

Arab Women and the 2030 Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Local Media

The logo for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is integrated into the title. The number '2030' is rendered in a white, sans-serif font. The zeros are replaced by circular icons containing silhouettes of a man and a woman, symbolizing gender equality and human development. The man's silhouette is on the left, and the woman's silhouette is on the right, both facing right. The background of the silhouettes is a light blue color, matching the overall theme of the document.

Executive Summary



Arab Women
and the

**Strategy for Sustainable
Development in the
Local Media**

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2030
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Introduction and Thanks

Some commentators stressed that considering the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda directly applicable - as it is - at the local level carries a lot of exaggeration. The Global Agenda has tools and means that need theoretical and practical treatment and national and local adaptation to translate into comprehensive development at different levels, without exception and including all people without exception as well. Therefore, the agenda also needs all the stakeholders, so that no one lags behind in the development process.

The keenness to ensure its media treatment at the local level or through local media content is one of the urgent demands two years after the announcement of the start of its implementation. Therefore, the call for its critical understanding, in both content and methodology, has become inevitable.

One may ask how to take advantage of the global agenda after it was adjusted to the national context first to turn afterwards into a local strategy with budgets, resources, legal powers and institutional structures, etc.? How to mobilize efforts to achieve the clear goals of the strategy by direct local beneficiaries and ensure that they are involved in defining priorities, in accordance with the requirements of each region, village or neighborhood, etc ...?

The process of promoting awareness of the Agenda 2030 at the local level will be important among these interrogations, especially in cooperation with journalists in this particular stage. The Agenda was approved by the end of 2015. It was officially launched on January 1, 2016 and will continue until December 31. However, there is now a definite need to familiarize national and local actors with their contents. This reality make the promotion-dissemination activity takes precedence over other types of operational activities that yield significant and direct development results.

For journalists, and the same applies to other actors as well, learning about Agenda 2030, understanding its content and methodology and identify the monitoring and follow-up mechanisms it provides would enable them, in the first place, to exercise some form of popular **control over the**

They can, in the first place, exercise some form of popular control over the appropriateness of national and local plans to the global development goals. This is not a formality - and this is a very small point - indeed, the most important is the commitment to content and substance. Governments have adhered to and agreed to the 2030 Agenda which calls for justice and equality, for respect for the environment and for developing real strategies to provide opportunities for decent work, social protection, gender equality, elimination of regional disparities ... etc ..

Since the government has committed to this, the global agenda is in this sense a monitoring, and pressure tool by local media, local actors and other pressure groups, for the government to actually commit to it.

In this sense, the government's plan, the budget, the ministerial statements and the work of parliament can be evaluated and (encouraged to play its oversight role in the government's commitment to these goals and its legislative role in enacting laws that facilitate the achievement of goals), including the extent to which the Government is committed to the objectives of achieving equitable local development, through the use of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

In this context, what can the media, especially local ones, do?

It is clear that female and male journalists are opinion makers and local leaders who can play an important role because of the features that distinguish them from other leaders.

Indeed, female and male journalists:

- Have communication channels that enable them to obtain information more than others, and they are supposed to use this in the service of local development. If he knows that the central government intends to implement a project that has a beneficial or harmful effect on the village or neighborhood concerned, such information must be communicated to the concerned parties.
- Have has the skill of search, investigation and checking the veracity of certain information or issues. Therefore, he can help local parties prepare their file in a scientific and thoughtful manner and to show them stakeholders and communication channels to lobby for their demand.
- They communicate with the public and with local or central officials, and thus can play a crucial role in monitoring the views of people and their satisfaction with a particular project, which contributes to correcting the path. They can also monitor the reactions and attitudes of officials, in a way that helps to improve local planning and implementation.
- If the female/male journalists look at the concept of development and the content of the 2030 Agenda and national strategies and subsequent translation into local plans, they can use the media where they work through conducting investigations, reports, interviews and TV or radio programs or using the internet and electronic media to follow up local projects. They can also highlight the successful ones so as to help others repeat the experience and criticize the gaps. Indeed, we rarely hear of successful experiences in local development unless the foreign press or the international and foreign reports are interested in it. Our country is perhaps full of more beautiful experiences closer to our reality.
- The female/male journalists who have knowledge of the 2030 Agenda and the human rights system can contribute to the creation of knowledge and general culture that contributes to building a culture of development and promoting the values of human rights, peace and solidarity. And this is a fundamental dimension of development itself. In addition, cultural and knowledge change is an essential component and a necessary condition for transforming our world as the Agenda calls for.

- The Global Plan could serve as a starting point for the discussion of various media themes based on using simple terms and concepts that reach people and be deeply insightful of their concerns aimed at:
 - ✓ **First**, improving people's lives: i.e. achieving justice and equality among people, eradicating poverty and empowering people - particularly the poor and residents of poor and remote areas - to gain access to education, health care, social assistance, decent housing and water, electricity, etc.
 - ✓ **Second**, changing priorities in the economy so that the goal would be to generate employment for all, especially young people and women, reduce unemployment, make jobs permanent... etc. And that the goal of business people would not to get quick profit or corruption and seize opportunities without moral or social responsibility.
 - ✓ **Third**, it means that we must preserve natural resources, so we do not destroy the environment and we do not waste water and do not cut trees, so as to preserving the world's wealth for future generations.
 - ✓ **Fourth**, it means justice and equal rights among people, between women and men, between poor and rich, between residents in the coast and residents in interior regions, between the white and the black. Everyone enjoys it with equal rights in accordance with the principles of truth, justice and the supremacy of law. No one shall exercise power in an authoritarian way Power is rather transferred through elections and peacefully in the date set by the constitution.

These general trends emerged through this report, in which the bright spots will be highlighted in its results. It is hoped that this research work will be a starting point in order to deepen reflection about the problems which were addressed and benefit from the practical and field treatment of all these concerns.

It is a report that was made possible thanks to Arab experts and with the support of AGFUND to whom we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation, and helped lay down the foundations to build a network of young researchers who have become sufficiently experienced to highlight the concerns of the development strategy in all its dimensions. The report also had an added value in its research component in a way that allows the submission of recommendations and proposals to decision makers and actors at the local level as well as to editors in the local media.

This would improve the media performance at the professional level, as well as in terms of community responsibility for female/male journalists, in general, which profession occupies a distinct position in its local dimension. We would like to note that in line with its tradition of valuing research results and field reports conducted by local experts, CAWTAR will consider the possibility of using national monitoring reports which were adopted in preparing this report to make recommendations and bring about new and deeper research paths.

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This is will be done while taking into consideration the specificities of the media landscape and the developmental reality in the sample countries, with the possibility of expanding the survey circle in this area. In this context, we would like to thank media institutions, female and male journalists and community activists in all sample countries for their cooperation and assistance.

Our thanks also go to members of the CAWTAR Arab Network for Gender and Development (ANGED) who kindly accepted to read the report and provided their feedback. Indeed, they believed in this project and accepted that their positions and opinions should be put to the test so that the strengths and weaknesses in the nascent media treatment of sustainable development goals may be explored.

Last but not least, we do not claim that the study has not weaknesses. It is the first study that focused attention on the 2030 Development Agenda and local media and women at the same time. This complex research work is actually a work that lays the bases of other more profound and more representative studies that would pave the way for raising other emerging problems and tackle sub-themes fitting into the same substantive issues raised in the report.

Dr. Sukeina Bouraoui

Executive Director of CAWTAR

Arab Women Development Reports

The Arab Women Development Reports are a series of periodic reports aimed at reducing the knowledge gap in research and studies related to women, in accordance with the gender approach in the Arab region. Each of these reports is based on a methodology and tools agreed upon by a group of female/male experts who belong to the CAWTAR Arab Network for Gender and Development. Each Arab Women Development Report represents the starting point for an integrated program including training and advocacy. The report Arab Women and Development Strategy 2030 report in local media (2017) is the sixth issue in the series after 1. Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women (2001) 2. Arab Adolescent Girl: Reality and Prospects (2003) 3. Arab Women and the Media: An Analytical Study of Research published between 1995 and 2005 (2006) 4. Arab Women and Participation in Decision Making (2010) and 5. Arab Women and Legislation (2015).



Arab Women and the Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Local Media

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Summary of the Report

Bases and Objectives

The report «Arab Women and the 2030 Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Local Media» raises new problems and questions imposed by the challenges experienced by the Arab world at a different stage of its history at the political, economic, cultural and social levels, in which the becoming of the media scene and the position of women have deep and direct impact.

The controversy or debate in place only concerns the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and we have not noticed during the preparation of the report or its relevant bibliography an interest in women within it. They were addressed only in relation to the fifth objective of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. More, we have not even seen to the date the report was drafted a link between the media attention and the strategy in general and between the local media interest and the strategy in particular, even if the terms differed and the areas of interest varied, and this is what we sought to monitor.

The report focused, in part, on the position and presence of women in the Arab local media, through case analysis and study in six Arab countries: Tunisia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine. In a cross-cutting manner, the report addressed, on the other hand, the dimensions and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The latter's preamble, entitled «Transforming Our World,» said that it is a transformational agenda aimed at achieving development where no one is excluded and it forms the framework of global consensus in order to ensure the participation of all, men and women, in development and to benefit from its yield. While the knowledge and cultural dimension has not been assigned a distinct place within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it recognized the importance of the media and communication in general in the pursuit of goals of the Global Strategy.

This report is part of CAWTAR's ongoing efforts since 2005 to underscore the importance of the media and knowledge field in the process of implementing development strategies in the Arab region according to the gender approach.

This report, which relies on gender-based analysis, is a new essential block to be added to the achievements of the strategy developed by the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), with support from Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND).

It enabled the Center to build partnerships in the field, the most important of which was probably with the Arab NGO Network for Development and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

This is in order to deepen the awareness of development actors in the Arab region of the importance of the media in general and local media and media professionals, especially in the process of supporting development efforts, as well as understanding the development reality according to the gender approach and its follow-up and evaluation.

The research team chose to embark on a new research experience on new emerging issues and questions in the making on which there were no assisting theoretical reference and literature.

In this context, the research team faced many methodological difficulties due to the complexities posed by the problem of research along with absence of a clear and concise understanding of the basic elements on which the theoretical framework of the study rests.

We mean In this regard, concepts relating to local affairs and local development, as well as the overlapping traditional and innovative communication concepts in light of the technological revolution witnessed in the field of information and communication, which continues to affect the Arab region and the world at large.

Local media is defined as «media that serves a limited and geographically, economically and socially consistent society, one that has unique environmental, economic and cultural characteristics provided it is limited by geographical borders to be covered by local broadcasting (1).

Regardless of the means or channel that is being adopted in the process of communication, local media is closely linked to the needs of people and connected to the culture of local environment and its realistic conditions. It is a reflection of the cultural and moral heritage in this environment and depends entirely on all rights holders.

The current report presents a comparative analytical study that sought to deepen the research into the extent the local and central audiovisual media containing local production in the Arab world interact with the presence of women and their concerns at the local level.

The study falls within the context of the political and social transformations in recent years and the ensuing general trend supported by the choices of decentralization, the establishment of the local governance and sustainable development processes and the increasing interest in local affairs.

The report also discusses the concepts of local affairs, local development and sustainable development in relation to local media, which although it is still in the early stages, it is expected to play an important role in developing the media landscape in general and the areas of treatment of Local affairs and women's presence and participation in the discussion of local public affairs in the Arab region.

Accordingly, the report fits into an integrated project process that will pave the way for subsequent studies aimed at addressing the set of challenges posed by the development of the local media landscape as well as the steps that will be taken in the framework of the Global Strategy for Sustainable Development that is still being achieved until 2030 and the position of women therein.

The report also sought to achieve a number of objectives for other aspects:

- **Knowledge and research:** contributing to enriching the Arab library through research on emerging problems, especially since the Arab Library lacks Arab scientific studies that go beyond the characterization of the emergence of traditional local media, to raise new problems in relation to the new courses that typify the media landscape at the Arab and global level, in general. 1. Hassan Abdullah Abu Hamad (2011) *The Challenges of Local Media (Press-Radio-TV) during the Transition Period, Heliopolis* <http://www.masress.com/misrelgdida/80734>
- **Methodological aspect:** providing a new experience in monitoring the contents of audio-visual media, from a gender perspective that takes into account the diversity of frameworks and the different forms and models in use (news bulletins, debates/ talk shows).
- **Practical aspect:** identifying the reality of the local media landscape in the Arab region and its developments and changes at all levels, as well as exploring research areas that concern at this stage of the research project the local audiovisual media field.

The report raises a number of basic and sub-questions:

- How and to what extent is the local media concerned with the specific issues of women at the national and local level?
- What is the role of the local media in defining women's issues at the local level and the specificity of their concerns?
- To what extent are journalists interested in local affairs in general and women's issues in particular?
- To what extent are journalists and decision-makers in the local media are aware of the contents of the Sustainable Development Goals and the recommendations adopted to improve the situation of women in general and the social, political and economic environment of the society as a whole?
- Has local media confined itself to addressing local issues?
- To what extent do local media interact with issues in relation to women's issues of national dimension?
- To what extent are local women leaders present in the media treatment?

Methodology

The report adopted the «quantitative and qualitative analysis» of a sample of media content through a process of monitoring a sample of audiovisual news bulletins and talk shows in the local media or of central media institutions that took interest in local affairs.

The research code was selected with a directive from a group of local experts in the sample countries by adopting the standard of audience coverage, according to the experts' assessment in countries that lack specialized institutions in this area. The research team chose to monitor the contents of local audiovisual media which are among the traditional media that maintained their position in the Arab media scene despite the changes that took place in recent years and the transformations brought about by the communication and information revolution in the production of media content and the way it is disseminated and audience's interaction with it.

The report included in its first section an overall introduction that contributed to framing the subject and identifying the specific concepts in local media and sustainable development. The second section focused on the introduction of local media and changes underwent in recent years, and the third section dealt with the local media topics and the place of women in the sustainable development process in the Arab region. The last part of the report contained the most important conclusions and a set of recommendations.

Summary of the main findings of the report

The report resulted in a number of quantitative and qualitative results that helped present a well-rounded picture of the media treatment of issues and concerns of the local media in general, along with the sustainable development processes, local affairs and issues related to women and their concern at the local level. The conclusion of these results is as follows:

1. Local Arab media, a scene in the making

This section includes a description of the main characteristics of the local media in the Arab region and the transformations that have been witnessed since the sixties of the last century. It is a compendium of the most important literature on the emergence of the local media in the Arab region and indicators affecting it. It also addressed the developments brought about by the revolution of information and communication technology in the Arab media landscape in general, and the resulting new information and communication phenomena in which traditional media were intertwined with the new media.

This section also gathered different experiences and forms of local media in the Arab region. These revealed an increasing presence of community media in Tunisia, News You Can Use in Egypt, cultural media in Lebanon, the official development media In Sudan, political media in Palestine, and the predominance of central media in Saudi Arabia

Despite the lack of information in this area and the lack of references and data, even in the official and professional institutions, we noted, when analyzing the details of the local Arab media scene the importance of the stock and the richness of the Arab experience in this field. Consequently, there is need to seek to dedicate studies to the local media in all Arab countries so that the researchers can see the specifics of this space that is experiencing rapid development and radical transformations that will have a direct impact in shaping elements that influence the Arab public opinion in general.

2. Sustainable Development and Local communities, comprehensive media treatment and disregard of local reality

Through the qualitative analysis of the results of focus groups' discussions, the report showed a lack of conceptual clarity in relation to the sustainable development goals among media professionals. Journalists and editors continued to adopt a traditional view in dealing with local development by reducing the media profession to explaining and reporting on the achievements of the state in the development field, without delving into the specific Sustainable Development Goals or concerns raised at the local level.

The results of the report also revealed the lack of a media treatment that takes into account specific local concerns, which leads us to say that the editing rooms rely in this on a comprehensive dimension with the continued focus on central political affairs. There has also been no particular attention to the sustainable development goals that address the daily concerns of citizens or those that would support a participatory approach to local governance, as well as an almost exclusion of women.

In the case of their involvement, we find that they themselves tap into the traditional view and do not give a critical reading of these orientations or attempt to modify them but continued to limit their concerns to traditional areas, with relative attention to the civil work fields. The qualitative analysis of the contents of the dialogues and focused dialogue groups showed that they mostly produced a speech different from the monitoring results.

The stated convictions of the journalists and editors on the one hand and the daily professional practice on the other hand upheld the traditional view and did not seek diligence and taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the transformations in the public affairs management platforms to develop the performance of the media that kept replicating old and traditional models.

3. Women in local media, bright spots and wasted opportunities

Although there have been numerous studies on women and media, these have rarely addressed the reality of women at the local level. Moreover, the research approach mostly focused on monitoring the image of women in the media and the extent of the presence of specific groups of women and actors in society with a focus on success stories and on the written press. The report sought to shed light on the specificity of another category of submerged women, including rural women, marginalized women and women ordinary citizens, while taking into account their role as producers, source and subject in the local media.

The study has made it possible to highlight a difference in the position of women in the local media compared with central media institutions. Indeed, women have appeared as correspondents with a distinct presence in field work. Hence, the presence of women is no reduced to a mere television picture, but has become an active presence on television screens and on the radio as producers of information.

In contrast, women have almost completely disappeared as analysts and commentators. Men have monopolized these media and journalist forms which are classified as media models for «prestigious» roles showing the power of decision within the media institution and the editorial room and impacting the courses of influencing the public opinion in terms of content, image and roles.

In view of the changes that took place in the ways the public interacted with the media content, it can be also noted that women journalists who are often young, do not prefer these forms of the traditional press, which was associated with the 1960s and actually has no great effect on the public opinion. Women journalists tend to prefer field work, which is a form of news journalism characterized by flash and short news and information that carry movement and image and explore and convey the reality on the ground in simple words and scenes, far from the theoretical discourse or the opinion one.

The results of the report also showed that issues related to women as subject did not have an important space in the local media content. They continued to be absent as source and did not appear on an equal stand with men. The report also showed the continuous stereotypical treatment of women's concerns through adopting them as primary source in news about women. The presence of women was confined to traditional subjects such as health, education and house-making and all issues of concern to women's reproductive role.

The results of the report highlighted that the marginalization of women's position in the local media reflected, indeed, the opportunities missed in the participatory management of local affairs that assume building on the potential of society.

In parallel, the report revealed the existence of bright spots, albeit limited, for women's successes in local radio, including in the political sphere that can be build upon to develop their presence in the local media in general, as well as in terms of access and contribution to the management of local affairs, generally.

4. Women and new media treatment of Sustainable Development Goals

That section of the report was the most complex. It indeed raises questions about women's relationship with sustainable development areas at more than one level. Monitoring included radio and television news bulletins. These are areas that differ considerably in form and content from radio / television talk shows in terms of objectives and methods of treatment. Such options, despite methodological difficulties, have enabled producing a comprehensive summary and giving an integrated picture on the local Arab media scene in its new form.

It also made it possible to produce a comprehensive and accurate view of the specificities of the media landscape, making study the starting point for more detailed innovative studies. One of the findings was an identification of the new opportunities provided for women to bring an additional contribution in the management of local affairs and the activation of development strategies.

The innovative approach of women can be identified through the ways they deal with the concerns of their environment tackle issues different from traditional ones. Indeed, women were marked at the local level by their tendency to initiate innovative subjects, including natural resources management and environment protection, which are an emerging priority and new issues that have become matters of concern to the international public opinion.

This section of the report also enabled to sketch the general orientations of the media discourse through the value analysis of the women's media discourse and the discourse on women. The values of women's media discourse, the discourse on women and women's discourse on women. This monitoring showed that the discourse was in its entirety neutral and supportive of women in general.

The main orientations of the local media discourse in dealing with the issues of sustainable development and women's concerns also carried a positive view. Stakeholders, men and women, were open to issues of concern to women in most of the sample countries. This was especially evident when the issue of political and economic empowerment was raised.

Indeed, the discourse was positive and supportive, especially among male characters in the story. This conclusion is considered as an indicators and bright spots that can be built upon to support the presence of women and their contribution to the public debate at the local level.

Introduction of research team

This report was carried out in a participatory manner with the contribution of a team of young researchers and experts among specialists in media affairs and coordinated by the lead researcher, journalist and media expert Mouna Mtibaa from Tunisia who had ensured the communication between experts and monitored the preparation of national reports via Skype and also via the Facebook page of the report. She also formulated with the CAWTAR team, composed of report coordinator Itidel Mejbri, Director of the Media Training and Lubna Al-Najar, editor-in-chief of Cawtaryat, the quantitative and qualitative analytical tools, including the monitoring network, the in-depth dialogue guide and the mini-search sessions.

The lead researcher drafted a regional report, which was presented to a group of experts among members of the CAWTAR Arab Network for Gender and Development “ANGED” to express opinion and make observations that were prepared by the drafting group. Mrs. Butheina Qribaa (Tunisia) cross-checked and reviewed the report and Dr. Mohamed Chelbi (Tunisia) proceeded to the final review of the report in terms of research value and use of terms and extraction of most prominent messages emerging from the findings and output.

The Panel of Experts composed of Amal Babakir (Sudan), Hayet Al Hariri (Lebanon), Amal Awaida (Egypt) and Mohamed Faisal Al-Shaibi prepared background papers on the local media scene in each of their countries, besides preparing a report on the position of women in it. The experts also conducted in-depth dialogues with female/male journalists and focused dialogue sessions with local women leaders. They also recorded news bulletins and talk shows and sent them daily to the CAWTAR center.

Expert Maram Taja (Saudi Arabia) also contributed in conducting a preliminary research on the media scene in Saudi Arabia. Technical monitoring of the process of compiling the blog was made by Yasmine Chaouch and Souheir Shaabani while Abdullatif Hamza provided assistance in the preparation of the initial research and the bibliographic research.

This is a small team that have been specially assigned to monitor the component of the project “Enhancing the Presence of Women in the Media at the Local Level” which received support from the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND) and contained several outputs, including this report. As for the monitoring process, monitors, Amal Othimini has encoded the media material, established a statistical data base and produced statistical table along with the preparation of the country monitoring reports, with contribution from monitor Sawsen Al Nouri (Tunisia).

This momentum would not have been possible without the cooperation of the project partner, the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND), which has believed in the need to provide an opportunity for a group of young researchers to conduct regional monitoring and regional report, though it was initially agreed to carry out only a regional report on the subject.

**Arab Women and the 2030 Strategy for
Sustainable Development in the Local Media**

Survey and analysis of situation in six Arab countries:
Tunisia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine

With the progress of reflection on the last output, CAWTAR sought to carry out the work in its current form and this required rescheduling the budget and changing its terms which was accepted by AGFUND to give young researchers the chance to meet and share knowledge with their predecessors members of ANGED:

- Dr. Nahawand El Kadri and Adeeb Nehmeh (Lebanon)
- Dr. Aisha Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)
- Prof. Abdullatif Al-Dwaihi (Saudi Arabia)
- Dr. Rasha Allam (Egypt)
- Dr. Widad Al-Barghouti (Palestine)
- Dr. Mohamed Chelbi (Tunisia)
- Dr. Irada Al-Jubouri (Iraq)

Overall Conclusion

Key conclusions and recommendations

The manifestations that were drawn from the analysis of the quality of the media treatment of the reality of women at the local level and the Sustainable Development goals certainly suggest that these aspects need to be given more attention. The report made it possible to monitor the emergence of early signs of the beginning of new trends in the local Arab media scene. It also showed the existence of new positive indicators that can be used to develop media performance and improve it to make it more professional and credible. The consolidation of the concepts of equality and balance in the selection of sources and the identification of the thematic focus are among the criteria that determine the quality of the media product and emphasize the societal role of female/male media professionals and the importance of their contribution to the adjustment of the debate on public affairs.

The report raised a number of preliminary questions and hypotheses. Fieldwork and monitoring led to a number of conclusions that were grouped into main themes that were accompanied by recommendations.

1. Sustainable development and local development in local media

- Media content in the local media has been overshadowed by topics related to political affairs linked to central government policies. There was no different and distinctive treatment of the relationship of these topics with or their impact at the local level. They (topics) also have no connection with sustainable development and local affairs and are therefore far from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The report highlighted the lack of clarity about the concepts of sustainable development goals among female/male journalists who considered this to be the responsibility of the State. They accordingly adopted a traditional approach in dealing with these issues by reducing the media profession to explaining and reporting on the achievements of the state in the development field, without delving into the specific Sustainable Development Goals or concerns raised at the local level. Moreover, the treatment of the sustainable development goals by female/male journalists was selective. It was summed up overall in Goal number 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” and Goal number 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.”

- The statements and opinions gathered about the perceptions that female/male journalists have of Sustainable development showed the existence of three groups:
 - 1. The skeptic on the feasibility of the concept of sustainable development and the plans and programs accompanying it,
 2. Institutional female/ male journalist who deals with the subject as one of the options of the state and works to secure coverage aimed at defining the achievements of the state in this area and mobilize public support for them.
 3. The local female/male activist who considers that the media has a broader role than coverage and goes beyond it to community tasks,
- The media treatment of sustainable development goals adopted a holistic approach. Indeed, there is no difference between central and local media institutions in ways of addressing the areas of sustainable development and its goals.
- Emergence of similar and non-diversified treatment of media content about sustainable development with female/male journalists merely covering these issues through attending seminars and forums organized by international and regional organizations on this subject. The communication material, including press releases and reports for broadcasting and direct use, provided by these organizations impacted negatively the quality of the media content because of their extensive and direct use by female/male journalists most of the time without processing. These communication practices have reduced the margin of initiative and innovation of journalists and media professionals during the media coverage of the development fields and its challenges and goals.
- Lack of interest on the part of editors in the specificity of local affairs as an important element likely to draw the attention of the listeners or viewers in the headlines of news and talk shows, since they consider local affairs secondary topics and concerns. Editorial rooms also prefer, most often, to present media material as issues of national or international dimension in order to give it influence and value. Editors do not see the function of the local media as mainly addressing a local audience.
- Data density, their easy accessibility and the existence of multiple sources on websites, especially social media have led to a kind of laziness among female/male media professionals and encouraged «Desktop Journalism” to the detriment of journalists’ presence on the ground. These findings from dialogues and monitoring results mainly highlight the transformations experienced by the journalistic practice, especially in its side related to the collection of information and the shortcomings they brought about that have made the journalistic work at times inconsistent with the goals it seeks to achieve. They also showed the poor knowledge

of media professionals of the goals and objectives of 2030 Strategy. To address this, a plan of action needs to be established by the organizations concerned with disseminating the sustainable development goals by ensuring that:

- 1. 1. Training workshops will include field visits to link the stated goals in the strategy with the living reality to make it easier for the media to grasp these goals in concrete terms,
 2. 2. Training workshops are an opportunity to encourage media professionals to diversify the forms of journalism; therefore training workshops have to include sessions of news production about the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals.
 3. 3. Pushing regional organizations concerned with the sustainable development goals to streamline the pace of organizing seminars, meetings and lectures so that there will be no theoretical content overload that makes media professionals reluctant to address these issues or deal with them in a theoretical and ambiguous manner and to produce press releases different from their traditional form

2. Women in the local media

- Issues related to women as subject did not have an important space in the local media content. Women's issues as a theme did not have an important space in local media content. They continued to be absent as source and did not appear on an equal stand with men. The report also showed the continuous stereotypical treatment of women's concerns through adopting them as primary source in news about women. The presence of women was confined to subjects relating to housewives and family affairs and traditional subjects such as health, education.
- The presence of women as actors in the radio space was more varied in the areas they covered with equal contribution as sources like men. This provided them the opportunity to develop their performance and contribute to discussions on local public affairs, including in the political field. This also signals the beginning of their appearance as actors in television after their ability to interact with the requirements and pressure of direct presence was crystallized.
- Low appearance of women in television among the characters in the story in exchange for a direct and relatively distinguished presence in radio content, whether news or talks shows. This refers to the ability of women to overcome the obstacles that may be encountered when addressing to public opinion and allow them to study and give them the necessary training and expertise that will help them access the television space, which demands and pressures are greater and appear as actors with content and views not just as a television picture.

- Reluctance of some women journalists to work or pressure to defend the rights of women, including about the issue of violence, considering that discourses, campaigns and the focus on collecting data on cases of violence cannot bring about radical solutions and that efforts must focus on building women's own capacity, improve their skills and personality and to seek access to women's remote agglomerations.
- Concerns related to women in the field of local development as seen by female/male media professionals are public concerns that absolutely affect women without being specific neither to sustainable development nor to their relationship to local development.
- Women continue to be marginalized as actors in media content, both in their position as program producers or journalists in the local media editing rooms. Their position did not differ from the one depicted in the previous studies on women and media in the major media institutions.
- The tendency to portray women as sex objects continued in the media, especially the visual media. The overwhelming picture in Arab screens was that young women journalists, while this was different for men.
- The appearance of men among the characters in the story to address topics with a social dimension that traditionally were restricted to women. The appearance of women as reporters and field journalists with a near absence in the field of analysis and comment in particular in television content that remains exclusive to men. Field work, except correspondence that is done for the account of international media institutions, were exclusive to beginners in journalism.

As for commentary and analysis, they were carried out exclusively by old media professionals and editors due to their social and political value and because they reflect the editorial line of the institution and contributes to guiding the public opinion. These results showed the emergence of a new concept of women's rights in society as a whole and among young women in particular, one that is different from women's thinking. It consisted in a lack of advocacy for women's issues by women themselves on the grounds of adherence to professional and impartial standards.

The results showed, on the other hand, that existence of opportunities and bright spots that can be valued of a better position of women within the media landscape. These recommendations concern female/male media professionals as well as women activists in the political and community level locally. It is necessary in this context to take into consideration the following recommendations:

Regarding female media professionals:

- Organizing dialogues and meetings to discuss general trends in the field of human rights in general and women's rights, in particular in the presence of women activists and leaders at the local level,
- Intensifying the organization of competitions in the field of media and not merely holding annual competitions while diversifying topics,
- Preparing a plan to integrate gender and women's rights into school curricula and courses of press colleges and institutes,
- Including the concept of parity in the selection of sources in all competitions and training workshops on the grounds that it is among the professional standards and quality standards in the media product,
- Disseminating life stories of women's rights defenders and awarding prizes that perpetuate their names.

Regarding leadership at the local level:

- Organizing training courses on the mechanisms of dealing with the media while involving female media professionals among them with the aim of creating communication networks between the two groups,
- Organizing training courses in dealing with the media and techniques of addressing people through them,
- Organizing training and journalistic production workshops for female journalists with a focus on topics that include a large number of stereotypes while giving due importance to them as they are closely linked to the daily lives of citizens.

3. Women and Sustainable Development Goals in the local media

- The media content was generally not compatible with the content of Sustainable Development Goals both for women and men among the characters in the story.
- Male characters in the story tackled more frequently than women subjects that concern the «political participation of women» as well as «women's economic empowerment» despite the absence of women as actors in local political affairs. This may lead to the marginalization of women's contribution to the discussion about public affairs in their political dimension and limiting their participation in it as a suggestion that their presence is an indicator of just image of openness in society.

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- The interest in the indicator of «participation in the management of public affairs» was limited to men which suggests a continuous lack of interest from women in public concerns and their right to express their opinion at the level of local governance.
- Women's treatment of local affairs in their economic dimension (rural economy, development policies, the right to development) was weak compared with other topics, including the issue of seasonal employment or unemployment.
- In contrast, the contributions of male characters in the story varied since an interest in various economic fields, such as industry, fishing as well as development policies and the rural economy was recorded.
- The interest in the content of the Sustainable Development Goals has differed in radio and television contents. While women and men continue to pay attention to the Goal related to "Good Health and Well-Being" in the radio contents, women's most important interest in television was directed to the Goal «industry, Innovation and Infrastructure «and» Sustainable Consumption and Production».
- These choices reflect the challenges faced by the Arab region in general at the level of advancement of productive economic areas as well as in facing the economic crisis in the region.
- Women's access to and their dealing, albeit modestly, with new areas, including environmental and natural resource-related issues, which are priority issues within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals were noted. This has made them more willing to internalize these contents and interact with them.
- The distinguished presence of women among the active figures in civil society confirms women's fear to get involved in partisan or political activity or that parties do not give them the opportunity to appear in the media even at the local level.
- The treatment of the issue of violence against women was weak and opportunistic and has been neglected in most of the sample countries. Women have been addressing this issue more frequently and considered that the treatment that is currently being proposed by regional organizations and community actors does not provide radical solutions to this problem which consists in their view in building the capacity of rural women, especially in facing difficulties.

This theme shows the reluctance of women to deal with some vital issues at this very stage such as issues with an economic dimension. It demonstrates at the same time women's initiative to tackle new topics of concern to the local and international public opinion.

On this basis, it would be useful to take into account the following proposals:

- Organizing dialogues and training workshops that are relevant to the management of public affairs with a focus on roles that can be performed by female/male media professionals in terms of social responsibility,

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- Organizing workshops and competitions for the best media production in the economic field and new topics in connection with the economic crisis in the region,
- Organizing field visits and workshops on the environment and natural resources,
- Developing advocacy strategies to reduce violence against women and encourage addressing the subject not only in its statistical or legal side, but also in terms of its economic and social development effects.

Arab Women
and the
2030
Strategy for Sustainable
Development in the
Local Media

Executive Summary



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