

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019



Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



ADVANCING EQUALITY

## VISION



ESCWA – an innovative catalyst  
for a stable, just and flourishing  
Arab region

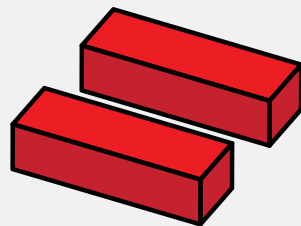
## MISSION



Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice.

Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.

# Annual Report 2019: Advancing Equality



Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



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# Foreword

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The last decade was difficult for the Arab region. A few countries fell into civil war while others suffered from serious political and economic instability. As a result, millions of people across the region saw their well-being put in jeopardy. Too many lives were lost. More people still were displaced, propelled into poverty, or stripped from access to basic human rights and needs like food, water, and education.

The region had made some strides in recovery but was hit, at the end of 2019, by the most serious health threat in decades, the COVID-19 pandemic, which wreaked havoc on people's lives, societies, economies, and health systems all over the world. At the time of writing, our region's chances of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seem seriously compromised. However, we, at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), will spare no effort to support member States in recovering then realigning priorities towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Today more than ever, the 2030 Agenda and Global Goals remain our map and compass.

Our focus in this edition of our annual report is 2019. Let us turn these pages together to look back on our achievements and difficulties, and draw lessons for a future in which we will need to be more innovative, agile and 'on track'.

At ESCWA, we made great strides in 2019. In April, we hosted the yearly Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, which embodies a spirit of collaboration and integration that is no longer an option, but an absolute necessity. An integration that reflects the underlying ethos of the 2030 Agenda, which



promises to ‘leave no one behind’. The year was also significant because of ambitious reform efforts within our organization. Against a backdrop of an uncertain and volatile global environment, weakened multilateralism, slow growth and rising inequality, there was a need to revisit the development paradigm in Arab countries and the role of ESCWA, to ensure the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

The realignment of the United Nations Development System and continuing turmoil in the region required that ESCWA looked inward to take stock of its strengths and reflect on ways to capitalize on them further. The new strategic direction, which was implemented at the end of the year, offers a new work architecture and approach to better support member States in their efforts to deliver on their development visions and achieve the SDGs.

The revised ESCWA programme will adopt a cluster approach, with all clusters responsible for all subprogrammes, rather than the silo approach fostered by the one subprogramme for each ESCWA division. This cluster approach intends to ensure the integration and complementarity of ESCWA work, in effect replicating the integrated approach of the 2030 Agenda.

The ESCWA programme will be organized around six interdependent and complementary subprogrammes as follows:

1. Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability
2. Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development
3. Shared Economic Prosperity
4. Statistics, the Information Society and Technology
5. 2030 Agenda and SDG Coordination
6. Governance and Conflict Prevention

Based on the guiding framework of the 2030 Agenda, the new structure is designed to address the most pressing obstacles that hinder the achievement of the SDGs in the Arab region. It emphasizes the fundamental principles of ‘leaving no one behind’ and reducing inequality between social groups and regions. It aims to provide support to member States in building inclusive, resilient, stable and peaceful societies that guarantee a dignified life for all and a brighter future for coming generations.

That is also why we chose ‘advancing equality’ as a theme for our 2019 Annual Report. Equality is the cornerstone of healthy nations, just societies, and inclusive and sustainable growth. We are witnessing the devastating effects of its absence during the COVID-19 pandemic, as unequal access to health

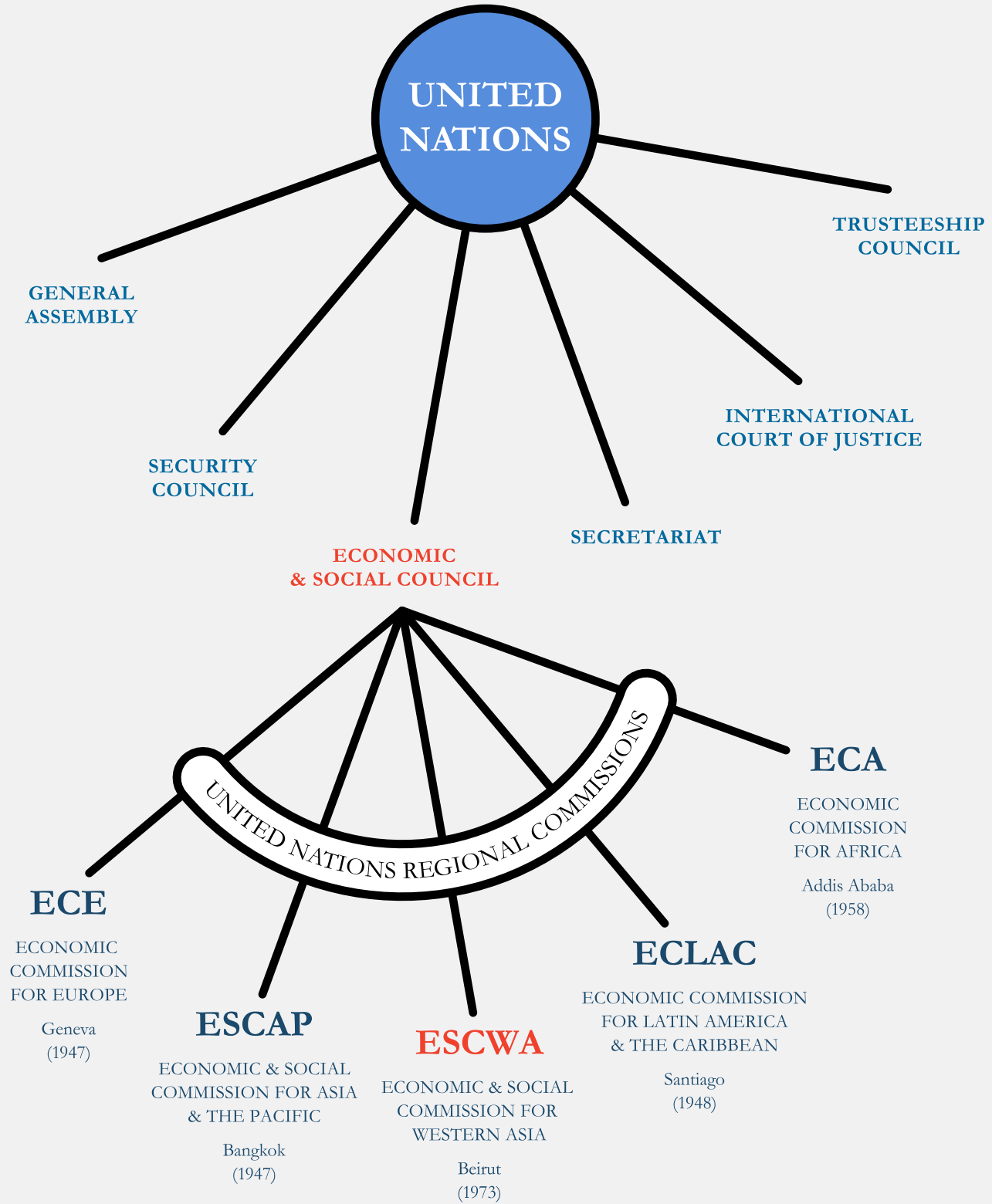


care, clean water, adequate nutrition and social protection are endangering lives and businesses alike. In 2019, we released a flagship report on *Rethinking Inequality in Arab Countries*, focusing on the non-income dimensions of health, education and living conditions and analysing the drivers of inequality in them, in particular poor economic structures and poor governance. Beyond the one report, all our activities in 2019 were inspired by the aim of advancing equality in our region, sadly renowned to be one of the most unequal in the world.

Lastly, we re-evaluated our approach to our annual report for 2019. With this edition, we aimed to venture away from the highly technical language towards a more engaging and conversational one to make the report appealing not only to colleagues in the field but to the general public as well. We aimed to present the interconnectedness of all the work we do with a flowing narrative that examines the Commission's efforts in 2019.



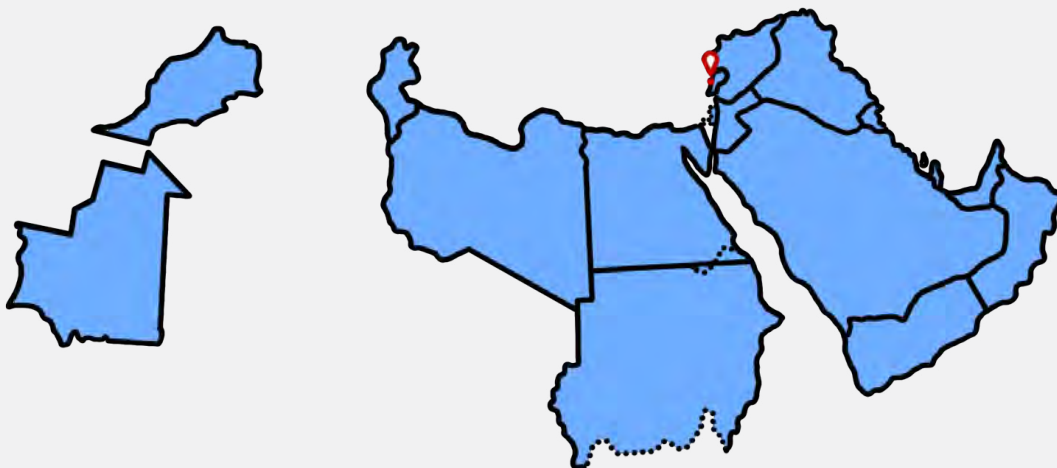
Rola Dashti  
Under-Secretary-General  
Executive Secretary of ESCWA



# ESCWA in Brief

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The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) promotes inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region. It provides a regional presence for the United Nations Economic and Social Council and serves as a platform for Arab countries on the global stage. While its 18 member States differ in some respects, they share a cultural, historic and linguistic heritage and face common development challenges and opportunities, which are most effectively tackled through collective, coordinated and mutually reinforcing action.



ESCWA is one of five regional commissions across the world; its sister commissions are located in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Geneva and Santiago. The United Nations regional commissions are unique intergovernmental platforms for the advancement of regional integration, the development of regional norms and standards, the exchange of experiences and the fostering of cooperation. Regional commissions are recognized for the critical role they play in promoting a holistic approach to development in their regions, and balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their member States.

ESCWA leverages its convening power to promote dialogue and knowledge sharing at the national, regional and global levels, and to foster interregional cooperation and vibrant South-South partnerships. The implementation of global policy frameworks, chiefly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are among the top priorities for ESCWA in the region.

## HOW WE WORK



ESCWA links development knowledge to policy through research and analysis. Bringing together policymakers, researchers, experts and relevant stakeholders through its convening power, transforming this knowledge into constructive dialogue and concerted action. ESCWA plays four essential roles:



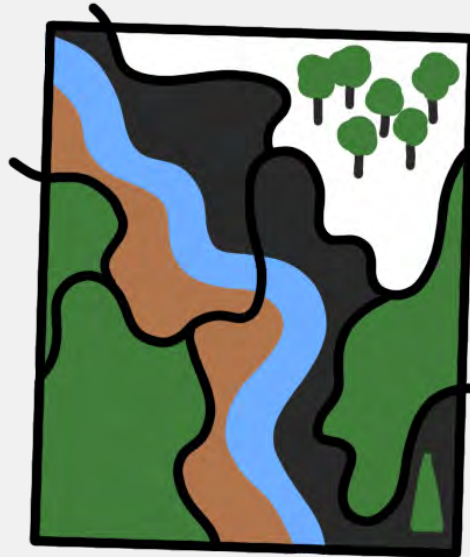
### Voice of the region

A regional platform for deliberation, coordination, consensus building and advocacy



### Think tank of the region

A source of innovative research, supporting quality data collection and analysis for forward-looking, evidence-based policymaking



### *Adviser to the region*

A provider of capacity-building and technical advisory services,  
strengthening national efforts to adopt norms and policies



### *Provider of support for the 2030 agenda in the region*

A partner to member States in the Arab region in their efforts  
to implement the SDGs

# The Year in Review: Highlight Events



## January

**10-11, Beirut**  
Civil Society  
Organizations Forum  
prior to the Arab  
Economic and Social  
Development Summit

**24-25, Beirut**  
Arab Region  
Parliamentary Forum on  
the 2030 Agenda

**29-30, Beirut**  
Statistical Committee,  
Thirteenth Session

**30, Beirut**  
Launch of the ESCWA  
Data Portal

## February

**6-7, Dubai, United Arab  
Emirates**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on National Digital  
Development Reports

**18-19, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Multidimensional  
Inequality in Arab  
Countries

**25-28, Beirut**  
The First Regional  
Workshop on Social  
Protection Reform in  
Arab Countries

**27-28, Cairo**  
Regional Consultation  
on the Environment and  
Natural Resources for  
the 2019 Arab Forum for  
Sustainable Development

## March

**4-6, Beirut**  
Green Technology  
Investments and Access  
to Sustainable Financing  
in the Arab Region

**6, New York**  
Making Disability Visible  
in Statistics – Side Event  
at the Fiftieth Statistical  
Commission

**20-21, Beirut**  
Committee on  
Technology for  
Development, Second  
Session

**21-22, Beirut**  
Regional Consultation  
on Climate Change  
in Preparation for the  
2019 Arab Forum for  
Sustainable Development

**27-28, Beirut**  
Capacity Development  
Workshop on Methods  
to Cost Violence against  
Women

## April

**1-7, Istanbul, Turkey**  
Regional Meeting for  
the Development of  
Purchasing Power Parities

**8, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Empowerment,  
Inclusiveness and  
Equality as Pathways to  
Peace and Sustainable  
Development in the Arab  
Region

**9-11, Beirut**  
Arab Forum for  
Sustainable Development  
2019

**17-18, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Intellectual Property  
Systems in the Arab  
Region

## May

**13-16, Cairo**  
Regional Training  
Workshop on Reforming  
and Restructuring the  
Electricity Sector

**23, Beirut**  
Leadership for Safer  
Mobility in Cities

## June

**15-16, Marrakech,  
Morocco**  
Executive Committee,  
Sixth Meeting

**24-25, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop on a  
Framework for the Social  
Expenditure Monitor for  
Arab States

**24-25, Beirut**  
Committee on Energy,  
Twelfth Session

**27-28, Beirut**  
Committee on Water  
Resources, Thirteenth  
Session

## July

**1-2, Tunis**  
High-level Meeting on the  
Future of Arab Economic  
Integration in a Changing  
Global Trade Landscape

**2-4, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop on  
Open Government and  
Emerging Technologies  
in the Arab Region

**15-17, Cairo**  
A Common Arab  
Regional Job  
Competencies Framework  
for Senior Public Servants

**23-25, Tunis**  
Regional Workshop on  
Poverty Measurement in  
Arab Countries

**30-31, Amman**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Green Technology  
Transfer, Adaptation  
and Investment for  
Implementing SDG 12

## August

**19-22, Beirut**  
Workshop on the Use  
of the Food Security  
Monitoring Framework in  
the Arab Region

## December

**3-4, Cairo**  
Regional Conference  
on the Global Compact  
for Safe, Orderly and  
Regular Migration:  
Implementation and  
Policy Implications for  
the Arab Region

**8-9, Amman**  
Committee on Trade  
Policies in States  
Members of the  
Economic and Social  
Commission for Western  
Asia, First Session

**9-10, Amman**  
Committee on Transport  
and Logistics, Twentieth  
Session

**11-12, Amman**  
Committee on Financing  
for Development in the  
States Members of the  
Economic and Social  
Commission for Western  
Asia, First Session

**15-16, Cairo**  
Workshop on Leaving  
No One Behind:  
Disability Assessment  
and Determination  
as a Means for Better  
Inclusion of Persons  
with Disabilities in Arab  
Countries

**21-22, Amman**  
Sixth Special Session of  
the Economic and Social  
Commission for Western  
Asia

## October

**1, Amman**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on the Living Conditions  
in the Occupied  
Palestinian Territory  
and Development  
under Occupation:  
Determinants, Effects  
and Coping Strategies

**8-9, Beirut**  
Committee on Social  
Development, Twelfth  
Session

**10-11, Beirut**  
Workshop on the  
Voluntary National  
Reviews in  
the Arab Region

**15-16, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop  
on Accelerating the  
Achievement of SDG 5  
through ICTs

**29-31, Amman**  
Disability Statistics in the  
Arab Region: Expanding  
Coverage to Leave No  
One Behind

## September

**5-6, Beirut**  
Regional Capacity-  
building Workshop  
on the Guidelines to  
Estimate the Economic  
Cost of Domestic  
Violence in the Arab  
Region

**19-20, Beirut**  
Second Regional Meeting  
on Enhancing Integrated  
National Development  
Planning in the Arab  
Region

**30, Beirut**  
International Translation  
Day 2019: The Power of  
Languages

**30, Rabat**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Evaluation of  
Population Censuses in  
Arab Countries

## November

**23-24, Amman**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Public-Private  
Partnerships for Ports

**26-27, Amman**  
Committee on Women,  
Ninth Session

**28, Amman**  
Second Meeting of  
the ESCWA Group of  
Experts on Fossil Fuels

**27-28, Amman**  
Regional Meeting on  
Promoting Food and  
Water Security in the  
Arab Region

**28, Amman**  
High-level Meeting on  
Progress Made in the  
Implementation of the  
Beijing Declaration and  
Platform for Action after  
25 Years

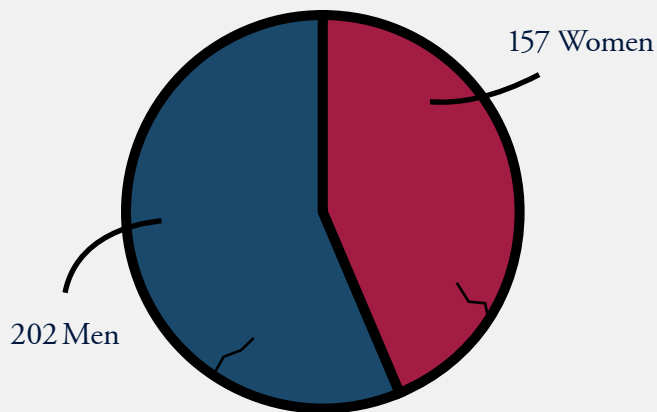
# ESCWA in Numbers

## STAFF

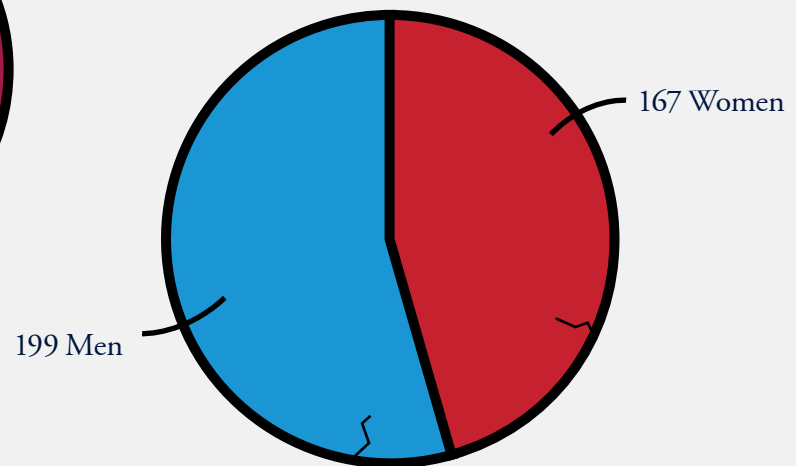


ESCWA Staff Members with Gender Breakdown (2018-2019)

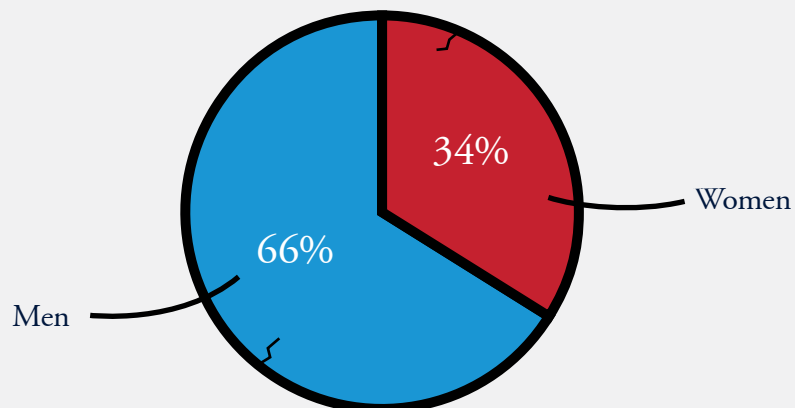
December 2018



December 2019



Leadership Positions 2019





## VISITORS



Serving as a knowledge hub to the region, ESCWA welcomes numerous stakeholders to its headquarters at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon. Every year, more people visit ESCWA to attend expert and intergovernmental meetings, special events and high-level forums, or to consult our resources and discuss development matters with our experts. These people include policymakers, researchers, civil society advocates, students and other development actors from across the region and the world.

In 2019, we welcomed 15,429 visitors to the ESCWA building, averaging at 1,200 visits a month and registering a 25 per cent increase from 2018.



# Communicating ESCWA

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ESCWA has made strides in communication and outreach throughout 2019, achieving increases of more than 50 per cent in almost all quantitative indicators of traditional and social media presence compared with the previous year. More importantly, we have adopted a new approach in communicating focused on visual storytelling, to suit today's information consumption trends and increase the reach of our work and messages. We set up a multimedia studio to produce higher quality visuals, videos, infographics and short spots, and conduct interviews with key advocates and officials, releasing about 240 videos by the end of the year.

Seeking to empower all its staff to communicate ESCWA better, we provided photography and storytelling trainings for them to produce more impactful and compelling narratives of their technical work and achievements. In the spring of 2019, we also started publishing our weekly newsletter in Arabic, along with English, to keep the public at large in the region abreast of our latest news.

All our efforts have amplified the voice of ESCWA across the different constituents of its member States, on the region's preferred traditional and social media outlets, and beyond the region.

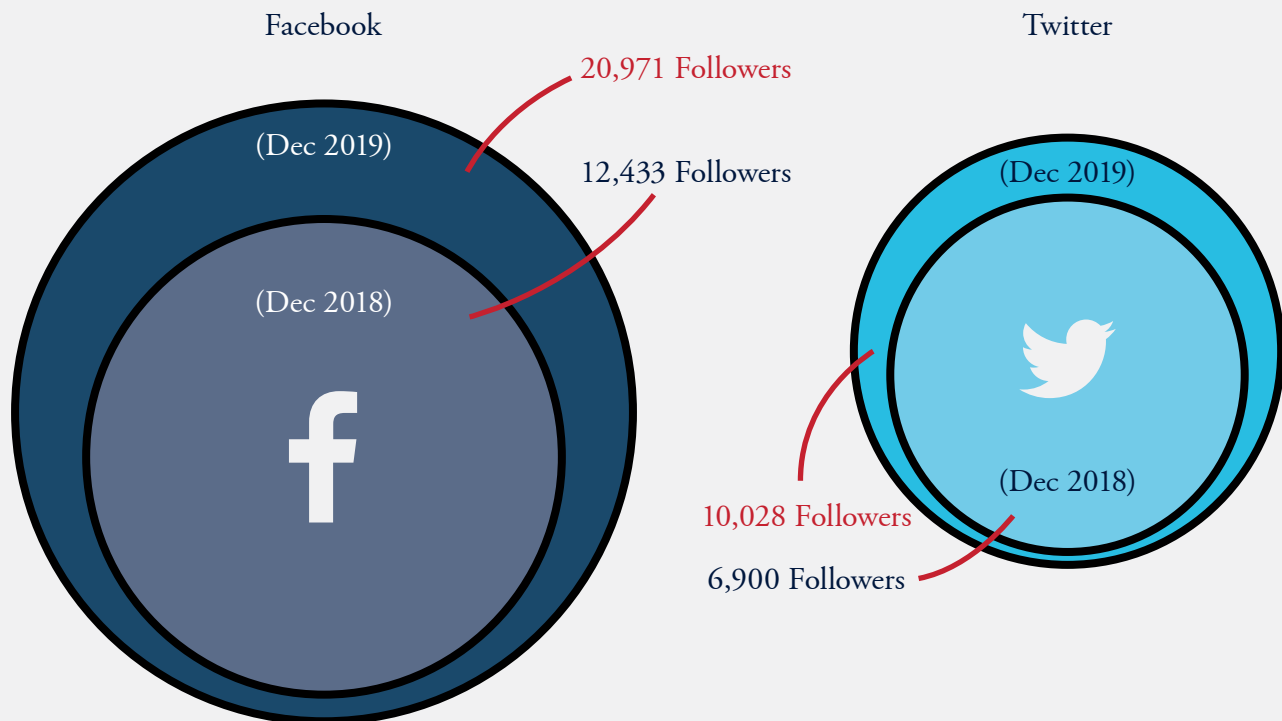
## ESCWA IN THE MEDIA



In 2019, ESCWA was mentioned in print publications (newspapers and magazines), on television and on the radio 1,216 times.

Throughout the year, we continued to reflect one coherent and unified voice through our different social media platforms by regularly posting concise and consistent messages in Arabic and English. We increased our number of Twitter followers by 45.3 per cent to reach 10,000 people and on Facebook by 68.6 per cent to reach 21,000 people. In April 2019, we also established an Instagram account (@unescwa) given the growth in the platform's popularity among younger generations globally and in the region.

### Social Media



Our work at ESCWA is geared towards ensuring that the Arab region is one where all people enjoy equal rights and lead a dignified life; all countries enjoy shared prosperity; and economic development is not achieved at the expense of the planet.

With that in mind, we support Arab countries in achieving their national development plans and the 2030 Agenda.

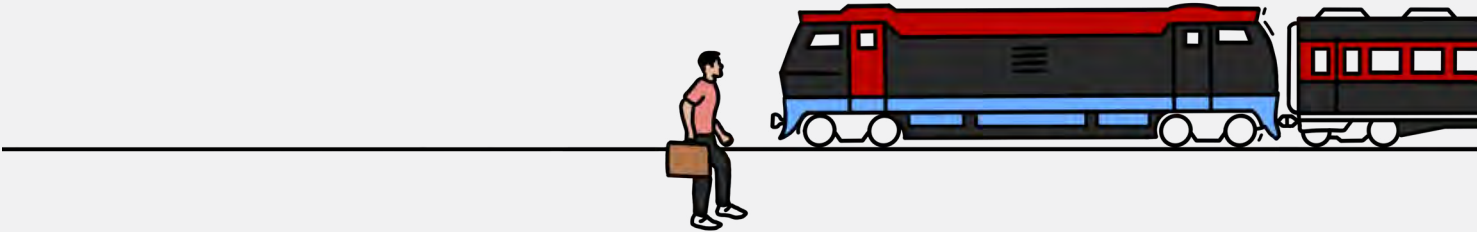
Though **SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities** specifically addresses the disparities of opportunity, income, and power spread, many of the other Goals are concerned with the same issue: the fact that people around the world are not being treated with equal respect and consideration.

At ESCWA, the first rule of our work is to...



# Leave No One Behind

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**N**ot women. Not the poor. Not migrants. Not the war-afflicted, refugees or internally displaced. Not persons with disabilities. No one.

Unfortunately, a knowledge gap on inequality between the different components of society within and between countries, subsists in the Arab region, despite the social and economic stances and equality concerns pronounced in constitutions and development policies. Such a gap puts the region's policymakers in quandary with a significant knowledge deficit on inequality.

To remedy this, we collaborated with the Economic and Research Forum (ERF) and consulted many experts across major academic institutions, over a period of two years, to 'rethink' the 'facts' of inequality in the Arab region. We wanted to approach the issue of inequality by looking at it through lenses other than just income, because inequality is also about health, education, and general living conditions. Much to our surprise, this multidimensional approach had not been used before in the region.

Our report, titled *Rethinking Inequality in Arab Countries*, was published in December of 2019 and has since stimulated policy discussions on inequality around the region. We hope that it will also push policymakers to rethink current policies and utilize the more nuanced understanding of inequality in their work moving forward.

## Five facts on inequality in the Arab region

1. Average income per capita growth has declined in low human development countries, especially those ridden by conflict such as the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen.
2. The middle class witnessed a significant decline to below 40 per cent and poverty rates are likely to have exceeded 25 per cent in Egypt, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen.
3. Only 31.4 per cent of the labour force in the Arab region are active contributors and are effectively covered by old-age pension schemes, which leaves more than two thirds of the labour force without future social protection.
4. Women's share in full-time employment in the formal private sector is only around 15.4 per cent in the Arab region, which is almost half the global average.
5. The Arab region has achieved significant human capital gains, accompanied, generally, with decreasing outcome inequalities.

**Official statistics on poverty are also scarce in the Arab region.** Few countries have reported poverty lines consistently and some have never reported them at all, as financial resources are generally required to accurately measure poverty through time. Prolonged conflict in some countries has also made it difficult to produce timely poverty data.

How can the region meet **SDG 1** of the 2030 Agenda on **No Poverty** when we still struggle to measure it? Such is the issue that drew members of our team to Tunisia, where they shared with representatives from national statistical offices of the region how they are measuring poverty and why the data are, or are not available. New methods were presented for measuring poverty more precisely and efficiently.

Another vital tool in the fight against inequality is social protection. Although the importance of social protection is globally recognized, there are still discussions on how it ought to be provided. What's more, social protection is an intricately complicated process with specific challenges in each country that make the 'right' approach difficult to determine. Consider generous social

assistance, for example. On the one hand, it can alleviate poverty and ensure a minimum standard of living for all. On the other hand, it can be wasteful when not adequately designed to target those who need it the most.

In October, we published a report on *Social Protection Reform in Arab Countries*. It illustrates the considerable and varied social protection reforms delivered by different countries around the region. It also highlights policy options, trade-offs and challenges, with the purpose of arming Governments with the knowledge required to make better choices.

### Five facts on social protection in the Arab region

1. Arab Governments are substantially reforming their social protection systems. With regard to contributory social and health insurance, they try to extend coverage, and reduce fragmentation of insurance systems and improve their financial sustainability. To this end, Arab Governments are establishing new specific schemes for particular groups, bundling pension and health insurance, subsidizing contributions on a targeted basis, and implementing 'parametric reforms' such as raising the retirement age.
2. In the area of non-contributory social protection, Arab Governments are reducing or abolishing blanket subsidies and seeking to transit to more targeted assistance (usually in the form of cash transfers) and/or health-care provision.
3. The complexity of social protection systems requires smart governance mechanisms that ensure coordination and collaboration between the different ministries and other actors. Many Arab Governments are establishing integrated social registries and management information systems as one instrument to improve cooperation across government institutions.
4. Social protection systems need to be well integrated into other social policies such as policies on labour, education, poverty alleviation, rural and urban development, and social services in general to leverage synergies and minimize potential negative implications.
5. Social protection systems require broad-based social dialogue in order to be perceived as fair and reliable.

Over the last few decades, the Arab region has shown considerable improvement in key development indicators. However, Arab societies are yet to fully embrace the principles of social justice: rights, equity, equality and participation. This is shown in rising social and economic inequalities among and between countries. By illustration, youth unemployment remains the highest in the world at 26 per cent, and the scarcity of decent jobs continues to force masses of people to migrate or engage in poor quality jobs that offer little to no social protection.

Such deficits impelled a need to rethink the development paradigm in the region. As a response, we created a set of knowledge products and capacity-building tools to assist Governments in mainstreaming social justice in their policies and designing equality-oriented policies.

Tunisia was among the first countries that expressed the need for reforming its development plans using our new approach. We have been working closely with the Tunisian Government to better understand and measure the drivers of inequality in the country and enhance its capacity to develop equality-oriented policies.

This collaborative work culminated in October 2019, when we convened a high-level meeting of senior officials in Tunis with a view to adopt a road map that will guide them in designing such policies. The momentum created in Tunisia has prompted other countries, such as Egypt, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Yemen, to request our support in carrying out similar reforms in their development plans.

In December, we also launched our ‘Social Expenditure Monitor for Arab States: A Tool to Support Budgeting and Fiscal Policy Reform’. This tool is meant to help Governments better target their social expenditure to reach the most vulnerable groups and advance social justice. It provides fiscal authorities with a mechanism to monitor public social spending and adjust choices, so as to achieve social development priorities and the related SDGs.

We had developed the Monitor based on the findings of a series of our working papers and publications on Arab States’ fiscal policies. To finalize its components, we also organized several workshops with State representatives. We are currently tailoring it to the specific needs of several countries, including Jordan, Kuwait, State of Palestine and Tunisia.

Beyond the general populations of people who suffer from inequality, we often fight for specific demographics to ensure they are respected and given the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. There is no sector of the population we focus on as much as...



## WOMEN



Because despite the progress that has been made, **SDG 5 on Gender Equality**, remains far from being a reality for countries in the region.

Even within the very system which is meant to be responsible for ensuring and delivering justice – the law – women have not been treated with equality and fairness. In fact, many of the barriers which stand between women and their full potential are codified within constitutions, labour laws, penal codes, personal status laws, and social norms across the region. There still exists, to this day, a lack of legislation in different areas of the region on issues such as domestic violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and child marriage.

In December 2019, we were thrilled to launch the report on *Gender Justice and Equality before the Law: An Analysis of Progress and Challenges in the Arab Region*, which we helped produce alongside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The report, a culmination of four years of collaborative work, is of unprecedented depth. It explores patterns and trends across the region, such as the fact that none of the 18 States studied have any existing law regarding marital rape.

The report also contains a specific sub-report for each country, analysing all laws and legislations relating to women's health, well-being, and security. Not only did it provide member States with a visually engaging and accessible highlight of the legal gaps in their countries, it also allowed them to learn how other States in the region – with similar cultural realities – resolved conflicting laws and addressed inequalities. Indeed, States do often compare themselves to each other, and we sometimes use this competitive quality to get them to act.

## Five facts on gender justice in the Arab region

1. At least 11 Arab States do not yet grant equality to women through the right to pass nationality to children.
2. Women mostly participate in the informal economy, where labour laws do not generally apply, and redress mechanisms are lacking.
3. While laws against sexual violence exist in most Arab States, few national legal frameworks or national accountability mechanisms are in place to hold perpetrators to account for gender-based violence during conflict.
4. Recent reforms of criminal laws in many Arab States include the abolition of 'marry-your-rapist' laws, the abolition of laws allowing for mitigation of punishment for femicide, laws prohibiting female genital mutilation and child marriage, and the strengthening of anti-trafficking laws.
5. Women's low participation in the judiciary in Arab States can be attributed to weak commitments to gender equality in legislation and policies, conservative religious doctrines, poor levels of transparency in appointments, the burden of women's unpaid care and domestic work, persistent gender stereotypes, and fragmented support from national women's machineries and civil society.

In rural areas across the region, women continue to suffer from a lack of opportunities and education, which puts them at a great economic disadvantage. In Tunis on 22 and 23 October, and in Amman on 20 and 21 November, we focused on empowering rural women by organizing national workshops titled 'Gender Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Development in the Rural Context: The Role of Renewable Energy'. The workshops allowed the sharing of women's entrepreneurial experiences and initiatives from various organizations and individuals that were given the opportunity to dialogue and learn.

Of course, it is not only women in rural areas who can benefit from more information on innovation and entrepreneurship. It is women and youth in general. Indeed, the lack of female and youth labour force participation has

a negative impact on the socioeconomic development of Arab countries, but the emergence of new technologies and the transformation of economies is beginning to change the landscape. New employment and work concepts are arising, which has created new opportunities for women and youth. The number of female and young entrepreneurs is rising in the region, but challenges remain. For this reason, in August 2019, we published a report titled *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Opportunities and Challenges for Arab Youth and Women* to help inform relevant parties on the existing landscape and aid in working towards **SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

### Five facts on employment and innovation in the Arab region

1. Youth unemployment hovers around 30 per cent in the Arab region; it is the highest rate in the world and is 3 to 4 times higher than total unemployment. Unemployment particularly affects educated youth and young women.
2. Arab women's labour force participation rate is the lowest in the world; it stood at 20.9 per cent in 2017, 3.5 times lower men's rate, only recording a marginal improvement from the 2000 value of 19.7 per cent.
3. Arab countries' competitiveness is generally low, they also exhibit weaknesses in innovation, technological readiness, and higher education and training quality and outcomes.
4. The business environment remains weak in the Arab region as well. It has either stagnated or deteriorated for most countries since 2011.
5. New inclusive innovation approaches, focusing on grassroots, pro-poor and social innovation, are key for sustainable development and represent great potential for young entrepreneurs and women in the Arab region. Governments and investors should encourage these types of innovation in various domains.

Another key event we facilitated regarding the fight for women's rights took place in Amman, on 28 November. It was a high-level regional review of progress in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, one of the main blueprints used by States worldwide to strive for and achieve gender equality.

The review, which brought all stakeholders to the table, including national women's machineries, civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, encouraged States to reveal both progress—in areas such as education, health, political participation, economic empowerment and combating violence against women—and gaps, and to be methodical in their plans moving forward. These elements were highlighted in the 'Arab Declaration on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years', which was adopted by participants as an outcome of the event and submitted as the Arab States' common position to the sixty-fourth session of the global Commission on the Status of Women held in New York in March 2020.

Another demographic we work hard to assist are...

## MIGRANTS



As an economic and social commission of the United Nations, we contend that migrants play a vital role in creating harmony across nations and cultures, and in advancing development in their countries of origin and countries of destination.

Unfortunately, the approach to migration governance in Arab States and across the world is rather fragmented, which weakens the ability to capitalize on migration and puts migrants at heightened risk. To tackle this issue, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (Marrakech Compact on Migration), which was the first comprehensive agreement on migration governance.



## Selected objectives of the Marrakech Compact on Migration

Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.

Objective 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration.

Objective 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.

Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.

Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants.

Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.


The whole list can be found in the Compact text (A/RES/73/195)

In December 2019, we published a situation report for the region relative to the objectives of the Marrakech Compact on Migration. We also co-organized a regional conference in Cairo to share our findings with policymakers, raise awareness on the issue, and examine the implementation of the Compact's objectives so far. Representatives from 16 Arab States attended and reaffirmed their commitment to continue working towards those objectives.



## Five facts on migration in the Arab region

1. In 2018, the Arab region hosted 3.7 million refugees under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate, including over 2 million Syrians. There were also 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) living in the region.
2. In 2018, of every five refugees under UNHCR mandate, two were from the Arab region. Of the 8.7 million Arab refugees, 6.5 million were from the Syrian Arab Republic alone.
3. Conflicts and environmental pressures have led to the internal displacement of around 15 million people in the Arab region, mainly in Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.
4. Labour migration is predominant throughout the Arab region. Around 24 million migrants worked in Arab countries in 2017, representing close to 15 per cent of all migrant workers globally.
5. Women represent nearly half of the migrant population in the Mashreq and in the Arab least developed countries, but only 35 per cent in the Maghreb and 28 per cent in Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

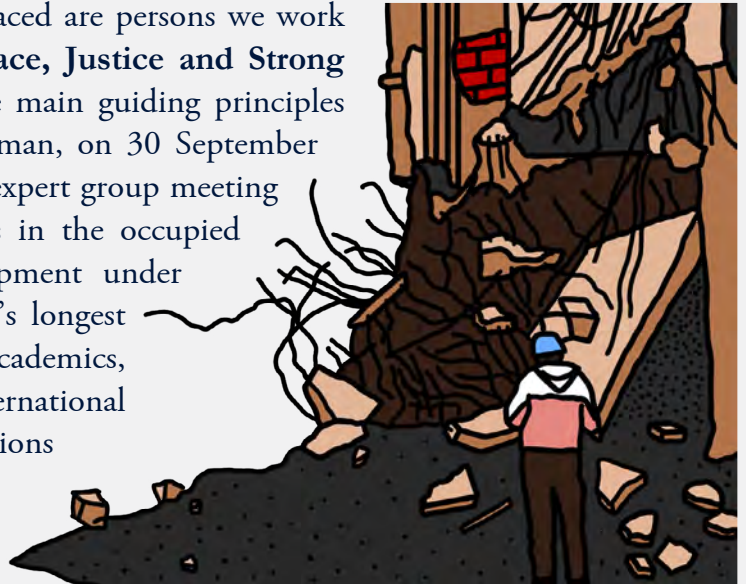


Migrants often migrate for the sole purpose of finding better economic opportunity. Other times, however, they migrate because they have been...

## LIVING IN OCCUPIED OR WAR-AFFLICTED TERRITORIES, OR INTERNALLY DISPLACED



The refugees and internally displaced are persons we work hard to protect. **SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** serves as one of the main guiding principles of our work at ESCWA. In Amman, on 30 September and 1 October, we organized an expert group meeting (EGM) on the living conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and development under the Israeli occupation, the world's longest ongoing military occupation. Academics, journalists, and experts from international and non-governmental organizations from around the world gathered to assess the repercussions of the Israeli occupation.



More than 52 years of occupation have, indeed, had a multilayered and intergenerational impact on the society, economy, and environment. In addition, the rights of Palestinians have been repeatedly and extensively violated. In 2019, more than 2.5 million Palestinians living under occupation needed humanitarian assistance; with 1 out of 3 people being food insecure (68 per cent in Gaza) and more than 29 per cent of Palestinians (53 per cent in Gaza) living below the poverty line.

We, at ESCWA, continue to monitor, analyse and report on Israel's policies and measures that affect the Palestinian people. Our EGM was one step forward in enhancing the understanding and mapping of the long-term impact of Israeli policies and practices on Palestine. Such a meeting serves two purposes; it helps raise awareness about the effect of the Israeli occupation and helps devise innovative approaches to mitigate and cope with the impact. The meeting also highlighted the stern conviction that there is no mitigating measure or policy that constitutes an alternative to ending the occupation and ensuring the full realization of justice and human rights.

Another country that has been strongly affected by conflict is Iraq. Thankfully, the country is on a path of recovery, and refugees have begun returning to their homes. The reintegration of refugees in Iraq has not been easy. Challenges



with capacity, planning, and funding are continuously faced. Consequently, the Iraqi Government developed an ‘Experimental Programme for the Rehabilitation of Liberated Areas’. At ESCWA, we have contributed with a series of institutional assessment workshops to identify the main capacity gaps and devise and implement training programmes to rebuild institutional capacity and improve the performance of State institutions affected by conflict.

On 2 and 3 May in Beirut, and from 6 to 8 October in Erbil, Iraq, we hosted the second and third workshops of the series, which were dedicated to Al Hamdaniya District in the Ninawa Governate. The workshops were attended by a large number of Iraqi officials from local public institutions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Iraqi Ministry of Planning.

At ESCWA, we are also involved in the planning and development of full-fledged programmes meant to aid in the rehabilitation and recovery of war-afflicted countries. The National Agenda for the Future of Syria (NAFS) was developed in 2012 and spent its first seven years (Phase I) serving as a platform for technical dialogue for Syrians to think about the future of their country during and after the conflict.

Moving forward into Phase II in 2019, NAFS aims to ensure that the work done during Phase I is owned by a broad spectrum of Syrians and remains relevant to the changing reality inside the country. It also aims to translate the largely theoretical work done during Phase I into concrete tools that could guide and influence recovery and reconstruction. Similar programmes are in development for Libya and Yemen.

Throughout the year, we have accelerated the implementation of our Libya Socioeconomic Dialogue Project, which aims to provide a platform for Libyans to formulate a vision for the socioeconomic development of their country, and to devise policy options for its implementation. We contracted Libyan experts to produce baseline studies on the economy, the society and governance in Libya. We then used the findings to prepare for live dialogue sessions to be held in 2020.

Beyond the aforementioned countries, the region has suffered a great degree of conflict in the past decade. Certain risks are apparent before, during, and after such conflict arises. Policymakers and stakeholders must be able to project and anticipate such risks, which make it very challenging for countries in the Arab region to reach the SDGs by 2030.

With this in mind, we hosted a meeting on ‘Developing a Risk Assessment Framework in the Arab Region’ in Beirut on 21 October, which was attended by experts and decision makers in fields such as governance, economics, climate change, politics, and security. We hope to prepare our member States to pre-empt conflict as much as possible.

Lastly, we work to protect the rights of...



## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Because for much too long now, they have been left behind in the Arab region. For persons with disabilities, discrimination continues to be a struggle, and public services like transportation and education have remained challenging and difficult to access.

The good news is that Arab countries are increasingly committed to ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is illustrated by their commitment and signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and by their formulation of strategies and laws in some cases to ensure progress towards inclusion.

We have been dedicated to assist our member States with the task of addressing the rights and needs of persons with disabilities. In 2019, we published two technical papers on the barriers and possibilities existing in the region related to articles 19 – deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities: their right and ability to live independently – and 33 – institutional arrangements that ensure implementation – of the Convention.





## Five facts on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Arab region

1. Article 19 of the Convention affirms the right for individuals with disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities, rather than live in long-term residential institutions, which tend to exclude them from society.
2. Article 33 of the Convention provides for the establishment of national coordination mechanisms within government to facilitate the implementation of the Convention and affirms the importance of civil society participation in the monitoring process, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.
3. Residential institutions in the region accommodate a significant number of persons with disabilities, as well as many children of divorced parents, children from families that have more than one family member with disabilities, orphans and children with multiple disabilities.
4. According to interviews in 19 institutions, the majority of institutionalized persons with disabilities were illiterate. Those who received formal education outside the institution accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total number of residents in the 19 institutions surveyed.
5. In 10 of 19 institutions, staff perceived residents as likely to stay permanently, and described social stigma as the main barrier to integration. Persons with disabilities, however, viewed the lack of employment and education opportunities as the central barriers to their independence.

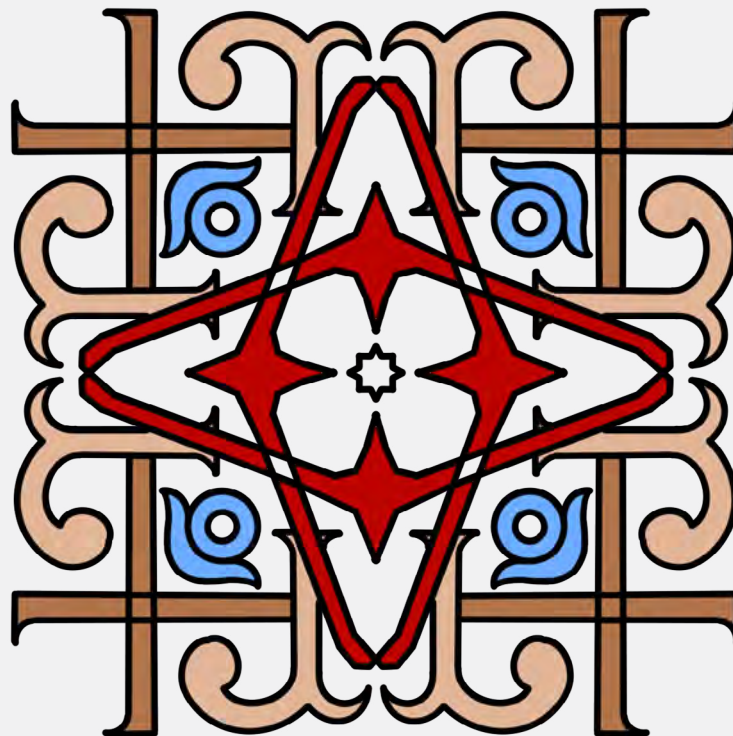
On 14 and 15 December, we hosted the fourth meeting of the Inter-sessional Group of Experts on Disability (IGED) in Cairo, which included experts from the 18 ESCWA member States. The ESCWA Committee on Social Development recommended the creation of this network in 2016, for such experts to exchange knowledge and support intergovernmental cooperation. Over the past four years, the IGED has evolved into a continuous and trusted form of exchange and collective learning.

As an economic and social commission, we also work beyond issues of social justice. We work on troubleshooting economic challenges and capitalizing on opportunities. As a regional commission, we work to ensure that our region becomes more and more...

# Integrated and Informed

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The Arab region is integrated as a group of States with a common language, shared culture and values, and intersecting histories and goals: a group that will only benefit from further integration and cooperation.



We strive to inform our member States about the tools and opportunities to achieve such integration present in the local socioeconomic landscape: from digital transformation and new technologies to transport statistics and Internet governance.

Primarily, we work with information and data. We compile, generate, publish, spread, and facilitate the sharing of information between all relevant parties. The more informed we can make our stakeholders – Governments, civil

society organizations, private businesses, and citizens – the better equipped and more efficient they can be.

On 16 and 17 December in Rabat, we held a regional training workshop on measuring, monitoring, and evaluating regional integration performance attended by ministries of commerce and economy in 12 Arab countries in charge of trade negotiations.

The workshop aimed to discuss a composite system of indexes and scoreboards and its use in the development of trade policies that stir economic growth. The system is designed to suit the needs expressed by member States to follow-up on and evaluate the impact of existing trade agreements, and assist them in the negotiation of new trade agreements. It will be updated as a result of the workshop and launched in 2020.

We also developed the prototype and interface for an interactive tool which simulates the performance of SDGs under different scenarios. The goal of the tool is to improve the analytical capacity of member States and decision makers in assessing the impact of a scenario, or a combination of them, on their SDG performance. We hope that it will help policymakers decide on the optimal combination of scenarios to achieve national and global targets.

Key players in our effort to collect, produce, and distribute information are...

## STATISTICS AND DATA



Which are key to good information. Statistics and data help to tell the story of the past, present, and future, in a numerical and universal language. Still, they are often manipulated, overused, and/or abused, which only makes us more adamant to provide the region and our member States with precise, relevant, and impartial statistics.

In 2019, our team was hard at work to update and strengthen, with the help of smart analytics, our online Data Portal, which is an advanced dissemination and visualization tool that concerns itself with accurate data about all 17 SDGs. The portal is built upon a complex backend that manages millions of data points relevant to the economic, social, demographic, and environmental status of the region.

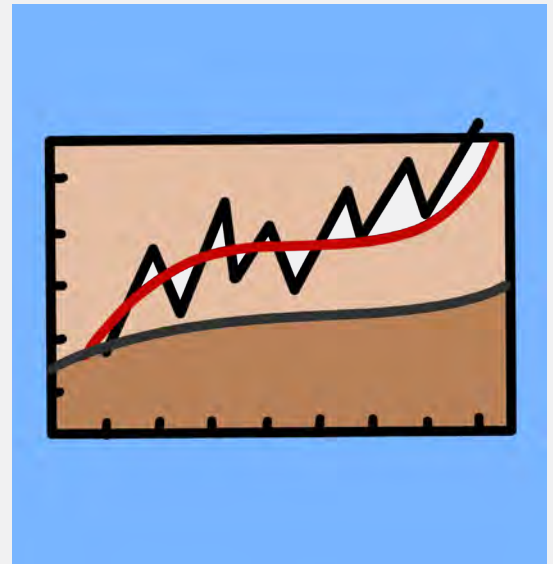
Everyone can benefit from our portal: Governments, ministries, businesses, investors, professors, students, and anyone working on advancing the region's progress towards the SDGs. It is a powerful visualization tool that turns data into insights right at the hand of the user.

It can be accessed at [data.unescwa.org](https://data.unescwa.org).

Of course, the portal is only made possible by that data which already exist, and though the region has come a long way in embracing data and statistics, there remains a need for development of databases and statistics in numerous fields.

One such field is transportation. The development of transport databases and statistics on all modalities – road, railway, marine, airway, and multimodal – and especially on road safety, has become a necessity for evidence-based policies and planning. Producing information and data will help improve road safety across the region. Naturally, many challenges exist, but we continue to work with member States to fulfil this task.

There is a tremendous road safety issue in the Arab region. With 21 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, we score higher than the world global average (17 fatalities per day) and exceed four times the rate registered for the European Union (5 per day).



In Beirut from 16 to 18 September, we hosted the ‘Regional Workshop on the Development of Transport Statistics and Transport-related Sustainable Development Indicators in the Arab Countries’, which was attended by representatives from the national statistical offices of 18 Arab States, private sector companies, road safety councils, and academia.

Two months later, on 7 and 8 November, we hosted a similar workshop in Amman, this time focusing on supply and use tables (SUTs). According to international best practices in national accounts, SUTs are considered as the optimal framework for reporting on economic activities, improving the consistency between economic statistics and facilitating the coverage of informal activities.

So far, only few Arab countries are producing SUTs and most of the time these tables are incomplete and unpublished. This is because a valid SUT requires consistency between data sources, clearly classified taxes and subsidies by product, correctly filled questionnaires, and statistical coverage across the economy: qualities that the region’s statistics are yet to acquire.

Our workshop was attended by representatives from the national statistical offices of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Qatar, and the International Monetary Fund. We hope to see, in the coming years, the implementation of SUTs into the national accounts of our member States.

One of the elements that keeps a region integrated and collaborative is...

## TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION



Trade allows countries and their citizens to benefit from the resources of other countries. It also encourages domestic firms to operate at their highest level of productivity in order to compete.

Though we have made strides in progress, we still have a long way to go in the Arab region in terms of economic integration agreements at the regional and subregional level. We are, at the moment, well short of trading blocs and regions. A major barrier keeping us from taking on such projects is lack of information. Policymakers around the region have little hard evidence on binding constraints that impede intraregional trade. Private sector operators often lack detailed information on the conditions and provisions preferred for market access in their neighbouring countries.

Of course, areas where information is lacking are where we aim to make a difference. In Tunis on 1 and 2 July, we held a workshop on ‘The Future of Arab Economic Integration in a Changing Global Trade Landscape’, where

we presented our new tools for assessing and monitoring trade performance. We also presented the findings of our second edition of the *Assessing Arab Economic Integration Report*, which focuses on the challenges and opportunities of liberalizing trade in services.

It is our hope that the region has a bright future of strong economic integration and much trade. It is important, however, to take the right measures in preventing the harmful and unjust practices – like dumping and the misuse of subsidies – that trade agreements can sometimes give way to.

In Tunis on 9 and 10 January, we organized a technical training workshop on trade defence and trade remedy instruments: anti-dumping, anti-subsidy, and safeguard instruments. The uses of these instruments and measures are new for most Arab countries and their implementation also requires that trade lawyers, operators, engineers, and policymakers acquire new technical skills.

On 8 and 9 December in Amman, we held the first session of our Committee on Trade Policies in ESCWA Member States. State representatives gathered to discuss issues as diverse as Arab economic integration, the repercussions of global trade wars, ways to measure the impact of trade policies on progress in the SDGs, and means to modernize the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area Agreement. They agreed on a set of recommendations on those issues, one of which was to benefit from ESCWA expertise to monitor, evaluate and deepen Arab economic integration.

One of the necessities of an economically integrated region is a strong transportation infrastructure. Unfortunately, the current Arab infrastructure suffers from gaps and missing links between national and regional networks. There is also a lack of knowledge about the flows of goods and people, and the performance of networks and facilities.

To capture the actual performance of roads, rails, ports, airports, and logistic zones region-wide, we developed a web-based Geographical Information System (GIS) tool, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, to





cater for remote data collection and monitoring for the region's transport networks and facilities. This tool, which we hope to release for use in 2020, can be used by policymakers, business owners, shippers, and others to make informed decisions on transportation.

On 10 and 11 July, we organized a regional training workshop in Beirut to train 27 officials from 14 ministries of transport on the use and functionalities of the tool. They were also taught to update the tool with technical characteristics (type, size, and design capacity) as well as operational features (status of maintenance, traffic volume, speed, safety level, service level) of their country's networks and facilities. As a result, we now have a database covering the region's entire transportation infrastructure.

On 23 and 24 November, we also held a joint expert group meeting in Amman with the Islamic Development Bank, to strengthen the capacity of senior government officials and public sector employees from Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in forming public-private partnerships (PPP) for ports. The training was dedicated to the preparation and drafting of PPP contracts, bidding and selection processes, and renegotiation and conflict resolution for better port management.

When it comes to development, one field has taken the driver's seat:

## TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



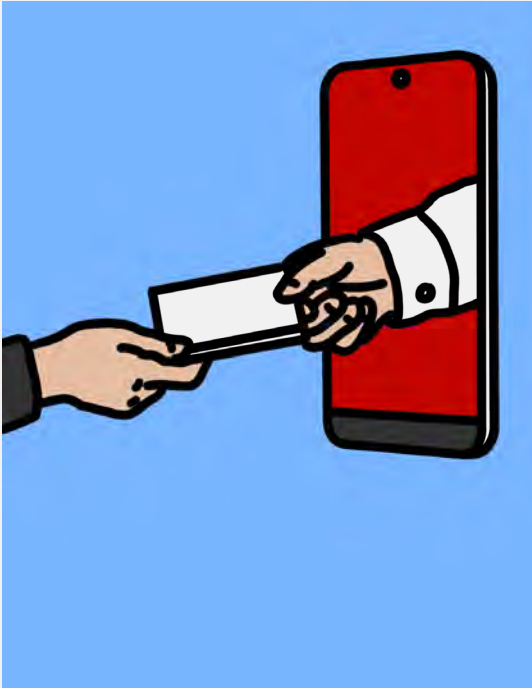
Such is the reason that **SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** aims to foster innovation. In this day and age, you either embrace and utilize the technological advancements being made worldwide or you get left behind.

At ESCWA, a whole segment of our staff works towards assisting member States in embracing and using technology for development. Unfortunately, some Arab countries are lagging in the area of digital development and the information on the status of technology development is limited. There is also a widening digital divide, which has given way to gaps in several policy areas.

So what did we do? We supported national entities from 11 Arab countries – namely Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates – on the development of national digital development reviews, which were then compiled to produce the forthcoming *Arab Digital Development Report*.



We have also been involved in helping Governments to develop and implement digital transformation strategies.



Across much of the Arab region, citizens are still required to make appearances at civil registry, motor vehicle and estate offices to take care of matters like passport renewal and property registration. They often spend hours in these offices, standing in long lines or going from booth to waiting area to office. It is an experience which is commonly known to be tedious.

It is no challenge, then, to imagine that such citizens would be thrilled to access some of these services digitally, through their mobile phones or computers, in the comfort of their own home. But the digital transformation of Governments and public services does not only benefit civilians; it benefits the Governments as well through higher cost-efficiency and security.

Through our Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, we have worked on helping Governments create, develop, and implement their digital government transformation strategies. In 2019, we held workshops in Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic for high- and mid-level government officials. We also provided assistance to the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic to develop national plans which are now in the process of formal clearance and adoption.

We have also been monitoring the development of new technologies – such as artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud computing – and how they can contribute to development in the Arab region. In December, we published a report, the *Impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Development in Arab Countries*, which we hope will be of service to member States looking to utilize new technologies.

## Five facts on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Arab region

1. A shift is taking place in the Arab region from technology consumption to localization and innovation, due to a change in mindset, diminishing job opportunities in government, and fewer access barriers to enabling technologies.
2. Women in the region have founded - or are leading - one in three startups, a higher percentage than in the Silicon Valley.
3. Almost all jobs in the region will be affected by automation to varying degrees, but very few occupations will entirely vanish.
4. According to a survey undertaken in companies in the region, the top four technologies most likely to be adopted by 2022 include Big data analytics, machine learning, Internet of Things, and app/web enabled markets.
5. On the risks associated with artificial intelligence, 71 per cent of respondents to a survey undertaken in the 22 Arab countries expressed concerns about privacy and 46 per cent about job losses.

In 2019, only three Arab countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) had developed their national AI strategies. During the year, we assisted Jordan and Lebanon to formulate their own. We also assisted the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic in formulating digital transformation strategies.

For the region, several challenges exist:

1. There is a widespread misconception that Arab countries cannot absorb or deploy such technologies due to the nascent local industry, aging public sector, and stressed society.
2. There is a widespread fear that technologies such as AI are a serious threat to jobs.
3. Such technologies require intensive capacity-building before they can be utilized.

This is where our work of collecting, publishing, and spreading information to the relevant parties is most important. Besides our report, we also hosted an EGM in Beirut in July on ‘AI and Local Industrial Development’.

The impact of new technologies combined with the need for better governance and sustainable development also pushed another idea into the limelight: open government.

An open government is one which operates under high levels of transparency and accountability, granting citizens the right to examine and criticize the function of the Government through full access to its documents and proceedings.

Open government strategies, action plans and initiatives, especially in open data, are expanding to countries like Jordan, Oman, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. Open data is considered the baseline for open government implementation. Government data are released to civilian access for the purpose of accountability, and can also be used in certain cases to develop new products and services.

Of course, a Government cannot simply make its data open overnight. Government officials responsible for the implementation of such a transformation require knowledge on the concepts, strategies, and potential legal aspects, while their technical staff require capacity-building.

Such is the reason that, in 2019, we held three national workshops on open government and data for Jordan, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic. The government officials who attended were pleased with the clarification of concepts and ideas related to open data. Some of the participants expressed interest in moving forward with the participation phase of open government, in that they are looking into developing methods to gain feedback from citizens.

Another area where we must stay well informed and on track in order to meet several of our Sustainable Development Goals, is...

## FOOD AND WATER

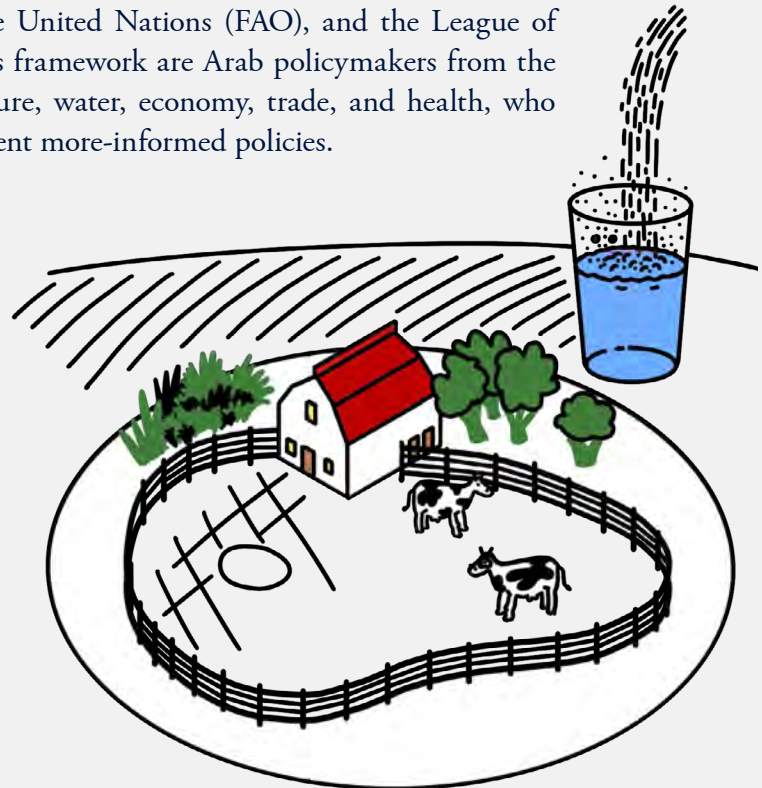


Because **SDG 2** aims for **Zero Hunger**, and **SDG 6** aims for **Clean Water and Sanitation**. When it comes to vital elements like food and water, our region's challenges are many.

Indeed, food security is a complex issue that requires concerted action by stakeholders at the national and regional levels. Our region faces many challenges that impact food security, namely water and arable land scarcity, a fast-growing population, climate change impacts, and an increasing dependency on food imports.

Food security requires four elements: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. Currently, food security policies across the region focus on increasing availability and emphasize to a lesser extent the remaining three components. But food security is not only about decreasing hunger; it is also about ensuring that civilians have sustained access to food through crises and natural disasters.

Where do we play a role? Throughout 2019, we prepared a food security-monitoring framework in collaboration with partners and experts from the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the League of Arab States. Beneficiaries of this framework are Arab policymakers from the ministries of planning, agriculture, water, economy, trade, and health, who can utilize it in order to implement more-informed policies.





## Five facts on Food Security in the Arab region

1. Undernourishment in the Arab region increased between 2010 and 2016 from 11.5 per cent to 12.1 per cent, affecting close to 50 million people. With increased conflict and poverty, these numbers may have worsened up until 2019.
2. Obesity affects 110 million people in the region.
3. Child stunting is relatively high at about 23 per cent, affecting mainly Arab least developed countries and indicating the existence of pockets of food insecurity in the region.
4. Poor Arab countries and those in conflict experience increased levels of child wasting at 8.7 per cent, an indication of the pervasiveness of food insecurity.
5. Food loss and waste is estimated at 210 kilograms per year per capita or one third of the region's food. It costs the region \$60 billion annually.

The Arab region is also facing severe natural water scarcity, with a long-term annual average precipitation below 350 millimetres. This is particularly critical for farmers who need adequate amounts of water for agriculture, given that the agriculture sector is the largest user of water in the region. Moreover, our efficiency in water use is categorized as low, due to wasteful irrigation practices.

AquaCrop is a crop growth model that can help tackle this problem. It is used to assess crop productivity based on water availability and other climate indicators. In 2019, we continued our series of national AquaCrop training workshops in three target countries: Jordan, Lebanon, and the State of Palestine. The training provided tools on irrigation management, as well as climate information and data from our Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR). Complementary workshops on using RICCAR datasets and GIS were provided for experts from Kuwait, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia.

Each country benefited from two workshops. The first focused on acquiring theoretical knowledge, and the second focused on applying that knowledge. This was done through actual case studies that cover specific crops and geographical locations within the countries, and use several climate scenarios

provided by RICCAR. We expect that the findings and recommendations of the workshops will influence policymaking on irrigation water management.

During the last two months of the year, we also launched a pilot project in Morocco on an important aquifer, which is used as a primary drinking water source for several urban centres as well as for agriculture and industrial activity, to assess the impact of climate change on groundwater. We produced written reports and a detailed geo-database, which we hope will set forth groundwater exploitation regimes to inform decision-making in Morocco. We also hope to use the lessons learned from the project and the modelling methodology on other aquifers in the region.



### Five Facts on Water in the Arab Region

1. The Arab region is among the most freshwater scarce in the world—18 out of 22 Arab States fall below the renewable freshwater resources scarcity annual threshold of 1,000 cubic meters per capita per year.
2. Approximately 60 per cent of water resources in the region originate outside its borders, amplifying dependency on external water sources.
3. It is estimated that 70 million people are without access to basic sanitation services in the region, and 47 million lack access to basic drinking water services.
4. Intermittency of water supply services and variations in the quality of services are major challenges that accentuate inequalities, especially between urban and rural communities.
5. Agriculture is the biggest consumer of water in the region, with 84 per cent of all freshwater withdrawals going to the sector.

To help our member States in the fight against water scarcity, we assisted them in water management and cooperation through AWARENET, the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network hosted by ESCWA. We also helped them prioritize water-related goals and include them in their national development strategies and plans to achieve SDG 6.

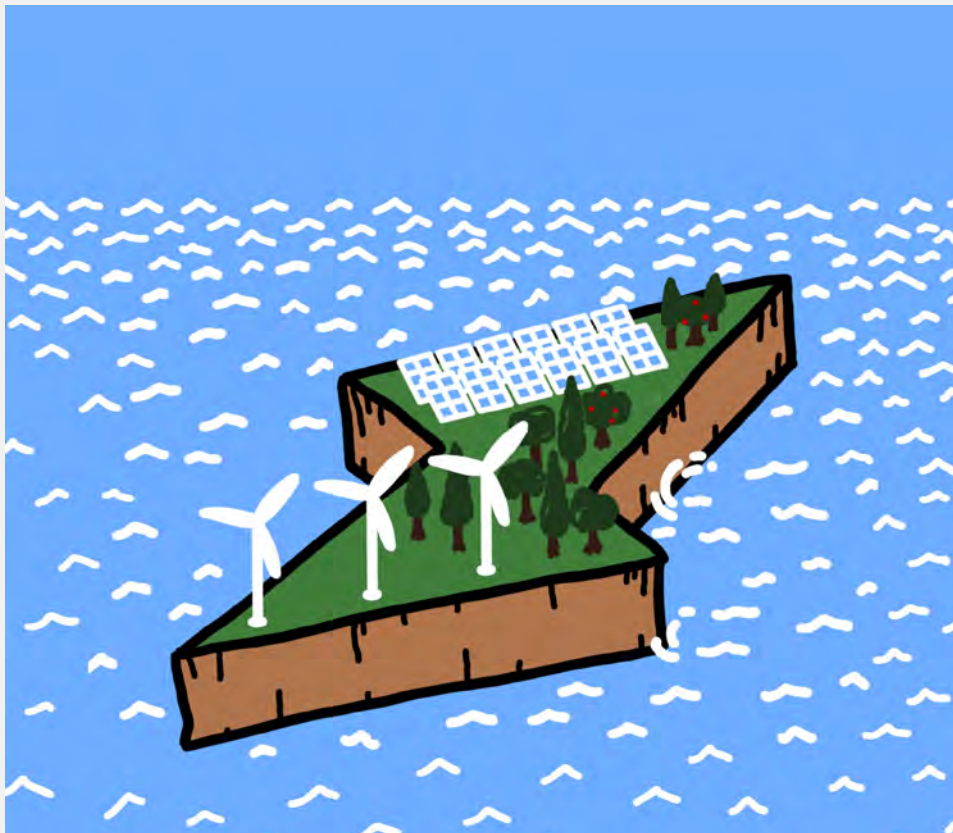
Last, but certainly not least, we push member States to make serious reforms to their approach to...

## ENERGY, CLIMATE ACTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Because sustainable development cannot be achieved without serious reforms to the energy industry, the biggest contributor to climate change. Such is one of the reasons behind **SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy**, and **SDG 13 Climate Action**.

On 17 and 18 April, we hosted a seminar in Beirut on monitoring the implementation of energy-related SDG indicators in the Arab region. The seminar allowed representatives from member States to discuss and share the challenges they still face in achieving sustainable energy development and their success stories. The collected inputs at the seminar were also integrated into the regional report on *Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2019 – Arab Region*, which provides a country by country breakdown for policymakers and statisticians. The report was launched during the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties (COP 25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2019 in Madrid.





## Five facts on energy in the Arab region

1. The Arab region has achieved near-universal access to modern energy but with very slow progress in energy efficiency and a marginal role of renewable energy.
2. Access inequalities remain between rural and urban areas; and women carry the burden of lack of energy access disproportionately.
3. Access to clean fuels and technologies is encouragingly high in the region, with 14 countries registering rates above 95 per cent; however, important efforts are still needed to close the gap entirely by 2030.
4. With declining shares of renewable energy in total final energy consumption, the Arab region seems far off target; however, rapidly falling costs of solar and wind technologies could reverse that trend.
5. Progress in sustainable energy and climate action are closely linked. The Arab region is highly vulnerable to climate change effects, which threaten the livelihoods of millions by impacting the availability of arable land and drinking water, through increased heat and the more frequent occurrence of natural disasters.

Arab countries are pursuing climate action in accordance with SDG 13 and the Paris Agreement, but access to financing remains insufficient to fund this pursuit. Complex accreditation criteria make it difficult to access dedicated climate funds, particularly for developing and least developed countries.

In Beirut on 12 and 13 September, we hosted the global Forum of the Standing Committee of Finance of the UNFCCC and issued the *Technical Report on Climate Finance in the Arab Region* to support Arab negotiators in their preparation for climate finance negotiations at COP 25. We also continued our series of dedicated training workshops to aid these negotiators, which are held twice a year.

Building on the findings of the report, we collaborated with UNFCCC and the League of Arab States to develop the Needs-based Climate Finance Project in the Arab Region. The aim of the project is to formulate a strategy for climate finance mobilization and access for Arab countries. The project was launched in November and the strategy is currently in development.



Also in November (25 to 27), we held a joint expert group meeting with the Islamic Development Bank in Amman on mainstreaming climate action into national development plans and budgets in Arab States, during which participants discussed challenges regarding climate finance access.

The year also witnessed the formal approval of the governance structure of our Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, housed at ESCWA, through which we provide support to our member States on climate change issues in partnership with regional and global entities.

### Five facts on climate finance in the Arab region

1. Climate adaptation is the priority of the Arab region, but developed countries provide the Arab region about five times more finance for mitigation than for adaptation.
2. Roughly three quarters of climate finance support to the Arab region go to the energy, transport, and infrastructure sectors. The water, agriculture and other sectors receive only limited support.
3. Loans exceed grants by a factor of five in climate finance support to Arab States, despite the need for more grants since many Arab States are facing significant fiscal constraints.
4. Arab least developed countries received only 2 per cent of bilateral climate finance from developed countries to the Arab region, despite their acute need for support.
5. Only 5 of the 22 Arab States have accessed funding for national projects through the Green Climate Fund, the multilateral climate fund serving the Paris Agreement, over its first four years of operation.

We have also provided support on broader environment action for member States, such as the State of Palestine, for which we held two seminars in 2019, the first on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda (in Amman, on 5 and 6 February) and the second on strategic environmental assessment (in Ramallah, from 14 to 18 July). The seminars provided the Government with tools to monitor the implementation of environment-related SDG targets and to plan for strategic environmental assessment to improve environmental management in the country.

No development, however, would be possible without financing. That is why, at ESCWA, we have created an office dedicated for...

## FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT



“We know the world has the resources to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said, “we must get these resources to where they are needed most.” And indeed, part of our job at ESCWA is to assist member States in finding, planning for, and providing the financial resources needed for the 2030 Agenda.

Throughout 2019, we addressed the three main financing challenges facing the Arab region’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the more specific Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, namely: financial constraints and opportunity costs; funding shortfalls; and financing inequalities.

We expanded our Arab Financing for Development (FfD) Scorecard, an integrated toolbox that provides measures of the region’s financing challenges, capturing more than 25 cross-border financing channels.



Global estimates of financing gaps continue to mask significant disparities in the SDG-related spending taking place across countries. At ESCWA, we complemented those estimates by granular examinations at the regional and national levels. We found that most national development strategies still do not provide details on how they will be financed.

We thus began to develop integrated national diagnostics and financing frameworks to present national authorities with a set of tools and models which analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks (SWOT) associated with each country’s specific financing landscape. By connecting financing requirements with long-term development goals and targets, these frameworks can help overcome short-term oriented decision-making, and allow policymakers to exploit synergies, and manage possible trade-offs across different policies.

Several member States have also requested analysis and technical assistance to curb illicit finance and protect their tax base from erosion due to multinational corporations' profit-shifting practices. One of the most rewarding interventions that we undertook in that area relates to supporting Bahrain from being removed from the European Union blacklist of 'Uncooperative Tax jurisdictions'.

In Egypt, we helped to train national tax authorities on revising bilateral tax agreements, paving the way for the adoption of new international norms, including the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) which enables the implementation of tax reforms without the need to bilaterally renegotiate individual tax treaties.

In Jordan, we provided advisory services in the field of taxation to enhance domestic resource mobilization capacities through better understanding of the key principles of tax treaties, BEPS strategies and other tax related matters.

Throughout the year, we also collaborated with the League of Arab States by providing analytical contributions to the 2019 Arab Economic and Social Summit, which paved the way for the adoption of a dedicated resolution on FfD by the Summit.

In Amman on 11 and 12 December, we also held the first session of our dedicated intergovernmental Committee on Financing for Development, the only intergovernmental body in the region that tackles this critical issue. During its first session, the Committee addressed the FfD priority areas identified in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda: domestic resource mobilization, taxation, private and international finance, international development cooperation, trade, and debt sustainability. Our representatives showcased ESCWA reports, technical papers, analysis and capacity-building interventions in the field of FfD for Committee members. We also facilitated an agreement among them over launching a regional debate to coordinate fiscal policies (especially tax systems), take action to curb illicit financial flows, and stabilize debt and debt service accumulation.

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT



At ESCWA, we are proud to work in partnership with numerous entities to multiply efforts and provide better support to member States for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Below are only a few examples of 2019 outcomes of such partnerships. Throughout the year, we...



1. **Hosted the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development**, a joint effort of the whole United Nations Development System in the region and the League of Arab States. This year's session was chaired by Iraq, which transmitted the agreed region's key messages of the Forum to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its main theme was "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the Arab region", mirroring that of the HLPF. The Forum was attended by more than 300 participants representing a wide variety of development actors: States, parliament members, civil society representatives (namely those of population groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities), academia and think tanks, the private sector, regional organizations, investment funds, the media, and more.

They stressed the need for overarching policy reform, deeper integration of the environmental, social and economic pillars of development, and innovative financing.

2. **Increased efficiencies in the United Nations statistical system**, by collaborating with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on a data collection structure looking at trade between Arab States, to avoid duplication and decrease the reporting burden on member States. More importantly, this will reduce significantly non-response and gaps in data on Arab States and the region in the international trade statistics database Comtrade.
3. **Advocated for policy coherence in Agriculture** with the League of Arab States, the Arab Organization for Agriculture Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), by promoting coordination across ministries of water, agriculture and related institutions and ministries to ensure policy coherence across national strategies.
4. **Supported institution building**, as we have been cooperating with the Arab Administrative Development Organization on series of workshops on administrative reforms and institutional development in our member States. With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Hub for Arab States, we organized in Amman on 12 and 13 December a regional EGM titled “Towards a Regional Monitoring Framework for Enhancing Institutional Effectiveness, Advancing Inclusiveness, Ending Violence, and Strengthening Anti-Corruption”. Participants included practitioners from academia, think tanks and decision makers, in addition to staff from the United Nations system. The meeting discussed the importance of Goal 16 in the Arab regional context.
5. **Worked for transparent and accountable governance** with many United Nations and other agencies contributing to our workshops on open data and the participatory approach to governance, including DESA, the United Nations University, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank.

# Administrative and Financial Information

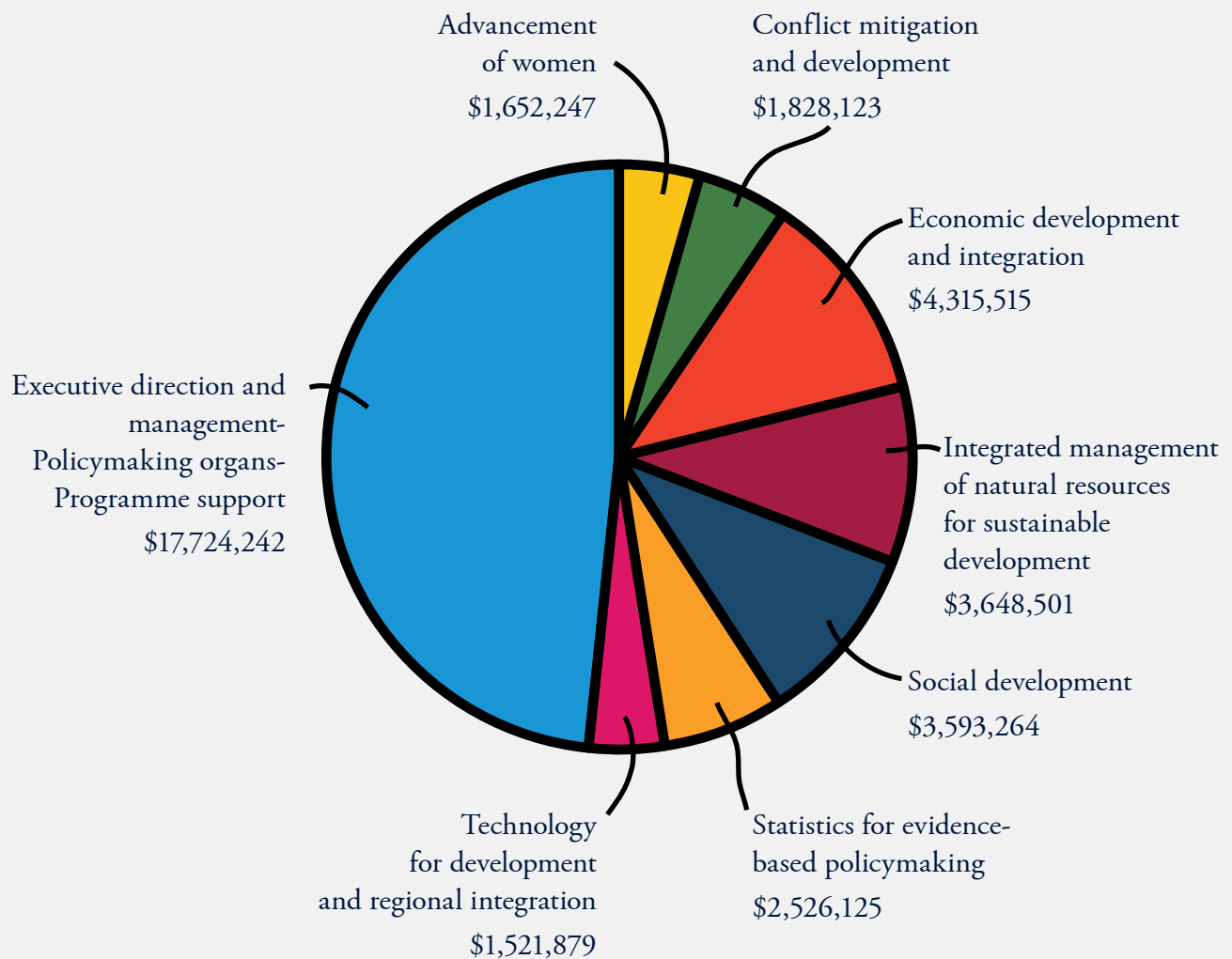
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**T**hroughout 2019, we have taken significant steps to optimize the allocation of ESCWA assets, realize significant cost savings and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda more efficiently. To that end, we have expanded the provision of administrative services to other United Nations entities at the regional level in various areas such as conference services, translation and printing, banking, medical services, travel and human resources. We have embraced technology in automation and delivery of services, and in recruitment.

## REGULAR BUDGET

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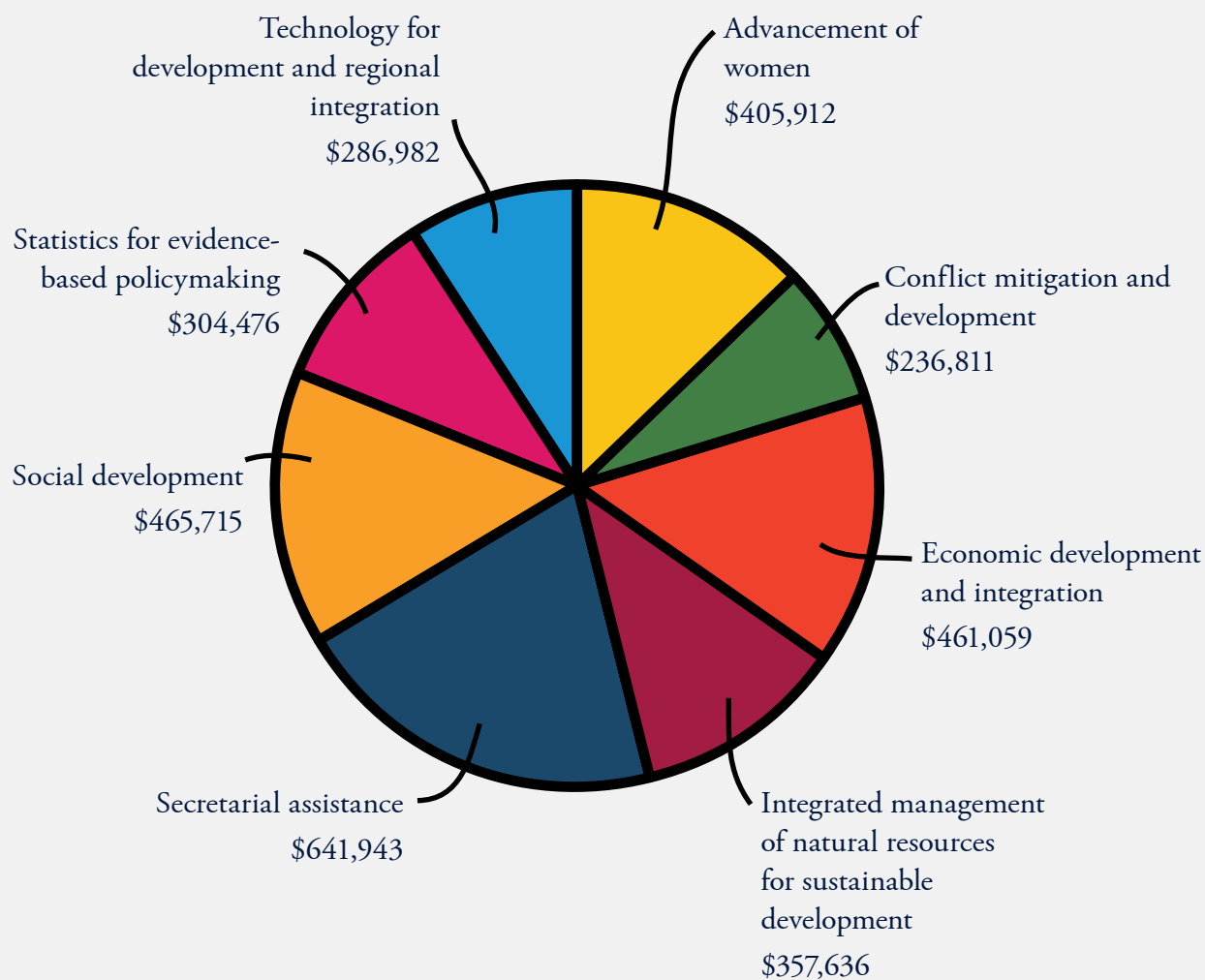
Grand Total  
\$36,809,896



## REGULAR PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION

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Grand Total  
\$3,160,534

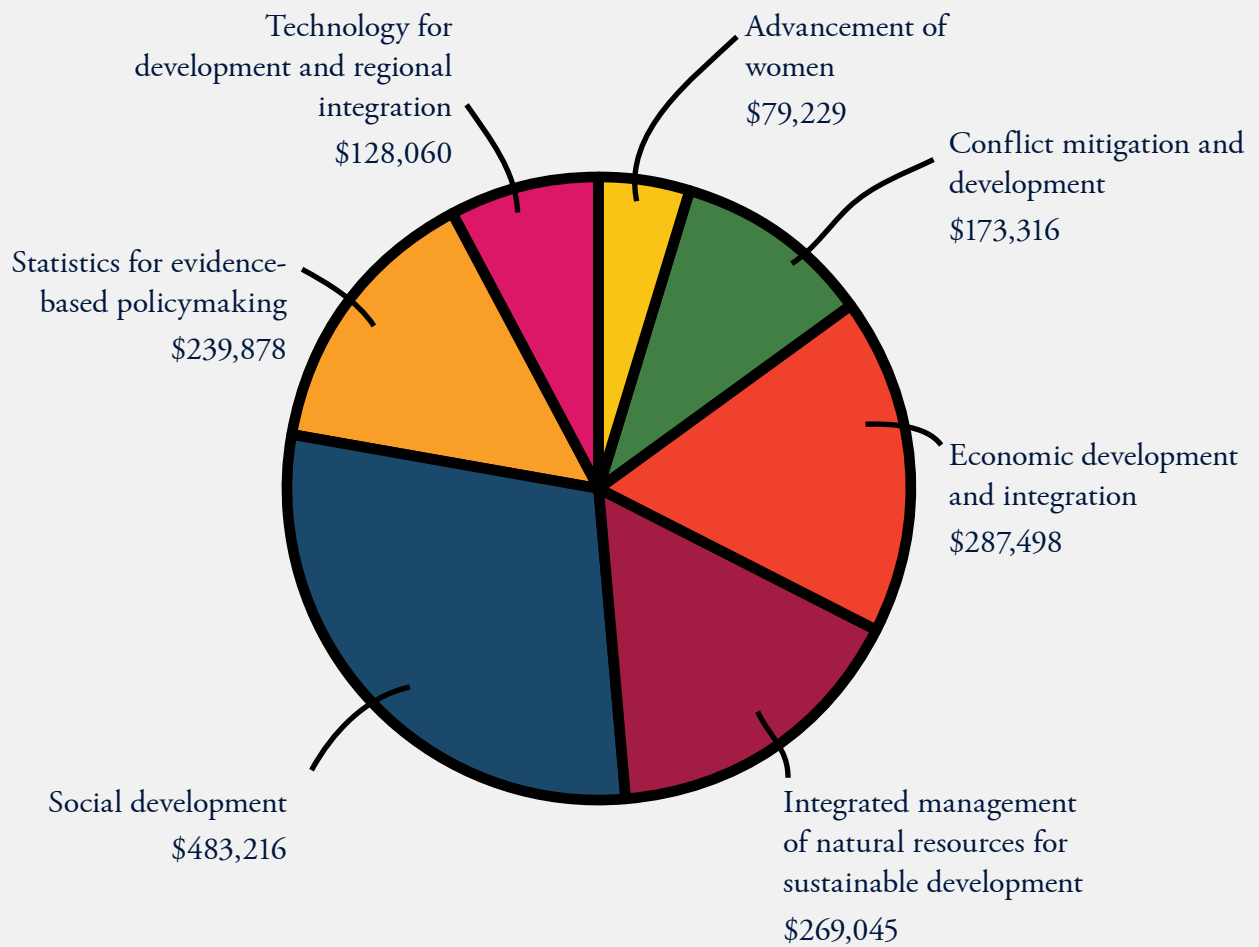




## DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

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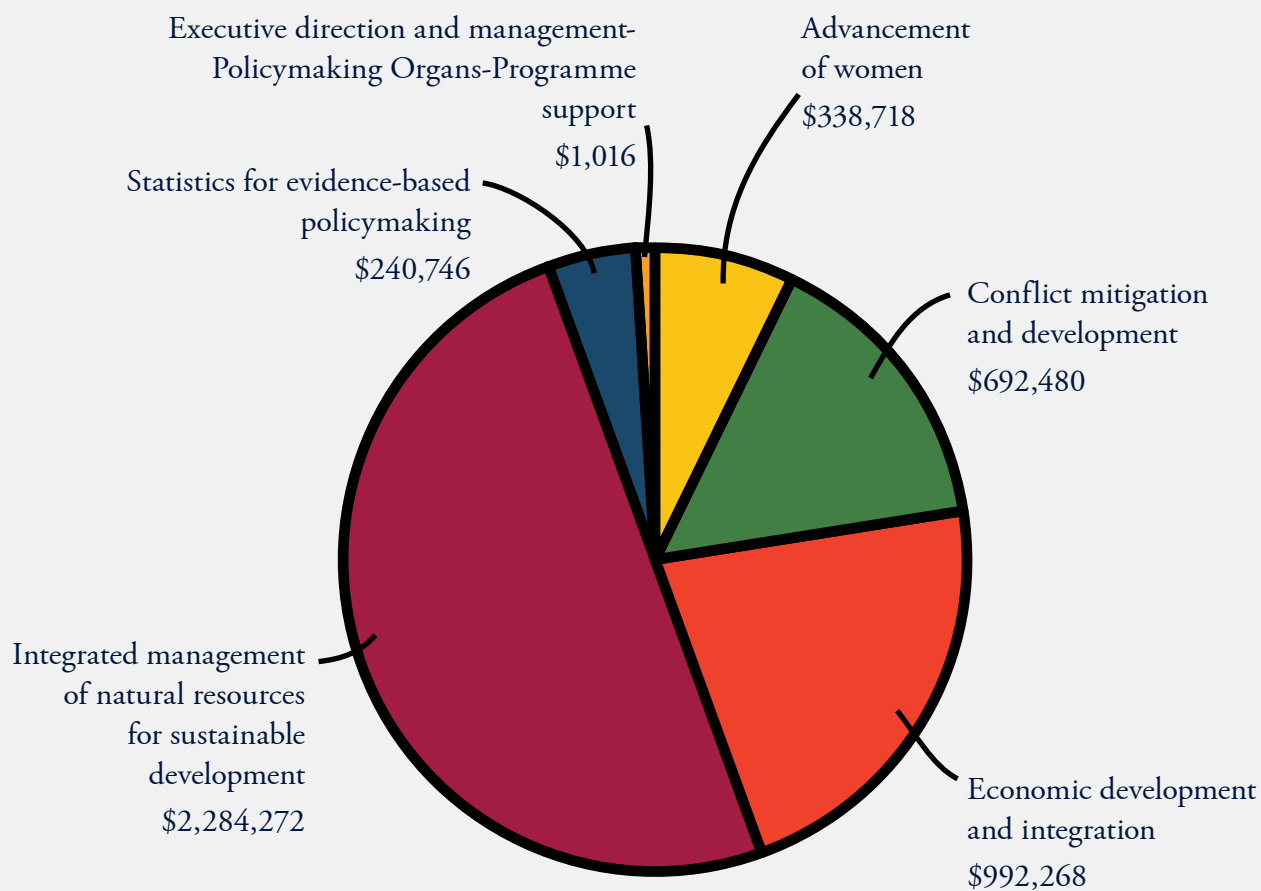
Grand Total  
\$1,660,242



## EXTRABUDGETARY PROJECTS

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Grand Total  
\$4,549,500



# Featured Publications

## Arab Horizon 2030: Innovation Perspectives for Achieving the SDGs in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/TDD/2019/2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-horizon-2030-innovation-perspectives-sdgs-arab-region>



The publication explores innovation approaches and technology trends that bolster inclusive sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs in the Arab region. It highlights various innovation approaches and the opportunities they offer. It also specifies the role of selected new technologies in addressing the region's development challenges. The publication finally offers policy recommendations on national innovation approaches and presents scenarios to harness science, technology and innovation in the development agenda of the Arab region.

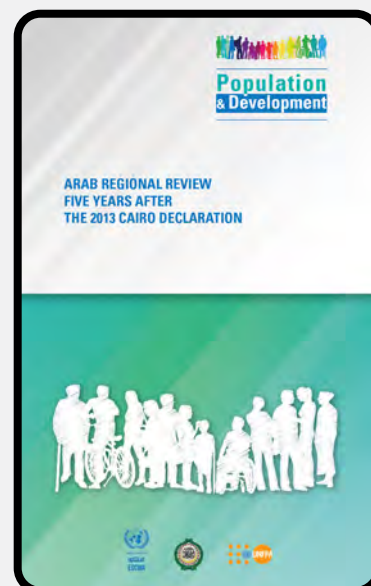
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## Arab Regional Review Five Years After the 2013 Cairo Declaration

E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/INF.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-regional-review-cairo-declaration>

The document highlights major demographic trends in the Arab region and relates them to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, adopted in 1994. It outlines major challenges in the region to achieve sustainable development and identifies progress made with respect to poverty alleviation, women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, sexual and reproductive health, mobility and environmental sustainability, and enabling environment. It concludes with showing the way forward and summarizing the key messages from the Arab regional review.





## Bioenergy and Sustainable Development in Arab Rural Areas

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/TP.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/bioenergy-sustainable-development-arab-rural-area>

The paper focuses on the status of bioenergy in the Arab region, especially in the least developed countries, and the Arab position that rejects the use of agricultural crops in developing countries to produce biofuels for the transport sector. The paper also presents the bioenergy targets of some Arab countries, the current situation of bioenergy in electricity generation and related case studies from the Arab region. In addition, it illustrates the importance of preparing an enabling environment to attract investments and enhance national support and regional and global collaboration.



## Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for Arab Countries, Tenth Issue

E/ESCWA/SD/2019/2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/industrial-statistics-bulletin-arab-countries-issue-10>

The Bulletin is divided into two parts. Part I includes summary tables on overall industrial trends, including levels of output expressed as the value added per capita at constant prices; labour productivity expressed as the share of value added per employee at constant prices; the size of the contribution made by industry to gross domestic product at producers' prices; and the average wage of employees in Arab countries. Part II contains tables of industrial statistics for each Arab country. It presents available data on the number of establishments; the number of employees; their wages and salaries; output; value added; and index numbers of industrial production.

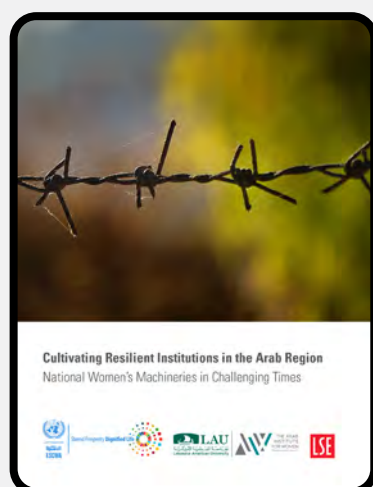


## Cultivating Resilient Institutions in the Arab Region: National Women's Machineries in Challenging Times

E/ESCWA/ECW/2019/4

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/cultivating-resilient-institutions-national-women-machineries>

The study examines how national women's machineries in the Arab region cultivate resilience to continue operating and delivering during conflict, occupation and formal political transitions. It defines a set of resilience characteristics, namely awareness, diversity, integration, self-regulation and adaptivity, and adopts them as a framework to examine the state of national women's machineries in four Arab countries: Jordan, which is hosting a sizeable refugee population; the State of Palestine, which struggles with occupation; Tunisia, which has gone through a formal political transition; and Yemen, which is conflict-affected. In doing so, the study highlights examples of good or unique practice that can benefit other Arab countries.



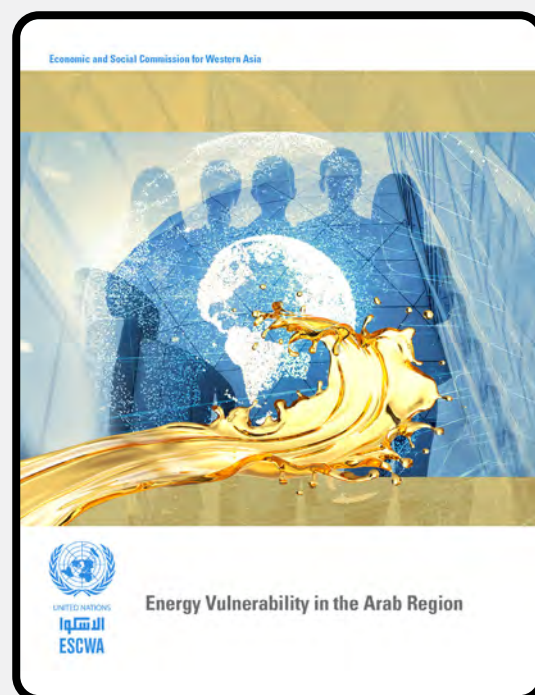
## Energy Vulnerability in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/energy-vulnerability-arab-region>

The publication identifies sources of energy vulnerability in the Arab region that prevent member States from being able to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for current and future generations. It also assesses strategies to tackle energy vulnerability effectively, while providing perspectives on how different groups could contribute to solving these issues. Building on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the publication aims to move beyond the 2030 horizon to mainstream the concept of sustainable long-term energy management in the Arab region.

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## External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region, No. 27

E/ESCWA/SD/2019/3

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/external-trade-bulletin-arab-region-issue27>

The Bulletin presents data and statistical indicators on external and intraregional trade in goods in ESCWA member States. Data are presented in time series until 2017, and were drawn primarily from national sources, complemented by secondary sources when needed. The Bulletin aims to assist policymakers, analysts, researchers and other users at the national, regional and international levels.

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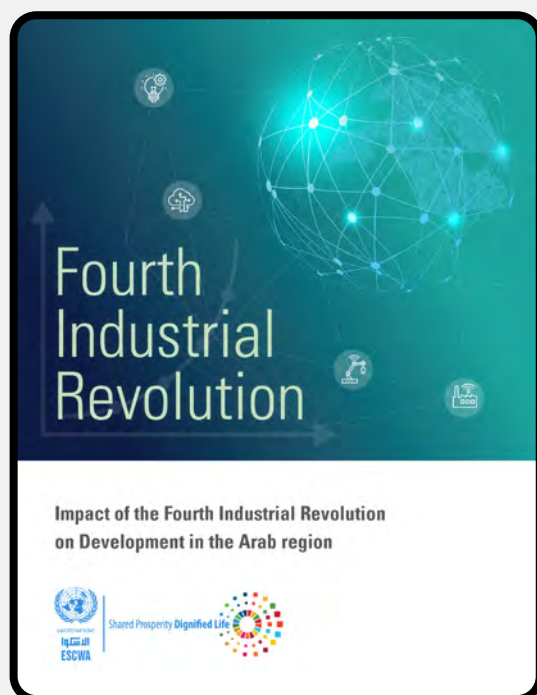
## Gender Justice & Equality before the Law: Analysis of Progress and Challenges in the Arab States Region

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/gender-justice-law-assessment-arab-states>

ESCWA, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), has undertaken a study on gender justice and the law in the Arab region. It provides a baseline assessment of laws and policies affecting the realization of gender equality and the protection of women from violence. The 18 country reports highlight successful legal provisions and identify gaps that countries need to address to meet their international obligations and commitments.







## Impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Development in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/TDD/2019/3

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/impact-fourth-industrial-revolution-development-arab-region>

The study contextualizes discussions around the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) to the Arab region. For more than two decades, ESCWA has identified biotechnologies and other advanced technologies as critical for industrialization and the future of manufacturing in Arab countries. However, since 2016 and with the acceleration in technologies enabled by affordable speed of light communications, powerful computing, and massive cloud information services and storage, the United Nations system has adopted frontier and digital technologies including big data, artificial intelligence and other 4IR technologies as strong enablers for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

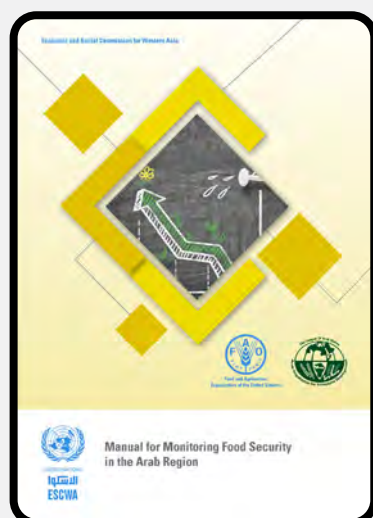
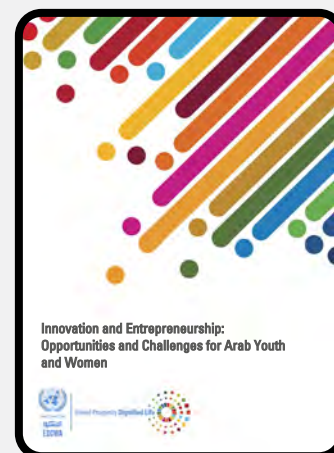


## Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Opportunities and Challenges for Arab Youth and Women

E/ESCWA/TDD/2019/TP.2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/innovation-entrepreneurship-opportunities-challenges-arab-youth-women>

Entrepreneurship is generally considered as one possible solution to unemployment for young persons and women in the Arab region. This study discusses available opportunities and challenges in that regard.



## Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/Manual.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/manual-monitoring-food-security-arab-region>

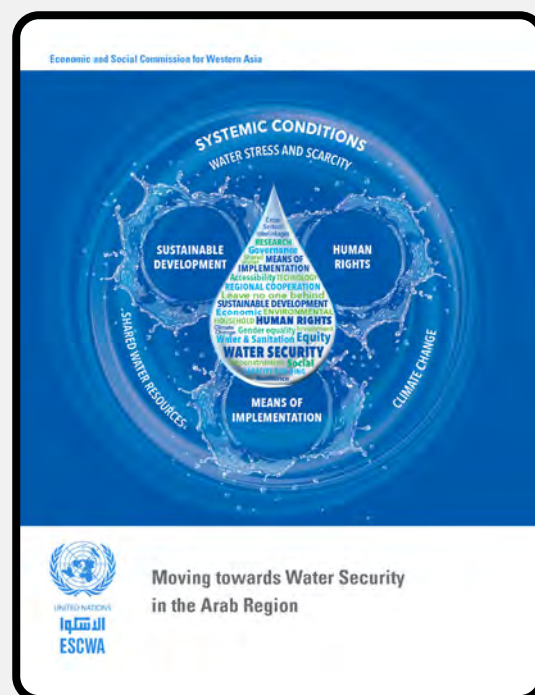
The manual outlines a framework that takes into consideration regional specificities and the integrated approach of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It highlights national strengths, weaknesses and priorities for intervention under the four pillars defining food security (access, availability, utilization, and sustainability).

## Moving towards Water Security in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/moving-towards-achieving-water-security-arab-region>

This report presents a conceptual framework for achieving water security in the Arab region. It considers the regional systemic conditions of water stress and scarcity, shared water and climate change that hinder the achievement of water security. This is done through a sustainable development lens, whereby water is central to the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental. A human rights-based approach is also taken to examine water security implications at all scales, including at the community and household level, so that water security in the Arab region is grounded in efforts to ensure that no one is left behind.



## National Accounts Studies of the Arab Region, No. 37

E/ESCWA/SD/2019/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/national-accounts-studies-arab-region-37>

Issue 37 of the National Accounts Studies of the Arab Region includes available data and estimates by ESCWA of gross domestic product (GDP) at both current and constant prices, in addition to the consolidated national accounts for each ESCWA member State during the period 2013-2017, and the estimated real GDP growth for 2018. Data were compiled from national statistical sources and member States' responses to questionnaires prepared by ESCWA. This publication is intended for economists, social researchers and policymakers.

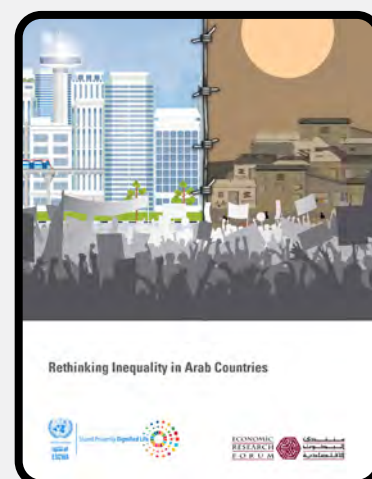


## Rethinking Inequality in Arab Countries

E/ESCWA/EDID/2019/2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/rethinking-inequality-arab-countries>

The report fills knowledge gaps about inequality in the Arab region, using a multidimensional approach that focuses on non-income dimensions: health, education and living conditions. A primary motivation for this study has been the availability of harmonized household data following the Arab Multidimensional Poverty report (ESCWA and others, 2017). This provides a unique opportunity to examine trends in outcome and opportunity inequalities between selected social, economic, spatial and demographic groups (rich and poor, men and women, rural and urban, educated and uneducated, etc.).





### Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/3

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/situation-report-international-migration-2019>

The report describes the main trends and patterns in international migration in the Arab region from 2017 to 2019. It also provides a summary of important developments in migration governance in Arab countries in the last two years and delves into the policy implications of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the context of the Arab region.



### Social Development Report 3 - Leaving no one behind: Integrating marginalized groups in some Arab countries

E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/4

<https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/leaving-no-one-behind-integrating-marginalized-groups-arabic.pdf>

The report, the third in the Social Development Report series, addresses social exclusion in the Arab region and examines the social and economic situation of selected marginalized social groups by focusing on three case studies: the first examines the living conditions and discrimination faced by the cemetery dwellers in Egypt; the second analyses the socioeconomic situation of the inhabitants of the rural Western parts of Tunisia; and the third addresses the situation of the population residing in the area of El-Tabbaneh in North Lebanon. The report provides case-specific policy recommendations and concludes with a set of general messages that emphasize the need for an integrated and holistic approach to social policies.



### Social Expenditure Monitor for the Arab States: A Tool to Support Budgeting and Fiscal Policy Reform

E/ESCWA/EC.6/2019/8/Rev.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/social-expenditure-monitor-arab-states-tool-support-budgeting-and-fiscal-policy-reform>

This paper proposes an innovative framework -the Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM)- to provide a comprehensive measure of public social expenditure in seven areas: 1) education; 2) health and nutrition; 3) housing and community amenities; 4) labour market interventions and employment generation; 5) social protection and food security; 6) arts, culture and sports; and 7) environment protection. The indicators are mapped to key beneficiaries across individuals, households and communities. The framework is flexible and can be adapted to national specificities.



### Social Protection Reform in Arab Countries

E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/social-protection-reforms-arab-countries-2019>

Social protection systems, their design and their coverage, are shaping social cohesion, social justice, the structure of the labour market, the prevention and alleviation of poverty, as well as resilience to economic shocks in any given society. In recent years, the demand for broader access to social protection guarantees and equitable redistribution of resources has become very pronounced in the Arab region. The report discusses recent and ongoing social protection reforms taking place in Arab countries, policy options applied by the countries in the region and their immediate and long-term implications, as well as choices, trade-offs and challenges Arab countries are facing while carrying out the reforms.



### Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2018-2019

E/ESCWA/EDID/2019/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/survey-economic-social-development-arab-region-2018-2019>



According to the 2018-2019 survey, the Arab region experienced an economic recovery with a growth rate of 2.3% in 2018, up from 1.7% the year before. This recovery was largely attributed to hydrocarbon sector-led growth in the region's oil-exporting countries, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council countries. This growth momentum will continue at a modest pace of 2.6% in 2019 and further increase to 3.4% for 2020. Notwithstanding such positive prospect, the region remains linked to geopolitical uncertainties, which are further exacerbated by several ongoing intraregional diplomatic rifts and armed conflict.



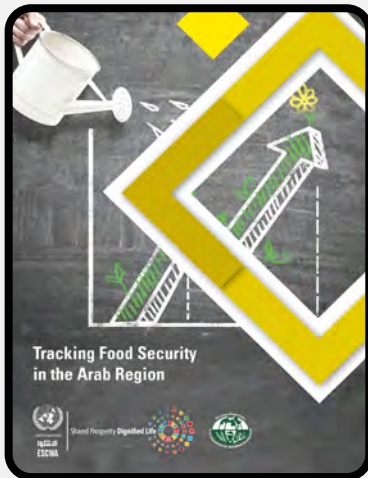
### Technology for Development Bulletin in the Arab Region 2018

E/ESCWA/TDD/2019/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/technology-development-bulletin-2018>

The publication aims to present the main global trends in technology and their impact on government work, integration and transformation, in addition to Internet neutrality. It also addresses impact in the context of the Arab region and the policies that can be developed to maximize technology's benefits and reduce adverse effects. The publication contains a chapter on several advanced technologies that have a direct impact on the digital economy, such as the Internet of things, big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technologies, and another on the link between technology and employment.





### Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/4

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/tracking-food-security-arab-region>

The publication provides information on applying the Food Security Monitoring Framework developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States, the Arab Organization for Agriculture Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and experts from the region. The framework captures the complex, multidimensional and interactive nature of food security to identify its outcome through 3 core indicators and its causal factors through 21 indicators distributed along the four food security dimensions, i.e., availability, access, utilization and stability.



### Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report – Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/3

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/energy-progress-report-arab-region>

Achieving SDG 7 in the Arab region constitute one of the most fundamental challenges across all Arab countries: it requires a significantly scale-up of progress in renewable energy and in decoupling regional growth from energy consumption. This must be done through improved energy efficiency and increasing productivity of energy use, while addressing climate concerns and ensuring a healthy planet for future generations.



### Women in the Judiciary in the Arab States: Removing Barriers, Increasing Numbers

E/ESCWA/ECW/2019/2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/women-judiciary-arab-states>



Women's right to participate fully and equally in all aspects of public life, including the judiciary, is a fundamental human right. There is a large body of evidence that women's presence in the judiciary is a catalyst for the development of strong, independent, accessible and gender-sensitive judicial institutions and, more broadly, the achievement of gender justice within society. In recent years, Arab countries have taken steps to appoint an increasing number of female judges and public prosecutors – for the first time in some countries. Despite these efforts, however, women remain starkly underrepresented in judicial institutions in the region, with strong disparities between and within countries.

The End

