

Protecting women and girls from all forms of violence:

- Continue efforts to enact laws to protect women from all forms of violence, including domestic violence and remove all discriminatory provisions against women;
- Take preventive measures to prevent all forms of violence and ensure that all women and girls have access to long-term protection and care, have access to justice and enforce it in a manner that ensures that perpetrators do not go unpunished;
- Promote anti-violence values against women and girls, provide monitoring mechanisms and supporting information.

Governance of gender equality system:

- Support and provide resources for national gender equality mechanisms to play their role;
- Provide an enabling environment for women's rights and civil society organizations and support them with resources and information;
- Produce all statistical indicators that measure progress in gender equality and women's empowerment periodically and at a level of detail sufficient to represent the most vulnerable segments and make these indicators available to all partners;
- Support independent and non-traditional initiatives to promote gender equality and monitor discrimination against women and girls, highlighting success stories and successful models related to empowering women and girls.

Promote data and statistics on gender equality:

- Evaluation of gender equality statistics, particularly of the most marginalized groups, and the incorporation of this assessment into national statistical strategies and the adoption of gender-disaggregated statistics;
- Update the data and statistics system to allow for an assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Conduct national capacity-building in gender equality statistics; employing modern information technologies to produce available gender equality statistics.



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GENERATION EQUALITY

REALIZING
WOMEN'S
RIGHTS FOR AN
EQUAL FUTURE

Steps Taken in the Arab Region for the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action



This brochure aims to provide a preliminary summary of the achievements of the Arab countries in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption, focusing on the intersections of the twelve areas of concern with the sustainable development agenda. The publication reviews progress in six key areas, drawing mainly on national reviews submitted by 20 Arab countries. The publication includes a summary of quantitative analysis of national data and qualitative analysis of achievements and challenges contained in the draft regional report, and aims to contribute to the formulation of appropriate future strategies for the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the national and regional levels. Key outputs include the following:

- **Comprehensive development, common prosperity and decent work**
- **Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**
- **Freedom from violence, stigmatization and stereotypes**
- **Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**
- **Peaceful societies where no one is marginalized**
- **Conservation, protection and repair of the environment**

Comprehensive development, common prosperity and decent work:



The level of human development increased from **0.709 to 0.728 globally**, but the improvement in the Arab region was the lowest globally of only 1.3 percentage points, while the increase in other regions ranged from 1.8 percentage points to 3.6 percentage points between 2012 and 2017;



Average GDP growth averaged 3.37% between 2010 and 2018, yet the proportion of the population below the poverty line was 41%, equivalent to 172 million people, including 54 million below the extreme poverty line;

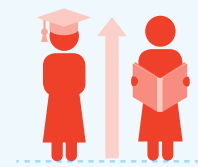


One in five women in the region contributes to the labor market, which is the lowest rate globally compared to one in two women on average worldwide.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services:



Arab countries have seen progress in many health indicators; for example, life expectancy at birth for females rose from 72.2 years in 2013 to 73.4 years in 2017;²



The average years of education for females rose from 4.9 years in 2013 to 6.2 years in 2017, and the illiteracy rate among young women decreased to 16%;



The social protection approach in the region is more of a concept of assistance rather than development.³ International Labour Organization data show that, despite the disparity between countries, Arab countries spend an average of 2.5% of GDP on social protection excluding health.⁴

¹ The conflict situation in Somalia and Yemen has prevented them from submitting their reviews.

² UNDP Human Development Reports for different years.

³ https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/E_ESCWA_SDD_15_TP-3_A.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/social-security/lang--en/index.htm>

Freedom from violence, stigmatization and stereotypes:



Despite cultural barriers to efforts to protect women and girls from violence, Arab States have made significant progress in amending or introducing legal systems and policies that eliminate discrimination against women, protect women and girls from violence and address gender-based social stereotyping;⁵

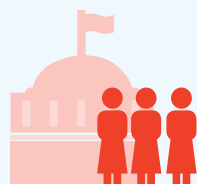


There are clear efforts to support the legislative environment to contribute to the promotion of civil rights and political participation and the enactment of legislation related to the economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls. However, there is an urgent need to enable women, especially marginalized women, to have their rights under the law fully and without delay;

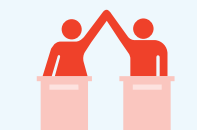


Many countries have developed legislative, policy and programmatic frameworks to support the most marginalized groups and provide protection for women and girls. These initiatives have led to a decline in female genital mutilation/cutting and the marriage of minors, and to support women's right to learn, work, marry and choose their husbands.

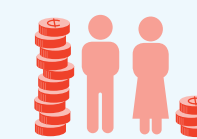
Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions:



The presence of women in the political sphere has increased, with women parliamentarians ranging from 15% to less than 25% in nine Arab countries which has led to several legal reforms in support of women's participation, while their representation in the judiciary varied considerably;



Long-term specialized programs have succeeded in promoting women's participation in various decision-making and leadership positions, both at the level of the public service and the private sector;



Efforts to adopt gender-responsive budgets are still largely limited, and in some countries the focus has been limited to the inclusion of gender equality issues in the overall budget.

⁵ Gender Justice Studies in the Arab States region:

<http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/gender-justice-and-the-law-in-the-arab-region>

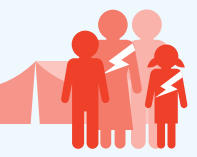
Peaceful societies where no one is marginalized:



There is growing interest in adopting and / or implementing a national plan of action on women, peace and security, or integrating commitments for women, peace and security into key policy, planning and monitoring frameworks at the national level;



Many reports have pointed to the escalation of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as domestic violence, particularly due to armed conflict and the resulting forced migration and displacement;

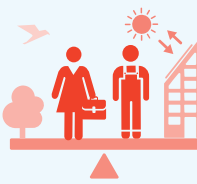


Efforts by Arab states to provide protection from abuses against women and girls in the context of conflict, provide humanitarian relief, and contribute to peace efforts are increasing.

Conservation, protection and repair of the environment:



Arab countries are undertaking a number of measures aimed at improving the ability of societies to cope with the effects of climate change, including policies to combat pollution and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, but the adoption of a gender approach in these efforts remains unclear;



Increased efforts to ensure that women have equal access to decent jobs in the green economy with a view to improving gender balance in employment, including infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

A Summary of the Proposed Recommendations

Localization of international frameworks in domestic policies:

- Localize global commitments to gender equality by integrating them into national development plans, policies, legislation and related frameworks;
- Focus on the most marginalized women and girls, and design appropriate interventions for each group to improve their situation;
- Achieving gender equity in access to decent work and career promotion, with legislation and incentives ensured;
- Supporting women in their dual functional and family roles related to care and unpaid work;
- Developing a comprehensible, coherent and complementary approach focusing on the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Ensure the comprehensiveness of national efforts in implementing social protection:

- Adopting criteria for prioritizing action to target the weakest and most caring social groups such as women with disabilities, poor women, breadwinners, elderly women, women working in the informal sector, domestic workers and workers without social protection umbrella;
- Stay away from one-dimensional taxonomic analysis when conducting socio-economic diagnostic studies and in assessing the effects of multiple discrimination against women and girls;
- Adopt a participatory approach when developing policies and programs with target groups;
- Redistribute available resources to ensure that women from the most vulnerable social segments have a fair share of inclusive and sustainable development that ensures that no one is left behind;
- Ensure minimum protection and basic care for displaced and refugee women and girls and take measures and procedures to ensure a safe and dignified life for them.