E. Mr. Yousef Al Shamali, Minister of Labor of Jordan (TBC) (6 mins) • Mr. Mohammed El Kharmoudi, Director of Administrative and General Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Administration Reform of Morocco (6 mins) • Mr. Mutaz Nabulsi, CEO of Estarta (6 mins) • Mr. Ghassan Kasabreh, Executive Director of NGOs Development Centre (NDC), Palestine (6 mins)
15:15 – 15:30	Q&A for Session 2 (15 min.)
15:30	Closing Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Janneke Kukler, UN Women Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States