



# Population & Development

## ARAB REGIONAL REVIEW FIVE YEARS AFTER THE 2013 CAIRO DECLARATION

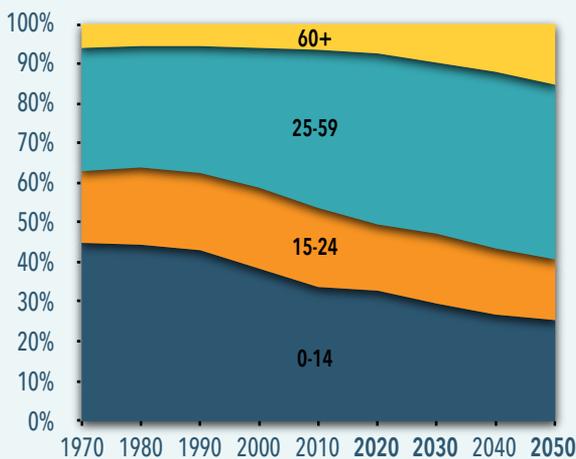


## BACKGROUND

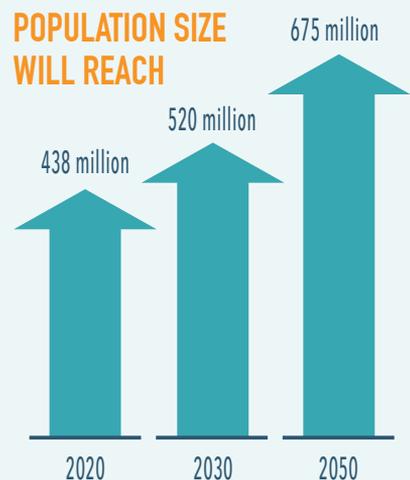
During 2018, ESCWA in partnership with United Nations Population Fund Arab States Office (UNFPA ASRO) and the League of Arab States conducted a review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration “Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World”. This outcome document resulted from the review of ICPD at 20 years in the Arab region and provided a roadmap for addressing population and development priorities beyond 2014. The 2018 review relied on voluntary reports led by member States and a regional synthesis report, and concluded with the organization of the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development in Beirut between 30th of October and 1st of November 2018.<sup>1</sup>

## THE ARAB REGION POPULATION AT A GLANCE

Population Composition in the Arab Region by Broad Age Groups, 1970-2050



POPULATION SIZE  
WILL REACH



OVER **15** MILLION  
IS THE NUMBER OF **INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED PERSONS** IN 2018



**9.7** MILLION  
**REFUGEES** HOSTED IN THE ARAB.  
REGION IN 2018.



**60%**  
OF THE TOTAL POPULATION  
IN THE ARAB REGION IS  
**UNDER 30 YEARS  
OF AGE.**



**+100** MILLION  
**OLDER PERSONS** IN THE ARAB REGION  
IN 2050. A HUGE INCREASE FROM 29 MILLION IN 2017.

<sup>1</sup> Conference documents can be downloaded from the following link  
<https://www.unescwa.org/events/arab-regional-conference-population-development>

# THE ARAB REGION FROM THE ICPD POA LENS

## A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

NOTICEABLE DECLINES IN INFANT, CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATH RATES

1

IMPROVED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE AND FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

2

DECLINE IN UNMET NEEDS FOR FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

3

INCREASING SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATIOS

4

MORE GENDER PARITY IN EDUCATION

5

DECLINING EXTREME POVERTY

6

IMPROVED ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION

7

1/2



THE NUMBER OF **MATERNAL DEATHS** IN THE ARAB REGION HAS BEEN **REDUCED BY NEARLY HALF** IN THE LAST 25 YEARS, DECREASING FROM 6.2 MILLION IN 1990 TO 5.2 MILLION IN 2000 AND TO 3.7 MILLION DEATHS IN 2015.

## B. MAJOR CHALLENGES

Progress has been uneven and insufficient. Major challenges threaten the region's ability to achieve sustainable development, including:

- 1 Changes to age structures reflected in growing dual bulges of youth and older persons exert additional pressure on States that are already struggling to address its population needs
- 2 Fragmented approaches to rights-based policy making, limited and non-inclusive social protection floors, and absence of universal health coverage including sexual and reproductive health leave large segments of the society including women, youth, older persons, migrants, and persons with disability vulnerable to poverty, ill-health, and isolation
- 3 Persisting inequalities within countries, particularly between rural and urban areas, weaken governments' abilities to ensure no one is left behind
- 4 Protracted conflict, occupation and instability witnessed across the region have, in many cases, resulted in reversing development gains
- 5 Structural and cultural barriers limit the economic, social and political inclusion of women, youth, older persons, migrants, and persons with disability among others
- 6 Record-high unemployment among youthful populations demanding quality education and training to enter formal labor markets
- 7 Rapid urbanization and growing pressures on already scarce environmental resources compromise the sustainability of the environment
- 8 Absence of reliable, accessible, and disaggregated data limits governments' abilities to develop evidence-based policies and programmes



IN 2017 **18.4** MILLION SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN REQUIRED ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION IN **7** CONFLICT OR POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES IN THE REGION



**11** MILLION IS A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES** IN THE ARAB REGION. THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO RISE SIGNIFICANTLY AS A RESULT OF CONFLICT AND BETTER REPORTING.



**30%** YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE ARAB REGION, HIGHEST IN THE WORLD. **YOUNG WOMEN** HAVE MORE THAN **DOUBLE** THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS.



IN 2020, **60%** OF THE POPULATION IN THE ARAB REGION WILL RESIDE IN **URBAN AREAS**. IT WILL EXCEED **70%** BY **2050**.

## C. IMPLEMENTING THE 2013 CAIRO DECLARATION PROGRESS IN THE REGION<sup>2</sup>

### POVERTY ALLEVIATION

- Most countries focus on poverty alleviation and economic empowerment through investing in income-generating projects and enhancing employment opportunities.
- Some countries have programmes to correct geographical imbalances in investment and development.

### YOUTH

- All countries have developed national strategies for youth.
- All countries have developed programmes to improve education quality and to make education more relevant to the labour market.
- All countries are implementing programmes to encourage young people's political and civic engagement.
- National institutions dedicated to youth exist in most countries.

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- Most countries have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Several countries have developed national policies and programmes for persons with disability.
- Few countries explicitly target persons with disabilities via their poverty alleviation programmes.

### MOBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Many countries have detailed strategies and programmes to address the needs of refugees and displaced persons.
- Few countries launched comprehensive migration strategies.
- Few countries have programmes to discourage irregular migration among young people.
- Most countries have policies and programmes to manage environmental resources and biodiversity.
- A few countries have formulated policies to address the environmental implications of demographic dynamics.

### WOMEN

- Almost all countries have designated national institutions for women and gender issues.
- Several countries have lifted some of the reservations they originally had to CEDAW; Tunisia became the first Arab country to lift all its original reservations.
- Most countries are implementing policies or programmes to promote women's economic participation.

### OLDER PERSONS

- All countries had established institutions or bodies dedicated to older persons.
- Most of the countries had drafted national strategies to deal with ageing-related issues.
- Morocco and Tunisia adopted innovative approaches to accommodate changes in the role of the family intergenerational exchange, such as mobile care units and surrogate families.

### SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- Several countries have formulated new strategies or reviewed and updated existing strategies on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as per Cairo Declaration.
- All responding countries have integrated at least some of the sexual and reproductive health services within primary health care.
- Most countries have expanded and improved services related to maternal health, family planning, and prevention and treatment of sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

### ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- The investment in data and research related to reproductive and sexual health appears a common feature in many countries.
- Partnerships between governments and civil society and the private sector for implementing the Cairo Declaration recommendations are widespread.

<sup>2</sup> The findings are based on national reports completed by 12 Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates).

# THE WAY FORWARD:

## Key Messages from the Regional Review and Regional Arab Population Conference

1

Countries reaffirm the 2013 Cairo Declaration emanating from the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States on the theme "Development challenges and population dynamics in a changing Arab world" as a comprehensive vision on population issues, and reconfirm commitment to its principles and goals aimed at achieving dignity, equality, respect for human rights and gender mainstreaming and at empowering population groups, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

2

The achievement of population and development goals rests on adopting a human rights-based approach to population issues, integrating population priorities in national development planning, ensuring availability of budgets, and designing effective follow-up mechanisms.

3

Efforts should aim to empower the recently established Arab population and development council within the League of Arab States with an aim to establish the Arab population strategy taking into account the demographic diversity and political, economic and social challenges facing the Arab region; and to strengthen and coordinate Arab efforts in setting policies pertaining to population issues.

4

A "life-cycle" comprehensive approach is required to ensure the provision of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights according to Cairo Declaration, the elimination of child marriage, forced marriage and early pregnancy. This approach is also necessary to ensure people's right to access high-quality services without facing financial, institutional or other obstacles, taking their right to privacy into account, and to enable them to make reproductive decisions based on accurate and reliable information. and exercise their rights to access quality services

5

Mainstreaming population issues, including population growth and human mobility patterns, in urban planning and management is needed to ensure the sustainability of the environment, cities and the wellbeing of its inhabitants.

6

Occupation, armed conflicts, and instability limit the potential to achieve sustainable development. It is thus imperative to achieve peace and address the root causes of instability and conflict.

7

States are responsible for ensuring the inclusion and protection of all social groups, including the most vulnerable, through reforming national policy frameworks, developing inclusive social protection schemes, ensuring universal health care, and broadening participation avenues in public policy making.

8

A prosperous future for the Arab population requires concerted efforts to empower the youth, equip them with needed education and skills and provide them with decent employment opportunities to enhance the demographic dividend.

9

To ensure a dignified life for their population, governments must provide quality, affordable, and universal health care that is sensitive to the needs of the different population groups.

10

To capitalize on the development gains of migration, there is a need to develop inclusive policies that widen pathways for regular migration and ensure human rights for all migrants.

11

Effective implementation, follow-up and review rests on the availability of robust statistical systems that produce and disseminate quality disaggregated data.

12

Government population bodies should be strengthened, their mandate broadened, and their coordination role enhanced.

13

Governments can work better through forging strategic partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

14

The review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration should be synchronized with the review of the 2030 Agenda. Incorporating the population dimension in the Voluntary National Reviews offers an opportunity to operationalize the commitments allows for effective monitoring and follow-up.



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