MENA Region

1) MENA Gender Analysis
2) Statistics from MENA Region

May Rihani, University of Maryland, 2018
MENA REGION

1) MENA Gender Analysis:

Impediments and Progress Toward Equitable Participation by Women in Social, Economic and Political Life in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

- May Rihani, University of Maryland, 2018
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Overview

The region’s best-performing countries this year are Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, having closed between 65% and 63% of their overall gender gaps. The lower end of the regional table is made up of Syria and Yemen, having closed 57% and 52% of their gender gap, respectively.

157 years to close overall gender gap in MENA region, with current rates of progress.

Women in the Middle East and North Africa region have achieved impressive gains in a number of social indices, but still have the world’s lowest rates of labor force participation.

Why do Arab women not participate in the workforce, especially given that girls in Arab countries enjoy educational parity with boys?
MENA countries out of 18 globally have closed less than 50% of the gap for Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex.

### Top 5 factors that deter men and women from entering politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deterrents for women</th>
<th>Deterrents for men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic responsibilities</td>
<td>Lack of support from the electorate</td>
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<td>Prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society</td>
<td>Lack of finance</td>
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<td>Lack of support from family</td>
<td>Lack of support of political parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>Lack of experience in “representative functions”: public speaking, constituency relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of finance</td>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
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Morocco, Jordan and Kuwait: A Regional and Global Comparison

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (ipu.org) 2017
**Morocco**

- In 2002, an informal ‘honorary agreement’ reserved 30 seats in parliament for women.
- In 2004, the Mudawanna Reform led to the inaction of the family law.
- In 2008, a quota reform for local governments was instigated.
- In 2011, quota provision was passed into law, and the number of reserved seats for women increased from 30 to 60 seats (395 total seats, 60/395 or 15%).

**Jordan**

In 2003, a quota provision reserved 6 seats for women in the national parliament. In 2010, the number of seats was raised to 12. Following the 2010 election, 13 seats (out of 120) in parliament are occupied by women, 12 through the quota regulation and one by competitive election.

- A report by the Jordanian Embassy in Washington, D.C., highlights that the parliamentary elections of January 2013 saw an increase in the number of women candidates from 16.7% of all candidates (121 female candidates).
- The report also states that there is a quota of 25% of the seats for women in municipal councils, and that two of Jordan's political parties are led by women.
Women and Social Issues

Early Marriage

18
legal age of marriage for girls and boys in Morocco (post Moudawana) and Jordan, with exceptions.


16%
% of young women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18 in Morocco.


32
births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in Morocco, 2006-2015

Source: UNFPA, State of World Population, 2017

15, 17
legal age of marriage for girls and boys, respectively, in Kuwait.
Exceptions are not granted.


1%, 10%, 22%
% of women married by age of 15, 18, 20 in Jordan in 2007.

Source: Department of Statistics (Jordan), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2007

26
births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in Jordan, 2006-2015

Source: UNFPA, State of World Population, 2017
Child marriage is the cause of obstetric, physical, and psychological diseases and disorders in women and also affects the health of their children.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>Physically weak children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>Handicapped and disabled children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>Gynecological diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>Psychological disorders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The early marriage of girls derails both educational and career opportunities.

Source: Giving What We Can, *The Role of Parliamentarians in Ending Child Marriage*, 2016

Encouraging Positive Change

Arab societies tend to be more responsive to social traditions than to law, experience suggests that change can be achieved through the legal system.

“...in the Islamic world, basic rights in family law constitute a major dimension of gender equality and good family practices.”

Dr. Mounira Charrad, Family Law Reforms in the Arab World: Tunisia and Morocco, 2012
The 2014 *Women in Public Life: Gender, Law, and Policy in the Middle East and North Africa* OECD and CAWTAR report, made the following recommendations for increasing the role of women as leaders in the Arab World:

- **Establish measures** such as quotas (voluntary or legislative) to improve the representation of women in parliaments and the political executive; **adopt measures** to strengthen equal access of women and men to public office.

- **Advance** the use of **leadership development programs** to strengthen women’s leadership.

- **Adopt policies** for greater work-life balance and for greater “women-friendliness” of legislatures, including instituting **gender-sensitive parliamentary practices** and procedures.

- **Support** the establishment of **cross-party women’s caucuses** to provide support networks for women in legislatures and **encourage peer cooperation**.

- **Take active steps to prevent**, identify and address **political harassment** and violence experienced by women when in public office.

- **Take steps to** strengthen women’s access to high-level **executive posts** by creating an enabling environment and institutional mechanisms that **provide support** and access to female leaders, including networking among female leaders.
Sources

- UNDESA, Dr. Mounira Charrad. *Family Law Reforms In The Arab World: Tunisia and Morocco*, 2014
Thank you