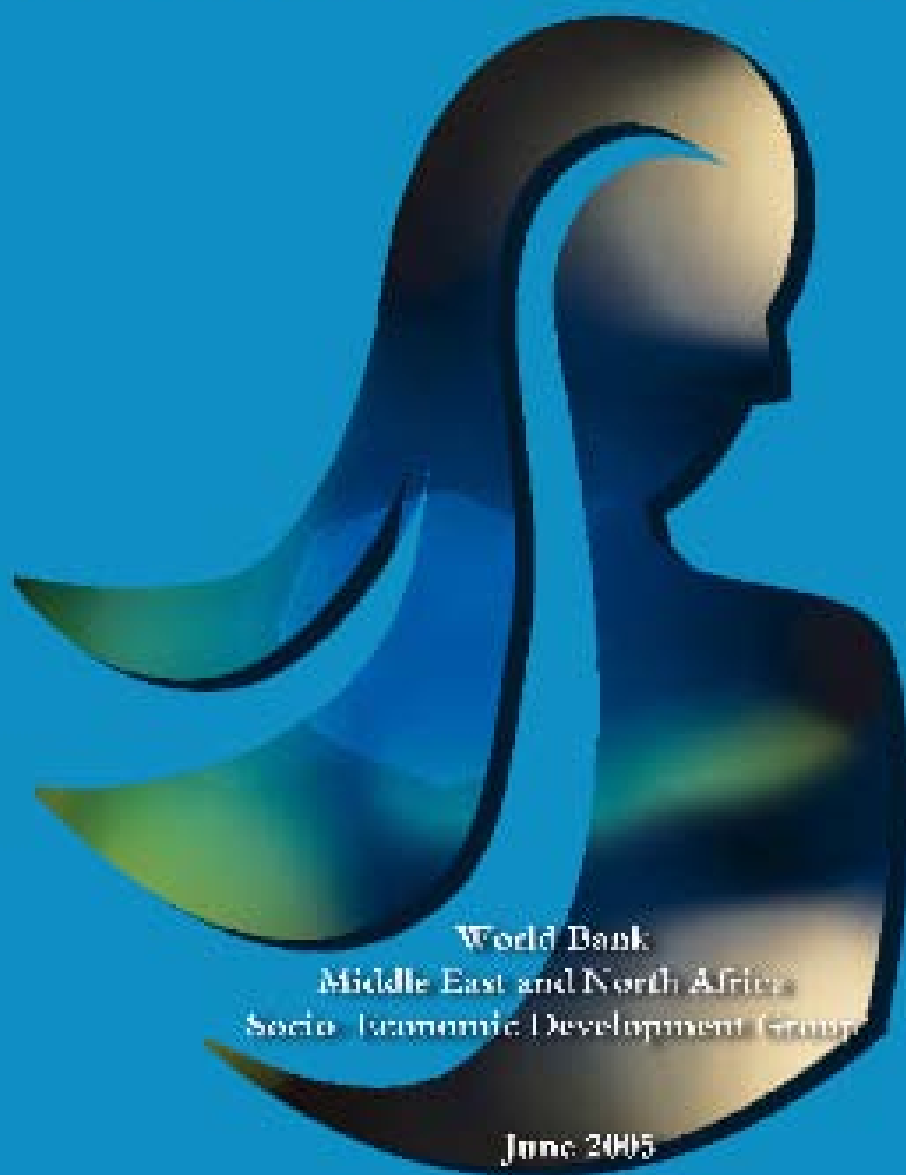


THE STATUS AND PROGRESS  
of  
WOMEN  
in the  
Middle East and North Africa Region



World Bank  
Middle East and North Africa  
Socio-Economic Development Group

June 2005

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## ***ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS***

AFCARE	l' Association des Femmes Cadres
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy program
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labor Organization
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NCW	National Council for Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy paper
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN/ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency
WDI	World Development Indicators
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WNC	Women's National Committee

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## **Introduction**

Over the years, the Gender group of the Middle East and North Africa Social and Economic Development division has regularly compiled briefs on the status and progress of women in the region for use by senior managers and staff. Based on feedback from readers inside and outside the Bank, we were encouraged to present these gender briefs in a compendium, making the information more accessible to a wider public. The content of this compendium is drawn from existing data banks, records, statistics, and sources found in the public domain. The countries covered in this compendium include Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Republic of Yemen.

This compendium was prepared by the Office of the Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank, under the supervision of Nadereh Chamlou, regional Gender Coordinator. The authors include Carmen Niethammer, who drafted the original gender briefs, and Elham Seyedsayamdost, who consolidated the report, supplementing and harmonizing the data and messages. Valuable contributions were made by Paul Dyer, Krisztina Mazo, Randa Akeel, and Angela Hawkins.

## Education and Training

### *ALGERIA*

Gender disparities with regards to **access to education** exist primarily in rural areas. According to the most recent census (1998), the rate of schooling for girls in urban areas is 87.4 percent compared with 88.7 percent for boys. In more remote rural areas, this rate drops to 60.5 percent for girls and 74.3 percent for boys. Secondary school enrollment is lower for the poor and for girls.

Girls' school **dropout** seems to be affected by parental choice, whereas in the case of boys that decision tends to be left to the boys' discretion. Parental decisions are very much based on the cost of schooling, and parents tend to favor their sons when they are faced with financial challenges and must decide who remains in school. The problem of insecurity and lack of support measures (provision of food, transport, etc.) has also contributed to girls' dropping out of school. This is particularly true in the rural areas.

**Illiteracy** remains a big problem with a 40.3 percent rate among women as opposed to a 23.6 percent for men. Poverty incidence is highest among the illiterate, who are mainly rural women (46 percent) followed by urban women (29 percent), rural men (22 percent) and finally urban men (13 percent). This situation also affects voting patterns since many illiterate women tend to either allow men to vote on their behalf or are told by their husbands, fathers, or brothers for whom to vote.

A recent review of **textbooks** shows that the image of women presented in textbooks is extremely traditional, hence reinforcing many of the existing stereotypes. This bias tends to be more apparent in Arabic textbooks than in French textbooks.

Women represent 53 percent of those enrolled in **universities**. They tend to be concentrated in traditional fields such as education, but they seem to be breaking through in some non-traditional areas such as medicine.

### *BAHRAIN*

The **first girl's primary school** was established in 1892 in Bahrain. Free and compulsory **primary education** applies to boys and girls, and includes free school necessities and transportation to and from school. Though primary education is compulsory, this is not enforced.

Female **adult illiteracy rates** (15 years and above) decreased from 41 percent in 1980 to 16 percent in 2002.

By 2000, **female adult literacy rate** among those aged 15 and above was 82.6 percent, compared with 90.9 percent for male rate. For female age group 15-24 years, literacy rate was much higher in 2000, with 98.5 percent as compared to 99.1 percent for men.

Women account for about 70 percent of Bahrain's **university** students, but fill only about 20 percent of the country's jobs. Women in **higher education** are enrolled largely in 'traditional faculties' (education, arts/humanities, and more recently business administration). However, one-third of students in Engineering Faculty are female.

In vocational education, women account for 30 percent of all trainees enrolled in courses provided by the Bahrain Training Institute, including accounting, information technology, business, retailing, garment technology and goldsmith craft. Female civil servants constitute around one third of those trained by Civil Service Bureau. Women have also benefited from training courses offered by the Bahrain Institute for Banking and Finance.

A proportion of private sector companies' contribution to training is being allocated to needy families; some 49 percent of beneficiaries of this scheme have been women.

## ***DJIBOUTI***

**Primary school enrollment rates**, though improving, remain exceptionally low (35 percent for girls compared to 46 percent for boys). Furthermore, large rural-urban differences persist. The ratio of enrolled girls to boys is about 0.77 in urban areas compared to only 0.50 in rural areas.

Nearly 61 percent of girls either **repeat** grades and/or **drop out** of school altogether. Girls' low school enrollment rates are correlated with levels of poverty. School dropout rates for girls at age 8-9 are also related to practice of FGM, after which many girls do not return to school after longer periods of sick leave. Most schools do not provide appropriate sanitary arrangements for girls and boys, contributing to girls' high dropout rates at ages 10-11.

Out of every 100 boys and 100 girls entering grade 1, 80 boys and 79 girls reach grade 6 (the end of primary cycle), 23 boys and 26 girls reach grade 10, and only 7 boys and 11 girls are able to reach the final year of secondary cycle.<sup>1</sup>

The **illiteracy rate** for women is estimated at 72 percent compared to 49 percent for men. This translates to about 200,000 illiterate women who represent about three-quarters of the illiterate population. This, in turn, has tremendous negative impacts on society's well-being. It directly affects families' nutritional status and the level of education achieved by children.

Regarding post-secondary education (in absence of a fully-developed university program), it should be noted that women comprise 45 percent of the student body in **technical schools** (Ali-Sabieh Professional High School and the Industrial and Business School). They concentrate mainly on commercial studies.

## ***EGYPT***

Although gender gaps in **literacy** persist, women have made substantial gains. Literacy rates for women in Egypt rose from 29 percent in 1976 to 51 percent in 1996. Rural-urban discrepancies remain, with **illiteracy** rates ranging from 27 percent in Port-Said to 70 percent in Menia. **Illiteracy among young women** in the **15-24 year** age bracket in 2000 remained high at 37 percent.

In terms of school curriculum, textbook content, particularly technical content, needs to be updated and improved to ensure timeliness and relevance, as well as to remove any gender discriminatory material. Equally important is the need to focus on teacher caliber and teacher training needs.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Djibouti Public Expenditure Review, 2004.

Gender inequalities in **educational enrollment** (where a slight gap between boys and girls persists) are affected largely by socio-economic status. Girls' enrollment is a function of poverty and also varies by region. In 1995, girls made up only 37 percent of primary school students in the poorest rural areas.

At the university level, the female share of students enrolled in almost all universities increased (at the undergraduate level from 35.4 percent in 1991/2 to 43.9 percent in 1998/9). Female enrollment is highest in the social sciences.

### ***ISLAMIC REPUBLIC of IRAN***

Major improvements have been made with regard to female **enrollment rates**, which in many instances (except at the secondary school level) have caught up with those of boys. At the university level, women's enrollment has even bypassed men's enrollment in some fields.

Among the problems confronted in regard to female education in Iran are 1) gender stereotyping in **textbooks**; 2) explicitly or implicitly guiding women towards "feminine" specializations (e.g., women are directed towards basic sciences whereas men enter into "more prestigious" fields such as engineering); and 3) obstacles faced by women upon entering "male-oriented" fields of study.

Shortage of **technical-vocational education** opportunities for girls is a major issue in Iran. Even when they exist, the kind of traditional programs offered (sewing, knitting, and handicrafts) cannot prepare young women for the real job market.

In rural and nomadic parts of Iran, girls are often engaged in carpet weaving under harsh conditions. This has limited their access to school. Furthermore, school hours are not flexible and often do not accommodate the needs of working girls. Thus, there are high **dropout** rates for girls.

**Teaching** was one of the first professions available to women in Iran. They still represent a significant portion of school teachers, with some 46 percent of school teachers being female. When one includes administrative staff in schools, the numbers are even higher.

### ***IRAQ***

Reliable gender **statistics** on education are not available for Iraq, but it seems that there are considerable gender and geographic imbalances (north vs. south and rural vs. urban).

Before 1991, female **literacy** rates were among the highest in the region, and Iraq had achieved nearly universal primary education for both girls and boys. Since 1991, adult female literacy rates and girls' **enrollment rates** have decreased. In 2000, it was estimated that 31 percent of girls were **not attending school**, nearly twice the number of boys who were not in school. UNICEF officials attribute this decrease mainly to poverty and inadequate education infrastructure rather than attitudes opposing education for girls - although these attitudes still persist.<sup>2</sup>

**Female illiteracy** more than quadrupled between 1985 and 1995 (from 8 percent to 45 percent). According to UNICEF, 30 percent of girls were no longer attending primary school in 2000.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Refugees International, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, The Situation of Children in Iraq, March 2003.



**In rural areas**, according to the most recent UN/World Bank Joint Iraq Needs Assessment of 2003, about half of all girls were not going to school, and the female **attendance** rate of 49.2 percent was much lower than that of males (72.1 percent). In urban areas, however, the gender gap is less pronounced. Attendance rates are estimated at 87.4 percent for male and 80 percent for female students).

At the **technical and vocational education level**, women make up less than 20 percent of student enrollment. There are significant gender disparities across subject fields.<sup>4</sup>

According to statistics released by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Developmental Cooperation in early 2004, **women teachers** make up 69 percent of all teachers.<sup>5</sup>

## **JORDAN**

Jordan has achieved gender parity in school enrollment at all levels and is set to achieve its **MDG goals** in education by 2005.<sup>6</sup>

The ratio of female to male **enrollments** is 97 percent in primary and secondary education. Primary school completion rates are 101 percent for females and 100 percent for males. Women account for 68 percent of **community college** enrollments and 47 percent of **public university** undergraduate enrollments (up from 37 percent in 1994). However, female **tertiary completion rate** is 31 percent of the male completion rate.<sup>7</sup>

Although only 50 percent of students who take the general secondary exam (*tawjih*) pass, the female **success rate** is significantly higher than that of males. The success rate of females varies from region to region and, in 1994, was higher than that for males by as much as 18 percent in the governorate of Irbid and as low as 3 percent in Tafila. In more than 75 percent of the governorates, the female success rate was more than 12 percent higher than that for males.

The general level of women's education has been rising over the past 20 years. But even though women's **illiteracy rate** was reduced from 49.5 percent in 1979 to 22 percent in 1991, they continue to lag behind men. According to the 2000 Annual Report on Employment, the **literacy rate** for women was 83.5 percent, compared to 94.3 percent for men.<sup>8</sup> The **youth literacy** gap between females and males in Jordan is less than 1 percent. However, according to the 2004 Jordan Poverty Assessment, the **illiteracy rate for poor people** is 20 percent, compared to 8 percent among the non-poor.

**Kindergartens** for 4 to 6 year olds are not compulsory and services are provided on a fee basis. As part of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy program (ERfKE), the government subsidizes early childhood education for low-income families. Females account for 47 percent of all kindergarten enrollments.

Efforts are being made to improve the image of women and to eliminate the associated stereotypes in **textbooks**, again as part of the ERfKE.

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank, UN/World Bank Joint Iraq Needs Assessment, October 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Iraqi Al-Amal Association, "The National Conference for Empowering Women in Democracy," Baghdad, June 2004.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Jordanian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2003.

Concerning **teaching staff**, women outnumber men at all levels (kindergarten, primary and secondary school) except at the secondary vocational school level.

## **LEBANON**

In 2000, 84 percent of women were literate compared to 93 percent of men. The reality of education in Lebanon reveals an increase in the enrollment rates at all levels of education: primary, secondary and post-secondary. Girls' **enrollment rates** have increased over the past thirty years, with girls' enrollment rates being almost equal to that of boys. Between 1970 and 1997, girls' enrollment rates went up by about 10 percentage points in each age group (for example, from 86 percent to 97 percent for the 5-9 year age group). Although the 15-19 age group witnessed similar enrollment increases, it remained the group with the lowest average level of girls' enrollment at 47.6 percent in 1997.<sup>9</sup>

A gender gap in enrollment is hardly noticeable until students reach age 15, where girls' enrollment rates exceed those of boys by 6.4 percent in the 15-19 year age bracket. This is likely due to boys leaving school at an earlier age than girls to enter the labor market.

Adult female **illiteracy** fell from 37 percent in 1980 to 21 percent in 1998. Youth female illiteracy is estimated at 8 percent.<sup>10</sup>

Enrollment rates of girls in **vocational education** reached 40 percent in 2000.<sup>11</sup> Despite the increase, this equality of opportunity has not translated into a more diverse choice of specializations for women.

There is also a growing sense that higher education for women is regarded as a means to obtain a "**personal education**"; that is, studying to get a university degree paves the way for marriage rather than preparing women for a professional career.<sup>12</sup> More than half of all **university** students are women – 53 percent in 2001. There is no university program or field of specialization that does not have female students.

## **MOROCCO**

The young age of marriage is a major impediment to girls' education and hence to their opportunities for economic participation. With the Parliament's approval of the *moudawana* (or the personal status code) the minimum **female age of marriage** was increased from 15 to 18.

**School enrollment** consistently increased from 66.7 percent in 1998 to 84.6 percent in 2000/01. The rate of enrollment for **rural girls**, the group with the lowest enrollment rates, also progressed from 53.6 percent in 1998-99 to 70.4 percent in 2000 and to 78 percent in 2002/03 (10 percentage points less than those of boys). Net female school enrollment rates in 2002/03 were recorded at 86 percent (7 percentage points less than those for boys). The **ratio of girls to boys** in primary and secondary education remains the lowest of middle-income countries in the region (83 percent in 1999). At the **preschool** level, girls make up 36 percent of students.

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<sup>9</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> UN/ESCWA, Summary Report on the Status of Women in Arab Countries, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing, July 2004.

<sup>12</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

The distance of schools from houses and levels of poverty have a major impact on girls' school enrollment rates – especially beyond the primary school level. NGOs have tried to fill this void: **informal education** provided by various associations in 2000 reached 35,000 children.

With enrollments improving, **illiteracy rates** also dropped from 55 percent in 1999-2000 to 47 percent in 2002. However, large gender gaps with regard to illiteracy rates remain. In 1998, 61.9 percent of women were illiterate as opposed to 34 percent of men. These gender gaps are even more pronounced in rural areas where lower rates of girls' enrollment are observed. Here the female illiteracy rate is as high as 83 percent compared to 45.5 percent in urban areas. **Drop-out rates** were 5 percent for girls compared to 4 percent for boys, while **repetition rates** were recorded at 12 percent for girls compared to 16 percent for boys.<sup>13</sup>

As for **youth literacy**, the last decade has witnessed noticeable progress – particularly for young females. While the youth female literacy rate was as low as 42 percent in 1990, it steadily increased to 60 percent in 2001 (at an annual growth rate of about 3 percent compared to that of young men at about 1 percent). However, despite significant progress in female youth literacy rates, the gender gap remains high at 17 percent.<sup>14</sup>

**School programs and textbook** content have been subject to critiques from the women's movement over the last decade. However, despite the Ministry of National Education's purported engagement and the preparatory work done with the Ministry of Human Rights, few changes have taken place. This is problematic given progress in enrollment, which - if not accompanied by a change in the culture of inequality - will continue to propagate and reinforce gender stereotypes and biases.

At the **tertiary level**, women now make up about 48 percent of university students (up from 43 percent in recent years). Women's share is slightly larger in technical and professional schools.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

Since the 1960s, Saudi Arabia has made substantial gains in the education of women. Women currently comprise 46 percent of **secondary school** students and 58 percent of **higher education** students. However, women are still restricted from taking some subjects, such as engineering, journalism, and architecture. According to the UNDP, 36 percent of adult women are illiterate, compared to only 17 percent of adult men.<sup>15</sup>

The Kingdom is well on its way to completely eliminating gender disparities in all levels of education: the girls to boys ratio in net enrollment has reached 0.90, 0.94, and 1.05 at the primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, respectively. **Girls' enrollment** across all educational levels grew at an average annual rate of 8.3 percent, compared to 4.2 percent for boys over the 1975-2000 period.<sup>16</sup> However, Saudi Arabia is the only Gulf Cooperation Country that has a lower enrollment of females in secondary school relative to males. If enrollment trends continue at the same rate as they have in recent years, this gap will close relatively fast.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 database.

<sup>15</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

**Female literacy** rates have reached 88.8 percent for those between 15 and 24 years of age, and 74.3 percent for those ages 15 and above.<sup>18</sup>

It is estimated that between 2004 and 2020, there will be twice as many female **college graduates** as male graduates.<sup>19</sup> According to 2003 statistics, at 52 percent, women form more than half of all college graduates in the Kingdom, but less than 5 percent of the labor force. Women in the workforce are mainly found in the education sector.<sup>20</sup>

There are thousands of **female professors** throughout the Kingdom, reflecting the high general level of female education in the country. Saudi Arabia funds one of the world's largest scholarship programs for women, and thousands of women have earned doctorates from Western universities.<sup>21</sup>

## **TUNISIA**

The country has made a lot of progress in terms of reducing female **illiteracy rates** (from 96 percent in 1956 to 36 percent in 1999), yet these are still higher than those of men. Illiteracy rates of older women in rural areas remain problematic: here one of two women was illiterate (compared to one in four in urban areas) in 1999. **Rural female illiteracy** has become the focus of current government literacy programs.

Over the last decade, **female school enrollment rates** have in many instances surpassed those of male enrollment rates (at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels and across governorates). In the 2000/01 academic year, slightly more than half of all university students were women. **School performance** of girls is also higher than that of boys. This is in sharp contrast to the mid-1950s, when women were practically excluded from the education system. However, rural-urban discrepancies remain, and where families face socio-economic difficulties, it is often the boy rather than the girl who is able to go to school.

At both secondary and tertiary levels, women continue to be enrolled in **traditional fields of study** and are less visible in the scientific and technical fields (for example, in mathematics, female students represent less than 20 percent).

Women are under-represented in school administration bodies despite gender parity among teachers at the primary and secondary school levels. This reinforces the perception that higher-level positions are reserved for men.

## **WEST BANK & GAZA**

The gender gap at the **primary education** level is almost non-existent, but increases at the secondary level, between grades 9 and 11, where female enrolment is 63 percent compared to that of male at 67.4 percent.

**Early marriage** is considered one reason for girls to drop out of school. According to the 1996 Palestinian Beijing Platform of Action document, about 40 percent of female teenagers, mostly in rural areas, become wives and mothers before they complete their education or learn an occupation. **The legal**

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Arab News, 3 June 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Nawaf Obaid, "Saudi women must get the vote in 2009," Financial Times, 13 October 2004.

**age of marriage for girls** is 16 in the West Bank and 9 in Gaza. This compares to the male legal ages of marriage, which are 16 and 12 respectively.<sup>22</sup> In Palestine, according to a 1992 study quoted by the Parliamentary Research Unit, the ratio of girls marrying between 12 and 17 was about 35 percent.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding **higher education**, the proportion of women with a Bachelor's degree or higher is 2.5 percent compared to 6.3 percent among men. Women make up 45 percent of those enrolled in **local universities**; however, it is worth noting that thousands of students from the West Bank and Gaza, mostly male, are pursuing their education abroad.<sup>24</sup>

**Vocational training** of girls is still limited and traditional, with girls constituting 13 percent of students enrolled in vocational schools.<sup>25</sup> The 1995/96 school year statistics show that girls in the vocational secondary schools continue to select traditional occupations like commerce and nursing.

The National Strategy points out that one shortcoming of the current **generation of job schemes** is that they mainly benefit unskilled adult males. This can be modified through a greater mix of construction with non-construction schemes and by designing projects that cater specifically to the young, the skilled, and women.

The number of **female teachers** in kindergartens and schools rose from 12,000 in 1995 to 18,000 in 1999.

## ***REPUBLIC of YEMEN***

Yemen has made great strides in improving access to education, but it still has a long way to go to achieve the MDGs of universal primary completion and gender parity. Enrollment in primary education has increased from 25,000 students in 1970 to more than 4 million in 2003. In 2003, gross enrollment was 65 percent, the adult literacy rate was only 48 percent, and nearly 80 percent of women were illiterate. Equity is a severe problem, with only 55 percent of primary school-aged girls in schools country-wide and less than 30 percent in rural areas. Given the low enrolment rate and high population growth, Yemen is still far from reaching the reading target of 100 percent net enrolment by 2015.

In 2000/1, 80 percent of the **teachers** at the primary level were male. However, the percentage of female teachers in training increased from 25 percent in 1990 to 45.8 percent in 2000. The lower secondary female enrollment rates are partially due to a lack of female teachers, especially in rural areas.

The gender gap in **vocational training** has not changed significantly over the last decade. In all vocational training programs following primary school, women make up 4.6 percent of all vocational trainees (2000). Most female trainees specialized in health, education and administration programs, while few enrolled in technical programs.

Of the students who graduated from **universities** in 2000, 27 percent were female. Most female students (44 percent) enrolled in the faculty of medicine (2001), followed by 41 percent in the faculty of sciences.

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<sup>22</sup> Women's Learning Partnership

<sup>23</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>24</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Palestine document.

## **Health**

### ***ALGERIA***

Regional disparities persist in terms of availability of health services, in turn having repercussions on women's health. The rate of **maternal mortality** is relatively high (140 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000), particularly in the rural areas. The **fertility rate** remains quite high at 2.75 births per woman.

Few **preventive services** are available to diagnose and prevent diseases that mainly affect women, such as breast and cervical cancer. Moreover, information about these diseases is not readily available to women or men.

Particularly in rural areas, the **lack of clean water** poses health risks, and scarcity and storage issues especially impact women, as they are mostly in charge of its provision.

Women have been exposed to a considerable degree of **violence** due to the country's internal conflict.

### ***BAHRAIN***

**Maternal mortality rates** are not easy to come by. According to modeled estimates, the maternal mortality rate was 28 per 100,000 live births (2000).<sup>26</sup> About 98 percent of pregnant women, however, receive **prenatal care**. Nearly 40 percent of pregnant women ages 15-49 are reported to suffer from **anemia**.<sup>27</sup>

The **fertility rate** decreased from 6 children per woman in 1975 to 2.3 in 2002.<sup>28</sup> **Contraceptive prevalence**, according to a 1995 Family Health Study, is reported at 62 percent among women in the 15-49 year old group.

### ***DJIBOUTI***

**High fertility rates** (5.2 children per woman in 2002), lack of women's health services, persistent **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, malnutrition and anemia are the main factors for **high maternal mortality rates**. Although alarmingly high, maternal mortality rates improved from 714 per 100,000 live births in 1989 to 690 per 100,000 in 2002. Moreover, there are only 35 **midwives** in all of Djibouti, and there are only **two gynecologists** in the country.

**Child mortality rates** are also quite high, with those for girls being higher than those for boys (100 compared to 88 deaths per 100,000 child births).

Those in extreme poverty are at particular risk, as they lack **access to medical services**. Those without access to medical services in 1996 were estimated at 56 percent.

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<sup>26</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 data base.

<sup>27</sup> Bahraini Health Study on Pregnant Women's Diet Situation, 1995.

<sup>28</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 data base.

**FGM** affects more than 95 percent of young girls between 6 and 9 years of age, although the practice has been illegal since 1995 and is punishable with five years of prison and a one million Francs fee. FGM is mainly administered by grandmothers and mothers and is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition. According to a recent survey, 50 percent of men are against the practice of FGM.

**HIV/AIDS** is one of the main public health problems, yet little information on the situation in Djibouti is available. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is estimated at 2.9 percent (6 percent for the age group 15-35), and 95 percent of the infected cases are transmitted heterosexually. Women's prevalence rate was estimated to be slightly higher (3.1 percent) than that of men. Since 1995, prostitution has been illegal, yet it remains a major issue due to the adverse economic situation. It is all the more concerning given the recent increase in foreign military presence in the country.

**Violence against women** is not well studied in Djibouti, but it is believed that men's consumption of qat (which consumes more than 30 percent of household expenditure) contributes to domestic violence.<sup>29</sup> Female vendors of qat are also exposed to aggression from their mainly male customers.

## ***EGYPT***

Egypt has one of the **largest populations** in the region, with a growth rate of 2.2 percent per year (1975-2000) and a respective fertility rate of 3.1 births per woman. Despite a significant decrease in **fertility rates**, short spacing of births is still prevalent, which puts women at increased health risk.

The 2000 Demographic and Health Survey estimates that 11.2 percent of married women have **unmet family planning needs**. This rate is as high as 18.7 percent in rural Upper Egypt.

Although the **legal age of marriage** for girls is 16, the phenomenon of early marriage perseveres. Enforcement of the existing law is particularly difficult for girls without **birth certificates**. Early marriage and, in turn, early pregnancy remain important factors affecting women's health conditions, especially among rural uneducated women. With the exception of **HIV/AIDS**, knowledge of sexual transmitted infections (STIs) is low among youth, especially pregnant girls.

## ***ISLAMIC REPUBLIC of IRAN***

Advances have been made in reducing the **maternal mortality rate** to about 37 per 100,000 live births. This is one of the lowest in the region.

It is notable that Iran, the most populous country in the region, has one of the highest **contraceptive rates** (74 percent). This has curbed population growth and contributed at the same time to women's increased participation in the economy and public life.

A recent development in **abortion laws**, as approved by the Iranian Parliament, allows a pregnancy to be terminated in the first four months if the fetus is mentally or physically handicapped. The damaged status of the fetus must be confirmed by three doctors, and both parents must give their consent to the abortion. Previously abortion was only allowed if the mother's life was in danger. While a step forward, the new bill still does not provide a woman with the right to an abortion, even if a woman is pregnant as a result of rape, unless her life is in danger or the fetus is handicapped.

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<sup>29</sup> Chewing of qat leaves is a traditional practice in Djibouti. Qat is a natural stimulant with the qualities of a mild amphetamine.

One critical area for women's health and education remains **the legal minimum age of marriage**. This was recently increased from 9 to 13 for girls and from 14 to 15 for boys. Although the mean age of marriage across the country has risen to 20, rural-urban differences prevail. Early marriage can create difficulties for young married women, who are not permitted to attend school with unmarried women and therefore tend to stop going to school, according to the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

## *IRAQ*

**Female life expectancy** at birth was at 60 years prior to the Beijing Conference in 1995 and rose to 63 by 2002.<sup>30</sup>

**Fertility rates** were at 5.9 births per woman in 1990 and declined to around four births in 2002.

UNICEF's 1999 Child and Maternal Mortality Survey shows very **high maternal mortality rates** of 294 per 100,000 live births for the period 1989-1998. This accounts for one-third of all deaths among women aged 15-49. Before 1990, the maternal mortality rate was 117 deaths for every 100,000 births, according to the National Report. In 2000, about 72 percent of births were attended by **trained health personnel** (79 percent in urban and 60 percent in rural areas).

The same 1999 survey points to the problem of **early marriage** (40 percent of women in Iraq were married before 18 years of age and only 14 percent were married at 24 years or later), which has led to a high incidence of anemia. Between 50-70 percent of pregnant women are estimated to be **anemic**, and roughly 23 percent of infants are born with low birth weights.

Since the war began, there are reports of increased numbers of **stillbirths** and complicated deliveries. The psychological impact of the war on **women's health**, while still unknown, is a potentially serious problem. Anecdotal evidence of high levels of **miscarriages**, birth defects, and cancer suggests possible environmental contamination.<sup>31</sup>

Human Rights Watch's Report "Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad" (July 2003) concludes that there is widespread fear of **rape and abduction** among women and their families. According to HRW, there have been incidents of hospital personnel turning away victims of sexual attack, saying it is not their responsibility.

## *JORDAN*

**Fertility levels** have been declining steadily during the last decade. The birth rate has declined from 50 per 1,000 in the mid-1970s to 33 per 1,000 in 1995. The total fertility rate declined from 7.5 children per woman in 1975 to 6.1 in 1985 to 3.5 in 2002.

**Education** is the strongest factor affecting **fertility levels**. Women who had attended secondary school had the lowest level of fertility (about 4.1) while those with no education had the highest (6.9). The total fertility rate was 6 children for women with primary education and 5.4 for women with secondary education. Women with secondary education had the highest median age at first birth (21.2 years).

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<sup>30</sup> World Bank, WDI, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Refugees International.



**Contraceptive prevalence rates** among married women ages 15-49 was 56 percent in 2002, and appears to be tapering off.<sup>32</sup> One-third of women using a modern method of birth control obtained the service from the public sector health system, while the other two-thirds did so from the private sector.<sup>33</sup>

The improvement of educational opportunities, particularly for girls, has resulted in their staying in school longer. This has been a factor in pushing the **age of marriage** upward. Women who have had more than a secondary education tend to marry almost six years later than those with no education or only a primary education. According to the Personal Status Law, the **legal age of marriage** is 15 for women and 16 for men (18 for both by temporary Royal Decree in December 2001).

Over the past 30 years, **maternal mortality** has fallen by nearly half to 41 per 100,000 births.

Of the 198 **HIV/AIDS** cases reported between 1986 and 1999, 24 percent were women.

## **LEBANON**

The overall **fertility rate** for women declined to 2.2 births per woman in 2002 from 3.2 in 1990.<sup>34</sup>

According to the 1994-97 Lebanon Maternal and Child Health Survey, fertility rates among women decreased with increasing **educational level**, with an average of 5.7 babies for illiterate women, 3.5 for those with elementary education, and an average of 2.2 babies for women with secondary education or more. Fertility rates also differ by region, being as high as 3.4 children per woman in the North district and as low as 1.7 children per woman in Beirut.

The survey also shows that 99.4 percent of the women surveyed knew about a method of **family planning**. According to the 1997 "Survey on Living Conditions," 61 percent of married women used contraceptives. About 88 percent of the **deliveries** took place in public or private health institutions.

Female life expectancy in 2002 was 72.6 years for women and 69 for men. Maternal mortality rate in 2000 was 150 for every 100,000 live births.

According to UNAIDS/WHO, there were 613 recorded cases of **AIDS** in Lebanon in 2000, of which the majority were men.

The first official report on CEDAW points out that the main causes of women's **mortality** in Lebanon are blood diseases and tumors (34 percent) followed by natural causes (26 percent).

There has been a rise in the **average age of marriage** among women from 23.7 years in 1970 to 28.1 in 1997. The civil war, which led to an imbalance in the numbers of unmarried men and women, and the current **socio-economic situation**, characterized by low salaries and a high cost of living, are among the main factors preventing young Lebanese from marrying. Average divorce rate is 2.4 for every 1,000 women and 2.5 for every 1,000 men.

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<sup>32</sup> This follows a sharp rise between 1990 and 1998, and a slight decline between 1999 and 2000.

<sup>33</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>34</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, Statistical Appendix, 2003.

Sufficiently reliable statistics on **domestic violence** are not available. A review of security reports between 1990 and 1994 showed that rape was the most frequently reported type of crime against women, compared to kidnapping, battering, mugging, incest, and murder.<sup>35</sup>

## **MOROCCO**

The rate of **contraceptive prevalence** among married women ages 15-49 is about 58.8 percent. The fertility rate has decreased from 4.1 (1991) to 2.75 (2002) children per woman, with the average number of children per woman being 6.7 for women without any education, 4.9 for those with a basic education, and 2.5 for those with higher education.

The **maternal mortality rate** decreased from 332 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 220 in 2000. It remains the highest among middle-income countries in the region. Rural-urban discrepancies also persist. The maternal mortality rate in rural areas is at 307 per 100,000 live births as opposed to 125 in urban areas. The rate of prenatal consultations is 42 percent (20 percent in rural areas).

Available, though limited, statistics on **STIs** are alarming as they are also an indication of **HIV/AIDS** prevalence rates. According to the last CEDAW Shadow report, 78 percent of STI cases were women. Women are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS given that men are largely responsible for the transmission of the virus to their partners.

Limited resources have been allocated to treating breast and cervical **cancer**. In terms of diagnosing early signs of cancer, the Ministry of Health does not have the financial resources to provide health centers with the necessary equipment. NGOs are helping, albeit to a limited extent, to provide psychological support to women affected by cancer. Measures related to the prevention of illegal **abortions**, improving medical care for sterility as well as for menopause - as outlined in the National Plan of Action to integrate women in development - have yet to be implemented.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

Saudi Arabia's **population growth** rate remains among the highest in the world at 3 percent in 2003 (surpassing national economic growth rates). **Fertility rates** in Saudi Arabia remain relatively high at 5.3 births per woman, corresponding to low **contraceptive prevalence rates**, which are just above 30 percent (1995-2002).<sup>36</sup>

Despite Saudi Arabia having a high level of public spending on health (4.2 percent of GDP), it has not been able to reduce its **child mortality rates** to numbers below those in upper-middle-income countries. Child mortality rates remain the highest in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).<sup>37</sup> And while Saudi Arabia, like all other GCC countries, has achieved **lower male mortality rates** than average male mortality in upper-middle-income countries, its **female mortality rates remain above** those in upper-middle-income countries.<sup>38</sup>

Improved access to general health services and specialized maternal health services has helped to reduce the incidence of **maternal mortality** considerably (to 23 per 100,000 live births in 2000). The percentage

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<sup>35</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Lebanese Women: In light of the Beijing platform for action, 2002.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, WDI, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

of **births attended by skilled health professionals** was 91 percent in 2000 – a significant increase from 78 percent in 1985.<sup>39</sup>

## **TUNISIA**

Tunisia has witnessed considerable progress regarding health and family planning indicators. The ratio of **midwives** per 10,000 women at reproductive age has increased from one in 1964 to 14.5 in 2000. But only 71 percent of pregnant women received prenatal care in 1996. In 1999, 82 percent of pregnancies and deliveries were attended by health care staff. Thirty-eight percent of pregnant women are anemic.

In 1986, Tunisia was named a model country for its family planning programs, as well as for the training of medical staff and decision makers from other Arab countries. The **contraceptive prevalence rate** increased from 9 percent in 1965 to 65 percent in 2000 and is among the highest in the MNA region.

Until 1984, **child mortality rates** among girls were higher than that of boys, indicating preferential treatment for boys. While this pattern has been reversing, it has not completely disappeared. Rural-urban differences in this regard remain: a young rural girl is four times more likely to die than a young urban girl.

Over the last 40 years, there has been a noticeable, comparatively high **death rate** for men. This is likely to be a result of violent causes and tobacco consumption. At the same time, more women have been able to take advantage of an improved health care system, frequently visiting the hospital for reproductive care matters, and benefiting from increased awareness of existing health risks.

## **WEST BANK & GAZA**

In 1999, the **fertility rate** was 5.6 in West Bank, 6.7 in Gaza, and 6.1 in the Palestinian territories.<sup>40</sup> Fertility rates have decreased over the years, indicating increased awareness of family planning and provision of related services.

Ninety-eight percent of women are aware of **contraceptive methods**, which are actually applied by 66.7 percent of them (of these, 71 percent are in West Bank and 39 percent in Gaza). Forty-five percent of married women use contraceptives. Modern methods are used by 52.5 percent of the women who use contraceptives.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, delays at military checkpoints have resulted in women **delivering** their **babies** while waiting for permission to pass. As a result, 24 women and 27 newborn babies have died since June 2003.<sup>41</sup>

Market disruptions from curfews have affected key high protein foods, especially meat, poultry and dairy products. According to the Bank's **Nutritional** Assessment, "reproductive age women are eating 13 percent less protein than before the Intifada."

At the intra-household level, **food aid** creates a concept of entitlement for women, who are traditionally in charge of administering food. The fact that aid comes in the form of food endows the household

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<sup>39</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Follow-up Report to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Thalif Deen, "Palestinian Women Hard Hit by Israeli Occupation," IPS, 6 February 2004.

members, who give a higher priority to food and nutrition, with a greater control over the household budget. Several studies show that food aid is less likely to be wasted on leisure items and activities than cash assistance, which are generally controlled and administered by men.<sup>42</sup>

A number of social and human rights organizations working at the household level in the West Bank and Gaza have noted an increase in **violence against women** and children as the crisis has lengthened. According to the Gaza City-based Women's Empowerment Project, reported cases of **domestic violence** have increased by 154 percent since 1999. In addition, less protection has been available to women from the authorities, as Palestinian law enforcement capacity has been reduced by the incapacitation of the police, particularly in the West Bank.

Palestinian women and foreign women workers face additional discrimination that make them especially vulnerable to abuses. A number of well-publicized cases of **trafficking in women** for prostitution, domestic violence, and sexual harassment and assault helped increase public awareness, but women suffering from such violations still have little recourse.<sup>43</sup>

## ***REPUBLIC of YEMEN***

The health status of the Yemeni population is poor. **Maternal mortality rate** (570 per 100,000 live births in 2000) and **total fertility rate** (6 in 2002) are the highest in MENA region. **Infant mortality rate** (65 per 1,000 live births) is the second highest in the region. **Child malnutrition** is the highest in the region and is deteriorating. Almost half of the Yemeni children are stunted.

Population growth at 2.9 percent is alarming and will not drop below 2.5 percent until after 2020. The population will almost double by 2025. **Contraceptive prevalence** rate is very low at 21 percent. More than 1.2 million Yemenis are suffering from malaria and about 20,000 are infected by tuberculosis. Although a national strategy for combating **HIV/AIDS** has been developed, no serious actions have been taken to implement it. The epidemiological status of HIV/AIDS prevalence is not clearly known. The health situation is compounded by the perverse effects of qat chewing. As such, Yemen is falling short of achieving the MDGs.

In 1998, total health spending was estimated at 5.6 percent of GDP. Total public spending was estimated at 1.9 percent of GDP (excluding all foreign assistance) and private spending at 3.3 percent of GDP. This makes Yemen among the countries with the highest share of private (out of pocket) expenditures on health in the region. Total per capita health spending amounts to about US\$20.

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<sup>42</sup> UNRWA, Comments of the draft of Twenty-Seven Months, 19 March 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Women's Human Rights.

## Economic Participation

### *ALGERIA*

Women's **access to the labor market** outside the household has increasingly been accepted in Algerian society. This is likely to stem from the economic pressures and needs faced by households for additional income. At the same time, it has become more acceptable that women's education is not an end in itself. Nevertheless, women workers are still perceived as taking jobs from men.

Female **economic activity** makes up 17 percent of the total active population. The rate of female economic activity doubled between 1977 and 1996, and grew faster than that of men.<sup>44</sup> Employed women are mainly found in industry and agriculture as well as the public sector and services. Women are also heavily employed in the health sector.

With 17 percent of the active population of 8.6 million being women, the female **unemployment** rate is 31.8 percent as compared to that of 26 percent for men.<sup>45</sup> This does not include "unemployed" women who are more likely than men to altogether drop out of the labor market when their unemployment period is too long.

With a shrinking public sector and a non-absorbing private sector, women's participation in the **formal sector** seems to be declining. This is reinforced by relatively higher barriers to entry for women in the private sector. Only 10.5 percent of businesses, self employed as well as enterprises, belong to women.<sup>46</sup>

There is a serious lack of visibility of women's economic contribution. Statistics tend not to take into account underestimated work in the **informal sector**, despite women's important presence. About 20-25 percent of total employment is estimated to take place in the informal sector.

There has been a positive evolution in female employment, particularly as a result of the increase in the age of female **marriage** and higher levels of education. While traditionally, unmarried women were more represented in the formal labor market than married women, the deterioration of economic conditions in the last decade has induced a moderate increase in the number of married women in the workforce. More than half of working women are less than 35 years of age, and 33 percent are between the ages of 20 and 29. Women are legally able to benefit from **maternity leave** while maintaining their employment and salary status.

Recently, the Association of Female Managers (*l'Association des femmes cadres* or AFCARE) made a series of recommendations regarding the improvement of women's economic participation. Accordingly, an improvement of knowledge and information relating to women's employment is necessary and should be created, in particular through the development of data banks on female employment. AFCARE also recommends that a system of quotas be established for women in order to facilitate their access to decision-making jobs in the various public institutions. To what extent these recommendations will be influential remains to be seen.

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<sup>44</sup> UNDP, MDG Report on Algeria, February 2003.

<sup>45</sup> World Bank, Draft Gender and Poverty Note, May 2003.

<sup>46</sup> World Bank, Algeria Country Assistance Strategy, 2003.

## ***BAHRAIN***

**Female economic activity rate** of those ages 20-24 increased from 10.1 percent in 1970 to 44.7 percent in 2000. The rate for the 25-44 year old age group increased from 4.5 percent in 1970 to 47.1 percent in 2000.

Female economic activity in services has slightly decreased from 96 percent in 1970 to 93 percent in 1990. The rate in the industrial sector has increased from 4 percent in 1970 to 6.9 percent in 1990, and remains unchanged in agriculture at 0.2 percent.

By 1998, women in the **public sector** made up 36 percent of all employees. These women worked mainly in the Ministries of Education and Health. In 1998, 20 percent of employees in the **private sector** were women, up from 18 percent in 1997. The highest rate of private sector female employment is in the finance and business sectors (31 percent).

In spite of the 'Bahrainization' policy – which aims to gradually replace expatriate workers with local people - **unemployment** rates for women are twice that of men (11 percent female versus 5 percent male). According to UN/ESCWA, since the May 2001 launch of the 'Program for Training and Employment', the percentage of women registered as unemployed has risen from 24 percent to 66 percent.

Bahrain did not ratify ILO Convention C100 on **equal pay**, and the Labor laws do not explicitly mention equal pay for work of equal value. Men and women employees generally receive the same pay for same grade, though in various cases women are paid less than men. Estimated **earned income** of women in 2000 was PPP US\$ 7,010 compared with PPP US\$ 21,059 for men.

The Bahraini **Labor law** clearly states that no employer is permitted to terminate a woman's services upon **marriage**, although the labor ministry can specify occupations that can be offered as an alternative upon marriage. There are prohibitions on **night work** for women, but exceptions are made for certain occupations.

The **legal minimum age** for entry to the labor market is 14 years, although the age for completing basic education is 15 years. The minimum age does not apply to family enterprises, but there are special provisions regulating employment of juveniles between ages 14-16 years.

## ***DJIBOUTI***

Women's **labor force participation** is one of the highest in the MENA region, estimated at 48.7 percent compared to 78.4 percent for men.

Of those women who are working, 18.8 percent work in the **public sector** compared to 54.4 percent of men. In the public sector, women work mostly in the health and education sectors where they mainly occupy lower paid positions.

Most working women are either **self-employed** (27.8 percent) or work in the **informal sector** (31.7 percent). While the importance of the informal sector is undeniable (especially as a source of income for the poor), a lack of statistics makes it difficult to assert the informal sector's full economic potential. At the same time, it should be noted that almost 40 percent of the economically **active women are illiterate** and that 49 percent attended primary school without any professional training. Those with a secondary school degree represent only 4 percent of working women.

The female **unemployment** rate is 66.3 percent, higher than the male unemployment rate of 52.5 percent. Unemployment especially affects **young women** (26.9 percent for the 15-19 age group and 51.3 percent for the 20-39 age group) regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. It should also be noted that 33.7 percent of **married men** and 60.1 percent of **married women** are unemployed.

## ***EGYPT***

Total **female labor participation rate remains low** at 18.5 percent, compared to the male economic participation rate of 72 percent. Due to problems of measurement and underreporting, this number is likely to be underestimated.

According to official unemployment statistics in Egypt, **women's unemployment is double to triple that of men**, the highest being for young and educated women in rural areas. This is despite the fact that women's participation in the labor force grew five times faster than men's in the period between 1980 and 1996.

Absorbing about 32 percent of working women, **agriculture is the largest employer of women**, an issue which needs to be taken into consideration in any agricultural reforms.

Women are also largely employed by the **public sector**. They made up 32 percent of government employees and 16 percent of employees in the private sector in 2001. These numbers indicate the need to consider the gender impact of any public sector reforms, including privatization.

In addition, there has been an increase in the number of women in **managerial and decision-making positions**. Official figures show that the percentage of women managers of the total has increased from 29 percent in 2001 to 37 percent in 2003.

## ***ISLAMIC REPUBLIC of IRAN***

Women's **labor force participation** is about 30 percent. This is extremely low given the high ratio of educated women and low fertility rates in Iran. Factors leading to such low participation rates are likely to include economic, socio-cultural and psychological ones, including the workplace environment and business culture.

At the same time, Iranian women have a presence in most professions in this traditionally male-dominated society. Many women are employed by the state and public sector. There are emerging numbers of women setting up their own businesses, and women are now active in all fields of the economic and political spectrums. These activities cover a broad range of **professions**, ranging from the legal and medical fields to serving as members of Iran's police forces.

According to the Iranian women's magazine *Zanan* (May 2004), several owners of Tehran's numerous coffee shops and gyms have been notified by police authorities not to hire female employees, unless as a cashier or in the kitchen. Many also have been advised to fire their female employees.

Entire industries, such as the rug weaving industry, are supported by women, but these women work outside the **formal labor market**.

## **IRAQ**

Overall, **women's participation in the labor force** increased from 18 percent in 1995 to 20 percent in 2000.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, the estimated **female economic activity rate** increased from 15.5 percent in 1970 to 22.6 percent by 2000 for the 20-24 years age group. Similar increases in female economic activity rate were also recorded for the 25-44 years age group from 19.5 percent in 1970 to 26.8 percent in 2000.<sup>48</sup>

Although women represent 52 percent of Iraq's **population**, according to most recent estimates, they now constitute only 23 percent of the **formal work force**. They are employed mostly as mid-level professionals in the public sector and the service sector. In rural areas, they are often employed as seasonal agricultural workers.<sup>49</sup>

The General Federation of Iraqi Women<sup>50</sup> in its Beijing plus Five Report noted that **women's increased economic participation** is not due to increased opportunities, but because women replaced men in the public sector as men left due to low salaries offered by the public sector. The percentage of **women in the public sector** rose from 34 percent in 1990 to 47 percent in 2004.<sup>51</sup>

Looking at female economic participation rates by **sector**, the services sector recorded an increase from 13.4 percent in 1970 to 51.6 percent in 1990, while the rate in agriculture decreased from 78 percent in 1970 to 39 percent in 1990.<sup>52</sup>

Iraqi women have been active participants in the formal professional labor sector, including as doctors, engineers, and school teachers. By 1997, women in **chief executive positions** were 12.3 percent of the total in this job category. Women constituted only 3.2 percent of the total of supervisory professionals, and the percentage of female technicians was 18.1 percent of the total in this job category.<sup>53</sup>

**Rural women's** economic activities are not adequately reflected in available data, since such activity is regarded as part of their domestic responsibilities. Thus, 98 percent of rural women work without wages compared to 47 percent of rural men.<sup>54</sup>

There is no legal discrimination against women applying for **credit** as long as they fulfill the eligibility criteria. By 2000, over 20 percent of beneficiaries of agricultural bank credits in two governorates were women.<sup>55</sup> The interim Iraqi government has established a special credit program for widowed and divorced women. So far, 400 loans have been granted.<sup>56</sup>

**Female-headed households** generally have lower earned and depend more on transfers and family support. This has serious implications for their coping mechanisms. In 1997, wages constituted only

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<sup>47</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing – Report submitted by Iraq, July 2004.

<sup>48</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Pro-Hussein organization promoting women's rights in Iraq with 1.2 million members.

<sup>48</sup> Data for 2004 are from the 2004 statistics from Iraq's Ministry of Planning, according to the Iraqi Al-Amal Association's White Paper on "The National Conference for Empowering Women in Democracy."

<sup>52</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>53</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing, - Report submitted by Iraq, July 2004.



one-third of sources of income of such families, while pensions and aid amounted to less than 6 percent.<sup>57</sup> Most recent official estimates show that there are approximately **150,000 female headed households** in Iraq, with that number increasing to around **300,000 by end of 2004**.<sup>58</sup>

## **JORDAN**

Based on estimates for all MENA countries and other world regions, the actual level of **female labor force participation** in Jordan is only about half of its potential - among the lowest in the region.<sup>59</sup>

Estimates of **women's labor force participation** in Jordan vary widely, from 12 to 28 percent. An examination of the educational level, fertility rate, age structure of Jordan's female population, and the current level of female labor force participation implies a lower utilization of productive capacity, creating potentially negative implications for household income and GDP growth.<sup>60</sup>

Average **unemployment rates** among women are high at 25 percent versus 15 percent for men. Young women as a subgroup are even more likely to be unemployed (estimated at 82 percent).<sup>61</sup> **Female unemployment** rates tend to increase with successive levels of education, while the reverse holds true for males; higher education levels mean lower unemployment for men but higher unemployment for women. Of women in the labor force, 64 percent have intermediate diplomas and higher. Nevertheless, unemployment rates are generally higher for women, at all levels of education, especially for those with vocational training.<sup>62</sup>

In Jordan, on average, women tend to be more **qualified** than men in similar jobs. World Bank estimates show that the average female wage earner in Jordan is likely to have 12.3 years of education, compared to 9.3 years for men holding a similar job.<sup>63</sup>

Very few women are found in **managerial and highly skilled jobs**. In the private sector they constitute only 4.1 percent of employees in the highest paid managerial jobs.<sup>64</sup>

Approximately 45 percent of the female labor force are employed in the **public sector**.<sup>65</sup> The share of women's participation in the public sector is unlikely to grow due to limitations and public sector downsizing and hiring restrictions. Future job growth for women has to be in the private sector. However, the **private sector** displays a greater degree of preferential treatment for male employees, partly due to

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<sup>57</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>58</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing – Report submitted by Iraq, July 2004.

<sup>59</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> According to the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS), women with vocational or post-secondary training, but without university education, have the highest rates of unemployment (31 percent). At higher educational levels (community college and university degrees), women's unemployment rates are more than double those of males (Jordan CAS, July 2004).

<sup>63</sup> This is of course based on a much smaller sample of women who, if working, tend to be more qualified than the average of a much larger sample of men.

<sup>64</sup> International Women's Rights Action Watch.

<sup>65</sup> The Ministries of Health, Education, Planning, Social Development, and Post and Telecommunications employ the largest proportions of women in their civil service, totaling 45,829, or approximately around 86 percent of all female civil service employees.

certain social norms as well as some labor regulations that increase the perceived cost of female employees.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout the Kingdom, 5.8 percent of women work in **agriculture** where women more than men rely on paid employment.<sup>67</sup> Men constitute a larger percentage of employers and the self employed. According to Department of Statistics data for 1999, the largest segment of rural employed women was salaried employees (92.5 percent), similar to urban women (93 percent).<sup>68</sup>

Income levels of **female-headed households** in Jordan (based on earnings) are among the lowest in the MENA region, at a little over 10 percent of total household income. This situation may imply that poor women in Jordan participate at a lower rate in the labor force than either poor women in other countries or poor Jordanian men. It may also imply that if poor women engage in labor force or economic activity, they earn wages that are substantially lower.

**Wage differentials** are less prominent in the public sector than in the private sector, and in Jordan, private sector wage differentials are the highest after Iran in the MENA region. Estimates show that if discrimination were eliminated and women were paid at a level commensurate with their skills, women's wages would increase by as much as 45 percent in the private sector and 13 percent in the public sector.<sup>69</sup>

Jordan's **Labor law** lacks a clear statement regarding wage or employment equality between men and women. Wage discrimination is common in the private sector, and there is no **minimum wage**. A 1987 survey of the state sector indicated that men's **pay** was 27.9 percent higher than that of females of equal education, age, and experience. Additionally, the Labor law forbids women from performing certain jobs and working from the hours of 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the absence of special circumstances.

Although statistical measurement of the **Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector** is problematic in Jordan, with no agreed formal definition, it is estimated that 90 percent of all businesses in Jordan are SMEs. Women entrepreneurs comprise only 3.9 percent of all entrepreneurs in Jordan. This is extremely low by world standards (average of 25-33 percent depending on how female entrepreneurship is measured). Microfinance surveys indicate that women run 63 percent of informal enterprises in Jordan.<sup>70</sup>

## **LEBANON**

Women have been joining the labor force in ever larger numbers since the civil war started in Lebanon. This development is taking place in spite of the conservative role the Lebanese society has assigned to its women.<sup>71</sup> There is a clear positive relationship between the **level of education of women** and their gaining employment in the formal labor force.<sup>72</sup>

Lebanese **women's labor participation rate** was 32.3 percent in 2000.<sup>73</sup> As education tends to be a prerequisite for women entering the labor force, working women tend to be more educated than their male

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<sup>66</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>67</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Jordanian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2003.

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Mona Khalaf, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon.

<sup>72</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Lebanese Women In Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>73</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, Statistical Appendix, 2003.

counterparts holding similar jobs.<sup>74</sup> Women are less well **paid** than men; however, this trend is changing in some sectors such as commerce and industry.

Almost a quarter or 24.6 percent of employed women work in the **professional sector**. Women have found opportunities in government, medicine, law, academia, business, and the arts. Unfortunately, few women have achieved senior positions in their fields. For instance, 41.5 percent of bank employees are women, but there are no female bank CEOs in the nation.<sup>75</sup> In 2000, women, as a share of paid employees, constituted 63.3 percent in health and social services, 62.2 percent in education, 35.5 percent in the services and business enterprises, 17 percent in trade, 16.6 percent in agriculture, and 16.1 percent in industry. More than 50 percent of those working in **charitable organizations** are women.<sup>76</sup>

The 2003 UNIFEM report points out that “Lebanese women tend to leave their work after marriage – and are allowed to cash their indemnities (as stipulated by the **Lebanese law**) – or leave work after the birth of their first child.”

## **MOROCCO**

The **rate of economic female activity** is estimated at 38 percent and, as such, is one of the highest in the region. At the same time, there has been much debate on this particular indicator, and different trends are quoted in different literature sources.<sup>77</sup>

**Unemployment rates** also vary, but are estimated to be around 17 percent for both men and women.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, an increase in male unemployment rates has negative impacts on women’s opportunities to secure formal employment.

Unemployment tends to trigger **emigration**. International migration from Morocco to Europe has undergone important changes; migrants are increasingly young, educated males who cannot find work at home. There is a prevailing view that male youth, unable to secure appropriate jobs, maybe a threat to domestic social stability.

Morocco has formulated strategies for **job rehabilitation and training** targeting unemployed youth. Yet, the focus on a gender dimension continues to be inadequate. The private sector (especially the textile industry) prefers young, unmarried female waged and salaried workers, who are deemed to be less costly in terms of benefits and increments.

Recent statistics on **child labor** seem to indicate that progress has been made in reducing the number of working boys and girls, yet the reliability on those statistics remains questionable. In fact, existing statistics for working boys are slightly higher than those for girls – though rural poverty tends to promote girls’ engagement in agricultural activities, such as water and fuel collection.

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<sup>74</sup> UNDP, Program on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>75</sup> Association des Banques du Liban, Les Ressources Humaines des Banques en An 2000, September 2001.

<sup>76</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>77</sup> According to the World Bank’s Morocco Gender Update 2002, the rate of female economic activity has continued to drop since 1998 from 24 percent in 1997 to 18.8 percent in 2001.

<sup>78</sup> According to the World Bank’s Morocco Gender Update, the female rate of unemployment increased from 21.8 percent in 1997 to 26 percent at the end of 2001. Unemployment statistics for men indicate similar trends at lower rates of change.

The issue of **sexual harassment** at the workplace - previously a taboo issue - is now being more openly discussed in Morocco. The new labor code emphasizes equality in its Preamble and contains an article regarding the criminalization of sexual harassment at the work place. Changes in the Penal Code have been made accordingly.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

**Women's participation in total employment** was estimated at 18 percent in 2003. Out of the total number of employed women, an estimated 30 percent are nationals, while the rest are expatriate female workers.<sup>79</sup>

**Female participation in the labor force** is highest in the 25-34 age group, followed by those of all ages with tertiary education. Female participation rates are directly affected by educational attainment and marital status.<sup>80</sup> In Saudi Arabia, there are incentives for married women to quit their jobs. For example, a woman who resigns because of marriage receives a benefit equal to 11 percent of her average annual salary over the years she has served.

Like in the other GCC countries, female **unemployment** in Saudi Arabia is higher than male unemployment. In fact, at 15.8 percent, it is more than double the male unemployment rate of 6.8 percent.<sup>81</sup> In response, the Shoura Council has drafted a **new strategy** that gives top priority to women's employment. It calls for a restructuring of women's higher education in line with job market requirements.

The strategy also calls for the expansion of women's technical education and vocational training, emphasizing that job opportunities for women in the **private sector** must be increased. According to the new Labor law, employers are obliged to give women who have been working for at least three years, **maternity leave** of 70 days at full pay. Women who have been employed for less than a year get maternity leave at half pay. In addition, the new law fixes the retirement age for men at 60 and for women at 55. The law also directs that women be paid their full gratuity if their contracts end at the time of marriage or childbirth.<sup>82</sup>

Strict laws about the **segregation of sexes** make it expensive for employers to hire women for whom they have to provide separate premises. Even the employment of male intermediaries by women entrepreneurs is in question. The Ministry of Commerce announced in 1995 that women would no longer be issued commercial licenses for businesses requiring them to supervise foreign workers, interact with male clients, or deal regularly with government officials.<sup>83</sup> In Saudi Arabia, it is prohibited - under any circumstances--to **integrate** women with men in places of work or facilities attached to those sites. This prohibition effectively bars women from most sectors and from attaining higher levels of management.

Some economic analysts have suggested that female education is a bad investment because it costs the government billions of riyals and the economic return is almost zero. Currently, many expatriate men and

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<sup>79</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Measured unemployment rates probably underestimate the underutilization of women's labor because, while men tend to continue looking for work, women are more likely to report themselves as housewives even if they would work if a job were available. World Bank, "Women in the Public Sphere," 2004.

<sup>82</sup> Arab News, September 15, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

women are employed in jobs that Saudi women could perform. These expatriates are **remitting millions of riyals outside the country.**<sup>84</sup>

Women may own businesses, but until recently, they were only allowed to run them through an appointed male agent.<sup>85</sup> According to Amnesty International, approximately 16,390 **businesses are owned by women** and women own 40 percent of the nation's private wealth.<sup>86</sup> Aggregate investments made by women in Saudi Arabia in 2002 included US\$ 1 million in industrial projects and US\$ 1.77 million in service projects<sup>87</sup>. Nevertheless, most women allow male relatives to control their economic interests rather than accept public responsibilities.<sup>88</sup>

In November 2002, Saudi **women's bank accounts** contained an estimated \$26.6 billion in idle funds as a result of laws that prohibit women from opening businesses of their own.<sup>89</sup> In fact, Saudi Arabia has large numbers of women business owners who have inherited family-owned businesses. Many of these are among the country's largest enterprises. The report blames the **flight of at least SR 21 billion to foreign countries** on regulations that prevent women from conducting business.<sup>90</sup>

However, the number of women registered in **local chambers of commerce and industry** is on the increase. The Jeddah chamber, for example, has more than 2000 women members out of a total membership of 50,000. In Riyadh, the figure is over 2,400 out of a total of 35,000 members. This represents a fourfold increase in just ten years. Businesswomen registered with the Eastern Province chamber number more than 1,000 out of a total of 14,000.<sup>91</sup>

Banks estimate that 30 percent of new **accounts** are opened by women, and investment managers say that 60 percent of new **investors in the stock market** are women. Furthermore, experts say that 35 percent to 40 percent of **investors in real estate** are women. Despite this, women face difficulty in accessing information concerning investment opportunities and in consultations concerning the options available, especially in the stock market.<sup>92</sup>

According to a survey conducted by a London-based research firm (Synovate), 32 percent of wives in Saudi Arabia keep their assets or part of their earnings as well as their **assets secret** from their husbands. Their assets are in bank accounts, stocks and shares, or property other than real estate.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Arab News, 3 June 2004.

<sup>85</sup> The country's Labor Minister announced in May 2004 that women may carry out business activities without the need for a *wakil* (representative). The impact of this announcement is, however, not yet clear.

<sup>86</sup> There are 40,320 commercial registrations by Saudi women in Saudi Arabia. These businesses focus on wholesaling, retailing and services, and are typically of small size and low technology use. There are 3,193 businesses in Riyadh that are owned by women. In 2003, there were 2,500 businesswomen members of the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2002, the Saudi Arabian General Investment Agency licensed 27 projects by female investors (representing 2.1 percent of total licenses).

<sup>87</sup> Nadereh Chamlou and Reem Kettaneh Yared, "Women Entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa: Building on Solid Beginning," Annual Joint Seminar of the Arab Fund on Arab Women and Economic Development, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Madinah, "Saudi Women's Bank Accounts Waiting to Be Tapped," 19 November 2003.

<sup>90</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>91</sup> Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," Arab View, 2003.

<sup>92</sup> Arab News, 9 February 2005.

<sup>93</sup> Arab News, 8 February 2005.

## **TUNISIA**

Women's **economic participation** has increased over recent decades. This was partly due to a more encouraging legal environment, recognizing women's right to work and their reproductive rights. In 1999, one of four economic active persons was a woman, compared to one in five in 1975. Similar developments are observed for the employed population.

According to the UNDP/Women's Ministry study "Les Femmes en Tunisie en 2000," the female rate of employment has been increasing faster than that of the female economic activity rate. Hence, female **unemployment** also decreased from 17.2 percent in 1994 to 15.3 percent in 2000.

In 1997, 18 percent of **married women** were economically active, a slight increase from 16.7 percent in 1994. This indicates that marriage has become less of an obstacle to women's participation in the economy.

Unlike male economic activity rates, women's economic participation rates vary largely between **governorates**. Women on average make up 31 percent of the economically active population; however, they represent 50 percent in Mahdia compared to 12 percent in Tataouine. In Tunis, the Northeastern governorate and the Central-Eastern governorate, female economic participation rates tend to be above average.

There has been a feminization of the textile industry. Since 1975, women have been mainly employed in the **industrial sector**. The service sector has since become increasingly more favorable. Women are also more active in agriculture than men. This has been reinforced by men's rural-urban migration.

In 1997, 1.3 percent of working women were employers and 15 percent were self-employed, compared to 5.8 percent and 21.2 percent of working men respectively.

**Seasonal employment** affects one in five women, as compared to one in four men.

## **WEST BANK AND GAZA**

In 2003, improved employment prospects pulled many Palestinians back into the labor force. Total employment levels were back to 1999 levels for the first time since the Intifada began. **Job creation** was relatively higher among women (a rise of 28 percent) than among men (up 20 percent). In 2003, female labor force participation rates were around 40 percent, similar to male participation rates.<sup>94</sup>

Women in 1999 accounted for 12.2 percent of total **labor force** in the West Bank and Gaza. Most women work for low **wages**.<sup>95</sup> **Unemployment rates** among women reached 13 percent in 1999.<sup>96</sup> This number would be even higher if women who were confined to their homes by necessity and not by choice were included.

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<sup>94</sup> World Bank, Four Years: Intifada, Closures, and Palestinian Economic Crisis – An Assessment, October 2004.

<sup>95</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>96</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

The share of women citing “**home duties**” as a reason to stay outside the labor force has declined from 52 percent in 2002 to 50.8 percent in 2003. The decline in women reporting “home duties” added some 28,000 women to the labor force – equivalent to a 30 percent increase.<sup>97</sup>

A recent Palestinian Parliamentary Research Unit study noted that existing **Labor laws** do not cover agricultural, domestic and family workers, or establishments with fewer than five workers. This affects women especially, based on the information that 11.6 percent of total workers work in **family enterprises** without remuneration (and these are mostly women) and that women account for 36.5 percent of total **agricultural work** force and for 60 percent of workers **without wages**.

Article 103 of the new labor law provides for **maternity leave** of 10 paid weeks after 180 days of services, and breast-feeding breaks of 1 hour per day for one year. The new Civil Service Law (article 107), which had already been in effect before the ratification of the new Labor law, was thus amended, adjusting the maternity leave from 3 months to 10 paid weeks.

The new Palestinian labor law provides for **protection of women** as regards hazardous, underground and **night work**. In the Palestinian Labor law, the Council of Ministers has the responsibility to set the night work limitations.

According to the General Union of Palestinian Women, 7 percent of Palestinian families are headed by women, 74 percent of whom are **widows**.

According to the 2002 UNIFEM report, **the poverty rate** among households supported by women reached 30 percent (compared to 22 percent of the remaining households).<sup>98</sup> Among the poor households supported by women, 73 percent live in **severe poverty**, while the proportion for households supported by men is 63 percent. Poor households supported by women account for more than 50 percent of West Bank families and 55 percent of Gaza Strip families that receive **social aid** from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Widows and divorced or abandoned women who receive social aid account for 31 percent of the total cases.<sup>99</sup>

A May 2004 Report by the ILO suggests that development strategies for the Palestinian economy should "aim to realize the full productive capacity of women, given their high educational qualifications" and recommends the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to develop **a national women's employment strategy** that would be integrated into the overall employment strategy of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>100</sup>

## ***REPUBLIC of YEMEN***

Yemen's **female labor participation** rate, at 31 percent, although very high for the region, is somewhat lower than one would predict given the country's level of female education, fertility rates, and age structure. A simulation carried out by World Bank analysts finds that if female labor force rates were to increase to 38 percent, the average rate for all developing countries, average household earnings would increase by 3 percent.

According to the 1999 Labor Force Survey, more than 75 percent of the **labor force** is male.

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<sup>97</sup> World Bank, *Four Years: Intifada, Closures, and Palestinian Economic Crisis – An Assessment*, October 2004.

<sup>98</sup> UNIFEM. *Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 2002.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> ILO, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*, May 2004.

Women's employment growth from 1994-99 was more than four times that of men (8.9 percent vs. 2.1 percent respectively) varying from sector to sector. At the same time, the share of women in the agriculture sector compared to the **non-agriculture sector** remained almost constant, indicating overall constraints for women to access employment in the non-agriculture sector.

In Yemen, the share of female employment in government fell from 9.1 percent in 1994 to 7.3 percent in 1999. This is one of the lowest female **public sector employment** rates in the MENA region. Given the segregated nature of Yemeni society, this potentially affects the government's service delivery to women in the health and education sector.

Unlike many other low-income countries, in Yemen, female **unemployment rates** are lower than male unemployment rates (around 8 percent compared to 12 percent), indicating that women are potentially being discouraged from seeking employment.



## **Public Participation and Representation**

### **ALGERIA**

Women were very active in the legislative and local elections of June-October 1997. Of the 16 million registered voters, 47 percent were women.<sup>101</sup>

Since May 2002, 24 women representatives have been elected to the **Parliament** (twice as many women as in the last parliamentary elections). However, their share remains small at 6.2 percent. At the level of **local government**, there were only 2 female mayors and 2 female *walis* (*governors*) in July 2002. There are also women at the level of the *da'ira* (*administrative district*), such as the *chef de da'ira* or *sous-prefet*.

For the first time ever, **the Executive** instated in June 2002 includes five female ministers. Four are at the level of Deputy Minister (reform of finances, scientific research, national community abroad, and family and women's situation) and one at the level of Minister (communications and culture/government spokesperson).<sup>102</sup>

Women are increasingly prevalent in the **Judiciary**. For example, women account for 34 out of 56 presidents of tribunals, and 137 out of 404 *juges d' instructions* (*examining magistrates*). This is quite an achievement for a MENA country. Nearly 20 percent of Supreme Court judges are women, and by the end of the 1990s, the majority of candidates competing to become judges were women.

The biggest **trade union**, The General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) established a women's committee in 2002.

### **BAHRAIN**

The October 2002 **parliamentary elections** were a landmark not only for Bahrain, but the entire Gulf region, where women have been denied suffrage. For the first time in Bahrain's history, women were allowed to run for national office and vote in a parliamentary race.<sup>103</sup> Although several Bahraini women had announced their nomination for the 2002 parliamentary elections, none were elected to the 40-member **Parliament**. The 40-member Upper House (the **Shoura Council**), which is appointed by the King, includes 6 women (or 15 percent).

More than 30 women ran for seats in the civic election in May 2002 and made up 10 percent of the contestants. However, not a single woman won despite the fact that women represented over 50 percent of all voters. These **municipal elections** were the first time women appeared on the ballot and the first elections in Bahrain in which women were formally allowed to vote.<sup>104</sup>

Six of the forty-six members of the Committee that drafted the **National Charter of Action** (which established Bahrain as a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral legislature) were female. Women

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<sup>101</sup> World Bank, Draft Algeria MDG Paper, June 2003.

<sup>102</sup> Distribution of cabinet posts by gender remained unchanged in October 2003 Cabinet.

<sup>103</sup> In elections for the previous parliament disbanded in 1975, only men had the franchise.

<sup>104</sup> Feminist Daily News Wire, April 2002.

turned out to vote in the referendum on the National Charter in February 2001 in almost the same numbers as men: 49 percent of the voters in the referendum were women.

In April 2004, Nada Haffadh, a doctor and a member of Bahrain's Upper House of Parliament, was appointed Minister of Health on the orders of King Hamad. This makes her the first woman in Bahrain to join a **government's Executive**, and the first woman in the Arab world to head a health ministry. In 2005, Fatima Al-Baloushi was appointed Minister for Social Affairs. The head of Bahrain's Supreme Council for Women (established in October 2001 with a mandate to improve gender equality and with an independent budget) has a rank equivalent to minister without portfolio.

Despite the improvements in women's public representation, some women's associations and activists have suggested that a quota system be introduced to ensure a number of seats for women in the next **Parliament**.

Bahrain's **first female ambassador** was appointed to France in 2000, and the rectors of Bahrain University and Gulf University are women. A Bahraini woman recently became the CEO of a bank, a first for the country.

Over the last two years, several new **women's associations**<sup>105</sup> have been formed. **The Union of Bahraini Women** was formed in 2001 as an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of existing women's and families' groups. In October 2001, the **Bahraini Chamber of Commerce and Industry** selected its first women board members and also established a **special businesswomen committee within the Chamber**. **The Bahrain Women's Society** is a campaigning body that aims to increase awareness of women's legal rights and other issues that affect women, such as globalization, information technology, the environment, healthcare, culture, the family and living in a multicultural society. **The Bahrain Businesswomen Society**, established in 2000, supports businesswomen's roles and aims to raise their professional status. It also launched the new business portal entitled "Women Gateway" in 2003, which was developed to help women in their daily business activities. **The Bahrain Young Ladies Association** has worked to educate women on their roles both as candidates and voters in their country.

Bahraini women took part in the **2000 Sydney Olympics**.

## ***DJIBOUTI***

Adopted by the National Assembly as law in 2002, 10 percent of all elected and administrative positions are to be occupied by women. The **quota law** stipulates that every party has to present at least 10 percent women among candidates. Thus, the results of the 2003 elections saw the unprecedented arrival of 7 women in **Parliament**, accounting for more than 10 percent of the newly elected parliamentarians.

There is one woman at the ministerial level. She has occupied the position of Deputy Minister for the Promotion of Women since it was established in 1999. No woman holds a position of Secretary-General. Three women are technical advisors to ministers in the Prime Minister's Office, the Youth Ministry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are no female **diplomats**.

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<sup>105</sup> Over 4,000 women are said to be members of non-government organizations and many have taken leading roles.

## ***EGYPT***

There used to be a 30-seat quota of women in the Egyptian Parliament, but this was cancelled in 1986. Since the 2000 elections, there have been 7 elected and 4 appointed women in Parliament (1.6 percent of legislators). This downward trend of women's representation can be also observed at the **local council election** level, where representation by women is as low as 1.2 percent.

In general, there is a lack of commitment among **political parties** to support women candidates for legislative and local councils.

In the **Shoura Council**, the Upper House, female membership increased to 5.7 percent in 1996 compared to 3.3 percent in 1980, reflecting an increased number of female members appointed by the President of Egypt.

There are two women in the 35-member **Cabinet**. One of them is the Minister of Insurance and Social Affairs, and the other fills the post of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. The first Egyptian female judge was appointed by a Presidential Decree in early 2003. There are three women judges in Egypt, all appointed by the President.

Women's participation in professional **syndicates** constitutes 17 percent (about one-sixth of male participants). Women's representation in **trade unions** is also low. In 1999, only 621 women (accounting for 3 percent) were elected to trade union committees in all governorates. One woman succeeded in being elected to the General Federation of Trade Unions in the last elections.

Even in **NGOs**, where women's membership is close to 35 percent, women's participation on boards remains in the range of 15 to 18 percent (with a high of 42 percent in family planning associations and a low of 8 percent in scientific and religious associations).

The Women's Committee in the ruling National Democratic Party is established under the Policies Council (other political parties do not have women and gender issues as a priority). **Equal Opportunity Units** have been established in 17 Ministries, an initiative that has been led by the National Council for Women. These units will work towards bridging gaps in the employment sector.

## ***ISLAMIC REPUBLIC of IRAN***

Despite a marked increase in the number of women occupying public positions since the onset of Mr. Khatami's presidency, women are still under-represented in public office. One encouraging sign lies in the appointment of Iran's first female **Vice President**, Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, as one of seven vice presidents in President Khatami's Cabinet.

The growing proportion of women selected in **parliamentary elections** (currently 13 female parliamentarians) reflects an increased participation of women in legislative and decision-making bodies. At the local and municipal levels, women have also been making some head-way. However, in January 2005, Iran's leadership for the first time ruled that women would not be allowed to run in the June 2005 **presidential elections**.

The **Assembly of Experts** (elected by universal suffrage but consisting entirely of clerics), appoints the country's Supreme Leader and has the sole power to dismiss him. Although the people of Iran elect the Assembly of Experts, candidates must first be approved by the 12-member **Council of Guardians**, in which there is no female representation. Constitutionally, the assembly is open to anyone, including

women, as long as they have achieved the required level of learning in Islamic jurisprudence and social and political issues.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have expanded over the past years and include **the Center for Women's Participation** (headed by Zahra Shojaie, Advisor to the President on Women's Affairs), commissions on women's affairs in the Ministry of the Interior, and special women's affairs units in ministries and governmental organizations.

The **first women's political party** in the Islamic Republic of Iran received a license in 2003.<sup>106</sup> The Iranian Women's Party Secretary-General, Fariba Davudi-Mohajer, described the party's objectives as "enlightening public opinion and pursuing the forgotten demands of women."

## ***IRAQ***

In July 2003, the group Voice of the Women of Iraq demanded a 30 percent **quota representation** in future governments and local city councils. Some progress was made when the **2004 Interim Cabinet** included six women ministers and several women deputy ministers.<sup>107</sup> More recently, one-third of the 140 winning candidates on the Shiite parliamentary list were women. Nearly 31 percent of Iraq's newly elected 275 **parliamentarians** are women. When Iraq's Parliament approved 32 **cabinet ministers** to form that country's new government, six of these top-ranking bureaucrats were women.

The recent appointment of a **female judge** prompted demonstrations in Najaf. The Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, ruled in September 2003 that judges had to be "mature, sane and masculine."<sup>108</sup> There were female law graduates and judges under the former regime. Currently, women make up one percent of judges (6 out of 744 total judge positions). The female judges are located only in Baghdad.

Under the Saddam Hussein regime, the Ba'ath Party's **General Federation of Iraqi Women** was the most active women's organization with a membership of around 1.5 million women. However, the government did not tolerate the existence of independent **women's NGOs** at the time.<sup>109</sup> Women were also represented in major **federations and trade unions**, where some held leadership positions. Nearly 21 percent of the Iraqi Bar Association members were women, while 65 percent of the Iraqi Teachers' Union members were women. In the General Federation of Labor, 20 percent of workers were women.<sup>110</sup>

## ***JORDAN***

In view of the last parliamentary elections in 2003, the Jordanian electoral law was amended to reserve 6 seats on the Lower House of the Majlis for women. Although 54 women had registered to run in the last

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<sup>106</sup> IRNA, 5 January 2003.

<sup>107</sup> At the first post-Saddam Hussein political meeting in Nasiriya, there were only four women, all exiles, out of 123 in attendance. In a meeting of future Iraqi leaders held in Baghdad on April 28, there were only a handful of women present. Three women were originally appointed to the 25 member Governing Council (Akila Al-Hashimi died after being shot in an assassination attempt in September 2003); another woman later took her position. The Interim Council of Ministers has only 3 women members, formerly Interim Governing Council members. On the level of Chief of Section the female percentage is highest in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (72), then the Ministry of Justice (65 percent), then the Ministry of Environment (52 percent) and lastly the Ministry of Public Works and Municipalities (51 percent).

<sup>108</sup> International Herald Tribune, "Woman judge in Iraq? Not yet, US military finds," 1 August 2003.

<sup>109</sup> Refugees International, April 2003.

<sup>110</sup> UNDESA, CEDAW, 1999.

elections, compared to 750 male candidates, none of them was elected to the parliament. Given the quota, 6 female parliamentarians were appointed and have made up 5.4 percent in the 110-seat **Lower House of Parliament** since August 2003. In the same year, King Abdullah dissolved the **Upper House of Parliament** and appointed seven women to a new 55-member body.<sup>111</sup> This brought the number of female members in both houses of Parliament to 11.<sup>112</sup>

In June 2003, women candidates received more than twice the **votes** women candidates received four year ago—33,452 compared to 13,128—and more women than men voted, setting another first for Jordan.<sup>113</sup>

At the **local government level**, women have achieved some modest electoral successes. In 1995, ten women were elected to **municipal council** seats, including the **first woman mayor**. In the 1999 municipal elections, however, women fared far worse. No bloc allowed women to join. Three out of 44 female candidates were elected for the 2,530 mayoral and council seats, and the only female mayor, Iman Futaymat, lost to another candidate. In an apparent attempt to compensate for the low numbers of women elected to municipal seats, the government increased the number of appointed women members of the **city council** from one to three (out of 40).

The 21-member **Jordanian Cabinet** (formed in October 2003) for the first time includes four women: the Minister of Tourism & Antiquities and Minister of Environment (merged); the Minister of Municipal Affairs; the Minister of State and Government Spokesperson; and the Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology.

Judge Taghrid Hikmat made history in July 2003 when she was elected to the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, becoming the first Jordanian woman and Arab judge to serve the prestigious court. Today, there are 19 **female judges** serving in various courts in the Kingdom, though they are not present in family courts.

## **LEBANON**

In October 2004, for the first time, women were appointed to the Lebanese Cabinet. Layla Solh, daughter of former Prime Minister Riad Solh, was named Minister of Industry. Wafaa Hamza was appointed Minister of State.

Lebanese women received the **right to vote** and run for public office in **1953**. From 1953 to 1972, nine women ran for parliamentary elections, but none of them succeeded. The first Lebanese woman to become a Member of **Parliament** was in 1963. She was appointed to complete the term of her father who had died in a tragic accident. Similarly, in 1991, Nayla Mouawad was appointed to Parliament after her husband died during his term. Only in 1992, 1996, and 2000 respectively, did three women finally get elected on their own merit. And since the August 2000 parliamentary elections, there have been three women in the 128 member Parliament (2.3 percent of Parliament). Lebanese women organizations have been advocating the establishment of a quota for women in Parliament.

On the more encouraging side, 230 of the 10,000 candidates elected in the May 2004 municipal elections were women, increasing the number of women by 91 compared to the previous municipal elections.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Previously, it included three women.

<sup>112</sup> Three female senators are serving for the first time: former Minister Rowaida Maaaitah, Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Forum for Women, Mai Abul Samen, and President of the Jordanian Business Women Forum, Wijdan Saket.

<sup>113</sup> National Democratic Institute.

This represents an increase from 1.7 percent female representation in 1998 to 2.3 percent in 2004.<sup>115</sup> Out of 108 **heads of municipalities**, only 3 are women.<sup>116</sup> In the South, female representation is relatively weaker than in the North.

Men dominate the leadership of all **political parties**.<sup>117</sup> The introduction of a **parliamentary quota system for women** continues to be discussed. In January 2005, both Speaker Nabih Berri and Interior Minister Suleiman Franjeh announced their endorsement for women's representation in Parliament according to "a certain formula." However, many women activists (like Roula Ajouz, the only female member of Beirut's municipal council) are against a women's quota.

Only 4 out of the 53 ambassadors representing the Lebanese government abroad are women. At the **director-general level**, there are 3 women of a total of 22 director-general positions.

Women's entry into the professional field has grown rapidly, with the most remarkable advances in the legal profession: 50 percent of **lawyers** and 27.5 percent of **judges** are now women. The last graduating class of judges had more women than men. Data for 2004 show that 124 out of 434 judges (28 percent) are women at **Judicial Courts**, while 19.5 percent are judges at the **State Consultative Council**.<sup>118</sup>

In 2000, 8.5 percent of women were **managers** in companies, and in 2003, there were 6 women **managing directors**. There was only one woman as Dean of University out of 13 in 2003.<sup>119</sup> And women's representation on **unions' boards** remains low.<sup>120</sup>

## **MOROCCO**

Since September 2002, 35 female parliamentarians have made up 10.8 percent of **Parliament**. This is in sharp contrast to the previous parliament, in which the rate of female representation in Morocco was the lowest in the Arab world - at 0.6 percent. This significant increase in female parliamentarians' share of representation follows five years of research and advocacy by civil society. This advocacy resulted in an implicit 20 percent quota system applied voluntarily by political parties at the last parliamentary elections. At the same time, the women's movement in Morocco is asking for legislative guarantees for the representation of women in electoral mandates and elective functions.

Some political parties also supported a 'charter of honor' at the **local elections** in September 2003 announcing that 20 percent of their candidates to the local elections would be women. Despite these efforts, only 127 of 6000 female candidates were elected, representing 0.55 percent of all elected local

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<sup>114</sup> Unofficial tally provided to The Daily Star by the Community and Educational Committee of the Lions Club in July 2004 in absence of official figures from the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>115</sup> One hundred and thirty nine women won office in 1998 out of a total of 1,022 seats, the last time municipal elections were held.

<sup>116</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> UN/ESCWA, Summary Report on the Status of Women in Arab Countries for the Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing, July 2004.

<sup>119</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>120</sup> In 2000, the status of women in the unions was as follows: The Teachers' Union - one woman out of 12 board members; The Secondary Teachers' Union - one woman out of 18 board members; The Engineers Union - no woman on the union's board; The Labor's Union - one woman member in the operating secretariat out of 12 members, and one woman member in the operating committee out of 44 members; The Physicians Order - no woman on the union's board; The Pharmacists Order - one woman was twice elected as its President; The Dentists Order - one woman was once elected as its President; The Bar Association - two women on the board.

representatives. It needs to be noted that the number of female candidates running for elections more than tripled since the last local elections in 1997, in which 80 women succeeded.

The upper chamber, **Majlis al-Mustacharin**, has 270 members who are appointed for 9 years. One of them is a woman.

Since November 2002, **the Cabinet** has included three women, but not at the ministerial level. One is a Deputy Minister and two are State Secretaries (one of them - among numerous responsibilities - also oversees the women's portfolio).

Morocco's **judiciary** remains a difficult area for women to penetrate, even though women in Morocco have been judges for a long time. Women judges are not yet permitted to serve in courts applying the *Shari'a* Law.

Women's membership in **trade unions** is weak. However, it is not uncommon to see professional associations headed by women.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

There are no women members of the **Majlis Al-Shoura**, a 150-member national consultative council appointed by the King.<sup>121</sup> However, female academics and thinkers have in the past been consulted by the Shoura Council on issues relating to women. Despite a lively public discussion on the subject matter, Shoura Council President Dr. Saleh Bin-Humaid in February 2005 ruled out the appointment of women to the consultative body during the upcoming Shoura reshuffle, when the number of its members increased from 120 to 150.<sup>122</sup>

While the **electoral law** published in August 2004 did not explicitly banish women from participating in the 2005 municipal elections, municipal bylaws did not encourage women either. In January 2005, however, the Interior Minister announced that women would not be allowed to vote in the **municipal elections**. Saudi election officials were quoted as having given administrative reasons for this decision, such as there not being enough female electoral staff to run women-only voter registration centres and that only a fraction of women in Saudi Arabia has photo identity cards. The announcement put an end to plans by some professional women to stand as candidates. However, high officials have publicly announced that they endorse women's participation in the next elections scheduled for 2009.

While no female has yet occupied a **ministerial or legislative post** in Saudi Arabia, many women hold sub-cabinet and senior government positions, mainly in the education, health or social service sector. Furthermore, a number of Saudi women hold executive positions in private sector firms, businesses, and international organizations (for example, Thoraya Obaid, UNFPA's Executive Director).<sup>123</sup> The Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry - after having established a women's wing in March 2004 - has also recently allowed women members to vote. This only occurred after numerous debates.

In 2003, women were appointed to the newly formed **National Human Rights Commission**<sup>124</sup> and the **Journalists' Syndicate** (where women also have voting power). Women also took part in a series of

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<sup>121</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>122</sup> Arab News, 10 February 2005.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>124</sup> This is a nongovernmental organization, which aims to promote women's rights and contribute to social justice.

national dialogues on challenges facing the nation. The discussions were at the heart of Saudi Arabia's reform program.<sup>125</sup>

In the summer of 2000, Princess Al-Jawhara Fahad bin Mohammed bin Abdel Rahman al-Saud was appointed **Assistant Undersecretary for Education Affairs**—the highest position ever held by a woman in the Saudi government.<sup>126</sup> **Businesswoman Lubna Al-Oyalan** was recently elected to the board of directors of a major Saudi Bank (Saudi Hollandi Bank), making her the first female in the kingdom to occupy such a position.

In the media, Saudi women journalists and writers have been prominent in voicing their opinions concerning incorrect attitudes, traditions and ideas that are not based in Islam but which are responsible for many problems women face in Saudi Arabia. The media has also been instrumental in promoting and projecting a positive image of today's professional women.<sup>127</sup>

## **TUNISIA**

Women's advancement in the public and political sphere has been reinforced over the past decade. Since the 1999 parliamentary elections, 21 women make up 11.5 percent of **parliamentary representatives** – a high percentage for a country in the MENA Region.

At the **local government level**, women are more active than at the national level. Here, they composed 20.6 percent of local government representatives in 2000, a significant increase from 1.7 percent in 1972. However, women have not been able to assume many high-level positions. In 2000, only four women occupied the position of Local Council President (*conseil municipal*).

Women's low national and local representation reflects their low representation in **political parties**. In 1992, the *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique* created the position of Permanent Secretary for Women's Affairs as part of an effort to promote women within the Party. The central committee of the party (which did not comprise more than 3 percent women in 1957) included 21 percent of women in 1998.

Women's participation in parliamentary and presidential elections has remained low. However, in 1994 women constituted 30 percent of all **voters** compared to only 13 percent in 1989.

The **Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs** became a full-fledged ministry in 1993 (out of the State Secretariat of Women's and Family Affairs, which was established in 1992). Two of 29 **ministers** are women (Minister of State Affairs in addition to the Minister of Women and the Family Affairs). In addition, out of the 25 State Secretaries, three are female. Since 1999, a woman has held the position of Ombudsman (*médiateur administratif*).

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<sup>125</sup> "Citizens' civil rights in addition to the right of men and women to participate in public affairs were among the recommendations made by the First National Dialogue Forum held in Makkah in December 2003. At the second dialogue, participants adopted recommendations combating extremism, calling for public involvement in the decision-making process and establishing civic institutions. The third dialogue held in Madinah in June gathered 70 male and female thinkers and researchers to discuss women's rights and duties in the Kingdom. The meeting lifted a virtual ban or taboo that has existed for years about discussing women's issues. It initiated a social dialogue and triggered and renewed interest in women's rights and women's roles in the future of Saudi Arabia. The dialogue reflected the Saudi leadership's opinion that women are an integral part of the reform process. It conveyed the message very clearly that both men and women are partners in reform." Arab View by Samar Fatany, 2003.

<sup>126</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>127</sup> Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," Arab View, 2003.



Women constitute about 37 percent of the **civil service** (especially in the fields of health, education, and social affairs). Tunisian women have also been fairly well represented at the **international level** including a Tunisian representative on CEDAW for a third consecutive term, high-ranking representatives in the Economic Commission for Africa, and the position of Secretary-General of the Arab Organization for the Family.

In the **Judiciary**, women have represented 24 percent of public prosecutors (*magistrates*) since 1998. Fifteen percent of high-level positions in the judiciary are occupied by women. About 60 percent of Tunis judges and 24 percent of all jurists are women. Of the 28 members of the Superior Council, only two are women. Women head both the Supreme Audit Organization and the Court of Appeals.<sup>128</sup>

Women's representation in **unions** remains very low, and unions such as the *Union General des Travailleurs* are viewed as a male dominated. While the quality and independence of NGOs is difficult to judge, it should be noted that the number of **women's associations** has increased from one in 1956 to 11 in 2001.

## **WEST BANK AND GAZA**

**Female suffrage** was granted as early as 1945. Women's **voter participation** in the Legislative Council elections reached 42 percent of the total. According to a Specialized Poll on the Proposed Palestinian Election, there is a decline in willingness to vote for women candidates. Instead a majority (65 percent) prefers allocating a **quota for women in the Legislative and Local Councils**.<sup>129</sup>

Since April 1996, the 88-member **Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)** has included 5 (or 5.7 percent) women. Concerned organizations have recently agreed to dedicate 20-30 percent of their electorate at the PLC to women. The **Palestinian People's Party** has begun seriously discussing a proposed allocation of 20-30 percent of parliamentary seats to women. The PLC also has a Women and Children Affairs Unit.

In 1996, a woman, in an unprecedented move in the region, put herself forward as a **presidential candidate** for the elections. Samiha Khalil (then head of the General Union of Palestinian Women) ran alongside President Yasser Arafat, winning 10 percent of the votes.

In November 2003, the Women's Department was upgraded to the **Minister for Women Affairs** which is headed by Zuhaira Kamal. Hence, the **Palestinian Cabinet** for the second time includes two female ministers.<sup>130</sup> Intisar al-Wazir has held the position of Minister of Social Affairs since the 1995 Beijing Conference.<sup>131</sup>

In the December 2004 municipal elections, 139 women were among the 887 candidates running for 306 seats. As per the quota system requiring that women hold two seats per council, **52 women were elected to local councils**. For the first time, the West Bank has a **female mayor**.

As regards the February 2005 cabinet, only two of the 24 are women, as in the outgoing cabinet. One of the female ministers is in charge of the ministry of women's affairs, while the other has no portfolio.

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<sup>128</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>129</sup> Birzeit University, 18 February 2004.

<sup>130</sup> Dr. Hanan Mikail-Ashrawi served as Minister of Higher Education from 1996-98.

<sup>131</sup> Al-Wazir is one of the most prominent women in Palestine. She is known as "Umm Jihad" (her husband Abu Jihad was the PLO's second-in-command when murdered in 1988).

Six female **judges** have been appointed in addition to a number of female **district attorneys**. One female judge was appointed in the High Court, another in the Supreme Court.

According to the 1999 Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, women in the **Palestine National Authority (PNA)** have been appointed to leading positions at grades which enable them to share the various levels of decision making in 13 ministries. However, women's participation in decision-making positions in the PNA institutions is still limited at 10 percent.<sup>132</sup> All heads of public structures and authorities are men. Of 240 director-generals, 30 are women, representing 12.5 percent of the general managers in the PNA. Women do not hold leadership positions in certain ministries such as Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Public works.

There have been three **female ambassadors**, and three women also participated in the **negotiations of the Peace Process**. In 1999, 65 (or 8.7 percent) of the elected members of the **Palestinian National Council** (the Parliament "in-exile") were women. Three appointed women of the 100-member **Palestinian Central Council** were also women.

A woman was recently appointed leader of the **Women's Police Force** (a new and non traditional field), which has 24 female police officers.

**The General Union of Palestinian Women**, together with an Inter-ministerial Committee, works at the national level to improve the status of women. In addition, a committee of non-governmental organizations has been formed through the General Union of Palestinian Women, in which women's centers, organizations, and notable personalities participate to promote the status of Palestinian women.

## ***REPUBLIC of YEMEN***

In a conservative society like Yemen, where tradition still dictates that women work inside the home, very few women are in influential positions. In the 1997 parliamentary elections, the number of **women candidates** decreased to only 19 candidates, from 52 in 1993. In this regard, the female Minister of Human Rights recently criticized opposition **political parties** for their bias against women and their negative stance towards women's empowerment.

There is only one **female minister** and one **female Member of Parliament**. Women are also not able to find their way into important positions in the judiciary, such as the **Supreme Court**. In 2001, there were 25 female **judges** (who tend to be from the South) of a total of 1037 (or 2.5 percent). This, however, is a significant decrease from 13.5 percent in 1995.

The **Shoura Council**, a consultative council appointed by the President, was formed in 1990 but did not include any women until 2001, when two women were appointed to the 101 member council. In **local councils**, women only make up 0.6 percent of a total of 6,035 local council members.

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<sup>132</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

## Women's Rights

### **ALGERIA**

Algeria signed the **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in 1996, albeit with reservations to provisions on ending discrimination against women within marriage and the family. While Algeria respects Article 9 (1) of CEDAW, which protects women's right to their own nationality, it does not provide equal rights with regard to passing nationality on to children in case of marriage to a foreigner, or to the foreign spouse himself.<sup>133</sup>

There is a schism between the personal status law, which is grounded in interpretations of Islamic law, and other laws such as the commercial codes, which draw on secular premises. Algeria's **Family Code** provisions are contested by human rights associations on issues such as the retention of legal recognition of polygamy and the daughter's obligation to seek permission for her first marriage.

The Code has been under review by a national commission responsible for *la refonte et la codification des codes civils et des procédures civiles*. The commission proposed **52 amendments**, which were recently adopted by the Council of Ministers. According to the revisions, the age of marriage for both women and men is fixed at 19 years; the couple to be married is obliged to have a notarized marriage contract and present a medical certificate; parental responsibilities are to be shared; and the necessity of a male relative's consent to the marriage of a woman has been removed. The bill subjects polygamy to the authorization of either of the spouses, with the permission of the President of the Court. With regard to divorce, the bill introduces the principle of the custody charge for both parents.

One of the most serious issues regarding **labor law** is that it does not provide sufficient protection for areas of work in which women are heavily engaged, particularly seasonal agricultural work, piece or casual work, domestic service, and work without pay in family firms. In general, Algerian women are not sufficiently aware of their rights.

### **BAHRAIN**

Bahrain signed **CEDAW** in June 2002, though with reservations to provisions dealing with change in national law and nationality of children.

In spite of pertinent articles in the **Constitution** and **National Charter**, in practice **Shari'a Law** governs legal rights of Bahraini women and specific rights may vary according to Shi'a or Sunni interpretation. There is **no codified personal status law**, but there are two *de facto* legal systems based on traditional Shari'a. Sunnis follow the **Maliki School** and Shi'as follow the **Ja'afari School**<sup>134</sup>

In terms of **freedom of movement**, women can obtain their passport and travel without a male guardian's permission. However, a Bahraini woman must live in her husband's house or lose the right to maintenance. There is no **legal minimum age of marriage**.

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<sup>133</sup> Nationality can be acquired by the child of a national mother and a foreign father who was himself born in Algeria.

<sup>134</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

Divorced women, whether Sunni or Shi'a, gain custody of daughters until age nine and sons until seven, when they come under the father's **custody**. Regardless of custody, fathers retain the sole right to decide on legal matters for their children until they reach the legal age. A non-Bahraini woman automatically loses custody of her children when divorcing a Bahraini husband.

Children of Bahraini women legally married to non-Bahrainis do not have the right to Bahraini **nationality**. While foreign wives can acquire Bahraini **nationality**, foreign husbands of Bahraini women are not entitled to Bahraini nationality.

**Polygamy** is legal and each co-wife has the right to a separate dwelling of equal quality. According to Ja'afari interpretation, co-wives from different levels of society receive different levels of maintenance. Similarly, in the Maliki interpretation, the standard of living of each co-wife affects the amount to which she is entitled.

There is no law prohibiting women from **driving**. Since the 1950s, Bahraini women have been free to drive without male escort.

## ***DJIBOUTI***

Djibouti ratified **CEDAW** without reservations in December 1998. However, Djibouti has yet to submit to the United Nations a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that they have adopted to implement the Convention. This was supposed to have been submitted within a year after its entry into force.

In January 2002, the **Family Code** replaced a 1995 law that governed matters of marriage and divorce according to the Islamic Law. The new law grants better protection for women and children. However, women's rights are not the same as those of men either during or after marriage.

Although the new law did not abolish **polygamy**, the practice now requires the agreement of the first wife, an assessment of the husband's economic position, and an authorization by a judge.

**Child custody** is decided by a tribunal. Children of a foreign parent can receive Djiboutian nationality regardless of whether the father or the mother is a foreign national.

The **Labor Code** has been under revision. The draft of October 2003 includes many improvements, such as allowing women to work at night and enabling the father of a newborn child to take time off to be with his family.

## ***EGYPT***

**CEDAW** was ratified in 1981, with reservations to nondiscrimination measures, nationality, family and marriage, and arbitration.

Laws and policies exist to protect equal rights for men and women with regard to property and contract rights, but **implementation of these laws is arbitrary**. Inheritance continues to be based on Shari'a Law.

There continue to be discrepancies between men and women with regard to the **personal status law** (especially interpretation and implementation), on issues of divorce, custody, alimony, etc. The **new**

**divorce law**, which was passed by Parliament in January 2000, enables Egyptian women for the first time to initiate divorce on grounds of incompatibility. But they must renounce all financial claims and return money given at the time of marriage - an arrangement known in Islam as *khula*. More recent developments include the amendments of the **Nationality Law** by Presidential Decree in October 2004. This allows Egyptian women married to foreigners to pass on their Egyptian nationality to their children. Also, the establishment of a **Family Court**, with well-trained and specialized judges, went into effect as of October 2004. This is facilitating women's settlement of their cases in adherence to court orders.

Linked to the issue of **women's access to services and rights** (such as voting) is the problem faced by many Egyptian women, particularly the poorest, of obtaining birth certificates and identity cards.

According to the March 2 Official Beijing + 10 Statement, an **Ombudsman Office** has been established at the National Council for Women to receive complaints regarding gender discrimination. The office has installed three **toll-free hotlines** and appointed lawyers, who deal with issues of gender discrimination at the work place as well as personal status law and domestic violence.

In addition, a new law was passed for the creation of a **Family Insurance Fund**, with the aim of advancing alimony for women until personal status cases are resolved and judgments enforced. Ministerial Decree No. 3936 of 1996, which stipulates that a wife should obtain her husband's prior approval for the **issuance of a passport** and as a condition to travel abroad, was recently abolished because it was deemed unconstitutional.

The **Tax Law** was also changed to make it more gender sensitive. Further, the Egyptian Parliament agreed to increase the age of children's custody to 15 years of age.

## ***ISLAMIC REPUBLIC of IRAN***

In October 2003, **Iranian human rights activist Shirin Ebadi** was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Having become Iran's first female judge in 1969, she was removed from office after the Islamic revolution in 1979. Since then, she has been active as a human rights advocate providing legal representation for victims of political persecution and has fought for the rights of women and children in Iran. Ebadi played a major role in the fight for Iranian ratification of CEDAW, a battle which was lost due to opposition from the **Guardians Council** and various religious leaders.

In early August 2003, the reformist-dominated Parliament ratified a bill proposing that the Islamic Republic of Iran would join **CEDAW**. Dozens of clerics held rallies in the holy city of Qom to protest against Parliament's decision, and the Guardian Council, which vets all legislation in accordance with Islamic Shari'a law, defied Parliament and rejected the United Nations treaty.

Discrimination in such areas as **marriage**, child custody, divorce, right to work, right to travel, inheritance, bearing legal witness, etc., are among the many legal issues facing women.<sup>135</sup> There is also marked discrimination in the **Penal Code** as girls legally come of age at age 9 while the age for boys is 15.

The issue of "**blood money**" is currently much debated in the country. The Penal Code, based on Islamic law, dictates that if a man kills a woman, he faces the death penalty only if the victim's family pays the difference between the value of his life and that of his victim. As a woman's life is valued as half that of

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<sup>135</sup> Some aspects can be corrected by stipulating the aforementioned in the marriage contract.

a man (about US\$11,000 versus US\$22,000), victims' families are faced with huge bills before sentences can be carried out. This regulation is much more important when it concerns compensation due to loss and dismemberment, workers' compensation, and impunities that are calculated on the basis of blood money. In practice, there are cases where the government has compensated families in order to carry out social justice.

Recently, the Iranian Parliament approved a bill for **equal inheritance and custody rights** that is now with the Guardian Council.

## **IRAQ**

In 1986, Iraq signed **CEDAW**, though with reservations to Articles 2, 9, 29, which deal with change in national law, nationality of children, and arbitration.

Iraq has made social investments in women, and its legislation gives them **equal rights to education and employment**. Iraq's constitution and labor law guarantee the right of work of every citizen regardless of sex. Iraq has also ratified the **ILO Convention C100 on equal pay** and its labor laws explicitly mention equal pay for work of equal value. At the same time, there are prohibitions on **night work** for women, but exceptions are made for certain occupations.

A 1992 law bans the **foreign travel of a woman** if she is not escorted by her father or husband. Women must live in the house of their husband or else forfeit their maintenance. In July 2003, the group "Voice of the Women of Iraq" called for the lifting of the ban on women traveling abroad without a male chaperone.

An Iraqi woman married to a non-Iraqi cannot give her children her **nationality**, but foreign nationals can apply for citizenship, which can be passed on to their children.

Regarding **polygamy**, marriage to more than one woman is not permitted except with the permission of a judge. Furthermore, the husband must have the financial ability to support more than one wife.

**Divorce** or *talaq* is irrevocable if the husband has pronounced three separate *talaqs* and the wife's waiting period is completed." Either spouse may request a judicial divorce in the case of: harm which renders continuation of marriage impossible, infidelity, marriage with a minor without the court's consent, or the husband's taking a second wife without permission of the court.<sup>136</sup>

Although tribal customs often prevail regarding **custody** arrangements, the mother has the preferential right to the custody and upbringing of the child during marriage as well as after its dissolution, and if it is not injurious to the child. In case of death of the child's father (or his incapacity to fulfill custody conditions), a working mother is not disqualified from custody on the grounds of employment, unless it is against the child's interest.

Iraq's **Penal Code** prescribes harsh punishments for both sexual violence and abduction or trafficking, but there is also a long-standing cultural stigma and shame attached to rape that places blame on the victim, excusing or mitigating punishment for the perpetrator, according to a HRW report. The Penal Code has incorporated some of these norms. A man may escape punishment for abduction, for example, by marrying the victim. So-called **honor killings** often result in significantly reduced sentences. The

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<sup>136</sup> The wife is entitled to request judicial divorce if the husband is imprisoned; leaves her for two years or more without lawful justification; is impotent; infertile; or refuses to provide her with maintenance.

attitudes reflected in such provisions are often shared by policemen, resulting in reluctance by victims of such crimes to file a complaint.

## **JORDAN**

Jordan became a signatory to **CEDAW** in 1980 and ratified it in 1992, but it has registered reservations to articles 9, 15 and 16, regarding nationality rights of children, movement, parents' equal rights, and personal rights to choose family name, profession and occupation.<sup>137</sup>

The Jordanian Constitution of 1952 embodies the principle of equality before the law in rights and obligations. However, many laws contain provisions with implicit and explicit impacts on women's rights, due to either discriminatory aspects in terms of unequal citizenship rights or fewer protections with regard to nationality, marriage and participation in the labor force and public sphere. To address these problems, a package of amendments to eliminate differential treatment has been proposed since 2001. These amended laws have not been approved by Parliament and are therefore in effect as Provisional Laws.

Prior to 2001, Jordanian laws on marriage provided unequal treatment for men and women with regard to the age of marriage by promoting early marriages for girls (15) and boys (16). The *Personal Status Provisional Law No. 82 of 2001* raised the age of marriage to 18 years for both males and females. This could enable girls to complete their secondary education and therefore be more employable. It could also give them more freedom in choosing their spouse and even in controlling the number of children they will have over a lifetime, as delayed marriage results in delayed childbearing.

The provisions of the same law sanctioned *khula*, which grants women the right to divorce similar to (but not the same as) a man's right to divorce. In August 2003, the lower house of Jordan's newly-elected Parliament rejected this law. It was among 211 temporary laws introduced by the government since the previous parliament was dissolved two years prior. Unlike men, women must specifically request a special clause in their marriage contract to obtain the right to divorce, and the law requires men to pay support to divorced wives for only one year. A guardian is required to administer a bride's **marriage contract**.

According to Jordanian **Nationality** Law No. 6 of 1986, "Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians have the right to keep their Jordanian nationality." However, the child of a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian is not automatically considered a citizen of Jordan. A Jordanian mother cannot transfer her nationality to her child unless he or she is born in Jordan to a mother with Jordanian citizenship and a father of unknown or foreign nationality or whose paternity has not been legally established.

A Jordanian woman cannot obtain a separate **passport** without her husband's written permission. However, Jordanian legislation authorizes the Director of the Passport Department to issue a passport for special cases for a period not exceeding one year. Under the Provisional Passports Law of 2003, married women no longer require such written permission. These new provisions also allow married women with children to include their minor children under 16 in their passports, provided such children are not already listed in their fathers' passports.

According to Jordan's Civil Status Law, the "**family book**," or *daftar*, is required to conduct nearly all official transactions, including voting or being a candidate for elected office, registering children for

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<sup>137</sup> Amnesty International USA, June 2004.

school or university, obtaining civil service jobs, and gaining access to social services such as food assistance. Upon marriage, a woman is transferred from her father's *daftar* to that of her husband. If a woman is "separated" from a *daftar* due to divorce or death, the only solution is to re-register under the *daftar* of a male family member. This becomes problematic if the male family member is working abroad or deceased. The Civil Status Provisional Law No. 9 of 2001 proposes to amend the existing law to allow divorced and widowed women to obtain independent *daftars* in their own names.

Jordanian legislation does not include specific laws that clearly penalize all forms of violence against Jordanian women. In August 2003, temporary legislation to tighten the penalties for **crimes of "honor"** was rejected by parliamentary deputies. The recent vote follows a 1999 landmark ruling by a Justice Ministry panel which had decided to annul an article of the Penal Code that provides for leniency towards men who commit violent acts against women in the "honor" context. Later that year, the Parliament had already rejected this change.<sup>138</sup> Police reports indicate that between 25 and 30 women are killed annually (one-third of all murders in Jordan) in the name of family honor, making it the most common type of murder of women in the country.

Jordan's Ministry of Labor recently endorsed a 'Special Working Contract for **non-Jordanian Domestic Workers**,' which stipulates their rights to life insurance, medical care, rest days, and repatriation upon expiration of the contract and reiterates migrant women's right to be treated in compliance with international human rights standards. This minimum standard contract is expected to become a model for other countries in the Arab region.

## **LEBANON**

Lebanon acceded to **CEDAW** in 1997, albeit with reservations to articles on nationality, marriage and family life, and arbitration.

A **woman's personal status** is dictated by her religious affiliation. Lebanon recognizes 19 different groups that are each accorded their own religious law.

Some women's groups have called for reform to create a universal civil **marriage** that would bring all marriages under a common code. The introduction of an optional civil marriage was suggested by the President of the Republic, Elias Hraoui, back in 1998. This proposal has been since sharply resisted by religious leaders (both Christian and Muslim), and the Parliament has blocked it from consideration. The **legal minimum age of marriage for most women** is 17 (16 with guardian consent). For Shi'a women, it is 9, and for Druze women, it is 17 (15 with guardian consent). For most men, the legal minimum age of marriage is 18 (17 with guardian consent). For Shi'a men, it is 15, and for Druze men it is 18 (16 with guardian consent).

Some areas of women's rights in Lebanon are also dictated by **common civil code**. This code guarantees that women can own businesses and that their testimony will be given equal weight to men's in court. The 2000 report by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) stated that the **Penal Code** discriminates against women in terms of honor killings, adultery, and rape.

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<sup>138</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.



## **MOROCCO**

Morocco acceded to **CEDAW** in 1993 with reservations to provisions regarding the nationality of children, movement, marriage, and arbitration. Removing these reservations and harmonizing national legal texts in this regard may now be possible since changes of the *moudawana*, or Personal Status Code, were put into law in January 2004.

In an unprecedented move, King Mohammed VI announced in October 2003 a **landmark reform**, granting women new rights in marriage and divorce. According to the new legislation, which passed Parliament in January 2004, the family is placed under the joint responsibility of husband and wife. The new law no longer stipulates women's submission to the guardianship of a male family member and calls for equality with respect to rights and obligations.

Protecting the wife against possible misuse by the husband of his right to **divorce**, the new legislation protects the woman's rights by making repudiation conditional upon the court's prior authorization. It further enhances the chances for reconciliation, both through the family and the judge. It requires that all monies owed to the wife and children be paid in full by the husband before divorce can be duly restricted. Verbal repudiation by the husband is no longer valid as divorce is subject to a court ruling.

While Morocco protects women's right to their own **nationality**, it does not provide equal rights with regard to passing nationality to a foreign spouse or common children. A proposal to grant Moroccan nationality to children born to a Moroccan mother and foreign father does not seem to be confronting any political problems, but still has not passed in Parliament.

In terms of **child custody**, initially, a woman could not be the legal guardian of her own children except in case of the father's death or loss of his legal capacity. The new legislation makes (for the first time in Moroccan history) reference to the International Agreements on Children's Rights and gives the woman the possibility to retain custody of her child under certain conditions, even upon remarrying or moving out of the area where her husband lives.

**Inheritance** is also governed by Islamic law, which defines the shares that go to each family member. The proposed new law provides grandchildren on the daughter's side the ability to inherit from their grandfather just as the grandchildren on the son's side do.

Despite notable reforms of the Family Code, the legal system continues to have major weaknesses related to the code of contract obligations, the civil procedures code, the labor code, penal legislation, and the nationality code.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

The exclusion of women in the 2005 municipal elections goes against Saudi Arabia's ratification of the **CEDAW**, which took place in October 2000, without reservations to Article 7 on political participation.<sup>139</sup>

According to an independent survey of more than 15,000 Saudi men and women conducted over six months across Saudi Arabia, more than 90 percent of the population wants to grant women more rights.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Amnesty International, "News Amnesty," 17 November 2004.

<sup>140</sup> Financial Times, 13 October 2004.

Islam gives a woman the **right to economic independence** and prohibits men from illegally exploiting their wealth. However, in practice, local banks handling public offerings often refuse to sell women shares unless they produce a written consent from their husbands. In practice, husbands are also able to buy shares in the name of their wives without their wives' prior knowledge.<sup>141</sup>

Recently, women have been able to obtain **identity cards**, but only 6 percent of Saudi women requested them.<sup>142</sup> However, IDs cannot be obtained without the approval of a male guardian. The lifting of such a requirement would be the first step towards women's legal independence by giving them an identity distinct from that of their husbands or fathers. This could then serve as the basis for granting passports, offering bank loans, and other means of increasing a woman's autonomy.

Legal matters pertaining to women are usually the purview of Islamic courts that use religious law as the basis for decisions. The Council of Senior Ulama makes the final interpretation of Islamic law in Saudi Arabia with the consent of the king. A man's **testimony** is equal to that of two women in court. A man may receive a **divorce** simply upon request, while a woman must win a legal decision (and written approval by the husband) to separate. Additionally, women are required to remain **segregated** from all males who are not members of their household. Women cannot receive **driver's licenses** or drive, nor are they allowed to be driven by men who are not family members.<sup>143</sup> In addition, a woman must obtain the written consent of a male family member to receive **medical treatment**.<sup>144</sup>

Discrimination against women includes limitations on **freedom of movement**, allowing for effective imprisonment within the home, and preventing recourse to protection or redress from human rights abuses. Equal **educational and vocational opportunities** continue to be denied to girls and women. Women abused by private individuals such as husbands or employers continue to be denied access to adequate protection or redress by the government. **Female domestic workers** remain at particular risk of human rights abuses, including physical abuse.

The practice of **forced marriage was recently banned**, as the Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's top religious authority, denounced the practice as un-Islamic. However, there is no systematic enforcement of this and institutional mechanisms of enforcement have not been established.

## **TUNISIA**

Tunisia ratified **CEDAW** in 1985, but reserved the provisions that contradict the Tunisian Constitution, the Personal Status Code, or the Tunisian Nationality Code.

Tunisia is most notable in the region for its women's legal status. The first accomplishment after Tunisia's independence was the 1956 adoption of the **Personal Status Code**, which laid the foundations for a new organization of the family, based on legal equality of men and women. Under the leadership of the former socialist president, Habib Bourguiba, polygamy and divorce by renunciation were outlawed. Bourguiba also placed limits on the tradition of arranging marriages, setting a minimum nuptial age of 17 for girls.

In 1992, the Personal Status Code was amended with a goal to further advance women's rights in the family. A Tunisian woman may now transmit her **nationality** to her children. In addition, the government recently introduced a new law that would make it possible for a Tunisian mother to register

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<sup>141</sup> Arab News, December 2004.

<sup>142</sup> BBC News, 10 February 2005.

<sup>143</sup> Women used to be able to obtain international drivers-licenses in Saudi Arabia.

<sup>144</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

her child as a citizen in the presence of a foreign father. Some legal discrimination against women continues to exist especially in the **property and inheritance law** governed by Shari'a. Property acquired during the marriage, regardless of who actually previously owned or obtained it, is in the name of the husband.

However, women's **legal literacy** remains problematic. According to International Women's Rights Action Watch, as of 1991 some 70 percent of illiterate women did not know that the provisions of the Personal Status Code granted them rights.

The wearing of **hijab** was outlawed under Bourguiba in 1986. When Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali became president in 1987, he lifted the ban on the wearing of hijab for two years. Currently, the wearing of hijab is forbidden in government offices, although it is more tolerated in general.

In an attempt to fight discrimination in employment, the government has made **equal opportunity** a mandatory part of investigation within audits of governmental institutions and state-owned enterprises. However, these standards have only limited impact as these requirements do not apply to the private sector.

Tunisia's current **abortion** law dates to 1973 when the new Penal Code was enacted. Article 214 of the Penal Code authorizes the performance of abortions on request during the first three months of pregnancy. The Government subsidizes abortion and those entitled to receive free health care can obtain an abortion free of charge in public hospitals.

## **WEST BANK AND GAZA**

Since the Palestinian Authority does not have state status, it is not eligible to ratify **CEDAW**, but both governmental and non-governmental organizations have taken the initiative of reporting to the United Nations CEDAW Committee that monitors implementation of the Convention.

A commitment to the advancement of the role of women is explicit in the **Declaration of Palestinian Independence** in which women's entitlement to equal rights is stated.

According to the Palestinian Beijing plus Five document, the **Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)** operates in compliance with CEDAW and other international agreements concerning the equal rights of women in exercising their political rights and in decision-making.

Palestinian women's organizations are currently working closely with the PLC to ensure that two new laws, the Family Law and the Child Law, are framed in accordance with the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights.<sup>145</sup> The Palestinian National Authority is supposed to amend and update laws and regulations in force, such as the **Personal Status Code**.

Women are now able to give their **nationality** to their husbands and children. Regarding **mobility**, passports can now be obtained without the need of the permission of any guardian.

Pre-occupation Jordanian **penal law** currently used in the West Bank absolves a rapist if he marries his victim. A new draft Palestinian Penal Code (currently in its second reading in the Parliament) would penalize rapists more severely.

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<sup>145</sup> Asma Khader, *Law and the Future of Palestinian Women*, 1998.

## ***REPUBLIC of YEMEN***

One of the first serious acknowledgements of the need to address gender inequality in Yemen occurred when the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen signed **CEDAW**, with reservations, in 1984. The Constitution of the unified Republic of Yemen contains a number of important articles related to women's rights.<sup>146</sup>

Various Yemeni laws issued after unification are in direct conflict with the CEDAW Convention and the Constitution. In particular, the **personal status laws** often conflict with these two documents. For example, it gives men the right to consent to the wife's work outside the home, which has consequences for women's ability to participate in the economy independently. Concerning the right of movement, Yemeni men have the right to restrict their dependents' movements, including their wives and adult unmarried daughters.

The **absence of a minimum legal age of marriage** in Yemen remains an issue, as this translates to young women getting married earlier, having more children, and potentially discontinuing their education. This phenomenon affects urban areas more than rural areas, despite the fact that the age of marriage is higher in urban areas (16.9 years on average, compared to 15.9 years in rural areas).

Yemen's Minister of Human Rights, Amat al-Aleem al-Suswah, recently attacked opposition parties for their bias against women. The minister blamed the weak political improvement in their work on their superficial representation of women in the parties and suggested that the presence of women is crucial to any growing nation.

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<sup>146</sup> Article 19 guarantees the right of equality of opportunity to all citizens in the political, economic, social and cultural domains. Article 27 states that there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 38 states that Yemenis are free to move around the country without restrictions. In addition, Article 42 of the Labor law states that women have equal rights *vis-à-vis* employment, wages, training, rehabilitation and social insurance.

## Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

### Algeria and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	2000	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	79.6	93.5*	98.6
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	79.2	90.0	91.1
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	12.3	..	
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	3.2 (1985-96)	6.2 (2002)	6.0

\*Statistics of the Ministry of Education

### Education and Training

Gender disparities with regards to **access to education** exist primarily in rural areas. According to the most recent census (1998), the rate of schooling for girls in urban areas is 87.4 percent compared with 88.7 percent for boys. In more remote rural areas, this rate drops to 60.5 percent for girls and 74.3 percent for boys. Secondary school enrollment is lower for the poor and for girls.

Girls' school **dropout** seems to be affected by parental choice, whereas in the case of boys that decision tends to be left to the boys' discretion. Parental decisions are very much based on the cost of schooling, and parents tend to favor their sons when they are faced with financial challenges and must decide who remains in school. The problem of insecurity and lack of support measures (provision of food, transport, etc.) has also contributed to girls' dropping out of school. This is particularly true in the rural areas.

**Illiteracy** remains a big problem with a 40.3 percent rate among women as opposed to a 23.6 percent for men. Poverty incidence is highest among the illiterate, who are mainly rural women (46 percent) followed by urban women (29 percent), rural men (22 percent) and finally urban men (13 percent). This situation also affects voting patterns since many illiterate women tend to either allow men to vote on their behalf or are told by their husbands, fathers, or brothers for whom to vote.

A recent review of **textbooks** shows that the image of women presented in textbooks is extremely traditional, hence reinforcing many of the existing stereotypes. This bias tends to be more apparent in Arabic textbooks than in French textbooks.

Women represent 53 percent of those enrolled in **universities**. They tend to be concentrated in traditional fields such as education, but they seem to be breaking through in some non-traditional areas such as medicine.

### Health

Regional disparities persist in terms of availability of health services, in turn having repercussions on women's health. The rate of **maternal mortality** is relatively high (140 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000), particularly in the rural areas. The **fertility rate** remains high at 2.75 births per woman.

Few **preventive services** are available to diagnose and prevent diseases that mainly affect women, such as breast and cervical cancer. Moreover, information about these diseases is not readily available to women or men.

Particularly in rural areas, the **lack of clean water** poses health risks, and scarcity and storage issues especially impact women, as they are mostly in charge of its provision.

Women have been exposed to a considerable degree of **violence** due to the country's internal conflict.

### Economic Participation

Women's **access to the labor market** outside the household has increasingly been accepted in Algerian society. This is likely to stem from the economic pressures and needs faced by households for additional income. At the same time, it has become more acceptable that women's education is not an end in itself. Nevertheless, women workers are still perceived as taking jobs from men.

Female **economic activity** makes up 17 percent of the total active population. The rate of female economic activity doubled between 1977 and 1996, and grew faster than that of men.<sup>147</sup> Employed women are mainly found in industry and agriculture as well as the public sector and services. Women are also heavily employed in the health sector.

With 17 percent of the active population of 8.6 million being women, the female **unemployment** rate is 31.8 percent as compared to that of 26 percent for men.<sup>148</sup> This does not include "unemployed" women who are more likely than men to altogether drop out of the labor market when their unemployment period is too long.

With a shrinking public sector and a non-absorbing private sector, women's participation in the **formal sector** seems to be declining. This is reinforced by relatively higher barriers to entry for women in the private sector. Only 10.5 percent of businesses, self employed as well as enterprises, belong to women.<sup>149</sup>

There is a serious lack of visibility of women's economic contribution. Statistics tend not to take into account underestimated work in the **informal sector**, despite women's important presence. About 20-25 percent of total employment is estimated to take place in the informal sector.

There has been a positive evolution in female employment, particularly as a result of the increase in the age of female **marriage** and higher levels of education. While traditionally, unmarried women were more represented in the formal labor market than married women, the deterioration of economic conditions in the last decade has induced a moderate increase in the number of married women in the workforce. More than half of working women are less than 35 years of age, and 33 percent are between the ages of 20 and 29. Women are legally able to benefit from **maternity leave** while maintaining their employment and salary status.

Recently, the Association of Female Managers (*l'Association des femmes cadres* or AFCARE) made a series of recommendations regarding the improvement of women's economic participation. Accordingly, an improvement of knowledge and information relating to women's employment is necessary and should be created, in particular through the development of data banks on female employment. AFCARE also

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<sup>147</sup> UNDP, MDG Report on Algeria, February 2003.

<sup>148</sup> World Bank, Draft Gender and Poverty Note, May 2003.

<sup>149</sup> World Bank, Algeria Country Assistance Strategy, 2003.

recommends that a system of quotas be established for women in order to facilitate their access to decision-making jobs in the various public institutions. To what extent these recommendations will be influential remains to be seen.

### Public Participation and Representation

Women were very active in the legislative and local elections of June-October 1997. Of the 16 million registered voters, 47 percent were women.<sup>150</sup>

Since May 2002, 24 women representatives have been elected to the **Parliament** (twice as many women as in the last parliamentary elections). However, their share remains small at 6.2 percent. At the level of **local government**, there were only 2 female mayors and 2 female *walis* (*governors*) in July 2002. There are also women at the level of the *da'ira* (*administrative district*), such as the *chef de da'ira* or *sous-prefet*.

For the first time ever, **the Executive** instated in June 2002 includes five female ministers. Four are at the level of Deputy Minister (reform of finances, scientific research, national community abroad, and family and women's situation) and one at the level of Minister (communications and culture/government spokesperson).<sup>151</sup>

Women are increasingly prevalent in the **Judiciary**. For example, women account for 34 out of 56 presidents of tribunals, and 137 out of 404 *juges d' instructions* (*examining magistrates*). This is quite an achievement for a MENA country. Nearly 20 percent of Supreme Court judges are women, and by the end of the 1990s, the majority of candidates competing to become judges were women.

The biggest **trade union**, The General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) established a women's committee in 2002.

### Women's Rights

Algeria signed the **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in 1996, albeit with reservations to provisions on ending discrimination against women within marriage and the family. While Algeria respects Article 9 (1) of CEDAW, which protects women's right to their own nationality, it does not provide equal rights with regard to passing nationality on to children in case of marriage to a foreigner, or to the foreign spouse himself.<sup>152</sup>

There is a schism between the personal status law, which is grounded in interpretations of Islamic law, and other laws such as the commercial codes, which draw on secular premises. Algeria's **Family Code** provisions are contested by human rights associations on issues such as the retention of legal recognition of polygamy and the daughter's obligation to seek permission for her first marriage.

The Code has been under review by a national commission responsible for *la refonte et la codification des codes civils et des procédures civiles*. The commission proposed **52 amendments**, which were recently adopted by the Council of Ministers. According to the revisions, the age of marriage for both

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<sup>150</sup> World Bank, Draft Algeria MDG Paper, June 2003.

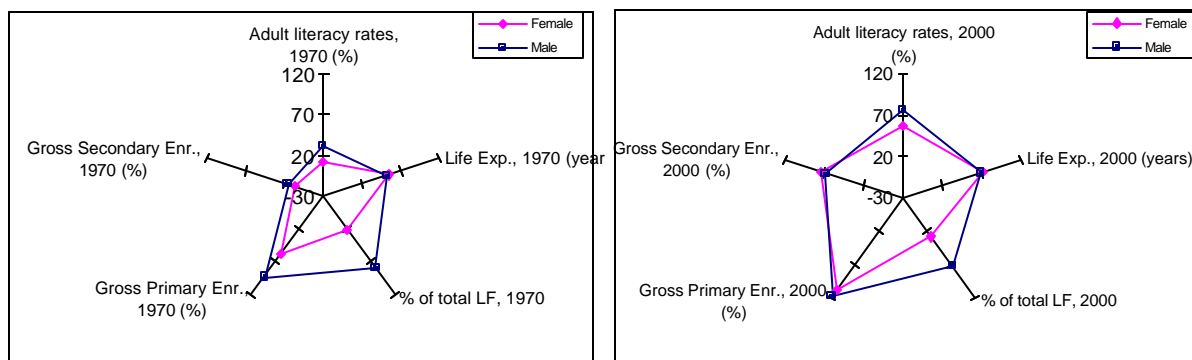
<sup>151</sup> Distribution of cabinet posts by gender remained unchanged in October 2003 Cabinet.

<sup>152</sup> Nationality can be acquired by the child of a national mother and a foreign father who was himself born in Algeria.

women and men is fixed at 19 years; the couple to be married is obliged to have a notarized marriage contract and present a medical certificate; parental responsibilities are to be shared; and the necessity of a male relative's consent to the marriage of a woman has been removed. The bill subjects polygamy to the authorization of either of the spouses, with the permission of the President of the Court. With regard to divorce, the bill introduces the principle of the custody charge for both parents.

One of the most serious issues regarding **labor law** is that it does not provide sufficient protection for areas of work in which women are heavily engaged, particularly seasonal agricultural work, piece or casual work, domestic service, and work without pay in family firms. In general, Algerian women are not sufficiently aware of their rights.

### Progress from 1970 to 2000:



### GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

A new ministry in charge of family and women's affairs was created under the Prime Minister in June 2002<sup>153</sup> and in October 2003 a new *Ministre Déléguée chargée de la Famille et de la Condition féminine*, Nouara Saadia Djaffar, was appointed. The Ministry needs to build its internal capacity and its infrastructure to enable it to conduct much needed gender research for policy formulation. The country has been working on a Gender Action Plan (spearheaded by the Ministry of Health and Population) that proposes three main axes:

1. Improving the information available on women's issues, which includes developing a better understanding of their participation in socio-economic and cultural life, and the need for gender-disaggregated data as well as more studies devoted to examining women's conditions.
2. Putting in place the necessary conditions to integrate women in the development process, which entail improving her image in society, ensuring the implementation of laws, encouraging the necessary conditions to enable women to balance their family and professional lives, and supporting partnerships between the public and private sectors, and civil society.
3. Implementing mechanisms to promote the institutionalization of the gender and development approach, which include strengthening the capacity of public institutions to integrate a gender

<sup>153</sup> Prior to this, the women's portfolio used to be handled by the Ministry of Solidarity.



approach in development programs and policies, and creating a research and documentation center focusing on research on women's issues.

The institutionalization of the gender approach is still in its early stages, as there is insufficient knowledge of gender-specific tools. Given the small size of the Ministry of Women, priority is currently given to the thematic areas of gender and work, gender and development, and gender and law. The revision of the Shari'a-based family code remains an issue of political will. The Ministry's efforts have also been supported by a Gender Donor Group which comprises members of UNFPA, UNDP, UNIFEM, WHO, WFP, and ILO.

## Kingdom of Bahrain

### Bahrain and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2001	2002
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	101.3	103.5	103.4	
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	98.7	99.9	100.4	100.5
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	7.3	10.7	12.9	
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	-	-	-	0

Source: MDG Country Profiles, September 2004

### Education and Training

The **first girl's primary school** was established in 1892 in Bahrain. Free and compulsory **primary education** applies to boys and girls, and includes free school necessities and transportation to and from school. Though primary education is compulsory, this is not enforced.

Female **adult illiteracy rates** (15 years and above) decreased from 41 percent in 1980 to 16 percent in 2002.

By 2000, **female adult literacy rate** among those aged 15 and above was 82.6 percent, compared with 90.9 percent for male rate. For female age group 15-24 years, literacy rate was much higher in 2000, with 98.5 percent as compared to 99.1 percent for men.

Women account for about 70 percent of Bahrain's **university** students, but fill only about 20 percent of the country's jobs. Women in **higher education** are enrolled largely in 'traditional faculties' (education, arts/humanities, and more recently business administration). However, one-third of students in Engineering Faculty are female.

In vocational education, women account for 30 percent of all trainees enrolled in courses provided by the Bahrain Training Institute, including accounting, information technology, business, retailing, garment technology and goldsmith craft. Female civil servants constitute around one third of those trained by Civil Service Bureau. Women have also benefited from training courses offered by the Bahrain Institute for Banking and Finance.

A proportion of private sector companies' contribution to training is being allocated to needy families; some 49 percent of beneficiaries of this scheme have been women.

### Health

**Maternal mortality rates** are not easy to come by. According to modeled estimates, the maternal mortality rate was 28 per 100,000 live births (2000).<sup>154</sup> About 98 percent of pregnant women, however,

<sup>154</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 data base.

receive **prenatal care**. Nearly 40 percent of pregnant women ages 15-49 are reported to suffer from **anemia**.<sup>155</sup>

The **fertility rate** decreased from 6 children per woman in 1975 to 2.3 in 2002.<sup>156</sup> **Contraceptive prevalence**, according to a 1995 Family Health Study, is reported at 62 percent among women in the 15-49 year old group.

### Economic Participation

**Female economic activity rate** of those ages 20-24 increased from 10.1 percent in 1970 to 44.7 percent in 2000. The rate for the 25-44 year old age group increased from 4.5 percent in 1970 to 47.1 percent in 2000.

Female economic activity in services has slightly decreased from 96 percent in 1970 to 93 percent in 1990. The rate in the industrial sector has increased from 4 percent in 1970 to 6.9 percent in 1990, and remains unchanged in agriculture at 0.2 percent.

By 1998, women in the **public sector** made up 36 percent of all employees. These women worked mainly in the Ministries of Education and Health. In 1998, 20 percent of employees in the **private sector** were women, up from 18 percent in 1997. The highest rate of private sector female employment is in the finance and business sectors (31 percent).

In spite of the ‘Bahrainization’ policy – which aims to gradually replace expatriate workers with local people - **unemployment** rates for women are twice that of men (11 percent female versus 5 percent male). According to UN/ESCWA, since the May 2001 launch of the ‘Program for Training and Employment’, the percentage of women registered as unemployed has risen from 24 percent to 66 percent.

Bahrain did not ratify ILO Convention C100 on **equal pay**, and the Labor laws do not explicitly mention equal pay for work of equal value. Men and women employees generally receive the same pay for same grade, though in various cases women are paid less than men. Estimated **earned income** of women in 2000 was PPP US\$ 7,010 compared with PPP US\$ 21,059 for men.

The Bahraini **Labor Law** clearly states that no employer is permitted to terminate a woman’s services upon **marriage**, although the labor ministry can specify occupations that can be offered as an alternative upon marriage. There are prohibitions on **night work** for women, but exceptions are made for certain occupations.

The **legal minimum age** for entry to the labor market is 14 years, although the age for completing basic education is 15 years. The minimum age does not apply to family enterprises, but there are special provisions regulating employment of juveniles between ages 14-16 years.

### Public Participation and Representation

The October 2002 **parliamentary elections** were a landmark not only for Bahrain, but the entire Gulf region, where women have been denied suffrage. For the first time in Bahrain’s history, women were

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<sup>155</sup> Bahraini Health Study on Pregnant Women’s Diet Situation, 1995.

<sup>156</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 data base.

allowed to run for national office and vote in a parliamentary race.<sup>157</sup> Although several Bahraini women had announced their nomination for the 2002 parliamentary elections, none were elected to the 40-member **Parliament**. The 40-member Upper House (the **Shoura Council**), which is appointed by the King, includes 6 women (or 15 percent).

More than 30 women ran for seats in the civic election in May 2002 and made up 10 percent of the contestants. However, not a single woman won despite the fact that women represented over 50 percent of all voters. These **municipal elections** were the first time women appeared on the ballot and the first elections in Bahrain in which women were formally allowed to vote.<sup>158</sup>

Six of the forty-six members of the Committee that drafted the **National Charter of Action** (which established Bahrain as a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral legislature) were female. Women turned out to vote in the referendum on the National Charter in February 2001 in almost the same numbers as men: 49 percent of the voters in the referendum were women.

In April 2004, Nada Haffadh, a doctor and a member of Bahrain's Upper House of Parliament, was appointed Minister of Health on the orders of King Hamad. This makes her the first woman in Bahrain to join a **government's Executive**, and the first woman in the Arab world to head a health ministry. In 2005, Fatima Al-Baloushi was appointed Minister for Social Affairs. The head of Bahrain's Supreme Council for Women (established in October 2001 with a mandate to improve gender equality and with an independent budget) has a rank equivalent to minister without portfolio.

Despite the improvements in women's public representation, some women's associations and activists have suggested that a quota system be introduced to ensure a number of seats for women in the next **Parliament**.

Bahrain's **first female ambassador** was appointed to France in 2000, and the rectors of Bahrain University and Gulf University are women. A Bahraini woman recently became the CEO of a bank, a first for the country.

Over the last two years, several new **women's associations**<sup>159</sup> have been formed. **The Union of Bahraini Women** was formed in 2001 as an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of existing women's and families' groups. In October 2001, the **Bahraini Chamber of Commerce and Industry** selected its first women board members and also established a **special businesswomen committee within the Chamber**. **The Bahrain Women's Society** is a campaigning body that aims to increase awareness of women's legal rights and other issues that affect women, such as globalization, information technology, the environment, healthcare, culture, the family and living in a multicultural society. **The Bahrain Businesswomen Society**, established in 2000, supports businesswomen's roles and aims to raise their professional status. It also launched the new business portal entitled "Women Gateway" in 2003. **The Bahrain Young Ladies Association** has worked to educate women on their roles both as candidates and voters in their country.

Bahraini women took part in the **2000 Sydney Olympics**.

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<sup>157</sup> In elections for the previous parliament disbanded in 1975, only men had the franchise.

<sup>158</sup> Feminist Daily News Wire, April 2002.

<sup>159</sup> Over 4,000 women are said to be members of non-government organizations and many have taken leading roles.

## Women's Rights

Bahrain signed **CEDAW** in June 2002, though with reservations to provisions dealing with change in national law and nationality of children.

In spite of pertinent articles in the **Constitution** and **National Charter**, in practice **Shari'a Law** governs legal rights of Bahraini women and specific rights may vary according to Shi'a or Sunni interpretation. There is **no codified personal status law**, but there are two *de facto* legal systems based on traditional Shari'a. Sunnis follow the **Maliki School** and Shi'as follow the **Ja'afari School**.<sup>160</sup>

In terms of **freedom of movement**, women can obtain their passport and travel without a male guardian's permission. However, a Bahraini woman must live in her husband's house or lose the right to maintenance. There is no **legal minimum age of marriage**.

Divorced women, whether Sunni or Shi'a, gain custody of daughters until age nine and sons until seven, when they come under the father's **custody**. Regardless of custody, fathers retain the sole right to decide on legal matters for their children until they reach the legal age. A non-Bahraini woman automatically loses custody of her children when divorcing a Bahraini husband.

Children of Bahraini women legally married to non-Bahrainis do not have the right to Bahraini **nationality**. While foreign wives can acquire Bahraini **nationality**, foreign husbands of Bahraini women are not entitled to Bahraini nationality.

**Polygamy** is legal and each co-wife has the right to a separate dwelling of equal quality. According to Ja'afari interpretation, co-wives from different levels of society receive different levels of maintenance. Similarly, in the Maliki interpretation, the standard of living of each co-wife affects the amount to which she is entitled.

There is no law prohibiting women from **driving**. Since the 1950s, Bahraini women have been free to drive without male escort.

## **GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

Since the accession of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa to the throne in 1999, Bahrain has launched a wide ranging democratic reform process, within which women's rights have been an integral part.

A new advisory body, the **Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain**, was created in 2001 to assist the government draw up policies on women's issues. The Council is comprised of fourteen members, appointed on the basis of their knowledge of women's issues, and chaired by Sheikha Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, the wife of the Emir. The Council's role is to propose public policy to the government on issues relevant to women and recommend amendments to existing legislation. Lulwa Al-Awadhi, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Women, was given the status of **Honorary Cabinet Minister** in November 2001.

The new atmosphere engendered by many reforms has encouraged the formation of a number of independent **women's groups**, which have actively campaigned on women's issues. For instance, the

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<sup>160</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

**campaign to reform the Personal Status law**, the legislation that governs marriage and divorce, has been led by newly established NGOs such as the Bahrain Women's Society.

**Sheikha Sabika bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa**, Queen of Bahrain and chairwoman of the **Supreme Council of Bahraini Women**, has also been active in her support of these women NGOs, among them the Bahrain Women's Society, the Awal Women's Society, the Union of Bahraini Women, and the Mothers and Children Welfare Society. The promotion of women's rights in Bahrain prompted Amnesty International to herald a 'New Dawn for Bahraini Women'. In May 2003, Sheikha Sabika was named one of '**21 Leaders For the 21st Century**' by Women's eNews, a New York based news service and website. Sheikha Sabika now leads the Supreme Council of Women as chair.

It is also worth mentioning that a **Woman and Family Section** was established in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1992. Its activities include supporting girls' and women's search for employment. In addition, an Information Centre for Women and Children was established in 1995 which is to function as **national/regional information network to promote women**.

## Djibouti

### Djibouti and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000	2001
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	70.4	73.2	85.3	..
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	78.1	84.4	89.5	90.4
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	..	..	..	..
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	0	0	0	10.8 (2003)

### Education and Training

**Primary school enrollment rates**, though improving, remain exceptionally low (35 percent for girls compared to 46 percent for boys). Furthermore, large rural-urban differences persist. The ratio of enrolled girls to boys is about 0.77 in urban areas compared to only 0.50 in rural areas.

Nearly 61 percent of girls either **repeat** grades and/or **drop out** of school altogether. Girls' low school enrollment rates are correlated with levels of poverty. School dropout rates for girls at age 8-9 are also related to practice of FGM, after which many girls do not return to school after longer periods of sick leave. Most schools do not provide appropriate sanitary arrangements for girls and boys, contributing to girls' high dropout rates at ages 10-11.

Out of every 100 boys and 100 girls entering grade 1, 80 boys and 79 girls reach grade 6 (the end of primary cycle), 23 boys and 26 girls reach grade 10, and only 7 boys and 11 girls are able to reach the final year of secondary cycle.<sup>161</sup>

The **illiteracy rate** for women is estimated at 72 percent compared to 49 percent for men. This translates to about 200,000 illiterate women who represent about three-quarters of the illiterate population. This, in turn, has tremendous negative impacts on society's well-being. It directly affects families' nutritional status and the level of education achieved by children.

Regarding post-secondary education (in absence of a fully-developed university program), it should be noted that women comprise 45 percent of the student body in **technical schools** (Ali-Sabieh Professional High School and the Industrial and Business School). They concentrate mainly on commercial studies.

### Health

**High fertility rates** (5.2 children per woman in 2002), lack of women's health services, persistent **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, malnutrition and anemia are the main factors for **high maternal mortality rates**. Although alarmingly high, maternal mortality rates improved from 714 per 100,000 live

<sup>161</sup> World Bank, Djibouti Public Expenditure Review, 2004.

births in 1989 to 690 per 100,000 in 2002. Moreover, there are only 35 **midwives** in all of Djibouti, and there are only **two gynecologists** in the country.

**Child mortality rates** are also quite high, with those for girls being higher than those for boys (100 compared to 88 deaths per 100,000 child births).

Those in extreme poverty are at particular risk, as they lack **access to medical services**. Those without access to medical services in 1996 were estimated at 56 percent.

**FGM** affects more than 95 percent of young girls between 6 and 9 years of age, although the practice has been illegal since 1995 and is punishable with five years of prison and a one million Francs fee. FGM is mainly administered by grandmothers and mothers and is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition. According to a recent survey, 50 percent of men are against the practice of FGM.

**HIV/AIDS** is one of the main public health problems, yet little information on the situation in Djibouti is available. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is estimated at 2.9 percent (6 percent for the age group 15-35), and 95 percent of the infected cases are transmitted heterosexually. Women's prevalence rate was estimated to be slightly higher (3.1 percent) than that of men. Since 1995, prostitution has been illegal, yet it remains a major issue due to the adverse economic situation. It is all the more concerning given the recent increase in foreign military presence in the country.

**Violence against women** is not well studied in Djibouti, but it is believed that men's consumption of qat (which consumes more than 30 percent of household expenditure) contributes to domestic violence.<sup>162</sup> Female vendors of qat are also exposed to aggression from their mainly male customers.

### **Economic Participation**

Women's **labor force participation** is one of the highest in the MENA region, estimated at 48.7 percent compared to 78.4 percent for men.

Of those women who are working, 18.8 percent work in the **public sector** compared to 54.4 percent of men. In the public sector, women work mostly in the health and education sectors where they mainly occupy lower paid positions.

Most working women are either **self-employed** (27.8 percent) or work in the **informal sector** (31.7 percent). While the importance of the informal sector is undeniable (especially as a source of income for the poor), a lack of statistics makes it difficult to assert the informal sector's full economic potential. At the same time, it should be noted that almost 40 percent of the economically **active women are illiterate** and that 49 percent attended primary school without any professional training. Those with a secondary school degree represent only 4 percent of working women.

The female **unemployment** rate is 66.3 percent, higher than the male unemployment rate of 52.5 percent. Unemployment especially affects **young women** (26.9 percent for the 15-19 age group and 51.3 percent for the 20-39 age group) regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. It should also be noted that 33.7 percent of **married men** and 60.1 percent of **married women** are unemployed.

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<sup>162</sup> Chewing of qat leaves is a traditional practice in Djibouti. Qat is a natural stimulant with the qualities of a mild amphetamine.



## Public Participation and Representation

Adopted by the National Assembly as law in 2002, 10 percent of all elected and administrative positions are to be occupied by women. The **quota law** stipulates that every party has to present at least 10 percent women among candidates. Thus, the results of the 2003 elections saw the unprecedented arrival of 7 women in **Parliament**, accounting for more than 10 percent of the newly elected parliamentarians.

There is one woman at the ministerial level. She has occupied the position of Deputy Minister for the Promotion of Women since it was established in 1999. No woman holds a position of Secretary-General. Three women are technical advisors to ministers in the Prime Minister's Office, the Youth Ministry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are no female **diplomats**.

## Women's Rights

Djibouti ratified **CEDAW** without reservations in December 1998. However, Djibouti has yet to submit to the United Nations a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that they have adopted to implement the Convention. This was supposed to have been submitted within a year after its entry into force.

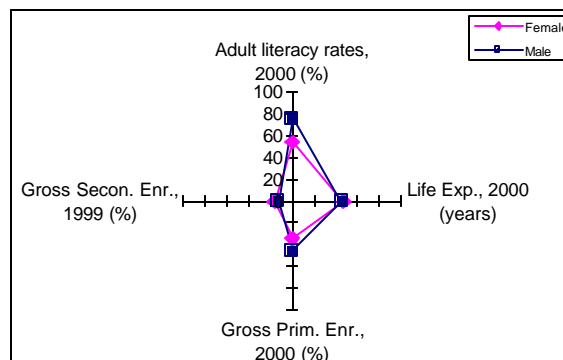
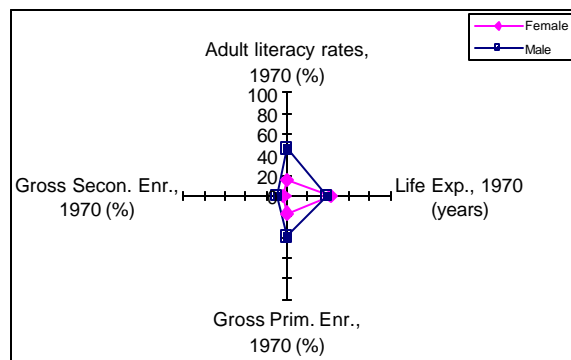
In January 2002, the **Family Code** replaced a 1995 law that governed matters of marriage and divorce according to the Islamic Law. The new law grants better protection for women and children. However, women's rights are not the same as those of men either during or after marriage.

Although the new law did not abolish **polygamy**, the practice now requires the agreement of the first wife, an assessment of the husband's economic position, and an authorization by a judge.

**Child custody** is decided by a tribunal. Children of a foreign parent can receive Djiboutian nationality regardless of whether the father or the mother is a foreign national.

The **Labor Code** has been under revision. The draft of October 2003 includes many improvements, such as allowing women to work at night and enabling the father of a newborn child to take time off to be with his family.

## Progress from 1970 and 2000:



## Arabic Republic of Egypt

### Egypt and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000	2001	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	78.1	76.9	93.8	94.05	
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	72.0	77.2	82.0	82.9	
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	20.5	18.9	20.9	..	20.3
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.4	2.0

### Education and Training

Although gender gaps in **literacy** persist, women have made substantial gains. Literacy rates for women in Egypt rose from 29 percent in 1976 to 51 percent in 1996. Rural-urban discrepancies remain, with **illiteracy** rates ranging from 27 percent in Port-Said to 70 percent in Menia. **Illiteracy among young women** in the **15-24 year** age bracket in 2000 remained high at 37 percent.

In terms of school curriculum, textbook content, particularly technical content, needs to be updated and improved to ensure timeliness and relevance, as well as to remove any gender discriminatory material. Equally important is the need to focus on teacher caliber and teacher training needs.

Gender inequalities in **educational enrollment** (where a slight gap between boys and girls persists) are affected largely by socio-economic status. Girls' enrollment is a function of poverty and also varies by region. In 1995, girls made up only 37 percent of primary school students in the poorest rural areas.

At the university level, the female share of students enrolled in almost all universities increased (at the undergraduate level from 35.4 percent in 1991/2 to 43.9 percent in 1998/9). Female enrollment is highest in the social sciences.

### Health

Egypt has one of the **largest populations** in the region, with a growth rate of 2.2 percent per year (1975-2000) and a respective fertility rate of 3.1 births per woman. Despite a significant decrease in **fertility rates**, short spacing of births is still prevalent, which puts women at increased health risk.

The 2000 Demographic and Health Survey estimates that 11.2 percent of married women have **unmet family planning needs**. This rate is as high as 18.7 percent in rural Upper Egypt.

Although the **legal age of marriage** for girls is 16, the phenomenon of early marriage perseveres. Enforcement of the existing law is particularly difficult for girls without **birth certificates**. Early marriage and, in turn, early pregnancy remain important factors affecting women's health conditions, especially among rural uneducated women. With the exception of **HIV/AIDS**, knowledge of sexual transmitted infections (STIs) is low among youth, especially pregnant girls.

## Economic Participation

Total **female labor participation rate remains low** at 18.5 percent, compared to the male economic participation rate of 72 percent. Due to problems of measurement and underreporting, this number is likely to be underestimated.

According to official unemployment statistics in Egypt, **women's unemployment is double to triple that of men**, the highest being for young and educated women in rural areas. This is despite the fact that women's participation in the labor force grew five times faster than men's in the period between 1980 and 1996.

Absorbing about 32 percent of working women, **agriculture is the largest employer of women**, an issue which needs to be taken into consideration in any agricultural reforms.

Women are also largely employed by the **public sector**. They made up 32 percent of government employees and 16 percent of employees in the private sector in 2001. These numbers indicate the need to consider the gender impact of any public sector reforms, including privatization.

In addition, there has been an increase in the number of women in **managerial and decision-making positions**. Official figures show that the percentage of women managers of the total has increased from 29 percent in 2001 to 37 percent in 2003.

## Public Participation and Representation

There used to be a 30-seat quota of women in the Egyptian Parliament, but this was cancelled in 1986. Since the 2000 elections, there have been 7 elected and 4 appointed women in Parliament (1.6 percent of legislators). This downward trend of women's representation can be also observed at the **local council election** level, where representation by women is as low as 1.2 percent.

In general, there is a lack of commitment among **political parties** to support women candidates for legislative and local councils.

In the **Shoura Council**, the Upper House, female membership increased to 5.7 percent in 1996 compared to 3.3 percent in 1980, reflecting an increased number of female members appointed by the President of Egypt.

There are two women in the 35-member **Cabinet**. One of them is the Minister of Insurance and Social Affairs, and the other fills the post of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. The first Egyptian female judge was appointed by a Presidential Decree in early 2003. There are three women judges in Egypt, all appointed by the President.

Women's participation in professional **syndicates** constitutes 17 percent (about one-sixth of male participants). Women's representation in **trade unions** is also low. In 1999, only 621 women (accounting for 3 percent) were elected to trade union committees in all governorates. One woman succeeded in being elected to the General Federation of Trade Unions in the last elections.

Even in **NGOs**, where women's membership is close to 35 percent, women's participation on boards remains in the range of 15 to 18 percent (with a high of 42 percent in family planning associations and a low of 8 percent in scientific and religious associations).

The Women's Committee in the ruling National Democratic Party is established under the Policies Council (other political parties do not have women and gender issues as a priority). **Equal Opportunity Units** have been established in 17 Ministries, an initiative that has been led by the National Council for Women. These units will work towards bridging gaps in the employment sector.

### Women's Rights

**CEDAW** was ratified in 1981, with reservations to nondiscrimination measures, nationality, family and marriage, and arbitration.

Laws and policies exist to protect equal rights for men and women with regard to property and contract rights, but **implementation of these laws is arbitrary**. Inheritance continues to be based on Shari'a Law.

There continue to be discrepancies between men and women with regard to the **personal status law** (especially interpretation and implementation), on issues of divorce, custody, alimony, etc. The **new divorce law**, which was passed by Parliament in January 2000, enables Egyptian women for the first time to initiate divorce on grounds of incompatibility. But they must renounce all financial claims and return money given at the time of marriage - an arrangement known in Islam as *khula*. More recent developments include the amendments of the **Nationality Law** by Presidential Decree in October 2004. This allows Egyptian women married to foreigners to pass on their Egyptian nationality to their children. Also, the establishment of a **Family Court**, with well-trained and specialized judges, went into effect as of October 2004. This is facilitating women's settlement of their cases in adherence to court orders.

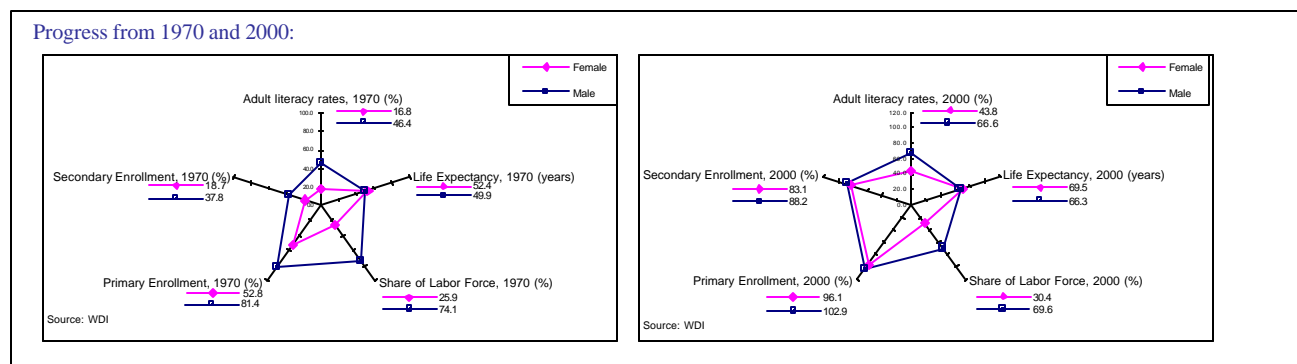
Linked to the issue of **women's access to services and rights** (such as voting) is the problem faced by many Egyptian women, particularly the poorest, of obtaining birth certificates and identity cards.

According to the March 2 Official Beijing + 10 Statement, an **Ombudsman Office** has been established at the National Council for Women to receive complaints regarding gender discrimination. The office has installed three **toll-free hotlines** and appointed lawyers, who deal with issues of gender discrimination at the work place as well as personal status law and domestic violence.

In addition, a new law was passed for the creation of a **Family Insurance Fund**, with the aim of advancing alimony for women until personal status cases are resolved and judgments enforced. Ministerial Decree No. 3936 of 1996, which stipulates that a wife should obtain her husband's prior approval for the **issuance of a passport** and as a condition to travel abroad, was recently abolished because it was deemed unconstitutional.

The **Tax Law** was also changed to make it more gender sensitive. Further, the Egyptian Parliament agreed to increase the age of children's custody to 15 years of age.

## Progress from 1970 and 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The Government of Egypt (GOE) has consistently expressed its commitment to integrating women fully in development, as reflected in identifying the empowerment of women as one of the priority areas of the ruling National Democratic Party; the Egyptian Delegation agenda at the Consultative Group Meeting in 2002; and in the mainstreaming of gender in the Five-Year National Development Plan; as well as in the establishment of the National Council for Women (NCW), an official government body responsible for empowering women economically, socially and politically, and addressing their strategic needs by safeguarding their human rights.

The NCW was established in February 2000, by a Presidential Decree. The Council reports directly to the President of Egypt, and is currently presided by the First Lady. The board of the NCW consists of thirty members selected on the basis of their expertise on gender issues, and their ability to influence policy makers and other partners in development. The NCW has eleven Technical Standing Committees that act as advisory bodies, 27 branches in each.

The Governorate and a Technical General Secretariat ensure that the NCW meets its mandate and fulfills its duties. The NCW complements the governmental and nongovernmental efforts, in addition to addressing key policy, legislative and executive issues pertaining to merging gender disparities. The NCW is the official focal point for gender issues, and the body representing the GOE in Regional and International conferences related to women issues.

Education remains a top gender priority for the GOE. The GOE has set several objectives to narrow the gap between women and men's education: 1) increase girls' retention in schools, 2) combat illiteracy, which in 2000 affected 56 percent of all female adults compared to 33 percent of all male adults<sup>163</sup>, 3) increase women's training opportunities in the non-traditional fields of science and math as well as technological and vocational training, 4) devise strategies to promote increased investments in girls' education such as providing additional schools for girls, and 5) enhance women's educational opportunities particularly at the university level and in non-traditional fields.

The GOE has identified several priorities including the need to promote policies targeting social practices harmful to women's health such as FGM and the perpetration of violence against women. The Ministry of Health has issued a decree forbidding FGM in public and private health centers and punishing perpetrators, as well as other physically and mentally harmful forms of violence against women. The

<sup>163</sup> United Nations Development Programme, National Human Development Report on Egypt, 2002.

GOE is also seeking to combat sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the most important of which is AIDS, by providing women – particularly adolescents – with legal protection, medical assistance, and relevant information.

## Islamic Republic of Iran

### Iran and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2001	Today
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	83.4	89.2	95.6	..
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	88.1	92.4	95.3	95.6
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	18.0	..	..	..
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.1

Source: MDG Country Briefs

### Education and Training

Major improvements have been made with regard to female **enrollment rates**, which in many instances (except at the secondary school level) have caught up with those of boys. At the university level, women's enrollment has even bypassed men's enrollment in some fields.

Among the problems confronted in regard to female education in Iran are 1) gender stereotyping in **textbooks**; 2) explicitly or implicitly guiding women towards "feminine" specializations (e.g., women are directed towards basic sciences whereas men enter into "more prestigious" fields such as engineering); and 3) obstacles faced by women upon entering "male-oriented" fields of study.

Shortage of **technical-vocational education** opportunities for girls is a major issue in Iran. Even when they exist, the kind of traditional programs offered (sewing, knitting, and handicrafts) cannot prepare young women for the real job market.

In rural and nomadic parts of Iran, girls are often engaged in carpet weaving under harsh conditions. This has limited their access to school. Furthermore, school hours are not flexible and often do not accommodate the needs of working girls. Thus, there are high **dropout** rates for girls.

**Teaching** was one of the first professions available to women in Iran. They still represent a significant portion of school teachers, with some 46 percent of school teachers being female. When one includes administrative staff in schools, the numbers are even higher.

### Health

Advances have been made in reducing the **maternal mortality rate** to about 37 per 100,000 live births. This is one of the lowest in the region.

It is notable that Iran, the most populous country in the region, has one of the highest **contraceptive rates** (74 percent). This has curbed population growth and contributed at the same time to women's increased participation in the economy and public life.

A recent development in **abortion laws**, as approved by the Iranian Parliament, allows a pregnancy to be terminated in the first four months if the fetus is mentally or physically handicapped. The damaged status

of the fetus must be confirmed by three doctors, and both parents must give their consent to the abortion. Previously abortion was only allowed if the mother's life was in danger. While a step forward, the new bill still does not provide a woman with the right to an abortion, even if a woman is pregnant as a result of rape, unless her life is in danger or the fetus is handicapped.

One critical area for women's health and education remains **the legal minimum age of marriage**. This was recently increased from 9 to 13 for girls and from 14 to 15 for boys. Although the mean age of marriage across the country has risen to 20, rural-urban differences prevail. Early marriage can create difficulties for young married women, who are not permitted to attend school with unmarried women and therefore tend to stop going to school, according to the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

### Economic Participation

Women's **labor force participation** is about 30 percent. This is extremely low given the high ratio of educated women and low fertility rates in Iran. Factors leading to such low participation rates are likely to include economic, socio-cultural and psychological ones, including the workplace environment and business culture.

At the same time, Iranian women have a presence in most professions in this traditionally male-dominated society. Many women are employed by the state and public sector. There are emerging numbers of women setting up their own businesses, and women are now active in all fields of the economic and political spectrums. These activities cover a broad range of **professions**, ranging from the legal and medical fields to serving as members of Iran's police forces.

According to the Iranian women's magazine *Zanan* (May 2004), several owners of Tehran's numerous coffee shops and gyms have been notified by police authorities not to hire female employees, unless as a cashier or in the kitchen. Many also have been advised to fire their female employees.

Entire industries, such as the rug weaving industry, are supported by women, but these women work outside the **formal labor market**.

### Public Participation and Representation

Despite a marked increase in the number of women occupying public positions since the onset of Mr. Khatami's presidency, women are still under-represented in public office. One encouraging sign lies in the appointment of Iran's first female **Vice President**, Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, as one of seven vice presidents in President Khatami's Cabinet.

The growing proportion of women selected in **parliamentary elections** (currently 13 female parliamentarians) reflects an increased participation of women in legislative and decision-making bodies. At the local and municipal levels, women have also been making some head-way. However, in January 2005, Iran's leadership for the first time ruled that women would not be allowed to run in the June 2005 **presidential elections**.

The **Assembly of Experts** (elected by universal suffrage but consisting entirely of clerics), appoints the country's Supreme Leader and has the sole power to dismiss him. Although the people of Iran elect the Assembly of Experts, candidates must first be approved by the 12-member **Council of Guardians**, in which there is no female representation. Constitutionally, the assembly is open to anyone, including



women, as long as they have achieved the required level of learning in Islamic jurisprudence and social and political issues.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have expanded over the past years and include **the Center for Women's Participation** (headed by Zahra Shojaie, Advisor to the President on Women's Affairs), commissions on women's affairs in the Ministry of the Interior, and special women's affairs units in ministries and governmental organizations.

The **first women's political party** in the Islamic Republic of Iran received a license in 2003.<sup>164</sup> The Iranian Women's Party Secretary-General, Fariba Davudi-Mohajer, described the party's objectives as "enlightening public opinion and pursuing the forgotten demands of women."

### Women's Rights

In October 2003, **Iranian human rights activist Shirin Ebadi** was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Having become Iran's first female judge in 1969, she was removed from office after the Islamic revolution in 1979. Since then, she has been active as a human rights advocate providing legal representation for victims of political persecution and has fought for the rights of women and children in Iran. Ebadi played a major role in the fight for Iranian ratification of CEDAW, a battle which was lost due to opposition from the **Guardians Council** and various religious leaders.

In early August 2003, the reformist-dominated Parliament ratified a bill proposing that the Islamic Republic of Iran would join **CEDAW**. Dozens of clerics held rallies in the holy city of Qom to protest against Parliament's decision, and the Guardian Council, which vets all legislation in accordance with Islamic Shari'a law, defied Parliament and rejected the United Nations treaty.

Discrimination in such areas as **marriage**, child custody, divorce, right to work, right to travel, inheritance, bearing legal witness, etc., are among the many legal issues facing women.<sup>165</sup> There is also marked discrimination in the **Penal Code** as girls legally come of age at age 9 while the age for boys is 15.

The issue of "**blood money**" is currently much debated in the country. The Penal Code, based on Islamic law, dictates that if a man kills a woman, he faces the death penalty only if the victim's family pays the difference between the value of his life and that of his victim. As a woman's life is valued as half that of a man (about US\$11,000 versus US\$22,000), victims' families are faced with huge bills before sentences can be carried out. This regulation is much more important when it concerns compensation due to loss and dismemberment, workers' compensation, and impunities that are calculated on the basis of blood money. In practice, there are cases where the government has compensated families in order to carry out social justice.

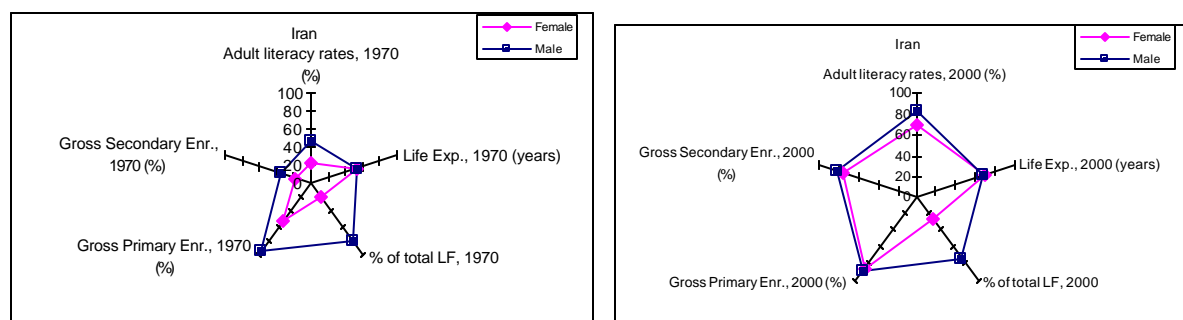
Recently, the Iranian Parliament approved a bill for **equal inheritance and custody rights** that is now with the Guardian Council.

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<sup>164</sup> IRNA, 5 January 2003.

<sup>165</sup> Some aspects can be corrected by stipulating the aforementioned in the marriage contract.

## Progress from 1970 to 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Upon the request of the Management and Planning Organization (MPO), the Center for Women's Studies, an inter-disciplinary research center at Tehran University, was asked to head a working group on "Gender and the **4th Five-Year Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan**" that convened bi-weekly at the Institute for Education and Research on Management and Planning. As a result, the current version of the 4<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Development Plan treats gender issues in a more serious manner across sectors. The main focus of the plan is to raise female labor force participation from 16 percent (per Iranian statistics) to 48 percent at the end of plan implementation.

The Government of Iran had expressed its commitment to integrating women in development by incorporating a gender perspective into the country's **3<sup>rd</sup> Five-Year Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan**. The Government's commitment to greater equality was also articulated at the United Nations' **Beijing plus Five and plus Ten Meetings** (June 2000 and March 2005), where the country's gender priorities and challenges were outlined. The overall objective of the Government has been to finalize **Iran's National Plan of Action** on the basis of Beijing's 12 critical areas of concern with emphasis on women's human rights, mass media, and strengthening institutional mechanisms towards the advancement of women. To this end, institutional mechanisms have been created in select ministries and government organizations.

**The Center for Women's Participation** (headed by H.E. Zahra Shojaie, Advisor to the President on Women's Affairs) started its activities in 1998, simultaneously with the start of President Khatami's Presidential term, to organize women's participation in all society's activities, identify their problems, and provide appropriate solutions. Moreover, women's affairs committees have been established in all provinces.

## Iraq

### Iraq and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2001	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	74.7	74.8	76.5	79.9
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	44.2	46.6	49.6	50.5
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	..	..	..	..
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	11.0	..	8.0	8.0

### Education and Training

Reliable gender **statistics** on education are not available for Iraq, but it seems that there are considerable gender and geographic imbalances (north vs. south and rural vs. urban).

Before 1991, female **literacy** rates were among the highest in the region, and Iraq had achieved nearly universal primary education for both girls and boys. Since 1991, adult female literacy rates and girls' **enrollment rates** have decreased. In 2000, it was estimated that 31 percent of girls were **not attending school**, nearly twice the number of boys who were not in school. UNICEF officials attribute this decrease mainly to poverty and inadequate education infrastructure rather than attitudes opposing education for girls - although these attitudes still persist.<sup>166</sup>

**Female illiteracy** more than quadrupled between 1985 and 1995 (from 8 percent to 45 percent). According to UNICEF, 30 percent of girls were no longer attending primary school in 2000.<sup>167</sup>

**In rural areas**, according to the most recent UN/World Bank Joint Iraq Needs Assessment of 2003, about half of all girls were not going to school, and the female **attendance** rate of 49.2 percent was much lower than that of males (72.1 percent). In urban areas, however, the gender gap is less pronounced. Attendance rates are estimated at 87.4 percent for male and 80 percent for female students).

At the **technical and vocational education level**, women make up less than 20 percent of student enrollment. There are significant gender disparities across subject fields.<sup>168</sup>

According to statistics released by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Developmental Cooperation in early 2004, **women teachers** make up 69 percent of all teachers.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Refugees International, 2003.

<sup>167</sup> UNICEF, The Situation of Children in Iraq, March 2003.

<sup>168</sup> World Bank, UN/World Bank Joint Iraq Needs Assessment, October 2003.

<sup>169</sup> Iraqi Al-Amal Association, "The National Conference for Empowering Women in Democracy," Baghdad, June 2004.

## Health

**Female life expectancy** at birth was at 60 years prior to the Beijing Conference in 1995 and rose to 63 by 2002.<sup>170</sup>

**Fertility rates** were at 5.9 births per woman in 1990 and declined to around four births in 2002.

UNICEF's 1999 Child and Maternal Mortality Survey shows very **high maternal mortality rates** of 294 per 100,000 live births for the period 1989-1998. This accounts for one-third of all deaths among women aged 15-49. Before 1990, the maternal mortality rate was 117 deaths for every 100,000 births, according to the National Report. In 2000, about 72 percent of births were attended by **trained health personnel** (79 percent in urban and 60 percent in rural areas).

The same 1999 survey points to the problem of **early marriage** (40 percent of women in Iraq were married before 18 years of age and only 14 percent were married at 24 years or later), which has led to a high incidence of anemia. Between 50-70 percent of pregnant women are estimated to be **anemic**, and roughly 23 percent of infants are born with low birth weights.

Since the war began, there are reports of increased numbers of **stillbirths** and complicated deliveries. The psychological impact of the war on **women's health**, while still unknown, is a potentially serious problem. Anecdotal evidence of high levels of **miscarriages**, birth defects, and cancer suggests possible environmental contamination.<sup>171</sup>

Human Rights Watch's Report "Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad" (July 2003) concludes that there is widespread fear of **rape and abduction** among women and their families. According to HRW, there have been incidents of hospital personnel turning away victims of sexual attack, saying it is not their responsibility.

## Economic Participation

Overall, **women's participation in the labor force** increased from 18 percent in 1995 to 20 percent in 2000.<sup>172</sup> Accordingly, the estimated **female economic activity rate** increased from 15.5 percent in 1970 to 22.6 percent by 2000 for the 20-24 years age group. Similar increases in female economic activity rate were also recorded for the 25-44 years age group from 19.5 percent in 1970 to 26.8 percent in 2000.<sup>173</sup>

Although women represent 52 percent of Iraq's **population**, according to most recent estimates, they now constitute only 23 percent of the **formal work force**. They are employed mostly as mid-level professionals in the public sector and the service sector. In rural areas, they are often employed as seasonal agricultural workers.<sup>174</sup>

The General Federation of Iraqi Women<sup>175</sup> in its Beijing plus Five Report noted that **women's increased economic participation** is not due to increased opportunities, but because women replaced men in the

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<sup>170</sup> World Bank, WDI, 2003.

<sup>171</sup> Refugees International, 2003.

<sup>172</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing – Report submitted by Iraq, July 2004.

<sup>173</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Pro-Hussein organization promoting women's rights in Iraq with 1.2 million members.

public sector as men left due to low salaries offered by the public sector. The percentage of **women in the public sector** rose from 34 percent in 1990 to 47 percent in 2004.<sup>176</sup>

Looking at female economic participation rates by **sector**, the services sector recorded an increase from 13.4 percent in 1970 to 51.6 percent in 1990, while the rate in agriculture decreased from 78 percent in 1970 to 39 percent in 1990.<sup>177</sup>

Iraqi women have been active participants in the formal, professional labor sector, including as doctors, engineers, and school teachers. By 1997, women in **chief executive positions** were 12.3 percent of the total in this job category. Women constituted only 3.2 percent of the total of supervisory professionals, and the percentage of female technicians was 18.1 percent of the total in this job category.<sup>178</sup>

**Rural women's** economic activities are not adequately reflected in available data, since such activity is regarded as part of their domestic responsibilities. Thus, 98 percent of rural women work without wages compared to 47 percent of rural men.<sup>179</sup>

There is no legal discrimination against women applying for **credit** as long as they fulfill the eligibility criteria. By 2000, over 20 percent of beneficiaries of agricultural bank credits in two governorates were women.<sup>180</sup> The interim Iraqi government has established a special credit program for widowed and divorced women. So far, 400 loans have been granted.<sup>181</sup>

**Female-headed households** generally have lower earned and depend more on transfers and family support. This has serious implications for their coping mechanisms. In 1997, wages constituted only one-third of sources of income of such families, while pensions and aid amounted to less than 6 percent.<sup>182</sup> Most recent official estimates show that there are approximately **150,000 female headed households** in Iraq, with that number increasing to around **300,000 by end of 2004**.<sup>183</sup>

### Public Participation and Representation

In July 2003, the group Voice of the Women of Iraq demanded a 30 percent **quota representation** in future governments and local city councils. Some progress was made when the **2004 Interim Cabinet** included six women ministers and several women deputy ministers.<sup>184</sup> More recently, one-third of the

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<sup>48</sup> Data for 2004 are from the 2004 statistics from Iraq's Ministry of Planning, according to the Iraqi Al-Amal Association's White Paper on "The National Conference for Empowering Women in Democracy."

<sup>177</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>178</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference 10 Years After Beijing,, July 2004 (Report submitted by Iraq)

<sup>182</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>183</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing – Report submitted by Iraq, July 2004.

<sup>184</sup> At the first post-Saddam Hussein political meeting in Nasiriya, there were only four women, all exiles, out of 123 in attendance. In a meeting of future Iraqi leaders held in Baghdad on April 28, there were only a handful of women present. Three women were originally appointed to the 25 member Governing Council (Akila Al-Hashimi died after being shot in an assassination attempt in September 2003); another woman later took her position. The Interim Council of Ministers has only 3 women members, formerly Interim Governing Council members. On the level of Chief of Section the female percentage is highest in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (72), then the Ministry

140 winning candidates on the Shiite parliamentary list were women. Nearly 31 percent of Iraq's newly elected 275 **parliamentarians** are women. When Iraq's Parliament approved 32 **cabinet ministers** to form that country's new government, six of these top-ranking bureaucrats were women.

The recent appointment of a **female judge** prompted demonstrations in Najaf. The Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, ruled in September 2003 that judges had to be "mature, sane and masculine."<sup>185</sup> There were female law graduates and judges under the former regime. Currently, women make up one percent of judges (6 out of 744 total judge positions). The female judges are located only in Baghdad.

Under the Saddam Hussein regime, the Ba'ath Party's **General Federation of Iraqi Women** was the most active women's organization with a membership of around 1.5 million women. However, the government did not tolerate the existence of independent **women's NGOs** at the time.<sup>186</sup> Women were also represented in major **federations and trade unions**, where some held leadership positions. Nearly 21 percent of the Iraqi Bar Association members were women, while 65 percent of the Iraqi Teachers' Union members were women. In the General Federation of Labor, 20 percent of workers were women.<sup>187</sup>

### Women's Rights

In 1986, Iraq signed **CEDAW**, though with reservations to Articles 2, 9, 29, which deal with change in national law, nationality of children, and arbitration.

Iraq has made social investments in women, and its legislation gives them **equal rights to education and employment**. Iraq's constitution and labor law guarantee the right of work of every citizen regardless of sex. Iraq has also ratified the **ILO Convention C100 on equal pay** and its labor laws explicitly mention equal pay for work of equal value. At the same time, there are prohibitions on **night work** for women, but exceptions are made for certain occupations.

A 1992 law bans the **foreign travel of a woman** if she is not escorted by her father or husband. Women must live in the house of their husband or else forfeit their maintenance. In July 2003, the group "Voice of the Women of Iraq" called for the lifting of the ban on women traveling abroad without a male chaperone.

An Iraqi woman married to a non-Iraqi cannot give her children her **nationality**, but foreign nationals can apply for citizenship, which can be passed on to their children.

Regarding **polygamy**, marriage to more than one woman is not permitted except with the permission of a judge. Furthermore, the husband must have the financial ability to support more than one wife.

**Divorce** or *talaq* is irrevocable if the husband has pronounced three separate *talaqs* and the wife's waiting period is completed." Either spouse may request a judicial divorce in the case of: harm which renders

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of Justice (65 percent), then the Ministry of Environment (52 percent) and lastly the Ministry of Public Works and Municipalities (51 percent).

<sup>185</sup> International Herald Tribune, "Woman judge in Iraq? Not yet, US military finds," 1 August 2003.

<sup>186</sup> Refugees International, April 2003.

<sup>187</sup> UNDESA, CEDAW, 1999.

continuation of marriage impossible, infidelity, marriage with a minor without the court's consent, or the husband's taking a second wife without permission of the court.<sup>188</sup>

Although tribal customs often prevail regarding **custody** arrangements, the mother has the preferential right to the custody and upbringing of the child during marriage as well as after its dissolution, and if it is not injurious to the child. In case of death of the child's father (or his incapacity to fulfill custody conditions), a working mother is not disqualified from custody on the grounds of employment, unless it is against the child's interest.

Iraq's **Penal Code** prescribes harsh punishments for both sexual violence and abduction or trafficking, but there is also a long-standing cultural stigma and shame attached to rape that places blame on the victim, excusing or mitigating punishment for the perpetrator, according to a HRW report. The Penal Code has incorporated some of these norms. A man may escape punishment for abduction, for example, by marrying the victim. So-called **honor killings** often result in significantly reduced sentences. The attitudes reflected in such provisions are often shared by policemen, resulting in reluctance by victims of such crimes to file a complaint.

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<sup>188</sup> The wife is entitled to request judicial divorce if the husband is imprisoned; leaves her for two years or more without lawful justification; is impotent; infertile; or refuses to provide her with maintenance.

## Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

### Jordan and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000	Today
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	93.2	96.5	101.5	..
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	97.3	99.1	100.2	100.2
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	23.1	22.1	20.8	21.9 (2003)
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	0	1.0	1.3 (1997)	5.4 (2003)

Source: MDG Country Profiles, World Bank, and International Parliamentary Union

### Education and Training

Jordan has achieved gender parity in school enrollment at all levels and is set to achieve its **MDG goals** in education by 2005.<sup>189</sup>

The ratio of female to male **enrollments** is 97 percent in primary and secondary education. Primary school completion rates are 101 percent for females and 100 percent for males. Women account for 68 percent of **community college** enrollments and 47 percent of **public university** undergraduate enrollments (up from 37 percent in 1994). However, female **tertiary completion rate** is 31 percent of the male completion rate.<sup>190</sup>

Although only 50 percent of students who take the general secondary exam (*tawjih*) pass, the female **success rate** is significantly higher than that of males. The success rate of females varies from region to region and, in 1994, was higher than that for males by as much as 18 percent in the governorate of Irbid and as low as 3 percent in Tafila. In more than 75 percent of the governorates, the female success rate was more than 12 percent higher than that for males.

The general level of women's education has been rising over the past 20 years. But even though women's **illiteracy rate** was reduced from 49.5 percent in 1979 to 22 percent in 1991, they continue to lag behind men. According to the 2000 Annual Report on Employment, the **literacy rate** for women was 83.5 percent, compared to 94.3 percent for men.<sup>191</sup> The **youth literacy gap** between females and males in Jordan is less than 1 percent. However, according to the 2004 Jordan Poverty Assessment, the **illiteracy rate for poor people** is 20 percent, compared to 8 percent among the non-poor.

**Kindergartens** for 4 to 6 year olds are not compulsory and services are provided on a fee basis. As part of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy program (ERfKE), the government subsidizes early childhood education for low-income families. Females account for 47 percent of all kindergarten enrollments.

<sup>189</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Jordanian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2003.



Efforts are being made to improve the image of women and to eliminate the associated stereotypes in **textbooks**, again as part of the ERfKE.

Concerning **teaching staff**, women outnumber men at all levels (kindergarten, primary and secondary school) except at the secondary vocational school level.

## Health

**Fertility levels** have been declining steadily during the last decade. The birth rate has declined from 50 per 1,000 in the mid-1970s to 33 per 1,000 in 1995. The total fertility rate declined from 7.5 children per woman in 1975 to 6.1 in 1985 to 3.5 in 2002.

**Education** is the strongest factor affecting **fertility levels**. Women who had attended secondary school had the lowest level of fertility (about 4.1) while those with no education had the highest (6.9). The total fertility rate was 6 children for women with primary education and 5.4 for women with secondary education. Women with secondary education had the highest median age at first birth (21.2 years).

**Contraceptive prevalence rates** among married women ages 15-49 was 56 percent in 2002, and appears to be tapering off.<sup>192</sup> One-third of women using a modern method of birth control obtained the service from the public sector health system, while the other two-thirds did so from the private sector.<sup>193</sup>

The improvement of educational opportunities, particularly for girls, has resulted in their staying in school longer. This has been a factor in pushing the **age of marriage** upward. Women who have had more than a secondary education tend to marry almost six years later than those with no education or only a primary education. According to the Personal Status Law, the **legal age of marriage** is 15 for women and 16 for men (18 for both by temporary Royal Decree in December 2001).

Over the past 30 years, **maternal mortality** has fallen by nearly half to 41 per 100,000 births.

Of the 198 **HIV/AIDS** cases reported between 1986 and 1999, 24 percent were women.

## Economic Participation

Based on estimates for all MENA countries and other world regions, the actual level of **female labor force participation** in Jordan is only about half of its potential - among the lowest in the region.<sup>194</sup>

Estimates of **women's labor force participation** in Jordan vary widely, from 12 to 28 percent. An examination of the educational level, fertility rate, age structure of Jordan's female population, and the current level of female labor force participation implies a lower utilization of productive capacity, creating potentially negative implications for household income and GDP growth.<sup>195</sup>

Average **unemployment rates** among women are high at 25 percent versus 15 percent for men. Young women as a subgroup are even more likely to be unemployed (estimated at 82 percent).<sup>196</sup> **Female**

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<sup>192</sup> This follows a sharp rise between 1990 and 1998, and a slight decline between 1999 and 2000.

<sup>193</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>194</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

**unemployment** rates tend to increase with successive levels of education, while the reverse holds true for males; higher education levels mean lower unemployment for men but higher unemployment for women. Of women in the labor force, 64 percent have intermediate diplomas and higher. Nevertheless, unemployment rates are generally higher for women, at all levels of education, especially for those with vocational training.<sup>197</sup>

In Jordan, on average, women tend to be more **qualified** than men in similar jobs. World Bank estimates show that the average female wage earner in Jordan is likely to have 12.3 years of education, compared to 9.3 years for men holding a similar job.<sup>198</sup>

Very few women are found in **managerial and highly skilled jobs**. In the private sector they constitute only 4.1 percent of employees in the highest paid managerial jobs.<sup>199</sup>

Approximately 45 percent of the female labor force are employed in the **public sector**.<sup>200</sup> The share of women's participation in the public sector is unlikely to grow due to limitations and public sector downsizing and hiring restrictions. Future job growth for women has to be in the private sector. However, the **private sector** displays a greater degree of preferential treatment for male employees, partly due to certain social norms as well as some labor regulations that increase the perceived cost of female employees.<sup>201</sup>

Throughout the Kingdom, 5.8 percent of women work in **agriculture** where women more than men rely on paid employment.<sup>202</sup> Men constitute a larger percentage of employers and the self employed. According to Department of Statistics data for 1999, the largest segment of rural employed women was salaried employees (92.5 percent), similar to urban women (93 percent).<sup>203</sup>

Income levels of **female-headed households** in Jordan (based on earnings) are among the lowest in the MENA region, at a little over 10 percent of total household income. This situation may imply that poor women in Jordan participate at a lower rate in the labor force than either poor women in other countries or poor Jordanian men. It may also imply that if poor women engage in labor force or economic activity, they earn wages that are substantially lower.

**Wage differentials** are less prominent in the public sector than in the private sector, and in Jordan, private sector wage differentials are the highest after Iran in the MENA region. Estimates show that if discrimination were eliminated and women were paid at a level commensurate with their skills, women's wages would increase by as much as 45 percent in the private sector and 13 percent in the public sector.<sup>204</sup>

Jordan's **Labor law** lacks a clear statement regarding wage or employment equality between men and women. Wage discrimination is common in the private sector, and there is no **minimum wage**. A 1987

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<sup>197</sup> According to the CAS, women with vocational or post-secondary training, but without university education, have the highest rates of unemployment (31percent). At higher educational levels (community college and university degrees), women's unemployment rates are more than double those of males (Jordan CAS, July 2004).

<sup>198</sup> This is of course based on a much smaller sample of women who, if working, tend to be more qualified than the average of a much larger sample of men.

<sup>199</sup> International Women's Rights Action Watch.

<sup>200</sup> The Ministries of Health, Education, Planning, Social Development, and Post and Telecommunications employ the largest proportions of women in their civil service, totaling 45,829, or approximately around 86 percent of all female civil service employees.

<sup>201</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>202</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Jordanian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2003.

<sup>203</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

survey of the state sector indicated that men's **pay** was 27.9 percent higher than that of females of equal education, age, and experience. Additionally, the Labor law forbids women from performing certain jobs and working from the hours of 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the absence of special circumstances.

Although statistical measurement of the **Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector** is problematic in Jordan, with no agreed formal definition, it is estimated that 90 percent of all businesses in Jordan are SMEs. Women entrepreneurs comprise only 3.9 percent of all entrepreneurs in Jordan. This is extremely low by world standards (average of 25-33 percent depending on how female entrepreneurship is measured). Microfinance surveys indicate that women run 63 percent of informal enterprises in Jordan.<sup>205</sup>

### **Public Participation and Representation**

In view of the last parliamentary elections in 2003, the Jordanian electoral law was amended to reserve 6 seats on the Lower House of the Majlis for women. Although 54 women had registered to run in the last elections, compared to 750 male candidates, none of them was elected to the parliament. Given the quota, 6 female parliamentarians were appointed and have made up 5.4 in the 110-seat **Lower House of Parliament** since August 2003. In the same year, King Abdullah dissolved the **Upper House of Parliament** and appointed seven women to a new 55-member body.<sup>206</sup> This brought the number of female members in both houses of Parliament to 11.<sup>207</sup>

In June 2003, women candidates received more than twice the **votes** women candidates received four year ago—33,452 compared to 13,128—and more women than men voted, setting another first for Jordan.<sup>208</sup>

At the **local government level**, women have achieved some modest electoral successes. In 1995, ten women were elected to **municipal council** seats, including the **first woman mayor**. In the 1999 municipal elections, however, women fared far worse. No bloc allowed women to join. Three out of 44 female candidates were elected for the 2,530 mayoral and council seats, and the only female mayor, Iman Futaymat, lost to another candidate. In an apparent attempt to compensate for the low numbers of women elected to municipal seats, the government increased the number of appointed women members of **the city council** from one to three (out of 40).

The 21-member **Jordanian Cabinet** (formed in October 2003) for the first time includes four women: the Minister of Tourism & Antiquities and Minister of Environment (merged); the Minister of Municipal Affairs; the Minister of State and Government Spokesperson; and the Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology.

Judge Taghrid Hikmat made history in July 2003 when she was elected to the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, becoming the first Jordanian woman and Arab judge to serve the prestigious court. Today, there are 19 **female judges** serving in various courts in the Kingdom, though they are not present in family courts.

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Previously, it included three women.

<sup>207</sup> Three female senators are serving for the first time: former Minister Rowaida Maaaitah, Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Forum for Women, Mai Abul Samen, and President of the Jordanian Business Women Forum, Wijdan Saket.

<sup>208</sup> National Democratic Institute.

## Women's Rights

Jordan became a signatory to **CEDAW** in 1980 and ratified it in 1992, but it has registered reservations to articles 9, 15 and 16, regarding nationality rights of children, movement, parents' equal rights, and personal rights to choose family name, profession and occupation.<sup>209</sup>

The Jordanian Constitution of 1952 embodies the principle of equality before the law in rights and obligations. However, many laws contain provisions with implicit and explicit impacts on women's rights, due to either discriminatory aspects in terms of unequal citizenship rights or fewer protections with regard to nationality, marriage and participation in the labor force and public sphere. To address these problems, a package of amendments to eliminate differential treatment has been proposed since 2001. These amended laws have not been approved by Parliament and are therefore in effect as Provisional Laws.

Prior to 2001, Jordanian laws on marriage provided unequal treatment for men and women with regard to the age of marriage by promoting early marriages for girls (15) and boys (16). The *Personal Status Provisional Law No. 82 of 2001* raised the age of marriage to 18 years for both males and females. This could enable girls to complete their secondary education and therefore be more employable. It could also give them more freedom in choosing their spouse and even in controlling the number of children they will have over a lifetime, as delayed marriage results in delayed childbearing.

The provisions of the same law sanctioned *khula*, which grants women the right to divorce similar to (but not the same as) a man's right to divorce. In August 2003, the lower house of Jordan's newly-elected Parliament rejected this law. It was among 211 temporary laws introduced by the government since the previous parliament was dissolved two years prior. Unlike men, women must specifically request a special clause in their marriage contract to obtain the right to divorce, and the law requires men to pay support to divorced wives for only one year. A guardian is required to administer a bride's **marriage contract**.

According to Jordanian **Nationality** Law No. 6 of 1986, "Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians have the right to keep their Jordanian nationality." However, the child of a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian is not automatically considered a citizen of Jordan. A Jordanian mother cannot transfer her nationality to her child unless he or she is born in Jordan to a mother with Jordanian citizenship and a father of unknown or foreign nationality or whose paternity has not been legally established.

A Jordanian woman cannot obtain a separate **passport** without her husband's written permission. However, Jordanian legislation authorizes the Director of the Passport Department to issue a passport for special cases for a period not exceeding one year. Under the Provisional Passports Law of 2003, married women no longer require such written permission. These new provisions also allow married women with children to include their minor children under 16 in their passports, provided such children are not already listed in their fathers' passports.

According to Jordan's Civil Status Law, the "**family book**," or *daftar*, is required to conduct nearly all official transactions, including voting or being a candidate for elected office, registering children for school or university, obtaining civil service jobs, and gaining access to social services such as food assistance. Upon marriage, a woman is transferred from her father's *daftar* to that of her husband. If a woman is "separated" from a *daftar* due to divorce or death, the only solution is to re-register under the *daftar* of a male family member. This becomes problematic if the male family member is working abroad

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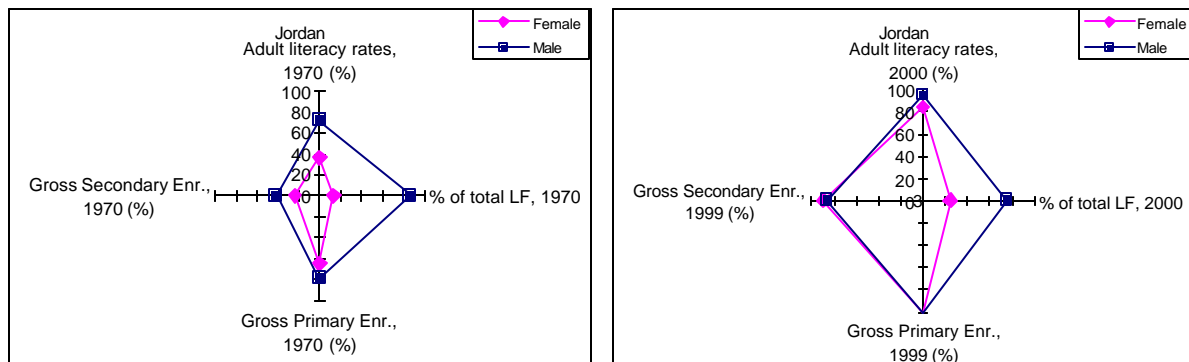
<sup>209</sup> Amnesty International USA, June 2004.

or deceased. The Civil Status Provisional Law No. 9 of 2001 proposes to amend the existing law to allow divorced and widowed women to obtain independent *daftars* in their own names.

Jordanian legislation does not include specific laws that clearly penalize all forms of violence against Jordanian women. In August 2003, temporary legislation to tighten the penalties for **crimes of "honor"** was rejected by parliamentary deputies. The recent vote follows a 1999 landmark ruling by a Justice Ministry panel which had decided to annul an article of the Penal Code that provides for leniency towards men who commit violent acts against women in the "honor" context. Later that year, the Parliament had already rejected this change.<sup>210</sup> Police reports indicate that between 25 and 30 women are killed annually (one-third of all murders in Jordan) in the name of family honor, making it the most common type of murder of women in the country.

Jordan's Ministry of Labor recently endorsed a 'Special Working Contract for **non-Jordanian Domestic Workers**,' which stipulates their rights to life insurance, medical care, rest days, and repatriation upon expiration of the contract and reiterates migrant women's right to be treated in compliance with international human rights standards. This minimum standard contract is expected to become a model for other countries in the Arab region.

### Progress from 1970 to 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The **Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)** is one of the first semi-governmental commissions established in the Arab world to promote women's issues. Established by a Cabinet decision in 1992, JNCW led a large effort comprised of Jordanian public and private institutions and individuals involved with women's issues to formulate a national strategy for women in Jordan. JNCW's responsibilities broadened in 1996 with the Cabinet's decision to charge it with defining policies and legislation related to women and identifying priorities, plans, and programs in both governmental and non-governmental sectors in order to effectively carry them out. Headed by HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal, JNCW is the authority on women's issues and activities for Jordan's public sector, and it represents the Kingdom in all dealings pertaining to women's affairs at national, regional, and international levels.

The participatory 1993 **National Strategy for Women** aimed to "enhance the status of women in Jordan and support their role in the reconstruction of society, the consolidation of social progress and the

<sup>210</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

realization of social development.” This Strategy was updated in 2000 to take into consideration developments since 1993, such as the ratification of CEDAW in 1992 and the Platform for Action of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Strategy was recently updated again in 2004 to provide a comprehensive focus on five domains: legislation, economic empowerment, participation in public life, human security and social protection, and media and communication. Key sectors and themes targeted include education, health, poverty, women-headed households, violence, aging, special needs, food security, environment, shelter and housing, and communication and media, and their impacts on women’s economic advancement.<sup>211</sup>

The government’s **five-year development plan** for the years 1986-1990 was prepared by an 18-member all-male committee, and the plan for the years 1993-1997 was prepared by a 24-member committee that included one woman. The JNCW partnered with key institutions to analyze gender issues across all sectors in Jordan and to integrate these into the **1999-2003 National Economic and Social Development Plan**.

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<sup>211</sup> World Bank, Jordan Country Gender Assessment, July 2004.

## The Republic of Lebanon

### Lebanon and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2001	Today
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	100.9	102.8	101.8	101.9
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	92.8	94.4	95.9	96.1
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	29.3	..	..	..
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament		2.0	2.3	2.3

Source: MDG Country Profiles, World Bank, and International Parliamentary Union

### Education and Training

In 2000, 84 percent of women were literate compared to 93 percent of men. The reality of education in Lebanon reveals an increase in the enrollment rates at all levels of education: primary, secondary and post-secondary. Girls' **enrollment rates** have increased over the past thirty years, with girls' enrollment rates being almost equal to that of boys. Between 1970 and 1997, girls' enrollment rates went up by about 10 percentage points in each age group (for example, from 86 percent to 97 percent for the 5-9 year age group). Although the 15-19 age group witnessed similar enrollment increases, it remained the group with the lowest average level of girls' enrollment at 47.6 percent in 1997.<sup>212</sup>

A gender gap in enrollment is hardly noticeable until students reach age 15, where girls' enrollment rates exceed those of boys by 6.4 percent in the 15-19 year age bracket. This is likely due to boys leaving school at an earlier age than girls to enter the labor market.

Adult female **illiteracy** fell from 37 percent in 1980 to 21 percent in 1998. Youth female illiteracy is estimated at 8 percent.<sup>213</sup>

Enrollment rates of girls in **vocational education** reached 40 percent in 2000.<sup>214</sup> Despite the increase, this equality of opportunity has not translated into a more diverse choice of specializations for women.

There is also a growing sense that higher education for women is regarded as a means to obtain a "**personal education**"; that is, studying to get a university degree paves the way for marriage rather than preparing women for a professional career.<sup>215</sup> More than half of all **university** students are women – 53 percent in 2001. There is no university program or field of specialization that does not have female students.

<sup>212</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> UN/ESCWA, Summary Report on the Status of Women in Arab Countries for the Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing, July 2004.

<sup>215</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

## Health

The overall **fertility rate** for women declined to 2.2 births per woman in 2002 from 3.2 in 1990.<sup>216</sup>

According to the 1994-97 Lebanon Maternal and Child Health Survey, fertility rates among women decreased with increasing **educational level**, with an average of 5.7 babies for illiterate women, 3.5 for those with elementary education, and an average of 2.2 babies for women with secondary education or more. Fertility rates also differ by region, being as high as 3.4 children per woman in the North district and as low as 1.7 children per woman in Beirut.

The survey also shows that 99.4 percent of the women surveyed knew about a method of **family planning**. According to the 1997 "Survey on Living Conditions," 61 percent of married women used contraceptives. About 88 percent of the **deliveries** took place in public or private health institutions.

Female life expectancy in 2002 was 72.6 years for women and 69 for men. **Maternal mortality** rate in 2000 was 150 for every 100,000 live births.

According to UNAIDS/WHO, there were 613 recorded cases of **AIDS** in Lebanon in 2000, of which the majority were men.

The first official report on CEDAW points out that the main causes of women's **mortality** in Lebanon are blood diseases and tumors (34 percent) followed by natural causes (26 percent).

There has been a rise in the **average age of marriage** among women from 23.7 years in 1970 to 28.1 in 1997. The civil war, which led to an imbalance in the numbers of unmarried men and women, and the current **socio-economic situation**, characterized by low salaries and a high cost of living, are among the main factors preventing young Lebanese from marrying. Average divorce rate is 2.4 for every 1,000 women and 2.5 for every 1,000 men.

Sufficiently reliable statistics on **domestic violence** are not available. A review of security reports between 1990 and 1994 showed that rape was the most frequently reported type of crime against women, compared to kidnapping, battering, mugging, incest, and murder.<sup>217</sup>

## Economic Participation

Women have been joining the labor force in ever larger numbers since the civil war started in Lebanon. This development is taking place in spite of the conservative role the Lebanese society has assigned to its women.<sup>218</sup> There is a clear positive relationship between the **level of education of women** and their gaining employment in the formal labor force.<sup>219</sup>

Lebanese **women's labor participation rate** was 32.3 percent in 2000.<sup>220</sup> As education tends to be a prerequisite for women entering the labor force, working women tend to be more educated than their male

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<sup>216</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, Statistical Appendix, 2003.

<sup>217</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Lebanese Women: In light of the Beijing platform for action, 2002.

<sup>218</sup> Mona Khalaf, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon.

<sup>219</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Lebanese Women In Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>220</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, Statistical Appendix, 2003.



counterparts holding similar jobs.<sup>221</sup> Women are less well **paid** than men; however, this trend is changing in some sectors such as commerce and industry.

Almost a quarter or 24.6 percent of employed women work in the **professional sector**. Women have found opportunities in government, medicine, law, academia, business, and the arts. Unfortunately, few women have achieved senior positions in their fields. For instance, 41.5 percent of bank employees are women, but there are no female bank CEOs in the nation.<sup>222</sup> In 2000, women, as a share of paid employees, constituted 63.3 percent in health and social services, 62.2 percent in education, 35.5 percent in the services and business enterprises, 17 percent in trade, 16.6 percent in agriculture, and 16.1 percent in industry. More than 50 percent of those working in **charitable organizations** are women.<sup>223</sup>

The 2003 UNIFEM report points out that “Lebanese women tend to leave their work after marriage – and are allowed to cash their indemnities (as stipulated by the **Lebanese law**) – or leave work after the birth of their first child.”

### **Public Participation and Representation**

In October 2004, for the first time, women were appointed to the Lebanese Cabinet. Layla Solh, daughter of former Prime Minister Riad Solh, was named Minister of Industry. Wafaa Hamza was appointed Minister of State.

Lebanese women received the **right to vote** and run for public office in **1953**. From 1953 to 1972, nine women ran for parliamentary elections, but none of them succeeded. The first Lebanese woman to become a Member of **Parliament** was in 1963. She was appointed to complete the term of her father who had died in a tragic accident. Similarly, in 1991, Nayla Mouawad was appointed to Parliament after her husband died during his term. Only in 1992, 1996, and 2000 respectively, did three women finally get elected on their own merit. And since the August 2000 parliamentary elections, there have been three women in the 128 member Parliament (2.3 percent of Parliament). Lebanese women organizations have been advocating the establishment of a quota for women in Parliament.

On the more encouraging side, 230 of the 10,000 candidates elected in the May 2004 municipal elections were women, increasing the number of women by 91 compared to the previous municipal elections.<sup>224</sup> This represents an increase from 1.7 percent female representation in 1998 to 2.3 percent in 2004.<sup>225</sup> Out of 108 **heads of municipalities**, only 3 are women.<sup>226</sup> In the South, female representation is relatively weaker than in the North.

Men dominate the leadership of all **political parties**.<sup>227</sup> The introduction of a **parliamentary quota system for women** continues to be discussed. In January 2005, both Speaker Nabih Berri and Interior Minister Suleiman Franjeh announced their endorsement for women's representation in Parliament

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<sup>221</sup> UNDP, Program on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>222</sup> Association des Banques du Liban, Les Ressources Humaines des Banques en An 2000, September 2001.

<sup>223</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>224</sup> Unofficial tally provided to The Daily Star by the Community and Educational Committee of the Lions Club in July 2004 in absence of official figures from the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>225</sup> One hundred and thirty nine women won office in 1998 out of a total of 1,022 seats, the last time municipal elections were held.

<sup>226</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

according to "a certain formula." However, many women activists (like Roula Ajouz, the only female member of Beirut's municipal council) are against a women's quota.

Only 4 out of the 53 ambassadors representing the Lebanese government abroad are women. At the **director-general level**, there are 3 women of a total of 22 director-general positions.

Women's entry into the professional field has grown rapidly, with the most remarkable advances in the legal profession: 50 percent of **lawyers** and 27.5 percent of **judges** are now women. The last graduating class of judges had more women than men. Data for 2004 show that 124 out of 434 judges (28 percent) are women at **Judicial Courts**, while 19.5 percent are judges at the **State Consultative Council**.<sup>228</sup>

In 2000, 8.5 percent of women were **managers** in companies, and in 2003, there were 6 women **managing directors**. There was only one woman as Dean of University out of 13 in 2003.<sup>229</sup> And women's representation on **unions' boards** remains low.<sup>230</sup>

### Women's Rights

Lebanon acceded to **CEDAW** in 1997, albeit with reservations to articles on nationality, marriage and family life, and arbitration.

A **woman's personal status** is dictated by her religious affiliation. Lebanon recognizes 19 different groups that are each accorded their own religious law.

Some women's groups have called for reform to create a universal civil **marriage** that would bring all marriages under a common code. The introduction of an optional civil marriage was suggested by the President of the Republic, Elias Hraoui, back in 1998. This proposal has been since sharply resisted by religious leaders (both Christian and Muslim), and the Parliament has blocked it from consideration. The **legal minimum age of marriage for most women** is 17 (16 with guardian consent). For Shi'a women, it is 9, and for Druze women, it is 17 (15 with guardian consent). For most men, the legal minimum age of marriage is 18 (17 with guardian consent). For Shi'a men, it is 15, and for Druze men it is 18 (16 with guardian consent).

Some areas of women's rights in Lebanon are also dictated by **common civil code**. This code guarantees that women can own businesses and that their testimony will be given equal weight to men's in court.

The 2000 report by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) stated that the **Penal Code** discriminates against women in terms of honor killings, adultery, and rape.

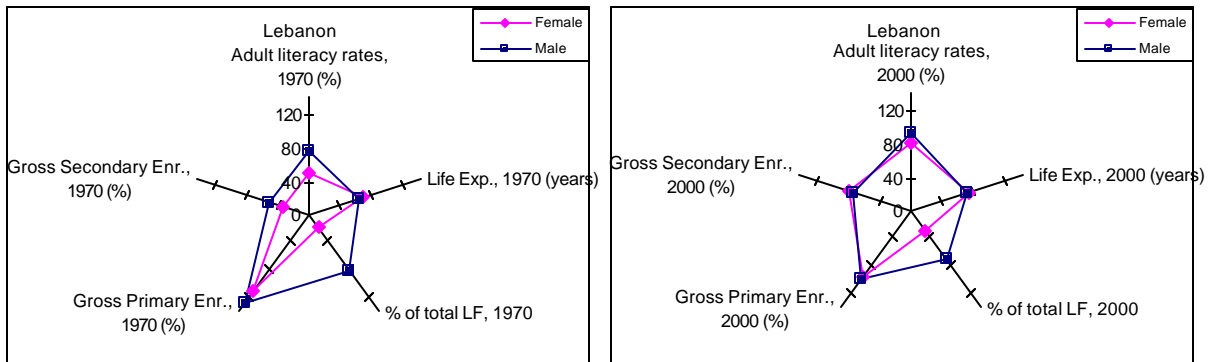
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<sup>228</sup> UN/ESCWA, Summary Report on the Status of Women in Arab Countries for the Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing, July 2004.

<sup>229</sup> UN/ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference: 10 Years After Beijing - Report submitted by Lebanon, July 2004.

<sup>230</sup> In 2000, the status of women in the unions was as follows: The Teachers' Union - one woman out of 12 board members; The Secondary Teachers' Union - one woman out of 18 board members; The Engineers Union - no woman on the union's board; The Labor's Union - one woman member in the operating secretariat out of 12 members, and one woman member in the operating committee out of 44 members; The Physicians Order - no woman on the union's board; The Pharmacists Order - one woman was twice elected as its President; The Dentists Order - one woman was once elected as its President; The Bar Association - two women on the board.

## Progress from 1970 to 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Founded in January 1998, the **National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)** (presently headed by Mrs. Andrée Emile Lahoud) was established as a national mechanism for women's advancement and gender equality, in compliance with global resolutions put forth during the Beijing world conference on Women in 1995. The NCLW has a broad mandate for change, from national priority-setting, advocacy and awareness-raising to monitoring, policy formulation, and legislative change.

The NCLW has drafted a **National Action Plan for Women**. The Plan seeks to empower women and challenge social discrimination through a variety of projects, including private and micro-credit development for poor women. The Committee has also implemented a national education program to teach women about their rights and to provide a new social image of women in public life.

A gender focal section was established at the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## Kingdom of Morocco

### Morocco and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	67.5	72.4	83	87.8
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	61.8	68.9	76.5	79.2
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector				25.8
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	0.6percent (1993)	0.6percent (1997)	0.6percent (1997)	11 percent

Source: MDG Country Profiles, World Bank and CEDAW 2003 Shadow Report.

### Education and Training

The young age of marriage is a major impediment to girls' education and hence to their opportunities for economic participation. With the Parliament's approval of the *moudawana* (or the personal status code) the minimum **female age of marriage** was increased from 15 to 18.

**School enrollment** consistently increased from 66.7 percent in 1998 to 84.6 percent in 2000/01. The rate of enrollment for **rural girls**, the group with the lowest enrollment rates, also progressed from 53.6 percent in 1998-99 to 70.4 percent in 2000 and to 78 percent in 2002/03 (10 percentage points less than those of boys). Net female school enrollment rates in 2002/03 were recorded at 86 percent (7 percentage points less than those for boys). The **ratio of girls to boys** in primary and secondary education remains the lowest of middle-income countries in the region (83 percent in 1999). At the **preschool** level, girls make up 36 percent of students.

The distance of schools from houses and levels of poverty have a major impact on girls' school enrollment rates – especially beyond the primary school level. NGOs have tried to fill this void: **informal education** provided by various associations in 2000 reached 35,000 children.

With enrollments improving, **illiteracy rates** also dropped from 55 percent in 1999-2000 to 47 percent in 2002. However, large gender gaps with regard to illiteracy rates remain. In 1998, 61.9 percent of women were illiterate as opposed to 34 percent of men. These gender gaps are even more pronounced in rural areas where lower rates of girls' enrollment are observed. Here the female illiteracy rate is as high as 83 percent compared to 45.5 percent in urban areas. **Drop-out rates** were 5 percent for girls compared to 4 percent for boys, while **repetition rates** were recorded at 12 percent for girls compared to 16 percent for boys.<sup>231</sup>

As for **youth literacy**, the last decade has witnessed noticeable progress – particularly for young females. While the youth female literacy rate was as low as 42 percent in 1990, it steadily increased to 60 percent in 2001 (at an annual growth rate of about 3 percent compared to that of young men at about 1 percent).

<sup>231</sup> UNICEF, 2003.

However, despite significant progress in female youth literacy rates, the gender gap remains high at 17 percent.<sup>232</sup>

**School programs and textbook** content have been subject to critiques from the women's movement over the last decade. However, despite the Ministry of National Education's purported engagement and the preparatory work done with the Ministry of Human Rights, few changes have taken place. This is problematic given progress in enrollment, which - if not accompanied by a change in the culture of inequality - will continue to propagate and reinforce gender stereotypes and biases.

At the **tertiary level**, women now make up about 48 percent of university students (up from 43 percent in recent years). Women's share is slightly larger in technical and professional schools.

## Health

The rate of **contraceptive prevalence** among married women ages 15-49 is about 58.8 percent. The fertility rate has decreased from 4.1 (1991) to 2.75 (2002) children per woman, with the average number of children per woman being 6.7 for women without any education, 4.9 for those with a basic education, and 2.5 for those with higher education.

The **maternal mortality rate** decreased from 332 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 220 in 2002. It remains the highest among middle-income countries in the region. Rural-urban discrepancies also persist. The maternal mortality rate in rural areas is at 307 per 100,000 live births as opposed to 125 in urban areas. The rate of prenatal consultations is 42 percent (20 percent in rural areas).

Available, though limited, statistics on **STIs** are alarming as they are also an indication of **HIV/AIDS** prevalence rates. According to the last CEDAW Shadow report, 78 percent of STI cases were women. Women are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS given that men are largely responsible for the transmission of the virus to their partners.

Limited resources have been allocated to treating breast and cervical **cancer**. In terms of diagnosing early signs of cancer, the Ministry of Health does not have the financial resources to provide health centers with the necessary equipment. NGOs are helping, albeit to a limited extent, to provide psychological support to women affected by cancer. Measures related to the prevention of illegal **abortions**, improving medical care for sterility as well as for menopause - as outlined in the National Plan of Action to integrate women in development - have yet to be implemented.

## Economic Participation

The **rate of economic female activity** is estimated at 38 percent and, as such, is one of the highest in the region. At the same time, there has been much debate on this particular indicator, and different trends are quoted in different literature sources.<sup>233</sup>

**Unemployment rates** also vary, but are estimated to be around 17 percent for both men and women.<sup>234</sup> At the same time, an increase in male unemployment rates has negative impacts on women's opportunities to secure formal employment.

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<sup>232</sup> World Bank, SIMA, 2003 database.

<sup>233</sup> According to the World Bank's Morocco Gender Update 2002, the rate of female economic activity has continued to drop since 1998 from 24 percent in 1997 to 18.8 percent in 2001.

Unemployment tends to trigger **emigration**. International migration from Morocco to Europe has undergone important changes; migrants are increasingly young, educated males who cannot find work at home. There is a prevailing view that male youth, unable to secure appropriate jobs, maybe a threat to domestic social stability.

Morocco has formulated strategies for **job rehabilitation and training** targeting unemployed youth. Yet, the focus on a gender dimension continues to be inadequate. The private sector (especially the textile industry) prefers young, unmarried female waged and salaried workers, who are deemed to be less costly in terms of benefits and increments.

Recent statistics on **child labor** seem to indicate that progress has been made in reducing the number of working boys and girls, yet the reliability on those statistics remains questionable. In fact, existing statistics for working boys are slightly higher than those for girls – though rural poverty tends to promote girls' engagement in agricultural activities, such as water and fuel collection.

The issue of **sexual harassment** at the workplace - previously a taboo issue - is now being more openly discussed in Morocco. The new labor code emphasizes equality in its Preamble and contains an article regarding the criminalization of sexual harassment at the work place. Changes in the Penal Code have been made accordingly.

### Public Participation and Representation

Since September 2002, 35 female parliamentarians have made up 10.8 percent of **Parliament**. This is in sharp contrast to the previous parliament, in which the rate of female representation in Morocco was the lowest in the Arab world - at 0.6 percent. This significant increase in female parliamentarians' share of representation follows five years of research and advocacy by civil society. This advocacy resulted in an implicit 20 percent quota system applied voluntarily by political parties at the last parliamentary elections. At the same time, the women's movement in Morocco is asking for legislative guarantees for the representation of women in electoral mandates and elective functions.

Some political parties also supported a 'charter of honor' at the **local elections** in September 2003 announcing that 20 percent of their candidates to the local elections would be women. Despite these efforts, only 127 of 6000 female candidates were elected, representing 0.55 percent of all elected local representatives. It needs to be noted that the number of female candidates running for elections more than tripled since the last local elections in 1997, in which 80 women succeeded.

The upper chamber, **Majlis al-Mustacharin**, has 270 members who are appointed for 9 years. One of them is a woman.

Since November 2002, **the Cabinet** has included three women, but not at the ministerial level. One is a Deputy Minister and two are State Secretaries (one of them - among numerous responsibilities - also oversees the women's portfolio).

Morocco's **judiciary** remains a difficult area for women to penetrate, even though women in Morocco have been judges for a long time. Women judges are not yet permitted to serve in courts applying the *Shari'a* Law.

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<sup>234</sup> According to the World Bank's Morocco Gender Update, the female rate of unemployment increased from 21.8 percent in 1997 to 26 percent at the end of 2001. Unemployment statistics for men indicate similar trends at lower rates of change.

Women's membership in **trade unions** is weak. However, it is not uncommon to see professional associations headed by women.

### Women's Rights

Morocco acceded to **CEDAW** in 1993 with reservations to provisions regarding the nationality of children, movement, marriage, and arbitration. Removing these reservations and harmonizing national legal texts in this regard may now be possible since changes of the *moudawana*, or Personal Status Code, were put into law in January 2004.

In an unprecedented move, King Mohammed VI announced in October 2003 a **landmark reform**, granting women new rights in marriage and divorce. According to the new legislation, which passed Parliament in January 2004, the family is placed under the joint responsibility of husband and wife. The new law no longer stipulates women's submission to the guardianship of a male family member and calls for equality with respect to rights and obligations.

Protecting the wife against possible misuse by the husband of his right to **divorce**, the new legislation protects the woman's rights by making repudiation conditional upon the court's prior authorization. It further enhances the chances for reconciliation, both through the family and the judge. It requires that all monies owed to the wife and children be paid in full by the husband before divorce can be duly restricted. Verbal repudiation by the husband is no longer valid as divorce is subject to a court ruling.

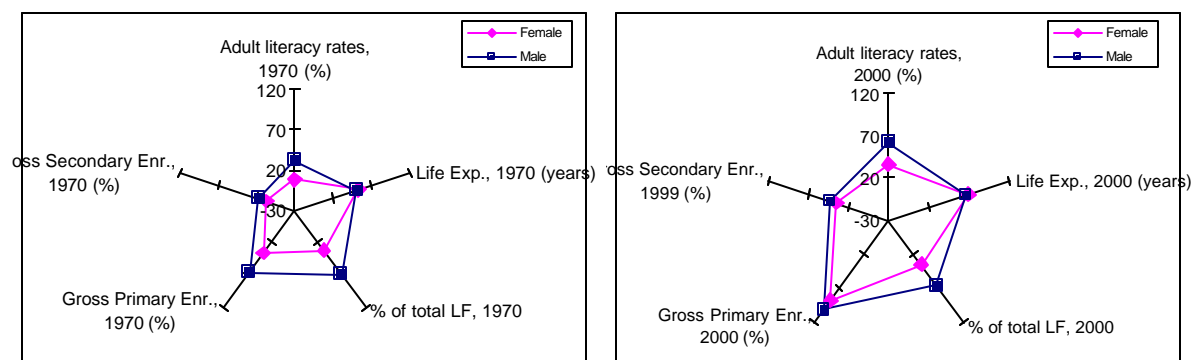
While Morocco protects women's right to their own **nationality**, it does not provide equal rights with regard to passing nationality to a foreign spouse or common children. A proposal to grant Moroccan nationality to children born to a Moroccan mother and foreign father does not seem to be confronting any political problems, but still has not passed in Parliament.

In terms of **child custody**, initially, a woman could not be the legal guardian of her own children except in case of the father's death or loss of his legal capacity. The new legislation makes (for the first time in Moroccan history) reference to the International Agreements on Children's Rights and gives the woman the possibility to retain custody of her child under certain conditions, even upon remarrying or moving out of the area where her husband lives.

**Inheritance** is also governed by Islamic law, which defines the shares that go to each family member. The proposed new law provides grandchildren on the daughter's side the ability to inherit from their grandfather just as the grandchildren on the son's side do.

Despite notable reforms of the Family Code, the legal system continues to have major weaknesses related to the code of contract obligations, the civil procedures code, the labor code, penal legislation, and the nationality code.

## Progress from 1970 to 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

In 1999, supported by a strong women's and civil society movement, a favorable political climate was indispensable for crafting a consensual **Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development**. The Plan, initiated by the World Bank and elaborated by the Moroccans themselves, contains 215 measures partitioned across four main axes: 1) Education and literacy; 2) Reproductive health; 3) Employment, professional training, and fighting against poverty; and 4) Enhancing women's legal and political status. The Plan has been receiving good media attention, in particular the measures recommended to enhance women's legal status created a great deal of controversy between conservative and modernist elements of society. As a result of the political sensitivities faced, the government moved away from adopting the Plan in its totality and instead integrated uncontested parts of it in its political declarations and five-year development Plan.

The axis dealing with the issue of the **personal status code** (which was at the heart of the controversy) was relegated to the King's arbitrage. Thus, a royal commission was established, which the King expected to be meaningful and comprehensive, and which was to report results by the end of 2002. About 30 women's and human rights groups formed a network called "*le printemps de l'égalité*" to follow the progress made by the royal commission. For the first time in Morocco's history, a strategic TV communication campaign was launched by the "printemps de l'égalité" to address violence against women and the family code's gender inequalities. Throughout the debate of reforming the personal status code, the King insisted on "rooting" the commission's recommendations in both the Moroccan Islamic culture and in the international human rights declarations as mentioned in the Moroccan constitution. On October 11, 2003, the King announced a **landmark reform** granting women new rights in a speech at the opening of Parliament, which has led to preliminary debates on the proposed changes. While the King formally instructed the Minister of Justice to implement the changes, the proposed measures still need to be written into law.

The November 2002 **changes in the Cabinet** have submerged the women's portfolio within a "Division de la Femme" as part of a State Secretariat attached to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Solidarity, and Social Action (the women's portfolio was formerly overseen within the Ministry of Women's Condition, the Family, Children, and the Disabled). The recent institutional changes make gender mainstreaming even more difficult - not only in terms of visibility and authority, but also in terms of budgetary allocations, as the Parliament is no longer able to have direct influence on resources diverted to a smaller women's department under the Secretary of State.

As **institutional capacity** is weak to comprehensively address women's issues, gender-sensitive activities



will have to be carried out by various ministries, the success of which depends much more on the will of the decision-makers within those ministries than on the respective gender focal points.

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### Saudi Arabia and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2001	2002	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	85.1	92.4	93.6		93.5
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	86.2	91.5	95.6	96.1	96.1
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	17.9	16.1	14.2		14.0
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	-	-	-	-	-

Source: MDG Country Profiles, February 2005

### Education and Training

Since the 1960s, Saudi Arabia has made substantial gains in the education of women. Women currently comprise 46 percent of **secondary school** students and 58 percent of **higher education** students. However, women are still restricted from taking some subjects, such as engineering, journalism, and architecture. According to the UNDP, 36 percent of adult women are illiterate, compared to only 17 percent of adult men.<sup>235</sup>

The Kingdom is well on its way to completely eliminating gender disparities in all levels of education: the girls to boys ratio in net enrollment has reached 0.90, 0.94, and 1.05 at the primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, respectively. **Girls' enrollment** across all educational levels grew at an average annual rate of 8.3 percent, compared to 4.2 percent for boys over the 1975-2000 period.<sup>236</sup> However, Saudi Arabia is the only Gulf Cooperation Country that has a lower enrollment of females in secondary school relative to males. If enrollment trends continue at the same rate as they have in recent years, this gap will close relatively fast.<sup>237</sup>

**Female literacy** rates have reached 88.8 percent for those between 15 and 24 years of age, and 74.3 percent for those ages 15 and above.<sup>238</sup>

It is estimated that between 2004 and 2020, there will be twice as many female **college graduates** as male graduates.<sup>239</sup> According to 2003 statistics, at 52 percent, women form more than half of all college graduates in the Kingdom, but less than 5 percent of the labor force. Women in the workforce are mainly found in the education sector.<sup>240</sup>

There are thousands of **female professors** throughout the Kingdom, reflecting the high general level of female education in the country. Saudi Arabia funds one of the world's largest scholarship programs for women, and thousands of women have earned doctorates from Western universities.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>235</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>236</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>237</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>238</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>239</sup> Arab News, 3 June 2004.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Nawaf Obaid, "Saudi women must get the vote in 2009," Financial Times, 13 October 2004.

## Health

Saudi Arabia's **population growth** rate remains among the highest in the world at 3 percent in 2003 (surpassing national economic growth rates). **Fertility rates** in Saudi Arabia remain relatively high at 5.3 births per woman, corresponding to low **contraceptive prevalence rates**, which are just above 30 percent (1995-2002).<sup>242</sup>

Despite Saudi Arabia having a high level of public spending on health (4.2 percent of GDP), it has not been able to reduce its **child mortality rates** to numbers below those in upper-middle-income countries. Child mortality rates remain the highest in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).<sup>243</sup> And while Saudi Arabia, like all other GCC countries, has achieved **lower male mortality rates** than average male mortality in upper-middle-income countries, its **female mortality rates remain above** those in upper-middle-income countries.<sup>244</sup>

Improved access to general health services and specialized maternal health services has helped to reduce the incidence of **maternal mortality** considerably (to 23 per 100,000 live births in 2000). The percentage of **births attended by skilled health professionals** was 91 percent in 2000 – a significant increase from 78 percent in 1985.<sup>245</sup>

## Economic Participation

**Women's participation in total employment** was estimated at 18 percent in 2003. Out of the total number of employed women, an estimated 30 percent are nationals, while the rest are expatriate female workers.<sup>246</sup>

**Female participation in the labor force** is highest in the 25-34 age group, followed by those of all ages with tertiary education. Female participation rates are directly affected by educational attainment and marital status.<sup>247</sup> In Saudi Arabia, there are incentives for married women to quit their jobs. For example, a woman who resigns because of marriage receives a benefit equal to 11 percent of her average annual salary over the years she has served.

Like in the other GCC countries, female **unemployment** in Saudi Arabia is higher than male unemployment. In fact, at 15.8 percent, it is more than double the male unemployment rate of 6.8 percent.<sup>248</sup> In response, the Shoura Council has drafted a **new strategy** that gives top priority to women's employment. It calls for a restructuring of women's higher education in line with job market requirements.

The strategy also calls for the expansion of women's technical education and vocational training, emphasizing that job opportunities for women in the **private sector** must be increased. According to the new Labor law, employers are obliged to give women who have been working for at least three years, **maternity leave** of 70 days at full pay. Women who have been employed for less than a year get

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<sup>242</sup> UNDP, Human Development Report: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World, 2004.

<sup>243</sup> World Bank, WDI, 2003.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Measured unemployment rates probably underestimate the underutilization of women's labor because, while men tend to continue looking for work, women are more likely to report themselves as housewives even if they would work if a job were available. World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2004.

maternity leave at half pay. In addition, the new law fixes the retirement age for men at 60 and for women at 55. The law also directs that women be paid their full gratuity if their contracts end at the time of marriage or childbirth.<sup>249</sup>

Strict laws about the **segregation of sexes** make it expensive for employers to hire women for whom they have to provide separate premises. Even the employment of male intermediaries by women entrepreneurs is in question. The Ministry of Commerce announced in 1995 that women would no longer be issued commercial licenses for businesses requiring them to supervise foreign workers, interact with male clients, or deal regularly with government officials.<sup>250</sup> In Saudi Arabia, it is prohibited - under any circumstances--to **integrate** women with men in places of work or facilities attached to those sites. This prohibition effectively bars women from most sectors and from attaining higher levels of management.

Some economic analysts have suggested that female education is a bad investment because it costs the government billions of riyals and the economic return is almost zero. Currently, many expatriate men and women are employed in jobs that Saudi women could perform. These expatriates are **remitting millions of riyals outside the country.**<sup>251</sup>

Women may own businesses, but until recently, they were only allowed to run them through an appointed male agent.<sup>252</sup> According to Amnesty International, approximately 16,390 **businesses are owned by women** and women own 40 percent of the nation's private wealth.<sup>253</sup> Aggregate investments made by women in Saudi Arabia in 2002 included US\$ 1 million in industrial projects and US\$ 1.77 million in service projects<sup>254</sup>. Nevertheless, most women allow male relatives to control their economic interests rather than accept public responsibilities.<sup>255</sup>

In November 2002, Saudi **women's bank accounts** contained an estimated \$26.6 billion in idle funds as a result of laws that prohibit women from opening businesses of their own.<sup>256</sup> In fact, Saudi Arabia has large numbers of women business owners who have inherited family-owned businesses. Many of these are among the country's largest enterprises. The report blames the **flight of at least SR 21 billion to foreign countries** on regulations that prevent women from conducting business.<sup>257</sup>

However, the number of women registered in **local chambers of commerce and industry** is on the increase. The Jeddah chamber, for example, has more than 2000 women members out of a total membership of 50,000. In Riyadh, the figure is over 2,400 out of a total of 35,000 members. This

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<sup>249</sup> Arab News, September 15, 2004.

<sup>250</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

<sup>251</sup> Arab News, 3 June 2004.

<sup>252</sup> The country's Labor Minister announced in May 2004 that women may carry out business activities without the need for a *wakil* (representative). The impact of this announcement is, however, not yet clear.

<sup>253</sup> There are 40,320 commercial registrations by Saudi women in Saudi Arabia. These businesses focus on wholesaling, retailing and services, and are typically of small size and low technology use. There are 3,193 businesses in Riyadh that are owned by women. In 2003, there were 2,500 businesswomen members of the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2002, the Saudi Arabian General Investment Agency licensed 27 projects by female investors (representing 2.1 percent of total licenses).

<sup>254</sup> Nadereh Chamlou and Reem Kettaneh Yared, "Women Entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa: Building on Solid Beginning," Annual Joint Seminar of the Arab Fund on Arab Women and Economic Development, 2003.

<sup>255</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>256</sup> Al-Madinah, "Saudi Women's Bank Accounts Waiting to Be Tapped," 19 November 2003.

<sup>257</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

represents a fourfold increase in just ten years. Businesswomen registered with the Eastern Province chamber number more than 1,000 out of a total of 14,000.<sup>258</sup>

Banks estimate that 30 percent of new **accounts** are opened by women, and investment managers say that 60 percent of new **investors in the stock market** are women. Furthermore, experts say that 35 percent to 40 percent of **investors in real estate** are women. Despite this, women face difficulty in accessing information concerning investment opportunities and in consultations concerning the options available, especially in the stock market.<sup>259</sup>

According to a survey conducted by a London-based research firm (Synovate), 32 percent of wives in Saudi Arabia keep their assets or part of their earnings as well as their **assets secret** from their husbands. Their assets are in bank accounts, stocks and shares, or property other than real estate.<sup>260</sup>

### Public Participation and Representation

There are no women members of the **Majlis Al-Shoura**, a 150-member national consultative council appointed by the King.<sup>261</sup> However, female academics and thinkers have in the past been consulted by the Shoura Council on issues relating to women. Despite a lively public discussion on the subject matter, Shoura Council President Dr. Saleh Bin-Humaid in February 2005 ruled out the appointment of women to the consultative body during the upcoming Shoura reshuffle, when the number of its members increased from 120 to 150.<sup>262</sup>

While the **electoral law** published in August 2004 did not explicitly banish women from participating in the 2005 municipal elections, municipal bylaws did not encourage women either. In January 2005, however, the Interior Minister announced that women would not be allowed to vote in the **municipal elections**. Saudi election officials were quoted as having given administrative reasons for this decision, such as there not being enough female electoral staff to run women-only voter registration entrees and that only a fraction of women in Saudi Arabia has photo identity cards. The announcement put an end to plans by some professional women to stand as candidates. However, high officials have publicly announced that they endorse women's participation in the next elections scheduled for 2009.

While no female has yet occupied a **ministerial or legislative post** in Saudi Arabia, many women hold sub-cabinet and senior government positions, mainly in the education, health or social service sector. Furthermore, a number of Saudi women hold executive positions in private sector firms, businesses, and international organizations (for example, Thoraya Obaid, UNFPA's Executive Director).<sup>263</sup> The Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry - after having established a women's wing in March 2004 -has also recently allowed women members to vote. This only occurred after numerous debates.

In 2003, women were appointed to the newly formed **National Human Rights Commission**<sup>264</sup> and the **Journalists' Syndicate** (where women also have voting power). Women also took part in a series of

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<sup>258</sup> Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," Arab View, 2003.

<sup>259</sup> Arab News, 9 February 2005.

<sup>260</sup> Arab News, 8 February 2005.

<sup>261</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region.

<sup>262</sup> Arab News, 10 February 2005.

<sup>263</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals" Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2002.

<sup>264</sup> This is a nongovernmental organization, which aims to promote women's rights and contribute to social justice.

national dialogues on challenges facing the nation. The discussions were at the heart of Saudi Arabia's reform program.<sup>265</sup>

In the summer of 2000, Princess Al-Jawhara Fahad bin Mohammed bin Abdel Rahman al-Saud was appointed **Assistant Undersecretary for Education Affairs**—the highest position ever held by a woman in the Saudi government.<sup>266</sup> **Businesswoman Lubna Al-Oyala**n was recently elected to the board of directors of a major Saudi Bank (Saudi Hollandi Bank), making her the first female in the kingdom to occupy such a position.

In the media, Saudi women journalists and writers have been prominent in voicing their opinions concerning incorrect attitudes, traditions and ideas that are not based in Islam but which are responsible for many problems women face in Saudi Arabia. The media has also been instrumental in promoting and projecting a positive image of today's professional women.<sup>267</sup>

### Women's Rights

The exclusion of women in the 2005 municipal elections goes against Saudi Arabia's ratification of the **CEDAW**, which took place in October 2000, without reservations to Article 7 on political participation.<sup>268</sup>

According to an independent survey of more than 15,000 Saudi men and women conducted over six months across Saudi Arabia, more than 90 percent of the population wants to grant women more rights.<sup>269</sup>

Islam gives a woman the **right to economic independence** and prohibits men from illegally exploiting their wealth. However, in practice, local banks handling public offerings often refuse to sell women shares unless they produce a written consent from their husbands. In practice, husbands are also able to buy shares in the name of their wives without their wives' prior knowledge.<sup>270</sup>

Recently, women have been able to obtain **identity cards**, but only 6 percent of Saudi women requested them.<sup>271</sup> However, IDs cannot be obtained without the approval of a male guardian. The lifting of such a requirement would be the first step towards women's legal independence by giving them an identity distinct from that of their husbands or fathers. This could then serve as the basis for granting passports, offering bank loans, and other means of increasing a woman's autonomy.

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<sup>265</sup> "Citizens' civil rights in addition to the right of men and women to participate in public affairs were among the recommendations made by the First National Dialogue Forum held in Makkah in December 2003. At the second dialogue, participants adopted recommendations combating extremism, calling for public involvement in the decision-making process and establishing civic institutions. The third dialogue held in Madinah in June gathered 70 male and female thinkers and researchers to discuss women's rights and duties in the Kingdom. The meeting lifted a virtual ban or taboo that has existed for years about discussing women's issues. It initiated a social dialogue and triggered and renewed interest in women's rights and women's roles in the future of Saudi Arabia. The dialogue reflected the Saudi leadership's opinion that women are an integral part of the reform process. It conveyed the message very clearly that both men and women are partners in reform." Arab View by Samar Fatany, 2003.

<sup>266</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region - <http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/saudi/gender.html>.

<sup>267</sup> Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," Arab View, 2003.

<sup>268</sup> Amnesty International, "News Amnesty," 17 November 2004.

<sup>269</sup> Financial Times, 13 October 2004.

<sup>270</sup> Arab News, December 2004.

<sup>271</sup> BBC News, 10 February 2005.

Legal matters pertaining to women are usually the purview of Islamic courts that use religious law as the basis for decisions. The Council of Senior Ulama makes the final interpretation of Islamic law in Saudi Arabia with the consent of the king. A man's **testimony** is equal to that of two women in court. A man may receive a **divorce** simply upon request, while a woman must win a legal decision (and written approval by the husband) to separate. Additionally, women are required to remain **segregated** from all males who are not members of their household. Women cannot receive **driver's licenses** or drive, nor are they allowed to be driven by men who are not family members.<sup>272</sup> In addition, a woman must obtain the written consent of a male family member to receive **medical treatment**.<sup>273</sup>

Discrimination against women includes limitations on **freedom of movement**, allowing for effective imprisonment within the home, and preventing recourse to protection or redress from human rights abuses. Equal **educational and vocational opportunities** continue to be denied to girls and women. Women abused by private individuals such as husbands or employers continue to be denied access to adequate protection or redress by the government. **Female domestic workers** remain at particular risk of human rights abuses, including physical abuse.

The practice of forced **marriage was recently banned**, as the Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's top religious authority, denounced the practice as un-Islamic. However, there is no systematic enforcement of this and institutional mechanisms of enforcement have not been established.

## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Crown Prince Abdullah has given instructions to Government agencies to facilitate the hiring of women, but progress remains slow.

In June 2004, the Council of Ministers approved a **nine-point plan to create more jobs and opportunities for women** which includes opening women's sections at government departments, allocating public land for women-only industrial areas, helping women work from home, and allowing only women to hold jobs at shops dealing in women-specific goods. The Labor Ministry has been given a year to develop a **full-fledged national plan for a female work force**.<sup>274</sup> Approximately 200,000 unemployed women are expected to benefit from the ministry's campaign.<sup>275</sup>

The **Ministry of Water and Electricity** recently announced that it will open women's sections in all its branches to better serve female customers. The ministry will employ university graduates with degrees in accounting, computer science and administration.<sup>276</sup>

The **Syeda Khadija bint Khuwailid Center at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry** is a newly established strategy and planning source to support and enable businesswomen to be part of the Kingdom's economic development. Women's departments have also been established in other regional Chambers of Commerce (such as in Riyadh and the Eastern Province).

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<sup>272</sup> Women used to be able to obtain international drivers-licenses in Saudi Arabia.

<sup>273</sup> UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region - <http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/saudi/gender.html>

<sup>274</sup> Arab News, 3 June 2004.

<sup>275</sup> Arab News, 27 January 2005. Some of the jobs that have been identified for Saudization for women are receptionists, tailor-shop and wedding-hall employees, nutritionists, governesses, marketers, secretaries, photographers, beauticians, caterers, and hospitality and amusement park employees.

<sup>276</sup> Arab News, 27 January 2005.

In 2003, the government approved a **new educational strategy** to steer the country's educational system toward meeting the requirements of the local job market. In order to raise the standard of education for women and to improve the qualifications of all Saudis, the government has set up a body to oversee higher education in addition to a national center to review the educational system.<sup>277</sup> Prior to a March 2002 fire at a girls' public intermediate school in Mecca (which claimed the lives of at least fourteen students), all aspects of state-financed education for girls in Saudi Arabia (including the renting of buildings for schools) were under the authority of the General Presidency for Girls' Education, an autonomous government agency long controlled by conservative clerics.

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<sup>277</sup> Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," Arab View, 2003.



## Tunisia

### Tunisia and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000	Today
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	81.9	89.1	99.9	..
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	81.0	87.6	91.5	92.0
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	19.7	..	..	..
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	4.0	7.0	11.5	11.5

Source: MDG Country Profiles, World Bank, and International Parliamentary Union

### Education and Training

The country has made a lot of progress in terms of reducing female **illiteracy rates** (from 96 percent in 1956 to 36 percent in 1999), yet these are still higher than those of men. Illiteracy rates of older women in rural areas remain problematic: here one of two women was illiterate (compared to one in four in urban areas) in 1999. **Rural female illiteracy** has become the focus of current government literacy programs.

Over the last decade, **female school enrollment rates** have in many instances surpassed those of male enrollment rates (at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels and across governorates). In the 2000/01 academic year, slightly more than half of all university students were women. **School performance** of girls is also higher than that of boys. This is in sharp contrast to the mid-1950s, when women were practically excluded from the education system. However, rural-urban discrepancies remain, and where families face socio-economic difficulties, it is often the boy rather than the girl who is able to go to school.

At both secondary and tertiary levels, women continue to be enrolled in **traditional fields of study** and are less visible in the scientific and technical fields (for example, in mathematics, female students represent less than 20 percent).

Women are under-represented in school administration bodies despite gender parity among teachers at the primary and secondary school levels. This reinforces the perception that higher-level positions are reserved for men.

### Health

Tunisia has witnessed considerable progress regarding health and family planning indicators. The ratio of **midwives** per 10,000 women at reproductive age has increased from one in 1964 to 14.5 in 2000. But only 71 percent of pregnant women received prenatal care in 1996. In 1999, 82 percent of pregnancies and deliveries were attended by health care staff. Thirty-eight percent of pregnant women are anemic.

In 1986, Tunisia was named a model country for its family planning programs, as well as for the training of medical staff and decision makers from other Arab countries. The **contraceptive prevalence rate** increased from 9 percent in 1965 to 65 percent in 2000 and is among the highest in the MNA region.

Until 1984, **child mortality rates** among girls were higher than that of boys, indicating preferential treatment for boys. While this pattern has been reversing, it has not completely disappeared. Rural-urban differences in this regard remain: a young rural girl is four times more likely to die than a young urban girl.

Over the last 40 years, there has been a noticeable, comparatively high **death rate** for men. This is likely to be a result of violent causes and tobacco consumption. At the same time, more women have been able to take advantage of an improved health care system, frequently visiting the hospital for reproductive care matters, and benefiting from increased awareness of existing health risks.

### **Economic Participation**

Women's **economic participation** has increased over recent decades. This was partly due to a more encouraging legal environment, recognizing women's right to work and their reproductive rights. In 1999, one of four economic active persons was a woman, compared to one in five in 1975. Similar developments are observed for the employed population.

According to the UNDP/Women's Ministry study "Les Femmes en Tunisie en 2000," the female rate of employment has been increasing faster than that of the female economic activity rate. Hence, female **unemployment** also decreased from 17.2 percent in 1994 to 15.3 percent in 2000.

In 1997, 18 percent of **married women** were economically active, a slight increase from 16.7 percent in 1994. This indicates that marriage has become less of an obstacle to women's participation in the economy.

Unlike male economic activity rates, women's economic participation rates vary largely between **governorates**. Women on average make up 31 percent of the economically active population; however, they represent 50 percent in Mahdia compared to 12 percent in Tataouine. In Tunis, the Northeastern governorate and the Central-Eastern governorate, female economic participation rates tend to be above average.

There has been a feminization of the textile industry. Since 1975, women have been mainly employed in the **industrial sector**. The service sector has since become increasingly more favorable. Women are also more active in agriculture than men. This has been reinforced by men's rural-urban migration.

In 1997, 1.3 percent of working women were employers and 15 percent were self-employed, compared to 5.8 percent and 21.2 percent of working men respectively.

**Seasonal employment** affects one in five women, as compared to one in four men.

### **Public Participation and Representation**

Women's advancement in the public and political sphere has been reinforced over the past decade. Since the 1999 parliamentary elections, 21 women make up 11.5 percent of **parliamentary representatives** – a high percentage for a country in the MENA Region.

At the **local government level**, women are more active than at the national level. Here, they composed 20.6 percent of local government representatives in 2000, a significant increase from 1.7 percent in 1972. However, women have not been able to assume many high-level positions. In 2000, only four women occupied the position of Local Council President (*conseil municipal*).

Women's low national and local representation reflects their low representation in **political parties**. In 1992, the *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique* created the position of Permanent Secretary for Women's Affairs as part of an effort to promote women within the Party. The central committee of the party (which did not comprise more than 3 percent women in 1957) included 21 percent of women in 1998.

Women's participation in parliamentary and presidential elections has remained low. However, in 1994 women constituted 30 percent of all **voters** compared to only 13 percent in 1989.

The **Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs** became a full-fledged ministry in 1993 (out of the State Secretariat of Women's and Family Affairs, which was established in 1992). Two of 29 **ministers** are women (Minister of State Affairs in addition to the Minister of Women and the Family Affairs). In addition, out of the 25 State Secretaries, three are female. Since 1999, a woman has held the position of Ombudsman (*médiateur administratif*).

Women constitute about 37 percent of the **civil service** (especially in the fields of health, education, and social affairs). Tunisian women have also been fairly well represented at the **international level** including a Tunisian representative on CEDAW for a third consecutive term, high-ranking representatives in the Economic Commission for Africa, and the position of Secretary-General of the Arab Organization for the Family.

In the **Judiciary**, women have represented 24 percent of public prosecutors (*magistrates*) since 1998. Fifteen percent of high-level positions in the judiciary are occupied by women. About 60 percent of Tunis judges and 24 percent of all jurists are women. Of the 28 members of the Superior Council, only two are women. Women head both the Supreme Audit Organization and the Court of Appeals.<sup>278</sup>

Women's representation in **unions** remains very low, and unions such as the *Union General des Travailleurs* are viewed as a male dominated. While the quality and independence of NGOs is difficult to judge, it should be noted that the number of **women's associations** has increased from one in 1956 to 21 in 2001.

## Women's Rights

Tunisia ratified **CEDAW** in 1985, but reserved the provisions that contradict the Tunisian Constitution, the Personal Status Code, or the Tunisian Nationality Code.

Tunisia is most notable in the region for its women's legal status. The first accomplishment after Tunisia's independence was the 1956 adoption of the **Personal Status Code**, which laid the foundations for a new organization of the family, based on legal equality of men and women. Under the leadership of the former socialist president, Habib Bourguiba, polygamy and divorce by renunciation were outlawed. Bourguiba also placed limits on the tradition of arranging marriages, setting a minimum nuptial age of 17 for girls.

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<sup>278</sup> World Bank, Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere, 2003.

In 1992, the Personal Status Code was amended with a goal to further advance women’s rights in the family. A Tunisian woman may now transmit her **nationality** to her children. In addition, the government recently introduced a new law that would make it possible for a Tunisian mother to register her child as a citizen in the presence of a foreign father. Some legal discrimination against women continues to exist especially in the **property and inheritance law** governed by Shari’a. Property acquired during the marriage, regardless of who actually previously owned or obtained it, is in the name of the husband.

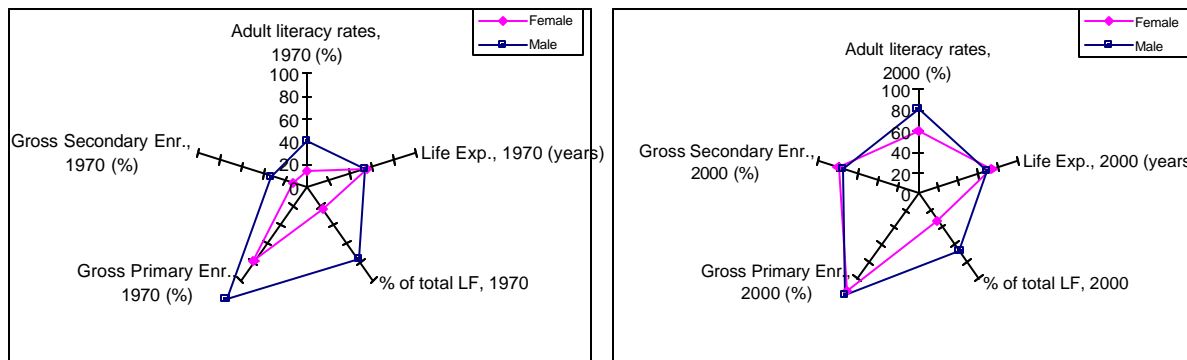
However, women’s **legal literacy** remains problematic. According to International Women’s Rights Action Watch, as of 1991 some 70 percent of illiterate women did not know that the provisions of the Personal Status Code granted them rights.

The wearing of **hijab** was outlawed under Bourguiba in 1986. When Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali became president in 1987, he lifted the ban on the wearing of hijab for two years. Currently, the wearing of hijab is forbidden in government offices, although it is more tolerated in general.

In an attempt to fight discrimination in employment, the government has made **equal opportunity** a mandatory part of investigation within audits of governmental institutions and state-owned enterprises. However, these standards have only limited impact as these requirements do not apply to the private sector.

Tunisia’s current **abortion** law dates to 1973 when the new Penal Code was enacted. Article 214 of the Penal Code authorizes the performance of abortions on request during the first three months of pregnancy. The Government subsidizes abortion and those entitled to receive free health care can obtain an abortion free of charge in public hospitals.

**Progress from 1970 to 2000:**



**GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

Tunisia is credited with being the first Arab and African country to adopt a clear population policy, and the government’s commitment to family planning is reflected in legislative and institutional reforms, as well as in its support for the inclusion of family planning services in maternal and childcare.

The Government’s current strategy to promote women is reflected in the **10th Development Plan (2002-2006)** in a separate chapter (7) entitled “The Woman and the Family.” The outlined strategy aims to enable women to play an active role in the country’s development process, at equal footing and in

partnership with men. The strategy envisions gender equality in all aspects of public life. To this end, the following actions are identified:

- Building women's capacity to facilitate their economic participation and to improve their employability – also in emerging job markets;
- Combating women's illiteracy – particularly in rural areas;
- Reinforcing information on rural women's issues towards the implementation of a national strategy;
- Improving social security coverage for women;
- Reinforcing women's participation in civil society organizations;
- Reinforcing roles of families in development by ensuring partnerships and solidarity among its family members and complementarity among family and society at large.

The *Ministre des Affaires de la Femme, de la Famille et de l'Enfance*, Naziha Ben Yedder (in office since autumn 2002) is also the Secrétaire d'Etat auprès de la ministre de la Femme, de la Famille et de l'Enfance, chargée de l'Enfance (Salwa Ayachi Labben) – a position created in 2003.

## West Bank and Gaza

### West Bank & Gaza and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1995	2000
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education			
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds			
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector			
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	5.7	5.7	5.7 (1996)

Source: MDG Country Profiles, World Bank.

### Education and Training

The gender gap at the **primary education** level is almost non-existent, but increases at the secondary level, between grades 9 and 11, where female enrolment is 63 percent compared to that of male at 67.4 percent.

**Early marriage** is considered one reason for girls to drop out of school. According to the 1996 Palestinian Beijing Platform of Action document, about 40 percent of female teenagers, mostly in rural areas, become wives and mothers before they complete their education or learn an occupation. **The legal age of marriage for girls** is 16 in the West Bank and 9 in Gaza. This compares to the male legal ages of marriage, which are 16 and 12 respectively.<sup>279</sup> In Palestine, according to a 1992 study quoted by the Parliamentary Research Unit, the ratio of girls marrying between 12 and 17 was about 35 percent.<sup>280</sup>

Regarding **higher education**, the proportion of women with a Bachelor's degree or higher is 2.5 percent compared to 6.3 percent among men. Women make up 45 percent of those enrolled in **local universities**; however, it is worth noting that thousands of students from the West Bank and Gaza, mostly male, are pursuing their education abroad.<sup>281</sup>

**Vocational training** of girls is still limited and traditional, which girls constituting 13 percent of students enrolled in vocational schools.<sup>282</sup> The 1995/96 school year statistics show that girls in the vocational secondary schools continue to select traditional occupations like commerce and nursing.

The National Strategy points out that one shortcoming of the current **generation of job schemes** is that they mainly benefit unskilled adult males. This can be modified through a greater mix of construction with non-construction schemes and by designing projects that cater specifically to the young, the skilled, and women.

<sup>279</sup> Women's Learning Partnership.

<sup>280</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, "Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women's Economic Participation in the MNA Region," World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>281</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>282</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Palestine document.

The number of **female teachers** in kindergartens and schools rose from 12,000 in 1995 to 18,000 in 1999.

## Health

In 1999, the **fertility rate** was 5.6 in West Bank, 6.7 in Gaza, and 6.1 in the Palestinian territories.<sup>283</sup> Fertility rates have decreased over the years, indicating increased awareness of family planning and provision of related services.

Ninety-eight percent of women are aware of **contraceptive methods**, which are actually applied by 66.7 percent of them (of these, 71 percent are in West Bank and 39 percent in Gaza). Forty-five percent of married women use contraceptives. Modern methods are used by 52.5 percent of the women who use contraceptives.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, delays at military checkpoints have resulted in women **delivering** their **babies** while waiting for permission to pass. As a result, 24 women and 27 newborn babies have died since June 2003.<sup>284</sup>

Market disruptions from curfews have affected key high protein foods, especially meat, poultry and dairy products. According to the Bank's **Nutritional** Assessment, "reproductive age women are eating 13 percent less protein than before the Intifada."

At the intra-household level, **food aid** creates a concept of entitlement for women, who are traditionally in charge of administering food. The fact that aid comes in the form of food endows the household members, who give a higher priority to food and nutrition, with a greater control over the household budget. Several studies show that food aid is less likely to be wasted on leisure items and activities than cash assistance, which are generally controlled and administered by men.<sup>285</sup>

A number of social and human rights organizations working at the household level in the West Bank and Gaza have noted an increase in **violence against women** and children as the crisis has lengthened. According to the Gaza City-based Women's Empowerment Project, reported cases of **domestic violence** have increased by 154 percent since 1999. In addition, less protection has been available to women from the authorities, as Palestinian law enforcement capacity has been reduced by the incapacitation of the police, particularly in the West Bank.

Palestinian women and foreign women workers face additional discrimination that make them especially vulnerable to abuses. A number of well-publicized cases of **trafficking in women** for prostitution, domestic violence, and sexual harassment and assault helped increase public awareness, but women suffering from such violations still have little recourse.<sup>286</sup>

## Economic Participation

In 2003, improved employment prospects pulled many Palestinians back into the labor force. Total employment levels were back to 1999 levels for the first time since the Intifada began. **Job creation** was

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<sup>283</sup> Follow-up Report to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1999.

<sup>284</sup> Thalif Deen, "Palestinian Women Hard Hit by Israeli Occupation," IPS, 6 February 2004.

<sup>285</sup> UNRWA, Comments of the draft of Twenty-Seven Months, 19 March 2003.

<sup>286</sup> Women's Human Rights.

relatively higher among women (a rise of 28 percent) than among men (up 20 percent). In 2003, female labor force participation rates were around 40 percent, similar to male participation rates.<sup>287</sup>

Women in 1999 accounted for 12.2 percent of total **labor force** in the West Bank and Gaza. Most women work for low **wages**.<sup>288</sup> **Unemployment rates** among women reached 13 percent in 1999.<sup>289</sup> This number would be even higher if women who were confined to their homes by necessity and not by choice were included.

The share of women citing “**home duties**” as a reason to stay outside the labor force has declined from 52 percent in 2002 to 50.8 percent in 2003. The decline in women reporting “home duties” added some 28,000 women to the labor force – equivalent to a 30 percent increase.<sup>290</sup>

A recent Palestinian Parliamentary Research Unit study noted that existing **Labor laws** do not cover agricultural, domestic and family workers, or establishments with fewer than five workers. This affects women especially, based on the information that 11.6 percent of total workers work in **family enterprises** without remuneration (and these are mostly women) and that women account for 36.5 percent of total **agricultural work** force and for 60 percent of workers **without wages**.

Article 103 of the new labor law provides for **maternity leave** of 10 paid weeks after 180 days of services, and breast-feeding breaks of 1 hour per day for one year. The new Civil Service Law (article 107), which had already been in effect before the ratification of the new Labor law, was thus amended, adjusting the maternity leave from 3 months to 10 paid weeks.

The new Palestinian labor law provides for **protection of women** as regards hazardous, underground and **night work**. In the Palestinian Labor law, the Council of Ministers has the responsibility to set the night work limitations.

According to the General Union of Palestinian Women, 7 percent of Palestinian families are headed by women, 74 percent of whom are **widows**.

According to the 2002 UNIFEM report, the **poverty rate** among households supported by women reached 30 percent (compared to 22 percent of the remaining households).<sup>291</sup> Among the poor households supported by women, 73 percent live in **severe poverty**, while the proportion for households supported by men is 63 percent. Poor households supported by women account for more than 50 percent of West Bank families and 55 percent of Gaza Strip families that receive **social aid** from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Widows and divorced or abandoned women who receive social aid account for 31 percent of the total cases.<sup>292</sup>

A May 2004 Report by the ILO suggests that development strategies for the Palestinian economy should "aim to realize the full productive capacity of women, given their high educational qualifications" and recommends the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to develop **a national women's**

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<sup>287</sup> World Bank, Four Years: Intifada, Closures, and Palestinian Economic Crisis – An Assessment, October 2004.

<sup>288</sup> Nadia Hijab and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, “Laws, Regulations, and Practices Impeding Women’s Economic Participation in the MNA Region,” World Bank, March 2003.

<sup>289</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>290</sup> World Bank, Four Years: Intifada, Closures, and Palestinian Economic Crisis – An Assessment, October 2004.

<sup>291</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.



**employment strategy** that would be integrated into the overall employment strategy of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>293</sup>

### Public Participation and Representation

**Female suffrage** was granted as early as 1945. Women's **voter participation** in the Legislative Council elections reached 42 percent of the total. According to a Specialized Poll on the Proposed Palestinian Election, there is a decline in willingness to vote for women candidates. Instead a majority (65 percent) prefers allocating a **quota for women in the Legislative and Local Councils**.<sup>294</sup>

Since April 1996, the 88-member **Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)** has included 5 (or 5.7 percent) women. Concerned organizations have recently agreed to dedicate 20-30 percent of their electorate at the PLC to women. The **Palestinian People's Party** has begun seriously discussing a proposed allocation of 20-30 percent of parliamentary seats to women. The PLC also has a Women and Children Affairs Unit.

In 1996, a woman, in an unprecedented move in the region, put herself forward as a **presidential candidate** for the elections. Samiha Khalil (then head of the General Union of Palestinian Women) ran alongside President Yasser Arafat, winning 10 percent of the votes.

In November 2003, the Women's Department was upgraded to the **Minister for Women Affairs** which is headed by Zuhaira Kamal. Hence, the **Palestinian Cabinet** for the second time includes two female ministers.<sup>295</sup> Intisar al-Wazir has held the position of Minister of Social Affairs since the 1995 Beijing Conference.<sup>296</sup>

In the December 2004 municipal elections, 139 women were among the 887 candidates running for 306 seats. As per the quota system requiring that women hold two seats per council, **52 women were elected to local councils**. For the first time, the West Bank has a **female mayor**.

As regards the February 2005 cabinet, only two of the 24 are women, as in the outgoing cabinet. One of the female ministers is in charge of the ministry of women's affairs, while the other has no portfolio.

Six female **judges** have been appointed in addition to a number of female **district attorneys**. One female judge was appointed in the High Court, another in the Supreme Court.

According to the 1999 Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, women in the **Palestine National Authority (PNA)** have been appointed to leading positions at grades which enable them to share the various levels of decision making in 13 ministries. However, women's participation in decision-making positions in the PNA institutions is still limited at 10 percent.<sup>297</sup> All heads of public structures and authorities are men. Of 240 director-generals, 30 are women, representing 12.5 percent of the general managers in the PNA. Women do not hold leadership positions in certain ministries such as Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Public works.

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<sup>293</sup> ILO, The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories, May 2004.

<sup>294</sup> Birzeit University, 18 February 2004.

<sup>295</sup> Dr. Hanan Mikail-Ashrawi served as Minister of Higher Education from 1996-98.

<sup>296</sup> Al-Wazir is one of the most prominent women in Palestine. She is known as "Umm Jihad" (her husband Abu Jihad was the PLO's second-in-command when murdered in 1988).

<sup>297</sup> UNIFEM, Evaluating the Status of Palestinian Women in Light of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2002.

There have been three **female ambassadors**, and three women also participated in the **negotiations of the Peace Process**. In 1999, 65 (or 8.7 percent) of the elected members of the **Palestinian National Council** (the Parliament “in-exile”) were women. Three appointed women of the 100-member **Palestinian Central Council** were also women.

A woman was recently appointed leader of the **Women’s Police Force** (a new and non traditional field), which has 24 female police officers.

**The General Union of Palestinian Women**, together with an Inter-ministerial Committee, works at the national level to improve the status of women. In addition, a committee of non-governmental organizations has been formed through the General Union of Palestinian Women, in which women’s centers, organizations, and notable personalities participate to promote the status of Palestinian women.

### **Women's Rights**

Since the Palestinian Authority does not have state status, it is not eligible to ratify **CEDAW**, but both governmental and non-governmental organizations have taken the initiative of reporting to the United Nations CEDAW Committee that monitors implementation of the Convention.

A commitment to the advancement of the role of women is explicit in the **Declaration of Palestinian Independence** in which women’s entitlement to equal rights is stated.

According to the Palestinian Beijing plus Five document, the **Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)** operates in compliance with CEDAW and other international agreements concerning the equal rights of women in exercising their political rights and in decision-making.

Palestinian women's organizations are currently working closely with the PLC to ensure that two new laws, the Family Law and the Child Law, are framed in accordance with the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights.<sup>298</sup> The Palestinian National Authority is supposed to amend and update laws and regulations in force, such as the **Personal Status Code**.

Women are now able to give their **nationality** to their husbands and children. Regarding **mobility**, passports can now be obtained without the need of the permission of any guardian.

Pre-occupation Jordanian **penal law** currently used in the West Bank absolves a rapist if he marries his victim. A new draft Palestinian Penal Code (currently in its second reading in the Parliament) would penalize rapists more severely.

### **GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

A Palestinian delegation participated in the **1995 Beijing Conference**. The outcomes of the Beijing Platform of Action and the **Arab Ministerial Conference**, held in Amman, Jordan in 1996, formed the basis for Palestinian women’s endeavor to produce a national strategy that would take into consideration their needs, priorities and their limited financial and other resources. An **Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee** has been established as a new mechanism for the purpose of strengthening and coordinating the role and function of women’s institutions, including those within ministries. In addition, many non-

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<sup>298</sup> Asma Khader, *Law and the Future of Palestinian Women*, 1998.

governmental organizations, especially the **General Union of Palestinian Women**, are coordinating their activities in this regard to reach a unified strategy to advance the situation of Palestinian women and to effectively implement the Platform of Action.

All of these efforts culminated in producing the **National Strategy for the Advancement of Palestinian Women**, which was adopted at a Conference held in June 1997 and attended by various women's institutions and organizations at both the governmental and non-governmental levels, as well as representatives from the Palestinian National Authority and the Legislative Council. The Strategy constitutes the foundation for planning and guidelines for the work of the various women's departments at the official level and for the NGOs on another level. This Strategy is based on the following:

- The Palestinian national program, which calls for the achievement of Palestinian inalienable rights, mainly the right to self-determination, to return and the establishment of their independent state.
- The Declaration of Independence adopted by the PNC in 1988, which *inter alia*, calls for gender equality in rights and duty.
- United Nations Conventions and Declarations, mainly the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Right of the Child, as well as the outcome of various international conferences.

**The Ministry of Social Affairs** (headed by a woman) has a general women's department in charge of education, awareness-raising, women's welfare, training & empowerment, and employment. At the **13th Women's Global Summit** (in which Palestine participated for the first time), the minister proudly pointed to the important role the ministry had played in successfully amending the provisions' draft of the Palestinian constitution related to nationality and the right of citizenship.

In November 2003, the Women's Department was upgraded to a **Minister for Women Affairs**, headed by Zuhaira Kamal.

Other ministries with women's departments are Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Health, Agriculture, Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Education. The **Central Statistics Office** has a gender statistics project.

## Republic of Yemen

### Yemen and the Millennium Development Goals Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators	1990	1994	2000	2003
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education	-	-	55.6	60.8
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds	34.1	42.2	55.7	60.3
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	8.9	7.9	6.3	5.8
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	4	-	1	1

Source: MDG Country Profiles, February 2005

### Education and Training

Yemen has made great strides in improving access to education, but it still has a long way to go to achieve the MDGs of universal primary completion and gender parity. Enrollment in primary education has increased from 25,000 students in 1970 to more than 4 million in 2003. In 2003, gross enrollment was 65 percent, the adult literacy rate was only 48 percent, and nearly 80 percent of women were illiterate. Equity is a severe problem, with only 55 percent of primary school-aged girls in schools country-wide and less than 30 percent in rural areas. Given the low enrolment rate and high population growth, Yemen is still far from reaching the reading target of 100 percent net enrolment by 2015.

In 2000/1, 80 percent of the **teachers** at the primary level were male. However, the percentage of female teachers in training increased from 25 percent in 1990 to 45.8 percent in 2000. The lower secondary female enrollment rates are partially due to a lack of female teachers, especially in rural areas.

The gender gap in **vocational training** has not changed significantly over the last decade. In all vocational training programs following primary school, women make up 4.6 percent of all vocational trainees (2000). Most female trainees specialized in health, education and administration programs, while few enrolled in technical programs.

Of the students who graduated from **universities** in 2000, 27 percent were female. Most female students (44 percent) enrolled in the faculty of medicine (2001), followed by 41 percent in the faculty of sciences.

### Health

The health status of the Yemeni population is poor. **Maternal mortality rate** (570 per 100,000 live births in 2000) and **total fertility rate** (6 in 2002) are the highest in MENA region. **Infant mortality rate** (65 per 1,000 live births) is the second highest in the region. **Child malnutrition** is the highest in the region and is deteriorating. Almost half of the Yemeni children are stunted.

Population growth at 2.9 percent is alarming and will not drop below 2.5 percent until after 2020. The population will almost double by 2025. **Contraceptive prevalence** rate is very low at 21 percent. More than 1.2 million Yemenis are suffering from malaria and about 20,000 are infected by tuberculosis. Although a national strategy for combating **HIV/AIDS** has been developed, no serious actions have been taken to implement it. The epidemiological status of HIV/AIDS prevalence is not clearly known. The

health situation is compounded by the perverse effects of qat chewing. As such, Yemen is falling short of achieving the MDGs.

In 1998, total health spending was estimated at 5.6 percent of GDP. Total public spending was estimated at 1.9 percent of GDP (excluding all foreign assistance) and private spending at 3.3 percent of GDP. This makes Yemen among the countries with the highest share of private (out of pocket) expenditures on health in the region. Total per capita health spending amounts to about US\$20.

### Economic Participation

Yemen's **female labor participation** rate, at 31 percent, although very high for the region, is somewhat lower than one would predict given the country's level of female education, fertility rates, and age structure. A simulation carried out by World Bank analysts finds that if female labor force rates were to increase to 38 percent, the average rate for all developing countries, average household earnings would increase by 3 percent.

According to the 1999 Labor Force Survey, more than 75 percent of the **labor force** is male. Women's employment growth from 1994-99 was more than four times that of men (8.9 percent vs. 2.1 percent respectively) varying from sector to sector. At the same time, the share of women in the agriculture sector compared to the **non-agriculture sector** remained almost constant, indicating overall constraints for women to access employment in the non-agriculture sector.

In Yemen, the share of female employment in government fell from 9.1 percent in 1994 to 7.3 percent in 1999. This is one of the lowest female **public sector employment** rates in the MENA region. Given the segregated nature of Yemeni society, this potentially affects the government's service delivery to women in the health and education sector.

Unlike many other low-income countries, in Yemen, female **unemployment rates** are lower than male unemployment rates (around 8 percent compared to 12 percent), indicating that women are potentially being discouraged from seeking employment.

### Public Participation and Representation

In a conservative society like Yemen, where tradition still dictates that women work inside the home, very few women are in influential positions. In the 1997 parliamentary elections, the number of **women candidates** decreased to only 19 candidates, from 52 in 1993. In this regard, the female Minister of Human Rights recently criticized opposition **political parties** for their bias against women and their negative stance towards women's empowerment.

There is only one **female minister** and one **female Member of Parliament**. Women are also not able to find their way into important positions in the judiciary, such as the **Supreme Court**. In 2001, there were 25 female **judges** (who tend to be from the South) of a total of 1037 (or 2.5 percent). This, however, is a significant decrease from 13.5 percent in 1995.

The **Shoura Council**, a consultative council appointed by the President, was formed in 1990 but did not include any women until 2001, when two women were appointed to the 101 member council. In **local councils**, women only make up 0.6 percent of a total of 6,035 local council members.

## Women's Rights

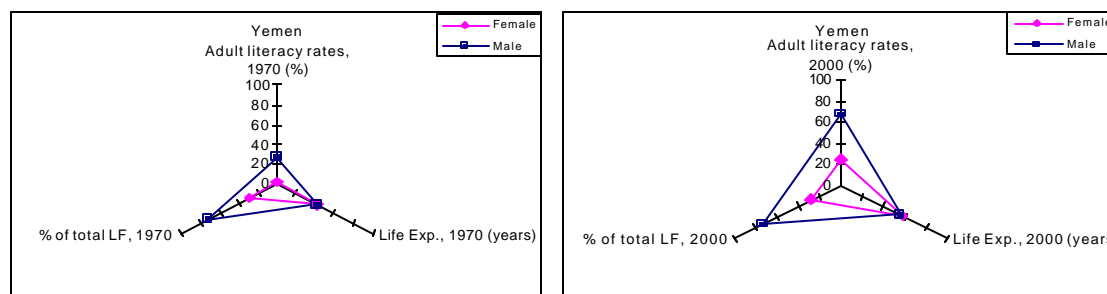
One of the first serious acknowledgements of the need to address gender inequality in Yemen occurred when the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen signed **CEDAW**, with reservations, in 1984. The Constitution of the unified Republic of Yemen contains a number of important articles related to women's rights.<sup>299</sup>

Various Yemeni laws issued after unification are in direct conflict with the CEDAW Convention and the Constitution. In particular, the **personal status laws** often conflict with these two documents. For example, it gives men the right to consent to the wife's work outside the home, which has consequences for women's ability to participate in the economy independently. Concerning the right of movement, Yemeni men have the right to restrict their dependents' movements, including their wives and adult unmarried daughters.

The **absence of a minimum legal age of marriage** in Yemen remains an issue, as this translates to young women getting married earlier, having more children, and potentially discontinuing their education. This phenomenon affects urban areas more than rural areas, despite the fact that the age of marriage is higher in urban areas (16.9 years on average, compared to 15.9 years in rural areas).

Yemen's Minister of Human Rights, Amat al-Aleem al-Suswah, recently attacked opposition parties for their bias against women. The minister blamed the weak political improvement in their work on their superficial representation of women in the parties and suggested that the presence of women is crucial to any growing nation.

### Progress from 1970 to 2000:



## GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The **Women's National Committee (WNC)**, which was established in 1996, reports to the Supreme Council of Women's Affairs, presided over by the Prime Minister. It is the main governmental body in charge of promoting gender equality in government policies and programs (including the PRSP and MDG strategies), and is headed by Rashida Al-Hamdani. The WNC has played an active part in the process of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and considers the PRSP to be serving as a guide for the

<sup>299</sup> Article 19 guarantees the right of equality of opportunity to all citizens in the political, economic, social and cultural domains. Article 27 states that there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 38 states that Yemenis are free to move around the country without restrictions. In addition, Article 42 of the Labor law states that women have equal rights *vis-à-vis* employment, wages, training, rehabilitation and social insurance.

gender-sensitive formulation, implementation and review of other national and sectoral plans, and strategies.

The **National Gender Strategy** which was presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Women's Conference in March 2003, was approved by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The strategy identifies four strategic areas for WNC's follow-up: 1) The implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); 2) Gender and Poverty Eradication; 3) Increasing the women's participation in the public sphere; and 4) Building Capacity of the Women's National Committee.

It should also be noted that the **Women's Studies Center at Sana'a University** was reopened in August 2003 to generate local gender research, inform national policies on gender, and to promote the national gender dialogue.

<b>Summary Gender Profile for ALGERIA</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, total	25,022,000	30,385,000	31,320,434
Population, female (% of total)	49.40	49.37	49.37
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	41.29	56.99	59.58
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	64.31	76.28	78.00
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	52.86	66.71	68.86
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	68.09	83.57	85.62
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	86.07	93.24	94.02
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	77.27	88.49	89.89
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	93.93	97.26	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	95.05	94.78	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	94.53	95.98	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	74	95	95
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	87	96	96
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	46.82	46.96
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	46.65	48.63
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	86.90	92.69	93.64
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	99.31	95.71	96.04
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	47.64	..	68.51
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	59.58	..	65.12
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	..
<b>Helath</b>			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	92	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	57
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4.4899998	..	2.75
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	68.800003	..	72.099998
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	..	69.400002
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	67.37	..	70.72
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	140	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	54	37	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	69	45	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	57.200001	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	17.799999	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	7.1999998	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	37.700001	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	35.599998	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	44.5	..	..
Labor force, total	7041191	10491940	11304171
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	21.14	27.58	29.18
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	8	12.2	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	29.709999	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	33.900002	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	19.799999	29.77	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	14.4	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	46.200001	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	38.700001	..	..



<b>Summary Gender Profile for BAHRAIN</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, total	503,000	670,000	697,846
Population, female (% of total)	41.98	44.76	44.99
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	74.64	82.57	84.18
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	86.79	90.88	91.52
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	82.11	87.52	88.50
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	94.99	98.58	98.86
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	96.22	98.20	98.39
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	95.64	98.38	98.62
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	89.90	98.13	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	88.63	100	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	89.24	99.08	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	96	88	94
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	94	93	106
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48.85	48.91
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	72.11	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	98.97	92.09	90.59
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	99.02	90.51	89.22
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	86.11	86.49	90.30
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	83.75	76.37	83.93
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	19.92	..	44.41
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	13.82	..	23.50
<b>Health</b>			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3.76	..	2.30
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	73.62	..	75.90
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	69.32	..	70.80
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	71.42	..	73.29
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	28	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	15	13	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	19	16	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Labor force, total	223,382	313,627	331,058
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	17.00	21.65	22.48
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	7.3	12.1	12.5
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	39.3	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for DJIBOUTI</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Population, female (% of total)	53.48	50.30	50.15	50.08
Population, total	490,000	666,000	693,480	705,480
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	83.95	85.16	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	46.40	89.58	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	87.30	87.66	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	..	32	32
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	..	38	39
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	42.77	42.91	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	28.02	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	26.06	28.14	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	36.52	35.74	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	12.69	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	19.93	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	1.07	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	1.34	..
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	61
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	55.95
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5.976	..	5.2	5.197
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	49.44	..	43.6	42.868
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	46.18	..	43.5	43.048
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	47.77	..	43.55	42.96
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	730	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	119	102	..	97
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	175	146	..	138
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..	2.9
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Labor force, total	..	..	..	..
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for EGYPT</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
Population, total	52,442,000	63,976,000	67,559,040
Population, female (% of total)	49.19	49.10	49.09
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	33.60	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	60.36	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	47.10	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	51.05	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	70.87	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	61.32	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	99.08	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	98.70	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	98.89	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	97	90
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	102	92
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	\$47.16	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	\$52.92	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	\$76.18	\$87.45	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	\$90.88	\$92.17	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	\$76.27	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	\$80.19	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	\$11.60	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	\$21.72	..	..
<b>Health</b>			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	60.90	69
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	56.10	60
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	13.33
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3.97	..	3.08
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	64.28	..	70.78
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	61.40	..	67.56
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	62.80	..	69.13
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	84	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	76	40	33
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	104	49	39
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.1
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>			
Labor force, total	18,281,282	24,304,482	26,681,092
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	27.10	30.48	31.42
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	52.00	39.40	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	34.90	27.40	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	10.20	6.90	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	23.90	24.60	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	37.50	53.70	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	40.90	48.00	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	31.70	25.60	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	20.50	19.00	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	17.90	22.70	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	5.20	5.10	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	8.60	9.00	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for IRAN</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
Population, female (% of total)	48.51	49.81	49.80
Population, total	54,400,000	63,664,000	66,392,020
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	53.96	68.93	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	72.22	83.01	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	63.16	76.03	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	80.82	91.32	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	91.73	96.22	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	86.33	93.82	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	89.11	93.71	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	90.66	93.74	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	89.94	93.73	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	93	102	..
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	107	107	..
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47.60	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	54.37	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	88.43	78.32	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	96.02	79.99	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	6.67	20.83	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	13.97	22.11	..
<b>Health</b>			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	89.60	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	74	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	12.26
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4.68	..	2.00
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	65.42	..	70.51
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	63.92	..	68.44
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	64.65	..	69.45
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	76	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	54	36	33
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	72	44	39
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.1
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>			
Labor force, total	16,515,840	21,874,950	24,553,096
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	20.28	26.97	29.39
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	18	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	4.5	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	8.10	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	12.6	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for IRAQ</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
Population, female (% of total)	49.09	49.25	49.24
Population, total	18,078,000	23,224,000	24,699,542
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	..	..
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	44.07	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	72.49	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	..
<b>Health</b>			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	72.10	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	44	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5.88	..	4.05
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	62.66	..	64.36
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	59.96	..	61.92
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	61.28	..	63.11
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	250	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	40	102	102
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	50	125	125
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>			
Labor force, total	4617121.00	6414469.00	7004296.50
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	16.32	19.79	20.87
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.1
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	39	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	11.6000004	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	9.30	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	19.10	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	51.70	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	69.30	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	12.6999998	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for JORDAN</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	47.89	48.25	48.29	48.34
Population, total	3,170,000.00	4,886,810.00	5,030,805.00	5,171,340.50
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	72.08	84.30	85.07	85.90
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	90.01	94.93	95.25	95.50
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	81.51	89.81	90.34	90.90
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	95.25	99.33	99.42	99.50
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	97.94	99.10	99.18	99.30
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	96.71	99.21	99.30	99.40
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	104	..	99	..
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	103	..	98	..
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	..	48.81	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	94.39	..	91.69	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	93.89	..	90.95	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	81.46	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	79.62	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	25.50	..	31.35	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	22.74	..	30.73	..
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	87.20	..	..	99.5
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	35	..	..	56
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5.40	..	..	3.5
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	70.34	..	..	73.60
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66.70	..	..	70.40
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68.48	..	..	71.96
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	41	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	33	25	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	40	30	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.10	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	794,085	1,557,915	1,618,863	1,679,548
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	17.09	23.87	24.44	24.99
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	23.10	22.11	22.01	21.91
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	20.70	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	11.80	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	13.20	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for LEBANON</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	51.45	50.81	50.79	50.76
Population, total	3,635,000	4,328,000	4,384,681	4,441,245
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	95.67	94.01	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	92.33	89.89	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	93.96	91.89	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	73	71	72
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	69	67	67
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48.16	48.10	48.18
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	86.28	86.46	87.42
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	76.20	89.25	89.43	90.36
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	79.31	90.05	90.09	90.82
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	44.15	47.61	48.22
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	40.45	41.77	40.41
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	63	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3.22199988	..	..	2.22000003
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	69.9000015	..	..	72.5999985
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	..	..	69
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	67.90	..	..	70.76
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	150	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	32	28	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	37	32	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.1	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	1134847.00	1554617.63	1598216.13	1642372.25
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	26.63	29.32	29.61	29.88
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	9.89999962	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	6.30000019	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	22.1000004	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	34.2000008	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	68.0999985	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	59.5	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	29.2999992	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for MOROCCO</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	49.95	49.95	49.96	49.96
Population, total	24,043,000	28,705,000	29,170,000	29,640,542
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	24.95	36.07	37.19	38.31
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	52.74	61.80	62.56	63.32
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	38.69	48.84	49.78	50.73
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	42.02	58.20	59.75	61.31
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	68.03	76.05	76.73	77.42
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	55.28	67.28	68.39	69.50
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	75.86	83.38	80.43	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	74.59	84.03	81.98	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	75.09	83.72	81.24	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	38	55	58	63
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	56	67	69	71
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	45.63	46.15	46.44
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	40.78	42.07	43.59
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	46.59	79.78	85.09	86.76
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	66.55	87.46	91.55	92.37
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	31.50	32.92
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	37.47	38.47
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	8.07	9.17	9.17	9.86
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	13.64	11.39	11.39	11.72
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4.01	..	..	2.75
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	65.25	..	..	70.40
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	61.79	..	..	66.40
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	63.48	..	..	68.35
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	220	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	66	41	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	85	46	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	8,903,123	11,318,382	11,597,117	11,881,115
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	34.52	34.74	34.88	35.02
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	3.10	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	4.10	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	50.20	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	31.90	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	46.50	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	63.80	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	19.80	22.40	19.60	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	26.21	26.20	26.60	25.81
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	53.60	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	20.4	13	12.5	12.5
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	14.2	13.8	12.5	11.6
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	15.8	13.6	12.5	11.6
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	31.6	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	30.9	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	31.1	..	..	..



<b>Summary Gender Profile for SAUDI ARABIA</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	45.04	45.69	45.79	45.89
Population, total	15,803,000	20,723,150	21,285,060	21,885,970
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	50.15	66.89	68.17	69.45
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	76.23	82.95	83.51	84.07
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	66.20	76.23	77.06	77.88
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	78.63	90.32	90.97	91.63
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	91.18	94.94	95.15	95.37
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	85.41	92.68	93.11	93.55
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	84.19	94.02	90.67	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	81.79	94.08	92.29	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	82.91	94.05	91.49	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	52	73	66	61
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	61	77	66	62
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47.99	48.13	47.93
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	52.34	48.79	51.37
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	52.37	56.32	56.54	54.17
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	64.91	60.83	61.13	54.66
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	27.58	50.32	51.03	51.57
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	34.33	53.21	54.72	53.86
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	9.68	24.90	26.49	30.40
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	10.77	19.51	17.74	20.71
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	6.56	..	..	5.30
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	70.48	..	..	74.90
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	67.60	..	..	71.40
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	69.00	..	..	73.11
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	23	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	34	24	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	44	29	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	4,966,883	6,208,656	6,427,450	6,660,776
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	11.39	17.74	18.57	19.40
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	12.00	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	20.00	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	6.10	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	21.30	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	81.90	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	58.70	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	5.20	1.80	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	16.11	14.00	14.20	14.01
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	9.30	9.10	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	3.80	3.90	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	4.60	4.60	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for TUNISIA</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	49.42	49.50	49.51	49.53
Population, total	8,154,400	9,563,500	9,673,600	9,781,000
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	46.54	60.57	61.86	63.13
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	71.58	81.38	82.31	83.14
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	59.11	71.01	72.11	73.17
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	75.16	89.12	89.83	90.55
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	92.81	97.36	97.60	97.85
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	84.06	93.33	93.81	94.28
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	77.48	95.69	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	93.88	95.22	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	86.45	95.45	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	70	91	95	99
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	79	92	96	99
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47.60	47.62	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	49.80	50.01	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	89.79	94.99	96.59	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	97.74	95.86	97.10	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	71.25	69.08	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	68.18	66.65	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	6.91	21.40	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	10.39	21.97	..	..
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	89.9	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	66	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3.496	2.08	2.05	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	72.1	74.7	75	75.1
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	68.6	70.6	70.8	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	70.31	72.60	72.85	73
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	120	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	41	22	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	52	28	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	2,858,933	3,868,436	3,962,016	4,055,594
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	29.05	31.94	32.20	32.46
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0.1	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	19.7	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	15.6	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for WEST BANK &amp; GAZA</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	..	49.29	49.30	49.30
Population, total	1,969,970	2,966,000	3,096,000	3,231,000
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	107	104	107
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	105	102	106
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	..	..	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	..	..
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	..	..	..	4.9
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	..	..	..	75.1
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	..	..	..	70.5
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	..	..	..	72.7439
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	..	..	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	383,159	625,233	660,191	696,862
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	..	11.48	11.93	12.36
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	20	34.6	26.4	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	20.4	9.8	9.4	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	30	11.2	10.8	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	42.6	38.6	32	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	50	53.4	62	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	37	51.2	57.8	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	39.6	34	33.1
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	12.6	14.1	17.1
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	14.5	27.3	33.5
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	14.2	25.5	31.3
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..

<b>Summary Gender Profile for YEMEN</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Population, female (% of total)	51.05	49.00	49.01	49.03
Population, total	11,876,000	17,507,160	18,045,754	18,600,916
<b>Education and Training</b>				
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	12.93	25.29	26.90	28.52
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	55.17	67.50	68.46	69.46
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	32.68	46.36	47.66	48.98
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	25.05	46.16	48.51	50.88
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	73.54	82.90	83.61	84.32
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	49.97	65.05	66.46	67.92
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	69.67	70.66	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	77.81	79.59	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	74.48	75.91	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	38	41	46
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	76	77	82
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	37.59	38.79	39.81
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	28.02	..	..	59.43
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	74.22	..	..	83.63
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	..	..
<b>Health</b>				
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	..	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	7.53	..	..	6.00
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	52.60	..	..	58.10
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	51.78	..	..	56.80
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	52.18	..	..	57.434147
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	570	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	98	84	..	..
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	142	117	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>				
Labor force, total	3,556,862	5,260,902	5,424,554	5,593,296
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	29.68	28.62	28.70	28.79
Prevalence of HIV, male (% ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	87.80	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	49.70	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	5.50	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	21.60	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	6.70	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	28.80	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the agricultural sector (%)	..	..	..	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	8.90	6.31	6.11	5.81
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..	..