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The Status *&* Progress of Women in the Middle East *&* North Africa



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World Bank Middle East
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Social and Economic
Development Group

Preface

Over the years, the Middle East and North Africa Social and Economic Development Group has regularly compiled briefs on the status and progress of women in the region for internal and external use. Based on feedback from readers, we were encouraged to present these briefs in a compendium, making the information more accessible to a wider public. This is the third compendium and its content is drawn from existing data banks, records, statistics, and sources found in the public domain. The compendium includes a regional gender overview, country gender profiles covering all MENA countries, individual country gender briefs for Djibouti, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza, and the Republic of Yemen. In addition, the compendium provides information on research carried out in the area of gender and transport as there is an increased interest in the role of infrastructure in women's economic empowerment, as well as research on attitudes regarding gender roles based on the World Values Survey.

Acknowledgments

This compendium was prepared by the Social and Economic Development Group and the Office of the Chief Economist of the Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank under the supervision of Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor, Farrukh Iqbal, Sector Manager, and Ritva Reinikka, Sector Director. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Gender Overview, the Gender and Transport note, and the MENA World Values Survey note were written by Talajeh Livani. The Country Gender Briefs were updated by Talajeh Livani with valuable comments from Randa Akeel (Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia briefs), Sibel Kulaksiz (Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen briefs), Safaa El-Kogali (Morocco brief), Meskerem Brhane (West Bank and Gaza brief), and Rashida Al-Hamdani (Yemen brief). Seemeen Saadat provided data and figures for the MENA World Values Survey note.

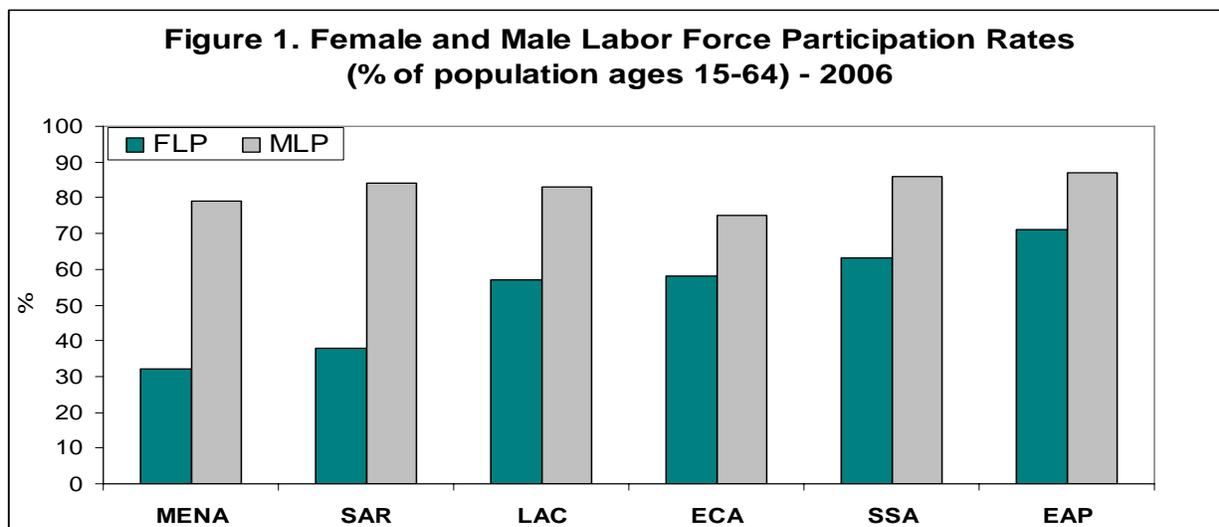
Table of Contents

Regional Gender Brief	4
Country Briefs	23
Djibouti	23
The Arab Republic of Egypt	27
The Islamic Republic of Iran	31
Iraq	35
Jordan	39
Lebanon	43
Morocco	47
Saudi Arabia	51
Syrian Arab Republic	55
West Bank and Gaza	59
The Republic of Yemen	63
Gender and Transport in MENA	67
World Value Survey-MENA Results	73
Country Gender Profiles	79
Algeria	79
Bahrain	80
Djibouti	81
Egypt	82
Iran	83
Iraq	84
Jordan	85
Kuwait	86
Lebanon	87
Libya	88
Morocco	89
Oman	90
Qatar	91
Saudi Arabia	92
Syria	93
Tunisia	94
United Arab Emirates	95
West Bank and Gaza	96
Yemen	97

Middle East and North Africa – Gender Overview

Economic Participation

While women's labor force participation¹ in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) increased from 28 to 32 percent between 2000 and 2006,² it remains the lowest in the world (world average is 58 percent). Men's labor force participation, on the other hand, is comparable to other regions (see figure 1).³



Source: World Bank Central Database (September 2008)

Note: MENA= Middle East and North Africa, SAR=South Asia Region, LAC=Latin America and Caribbean, ECA=Europe and Central Asia, SSA=Sub-Saharan Africa, and EAP= East Asia and Pacific

Furthermore, there are great variations within MENA in terms of women's participation in the economy and the extent to which it has changed. In the 2000–6 time period, Iran and Libya saw the most substantial increases in their female labor participation rates; additions of 9 and 8 percentage points, respectively. In 2006, women's economic activity rate remained highest in Djibouti (55 percent) and Kuwait (51 percent including the non-native workforce) and was lowest in the West Bank and Gaza (16 percent in 2007) and Saudi Arabia (19 percent).⁴ The actual rates may be substantially higher as many women work in the informal sector.

The 32 percent of women ages 15–64, who are in the labor force make up 28 percent of the total labor force in MENA (see figure 2). In terms of the female share of the total labor force, Djibouti and Iran top the list of MENA countries with 39 and 34 percent, respectively (2006). In contrast, women account for only 13, 14, and 14 percent of the workforce in the West Bank and Gaza, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, respectively (see figure 2). With the exception of Djibouti, women constitute a lower share of the labor force in all MENA countries when compared to the average for the same income group.

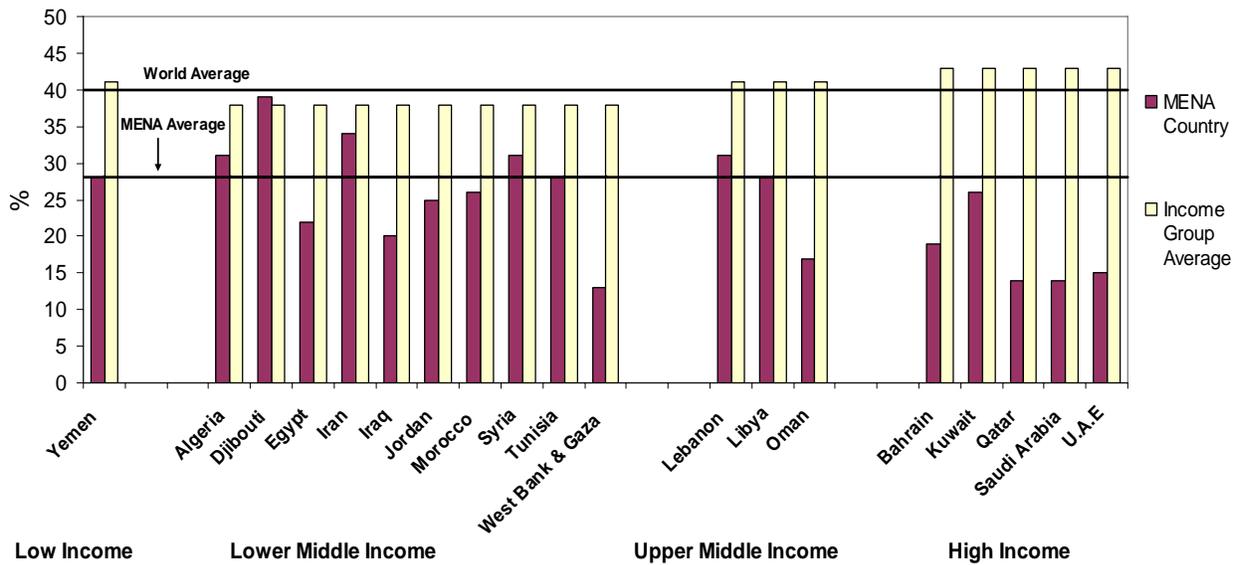
¹ The share of women ages 15–64 who are economically active, including both those employed and unemployed.

² World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

Figure 2. Female Share of Total Labor Force - 2006



Source: World Bank Central Database, September 2008.
 Note: Iraq data is from the ILO.

As figure 3 shows, the economic activity rate for males in each age group has not changed much; for the 15–24 age group, it has even decreased slightly. Women’s economic activity, on the other hand, has increased significantly in each age group and the most in the 25–29 age group, from 35 to 40 percent between 2000 and 2005. Therefore, **the labor force growth in the region comes primarily from the rise in women’s labor force participation.**

Figure 3



Source: World Bank staff estimates based on ILO 2005.

Source: World Bank, *MENA Economic Developments and Prospects: Job Creation in an Era of High Growth* 2007.

The increased female economic activity is due mainly to higher levels of education and a rise in the average age for marriage. Figure 3 also shows that more women in the 30-plus age group remain in the labor market, hence, even after they are married and have children. This data suggests that one income no

longer suffices for the changing needs of the family and that attitudes toward women's work outside the home are slowly changing.

Women in MENA work predominantly in the public sector (mostly in the education and health sectors), as the private sector does not provide the same wage and nonwage benefits. Women work mainly in services—49 percent of women's employment (2006).⁵ Nonetheless, **MENA was the only region where women's employment in agriculture increased significantly in the last decade**; it rose from 33 percent of total female employment in 1996 to 39 percent in 2006. In all other regions, agriculture is a shrinking source of employment for women. It is important to note that male employment in agriculture decreased in the same time period—following the global trend—and now accounts for 27 percent of male employment (2006). This suggests that any issues or policy reforms in the agricultural sector may have a greater impact on women than men. Women's employment in industry accounts for 12 percent of all female employment in MENA—a significant decline from 18 percent in 1996 and lower than the current world average of 17 percent.⁶

Women in MENA are more likely to be in “vulnerable employment”⁷ than men: vulnerable employment accounts for 39 percent of women's versus 33 percent of men's employment (2006). **Nonetheless, it appears that women are slowly moving away from vulnerable jobs.** The share of women who are wage and salaried workers increased substantially in the past decade; an increase from 47 percent of female employment in 1996 to 56 percent in 2006, which is higher than the world average of 48 percent and the MENA male average of 55 percent.⁸ The change is due mainly to heavy investments in education but also because many wage and salaried jobs are still found in the public sector where women find it easier to get jobs.⁹

The female unemployment rate is much higher and the unemployment gender gap much wider in MENA than in other regions (17 versus 10 percent in 2006).¹⁰ The highest female unemployment can be found, among others, in Djibouti (69 percent), Yemen, (46 percent), Jordan (26 percent), and the West Bank and Gaza (22 percent). Some of the widest unemployment gender gaps are in Yemen (46 percent for women versus 13 percent for men), Jordan (26 versus 10 percent), and Egypt (21 versus 7 percent). Iraq and the West Bank and Gaza see the opposite trend, with males at a higher risk for unemployment.¹¹ As will be discussed later, female unemployment is not necessarily related to skill.

It is important to note that the unemployment rate is much higher in the 15–24 age group. In 2006–2007, over 20 percent of young men and 30 percent of young women in MENA were unemployed; whereas the world average was 12.5 percent for young women and 12.2 percent for young men.¹² The highest female youth unemployment can be found, among others, in Jordan (48 percent), Algeria (46 percent), and West Bank and Gaza (43 percent). And some of the widest youth unemployment gender gaps are in Jordan (48 percent for young women versus 24 percent for young men), Egypt (40 versus 21 percent), Iraq (36 versus 17 percent), and Syria (39 versus 21 percent).¹³ In addition, **female unemployment increases with higher levels of education** whereas male unemployment generally decreases with additional years of education (see table 1).

⁵ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (March 2007). ILO's definition of MENA includes Sudan but excludes Djibouti.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Combination of the own-account worker and contributing family worker categories.

⁸ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (March 2007).

⁹ ILO, *Global Employment Trends* (January 2008).

¹⁰ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (March 2007).

¹¹ Data is from the individual gender briefs.

¹² ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (March 2007 and March 2008).

¹³ World Bank Central Database (March 2008).

Table 1. Unemployment Rates in Selected MENA Countries, by Gender and Education Level

	Males	Females	Gender parity rate
Jordan			
Less than secondary	14.2	19.2	1.4
Secondary and intermediary	9.5	22.9	2.4
Higher	12	29.5	2.5
Egypt, Arab Rep. of			
Less than secondary	1.5	1.1	0.7
Secondary	6.5	33.8	5.2
Higher	8.5	24.6	2.9
Algeria			
None	7.8	2.9	0.4
Primary	16.5	9.5	0.6
Secondary	18.4	22.8	1.2
Higher	14.5	27.5	1.9
Iran, Islamic Rep. of			
Less than secondary	6.1	2.7	0.4
Secondary and intermediary	14.3	31.9	2.2
Higher	10.5	31.3	3.0

Source: World Bank, *MENA Economic Developments and Prospects: Job Creation in an Era of High Growth*, 2007.

Women’s economic activity is much lower than its potential and female unemployment is high due to a set of social, cultural, and legal barriers. First, the general scarcity in job opportunities creates an impression that employing women will inevitably reduce opportunities for men, who are considered the primary breadwinners. The gender flagship report¹⁴ has shown this assumption to be false as there is no correlation between higher levels of unemployment and female labor force participation. In addition, women’s employment can significantly improve household income—by as much as 25 percent¹⁵—and lead many families out of poverty.

Second, some employers openly favor male job seekers. For example, 15 and 33 percent of employers in Jordan and Syria, respectively, listed gender (preferring males) as the most important factor when hiring a young person for a professional position.¹⁶ Employers who prefer female workers offer them jobs that are low skilled and low paid.¹⁷

Third, women find it easier to get jobs in the public sector than in the private sector. And some prefer to wait for public sector jobs as they offer them better remuneration and benefits. The waiting time results in longer periods of unemployment.¹⁸

Finally, most MENA countries have labor laws that, while designed to protect women, result in higher costs for employers who hire women. These include laws on the number of hours of work for women, maternity leave policies, provision of childcare centers, and transportation.

An issue that deserves more attention is “discouragement.” A person who is discouraged is inactive because he or she feels a job search would be a futile effort.¹⁹ Given that women face higher

¹⁴ World Bank, *Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere* (2004).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (2006).

¹⁷ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (March 2008).

¹⁸ Ibid.

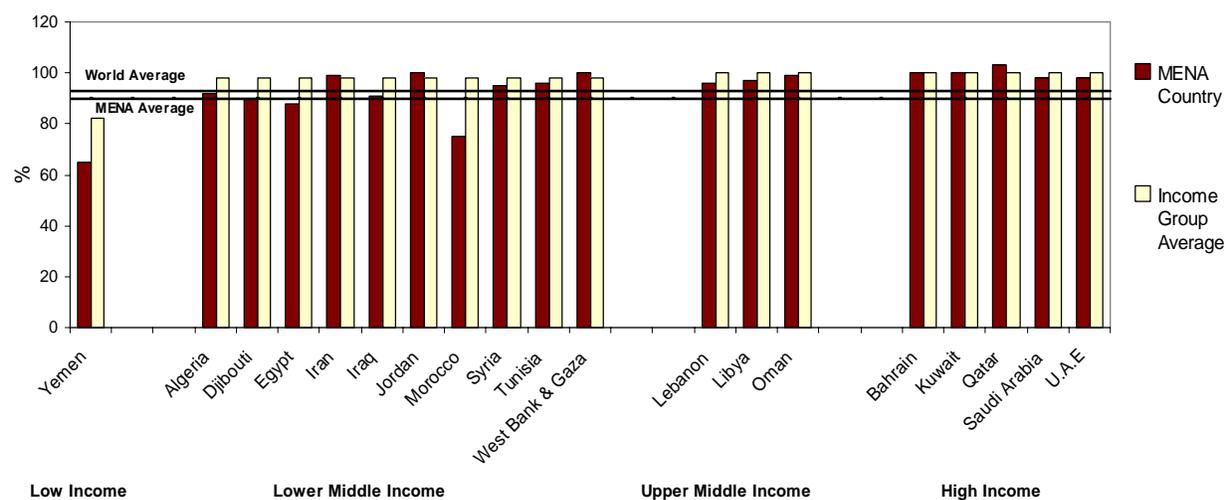
unemployment rates, have far fewer opportunities in labor markets than men, and often face social barriers to entering labor markets, it is very likely that discouragement among women is higher than among men. MENA lacks data on discouragement, making it difficult to draw any conclusions on the prevalence and severity of the problem.

Promoting women’s entrepreneurship is an effective way to address female unemployment and to help enhance women’s economic empowerment. A recent study conducted by the World Bank entitled *The Environment for Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* shows that women account for only 13 percent of firm owners in MENA, compared to 20 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and East Asia and Pacific (EAP), and 24 percent in Europe and Central Asia (ECA). Contrary to common belief, women-owned firms in MENA are essentially similar to male-owned firms in MENA in terms of size, sector, productivity, and job creation. In addition, they perform at least as well in global orientation and are more likely than male-owned firms in MENA to hire women. However, women-owned firms in some MENA countries are more likely than male-owned firms to report certain investment constraints as binding in running their businesses.

Education

MENA’s investment in female education in the past few decades has been impressive. Only a few countries in the region still have alarmingly low rates of female literacy: Yemen (35 percent), Morocco (40 percent), and Djibouti (54 percent).²⁰ The literacy rate is considerably higher and the gender gap much narrower in the younger age groups. Most countries have closed or nearly closed the gender gap on youth literacy, but countries such as Yemen and Morocco still have wide gaps compared even to countries in the same income group (see figure 4).²¹ The ratio of young literate females to males in MENA is 0.90 compared to the world average of 0.93.

Figure 4. Ratio of Young Literate Female to Males (%) - 2004/2005



Sources: World Bank Edstats and Central Database (September 2008); Population Reference Bureau (Djibouti and Lebanon).
 Note: Data for all countries are from 2004/5 except for Oman (2003), Algeria (2002), Bahrain (2001), Iraq (2000), Lebanon (2000–2004), and Djibouti (2000–2004).

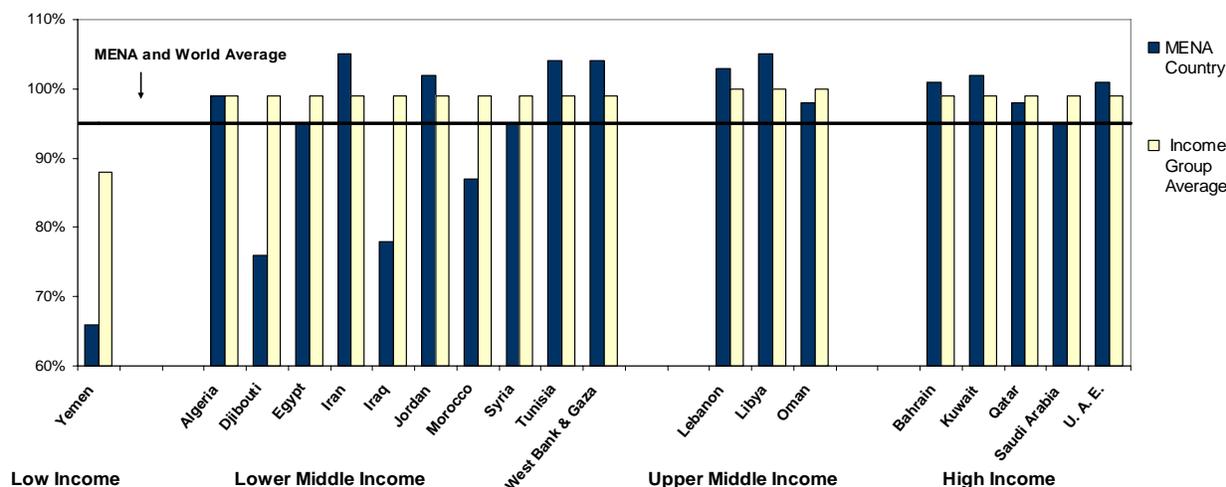
¹⁹ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (2006).

²⁰ World Bank Edstats (September 2008) and UNESCO *Education for All Report* (2003/4).

²¹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008). The ratio of young literate females to males is 0.65 in Yemen and 0.75 in Morocco.

The gender gap in primary and secondary education has closed (in nine countries) or is closing in most countries of the region (see figure 5). Nonetheless, some countries lag behind; the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education in Yemen, Djibouti, and Iraq are 0.66, 0.76, and 0.78 percent, respectively (2005/2006).²² Poverty is one reason for the lower female school enrollment. In Yemen, 51 percent of girls ages 6–14 are not in school;²³ the main reasons include poverty, early marriage, and lack of female teachers and girls' schools. In Iraq, security is a major impediment. These issues are also responsible for the alarmingly low female primary school completion rates (32 percent in Djibouti, 46 percent in Yemen, and 63 percent in Iraq.)²⁴

Figure 5. Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary and Secondary Education (%) - 2005/2006



Source: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a standardized assessment administered to 15-year-olds, showed some interesting results in 2006 (see table 2). The survey was conducted in three MENA countries and showed that 15-year-olds in MENA perform worse on PISA's tests than their counterparts in the developed world. Interestingly, however, **girls in MENA perform better than boys in MENA in the same age group on the different tests.** These results are in contrast to the trend in more developed countries where male students tend to perform better on mathematical and scientific literacy tests.

Table 2. Girls' versus Boys' Performance on PISA Tests

	Mean score on Mathematical Literacy		Mean score on Reading Literacy		Mean score on Scientific Literacy	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Jordan	388	381	428	373	436	408
Qatar	325	311	346	280	365	334
Tunisia	358	373	398	361	388	383
Canada	520	534	543	511	532	536
France	492	499	505	470	494	497
Germany	494	513	517	475	512	519
United Kingdom	487	504	510	480	510	520
United States	470	409	511	477	489	455

Source: Edstats, September 2008.

²² World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

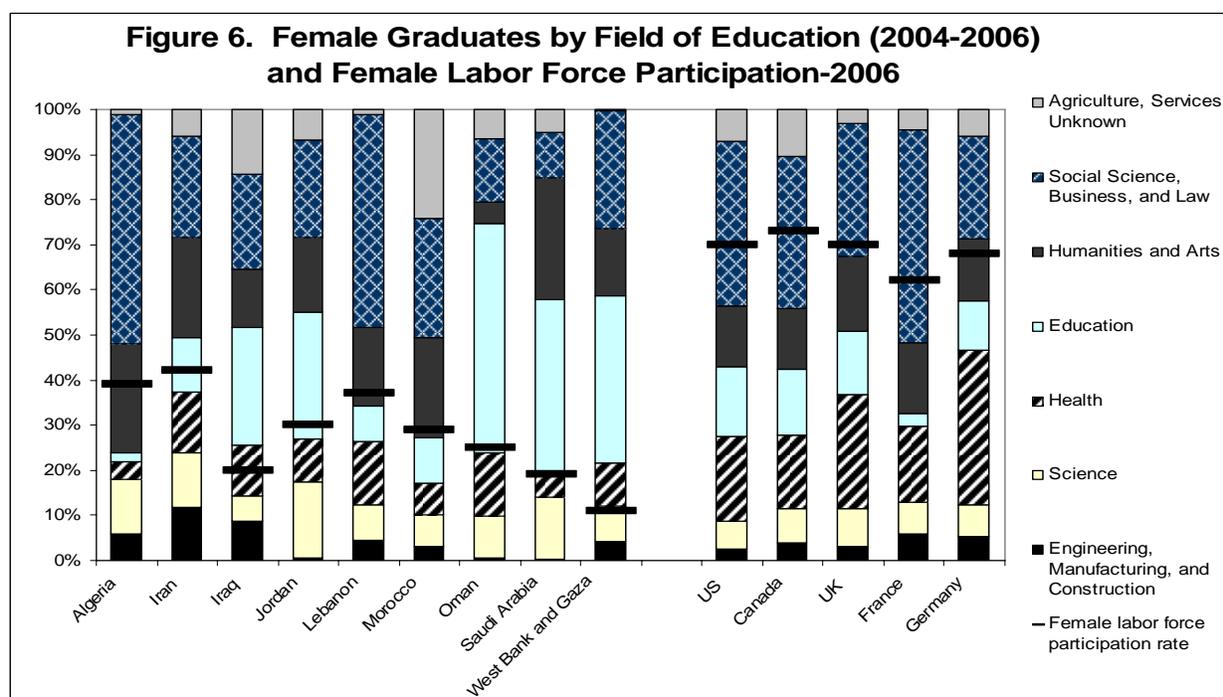
²³ The Republic of Yemen Women's National Committee, draft of report, *Women's Status from a Gender Perspective 2007*.

²⁴ World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

Women’s performance is impressive at the tertiary education level (2005). In Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza, female students outnumber male students by a significant margin.²⁵ Some countries have recently taken steps to curb the growing female tertiary enrollment. Iran, for example, imposed a 30-percent quota for both men and women in all university fields, with the remaining 40 percent chosen on a competitive basis.²⁶ Previously, the government had established a 50-percent quota for male and female students in the university entrance exams for medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy (fields where female enrollment exceeded that of males considerably). Some argue that the quotas were created to prevent women’s domination in certain fields, while others maintain that the quota could benefit women in disciplines where they are outnumbered by men. Not all MENA countries have a high female presence at the tertiary level, especially alarming are Iraq (59 females/100 males) and Yemen (37 females/100 males).²⁷

In addition to these issues, a few points on female education deserve more attention. The **majority of women continue to enroll in fields that are traditionally considered to be “appropriate for women.”** These include education, humanities, and the arts (see figure 6).

It is important to note, however, that the percentage of women in engineering and the sciences in MENA countries is comparable to or higher than in more developed countries. Nonetheless, women’s enrollment in engineering and the sciences does not automatically lead to higher female labor force participation or lower female unemployment.



Source: World Bank Edstats, September 2008.

Note: According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the fields are (1) Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction: engineering and engineering trades, manufacturing and processing, architecture and building; (2) Health: medicine, medical services, social care, and social work; (3) Science: life sciences, physical sciences, mathematics and statistics, and computing; (4) Education: teacher training and education science; (5) Humanities and Arts; (6) Social Sciences and Business and Law: social and behavioral science, journalism and information, business and administration, and law; (7) Agriculture: agriculture, forestry, fishery, and veterinary; (8) Services: personal services, transport services, environmental protection, and security services; and (9) Unknown or unspecified: fields that are unknown or unspecified.

²⁵ World Bank, *The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa* (2008).

²⁶ “Iran Plans University Gender Quotas,” *Khaleej Times*, February 25, 2008.

²⁷ World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

There are **vast differences in access to education among women from different socioeconomic groups—with female-headed households being particularly vulnerable – and between urban and rural women.** For example, only 14 percent of female youth in rural areas are literate compared to 48 percent in urban areas.²⁸ Furthermore, only 48 percent of rural girls compared to 67 percent of urban girls are enrolled in primary education (2006).²⁹ In Iraq, only 49 percent of rural women are literate compared to 71 percent of urban women (2004).³⁰ In Yemen, 60 percent of urban versus only 24 percent of rural women are literate.³¹

There is a shortage of female teachers, especially in rural areas, which adversely affects girls' school attendance. While the feminization of the teaching profession has been rising since 1980 and reached approximately 50 percent in the 1990s, wide disparities in the number of female teachers exist across the MENA region. Women account for 72 percent of teachers in Lebanon versus only 20 percent in Djibouti.³² Some countries see great disparities between urban and rural areas. In Yemen, for example, there are 52 female teachers to every 100 male teachers in urban areas versus only 8.6 female teachers to every 100 male teachers in rural areas³³—this is one of the primary reasons for girls' low school enrollment rate in rural areas.

Health

The progress in women's access to health care during the 1990s has continued after 2000. **On average, both female and male life expectancy increased by one to two years in the 2000–6 time period.**³⁴

In addition, the region experienced further declines in the fertility rate: 3.2 to 2.9 births per woman in 2000–6 (4.8 births per woman [bpw] in 1990).³⁵ In 2006, Tunisia, Iran, and Lebanon had the lowest fertility rates, 2.0, 2.1, and 2.2 bpw, respectively; while the highest were in Yemen (5.6 bpw), West Bank and Gaza (4.6 bpw), Iraq (4.4 bpw), and Djibouti (4.1 bpw).³⁶ Furthermore, adolescent (women ages 15–19) fertility in MENA decreased from 38 births/1000 women in 2000 to 31 births/1000 women in 2006.³⁷ The drastic decline in the fertility rate was mainly the result of increased female education, higher average age of marriage, and availability of family planning policies; these are all addressed below.

The region has seen significant changes in marriage patterns: only 4 percent of women now ages 20–24 are married by the age of 15, compared with 17 percent a generation ago.³⁸ Average marriage age has risen especially in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Kuwait, and the UAE.³⁹

As expected, **women with less education marry earlier, have more children, and thus, reinforce the cycle of poverty.** In the UAE, for example, the average age of marriage for women with secondary education or higher is 27 years, but only 18 years for those with no education. In Oman, women with high school diplomas, on average, marry at age 25 compared to 19 for those with no education.⁴⁰ Interestingly,

²⁸ A recent World Bank assessment for the Djibouti PRSP 2004–6.

²⁹ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

³⁰ UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey* (2004).

³¹ The Republic of Yemen, *Sixth National Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW* (December 2006).

³² World Bank, *The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa* (2008).

³³ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Needs Assessment of Gender Equality* (2005).

³⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ World Bank Central Database WHO Statistical Information System (September 2008)

³⁷ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³⁸ World Bank, *Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere* (2004), 50.

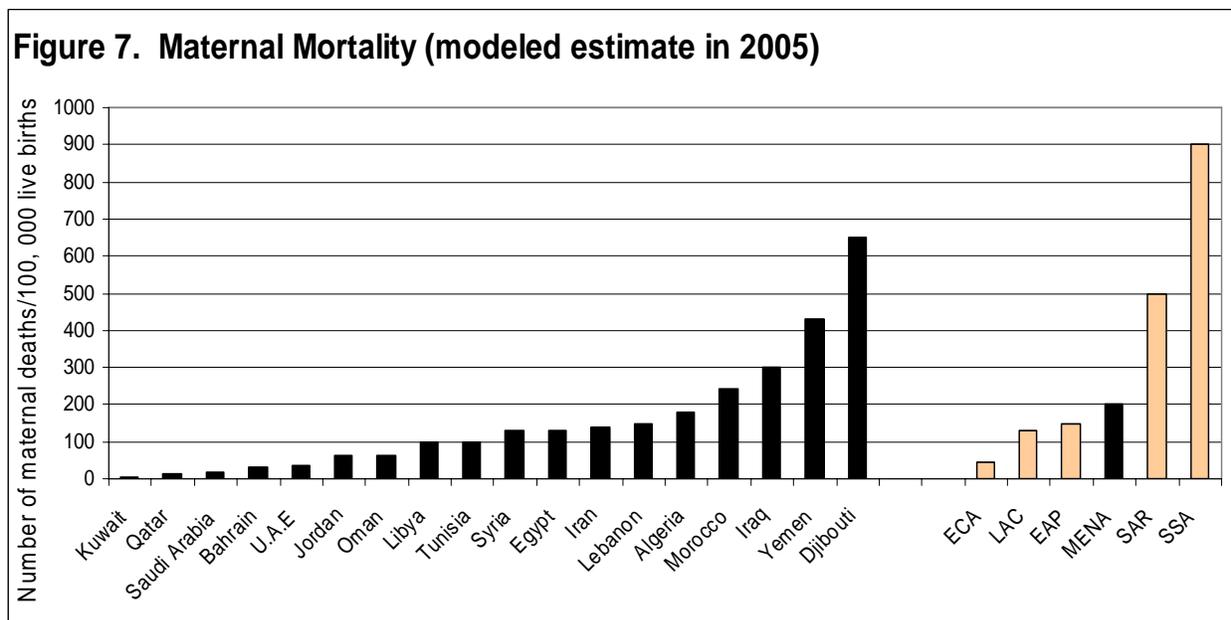
³⁹ Population Reference Bureau, *Marriage in the Arab World* (2005).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

data from countries such as Jordan show that causality may also go the other way: early marriage is the primary reason that Jordanian girls drop out of school. A few countries have a very low minimum legal age of marriage (Iran), and some do not have one at all (Yemen). An efficient short-term solution would be to enforce laws that make school compulsory until a certain age.

The contraceptive prevalence rate (percent of women ages 15-49 using contraceptives) has increased in all MENA countries but ranges from a low of 18 percent in Djibouti (2006) to a high of 74 percent in Iran (2000).⁴¹ Adolescent women are less likely than older women to use and know about contraceptives. In Egypt, for example, 24 percent of married women ages 15–19 use contraceptives versus 59 percent in the overall group (15–49 years). The same may be observed in Algeria (24 and 57 percent, respectively); Jordan (13 and 56 percent, respectively); Morocco (36 and 63 percent, respectively); and Syria (9 and 58 percent, respectively). Djibouti and Yemen have the lowest contraceptive usage rates among married adolescent women, 6 and 5 percent, respectively.⁴²

The maternal mortality rate in MENA is lower than in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa but higher than in other middle-income regions (see figure 7). **The rates in Djibouti and Yemen remain alarmingly high:** 650 deaths/100,000 live births in Djibouti (2005)⁴³ and 450 deaths/100,000 live births in Yemen (2005).⁴⁴ **Iraq is of particular concern as maternal mortality actually increased from 117 deaths/100,000 live births before 1990 to 300 deaths/100,000 live births in 2005⁴⁵**—now constituting one third of all deaths among women ages 15–49.⁴⁶



Source: World Bank Central Database, September 2008.

Note: National estimates can be found in individual country gender briefs.

⁴¹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁴² World Bank Central Database and Population Reference Bureau – Data Finder (September 2008). The rates for adolescent married female accounts only for use of modern methods whereas the rate for the overall married female population accounts for all methods including both traditional and modern methods.

⁴³ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁴⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008). The national estimate for Yemen is 366 per 100,000 live births.

⁴⁵ World Bank, WDI (2003); UNDP-POGAR and the World Bank/WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA report, *Maternal Mortality in 2005* (2007).

⁴⁶ UNICEF, *Iraq Watching Briefs—Overview Report* (July 2003).

Maternal and infant deaths are sometimes caused by conflict in the region. In the West Bank and Gaza, for example, women have had to give birth while waiting to pass through checkpoints to hospitals or health centers: 69 cases in 2000–6 resulted in the deaths of 5 women and 35 fetuses.⁴⁷ And some women are not able to reach medical facilities for prenatal and postnatal care. As there is conflict in several countries of the region, particular attention must be given to women as conflict affects women's access to health services more than men's.

More than 90 percent of births are attended by skilled health staff in most countries of the region. Although they are not doing as well as other MENA countries, Egypt and Morocco have observed significant improvements in this indicator.⁴⁸

Several additional issues affecting women's health in MENA must be highlighted. First, despite a drop in early marriage, the problem persists in countries such as Yemen (19 percent of women under the age of 19 are married)⁴⁹ and the West Bank and Gaza (12 percent of women ages 15–19 married at 14 years or younger).⁵⁰ In Iraq, 23 percent of women are married before the age of 18.⁵¹ One of the main consequences of early marriage is higher adolescent fertility, which not only puts young women at greater health risks but may also result in school dropout, thus reinforcing the cycle of poverty.

The prevalence of early childbearing in MENA is highest in Yemen and Syria, where 20 and 12 percent of women, respectively, give birth by age 18. In addition, it appears that conflict has some effect on adolescent fertility; a study in the West Bank and Gaza found that there was a rise in adolescent fertility at the time of the first intifada, a trend associated with a declining age of marriage for girls during that period.⁵²

Second, **female genital mutilation, which attracts much international attention, remains high in Djibouti, Egypt, and in Yemen** (but not in the rest of MENA) although the practice is illegal in both Djibouti and Egypt. More than 93 percent of women in Djibouti (2006) and 38 percent of women in Yemen (2003) have been circumcised.⁵³ And 69 percent of Egyptian girls under the age of 18 have been or are expected to be circumcised (2005).⁵⁴

The third health issue is the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Although the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is very low in MENA (0.1 percent in 2005), data from Iran, Egypt, and Morocco show that **the percentage of females in the total HIV/AIDS population is on the rise. In Djibouti, women make up 58 percent of the total HIV/AIDS population (2007).**⁵⁵

Young women may be more at risk for sexually transmitted infections. In Oman, for instance, women under 25 years are twice as likely to have an STI as women ages 25 and older.⁵⁶ This may partly be due to the fact that strikingly little information on sexuality and reproductive health is available to young women, and health care institutions are ill-equipped to provide sexual and reproductive health services to unmarried youth.⁵⁷

⁴⁷ WHO, *Health Conditions in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and in the Occupied Syrian Golan* (2007).

⁴⁸ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁴⁹ Population Reference Bureau, *Marriage in the Arab World* (2005).

⁵⁰ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Palestinian Family Healthy Survey 2006* (December 2007).

⁵¹ Government of Iraq, Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (2006).

⁵² World Bank, *Youth—An Undervalued Asset: Toward a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa* (2008).

⁵³ WHO, *Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation* (2008) and *Yemen Family Health Survey* (2003)

⁵⁴ *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey* (2005).

⁵⁵ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁵⁶ Population Reference Bureau, *Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health in the MENA* (2007).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Fourth, **violence against women, including honor killings persists.** A study in Egypt found that 47 percent of all homicides with female victims were cases of honor killings.⁵⁸ Similarly, there were 51 cases of honor killings in the West Bank and Gaza in the past three years.⁵⁹ In Syria, an estimated 200 women are murdered in honor crimes every year, and in Jordan, 17 women were killed in honor crimes in 2007. One issue is that honor killings have not been considered homicide and therefore not punished as such. Significantly, however, in May 2008, Jordan's courts sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for killing his sister. This may suggest a stronger determination on the part of the authorities to reduce that crime as Jordanians convicted of honor crimes have previously been jailed for as little as six months.⁶⁰ Alarming, Human Rights Watch has documented a sharp increase in the incidence of sexual violence against women in Baghdad, the legal system and other services in Iraq are unprepared to deal with the situation.⁶¹

There is also a high prevalence of domestic violence. In Iraq, 21 percent of Iraqi women and 23 percent of Palestinian women experience physical violence from their husbands.⁶² And in Egypt, a 2008 study by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights shows that 85 percent of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment.⁶³

Finally, **there is a wide urban-rural gap in women's access to health services.** Rural women generally marry at a younger age and have more children and also have less access to health care. The maternal mortality rate is higher, and the likelihood of having skilled health staff present at deliveries is lower in rural areas. For example, only 40 percent of rural births in Morocco are attended by skilled health staff compared to 85 percent in urban areas (2004).⁶⁴ In Yemen, 83 percent of rural women deliver at home, increasing the likelihood of maternal mortality. These facts illustrate the importance of bringing affordable health services to rural women and ensuring that they receive the care they need.

Public Participation and Representation

The region has witnessed some encouraging developments in the area of women's public participation and representation. **The proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 3.9 percent in 2000 to 8.8 percent in 2007** (see figure 8). Despite this, **the regional average is the lowest in the world, and all but three MENA countries perform worse than other countries in the same income group.**

⁵⁸ UNDP, *The Gender and Citizenship Initiative: Egypt* (accessed March 14, 2008); the study is from 2002.

⁵⁹ *Palestine Monitor*, "Killing for Honor—A Deadly Part of a Larger Trend, August 2, 2007.

⁶⁰ BBC, "Jordan Touch on Honour Killer," May 13, 2008.

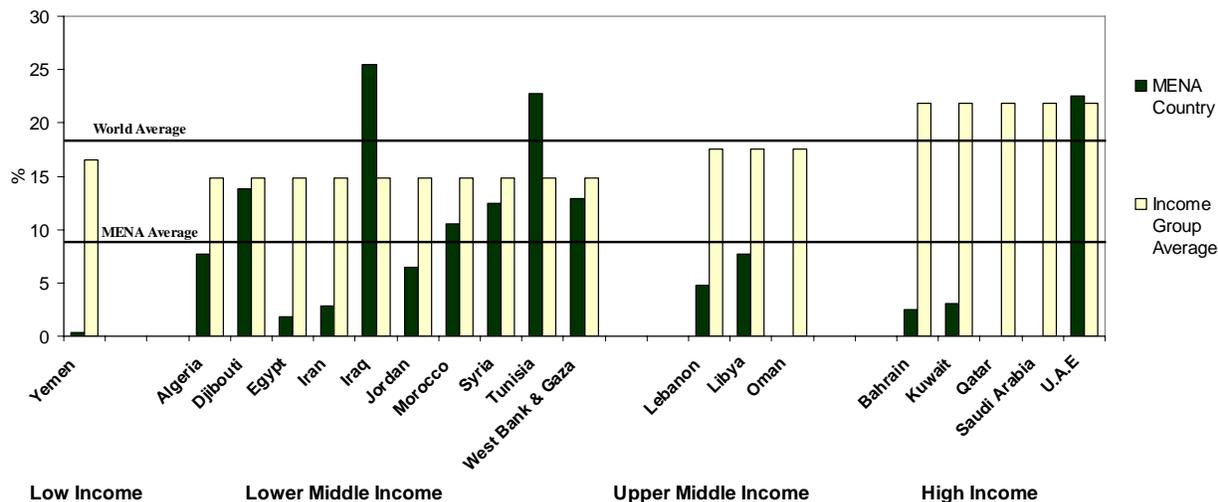
⁶¹ World Bank, *Youth—An Undervalued Asset: Toward a New Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa* (2008).

⁶² Iraq and WHO, *Iraq Family Health Survey Report (2006/2007)* and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (March 2008).

⁶³ Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights Website (Accessed August 2008)

⁶⁴ WHO Statistical Information System (September 2008).

Figure 8 - Proportion of Seats held by Women in National Parliaments - 2008
 (With the exception of a few, MENA countries do worse than countries in the same income group and the world average)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Inter-Parliamentary Union, September 2008.

Notes: MENA and income group averages are from 2007, while MENA country and world average data are from September 2008. In the West Bank and Gaza, the Legislative Council is considered the National Parliament

Some countries, mainly through the use of quotas and appointments, have been able to increase female representation in parliament. In September 2008, the following countries had the highest female representation in their lower houses of parliament: Iraq (25.5 percent—although it decreased from 31.5 percent in 2005), Tunisia (22.8 percent), United Arab Emirates (22.5 percent—a remarkable increase from 0 percent in 2005), and Djibouti (13.8 percent). The lowest representation was in the Gulf (0 percent in Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia), in Yemen (0.3 percent), and in Egypt (1.8 percent).⁶⁵ In 2007, the Yemeni president proposed a 15 percent quota for women in Parliament but it is not yet clear how this will be implemented. In the same year, the Jordanian cabinet rejected a request from women’s groups to raise the quota for women’s seats in the lower house from 6 to 12. Similarly, a new election law, passed by the Lebanese parliament in October 2008, rejected proposed reforms such as having a quota for women.

Interestingly, some of the countries with minimal female representation in lower houses of parliament appear to have a much higher representation in the upper house or senate (2008). These include Bahrain (25 percent), Oman (20 percent), and Jordan (12.7 percent). In contrast, countries such as Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco have lower female representation in their senates than in their lower houses of parliament: 15.2 percent, 2.9 percent, and 1.1 percent, respectively (2008).⁶⁶

Women candidates are generally more successful in local and municipal elections when issues are more clearly defined and they can compete with candidates of similar sophistication. In the 2006 Iranian local elections, for example, 44 seats out of 264 on provincial capital councils went to women. Recently, some countries have started using quotas for local elections. The 2007 municipal elections in Jordan, for example, were the first to take place under new legislation that guarantees at least 20 percent of elected positions to women candidates.

⁶⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, Women in National Parliaments (September 2008).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

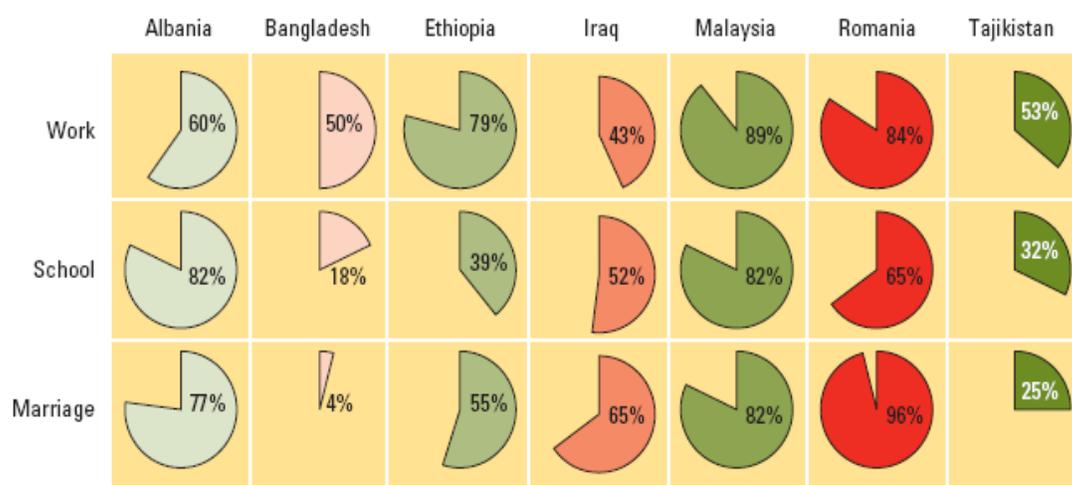
Women’s participation in government at the ministerial level has increased slightly but remains low. Furthermore, the trend of appointing women as heads of only selected ministries (such as Education, Health, Women’s Affairs, and Environment) has not changed. The most significant change took place in Morocco, where the new cabinet of October 2007 includes seven women—the highest female representation in the cabinet since the country gained independence. Similarly, the July 2008 Iraqi cabinet includes 5 women and the Jordanian cabinet, formed in November 2007, includes four females (15 percent of cabinet members). Syria has a female vice-president.

Female representation in the judiciary has grown dramatically. In an unprecedented move in 2007, the Supreme Judicial Council of Egypt appointed 30 female judges. Developments in other countries include the appointment of the first female court chief in Jordan (2007), the first female judge in the UAE (2008), and the first female judge in the Yemeni Supreme Court (2006). Women account for 16 percent of lawyers and 10 percent of judges (2005) in the West Bank and Gaza,⁶⁷ 18 percent of judges in Morocco,⁶⁸ and 37 percent of judges and 29 percent of lawyers in Lebanon.⁶⁹

Despite these overall positive developments, MENA still lags behind other regions in terms of women’s public participation and representation. The progress in political representation will be slow if it is not accompanied by quotas and appointments. In MENA, as in most parts of the world, women political candidates face a steeper up-hill battle in national and local elections.

There are some interesting findings about women’s self-perceptions. In Iraq, for example, young women feel that they have more influence in marriage than in schooling or work (see figure 9). However, when compared to young Iraqi men, they are more likely to feel in control about work and school but slightly less in regard to marriage.⁷⁰

Figure 9. Who has the final say? The percentage of young women (ages 15–24) who feel they have had the most influence on key life transitions varies greatly across societies.



Source: WDR 2007, 15

⁶⁷ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (March 2008).

⁶⁸ Government of Morocco, Ministry of Justice Web site.

<http://ejustice.justice.gov.ma/justice/console/Uploads/Doc/FicheStat.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Embassy of Lebanon, Washington, DC, correspondence October 1, 2007.

⁷⁰ World Bank, *World Development Report* (2007), 54.

There are gender gaps in young people's social participation. In Jordan, for example, girls and young women participate less in social organizations (extracurricular and intramural, school councils, and clubs) than their male peers.⁷¹ In Egypt, boys have more freedom of mobility and are twice as likely to go out with friends: approximately 50 percent of Egyptian boys versus only 5 percent of girls play sports. Egyptian girls are much less likely to visit friends or go for a walk; those aged 16 to 19 are four times more likely to do domestic chores, whereas boys are more likely to be in paid employment. Also, while most girls feel that their families respect their opinions, they are both less comfortable than boys in expressing them and less likely to feel that their opinions are respected.⁷²

Women's Legal Rights

From 2000–2007, countries such as Bahrain, Syria, Oman, and the UAE ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with reservations to certain articles (See table 4 in annex 1). In 2007, the Jordanian cabinet endorsed the CEDAW — without removing the reservations—and published it in the Official Gazette, giving it the force of law.

In Egypt, the Nationality Law was amended in 2004 to allow Egyptian women married to non-Egyptians to pass on their nationality to their children. Furthermore, **the 2005 Family Court Law** allowed for specialized courts for custody, divorce, and all other family-related cases. Accordingly, **a Family Fund was established** to offer financial support for divorced women until the court ruling. More recently, an article was added to **the Social Insurance Law**, which enables husbands to benefit from their wives' pensions, given that certain conditions are met.⁷³

In June 2008, the **Egyptian Parliament passed new laws setting 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage for both genders** (previously it was 16 for girls) and imposing a penalty of three months to two years in prison or a fine between \$190 and \$940 for those convicted of practicing female circumcision.

In Algeria, a 2005 amendment to the Family Code addresses the special vulnerabilities of women undergoing divorce. The reform law, in most circumstances, gives mothers custody rights over children and requires a man to give up the conjugal residence or provide housing when the ex-wife retains custody. However, many have expressed concern that the 2005 amendment is left largely unenforced.

In 2006, Iran's Parliament passed a law allowing children with an Iranian mother and a foreign father to acquire Iranian nationality. The new law, however, has many conditions. Among others, the child must give up any other nationality and the application may only be filed after the child has turned 18.⁷⁴

The Iranian Parliament also passed new legislation in 2008, which entitles women suffering injury or death in a car accident to the same insurance company compensation as men. Previously, women received only half of the compensation given to men. This law is awaiting endorsement by the Guardian Council.⁷⁵

⁷¹ World Bank, *Jordan Gender Assessment* (2005).

⁷² World Bank, *Egypt Country Gender Assessment* (2003), 15–16.

⁷³ Egyptian State Information Service, *Egyptian Women Yearbook 2006*.

⁷⁴ *IranDokht News*, "Iran Offers Citizenship to Children of Foreign Men," September 25, 2006.

⁷⁵ "Iran Women to Get Equal 'Blood Money' in Car Crashes," *Reuters*, May 27, 2008.

In February 2007, the Moroccan Parliament unanimously adopted a Nationality Code, which grants citizenship to children born to a Moroccan mother and a foreign father.⁷⁶

In Djibouti, a new labor code was introduced in 2006, which allows for women to work during night hours opening up potential new employment opportunities for women in the formal sector. Furthermore, in 2005, Djibouti ratified the Maputo Protocol, which protects a range of women's rights such as prohibiting forced marriages and setting a minimum legal age of marriage of 18 years.

In August 2007, the cabinet approved the amendments to 10 laws (endorsed by the President) containing discriminatory articles against women.⁷⁷ Parliament has approved four of these, including equal terms for retirement (compulsory at age 60—optional for women at 55—or after 35 years of service), 70 days of maternity leave with protection from being fired while on leave, and the eligibility of both wife and husband (as long as the husband chooses the pension of one wife) to each other's pension.

Despite some advancement, serious concerns remain in the area of women's legal rights. Most of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa have ratified the CEDAW but with provisions and reservations that undermine potential progress. Certain articles of the CEDAW are rejected because they are considered incompatible with national legislation and the *Shari'a*. These include Article 9 (discrimination in granting nationality to children) and Article 16 (discrimination relating to marriage and family relations).

Challenges remain in national laws regarding matters of marriage, divorce, child custody, and nationality (see table 3 in annex 1). For example, in most countries women cannot give their nationality to their children if the children's father is a foreign national. Similarly, the penal code in many countries does not protect women from crimes committed against them such as honor killings and sexual assault. In countries such as Iran and Iraq, the push by women's rights activists for gender equality has been suppressed.

The status of women in MENA is at a critical point. Violence and instability in the region have made gender issues a lower priority for MENA governments. Furthermore, because of external interference, the population in MENA, including women, is re-embracing cultural traditions and attachments, giving more validity to conservative forces within their countries.

Despite these recent trends, **an overwhelming majority still believes that it is very or somewhat important for women to have equal rights** with men: 90 percent in Egypt, 83 percent in the West Bank and Gaza, and 78 percent in Iran. Seventy-seven percent of Egyptians and Palestinians and 70 percent of Iranians think that their governments should make an effort to prevent discrimination against women. In fact, most Palestinians and Iranians think that their government should do more to prevent discrimination against women and that the UN should make efforts to further the rights of women.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Government of Morocco Web site, Portail National du Maroc (accessed March 2008).

⁷⁷ The laws include Pleadings and Civil Implementation Law, Diplomatic Law, Personal Status Code, Labor Law, Police and Prisons Law, Insurance, Pension and Social Security Law, Civil Law, and Crime and Penalty Law.

⁷⁸ WorldPublicOpinion.org.

Table 3. Equal Constitutional Rights, Freedom of Movement, and Marriage

Country	Constitution stipulates equal rights and duties for all citizens under the law (both men and women)	Freedom of mobility: right of a woman to travel or obtain a passport without husband's or guardian's permission or signature ^a	Marriage		
			Minimum legal age for marriage	Women's right to conclude their own marriage contract	Women's right to get a divorce by the court ^b
Algeria	Yes	Yes ^c	F-18; M-21	No	Yes
Bahrain	Yes	Yes ^d	None	Yes and No ^e	Yes
Djibouti	Yes	Yes	F and M-18	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Yes	Yes	F and M-18	Yes and No ^f	Yes
Iran	Yes and No ^g	No	F--13; M-15	No	Yes
Iraq	Yes	Yes and No ^h	F and M-18	Yes and No ^h	Yes and No ^h
Jordan	Yes	Yes and No ⁱ	F and M-18 ^j	No	Yes
Kuwait	Yes	Yes and No ^k	F-15; M-17	No	Yes
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	F-17; M-18 ^l	Yes	Yes ^m
Libya	Yes	Yes	F and M-20	Yes and No ⁿ	Yes
Morocco	Yes ^o	Yes	F and M-18	Yes	Yes
Oman	Yes	No	None	Yes and No ^e	Yes
Qatar	Yes	Yes	F-16; M-18	No	Yes
Saudi Arabia	No	No	None	No	Yes and No ^p
Syria	Yes and No ^q	Yes and No ^r	F-17; M-18	No	Yes
Tunisia	Yes	Yes	F-17; M-20	Yes	Yes
United Arab Emirates	Yes	Yes	F and M-18	No ^s	Yes
West Bank and Gaza	Yes	Yes	F-15 and 16; M-16 and 17 ^t	Yes	Yes
Yemen	Yes	Yes and No ^u	None	No	Yes

Sources: Woodrow Wilson Center Report, "Best Practices: Progressive Family Laws in Muslim Countries"; Freedom House Report, "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Citizenship and Justice"; World Bank Report, "Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa." (All data for Djibouti; column 3 for Egypt and West Bank and Gaza; column 4 for Bahrain and Saudi Arabia; column 5 for Oman and West Bank and Gaza; and column 6 for Oman.) Palestine Report 2004 (column 4 for West Bank and Gaza); *Foreign Affairs*, "Women, Islam, and the New Iraq" (all but column 4 for Iraq, which was taken from Amnesty International), and Interpol (Qatar—minimum legal age of marriage for men).

- ^a In most MENA countries where women legally have freedom of movement, this is rarely the case in practice. There are social restrictions, and many times husbands can restrict women from leaving the country by withholding their passports or giving their names to the immigration authorities.
- ^b In all MENA countries, women have the right to divorce under special circumstances, such as if the husband is imprisoned, if he is unjustifiably absent, or if he unjustifiably fails to pay maintenance. However, in certain cases (nonpayment of maintenance or physical and mental abuse), the burden of proof is entirely on the woman; and, in practice, it is very difficult to get the court to approve the divorce. All countries allow women to be granted divorce through *Khul'a* whereby a woman, for any reason she deems justifiable, can be granted a divorce as long as she pays back the dowry to the husband and renounces any marital financial rights. Many women report that obtaining *Khul'a* is a long and frustrating procedure. Some countries require the husband's signature even in a *Khul'a* divorce.
- ^c The constitution allows for the freedom of movement of all citizens. However, Article 39 of the Family Code stipulates, "The duty of the wife is to obey her husband," thus providing the husband with full authority over his wife in law and in practice. Most Algerian policemen and court officials consider it standard social practice for a husband to forbid his wife to travel without his permission.
- ^d While there are no direct legal restrictions on women's freedom of movement, socially imposed restrictions may limit women's rights. For example, a woman may have to request permission from the head of the household to travel abroad.
- ^e Two legal systems are followed and are based on two Islamic schools: *Maliki* (women must have their male guardian represent them in marriage, and no woman can execute her own contract); and *Jafari* (any adult man or woman of sane mental capacity can execute his or her own marriage contract).
- ^f Procedure for judicial recourse exists under some conditions. For example, a judge may authorize marriage if the *wali* (guardian) refuses.
- ^g In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the 20th Amendment to the Constitution gives men and women equal protection under the law and the enjoyment of rights "in conformity with Islamic criteria."
- ^h Article 2 of the final version of the Iraqi Constitution makes Islam the official religion of the state, cites it as a basic source of legislation, and says that no law can be passed that contradicts its "undisputed" rulings. Interpreting this provision will fall to the Supreme Court. Furthermore, Article 39 deems Iraqis "free in their personal status according to their religions, sects, beliefs, or choices," but leaves it up to subsequent legislation, such as the *Shari'a*, to define what this means.
- ⁱ The current Provisional Passport Law does not require women to seek permission from their male guardians or husbands to renew or obtain a passport. Nevertheless, in several recent cases, mothers reportedly could not travel abroad with their children because authorities complied with requests from fathers to prevent their children from leaving the country.
- ^j The royal decree raising the minimum marriage age to 18 has not yet been written into law. If the provisional law is rejected by the parliament, minimum legal age for marriage will be 15 for girls and 16 for boys.
- ^k Under Article 15 of the Passport Law (11/1962), a married Kuwaiti woman cannot apply for a passport without the written approval of her husband, but an unmarried woman over 21 years can directly obtain her passport.
- ^l In the Druze Personal Status Codes, the minimum age for marriage is 18 for males and 17 for females (with the absolute minimum of 16 for males and 15 for females accepted only by an official statement from the court). In the Eastern Catholic Personal Status Codes, Law 75 indicates that the minimum age for marriage is 16 for males and 14 for females. The minimum marriage age for Shi'a is puberty, or with judicial permission, 9 for girls and 15 for boys.
- ^m The wife may apply for divorce on many grounds, including discord. A reconciliation attempt is mandatory. Religious minorities may follow different rules.
- ⁿ Officially, a guardian may not force a ward of either sex into marriage or prevent a ward from marrying. However, according to tradition, women cannot marry without the consent of their father or male guardian.
- ^o While Article 8 of the Constitution of 1996 guarantees women equal political rights with men, the constitution does not grant women equal enjoyment of civil rights. Furthermore, Article 8 of the constitution provides for equality of citizens "before the law," rather than "in law."
- ^p A woman may obtain a divorce only if her husband granted her the right of divorce at the time of the signing of their marriage contract. The majority of women in Saudi Arabia lack this provision in their marriage contracts. Without this provision, a Muslim wife can only obtain a legal divorce by proving in court, desertion or impotence on the part of the husband. Women can also obtain divorce whereby they renounce any financial marital claims. However, any divorce proceedings filed by the woman has to be signed by the husband to be effective.
- ^q Although the constitution guarantees "full rights and opportunity" for all citizens, exceptions exist in the Nationality Code, the Personal Status Code, and the Penal Code that do not afford women full and equal status as citizens.
- ^r A woman no longer needs the permission of her husband to obtain a passport. However, Syrian law gives a husband the right to prevent his wife from leaving the country by submitting her name to the Ministry of Interior. Unmarried women over the age of 18 may travel domestically and abroad without the permission of male guardians.
- ^s A woman, as young as 15 years (the legal age for marriage) may go to a court of law to defend her right to marry a Muslim citizen of her choice, if her male guardian forbids her marriage.
- ^t In the West Bank, the Jordanian example is followed, whereby the minimum age of marriage for girls is 15 and boys, 16; while in Gaza, Egyptian law is followed, and the ages are 16 and 17 for girls and boys, respectively.
- ^u Women are not legally permitted a passport without the approval of their *wali*, but women with passports are legally allowed to travel without their guardian's permission.

Table 4. Status of Ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Country	Date of Ratification and Accession to CEDAW	Does the Country have reservations?					
		Article 2 on nondiscrimination measures	Article 7 on political and public life	Article 9 on nationality	Article 15 on law	Article 16 on marriage and family life	Article 29 on arbitration
Algeria	May 1996	Yes	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes	Yes
Bahrain	June 2002	Yes	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes ¹	Yes, para. 1
Djibouti	December 1998	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation
Egypt	September 1981	Yes	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	No reservation	Yes	Yes, para. 2
Iran	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Iraq	August 1986	Yes, points f & g	No reservation	Yes, paras. 1 & 2	No reservation	Yes	Yes, para. 1
Jordan	July 1992	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes, para. 1; points c, d, g	No reservation
Kuwait	September 1994	No reservation	Yes, point a	Yes, para. 2	No reservation	Yes, point f	Yes, para. 1
Lebanon	April 1997	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	No reservation	Yes, para. 1, points c, d, f, g	Yes, para. 2
Libya	May 1989	No reservation ²	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 1, points c & d	No reservation
Morocco	June 1993	Yes	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes	Yes
Oman	February 2006	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes, para. 1; points a, c, f	Yes, para. 1
Qatar	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Saudi Arabia ³	September 2000	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 1
Syria	March 2003	Yes	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes para. 1; points c, d, f, & g and para 2	Yes, para. 1
Tunisia	September 1985	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para. 2	Yes, para. 4	Yes, para. 1; points c, d, f, g, & h	Yes, para. 1
United Arab Emirates	October 2004	Yes, point f	No reservation	Yes	Yes, para. 2	Yes	Yes, para. 1
West Bank and Gaza	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Yemen	May 1984	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	No reservation	Yes, para.1

Source: CEDAW, March 2008. --- Denotes that the country has not ratified or acceded to the convention.

General Notes:

1. Insofar as it is incompatible with Islamic *Shari'a*.
2. Article 2 of the convention shall be implemented with due regard for the preemptory norms of the Islamic *Shari'a* relating to determination of the inheritance portions of the estate of a deceased person, whether female or male.
3. Saudi Arabia has an overall reservation that "In case of contradiction between any term of the convention and the norms of Islamic law, the Kingdom is not under obligation to observe the contradictory terms of the convention."

The following are excerpted from CEDAW:

- *Article 2.* Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, and, to this end, undertake:
 - (a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
 - (b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
 - (c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
 - (d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;
 - (e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization, or enterprise;
 - (f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that constitute discrimination against women;
 - (g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

- *Article 7.* Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right
 - (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
 - (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

- *Article 9.*
Paragraph 2. Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

- *Article 15.*
Paragraph 4. Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

- *Article 16.*
Paragraph 1. Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women,
 - (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
 - (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
 - (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship, and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
 - (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession, and an occupation;
 - (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment, and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

- *Article 29.*
Paragraph 1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.
Paragraph 2. Each State Party may at the time of signature or ratification of this Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by that paragraph with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.

DJIBOUTI

Critical Issues

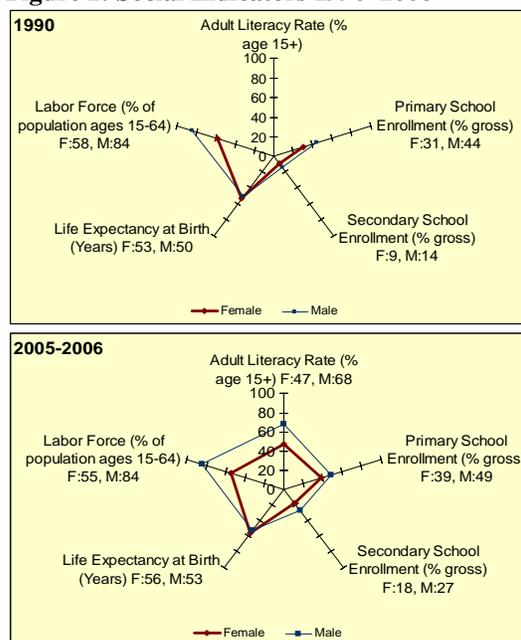
1. Female education and literacy are very low in Djibouti. In 2006, female gross primary school enrollment stood at 39 percent – approximately 40 percent of the MENA average and less than half the average for Sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁹ Female literacy is low at 47 percent (see paragraph 5).⁸⁰

2. Despite improvements in the 1990s, Djibouti lags on many health indicators. Life expectancy is the lowest in the region for both women and men (56 years for women and 53 years for men) and maternal mortality is highest (650/100,000 live births).⁸¹ Furthermore, the fertility rate remains high at 4.1 births per woman (bpw). The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is estimated at 3 percent, out of which 58 percent are women⁸² (see paragraphs 9, 12, and 13).

3. Djibouti has both a high female labor force participation rate (55 percent) and a high female unemployment rate (69 percent). Male unemployment is also high at 55 percent (see paragraph 17).⁸³

4. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a critical issue affecting around 93 percent of women (see paragraph 11).

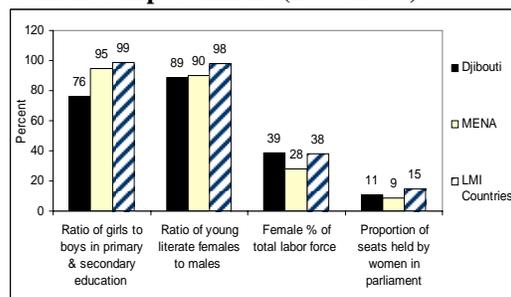
Figure 1: Social Indicators 1990–2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database (September 2008) and 2007 Djibouti Human Development Report

Note: There is no literacy data for 1990 and the 2006 literacy data is for 2002.

Figure 2: MDG 3 – Promote gender equality & women’s empowerment (2005–2007)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and the Population Reference Bureau (September 2008)

Note: Youth literacy data for Djibouti is for the 2000-2004 time period.

LMI: Lower-middle income

⁷⁹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁸⁰ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸¹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008) and World Bank/WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA, *Maternal Mortality in 2005 modeled estimates*, (2007).

⁸² World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁸³ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **The literacy rate remains one of the lowest in MENA:** 47 percent for women and 68 percent for men (2002).⁸⁴ **Girls' and boys' primary school enrollment, though improving, remains exceptionally low.** The 2007 Djibouti human development report estimates female net primary enrollment at 66 percent versus 67 percent for boys (2006). Secondary net enrollment for girls is estimated at 38 percent versus 44 percent for boys (2006).⁸⁵

6. **Rural-urban gaps in girls' access to education are very high.** The literacy rate for female youth (ages 15-24) in rural areas is only 14 percent compared to 48 percent in urban areas.⁸⁶ Also, only 48 percent of rural girls compared to 67 percent of urban girls are enrolled in primary education (2006). At the secondary level, the rate is 13 percent for rural girls versus 38 percent for urban girls (2006).⁸⁷ While there is almost no gender gap at the primary level (neither in rural nor urban areas), this gap widens at the secondary level where the ratio of girls to boys is 0.83 in urban areas and 0.59 in rural areas (2006).⁸⁸

7. **The primary completion rates are alarmingly low particularly for girls:** 32 percent compared to 39 percent for boys (2006).⁸⁹ Girls' low school enrollment and high dropout rates are correlated with high levels of poverty. School dropout rates for girls at ages 8–9 are also related to the practice of FGM, after which many girls do not return to school. High drop out rates for boys are linked with increased violence, gang activities and drug use. Most schools do not provide appropriate sanitary arrangements for girls and boys, contributing to girls' high dropout rates when they reach puberty.

8. **In 2006, women constituted 40 percent of the students at the University of Djibouti** (formerly Pole University).⁹⁰

Health

9. **Health indicators in Djibouti are of high concern and are likely to worsen in the face of the current rise in food prices.** Prompting early marriage and early age pregnancies, girls are particularly vulnerable. High fertility rates (4.1 children per woman in 2006), lack of women's health services, malnutrition, and anemia are the main factors behind the high maternal mortality rate (650 deaths/100,000 live births in 2005).⁹¹ Poor women are hit hardest with 9 percentage points more maternal deaths than the average.⁹² Only 18 percent of women use contraceptives (2006).⁹³ On the positive side, a significant development was observed in the presence of health staff at child deliveries. In 2006, 93 percent of births were attended by skilled health staff compared to 61 percent in 2003.

10. **Child mortality rates (under age 5) are high;** 103 deaths/1000 males and 81 deaths/1000 females (2006).⁹⁴

⁸⁴ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸⁵ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸⁶ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸⁷ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸⁸ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁸⁹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁹⁰ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

⁹¹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁹² Republic of Djibouti, *National Ten-year Evaluation Report on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 2004.

⁹³ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁹⁴ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

11. **Female genital mutilation affects more than 93 percent of women (2006),⁹⁵** even though the practice has been illegal since 1995 and is punishable with five years of prison and a fee of one million Djibouti francs. The practice mostly affects girls between the ages of 8 and 9. FGM is administered mainly by grandmothers and mothers and is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition. According to a recent survey, 50 percent of men are against this practice. Yet, eradicating FGM remains a challenge.

12. **HIV/AIDS is another public health problem.** The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was estimated at 3.1 percent in 2007, out of which 58 percent were women.⁹⁶

13. **Although higher than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (47 years), female life expectancy in Djibouti is extremely low (56 years)** when compared to the MENA average of 72 years. Male life expectancy is also very low at 53 years (2006).⁹⁷

14. Violence against women is not well studied in Djibouti, but it is believed that men's consumption of Qat (which consumes more than 30 percent of household expenditure) contributes to domestic violence.⁹⁸

Economic Participation

15. **Djibouti has the highest female labor force participation rate in the MENA region estimated at 55 percent (2006)⁹⁹** and dominated by the lowest income groups. The highest participation is among women in the 30-34 age group (65 percent in 2006).¹⁰⁰

16. **The majority of working women are concentrated in the informal sector either as self-employed or workers.** While the importance of the informal sector is undeniable (especially as a source of income for the poor), a lack of statistics makes it difficult to assert this sector's full economic potential. Djiboutian women have a very high entrepreneurial activity. However, they remain in the informal sector and rarely if at all transition to the formal economy.

17. **Unemployment affects women and youth in particular.** The unemployment rate for women is very high at 69 percent compared to male unemployment of 55 percent (2002).¹⁰¹ **The fisheries sector holds high potential for employment** and can generate 3000 to 4000 direct or indirect jobs, especially for women, and can contribute to poverty reduction.¹⁰²

18. The micro-credit program of the Social Fund for Development has been successful in helping to reduce poverty for women and their families. Through this program, which almost exclusively benefits women, 2500 women have been able to create their own income-generating activities.¹⁰³

Public Participation and Representation

19. **As a result of the February 2008 parliamentary elections, women now occupy 14 percent of parliamentary seats.¹⁰⁴** This is higher than the 11 percent in the 2003 elections. Adopted by the National

⁹⁵ WHO, *Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation* (2008).

⁹⁶ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁹⁷ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

⁹⁸ Chewing of qat leaves is a traditional practice in Djibouti. Qat is a natural stimulant with the qualities of a mild amphetamine.

⁹⁹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹⁰⁰ ILO Laborsta (August 2008).

¹⁰¹ République de Djibouti, *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain* (2007).

¹⁰² African Development Bank, *Country Strategy Paper* (2004).

¹⁰³ Fonds Social de Développement de Djibouti, DEFIS, Edition 6 (April 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, Women in National Parliament (September 2008).

Assembly as law in 2002, 10 percent of all elected and administrative positions have to be occupied by women. The quota law stipulates that every party has to present at least 10 percent women among its candidates. Women in Djibouti are very active at the local level in different organizations, associations, and unions. Despite their high representation, organizations tend to be led and managed by men.

20. There are two female minister-delegates in charge of women's affairs and international cooperation. The Women's Ministry is the least funded ministry in the government.

21. The highest judge in the country is a woman and Article 29 of the Constitution stipulates that "in the event that the Presidency of the Republic is vacated for whatever reason, the President shall be replaced on an interim basis by the President of the Supreme Court." The body in which Djiboutian women have the highest representation is the *magistrature*: 8 of the country's 24 judges are women. There are more women clerks in the court (52 percent) than men (48 percent), and the trend continues to favor women.¹⁰⁵

Women's Legal Rights

22. The Labor Code of 2006 allows for women to work during night hours opening up potential new employment opportunities for women in the formal sector. One positive outcome has been increased public sector employment for women to do nighttime street sweeping/cleaning shifts – a job traditionally done by women in Djibouti.

23. In February 2005, Djibouti ratified the Maputo Protocol, increasing protection for women's rights in multiple areas (economic, social, health, and reproductive rights). Article 6 requires that state entities implement appropriate national legislation to ensure that "no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties." The same article also requires state parties to ensure that "the minimum age of marriage for women shall be 18 years." The protocol came into force in November 2005, but it is not clear whether it is being implemented effectively.

24. Djibouti ratified CEDAW¹⁰⁶ without reservations in December 1998; however, it has yet to submit a report to the United Nations on the legislative, judicial, administrative, or other measures that have been adopted to implement the convention.

25. In January 2002, the Family Code replaced a 1995 law that governed matters of marriage and divorce according to Islamic law. The new law grants better protection for women and children. However, women's rights are not the same as men's, either during or after marriage. Although the new law did not abolish polygamy, the practice now requires the consent of the first wife, an assessment of the husband's financial situation, and an authorization by a judge. Child custody is determined by a tribunal. Children of a Djiboutian citizen can receive Djiboutian nationality regardless of whether the father or the mother is a foreign national.

26. A 2004 report by Strategic Initiatives for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) states that violence against women in Djibouti is "widely seen in the family and is tolerated rather well by society, including women." There is a lack of reliable data regarding violence against women because the topic is "culturally taboo."¹⁰⁷ Incidents of domestic violence are usually dealt with inside the family or clan structure instead of in the court system.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Government of Djibouti, *National Ten-year Evaluation Report on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action* (2004).

¹⁰⁶ The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

¹⁰⁷ Government of Djibouti, *National Ten-year Evaluation Report on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action* (2004).

¹⁰⁸ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Research Directorate. <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451015> (accessed July 30, 2007).

EGYPT

Critical Issues

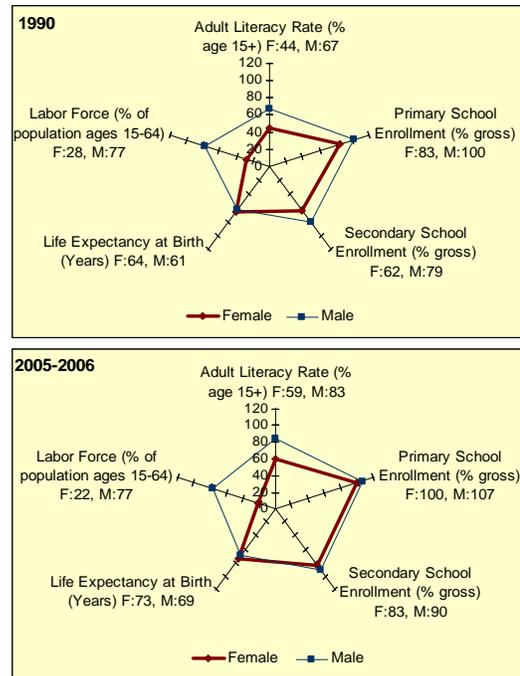
1. Illiteracy among young women (15-24 years) remains high at 21 percent compared to 10 percent for young men¹⁰⁹ (see paragraph 5).

2. Female labor participation remains low (23 percent in 2008), and women's unemployment rate (21 percent) is much higher than men's (7 percent). The gender gap in unemployment is even greater in the younger age groups; 40 percent unemployment for females versus 21 percent for males ages 15-24 in 2002¹¹⁰ (see paragraphs 11 and 13).

3. Female genital mutilation remains a major issue. Sixty-nine percent of girls under the age of 18 have either been or are expected to be circumcised.¹¹¹ In June 2008, the Egyptian Parliament passed a new law, which imposes a penalty of three months to two years in prison or a fine for those convicted of practicing female circumcision (see paragraph 7).

4. Violence against women—including honor killings and sexual harassment—persists. A 2008 study by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights reveals that 85 percent of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment (paragraph 22).¹¹²

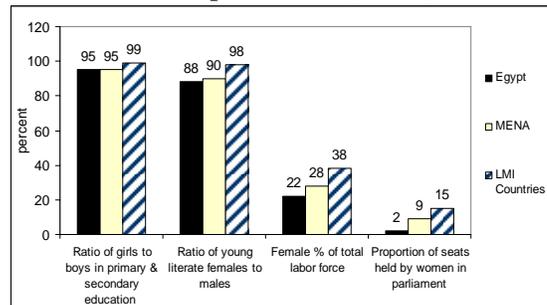
Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990–2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

Note: The 1990 literacy data is for 1996.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005-7)



Source: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

LMI = Lower-middle income.

¹⁰⁹ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

¹¹⁰ ILO CAPMAS and World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹¹¹ *Egypt: Demographic and Health Survey* (2005).

¹¹² Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights Website (Accessed August 2008)

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **Despite the persistence of gender gaps in literacy, women have made substantial gains:** 59 percent of women were literate in 2006 compared to 44 percent in 1996. Male literacy in the same period increased from 67 to 83 percent.¹¹³ The literacy gender gap is smaller in the younger age groups: 79 percent of young females (ages 15–24) versus 90 percent of young males are literate (2005).¹¹⁴

6. The ratio of girls to boys is 0.94 in primary education and 0.92 in secondary education (2005).¹¹⁵ The gender inequality in access to education is greater in lower-income households. The illiteracy rate is higher in female-headed households. The incidence of illiteracy among FHHs is 85 percent in rural areas and 57 percent in urban areas.¹¹⁶

Health

7. **Female genital mutilation remains a critical issue.** A 2005 survey found that 69 percent of girls under the age of 18 have either been or are expected to be circumcised.¹¹⁷ In 2007, the Ministry of Health issued a ban on all forms of FGM, eliminating an exception that existed in the 1996 ban which allowed the practice “for cases where it was necessary, as decided by the head of the gynecological department of a hospital.”¹¹⁸ And in June 2008, the Egyptian Parliament passed a new law, which imposes a penalty of three months to two years in prison or a fine between \$190 to \$940 for those convicted of practicing female circumcision.

8. **The percentage of women (15-49) who married under the age of 18 is declining,** from 44 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 2005 (currently, the average age for first marriage is 20.4 years).¹¹⁹ Similarly, the proportion who gave their first birth at age 18 or less has declined from one-quarter to almost one-eighth over the same period. In June 2008, the Egyptian Parliament passed a new law setting 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage for both genders (previously 16 for girls).

9. **The reduction in maternal mortality in Egypt has been impressive,** and government-led campaigns have paid off. The rate is now 53 deaths per 100,000 live births (2006).¹²⁰ The percentage of deliveries under medical supervision increased from 61.5 percent in 2000 to 78.6 percent in 2006.¹²¹ However, there is a great disparity between different socioeconomic groups: 96 percent of births in the highest wealth quintile versus only 51 percent for the lowest wealth quintile are attended by skilled health staff (2005).¹²²

10. The level of unmet need for family planning has significantly declined from 19.8 percent in 1992 to 10.3 percent in 2005.¹²³ The fertility rate has decreased to 2.9 births per woman in 2006.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, short spacing of births is still prevalent, increasing health risks for women.

¹¹³ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

¹¹⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹¹⁵ World Bank Central Database (August 2008).

¹¹⁶ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2005* (2005).

¹¹⁷ *Egypt: Demographic and Health Survey* (2005).

¹¹⁸ Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights Web site (accessed August 1, 2007).

¹¹⁹ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* The WHO estimates this to be 130 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005.

¹²¹ Government of Egypt, Ministry of Health Web site (accessed March 2008).

¹²² WHO Statistical Information System (August 2008).

¹²³ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

Economic Participation

11. Female labor force participation declined from 28 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 1998. Since then, it has increased to 23 percent (2008). Male labor force participation stayed constant at 77 percent with occasional fluctuations.¹²⁵ This is an indication that women are more vulnerable to changes in the labor market. In addition, **the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector decreased from 19.2 percent in 1990 to 17.7 percent in 2005.**¹²⁶

12. Women account for 32 percent of government employees versus only 18 percent of private sector employees (2005). This is mainly because women face less employment discrimination on grounds of marriage and maternity leave in the public sector.¹²⁷ Also, women constitute a large share of the informal sector (67 percent).¹²⁸

13. **Female unemployment remains high at 21 percent in 2008 (7 percent for men)¹²⁹ and the gender gap widens in the younger age groups;** 40 percent unemployment for females versus 21 percent for males ages 15-24 (2002).¹³⁰ Also, female unemployment increases with higher levels of education; the unemployment rate for women with secondary and tertiary education is higher than for those with less than secondary education.¹³¹

14. A recent World Bank survey shows that 20 percent of Egyptian firms are female-owned. Interestingly, they are more likely than male-owned firms to perceive access to land and electricity as constraints.¹³² Similarly, ICA surveys show that women suffer more from constrained access to finance compared to men.¹³³ In addition, while the law gives women ownership rights, they often have less productive assets, and lack independence in managing these assets (being under the guardianship of their brother, husband, or even son). In many cases they are prevented from using their property as collateral for loans, limiting their ability to participate as independent agents in private-sector activity.¹³⁴ In 2007, the number of business associations stood at 58, out of which 16 were businesswomen's associations.¹³⁵

15. Gender has been mainstreamed in the National Socio-Economic Development Plan of 2007–12, and the concept of gender-sensitive, performance-based budgeting was introduced in national planning. Two articles of the budget guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance for 2008/09 highlighted gender concerns, and gender-sensitive statements were included in the call circular for 2008/09. The MoF is now working on producing sex-disaggregated statistical statements for 2008/09, as well as producing budget templates that are gender disaggregated.

Public Participation and Representation

16. **Women's political participation is very low in Egypt.** Since the 2007 elections, women occupy only 1.8 percent of parliamentary seats.¹³⁶ Women's share in the Shura Council (upper house) is 6.8 percent,

¹²⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

¹²⁷ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Human Development Report* (2005).

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ ILO, CAPMAS, *Quarterly Labor Force Sample Survey* (April 2008).

¹³⁰ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹³¹ World Bank, *MENA Economic Developments and Prospects: Job Creation in an Era of High Growth*, (2007), 48.

¹³² World Bank, *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (2007).

¹³³ World Bank, *Access to Finance and Economic Growth in Egypt* (2006).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

¹³⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, *Women in National Parliaments* (September 2008).

mainly as a result of appointments. There are two women in the cabinet: the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and the Minister of International Cooperation.¹³⁷

17. In general, there is a lack of commitment among political parties to support women candidates for legislative and local councils. Women's representation in local councils is a negligible 1.8 percent, with 1.3 percent of local council seats in rural areas and 2.9 percent of local in urban areas.¹³⁸

18. The number of male members in civil society organization general assemblies is double the number of females. Overall, low representation reflects the still prevailing patriarchal values and traditions that favor men to be leaders. It could also be explained by the fact that women are entirely held responsible for childrearing and homemaking, and this leaves them little time to participate in public life especially if they are also engaged in paid work.¹³⁹

19. The first Egyptian woman judge was appointed by a presidential decree in early 2003. In an unprecedented move in 2007, the Supreme Judicial Council appointed 30 female judges.¹⁴⁰

20. In 2006, for the first time in Egypt's history, various governorates named women as religious guides and preachers, known as "murshidat."¹⁴¹ In 2008, for the first time, a woman was appointed to conduct religious marriages, more specifically as a "maazun."¹⁴²

Women's Legal Rights

21. **Recently, an article was added to the Social Insurance Law that enables husbands to benefit from their wives' pensions, given that certain conditions are met.**¹⁴³

22. **Violence against women is a critical issue.** A 2002 study found that 47 percent of all homicides with female victims were cases of honor killings.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, a 2008 study by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights shows that 85 percent of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment.¹⁴⁵

23. **There has been some discrimination in terms of divorce, custody, and alimony.** However, a new divorce law issued in 2000 enables Egyptian women to initiate divorce with the condition that they renounce all financial claims and return the money given at the time of marriage.

24. **The Nationality Law of 2004 gives Egyptian women with non-Egyptian husbands the right to transfer their citizenship to their children.** Also, a 2005 Family Court Law allows for specialized courts for custody, divorce, and all other family-related cases. Accordingly, a Family Fund was established to give financial support to divorced women until the court ruling.

25. A recent poll conducted by World Public Opinion shows that 90 percent of Egyptians think it is somewhat or very important for women to have full equality of rights with men, and 77 percent think that the government should make an effort to prevent discrimination against women.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁷ Government of Egypt Web site. <http://www.egyptiancabinet.gov.eg/Cabinet/Cabinet.asp> (accessed August 2008).

¹³⁸ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

¹³⁹ Egypt Institute of National Planning and UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Report 2008* (2008).

¹⁴⁰ "Analysis: Egypt Women's Rights Still an Uphill Climb," *Middle East Times*, May 4, 2007.

¹⁴¹ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, "Egypt: First Women Preachers Named," December 10, 2006.

¹⁴² BBC News, "Woman to Conduct Egypt Marriages," February 28, 2008.

¹⁴³ Egyptian State Information Service, *Egypt Yearbook 2006*.

¹⁴⁴ UNDP-POGAR, "The Gender and Citizenship Initiative: Egypt" (accessed March 14, 2008).

¹⁴⁵ Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights Website (Accessed August 2008)

¹⁴⁶ Worldpublicopinion.org (2008).

IRAN

Critical Issues

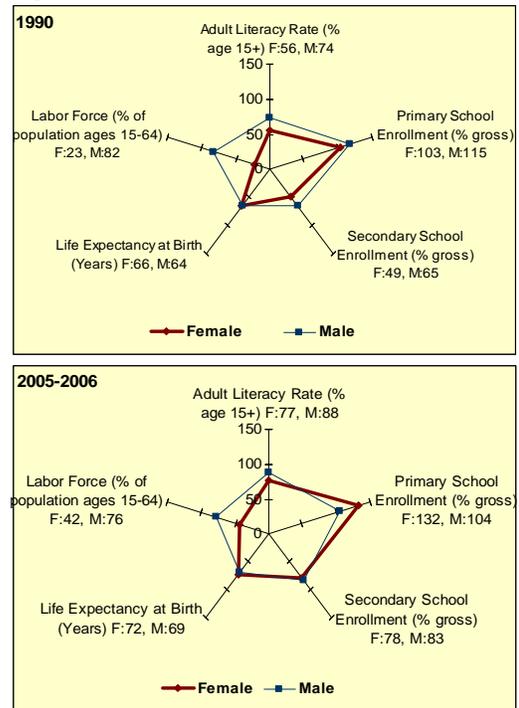
1. Female unemployment stands at 15 percent for women versus 8 percent for men (2008). The unemployment rate increases with higher levels of education: 2.7 percent of women with primary education are unemployed compared to 31.3 percent of those with tertiary education (2006). Youth unemployment (ages 15-24) is especially of concern: 31 percent for females versus 17 percent for males in 2008 (see paragraph 12).

2. One critical area for women's health and education remains the legal minimum age of marriage which in 2003 was raised from 9 to 13 years for girls and from 14 to 15 years for boys. However, a girl can get married at age 9 with court permission (see paragraph 9).

3. Women accounted for 8 percent of registered candidates in the 2008 parliamentary elections, gaining only 2.8 percent of the seats (4.1 percent in the previous parliament). No woman has served as the head of a ministry since the Islamic Revolution (see paragraphs 16 and 17).

4. In December 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution expressing "deep concern" about "ongoing systematic violations of human rights" in Iran. The resolution specifically mentioned repression and persecution of women and women's rights defenders and called upon the government to "eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls" (see paragraph 23).

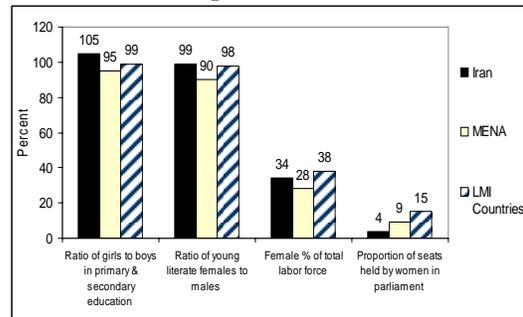
Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990–2006



Source: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008)

Note: National estimates show female economic activity at 16 percent (ages 10+) and male economic activity at 63 percent (2008)

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3–Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005–7)



Sources: World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

LMI = Lower-middle income.

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **In 2008, Iran imposed a 30 percent quota for men and women in all university fields;** the remaining 40 percent were to be chosen on a competitive basis.¹⁴⁷ Two years earlier, the government had established a 50-percent quota for male and female students in the university entrance exams for Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy (fields where female enrollment has been considerably higher) citing scarcity of female facilities and dormitories and transportation as reasons for the decision.¹⁴⁸ Some believe that the recent university quotas were created to prevent women from dominating the medical field. However, some officials argue that this could benefit women in disciplines where they are outnumbered by men.

6. **The youth literacy gender gap has closed,** and the female-to-male ratio in school enrollment at primary and secondary levels are 1.27 (2006) and 0.94 (2005), respectively.¹⁴⁹ Women comprise approximately two-thirds of university entrants.

7. Despite the prevalence of gender stereotyping in textbooks and cultural pressures that encourage women to specialize in traditional fields, the number of women enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields such as engineering and the sciences has been rising. In 2006, females accounted for 67 percent of graduates in the sciences (60 percent in 2004) and 23 percent of graduates in engineering, manufacturing, and construction (13 percent in 2004).¹⁵⁰

Health

8. **Iran has the highest contraceptive usage rate in the region** (74 percent in 2000).¹⁵¹ Among other factors, this has helped reduce the fertility rate from 6.6 bpw in 1980 to 2.1 in 2006,¹⁵² and in turn curbed population growth. However, President Ahmadinejad has publicly voiced his opposition to small families, raising the possibility for women to work part time but be paid full-time wages.¹⁵³

9. **One critical area for women's health and education remains the legal minimum age of marriage,** which in 2003 was raised from 9 to 13 years for girls and from 14 to 15 years for boys (although a girl can still be married off at age 9 with court permission). Though few marriages occur at that age, those that do are likely to be among the more marginal, poorer, and less educated social groups. The divorce rate increased by 12 percent in 2006-2007 compared to 2005-2006.¹⁵⁴

10. **Maternal mortality is 140 deaths per 100, 000 live births (modeled estimate in 2005). The national estimate is 37 deaths/ 100, 000 live births (1997).**¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ *Khaleej Times*, "Iran Plans University Gender Quotas," 25 February 2008.

¹⁴⁸ *Rooz Online*, January 28, 2007. <http://www.roozonline.com/archives/2007/01/001911.php>

¹⁴⁹ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *BBC News*, "Iran Leader Backs Larger Families," October 23, 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Statistical Center of Iran (website accessed August 2008).

¹⁵⁵ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

Economic Participation

11. **Female economic activity increased significantly from 33 to 42 percent in 2000-2006** (there are different estimates on this indicator).¹⁵⁶ Although it is now one of the highest in MENA, it is still low considering the high levels of female education. Women ages 30–34 have the highest economic activity rate (56 percent in 2006).¹⁵⁷ Women in Iran are present in all fields of employment, even in traditionally male-dominated ones such as the police force and the fire services. In 2008, agriculture accounted for 34 percent of total female employment (23 percent for men).¹⁵⁸ Despite the fact that the labor force participation of women in urban areas is lower than those in rural areas, urban women are more likely to be unemployed.¹⁵⁹

12. **Female unemployment stands at 15 percent for women versus 8 percent for men in 2008** (age 10+).¹⁶⁰ It increases with higher levels of education: 2.7 percent of women with primary education are unemployed compared to 31.3 percent of those with tertiary education (2006).¹⁶¹ Youth unemployment (ages 15-24) is especially of concern: 31 percent for females versus 17 percent for males in 2008.¹⁶²

13. In 2006, 63 percent of inactive women (0.6 percent of inactive men) were home-makers while 26 percent of inactive women (64 percent of inactive men) were students.¹⁶³

14. The current five-year development plan (2005–09) includes several gender-specific actions such as expansion of women’s opportunities and protection of female-headed households.

Public Participation and Representation

15. Although President Ahmadinejad appointed two women to his cabinet (secondary cabinet positions),¹⁶⁴ his **government has made several moves to curb women’s advocacy and representation**. The Centre for Women’s Participation was renamed the Centre for Women and Family Affairs “to pay more attention to the institution of family.”¹⁶⁵ Simultaneously, there have been severe crackdowns over the dress code, and on several peaceful women’s rights demonstrations demanding equal rights under the law. Furthermore, the Iranian premier women’s magazine, *Zanan*, was shut down in February 2008.

16. Women accounted for 8 percent of registered candidates in the 2008 parliamentary elections; however, they managed to gain only 2.8 percent of the seats (4.1 percent in the previous parliament).

17. **Iran’s most powerful political body, the 12-member Council of Guardians has no female representation**. Women’s rights activists point out that women have not been able to run for president or serve as judges.¹⁶⁶ And no woman has served as the head of a ministry since the Islamic Revolution.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. The Statistical Center of Iran estimates female economic activity at 16 percent (age 10+) and male economic activity at 63 percent (2008).

¹⁵⁷ ILO Laborsta (August 2008).

¹⁵⁸ Statistical Center of Iran (September 2008).

¹⁵⁹ World Bank, *Employment and Labor Market Study* (2007).

¹⁶⁰ Statistical Center of Iran (September 2008).

¹⁶¹ World Bank, *MENA Economic Developments and Prospects: Job Creation in an Era of High Growth* (2007), 48.

¹⁶² Statistical Center of Iran (September 2008).

¹⁶³ Statistical Center of Iran (Website accessed August 2008).

¹⁶⁴ Fatemeh Javadi was appointed Vice President and Head of the Environmental Protection Organization, and Zohreh Tabibzadeh was given the position of Presidential Advisor on Women’s Affairs and Head of the Center for Women and Family Affairs.

¹⁶⁵ Embassy of Iran in Denmark Web site, <http://www.iran-embassy.dk/fa/culteral/women%20en.pdf>.

¹⁶⁶ BBC News, “Women’s Rights on Iranian Agenda,” March 9, 2006.

Women's Legal Rights

18. **A proposed Family Protection Bill (July 2008) was returned to a legal committee of Parliament for further discussion.** If ratified, the bill would have, among other provisions, lifted the condition requiring a man to get the permission of his first wife to take a second wife, imposed additional procedural impediments to divorce for women, criminalized the marriage of a foreigner to an Iranian woman without authorization.¹⁶⁷

19. **Parliament recently passed a law which grants women suffering injury or death in a car accident entitlement to the same insurance company compensation as men.** Previously, women received only half of the compensation given to men. This law is awaiting endorsement by the Guardian Council.

20. **In 2006, women's rights activists started the One Million Signatures Campaign,** a project aimed at collecting one million signatures to demand an end to discrimination against women in Iranian laws. There have been severe crackdowns on this campaign and its members; some have been put on trial while others have been imprisoned.

21. Also in 2006, **parliament passed a law allowing children with an Iranian mother and a foreign father to acquire Iranian nationality.** The new law, however, has many conditions. Among others, the child must give up any other nationality and the application may only be filed after the child has turned 18.¹⁶⁸

22. **The Iranian Constitution does not provide explicitly for equality of rights between men and women** and Iran is one of the few countries in the region that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of the All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 20 of the constitution says that men and women "enjoy equal protection of the law...in conformity with Islamic criteria," and Article 21 stipulates that "the government must ensure the rights of women in all respects, in conformity with Islamic criteria." Most of the laws that discriminate against women in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody derive their legitimacy from the clause effectively subordinating women's rights to the state's interpretation of Islamic law.¹⁶⁹ There is also marked discrimination in the Penal Code as girls legally come of age at 9 years (15 for boys) and can then be tried and convicted as adults.

23. **In December 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution expressing "deep concern" about "ongoing systematic violations of human rights" in Iran. The resolution specifically mentioned repression and persecution of women and women's rights defenders and called upon the government to "eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls."**

24. A recent poll conducted by World Public Opinion shows that 78 percent of Iranians think that it is somewhat or very important for women to have full and equal rights with men. Seventy percent think that the government should make an effort to prevent discrimination against women, and 52 percent think that the UN should make further efforts.

¹⁶⁷ Women's Learning Partnership, "Facing Strong Opposition, Iranian Government Backs Down on Discriminatory Family Protection Bill," September 2, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ *IranDokth News*, "Iran Offers Citizenship to Children of Foreign Men," September 25, 2006.

¹⁶⁹ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, "Iranian Women Take on the Constitution," July 8, 2005.

IRAQ

Critical Issues

1. Women in Iraq are substantially affected by the ongoing hostilities and insecurity. Their access to employment, education and health facilities has been impaired and they have borne much of the burden of the internal displacement that has occurred (see paragraphs 10, 11, and 15).

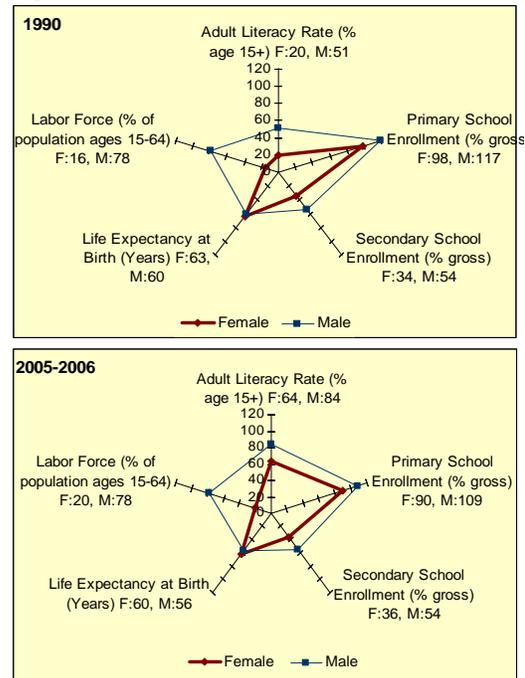
2. As a result, while both males and females have suffered in recent years, gender gaps are rising in social indicators. Furthermore, the maternal mortality rate has increased and fertility is high at 4.4 births per woman (see paragraphs 6 and 9).

3. Domestic violence is a serious issue with 21 percent of married women surveyed experiencing physical violence within their homes (see paragraph 11).

4. Women and human rights groups have expressed concern that allowing Sharia-based interpretations in the laws risks eroding many rights enjoyed by Iraqi women under the Constitution (see paragraphs 19 and 21).

5. Women's economic activity is one of the lowest in the region - 13 percent compared to 75 percent for males (2007). Forty-five percent of women describe their access to employment opportunities as poor and 27 percent say they don't have any opportunities at all.¹⁷⁰ Unemployment is highest for young women especially among 20–24 year olds reaching 36 percent (see paragraphs 12 and 13).

Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990–2006

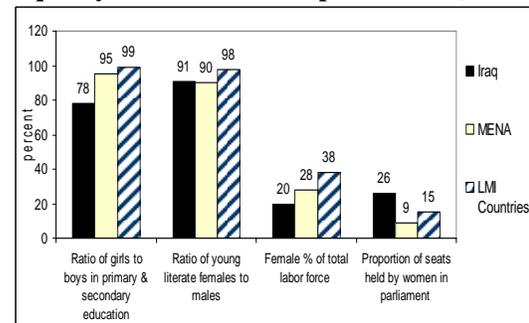


Source: World Bank Central Database, Edstats, UNDP, and ILO (September 2008).

Note: 1990 school enrollment data are for 1991. Labor force data for 2006 is for population ages 15+.

The 2007 household socio-economic survey puts women's economic activity at 13 percent compared to 75 percent for men.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3 –Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005-7)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats, UNDP, and UNESCO (September 2008)

Note: The World Bank Second Iraq Interim Strategy (2005) estimates the ratio of young literate women to men to be 0.50. LMI = Lower-middle income.

¹⁷⁰ Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008).

Development Issues

Education and Training

6. **Illiteracy is around 19 percent - 12 percent for males and 26 percent for females.** In a survey conducted by Women for Women International (2008), 76 percent of respondents said that girls in their families are not allowed to attend school. The primary reasons cited for this are poverty and insecurity.¹⁷¹ Other reasons for not enrolling children in school that were cited by households and which relate more strongly to girls than to boys include; no nearby schools available, and social reasons.¹⁷²

7. **On a positive note the primary school enrollment rates (net) have increased since the last Living Conditions Survey that was conducted in 2004.** Data for 2007 show that primary school enrollment (net) reached 87 percent for males and 82 percent for females up from 83 percent and 75 percent respectively.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the gender gap exists in the ratio of girls to boys at all school levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary). Furthermore, there is a wide urban-rural gap with rural girls having much less access to education services.

8. **In universities, women are increasingly moving away from traditionally male-dominated fields.** For example, the female share of graduates in engineering, manufacturing, and construction fell from 21 to 11 percent in 2000-2004 and from 71 to 51 percent in science. At the same time, the female share in the health and agriculture fields increased.¹⁷⁴

Health

9. **Some health indicators have worsened over the past decade.** Maternal mortality increased from 117 deaths/100,000 births before 1990 to 300 in 2005,¹⁷⁵ making it one of the highest rates in the region. The fertility rate is high at 4.4 bpw (2006),¹⁷⁶ and the contraceptive prevalence rate is 50 percent (2006).¹⁷⁷ In 2006, 23 percent of women in Iraq were married before the age of 18.¹⁷⁸ Early marriage, and as a result early childbearing, has led to a high incidence of anemia (38 of pregnant women are anemic).¹⁷⁹

10. **In a recent survey, 47 percent of women report their access to medical and health care services as poor while 22 percent report that they have no access at all.**¹⁸⁰ As with access to education, there are wide urban-rural gaps in access to health care. Only 78 percent of births in rural areas are attended by skilled health staff compared to 95 percent in urban areas (2006).¹⁸¹ Furthermore, two-thirds of women have only limited access to clean water, with 67 percent describing the availability of clean water in their neighborhoods as somewhat bad or very bad.¹⁸²

¹⁷¹ Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008)

¹⁷² The 2007 Iraq Household Social and Economic Survey (IHSES 2007).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

¹⁷⁵ World Bank, WDI (2003) and the World Bank/WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA report, *Maternal mortality in 2005* (2007).

¹⁷⁶ WHO Statistical Information System (August 2008)

¹⁷⁷ Government of Iraq, Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (2006).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Iraq and WHO, Iraq Family Health Survey Report (2006/2007)

¹⁸⁰ Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008)

¹⁸¹ Government of Iraq, Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (2006).

¹⁸² Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008)

11. Trafficking and related problems. Concerns about abduction, trafficking and violence against women are rising.¹⁸³ A recent survey of Iraqi women finds that 64 percent of respondents believe violence against women is increasing, 30 percent say that trafficking in women is increasing, 30 percent think prostitution has increased, and 39 percent believe that rape is increasing.¹⁸⁴ Rogue militias and violence among ethnic groups have also increased the pressure on women over the past couple of years, restricting them from leaving their homes or attending university, and enforcing a strict use of the veil. Some women activists have been targeted and killed. Human Rights Watch reports that hospital personnel continue to turn away victims of sexual attack, saying it is not their responsibility. Domestic violence is a critical issue. Eighty-three percent of married women report at least one form of marital control, 33 percent report at least one form of emotional violence, and 21 percent experience physical violence.¹⁸⁵

Economic Participation

12. Women's economic activity is one of the lowest in the region - 13 percent compared to 75 percent for males. Fifty-eight percent of working women versus 67 percent of working men are in wage jobs. A large share of female employment is concentrated in the non-wage agricultural sector (32 percent of female employment versus 11 percent of male employment).¹⁸⁶ Though low-income women have historically benefited most from the informal economy such as street commerce, the prevalence of violence has driven women out of their jobs and into their homes.¹⁸⁷

13. Forty-five percent of women describe their access to employment opportunities as poor and 27 percent say they don't have any opportunities at all.¹⁸⁸ Overall, female unemployment is lower than male unemployment (15 versus 29 percent in 2004).¹⁸⁹ However, unemployment is highest for young women especially among the 20 – 24 year olds where it reaches 36 percent compared to 17 percent for males in the same age group.¹⁹⁰ Women generally have a harder time than men integrating into private-sector work, and given the supply of private sector jobs that is available in Iraq—mostly male-dominated work in construction—women have fewer job opportunities than men.¹⁹¹

14. The number of female-headed households is high—11 percent in 2004.¹⁹² Approximately 86,000 widows receive some government support (about \$40 a month).¹⁹³ The Women's Committee in parliament recently presented a draft law that would provide housing for women without financial support to prevent them from taking desperate measures (such as prostitution) and protect them from exploitation. The draft bill has yet to be voted on as it is considered a lesser priority than issues such as the stability and security of Iraq.

15. According to the International Organization for Migration, 2.8 million people are internally displaced in Iraq out of which half are women. The displaced women are particularly vulnerable as it is much harder for them than men to access employment opportunities. Some of these vulnerable women

¹⁸³ *Payvand News*, "Sex Traffickers Target Women in War-Torn Iraq," October 28, 2006.

¹⁸⁴ Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008)

¹⁸⁵ Iraq and WHO, *Iraq Family Health Survey Report (2006/2007)*

¹⁸⁶ The 2007 Iraq Household Social and Economic Survey (IHSES 2007).

¹⁸⁷ Women for Women International, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report," (2008)

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008)

¹⁹⁰ The 2007 Iraq Household Social and Economic Survey (IHSES 2007).

¹⁹¹ World Bank, "Rebuilding Iraq: Economic Reform and Transition," (2006).

¹⁹² UNDP, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey (2004)*.

¹⁹³ *The Washington Post*, "Iraqi Women Take on Roles of Dead or Missing Husbands," April 23, 2008.

have gone into prostitution and begging while others receive support from the government and aid organizations.

Public Participation and Representation

16. The proportion of women in parliament decreased from 32 to the current 25.5 percent (70 seats) after the December 2005 elections. The constitution guarantees a 25-percent quota for women—having led to Iraq having the highest share of female parliamentarians in the region.

17. The July 2008 cabinet includes five women; Ministers of Environment, Housing and Construction, Human Rights, and Ministers of State for Women’s Affairs and for Provinces.

18. Despite a high female presence in leadership positions, 44 percent of women in Iraq don’t think that the circumstances of women are being considered by those making decisions about Iraq’s future.¹⁹⁴

Women’s Legal Rights

19. The Iraqi Constitution accords equal status to men and women, including equal rights to education, literacy, and employment; and guarantees women the right to vote and to run for public office. It specifies that no discrimination can be based on sex. The constitution also states that no law can be passed that contradicts the “established rulings” of Islam. Sharia-based interpretations do not accord equal rights for men and women.

20. Kurdish women in Iraq have expressed concern about the enforcement of a law, which states that a woman who applies for a passport must have her male guardian’s permission. This law had previously been ignored by the Kurdish authorities.¹⁹⁵ And more recently, there have been discussions about updating a 1952 law. The new law would restrict women’s rights in divorce and inheritance and would allow men to have four wives.

21. Laws and practices that require women to obtain official permission from a male guardian to travel, work, or continue their education severely constrict women’s economic advancement, particularly that of widows and divorcees and those with estranged husbands. It also provides a mechanism for males who want to pressure or threaten their female kin.

22. Generally, there is a lack of knowledge among Iraqi women in regards to their rights. Seventy-one percent do not know that they have the right to move freely, 53 percent do not know they have the right to an education, and 52 percent do not know they have the right to political participation.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Women for Women International, “Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report,” (2008)

¹⁹⁵ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, “Kurdish Women Resent New Passport System,” June 8, 2007.

¹⁹⁶ Women for Women International, “Stronger Women Stronger Nations Report Series: Iraq Report,” (2008)

JORDAN

Critical Issues

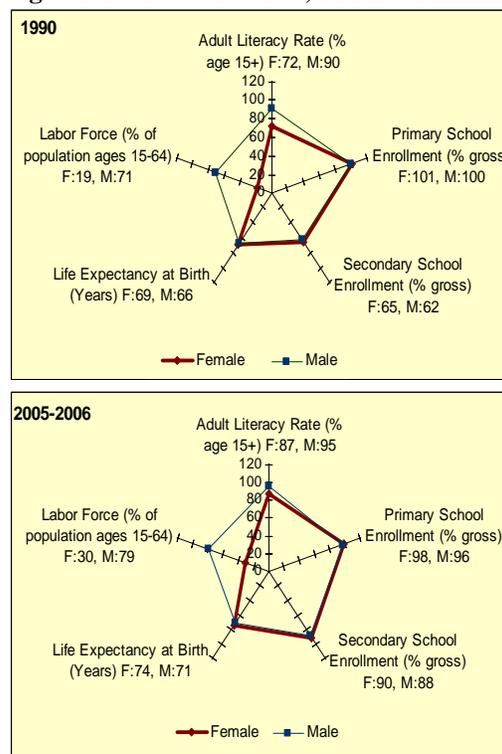
1. The female labor force participation rate was only 15 percent in 2007 (see paragraph 12). This is much lower than the average for the MENA region and only half as much as Jordan's potential.

2. Female youth unemployment is as high as 48 percent compared to 24 percent for young males (see paragraph 13).

3. Fertility rates remain uncharacteristically high given women's level of education which is one of the highest in the region. It stands at 3.6 births per woman (bpw) in Jordan compared to the regional average of 2.9 bpw (see paragraph 9).

4. Infant and child mortality rates are falling in Jordan but those for girls are declining at a slightly slower rate than those for boys. This may reflect differences in access to health care and nutrition (see paragraph 8).

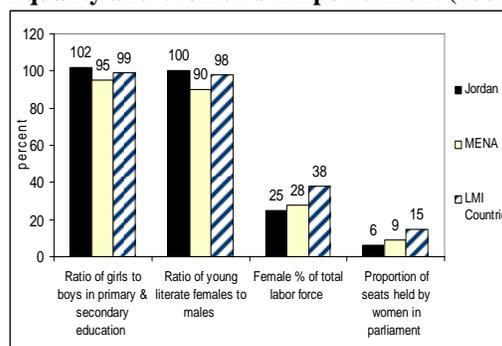
Figure 1. Social Indicators, 1990–2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (August 2007/September 2008).

Note: The Jordan Department of Statistics estimates the 2007 female labor force participation rate at 15 percent compared to 64 percent for males.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3–Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005–7)



Source: World Bank Central Database/ Edstats (September 2008).

LMI = Lower-middle income

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **Jordan has made significant progress in extending universal access to education.** In 2007, the ratios of women to men were 0.8, 1.1, and 0.7 at the primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, respectively. At the university level, women account for 42 percent of students in applied science and 57 percent of students in humanities (2006).¹⁹⁷

6. **Progress continues to be made in addressing adult female illiteracy.** During 2000–2007, female illiteracy dropped from 16.5 percent to 12 percent. Male illiteracy has stayed constant at around 5 percent over the same period.¹⁹⁸ Youth enjoy full gender parity in literacy.

7. **Efforts are being made to eliminate stereotypes in textbooks;** the government is addressing this issue in its Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) project.

Health

8. **Infant and child mortality rates (measured per thousand live births) are falling in Jordan but faster for boys than for girls.** In 2002, infant mortality rates were 25 for boys and 23 for girls. In 2007, the rates for both boys and girls reached 20, suggesting a faster decline among boys than among girls. A similar trend is observed for child mortality rates: these were equal in 2002 at 28 but stood at 23 for girls and 22 for boys in 2007.¹⁹⁹

9. **Women are getting married later.** The average age of marriage is now 26.4 years (2007) compared to 24.7 in 1994. For men, it is now 29.5 years compared to 27.9 in 1994.²⁰⁰ The fertility rate remains high at 3.6 bpw 2007 compared to 3.7 bpw in 2002²⁰¹ (the MENA average for 2006 is 2.9 bpw²⁰²). Up until 2002, fertility rates for rural women remained consistently higher than for urban women, however data for 2007 show that they are now almost equal at 3.7 and 3.6 respectively.²⁰³ The Ministry of Health announced that by the end of 2008 they will make available free condoms and birth control pills through public hospital and health centers, military hospitals and family planning organizations.²⁰⁴

10. Almost all births are attended by skilled health staff (2002) with no regional disparities: 99 percent of births in urban versus 97 percent of births in rural areas are attended by skilled health staff.²⁰⁵ This has helped keep maternal mortality fairly low at 62 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (modeled estimate in 2005).²⁰⁶

Economic Participation

¹⁹⁷ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁰³ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

²⁰⁴ Jordan Times, "Contraceptive devices to be available free of charge for married couples by year-end - Health Ministry," July 18, 2008.

²⁰⁵ WHO Statistical Information System (August 2008).

²⁰⁶ World Bank/WHO, *Maternal Mortality in 2005* (2007).

11. The new Social Security Code (SSC) brings reforms on maternity benefit costs that will help eliminate discrimination in hiring female workers. Previously employers were required to pay for 10 weeks leave of absence to every female employee who got pregnant. Under the new code, maternity benefits (full salary for 10 weeks of leave – maximum four deliveries per woman) will be paid by the social security administration. All employers and employees would make a contribution to social security based on the employee’s salary (0.5 percent by the employer; and 0.25 percent by the employee). Thus, the burden of costs is carried by the government, all workers and employers rather than by the employer alone. More importantly it is no longer linked solely to women workers eliminating the rationale for not hiring a woman due to potential higher benefit costs.

12. According to the Department of Statistics, the labor force participation rate was 15 percent for females in 2007, compared to 64 percent for males.²⁰⁷ Women work predominantly in the public sector mainly in education (accounting for 32 percent of female employment in 2007) and health (13 percent of female employment).²⁰⁸ Income levels based on earnings of female-headed households in Jordan are among the lowest in MENA, at about 10 percent of total household income. They rely heavily on transfers and family help.²⁰⁹

13. In 2007, female unemployment (25.6 percent) was significantly higher than male unemployment (10.3 percent).²¹⁰ It is worth noting that female unemployment increases with higher levels of education: in 2007, females with bachelor’s degrees and above accounted for 50 percent of unemployed women (22 percent for men).²¹¹ The gender disparity in youth (15-24 years) unemployment is alarmingly wide: female youth unemployment is 48 percent versus 24 percent for male youth (2007).²¹²

14. A 2007 study on women’s entrepreneurship showed that female-owned firms account for approximately 15 percent of all firms in Jordan—higher than the MENA average of 13 percent. They are more likely to generate exports and jobs, especially for female workers. However, they are also more likely to perceive labor regulation and policy uncertainty as binding constraints.²¹³

Public Participation and Representation

15. The Jordanian cabinet, formed in November 2007, includes a record number of women. Four ministers making up 15 percent of the cabinet, head the Ministries of Planning and International Cooperation, Tourism and Antiquities, Social Development, and Culture.

16. Female voice and representation in national parliament remains low. In September 2007, the Jordanian cabinet rejected a request from women’s groups to raise the quota of women’s seats in the lower house from 6 to 12 for the November 2007 elections. Currently, seven parliamentary seats are occupied by women. This is 6 percent compared to the MENA average of 9 percent (2007) and the world average of 18 percent (2008). There are also seven women in the upper house—13 percent of the total.

17. A new law for political parties was approved by the Jordanian Parliament in March 2007. This new law requires political parties to grant women advanced positions within their ranks and links public financial support to the presence of women in leadership positions.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

²⁰⁸ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics.

²⁰⁹ World Bank, *Jordan Poverty Assessment* (2004).

²¹⁰ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

²¹¹ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics (August 2008).

²¹² Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

²¹³ World Bank, *The Environment for Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (2007).

²¹⁴ UNDP-POGAR Web site (accessed March 2008).

18. **There have been attempts to increase female representation at the local level.** The July 2007 municipal elections were the first to take place under new legislation that guarantees at least 20 percent of elected positions to women candidates. Previously, half of all municipal council seats were appointed by the king, and there was no quota system.²¹⁵

19. Women account for 7.5 percent of all members in political parties, 26 percent in voluntary associations, 23 percent in professional associations, 20 percent in syndicates, and 20 percent of municipal councilors (2007).²¹⁶ Also, women account for 5 and 16.5 percent of the judicial and diplomatic corps, respectively.

20. In May 2007, a woman was appointed as court chief for the first time in Jordan.

Women's Legal Rights

21. **In May 2008, the Jordanian government made a strong statement against honor killings** through a landmark decision to give a man a sentence of 10 years imprisonment for killing his sister.²¹⁷ This is the maximum punishment that has so far been given for such cases and despite the Jordanian penal law still including very lenient provisions for honor killings.

22. Jordan became a signatory to CEDAW²¹⁸ in 1980 and ratified it in 1992, but it has registered reservations to Articles 9, 15, and 16 regarding nationality rights of children, mobility, parents' equal rights, and personal rights to choose the family name and professional occupation. In July 2007, the cabinet endorsed the CEDAW, although it did not remove the previous reservations, and published it in the Official Gazette, giving it the force of law. This was applauded by women activists but also drew strong objections from conservatives in parliament.

23. **Jordan has made little progress in finalizing certain legal amendments favoring women's rights.** In a highly publicized session, parliament voted against two of them: (1) giving women the right to khul'a and (2) removing sanctions in the Penal Law that granted leniency to perpetrators of honor crimes. Laws regarding higher minimum age of marriage and those granting women their own ID cards (daftar) for access to public services, remain interim laws until parliament agrees to vote on them again.

24. **Jordanian women have limited rights to divorce.** Unlike men, women must specifically request a special clause in their marriage contract to obtain the right to divorce. The majority of women do not include this request for fear of losing prospective grooms; men who accept this clause are looked down upon by society. The law requires men to pay support to divorced wives for only one year.

25. According to Jordanian Nationality Law No. 6 of 1986, "Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians have the right to keep their Jordanian nationality." However, unlike their male counterparts, a Jordanian mother cannot automatically transfer her nationality to her child unless the child is born in Jordan to a mother with Jordanian citizenship and a father of unknown foreign nationality or whose paternity has not been legally established. Under Law No. 2 of 1969, a woman must seek permission from her male guardian or husband to renew or obtain a passport. In several cases mothers reportedly could not leave the country with their children because authorities complied with fathers' requests (without a court order) to stop their children from leaving the country.

²¹⁵ BBC News, "Jordan Election Marred by Boycott," July 31, 2007.

²¹⁶ Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Woman and Man in Jordan in Figures* (2008).

²¹⁷ BBC News, "Jordan tough on honor killer," May 13, 2008.

²¹⁸ Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women.

LEBANON

Critical Issues

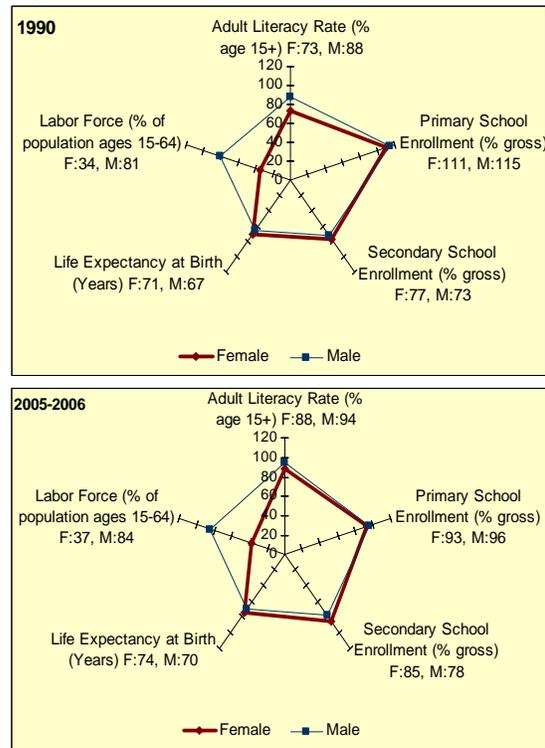
1. For a country that is otherwise advanced in gender matters, women’s political participation and representation at the national level is low. At present, there are only six women out of a total of 128 parliamentarians; this figure is lower than the MENA average which is already the lowest in the world (see Figure 2 and paragraph 18).

2. Lebanon is one of the top countries in the region for social indicators and progressive laws. However, female economic activity is lower than in upper-middle-income countries (Figure 2).

3. Although women have found opportunities in all fields, few have achieved senior positions in their fields. For example, women comprise 90 percent of the workforce in banks but account for only 19 percent of bank general and assistant general managers²¹⁹ (See paragraph 13).

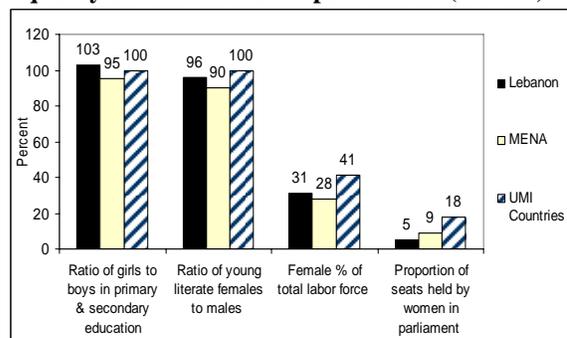
4. Lebanese women cannot pass on citizenship to a non-Lebanese husband or to their children, whereas Lebanese men can automatically give citizenship to their children and foreign spouses. In addition to being discriminatory against women the law is one of the leading contributors to the number of disaffected youth and children. The number of children born to non-Lebanese fathers is not insignificant in Lebanon given the number of refugees and workers from neighboring countries that are married to Lebanese women. These children and youth are unable to access public schooling and other services or gain employment in the formal sector (see paragraph 22).

Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990-2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008), and the 2004 National Survey of Household Living Conditions
 Note: the 1990 secondary school enrollment is for 1992 and the 2005-2006 literacy data is from 2004 and for ages 10+

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2005–7)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008), and Population Reference Bureau (August 2008)
 Note: Youth literacy data is for 2000-2004.
 UMI = Upper-middle-income.

²¹⁹ “Constraints Facing Working Women in Lebanon: An Insider View,” *Women in Management Review* 20 (7/8): 581, ABI/INFORM GLOBAL (2005).

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **There are no gender gaps in access to education.** The ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education are 0.97, 1.10, and 1.16, respectively (2006).²²⁰ And women account for 46 percent of students in vocational and technical education (2004/2005).²²¹
6. **There is no university program or field of specialization that does not have female students.** Large numbers of women are graduating in law.
7. **Illiteracy for those aged 10 years and above is approximately 9 percent: 5.6 percent for males and 11.8 percent for females (2004).** The illiteracy gender gap is wider in the older age groups; illiteracy among women above the age of 40 is double that of men in the same age group, whereas the rate for men under the age of 34 is the same or even higher than for women in the same age group.²²²

Health

8. **Lebanon is doing well in terms of women's health.** About 98 percent of births are attended by skilled health staff (2004),²²³ and the maternal mortality rate is 150 deaths for every 100,000 live births (2005 modeled estimate) - below the MENA average of 200 yet well above the average rate for upper-middle-income countries which, is 97 deaths for every 100,000.²²⁴ Conflict plays an important role in affecting access to pre- and post-natal health care.
9. **The fertility rate declined from 3.1 births per woman (bpw) in 1990 to 2.2 bpw in 2006.**²²⁵ Fifty-eight percent of married women use contraceptives (2004).²²⁶

Economic Participation

10. **Currently, the female labor force participation rate of 37 percent (2006) is higher than the MENA average (32 percent) but much lower than in comparable upper-middle-income countries (55 percent).**²²⁷ Male labor force participation in Lebanon (84 percent), on the other hand, is both higher than the MENA average and the average for other upper-middle-income countries.²²⁸ Women's economic activity rate is highest in the 25–29 age groups and more prevalent in Beirut, compared to other parts of the country.²²⁹
11. **Many males have moved to the Gulf to take advantage of the new employment opportunities available;** women, whose mobility is more restricted by socio-cultural barriers, have not been able to do the same. Data is not yet available to determine if women's employment has benefited from the gap left by those who have emigrated.

²²⁰ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²²¹ Lebanon, Third Report to CEDAW (2006).

²²² UNDP and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, *The National Survey of Household Living Conditions* (2004), 46.

²²³ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²²⁴ World Bank/WHO, *Maternal Mortality in 2005* (2007).

²²⁵ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²²⁶ *ibid*

²²⁷ *ibid*

²²⁸ *ibid*

²²⁹ UNDP and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, *The National Survey of Household Living Conditions* (2004), 56.

12. The female workforce is more educated than the male workforce. Often, education tends to be more of a prerequisite for women entering the labor force than for men. For example, 34.1 percent of the female workforce compared to 15.9 percent of the male workforce has university degrees (2004).²³⁰

13. Although women have found opportunities in all fields, few have achieved senior positions in their fields. For example, women comprise 90 percent of the workforce in banks but account for only 19 percent of bank general and assistant general managers.²³¹ Furthermore, women are paid less than men for doing comparable work. Eleven percent of the female workforce is either an employer or self-employed (40 percent of the male workforce in 2004/2005). Seventy-six percent of women are employees and receive a monthly salary (41 percent of men).²³²

14. Similar to many other countries in the region, females with higher levels of education are more likely to be unemployed while this is not the case for men. Female aggregate unemployment (ages 15–64) is 9.6 percent compared to 7.7 percent for males (2004).²³³ Women with university education account for 37 percent of all unemployed females (14.8 percent for males), while women with elementary education make up 15.6 percent of the unemployed (32.5 percent for males).²³⁴

15. Findings show that female-owned firms in Lebanon tend to hire more women than men. Therefore, increasing female entrepreneurship is an effective means for opening additional employment opportunities for women.

Public Participation and Representation

16. Lebanese women received the right to vote and run for public office in 1953, but it was almost four decades before a woman was elected to parliament in her own right. From 1953 to 1972, nine women ran in parliamentary elections, but none of them succeeded. In 1963, a Lebanese woman managed to enter parliament. She was appointed to complete the term of her father, who had died in a tragic accident. Similarly, in 1991, Nayla Moawad was appointed to parliament after her husband died during his term. Only in 1992, 1996, and 2000 were three women elected on their own merit.

17. In 2004, for the first time, women were appointed to the cabinet. Layla Solh, daughter of former Prime Minister Riad Solh, was named Minister of Industry; and Wafaa Hamza was appointed Minister of State. The Cabinet formed in July 2008 includes only one woman: Bahiya Hariri as education minister. Women are members of political parties, but men continue to dominate the leadership of these parties.²³⁵ However, women continue to be active in their communities, mainly through civil society organizations.

18. Women's representation in public office is relatively low. There are few female ambassadors (3.8 percent of the total), director-generals (13.6 percent of the total),²³⁶ and heads of municipalities (0.4 percent of all municipality heads).²³⁷ Currently, there are six female MPs (holding 4.7 percent of parliamentary seats in 2008) compared to three in 2004. **A new election law, passed by parliament in October 2008, rejected proposed reforms such as having a quota for women.**

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ "Constraints Facing Working Women in Lebanon: An Insider View," *Women in Management Review* 20 (7/8): 581, ABI/INFORM GLOBAL (2005).

²³² Lebanon, Third Report to CEDAW (2006).

²³³ UNDP and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, *The National Survey of Household Living Conditions* (2004), 60.

²³⁴ Ibid., 62.

²³⁵ UN-ESCWA, Arab Regional Conference, "10 Years after Beijing," report submitted by Lebanon (July 2004).

²³⁶ UN-ESCWA Web site (accessed September 2007).

²³⁷ Embassy of Lebanon, Washington, DC, correspondence, September 20, 2007.

19. **However, women have made remarkable advances in the legal profession:** 28.5 percent of lawyers and 37 percent of judges are now women.²³⁸ Nevertheless, women are prohibited from serving as judges in religious courts, which handle all cases of personal status, child custody, divorce, and marriage.

20. Women advocates report that there is an absence of funds allocated to institutional mechanisms or programs exclusively for women in the general national budget.²³⁹

Women's Legal Rights

21. **Women's rights advocates in Lebanon attribute the lack of advancement of women's rights to Lebanon's history of civil war and violence.** They claim that chronic strife has not only changed social attitudes and perspectives but that the issue of security constantly leads government to treat gender issues as a non-urgent matter.

22. **Lebanon ratified CEDAW²⁴⁰ in 1996 but placed a reservation on Article 16, which deals with marriage and family laws.** Lebanese women cannot give Lebanese citizenship to a non-Lebanese husband or to their children, whereas Lebanese men can automatically give citizenship to their children and foreign spouses.

23. **Lebanon recognizes 17 different religious groups that are each accorded their own religious law; these laws apply different personal status to men and women.** This is in contradiction to the constitution, which stipulates equality for all citizens. The introduction of an optional civil marriage in lieu of a religious one was proposed in 1998 by President Elias Hraoui. This proposal was vehemently resisted by religious leaders (both Christian and Muslim), and the parliament blocked it from consideration.

24. **Some areas of women's rights are dictated by common civil code** such as those that guarantee women the right to own businesses and accord their testimony in court equal weight as men's.

²³⁸ Embassy of Lebanon, Washington, DC, correspondence, October 1, 2007.

²³⁹ Lebanon, Third Report to CEDAW (2006).

²⁴⁰ The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

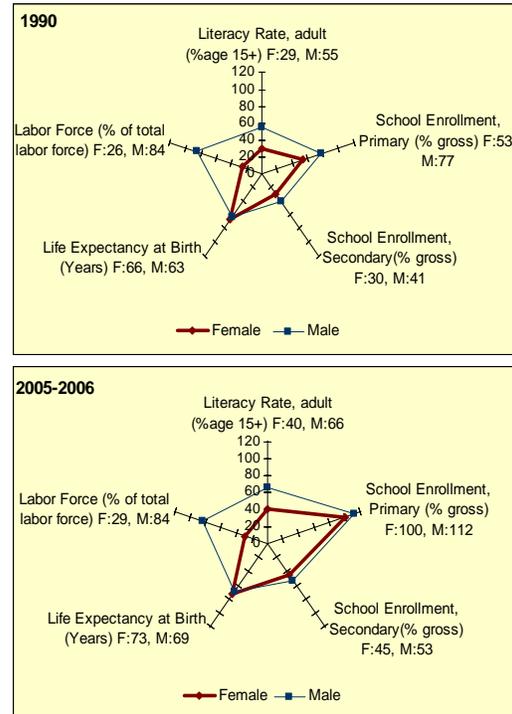
MOROCCO

Critical Issues

1. Despite notable progress, Morocco lags behind in women’s social indicators. The country has the second lowest female literacy (40 percent) and female youth literacy (60 percent) in the MENA region. It also has one of the widest gender gaps in school enrollment (see paragraphs 3 and 4).

2. Furthermore, maternal mortality remains one of the highest in the region, and the percentage of births attended by skilled health staff is much lower than the MENA average (see paragraphs 6 and 7).

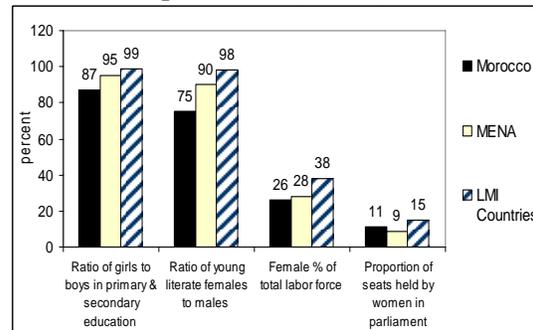
Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990–2006



Sources: World Bank Central database and Edstats (September 2008).

Note: Literacy data for 2005 is from 2004 and 1990 literacy data is from 1994.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3–Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2005-7)



Source: World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

Note: Youth literacy data for Morocco is from 2004.

LMI = Lower-middle income.

Development Issues

Education and Training

3. **The gender gap in illiteracy remains high:** the illiteracy rate among women is almost twice that among men. Moreover, about 40 and 19 percent of female and male youth, respectively, were illiterate in 2004.²⁴¹
4. **The gender gap in school enrollment has narrowed but remains one of the widest in the MENA region.** The ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education increased from 0.70 to 0.87 in 1990-2005. While the gender gap in tertiary enrollments narrowed significantly during this period, it was due mainly to a decline in boys' gross enrollment rate (from 14 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2006) rather than a rapid increase in girls' enrollment (from 8 to 11 percent in 1990-2006).²⁴²
5. The percentage of female teachers at the primary level increased from 37 to 47 percent in 2000-2006. This is a positive development as girls are more likely to attend school when there are female teachers available. The share of female teachers in secondary school has stayed constant at 33 percent.²⁴³

Health

6. The fertility rate among Moroccan women decreased from 4 to 2.4 bpw between 1990 and 2006.²⁴⁴ However, **maternal mortality remains one of the highest in MENA:** 240 deaths/100,000 live births (modeled estimate in 2005).²⁴⁵
7. The rate of prenatal consultations is 68 percent (48 percent in rural areas), and the percentage of births attended by skilled health staff increased dramatically from 31 percent in 1992 to 63 percent in 2004 (85 percent in urban versus 40 percent in rural areas).²⁴⁶ There is an even greater gap in access to health based on income. For example, only 30 percent of births are attended by skilled health staff in the lowest income quintile compared to 95 percent in the highest income quintile (2004).²⁴⁷
8. Available statistics on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are alarming as they are also an indication of women's vulnerability to the HIV virus. According to the 2003 CEDAW Shadow Report, 78 percent of STD cases were women.

Economic Participation

9. **Despite slow and unpredictable economic growth, and a conservative social and cultural environment, Moroccan women have made strides in labor force participation.** Women's economic activity rate increased from 26 percent in 2002 to 29 percent in 2006, getting closer to the 1999 rate of 31 percent.²⁴⁸

²⁴¹ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

²⁴² World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁴⁵ Ibid. The national estimate was 227/100,000 live births in 2003

²⁴⁶ WHO Statistical Information System (September 2008).

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

10. Though jobs for women increased in the service sector, a decline in women's employment in industry led to an overall drop in women's employment between 1999 and 2004. The decline in industrial activity was due mainly to the decline in the textile and garment industries, which was associated with the phasing out of the Multi-Fiber Agreement.²⁴⁹

11. Patterns of employment differ significantly along gender lines, with women engaged mainly in unpaid work and men in paid work. Of all employed women, 56 percent are unpaid family helpers, 31 percent are wage workers, and 11.7 percent are self-employed.²⁵⁰

12. Recent studies have noted limited and unequal access by women to finance, markets, networks, and training.²⁵¹ The share of female-owned firms is only 10 percent; 65 percent of the total are managed by the female owners.²⁵² Half of Morocco's women-owned enterprises are self-financed. Women entrepreneurs do not have sufficient information about the different financing schemes offered by banks and donor programs or other forms of institutional financing. Furthermore, businesswomen note a gap in their knowledge about financial management, analysis, and planning and do not have the same opportunities as men to be part of business networks, where information is shared.²⁵³

13. A comprehensive new labor law went into effect in 2004. As amended, the labor law stipulated the penalization of gender-based discrimination and equal pay for equal work. However, certain gender-specific mandates appeared to result in additional costs to employers, which may constrain women's employment opportunities. For example, the law restricts the number of hours that women can work.

Public Participation and Representation

14. The new cabinet (October 2007) includes seven women. This is the highest female representation in the cabinet since Morocco gained independence. There are now five women ministers and two secretaries of state. The female ministers head the ministries of (1) energy, mines, water and environment; (2) health; (3) youth and sports; 4) social development; and 5) culture.

15. Since 2001, Morocco has made major reforms to integrate women in its political system; women now have one of the largest parliamentary representations in the region. In the September 2007 parliamentary elections, a total of 34 seats, 10.5 percent of all seats, went to women (30 seats were reserved for women based on a quota system). Leaders of the recently elected Islamist party of Justice and Development have endorsed the new *Moudawana* (family law) and state that they do not promote religious extremism.²⁵⁴

16. Some political parties supported a "charter of honor" in the local elections in 2003, announcing that 20 percent of their candidates would be women. Despite these efforts, only 127 of 6,024 female candidates were elected, representing 0.55 percent of all elected local representatives. Nonetheless, female candidates in the 2003 elections were more successful than in the 1997 elections, in which 83 women succeeded. The next municipal elections will be held in September 2009.

17. Morocco's judiciary remains a difficult area for women to penetrate. Female judges are not yet permitted to serve in courts applying *Shari'a* law. Women represent 18 percent of the 3,082 judges.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ World Bank, *Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan after the End of the Multi-Fiber Agreement* (2006).

²⁵⁰ World Bank, *Gender and Employment in Morocco* (2007).

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² World Bank, *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region, 2007*.

²⁵³ World Bank, *Gender and Employment in Morocco* (2007).

²⁵⁴ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "The 2007 Moroccan Parliamentary Election," September 11, 2007 The *Moudawana* (family code) was reformed in 2004, granting women more rights in the areas of marriage and divorce.

²⁵⁵ Government of Morocco, Ministry of Justice, <http://ejustice.justice.gov.ma/justice/console/Uploads/Doc/FicheStat.pdf>.

Women's Legal Rights

18. **In February 2007, the Moroccan Parliament unanimously adopted the Nationality Code**, which grants Moroccan citizenship to children born to a Moroccan mother and a foreign father.

19. **Gender issues have taken center stage in Morocco in the past few years.** In 2004 King Mohammed VI initiated landmark reforms in the family code, the *Moudawana*. These granted women greater equality and justice in marriage and divorce, and in their status in the family. According to the new legislation, the family is placed under the joint responsibility of husband and wife. The new law no longer stipulates women's submission to the guardianship of a male family member, but calls instead for equality in rights and obligations.

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

21. As for child custody, earlier a woman could not be the legal guardian of her own children except in case of the father's death or loss of his legal capacity. The new legislation refers (for the first time in Moroccan history) to the International Agreements on Children's Rights and gives the woman the right to retain custody of her children under certain conditions, even upon remarrying or moving out of the area where her husband lives. Inheritance is also governed by Islamic law, which defines the shares that go to each family member. The proposed new law allows grandchildren on the daughter's side to inherit from their grandfather just as the grandchildren on the son's side do.

22. **Morocco is a front runner in the area of gender budgeting.** A large proportion of the government has been trained in gender budgeting, and the new finance law foresees the integration of gender issues across all sectors. The latest budget report included, for the first time, a chapter on gender budgets.

23. The revised 2003 Penal Code makes sexual harassment in the workplace a criminal offense.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Freedom House, *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa; Citizenship and Justice*, (2005).

SAUDI ARABIA

Critical Issues

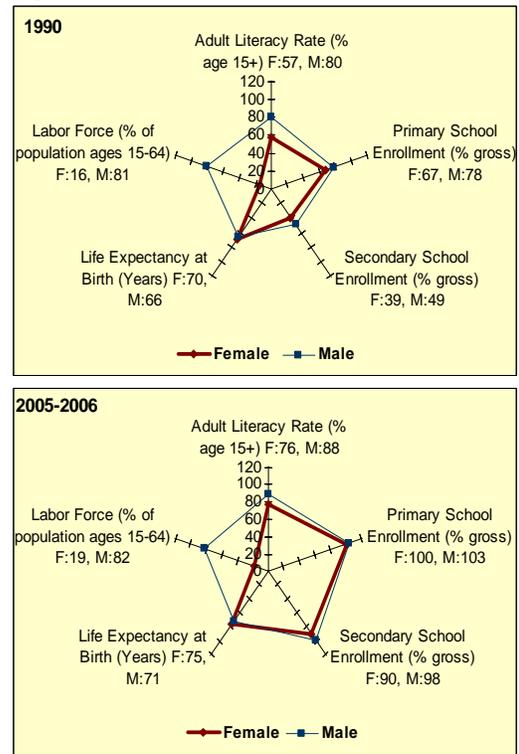
1. Saudi women do not have automatic access to public resources and services as citizens - they are required to go through a male guardian, typically a husband or a father. Regardless of her age a woman's guardian can block her right to travel, study, work, marry, obtain an ID or a passport, and undertake medical procedures. Nevertheless, in some areas such as education, female enrolments have risen substantially over time and gender gaps almost closed (see paragraph 5).

2. Textbooks and teachers enforce stereotyping of women and their role in Saudi society. The curriculum in girls' schools is different from that in boys' schools, based on what is "befitting for the nature of women." Saudi women are not given the opportunity to take subjects such as engineering, journalism, and architecture and have few options available in vocational and skills training. They are thus placed at a disadvantage to men as well as to their female counterparts in the region and the rest of the world who do not face similar constraints.

3. The electoral law of August 2004 did not explicitly ban women from participating in the 2005 municipal elections. However, municipal bylaws do not protect women's right to participate, and women were not allowed to vote in the 2005 municipal elections. The government cited lack of adequate facilities for women voters as the reason. Government officials have publicly announced that they endorse women's participation in the next elections in 2009; however, there are no signs of preparatory work being put in place for women to vote.

4. Saudi women need to work more than ever as high inflation is forcing many families to seek additional income. But their employment options in the private sector are few, and implementation of the new labor laws for women has not materialized. The minister of labor continues to face strong opposition from conservative groups in applying the new labor laws (see paragraph 14).

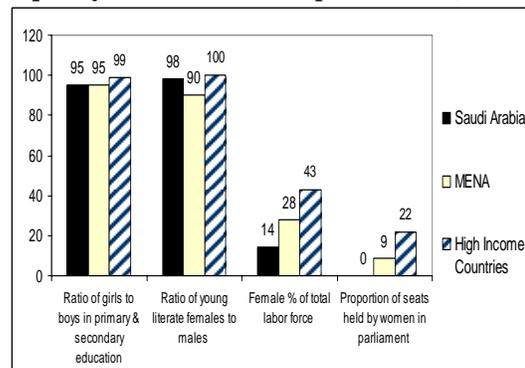
Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990-2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

Note: Literacy data for 1990 is for 1992; data for 2005-2006 is from 2004.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005-7)



Source: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008)

Note: Youth literacy data for Saudi Arabia is for 2004.

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **Saudi Arabia has made substantial gains in the education of women.** Gender gaps have almost closed in primary and secondary education, and women's share in enrollment and graduation in tertiary education surpasses that of men's (2005-2006).²⁵⁷

6. **In 2008, the first group of women graduated in law from a Saudi university.** While women still cannot practice law, the government has indicated that they can work in courts to assist female clients. This has still not happened.

7. **The educational curriculum and vocational training available for women does not prepare them for work; instead, it focuses on household duties and Islamic studies.** At the same time, almost all middle-income families require more than one income to maintain their living standards. Hence, there is a disconnect between what families need and what the legal and cultural environment permits.

8. **The building of colleges and universities for women (recently announced by the government) is of critical importance.** The shortage of public and private universities for women has caused a large number of young single women to stay at home, particularly as work opportunities remain limited.

Health

9. **The fertility rate has declined significantly but it remains high at 3.4 births per woman (bpw) (2006),** corresponding to a low contraceptive prevalence rate (21 percent in 2000).²⁵⁸

10. **Although low by regional standards, child and infant mortality rates (2006) remain the highest in the Gulf Cooperation Council.** Maternal mortality (modeled estimate of 18 deaths/100 000 live births in 2005) is relatively low.²⁵⁹ In contrast to the biologically expected pattern, the mortality rate of girls age one is higher than that for boys in the same age group (2005).²⁶⁰ Child health and mortality is closely linked to the mother's access to health care services.

Economic Participation

11. **Women's economic activity rate is low at 19 percent (2006).**²⁶¹ An estimated 70 percent of working women are expatriate female workers.²⁶² Currently, many expatriates are employed in jobs that Saudi women could perform, such as retail, manufacturing, and services.

²⁵⁷ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

²⁵⁸ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNDP, *Millennium Development Goals* (2005).

²⁵⁹ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² *The 2002 Saudi Arabia MDG Report. The 2006 MDG Report* estimates the share of nationals in the overall (not female) workforce to be 43 %.

12. **Women in the workforce are concentrated mainly in the education sector.**²⁶³ Female labor force participation is highest in the 25–34 age groups and is directly related to educational attainment. Marriage does not appear to be a major obstacle, as 69 percent of working women are married.²⁶⁴ However, there are incentives for married women to quit their jobs. For example, a woman who resigns because of marriage receives a benefit equal to 11 percent of her average annual salary for the years she has served.

13. **Female unemployment stands at 15 percent versus 5 percent for men (2006).**²⁶⁵ In contrast to men, women’s unemployment increases with higher levels of education: women with primary, secondary, and tertiary education account for 8, 42, and 50 percent, respectively, of all unemployed females (2002).²⁶⁶

14. **The government has drafted a new labor law aimed at enhancing women’s economic and employment opportunities.** However, implementation has not started, and many barriers restricting women’s economic activity remain such as written permission from a male guardian to work and to travel.

15. **In addition, strict segregation laws and special facilities for women employees can make it very costly for employers to hire females, especially in the private sector.** Employers have to provide separate premises, and sometimes transportation, for female employees. The new labor law would have employers subsidize childcare by requiring firms with 50 or more female employees to have childcare facilities. Also, the segregation law effectively bars women from attaining higher levels of management positions other than in female units, which have limited functions and responsibilities.

16. **Saudi women own 10 percent of real estate in major cities and have an estimated cash fund of SR 45 billion; 75 percent of that total is sitting idle in bank deposits.** According to a recent study by the Khadija bint Khuwailid Businesswomen’s Center, investment by Saudi businesswomen has reached approximately 21 percent of total investment. Women “own” about 4 percent of the total registered businesses in Saudi Arabia (40 percent of family-run companies).²⁶⁷ Many of these are among the country’s largest enterprises. However, women cannot be registered Board members even in their family businesses and have to be represented by a male.

Public Participation and Representation

17. **The first organization representing women’s empowerment was established in May 2008 in the Eastern Province—the Prince Sultan Center for Women’s Development.** In 2007, the King issued a decree appointing the first Saudi woman as president of a university.

18. **A few women hold subcabinet and senior government positions, mainly in the education, health, or social services sectors.** A small number of Saudi women hold executive positions in private sector firms, businesses, and international organizations.²⁶⁸ The Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry—after establishing a women’s wing in March 2004—has recently also allowed women members to vote although women cannot become Board members.

²⁶³ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNDP, *Millennium Development Goals* (2005).

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ “Businesswomen Keen to Play Their Role in Kingdom’s Development,” *Arab News*, March 19, 2007.

²⁶⁸ United Nations, *Millennium Development Goals: Report on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Riyadh 2002).

The Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry elected 2 women to its Board of Directors in 2005 (two other women were subsequently appointed by the Ministry of Commerce and Trade). Under high pressure women withdrew from running in the Board elections for the Chamber of Commerce of the Eastern Province.

19. **There are no women in the Majlis Al-Shoura.** Recently, three women were nominated as consultants on women's issues. Some women's rights activists have expressed concern that the selected women defend the status quo rather than support change.

20. **Writers and journalists, many of whom are women, as well as the media, have been vocal** regarding attitudes and traditions that are not based in Islam but are responsible for many problems Saudi women face.²⁶⁹

Women's Legal Rights

21. **Some positive developments are taking place.** Laws forbidding violence against women are being drafted and the National Human Rights Association has been raising awareness and conducting training for health and hospital workers to recognize signs of domestic abuse. In recent years women have been able to obtain ID cards and the number of women requesting them has been increasing. However, IDs cannot be obtained without the approval of a male guardian. ID cards serve as the basis to accessing many services such as obtaining a passport, opening a bank account or securing a bank loan. Un-accompanied women can now stay in hotels, making it easier for business women to travel.

22. **Legal matters pertaining to women are under the purview of Islamic courts that use their reading of religious law as the basis for decisions.** The Council of Senior Ulema makes the final interpretation of Islamic law in Saudi Arabia with the consent of the king. A man's testimony in court is equal to that of two women. A man may receive a divorce simply by stating it, while a woman must win a legal decision in court. Even if she is granted a divorce by the judge, the husband must still sign the divorce papers for the divorce to be effective.

23. **There has been significant reporting and highlighting of domestic abuse cases in the local media;** the National Human Rights Association and other NGOs have begun helping these victims and raising awareness about this issue. Female domestic workers remain at particular risk of human rights abuses. A 2008 Human Rights Watch report urged Saudi Arabia to implement labor, immigration, and criminal justice reforms to protect female domestic workers.

²⁶⁹ Samar Fatany, "The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," *Arab View*, (2003).

SYRIA

Critical Issues

1. Female unemployment stands at 21 percent for women versus 8 percent for men (2003). The unemployment rate is even higher among youth: 39 percent for young women ages 15-24 are unemployed compared to 21 percent for men (see paragraph 14).

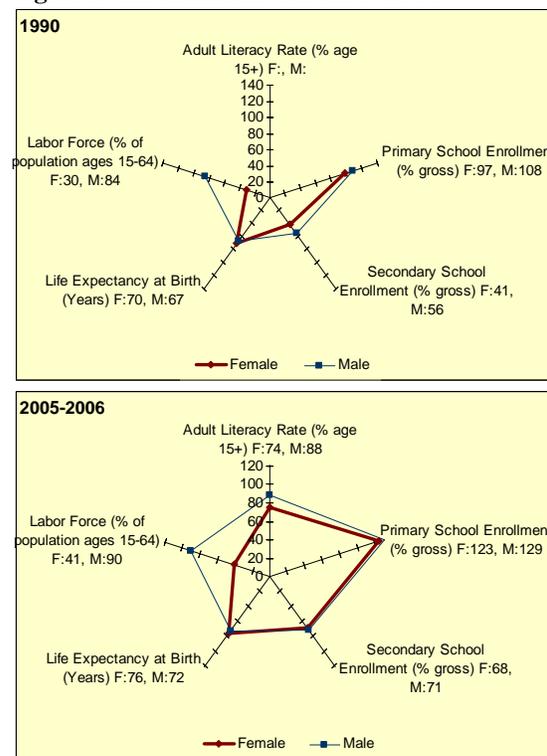
2. Women are restricted from certain types of work, and the employment of women during certain hours of the night is forbidden (see paragraph 13).

3. Educational attainment in Syria is largely affected by income, locality, and gender. Poor rural girls are most at risk for not having access to education (see paragraph 7).

4. The Syrian Constitution and Labor Law accord equality to men and women in all spheres of life and work. However, personal status laws and the penal code place women at a disadvantage to men contradicting these equality clauses (see paragraphs 22 and 23).

5. Violence against women, including honor killings, remains a critical issue. Women's organizations estimate that more than 200 women are murdered every year in "honor crimes." Murders considered to have been in defense of honor are not considered a "crime" under Syrian law, but an "offence." It carries a maximum penalty of a year's imprisonment, but could be reduced to a month by a judge (see paragraph 24).

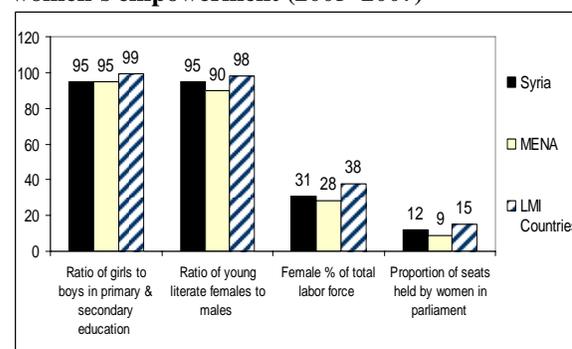
Figure 1: Social Indicators 1990–2006



Source: World Bank Central database and Estats (September 2008)

Note: There is no literacy data for 1990 and the 2006 literacy data is for 2004.

Figure 2: MDG 3 – Promote gender equality & women's empowerment (2005–2007)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008)

Note: Youth literacy data for Syria is for 2004.

LMI: Lower-middle income

Development Issues

Education and Training

6. **Seventy-four percent of women and 88 percent of men are literate (2004).**²⁷⁰ While the literacy rate among youth (ages 15-24) is much higher, alarmingly, both female and male youth literacy fell between 2002 and 2004; from 93 to 90 percent for females and from 97 to 95 percent for males.²⁷¹

7. **Educational attainment in Syria is largely affected by income, locality, and gender.** Data shows that female children in poor households living in rural areas are most at risk for being illiterate and having low access to basic education.²⁷²

8. Children in female-headed household are more likely than those in male-headed households to drop out of school to work (one of twelve in FHHs and one of 20 in MHHs). Given that the illiteracy rate among children aged 10-15 years is higher for girls than boys, it appears that girls who do not go to school in poor households are kept at home, often helping with domestic work.²⁷³

Health

9. While the fertility rate decreased from 3.7 bpw in 2000 to 3.2 bpw in 2006, it remains higher than the regional average of 2.9 bpw (2006).²⁷⁴ Fifty-eight percent of married women in age group 15-49 use contraceptives (2006).²⁷⁵

10. **The maternal mortality rate stands at 130 deaths per 100, 000 live births** (modeled estimate in 2005).²⁷⁶ Ninety-three percent of births are attended by skilled health staff (2006)²⁷⁷ and 84 percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care (2006).²⁷⁸ The prevalence of anemia among pregnant women is high at 39 percent (2005).²⁷⁹

Economic Participation

11. **Women's labor force participation increased from 36 percent in 2000 to 41 percent in 2006.** While this is now one of the highest in the region, it is significantly lower than male labor force participation of 90 percent.²⁸⁰

12. Women in urban areas are mainly employed in the public sector (70 percent of urban women's employment) while rural women are predominantly self-employed or unpaid workers (63 percent). On the other hand, men in urban areas mainly work in the private sector (44 percent of urban male employment), and rural men are predominantly self-employed or unpaid workers (43 percent).²⁸¹ Noteworthy, women

²⁷⁰ World Bank Edstats (September 2008).

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² UNDP, Poverty in Syria: 1996-2004 (2005).

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁷⁵ United Nations Millennium Development Goals Website (September 2008).

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Fafo, The Syrian Labor Market: Findings from the 2003 Unemployment Survey (2007).

in the public sector tend to be concentrated in low-skill jobs indicating a lack of access to management and decision-making positions.²⁸²

13. Women are restricted from certain types of work. For example, they cannot work in mines, quarries, metal foundries, and glass smelters. In addition, the employment of women during certain hours of the night is forbidden (with the exception of artists, actresses, stewardesses, airport workers, doctors, nurses and midwives).²⁸³

14. There is a significant gender gap in terms of job security: vulnerable employment accounts for 52 percent of women's and 40 percent of men's employment (2001).²⁸⁴ Furthermore, overall unemployment and the gender gap in unemployment are critical issues: 21 percent for women versus 8 percent for men (2003).²⁸⁵ The unemployment rate is even higher in the younger age groups (ages 15-24); 39 percent for women compared to 21 percent for men (2002).²⁸⁶ In contrast to men's unemployment which is higher in rural areas, women's unemployment is higher in urban areas (2003).²⁸⁷

15. Findings show that female-owned firms in Syria tend to hire more women than men. However, currently only 10 percent of Syrian firms are female-owned (the average for the region is 13 percent). Interestingly, 60 percent of female-owned firms are also managed by the owner. This is a rate comparable with male individual ownership and debunks the myth that women are owners in name only.²⁸⁸

16. Eight percent of all households in Syria are headed by women. While these households are not poorer than male-headed households, they are more vulnerable to economic shocks as their income sources are often irregular or insecure.

Public Participation and Representation

17. The National Women's Strategy aims at increasing women's empowerment, and the number of women holding decision-making posts in the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Special units in most ministries have been established to monitor the implementation of projects aimed at increasing women's participation within the ranks, but little is known about the level of implementation.

18. Syrian women gained their voting rights in 1953.²⁸⁹ **Currently, women account for 12 percent of parliamentarians (2008)** - higher than the regional average of 9 percent (2007) but lower than the 15 percent for other lower middle income countries (2007).

19. **Syria has a female vice-president.** In addition, there are two women ministers and two women deputy ministers in the cabinet (2008). The women ministers head the ministry of expatriates and the ministry of labor and social affairs. Women account for 7 percent of ambassadors.²⁹⁰

²⁸² Syrian Arab Republic, Second National Report on the Millennium Development Goals (2005).

²⁸³ CEDAW Report, Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2005).

²⁸⁴ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁸⁵ Fafo, The Syrian Labor Market: Findings from the 2003 Unemployment Survey (2007).

²⁸⁶ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

²⁸⁷ Fafo, The Syrian Labor Market: Findings from the 2003 Unemployment Survey (2007).

²⁸⁸ World Bank, *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region*, 2007.

²⁸⁹ Women and the People's Assembly in the Syrian Arab Republic. A research conducted in cooperation with UNIFEM & SCFA.

²⁹⁰ Syrian Arab Republic, Second National Report on the Millennium Development Goals (2005).

20. Women can be found in all posts in the public sector and the judiciary although women's participation within the judiciary and the legal sector remains relatively low. Women account for 13 percent of judicial officers and there are currently 170 female judges. Furthermore, women account for 14 percent of total State advocates²⁹¹ and their share in trade unions is 20 percent.²⁹²

21. Currently, Syrian media concentrates on the traditional role of woman as mother, wife, housewife and student, and focuses on women's problems not as being key social issues but from a sympathetic perspective concerned with issues of divorce, personal status law, custody, alimony, dower and others.²⁹³

Women's Legal Rights

22. **Syria acceded to CEDAW in 2003.** The Syrian Constitution and Labor Law accord equality to men and women in all spheres of life and work. However, personal status laws and the penal code place women at a disadvantage to men contradicting these equality clauses. No advancements have been made to amend those laws that discriminate and compromise women's status of equality with men.

23. The following are some discriminatory laws. Syrian women married to non-Syrians are unable to give their nationality to their children whereas men are granted that right. In addition, women of all ages are required to have male guardians to contract their marriages, while adult men are free to contract their own marriages. If an adult woman marries without her guardian's consent; the guardian may invalidate her marriage.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, the penal code discriminates against women in some of its articles such as in adultery cases and honor crimes.²⁹⁵

24. **Women's organizations estimate that more than 200 women are murdered every year by brothers, cousins or fathers in so called "honor crimes."** Murders considered to have been in defense of honor are not considered a "crime" under Syrian law, but an "offence." It carries a maximum penalty of a year's imprisonment, but could be reduced to a month by a judge.²⁹⁶ In August 2008, the first official shelter for battered and abused women was opened.²⁹⁷

25. Legal reform in Syria includes an increase of maternity leave to 120 days for the first child, 90 days for the second child and 75 days for the third child. Furthermore, women are now able to pass their pension to their husbands.²⁹⁸

²⁹¹ CEDAW Report, Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2005).

²⁹² Syrian Arab Republic, Second National Report on the Millennium Development Goals (2005).

²⁹³ Women and the People's Assembly in the Syrian Arab Republic. A research conducted in cooperation with UNIFEM & SCFA.

²⁹⁴ UNDP, TOOLKIT The Importance of Gender Mainstreaming in Syria.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ BBC News, *Honour Crime Fear of Syria Women*, October 12, 2007.

²⁹⁷ Women's ENews, *Syrian Case Tests Tolerance on Killing Kinswomen*, September 7, 2008.

²⁹⁸ UNDP, TOOLKIT The Importance of Gender Mainstreaming in Syria.

WEST BANK AND GAZA

Critical Issues

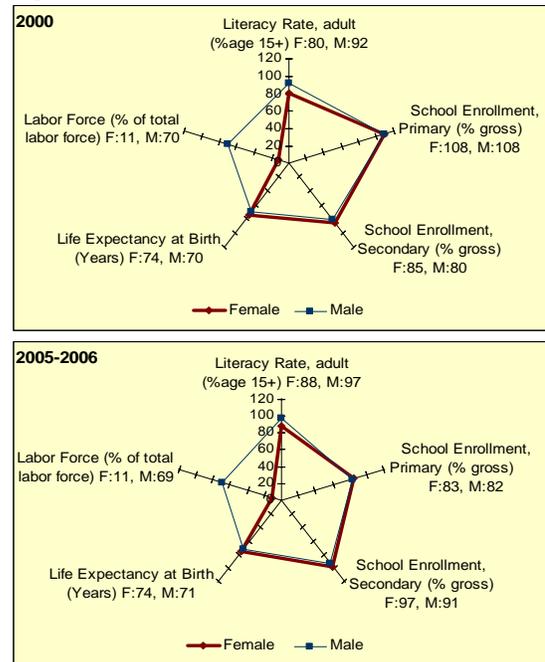
1. Social indicators for both males and females are at risk for worsening. Delays at checkpoints and other restrictions on movement in Palestinian society as well as a rising trend of house demolitions and displacement have affected access to health care and employment opportunities, especially for women (see paragraphs 7, 8, and 14).

2. Palestinian women suffer from malnutrition, especially when pregnant and nursing.²⁹⁹ Women in refugee camps are particularly vulnerable (see paragraph 8).

3. Participation of women in the labor force is the lowest in the region—15.7 percent, one of the lowest in the world.³⁰⁰ Unemployment is high for both men and women, especially for young females and women with higher education; 38 percent of women who finished 13 years of education or more are unemployed versus 18 percent of men³⁰¹ (see paragraph 11 and 13).

4. Violence against women remains a major issue (see paragraph 23).

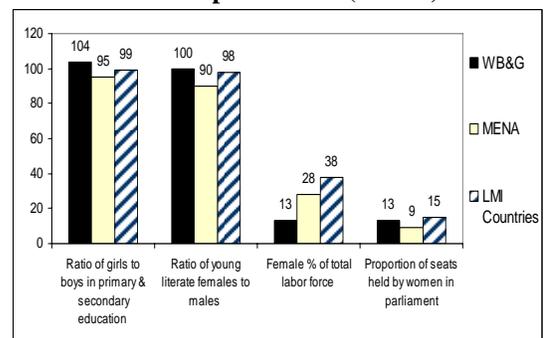
Figure 1. Social Indicators 2000-2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008)

Notes: Due to lack of data for 1990, 2000 was used for comparison. Also, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates female labor force participation to be 16 percent (2007)

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2005-7)



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

Note: The PLC is considered the national parliament.

Youth literacy data is for 2004.

LMI = Lower-middle income.

²⁹⁹ UN News Center, “Palestinian Women Experience Major Poverty Induced by loss of Spouses,” February 15, 2005.

³⁰⁰ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey* (October–December 2007).

³⁰¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Press Release on the occasion of the International Woman’s Day, March 8, 2008.

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **The gender gap in primary school enrollment has closed, and women's secondary and tertiary enrollment exceeds men's** (2005). Greater effort is required to keep young men in secondary school. More girls enroll in vocational education than previously, accounting for 27 percent of all vocational school students in 2002 compared to 18 percent in 1997. Even so, there is still a gender gap in the various fields of vocational education.³⁰²

Health

6. **There has been a sudden upturn in the number of underage marriages in the last few years.** Among 50- to 54-year-old-women, 7.5 percent report marrying at the age of 14 or under. Only 4.3 percent of 20-24 year old women report the same compared to 12.1 percent of 15–19 year old girls.³⁰³

7. The percentage of women who received antenatal care increased from 92.9 to 98.8 percent in 1996–2006, while postnatal care increased from 19.7 to 30 percent in 1996–2006.³⁰⁴ The share of births delivered at home, on the way to hospitals, or at military checkpoints is 3.4 percent—4.8 percent in the West Bank and 1.1 percent in Gaza.³⁰⁵ **There are a number of preventable cases of maternal and infant deaths.** For example, due to delays at checkpoints, women have had to give birth while waiting to pass through to hospitals or health centers; there were 69 such cases in 2000–2006, resulting in the deaths of 5 women and 35 fetuses.³⁰⁶ And some women are not able to reach medical facilities for prenatal and postnatal care. Fifty-three percent of households refer to the closure measures, 54 percent to military checkpoints, and 16 percent to the separation wall as impediments to accessing health services.³⁰⁷

8. **Checkpoints and curfews have also affected the quality and quantity of food delivered to the Palestinian Territories.** Refugee women are severely malnourished as they have less access to agricultural land. Refugees are three times more dependent on food assistance than non-refugees.³⁰⁸

9. The number of family planning clinics increased from 97 to 197 in 1997–2003; the Ministry of Health provides contraceptives at affordable rates.³⁰⁹ These measures have helped decrease the fertility rate from 6.3 bpw in 1992 to the 2006 rate of 4.6 bpw—still third highest in MENA.³¹⁰ A key factor driving high fertility is a preference for more children rather than a religious imperative or family pressure.³¹¹

10. The prevalence of post-trauma stress disorder among children, especially girls, is a serious concern.³¹²

³⁰² United Cities and Local Governments Website, http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/docs/PALESTINE_English.pdf (accessed March 2008).

³⁰³ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Palestinian Family Health Survey 2006* (December 2007).

³⁰⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Palestinian Family Health Survey 2006* (April 2008).

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ WHO, *Health Conditions in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and in the Occupied Syrian Golan* (May 2007).

³⁰⁷ ILO, *Report of the Director-General on the Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories* (2005), para. 31.

³⁰⁸ University of Geneva, *The Role of International and Local Aid During the Second Intifada, Report VII* (Aug 03–Feb 04).

³⁰⁹ Palestine Ministry of Planning, UNDP, and Birzeit University, *Palestine Human Development Report* (2004).

³¹⁰ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³¹¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006* (December 2007).

³¹² UNRWA, *Annual Report of the Department of Health* (2003), 5.

Economic Participation

11. Participation of Palestinian women in the labor force remains low at 15.7 percent (2007).³¹³ Key factors include a weak economy, reluctance on the part of employers to employ women, and socio-cultural barriers to women's employment. Women's economic activity rate is higher in the West Bank than in Gaza (17.9 and 11.5 percent, respectively, for females, ages 15 and over).

12. Palestinian women's economic participation is highest in the 35–44 age group (22 percent).³¹⁴ Women work mainly in services (49 percent of female employment) and agriculture (34 percent), whereas men work in services (33 of male employment) and commerce (22 percent).³¹⁵

13. **Despite their low economic activity, female unemployment (ages 15+) remains high at 22 percent** (2007); however, it is lower than male unemployment (23 percent).³¹⁶ Unemployment is particularly high among youth—43 percent for young women and 34 percent for young men (2006).³¹⁷ Unlike male unemployment, female unemployment increases with higher levels of education: 38 percent of women versus 18 percent of men who finished 13 years of education or more are unemployed.³¹⁸

14. **One reason for the high unemployment is the continuous restrictions on movement and access.** In the West Bank, Palestinians face more than a total of 570 physical obstacles including checkpoints, flying checkpoints, earth mounds, road blocks, and trenches, as well as a matrix of administrative procedures.

15. **Poverty rates are high and female-headed households are particularly at risk;** the poverty rate among female-headed households is 30 percent compared with 20 percent among male-headed households (2002).³¹⁹ Even within male-headed households, the burden of responsibility is felt most severely by women.

16. A recent report shows that female-owned firms in the West Bank and Gaza (20 percent of all firms) have recently created more jobs than male-owned firms. Female-owned firms are more likely to perceive telecommunications and access to land and to workers as binding constraints to their businesses, while male-owned firms are slightly more likely to report corruption as a constraint.³²⁰

Public Participation and Representation

17. Women played a crucial role in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections and currently occupy 13 percent of seats in the PLC. The election of women to the PLC is important as it shows the possibility for and social acceptance of women in positions of leadership. However, the PLC is not functional for various political reasons; additionally, many of its elected members, including women, have been under Israeli detention. Despite these circumstances, women parliamentarians have played an important role in influencing national politics.

³¹³ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labor Force Surveys* (2006 and 4th Quarter 2007).

³¹⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population, Housing and Establishment Census 2007*, April 2007.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Palestinian Labor Force Survey* (2006).

³¹⁸ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Press Release on the occasion of the International Woman's Day, March 8, 2008.

³¹⁹ Palestine Ministry of Planning, UNDP, and Birzeit University, *Palestine Human Development Report* (2004).

³²⁰ World Bank, *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (2007).

18. Granted voting rights in 1945, Palestinian women have always played an active political role. They have been involved in campaigning, and organizing rallies and demonstrations. Women's participation, both as candidates and as voters was high in all stages of the 2005–6 local elections. For example, in the third stage of the municipal elections, women accounted for 558 out of 2,274 candidates.³²¹

19. The Palestinian Unity Government's cabinet, formed in March 2007, included two women. In response to the seizure of Gaza by Hamas militants, a new cabinet was appointed by presidential decree in July 2007. **The July 2007 cabinet includes three women heading four ministries** (the ministries of Tourism, Women's Affairs, Education and Higher Education, and Youth and Sports).

20. Women account for 16 percent of lawyers, 13 percent of prosecutors, and 10 percent of judges (2005).³²² In addition, women account for 11 percent of doctors and 17 percent of dentists (2005).

21. **Women's issues take a back seat to issues of security.** In times of stability, women's rights organizations come to the forefront. There are several women's movements including the feminist, nationalist, and the religious women's movement. While different, their common ground is resistance to the occupation.

Women's Legal Rights

22. Fifty-six percent of Palestinians think the government should do more to prevent discrimination toward women.³²³ A 2008 poll conducted by the Arab World for Research and Development found a strong support (82 percent) for amending laws that allow arbitrary divorce, polygamy, and honor killings.

23. **Violence against women remains a major issue.** In 2005, a large proportion of married women were exposed to at least one incident of psychological (62 percent of respondents), physical (23 percent), and sexual (11 percent) violence by their husbands; 26 percent of men report being subjected to psychological violence by their wives.³²⁴ Human Rights Watch has documented instances of rape victims being forced to marry assailants and of light sentences for men who kill female relatives suspected of adultery. There have been 51 cases of honor killings in the past three years.³²⁵ The actual number may be higher as many such cases go unreported.

24. The Declaration of Palestinian Independence commits explicitly to the advancement of women and their entitlement to equal rights. Since Palestine does not have state status, it is not eligible to ratify the CEDAW, but both governmental and nongovernmental organizations have taken the initiative of reporting to the UN CEDAW Committee.

25. Unlike women in most Arab countries, **Palestinian women are able to give their nationality to their husbands and children.** Also, passports can be obtained without the permission of a guardian.

26. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was created in 2004. The Palestine Women's Research and Document Center was created in 2006 with the objective of serving as both a documentation and resource center and as an observatory, giving a voice to Palestinian women at the regional and international levels.

³²¹ UNDP-POGAR Web site, "Elections Country Profile-Palestine" (accessed March 20, 2008).

³²² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (March 2008).

³²³ Survey by World Public Opinion (2008).

³²⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (March 2008).

³²⁵ "Killing for Honor — a Deadly Part of a Larger Trend," *Palestine Monitor*, August 2, 2007.

YEMEN

Critical Issues

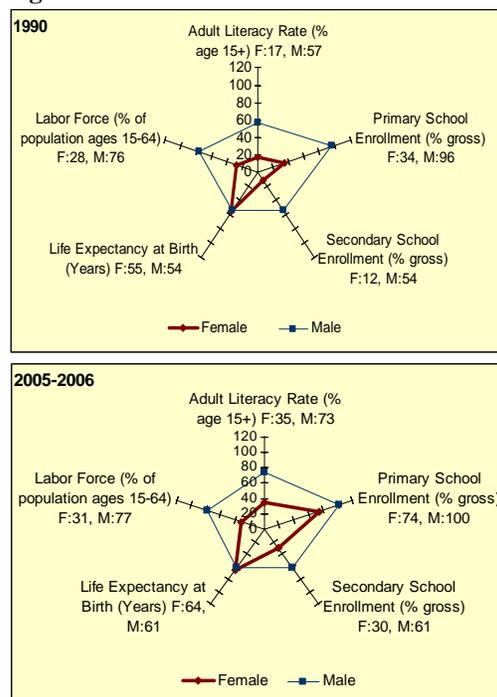
1. Yemen was ranked last out of 128 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2007.

2. Female literacy (35 percent) and school enrollment are exceptionally low, both by regional standards and in comparison to other low-income countries. Alarming, 51 percent of girls ages 6–14 are not in school (see paragraphs 6 and 7).

3. Early marriage remains high, especially in rural areas—19 percent of women under the age of 19 are married (2006).³²⁶ Yemen does not have a minimum legal age for marriage. Parliament is currently considering a proposal to set a minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years (paragraph 22).

4. Yemen has the highest fertility rate in the region at 5.6 bpw in 2006 (paragraph 13), and has the second highest maternal mortality rate in MENA estimated at 366 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2006 (see paragraph 8 and 9).³²⁷

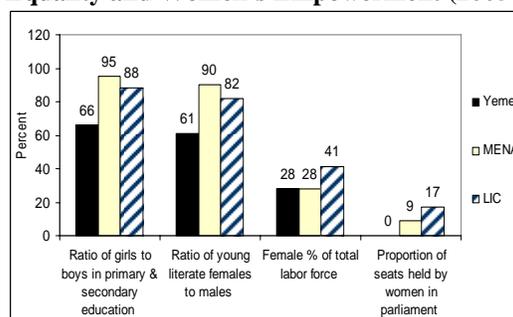
Figure 1. Social Indicators 1990–2006



Sources: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008).

Note: Secondary school enrollment data for 1990 is from 1992 and 1990 literacy data is for 1994.

Figure 2. MDG Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2005–7)



Source: World Bank Central Database and Edstats (September 2008); Yemen Central Statistical Organization (2008).

LIC = Low-income countries.

³²⁶ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2007*.

³²⁷ Ibid.

Development Issues

Education and Training

5. **Yemen performs poorly on female education indicators.** School enrollment for females remains exceptionally low, and girls' school dropout is high. Major constraints include early marriage, social restrictions, issues of transportation, and cost of schooling.
6. **Yemen has the lowest female literacy rate in the region** (35 percent in 2005-06). The urban-rural disparity is wide: 60 versus 24 percent of urban and rural women, respectively, are literate.³²⁸ The ratio of young literate girls to boys is 0.61 (2006).³²⁹
7. **Fifty-one percent of girls, ages 6–14 are not in school.**³³⁰ Despite significant improvement in girls' education over the last decade, girls' enrollment is only 68 percent of male enrollment at the primary level and 51 percent of male enrollment at the secondary level (2006)³³¹. The gender gap is even greater at the tertiary level (38 females/100 males in 2006).³³²

Health

8. **Female health data for Yemen are alarming.** Despite a significant drop in maternal mortality, Yemen still has the second highest rate in MENA and one of the highest in the world (366 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005).³³³ Only 45 percent of pregnant women receive pre-natal care (2005) and only 26 percent of women nationwide give birth under medical supervision (2004).³³⁴ Seventy-seven percent of women deliver at home (2003).³³⁵
9. In addition, **Yemen has the highest fertility rate (5.6 bpw in 2006) and the second highest adolescent fertility rate (married women aged 15-19) in the region.**³³⁶ The contraceptive prevalence rate is only 23 percent (2003)—the second lowest in MENA.³³⁷ Since January 2007, the Ministry of Health has been offering free contraceptives in all its facilities.
10. Child mortality is higher among boys than girls in urban areas – keeping with the biologically expected pattern. In rural areas, on the other hand, the girls' mortality is higher than boys' (2004),³³⁸ indicating poor care and nutrition for girls in these areas.
11. Female genital mutilation is not as prevalent as in Djibouti or Egypt but it does occur in the coastal areas of the country (38 percent in 2003).³³⁹

³²⁸ The Republic of Yemen, *Sixth National Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW* (December 2006).

³²⁹ The Republic of Yemen, Central Statistics Organization (August 2008).

³³⁰ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Women's Status from a Gender Perspective 2007* (2008).

³³¹ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2007*.

³³² The Republic of Yemen, Central Statistics Organization (August 2008).

³³³ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2007*. WHO's modeled estimate for Yemen's maternal mortality in 2005 is 430 per 100,000 live births.

³³⁴ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2005* and the *Sixth Report to CEDAW* (2007).

³³⁵ The Republic of Yemen, *Sixth Report to CEDAW* (2007).

³³⁶ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ *Yemen Statistical Yearbook 2006*.

³³⁹ Yemen, *Family Health Survey* (2003).

Economic Participation

12. **Yemen's female labor force participation rate is 31 percent (2006)—almost equal to the MENA average of 32 percent but much lower than other low-income countries (60 percent).**³⁴⁰ Women's employment is mainly in the agriculture sector (36 percent of female employment in 2004).³⁴¹ Unemployment for women is very high at 46 percent compared to 13 percent for men (2004).³⁴²

13. **Paid domestic labor is a growing sector for women's employment in Yemen.** Within the domestic work wage ranking, Yemeni women are the worst paid when compared to female workers of other nationalities. In general, domestic workers in Yemen complain about strenuous workloads, low or delayed payment of salaries, isolation, lack of legal rights, and physical and mental abuse.³⁴³

14. The incidence of poverty for female-headed households (18 percent of Yemeni households) is not higher than male-headed households mainly because FHHs receive four times more income transfers than MHHs. Interestingly, Yemeni FHHs allocate resources more efficiently for the welfare of the family than do MHHs. For example, FHHs spend more on education and less on goods such as tobacco and qat.³⁴⁴

15. According to the World Bank Study on "The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship (2007)," Yemeni women entrepreneurs are facing constraints such as access to or cost of finance, access to land, and the legal system.³⁴⁵ A Businesswomen's Council was established in 2007 to promote women's entrepreneurship. Furthermore, some banks have created "women's sections" to facilitate women's access to credit.

Public Participation and Representation

16. **There is only one woman in parliament, accounting for 0.3 percent of parliamentary seats (2008).**³⁴⁶ The Shura Council includes two women (2008). The President proposed a 15 percent quota for women in parliament but it is not clear how this system will be implemented.

17. Two women applied to run for the presidency in the 2006 elections but their applications did not receive the required 5-percent minimum endorsement of parliament and the Shura Council. Local elections were held in the same year and women attained only 0.5 percent of the membership in local government councils.³⁴⁷ Voter registration records for the 2006 elections show that women are participating in higher numbers than previously: 42 percent in 2006 versus 15 percent in 1993.³⁴⁸ Women are also more active in local organizations accounting for 55 percent of the leaders of these organizations.³⁴⁹

18. **Currently, there are two women ministers in the cabinet,** one heading the Ministry of Human Rights and the other, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. Sixteen ministries have established women's departments. Gender audits have been conducted in 6 ministries and a gender budgeting department has been established in the Ministry of Finance.

³⁴⁰ World Bank Central Database (September 2008).

³⁴¹ The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2007*.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ ILO, *Mapping Study on Women Domestic Workers in Yemen* (2006).

³⁴⁴ World Bank, *Yemen Poverty Assessment* (2007).

³⁴⁵ World Bank, *The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship* (2007).

³⁴⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, Women in National Parliaments (August 2008).

³⁴⁷ "Yemeni Women Excluded from High Political Positions," *Culture and Society*, June 2, 2007.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

19. The first female judge was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2006.

Women's Legal Rights

20. The Constitution of Yemen contains a number of important articles relating to women's rights.³⁵⁰ The signing of CEDAW in 1984 (with only one reservation to the article on arbitration) was one of the first serious acknowledgments of the need to address gender inequality in Yemen. However, some Yemeni laws are in conflict with CEDAW and the constitution. The Personal Status Laws, for example, give men the right to consent to the wives' work outside the home; the law has obvious consequences for women's independent participation in the economy. Furthermore, Yemeni men have the right to restrict their dependents' movements, particularly their wives' and unmarried adult daughters'. Yemeni women cannot give Yemeni citizenship to a non-Yemeni husband or to their children.

21. In August 2007, the cabinet approved the amendments to 10 laws (endorsed by the President) containing discriminatory articles against women.³⁵¹ Parliament has approved four of these, including equal terms for retirement (compulsory at age 60—optional for women at 55—or after 35 years of service), 70 days of maternity leave with protection from being fired while on leave, and the eligibility of both wife and husband (as long as the husband chooses the pension of one wife) to each other's pension.

22. One critical issue that requires attention is the lack of a minimum legal age for marriage. Early marriage remains high, especially in rural areas—19 percent of women under the age of 19 are married (2006).³⁵² Parliament is currently considering a proposal to set a minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years.

³⁵⁰ Article 19 guarantees the right of equality of opportunity to all citizens in the political, economic, social, and cultural domains. Article 27 states that there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 38 states that Yemenis are free to move around the country without restrictions. In addition, Article 42 of the Labor Law states that women have equal rights in employment, wages, training, rehabilitation, and social insurance.

³⁵¹ The laws include Pleadings and Civil Implementation Law, Diplomatic Law, Personal Status Code, Labor Law, Police and Prisons Law, Insurance, Pension and Social Security Law, Civil Law, and Crime and Penalty Law.

³⁵² The Republic of Yemen, Women's National Committee, *Report on the Situation of Women in Yemen 2007*.

Gender and Transport in the Middle East and North Africa

Everywhere, transport is key to the Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to gender. Better access to transport helps women reach employment opportunities, increasing family income, and reducing poverty (Goal 1). Better access reduces the time girls spend on household activities such as transporting water, fuel, and food and boosting female primary education enrollment and gender parity in education (Goals 2 and 3). Better transport helps pregnant women gain access to health services, and reduces maternal, infant, and child mortality (Goals 4 and 5).³⁵³ And it eases women's access to decision-making centers, promoting their participation in government (a key indicator for Goal 3). The World Bank already assigns transport an important role in women's empowerment. The purpose of this note is to summarize the existing literature inside and outside the Bank and to draw some lessons for the Middle East and North Africa region.

The main messages are the following:

- Good transport is key to women's health, education, and economic empowerment—in MENA as in the rest of the world.
- Women's needs differ from men's for urban transport, for rural transport, and for safety in transport—in MENA as in the rest of the world.
- Social, cultural, and traditional factors in MENA create additional challenges for women—these are specific to the region.

Transport's Links to Women's Health, Education, and Empowerment

Regional data support the global link between access to safe, affordable transportation and women's health and education.

Maternal mortality drops as rural accessibility to transport rises. Except for Djibouti, the countries with maternal mortality rates above 200 deaths per 100,000 live births—the Republic of Yemen, Morocco, and Iraq—also have very low rural access indexes (the proportion of the population living within 2 kilometers of an all-weather road). By contrast, countries with the lowest maternal mortality rates—Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar—have the highest rural access indexes. Country reports support the link. The Egypt Gender Assessment reports that a few maternal deaths each year are due to lack of transport, and a project in Morocco highlights that one of the most tangible benefits of rural roads is lower maternal mortality.^{354, 355}

Low rural accessibility also tends to mean large gender disparities in education. A study in rural Morocco found that a paved road in a community increased girls' school attendance much more than boys': from 21 percent to 48 percent for girls against 58 percent to 76 percent for boys. The study also found that lack of transport can make the direct cost of schooling considerably higher for girls as parents must pay higher

³⁵³ World Bank, *Gender and Transport Resource Guide* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006).

³⁵⁴ World Bank, *Egypt Gender Assessment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003).

³⁵⁵ World Bank, *Morocco Rural Roads Project Assessment Document* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004). A 1998 study of two rural roads in Morocco found that the villagers considered reduction of maternal mortality to be one of the most tangible benefits of the road.

costs if they do not want their daughters to walk long distances to school.³⁵⁶ Another study in 27 rural Moroccan provinces found that cutting water transport time (increasing water access from 20 to 50 percent) helped raise girls' primary enrollment from 30 to 51 percent.³⁵⁷ In rural areas of Yemen, lack of transport is a main reason for girls' significantly lower primary school enrollment—30 percent against 73 percent for boys.³⁵⁸ Few female teachers are willing to accept jobs in rural areas that lack basic transport, further undermining girls' already low school enrollment.

Transport is important for women's access to economic opportunities everywhere. It is even more crucial in MENA. If female economic activity in MENA were to reach the levels predicted for the region's education, fertility, and age profile; the average household earnings would rise as much as 25 percent.³⁵⁹ However, female labor force participation in MENA is the lowest in the world, and women often report transport as a constraint in accessing jobs.³⁶⁰ MENA's transport infrastructure has neither kept pace with its rapid population growth,³⁶¹ nor is it sufficiently gender sensitive.³⁶²

Consider women's entrepreneurship, an important avenue for private sector growth and women's employment: a survey in MENA finds that female-owned firms are more likely than male-owned firms to report transport as a severe constraint.³⁶³ In Saudi Arabia, 23 percent of female-owned firms report transportation as a severe barrier, compared with only 13 percent of male-owned firms.³⁶⁴ In the West Bank and Gaza, 54 percent of female-owned firms report transport as a constraint, though male-owned firms fare little better. And in Lebanon, lack of infrastructure creates high transportation costs—a main obstacle to female-owned firms for accessing domestic markets.³⁶⁵ Women who participate in the microcredit schemes in Lebanon report difficulty in organizing themselves—especially if distance and transportation are problematic, as in agribusiness.³⁶⁶

Female employees also seem to be more affected by transport than males. Investment climate assessment data show that women, especially unskilled women, live closer to work. Among unskilled female workers (with secondary education or less), 31 percent live within 3 kilometers of their firms, against 20 percent of skilled female workers (with completed secondary school), 22 percent of unskilled male workers, and just 17 percent of skilled male workers. Female workers also spend more time commuting to work, though this difference narrows at higher levels of education.³⁶⁷

³⁵⁶ World Bank, *Engendering Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001); S. Khandker, V. Lavy, and D. Filmer, "Schooling and Cognitive Achievements of Children in Morocco. Can the Government Improve Outcomes?" Discussion Paper 264 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1994).

³⁵⁷ World Bank, *Yemen Country Assistance Strategy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006).

³⁵⁸ UNDP, "Persistent Inequalities" (New York: UNDP, 2008); <http://www.undp.org/ye/Inequalities.php>.

³⁵⁹ See the World Bank, *Gender and Development in the MENA* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).

³⁶⁰ E. Doumato and M. Posusney, *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy, and Society* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

³⁶¹ World Bank, "Transportation in MENA Sector Brief" (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 2007).

³⁶² World Bank, *Gender and Development in the MENA* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).

³⁶³ World Bank, *Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007). The statement holds in Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and West Bank and Gaza.

³⁶⁴ World Bank, *Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007).

³⁶⁵ E. Isaia, "The Microcredit Sector in Lebanon: Al Majmoua Experience" (Turin, Italy: University of Turin, 2005).

³⁶⁶ International Finance Corporation, "Gender Entrepreneurship Markets Country Brief—Lebanon" (Washington, DC: IFC, 2007)

³⁶⁷ Presentation by N. Benhassine, "Firm Ownership and Gender in MENA: Evidence from the ICA Data" (Washington, DC: World Bank, August 2007). The average speed of transport to work for women and men with secondary education and less is 36 kilometers per hour and 52 kilometers per hour, respectively; it is 40 kilometers per hour for women and 43 kilometers per hour for men who have completed secondary education or more

Women's Different Needs for Urban Transport, Rural Transport, and Safety in Transport

In Middle East and North Africa, lagging public transport in urban areas produces harsher consequences for women than for men, as women are far more dependent on such systems. In Algeria, for example, many women rely on public transport to get to work because private transport is costly. In Iran, inadequate public transport has fostered dependence on taxis—not always a congenial arrangement for women—as the most common means of getting around. In Egypt, 55 percent of working women in urban areas need one to two hours to reach work; the long commute time can be particularly burdensome for married women with families.³⁶⁸

These findings are in line with global trends: Public transport systems are routed and scheduled mainly to serve men's commuting needs; they do not serve women in the multiple tasks they perform as mothers, producers, and entrepreneurs.³⁶⁹ As women attempt to fulfill both productive and reproductive roles, they may value flexible times and routes in public transport structures.³⁷⁰ The urban poor, with its large proportion women and members of female-headed households, cannot afford public transport and must use other modes of travel, such as walking or riding bicycles. Today, 73 percent of World Bank transport funding is for roads and highways, mainly in rural and interurban areas. Urban transport projects represent less than 10 percent of the transport portfolio.³⁷¹ The efforts under way to invest more in urban transport must integrate the needs and constraints of women. Perhaps MENA can follow Europe's example as it tries to make city transport systems more gender friendly by taking innovative measures such as building child care centers closer to public transport routes .

Additionally, women's different needs for transport in rural areas must be addressed. Although only 43 percent of MENA's population is rural, an estimated 70 percent of the region's poverty is concentrated in rural areas.³⁷² Since gender disparities in access to education, health facilities, and economic opportunities are much wider in rural areas, transport issues are especially crucial. Rural women may value better paths in the village and better access to intermediate means of transport such as bicycles as much as they do motorized transport. At the center of women's needs is rural transport's link with agriculture. Globally, women are more likely than men to work in agriculture.³⁷³ In fact, MENA is the only region where women's employment in agriculture has significantly increased in the last decade—from 33 percent of total female employment in 1996 to 39 percent in 2006. Meanwhile, men's employment in agriculture has fallen, following the global trend.³⁷⁴

The feminization of agriculture in the Middle East, now with the world's largest female share in agriculture,³⁷⁵ makes it urgent to better understand the transport needs of women in agriculture. Agriculture remains the most important sector for rural income generation,³⁷⁶ and evidence from India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines shows that roads lead to more productive agriculture. With better transport, MENA's women in agriculture could increase their incomes by purchasing agricultural inputs and selling their own produce without intermediaries.

³⁶⁸ E. Doumato and M. Posusney, *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy, and Society* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 2003). The figure is 42 percent in rural areas.

³⁶⁹ World Bank, *Gender and Transport Resource Guide* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006).

³⁷⁰ GTZ, *Gender and Urban Transport: Smart and Affordable* (2007), Eschborn, Germany .

³⁷¹ GTZ, *Gender and Urban Transport: Fashionable and Affordable* (2007), Eschborn, Germany.

³⁷² International Development Research Centre, *Gender and Water Demand Management: Diagnostic Study Executive Summary* (2004).

³⁷³ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (Geneva: ILO, 2007);

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/getw07.pdf>.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Not including North Africa.

³⁷⁶ International Development Research Center, *Gender and Water Demand Management: Diagnostic Study Executive Summary* (2004).

In MENA and elsewhere, women's priorities for safety in transport are different from men's. Men are more likely to be involved in road crashes because they own, drive, and use motorized transport much more than women. In the United Kingdom, 75 percent of women versus 15 percent of men have no or restricted access to a car. In Nairobi 9 percent of female heads of household use a private car, compared with 24 percent of males.³⁷⁷ Therefore, men are more affected by road safety.

However, as women are more likely to be targets of crime, they tend to be more concerned than men about personal safety and security.³⁷⁸ Overcrowding in public transport systems, for example, is a security issue when it facilitates groping and other inappropriate behavior.³⁷⁹ In Japan, the number of molestation cases on Tokyo's trains almost tripled between 1996 and 2004. According to a 2004 survey by the Tokyo police, about 380 of 632 women who traveled on rush hour trains said they had been molested. Only 10, however, had been able to report the incident to the police—by bringing the perpetrator with them.³⁸⁰ Reports from the MENA region are similar. In Iran and in Algeria, mixed public transportation is deemed uncomfortable and unsafe for women, due mainly to sexual harassment.³⁸¹ This safety concern must be addressed as it infringes on women's rights. It creates barriers to women's entry in the labor market and their access to decision-making bodies.

One solution is (voluntary) segregation. Today, in London, Cork, and Rio de Janeiro, women-only taxis are one solution to issues of personal security.³⁸² Japan has women-only carriages in trains, and Mexico recently introduced women-only buses to protect female passengers from groping and verbal abuse.^{383, 384} The overall response from women has been positive.

Some MENA countries have followed that model: Egypt has women-only carriages in trains. Egyptian labor law requires employers to provide transport for female employees who work at night; however, this injunction is seldom carried out.³⁸⁵ Iran designates that women sit at the back of public buses. More recently, Iran and Dubai introduced female-operated taxis that accept only female passengers. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, these services have provided an alternative for women who feel uncomfortable in mixed transport systems. They have benefited women drivers, especially those without providers, whose work brings in \$13–\$21 a day.³⁸⁶ Segregation may be a good short-term option. In the medium term, women may feel more comfortable using different modes of transport if there are more security personnel on buses and trains and more lighting on streets, train stations, and vehicles. However, a more sustainable approach is one that changes attitudes. As Japan shows, most countries lack education on sexual harassment—it is simply not viewed as a crime. In the long run, education and stronger enforcement of sexual harassment laws are necessary.

³⁷⁷ GTZ, *Gender and Urban Transport: Smart and Affordable* (2007).

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ "Japan Women in Fear of Subway Molesters," *Financial Times*, December 19, 2005.

³⁸¹ V. Moghadam, *Women, Work, and Economic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

³⁸² "Iran's Women Find Freedom behind the Wheel of a Taxi," *Financial Times*, September 12, 2006.

³⁸³ "Japan Women in Fear of Subway Molesters," *Financial Times*, December 19, 2005.

³⁸⁴ "Mexico City Rolls Out Women-Only Buses," *Washington Post*, January 24, 2008.

³⁸⁵ World Bank, *Egypt Country Gender Assessment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003). Some of these labor laws were instituted to increase women's entry into the labor market. However, they may result in employers' preference for male workers.

³⁸⁶ "Iran's Women Find Freedom behind the Wheel of a Taxi," *Financial Times*, September 12, 2006.

Additional Transport Constraints for MENA's Women

Women in MENA face three additional transport constraints. First, concerns about transport safety and negative perceptions of women's use are much stronger than elsewhere. A "code of modesty" stipulates that a woman's reputation is key to the family's honor and dignity;³⁸⁷ so interactions between men and women are restricted. Evidence from many countries shows that women in urban areas make more trips (motorized and nonmotorized) than men each day. However, this is not the case in predominantly Islamic countries,³⁸⁸ suggesting that women in MENA may be more secluded from the public space than in other regions.

Second, there are legal restrictions on women's movements. In many MENA countries, women need the permission of male guardians to travel domestically or abroad, creating unnecessary barriers for businesswomen or employees who need to travel for work.

A third constraint stems from the constant conflict in the region. Violence in Iraq, Lebanon, and the West Bank and Gaza not only damages infrastructure and undermines security but also has serious implications for women's mobility. In the Palestinian Territories, the restrictions on movement have hurt women's access to health services and economic opportunity more than men's. Delays at checkpoints have caused many pregnant women to deliver their babies while waiting to pass through to hospitals or health centers—69 such cases were documented between 2000 and 2006, resulting in the deaths of 5 women and 35 fetuses.³⁸⁹ Women are also not able to reach medical facilities for prenatal and postnatal care. As a result of the separation barrier in the northern West Bank, 22 percent of the land is accessible only to pedestrians, so no vehicles can be used to transport produce grown there. This has serious implications for women in agriculture.³⁹⁰

Promoting Women's Inclusion in Transport, for the Benefit of All

What can governments and the World Bank do to ensure that women's transport needs are met? A topic that deserves more attention is women's employment in the transport sector. This sector represents 7–10 percent of GDP and employs 10–12 percent of the labor force in MENA.³⁹¹ As in other regions, very few women in MENA work in transport. In 1999, 1.3 percent of employed women but 7.5 percent of employed men in Egypt worked in the transportation, storage, and communication sectors. This rate is falling for women but rising for men.³⁹² In Jordan, the ministries of water and transport employ among the lowest proportions of female workers.³⁹³ Two factors are to blame: Information about jobs is often disseminated through male-only networks, and many employers are reluctant to offer women employment because it is not a traditional sector for women.³⁹⁴ Surveys in Africa show that women are eager to participate in transport jobs.³⁹⁵ Involving women in transport will allow them to share their perspectives in decision making. As transport is demand-driven, the concerns of all users should be considered.

³⁸⁷ World Bank, *Gender and Development in the MENA* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).

³⁸⁸ GTZ, *Gender and Urban Transport: Smart and Affordable* (2007) Eschborn, Germany.

³⁸⁹ WHO, *Health Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the Occupied Syrian Golan* (2007).

³⁹⁰ World Bank, *Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007).

³⁹¹ World Bank, "Transportation in MENA Sector Brief" (Washington, DC: World Bank, April, 2007).

³⁹² World Bank, *Egypt Country Gender Assessment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003).

³⁹³ World Bank, *Jordan Country Gender Assessment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005).

³⁹⁴ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, *Handbook for Mainstreaming: A Gender Perspective in the Rural Transportation Sector* (SIDA, 2005). Stockholm, Sweden.

³⁹⁵ Surveys in Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Tanzania indicate that women are eager to participate in road network opportunities.

The most important step is to integrate gender in all transport projects. Today, only 19 percent of transport projects at the World Bank integrate gender.³⁹⁶ And most gender and transport research at the World Bank has been conducted in Asia and Africa. Two MENA transport projects in Morocco and Yemen have successfully addressed gender issues.

An impact study of a World Bank–financed rural road paving project in Morocco revealed substantial social benefits for women (controlling for nearby roads that were not in the project). Girls’ primary enrollment increased by 220 percent against 108 percent for boys. Road improvement broadened access to existing schools, made it possible for teachers to commute from towns to village schools, and enabled local authorities to establish new schools and recruit more teachers. The paved roads made butane for cooking and heating far more affordable, dramatically reducing women’s daily chore of collecting fuel.³⁹⁷

In Yemen in 1994, overall school enrollment was 55 percent, but it was only 24 percent for girls. A nationwide survey in 1997 showed that 43 percent of mothers did not deliver their babies at a health clinic due to poor access. The transportation cost for one health visit could be as high as 32 percent of the cost of the visit. Women and children spent hours collecting fuel wood and water. The rural roads project sought to improve conditions. The project used a participatory approach that included local consultations and input in the planning process. Separate consultations with women, using female interviewers, revealed very different concerns than consultations with men. The results of these conversations affected road design and implementation. Women focused on safety and on the proximity of roads to houses and schools and asked also for small earthen dams for harvesting water for agriculture. Solutions in the revised design included speed bumps, pedestrian access paths, retaining walls, and minor realignment of roads. The roads improved access to health services, water, and education and reduced travel time to the nearest market or service by 50 to 75 percent in seven villages.³⁹⁸

Although these are successes to build on, there is still a great shortage of gender analysis in the sector, especially as the transport issues faced by women in MENA are more complex than those in other regions. It is therefore critical that gender is integrated in MENA transport projects by collecting sex-disaggregated data; examining gender differences in demand, need, and constraints; and involving women through consultations during project design and implementation. The World Bank has an extensive toolkit for taking these measures. Governments can also help by engendering transport ministries and creating gender strategies for the sector. The focus should be to produce transport systems that are compatible with the social, cultural, and traditional nature of MENA and that promote women’s participation in society.

³⁹⁶ N. Ahmad, “Making Infrastructure Work for Women and Men,” Presentation at Transport Portfolio Review, February 22, 2008, Washington, DC.

³⁹⁷ World Bank, *Poverty and Transport* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1997); <http://www.worldbank.org/transport/publicat/twu-30.pdf>. H. Levy, *Kingdom of Morocco--Impact Evaluation Report: Socioeconomic Influence of Rural Roads* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004); <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/reducingpoverty/docs/FullCases/MENA%20PDF/Morocco%20Rural%20Roads.pdf>.

³⁹⁸ World Bank, *Gender and Transport Workshop*, Washington, DC, June 20, 2007.

World Value Survey–MENA Results

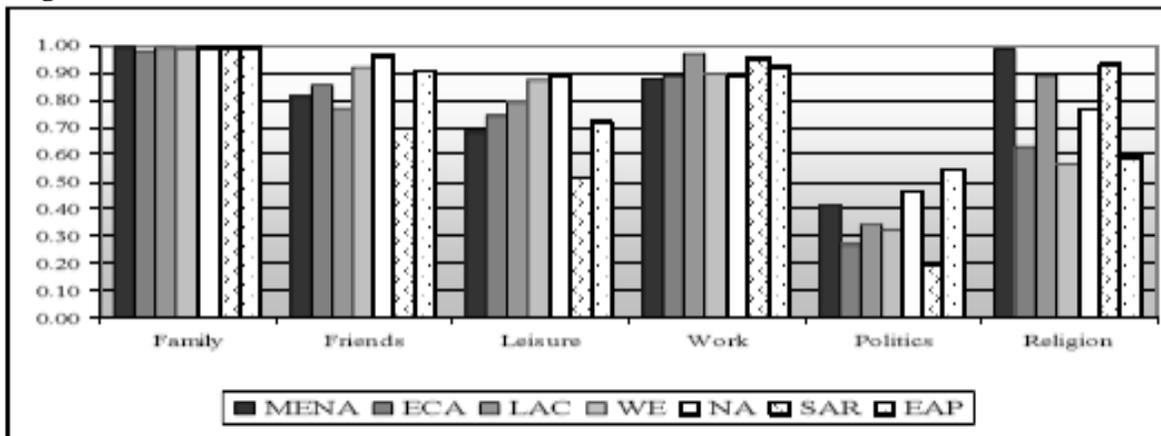
Many factors influence the level of women’s participation in the public sphere and, more specifically, in the labor force. In the Middle East and North Africa, as elsewhere, one of the most important factors are perception or attitudes and ideas about women’s role in society, and more specifically attitudes about the value of work, working women, and gender equality. Ultimately, attitudes and values determine the level of transformation, or the lack of it, in a society.

The following figures illustrate views of men and women in MENA on a variety of topics such as (1) importance of family, work, and leisure; (2) financial satisfaction; (3) women’s education; (4) women’s right to work when jobs are scarce; (5) working women; and (6) important aspects of work. The results are based on World Value Surveys during 1999–2004 in the following countries: Algeria (2002), Egypt (2000), the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000), Iraq (2004), Jordan (2001), Morocco (2001), and Saudi Arabia (2003).

Importance of Family, Work, and Leisure in Life

As the figure below shows, nonwork activities such as spending time with family and engaging in religious practices or charity are highly valued in MENA. Interestingly, leisure is not valued as much as in other regions.

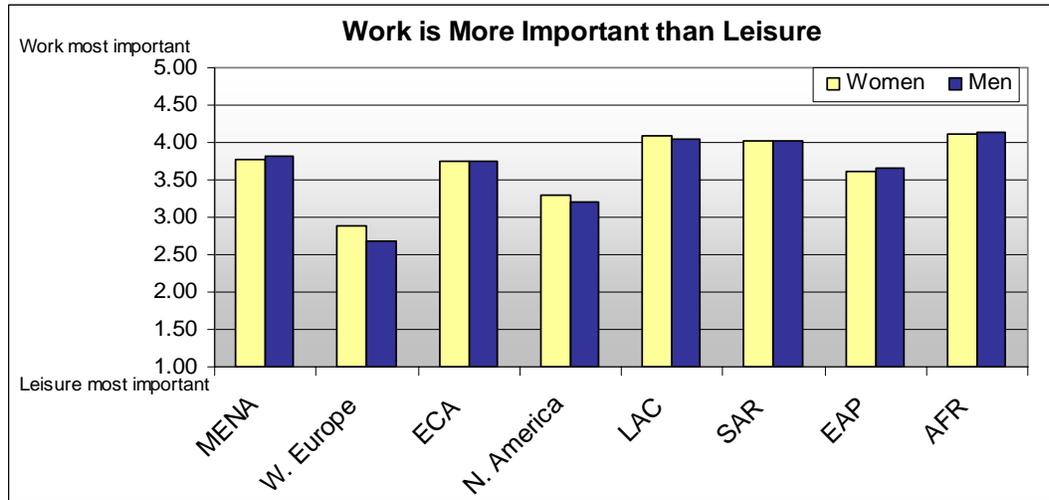
Figure 1



Source: World Values Survey 1999–2004.

Most people believe that work is more important than leisure. This opinion is stronger in MENA compared with Western Europe (WE), North America (NA), and East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), but weaker compared with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), South Asia (SAR), and Africa (AFR). As in other regions, opinions of MENA’s men and women are no different regarding leisure.

Figure 2

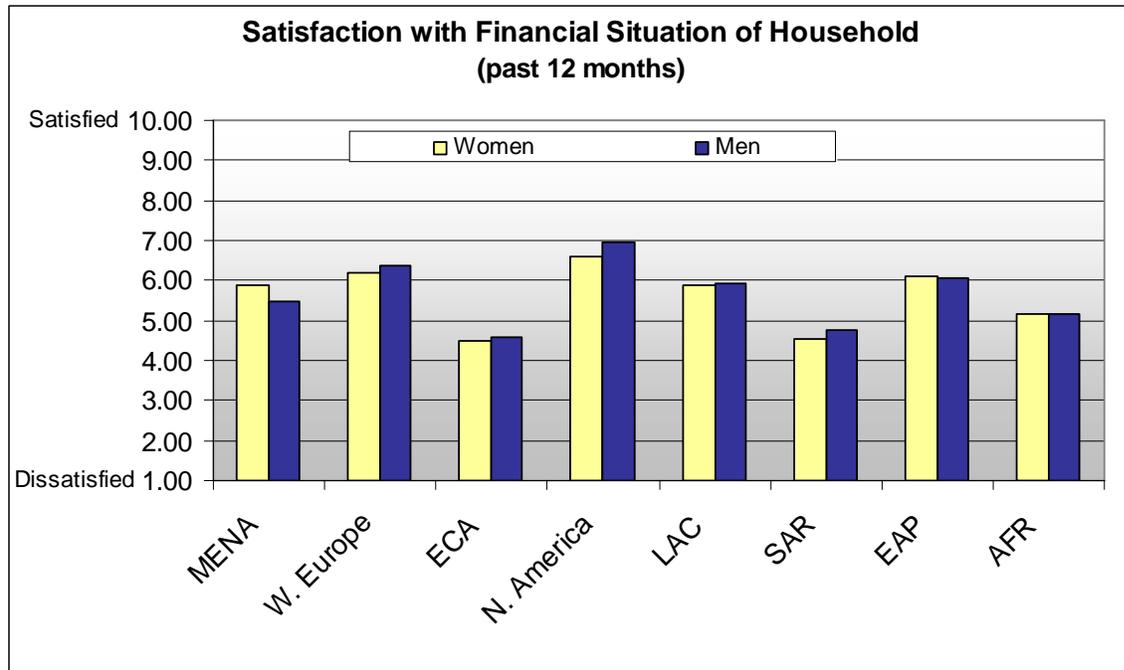


Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Financial Satisfaction

It appears that women in MENA are slightly more satisfied with the financial situation of their households than men. However, the level of satisfaction for both men and women in MENA is lower than in LAC, EAP, WE, and NA.

Figure 3

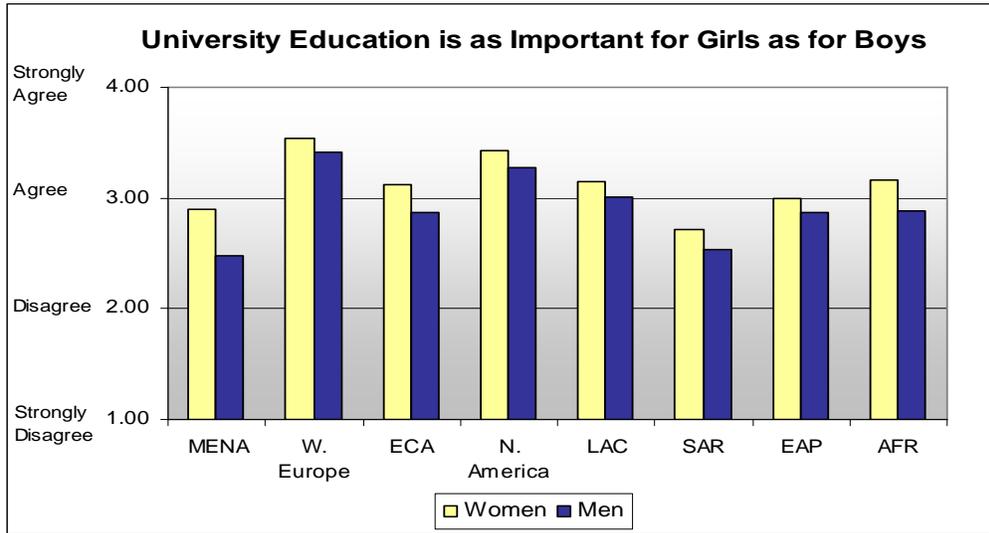


Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Women's Education

Women everywhere are more likely than men to agree that university education is as important for girls as for boys. Interestingly, in MENA, the gap between the numbers of men and women who agree with this statement is wider than in other regions. Men in MENA are the least likely to think that university education is as important for girls as for boys.

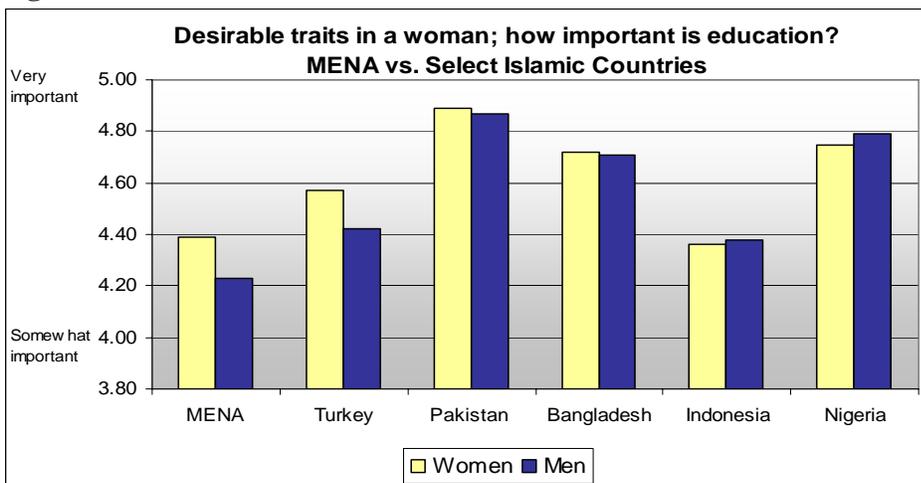
Figure 4



Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Both men and women in Islamic countries overwhelmingly believe that education is desirable for a woman (5 being very important and 1 being not at all important). However, more women than men support this view; the gender differences for this opinion are greater in MENA than in other majority Islamic countries.

Figure 5



Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Scarcity of Jobs

When jobs are scarce, who has the greater right to work? This question is relevant in MENA in light of high unemployment rates. Seventy-three percent of women versus 85 percent of men in MENA think that men should have more rights to jobs when jobs are scarce. These percentages are higher than in any other region, and interestingly, women in MENA are more likely to agree with this statement, compared even to men in other regions.

Figure 6a

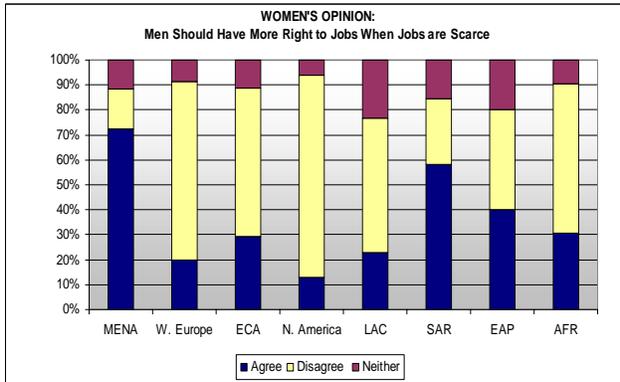
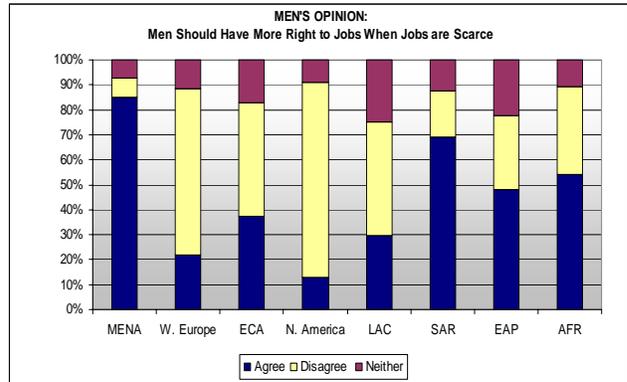


Figure 6b

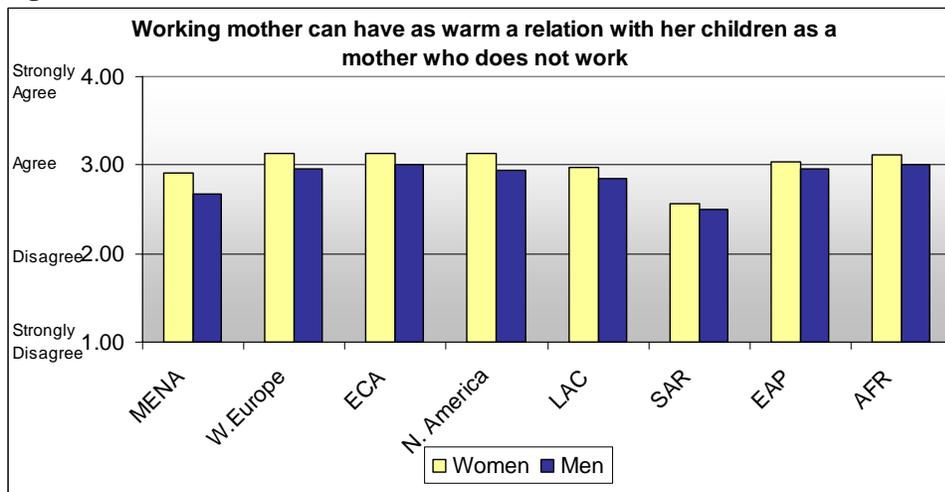


Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Working Women

Most women and men believe that a working mother can have as warm a relation with her children as a mother who does not work. Women are more likely than men to support this view. Nonetheless, the percentage of women in MENA who believe this to be true is lower than in other regions with the exception of South Asia.

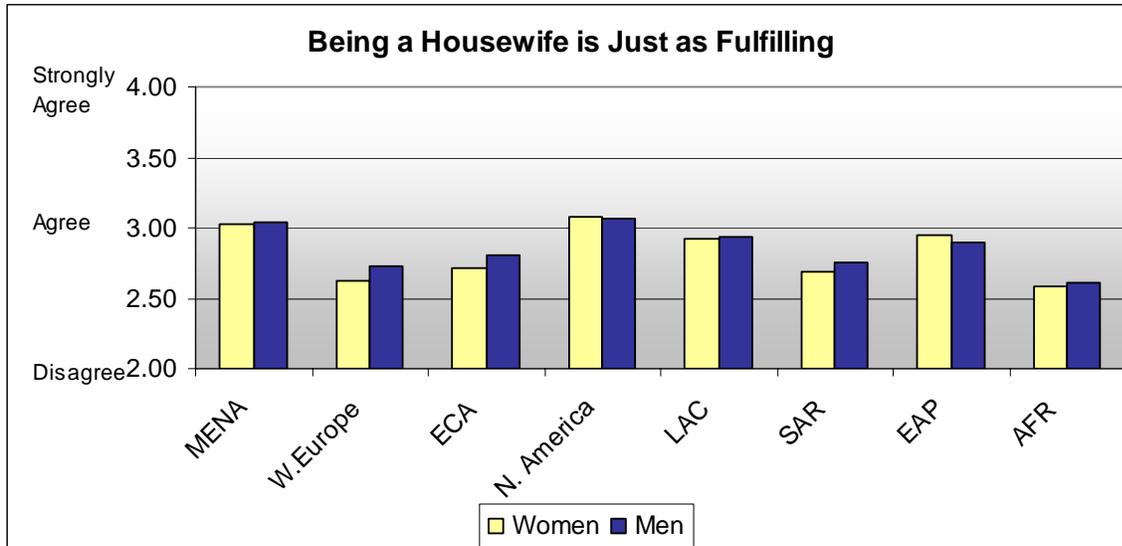
Figure 7



Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

The population in MENA is second among the regions in believing that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working outside the home. There are no differences between men's and women's opinions on this matter.

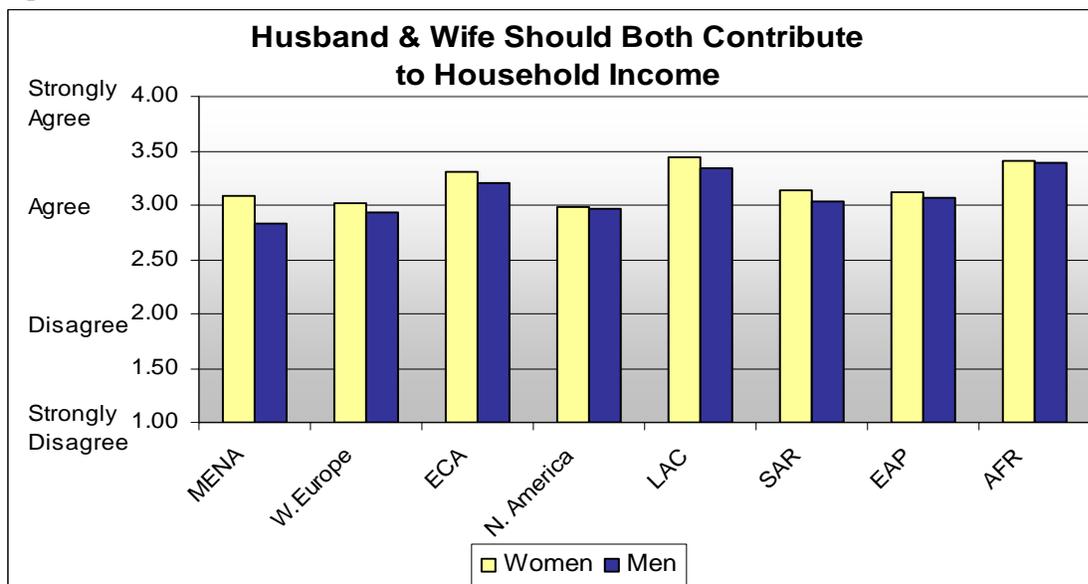
Figure 8



Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

The share of women in MENA who think that both husband and wife should contribute to household income is comparable to other regions. The share of men who agree with this statement, however, is slightly lower in MENA than in any other region.

Figure 9

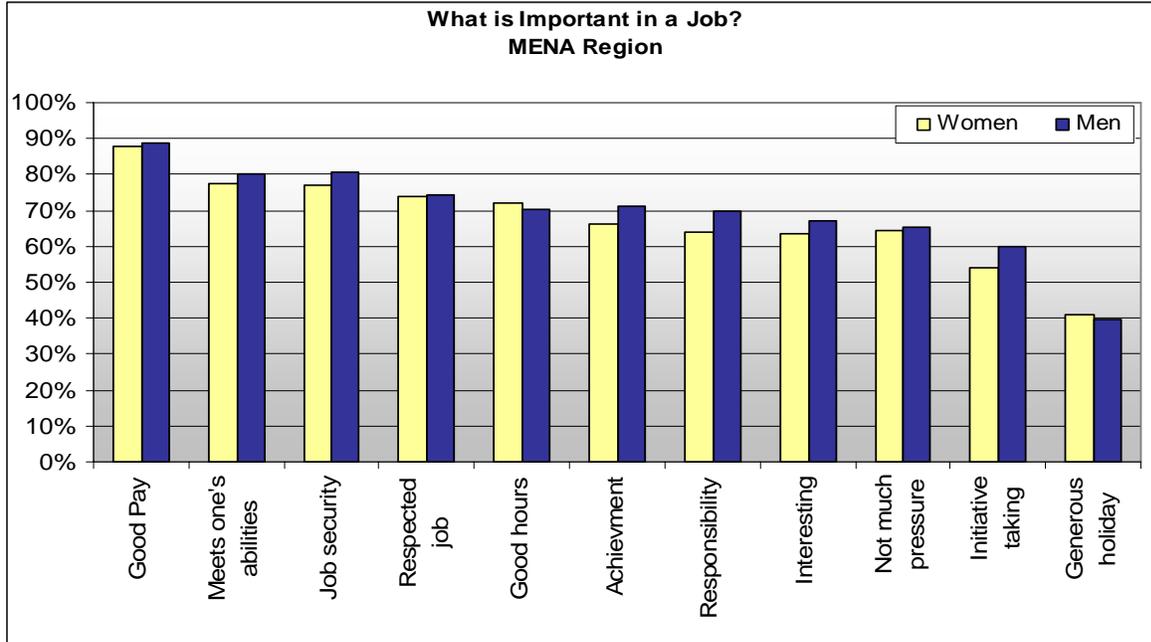


Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Importance in a Job

The figure below shows what men versus women value in their jobs. Both men and women (approximately 90 percent) consider good pay the most important factor in a job. However, when compared to women, men are slightly more likely to value achievement, responsibility, job security, and initiative-taking in a job.

Figure 10



Source: World Value Surveys, 1999-2004.

Summary Gender Profile for Algeria	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	25,282,515	30,506,054	33,852,676
Population, female (% total)	50	49	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	60 (2002)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	80 (2002)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	70 (2002)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	86 (2002)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	94 (2002)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	90 (2002)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	94 (1991)	98	96 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	95 (1991)	97	95 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	95 (1991)	97	95 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	72	82	96
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	89	83	96
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47	47
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	46	50
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	83 (1991)	90	95
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	95 (1991)	93	98
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	47 (1991)	..	68 (2004)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	59 (1991)	..	65 (2004)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	..	24
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	..	19
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	77 (1992)	92	95
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	47 (1992)	64	61
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	25 (2001)	29
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5	3	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	68	71	73
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	69	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	67	70	72
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	180 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	54	37	33
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	69	44	38
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	0 (2001)	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	13 (2001)	11 (2003)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	23 (2001)	23 (2003)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	28 (2001)	25 (2003)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	24 (2001)	24 (2003)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	59 (2001)	64 (2003)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	54 (2001)	53 (2003)
Labor force, total	7,230,531	11,101,168	13,887,214
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	23	28	31
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	13	14 (2004)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	55 (1991)	61 (2001)	59 (2004)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	31 (2001)	18 (2005)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	27 (2001)	15 (2005)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	27 (2001)	15 (2005)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	48 (2001)	..

Summary Gender Profile for Bahrain	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	492,952	650,080	752,789
Population, female (% total)	42	42	43
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	77 (1991)	84 (2001)	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	89 (1991)	89 (2001)	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	84 (1991)	87 (2001)	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	97 (1991)	97 (2001)	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	97 (1991)	97 (2001)	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	97 (1991)	97 (2001)	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	90 (1991)	98	98 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	89 (1991)	100	100 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	89 (1991)	99	99 (2004)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	98 (1991)	100	117
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	96 (1991)	96	117
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	49	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	54 (1991)	72	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	99 (1991)	98	98 (2005)
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	99 (1991)	94	98 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	86 (1991)	91	96
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	84 (1991)	84	91
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	20 (1991)	28 (1999)	47
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	15 (1991)	16 (1999)	19
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	94 (1988)	..	99 (2005)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	53 (1989)	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4	3	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	74	76	77
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	70	73	74
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	72	75	76
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	32 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	15	10	9
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	19	12	10
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	0 (2001)	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	3 (1991)	2 (2001)	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	7 (1991)	13 (2001)	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	33 (1991)	32 (2001)	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	92 (1991)	85 (2001)	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	64 (1991)	64 (2001)	..
Labor force, total	219,603	300,445	350,301
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	17	18	19
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	8	12	11 (2005)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	39	29 (2005)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	10 (2001)	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	4 (2001)	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	5 (2001)	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Djibouti	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	560,589	729,736	832,992
Population, female (% total)	50	50	50
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	84 (1991)	85 (1999)	87 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	46 (1991)	71 (1999)	92 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	87 (1991)	77 (1999)	90 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	23	32
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	33	39
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	42	44
Primary education, teachers (% female)	37 (1991)	28 (2001)	27
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	24 (1991)	23	34
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	33 (1991)	31	42
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	11 (2001)	17 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	17 (2001)	26 (2005)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	0	2
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	0	3
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	93
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	9 (2002)	18
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	60 (2001)	58
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	6	5	4
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	53	55	56
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	50	52	53
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	51	53	54
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	650 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	116	97	86
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	175	147	130
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	2
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	1
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	3 (2001)	3
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	0 (1991)	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	3 (1991)	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	1 (1991)	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	11 (1991)	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	88 (1991)	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	78 (1991)	..	..
Labor force, total	218,389	294,034	345,317
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	41	40	39
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	27 (2002)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	8 (1991)	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	47 (1991)	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	42 (1991)	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	44 (1991)	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Egypt	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	55,136,953	66,528,578	75,466,539
Population, female (% total)	50	50	50
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	59 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	83 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	71 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	79 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	90 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	85 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	99	97 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	99	96 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	99	97
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	94	96
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	102	101
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47	48
Primary education, teachers (% female)	52 (1991)	52	56
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	79 (1991)	90	94
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	94 (1991)	96	98
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	78 (2001)	78 (2002)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	82 (2001)	82 (2002)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	11 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	20 (1991)	..	..
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	37 (1991)	61	74 (2005)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	47 (1992)	56	59 (2005)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	17 (2001)	29
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4	3	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	64	71	73
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	61	67	69
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	62	69	71
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	130 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	67	40	29
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	91	51	35
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	52	39	39 (2003)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	35	27	28 (2003)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	10	7	6 (2003)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	24	25	23 (2003)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	38	54	55 (2003)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	41	48	49 (2003)
Labor force, total	16,467,288	19,780,035	23,110,745
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	26	22	22
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	21	19	20 (2003)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	18	23	24 (2004)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	5	5	7 (2004)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	9	9	11 (2004)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	37 (1999)	40 (2002)
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	14 (1999)	21 (2002)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	20 (1999)	27 (2002)

Summary Gender Profile for Iran	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	54,400,000	63,938,646	71,021,039
Population, female (% total)	49	49	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	56 (1991)	70 (2002)	77 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	74 (1991)	84 (2002)	88 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	66 (1991)	77 (2002)	82 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	81 (1991)	..	97 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	92 (1991)	..	98 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	87 (1991)	..	97 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	89 (1991)	97	87 (2002)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	91 (1991)	98	88 (2002)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	90 (1991)	98	88 (2002)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	81	89	108
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	93	92	95
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	55
Primary education, teachers (% female)	53 (1991)	54	62
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	89 (1991)	79	100 (2005)
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	96 (1991)	81	91 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	75 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	79 (2005)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	7 (1991)	18	28
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	14 (1991)	20	25
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	90	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	49 (1991)	74	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	27 (2001)	28
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5	2	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	66	70	72
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	64	68	69
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	65	69	71
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	140 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	54	36	30
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	72	44	34
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	34 (2005)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	23 (2005)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	28 (2005)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	31 (2005)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	37 (2005)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	46 (2005)
Labor force, total	15,616,965	21,984,538	29,064,702
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	20	29	34
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	14	12 (2002)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	36	42 (2005)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	24 (1991)	22 (2002)	17 (2005)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	10 (1991)	11 (2002)	10 (2005)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	11 (1991)	13 (2002)	12 (2005)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	32 (2005)
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	20 (2005)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	23 (2005)

Summary Gender Profile for Iraq	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	18,514,859	24,391,933 (1999)	..
Population, female (% total)	49	49 (1999)	..
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	64	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	84	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	74	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	80	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	89	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	85	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	63 (1999)	73 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	67 (1999)	87 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	66 (1999)	81 (2004)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	52 (1989)	47	63 (2005)
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	64 (1989)	58	86 (2005)
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	44	44 (2005)
Primary education, teachers (% female)	70 (1991)	72	72 (2005)
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	88 (1991)	76	82 (2005)
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	100 (1991)	90	95 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	24	32 (2005)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	38	45 (2005)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	8	12 (2005)
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	15	20 (2005)
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	54 (1989)	72	89
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	14 (1989)	44	50
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	6	..	..
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	63	..	..
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	60	..	..
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	62	..	..
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	300 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	42	..	..
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	53	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0 (2005)
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	33 (2004)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	14 (2004)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	7 (2004)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	20 (2004)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	60 (2004)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	66 (2004)
Labor force, total	4,727,918	6,731,130	..
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	17	19 (1999)	..
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	21 (2002)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	15 (2004)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	29 (2004)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	27 (2004)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Jordan	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	3,170,000	4,797,500	5,718,855
Population, female (% total)	48	48	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	87 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	95 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	91 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	99 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	99 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	99 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	97 (1999)	96 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	98 (1999)	97 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	98 (1999)	95 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	98	98	98
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	97	97	100
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	49	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	62 (1991)	..	64 (2003)
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	94 (1991)	92	90
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	94 (1991)	92	89
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	83 (1999)	83
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	78 (1999)	81
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	24 (1991)	31	41
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	22 (1991)	28	37
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	87	..	100 (2002)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	40	..	56 (2002)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5	4	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	69	72	74
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	69	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68	71	72
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	62 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	33	25	21
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	40	30	25
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	4	2 (2003)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	5	4 (2003)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	12	12 (2003)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	23	23 (2003)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	83	84 (2003)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	71	73 (2003)
Labor force, total	753,541	1,473,187	1,873,216
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	19	23	25
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	23	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	20 (2001)	17 (2004)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	15 (2001)	12 (2004)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	16 (2001)	12 (2004)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Kuwait	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	2,125,000	2,190,000	2,662,966
Population, female (% total)	43	39	40
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	91 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	94 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	93 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	..	..	100 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	..	..	100 (2005)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24)	..	..	100 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	..	97 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	..	95 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	..	96 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	97	92
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	94	90
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	49	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	61 (1991)	74	87
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	47 (1991)	83	83
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	51 (1991)	82	84
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	85	78
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	83	75
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	33 (1999)	26
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	14 (1999)	11
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	100 (2002)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15-49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3	3	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	77	79	80
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	73	75	76
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	75	77	78
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	4 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	14	9	9
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	16	11	11
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15-49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Labor force, total	852,515	1,145,756	1,426,421
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	22	22	26
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	45	28 (2002)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	1	2 (2004)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Lebanon	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	2,974,323	3,772,283	4,097,076
Population, female (% total)	51	51	51
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	73	..	..
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	88	..	..
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	80	..	..
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	89	..	..
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	95	..	..
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	92	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	99	94 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	95	88 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	97	91 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	92	82
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	91	79
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	48
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	82	85
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	65 (1991)	86	82
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	68 (1991)	88	82
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	76
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	70
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	35	51
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	33	45
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	93 (2001)	98 (2004)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	63	58 (2004)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	33
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3	2	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	71	73	74
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	67	69	70
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	69	71	72
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	150 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	32	28	26
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	37	32	30
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Labor force, total	1,024,688	1,415,984	1,624,006
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	31	29	31
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	..	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Libya	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	4,363,768	5,345,662	6,156,488
Population, female (% total)	47	48	48
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	75 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	93 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	84 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	96 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	100 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	98 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	..	..
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	..	..
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	48
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	91 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	95 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	45	58 (2003)
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	46	53 (2003)
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	99 (1999)	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5	3	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	71	75	77
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	70	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68	73	74
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	97 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	35	20	17
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	41	22	18
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Labor force, total	1,280,449	1,979,720	2,498,143
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	17	23	28
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	16 (2001)	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Morocco	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	24,167,267	28,465,720	30,860,595
Population, female (% total)	50	50	51
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	40 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	66 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	52 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	60 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	81 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	70 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	76 (1991)	81	79 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	75 (1991)	79	82 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	75 (1991)	80	80 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	39 (1991)	50	80
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	57 (1991)	63	88
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	45	46
Primary education, teachers (% female)	37 (1991)	37	47
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	46 (1991)	71	85
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	66 (1991)	80	89
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	27	32 (2003)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	33	37 (2003)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	8 (1991)	8	11
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	14 (1991)	11	13
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	31 (1992)	..	63 (2004)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	42 (1992)	..	63 (2004)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	28 (2001)	28
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4	3	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	66	71	73
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	63	67	69
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	64	69	71
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	240 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	69	45	34
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	89	54	37
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	57 (2002)	63
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	40 (2002)	38
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	19 (2002)	14
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	21 (2002)	22
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	24 (2002)	23
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	39 (2002)	40
Labor force, total	7,594,873	10,048,720	11,314,809
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	24	26	26
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	25	22	22 (2005)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	54	52	51 (2005)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	20	13	10
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	14	14	10
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	16	14	10
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	32	17 (1999)	14
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	31	22 (1999)	18
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	31	21 (1999)	17

Summary Gender Profile for Oman	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	1,842,998	2,402,184	2,599,551
Population, female (% total)	44	42	44
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	74 (2003)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	87 (2003)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	81 (2003)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	97 (2008)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	98 (2008)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	97 (2008)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	96 (1991)	97	100 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	97 (1991)	95	100 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	97 (1991)	96	100 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	62	81	92
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	67	82	95
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	47 (1991)	54	65
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	68 (1991)	81	75
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	71 (1991)	81	73
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	68	77
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	67	77
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	4 (1991)	12 (2002)	26
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	4 (1991)	16 (2002)	25
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	95	98 (2005)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	9 (1988)	32	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	7	4	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	72	75	77
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	68	72	74
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	70	74	76
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	64 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	25	12	10
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	32	15	12
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0 (2005)
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	5	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	7	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	14	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	11	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	80	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	82	..
Labor force, total	567,370	884,119	965,272
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	11	13	17
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	19	25	25 (2001)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Qatar	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	467,428	616,719	836,082
Population, female (% total)	33	35	33
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	89 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	89 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	89 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	98 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	95 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	96 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	65 (1991)	..	87 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	63 (1991)	..	87 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	64 (1991)	..	87 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	72	89 (1999)	99
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	67	89 (1999)	99
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	72 (1991)	75	85
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	89 (1991)	92	94
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	90 (1991)	92	93
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	72 (1991)	79	90
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	68 (1991)	70	91
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	40 (1991)	41 (1999)	33
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	12 (1991)	11 (1999)	10
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	100 (2002)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4	3	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	72	75	76
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	68	72	75
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	70	74	75
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	12 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	21	19	18
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	26	23	21
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	..
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	0 (2004)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	3 (2004)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	3 (2004)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	48 (2004)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	97 (2004)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	49 (2004)
Labor force, total	255,806	328,089	476,682
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	10	14	14
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	15(2001)	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	15 (2001)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	..	13 (2001)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	..	2 (2001)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	..	4 (2001)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Saudi Arabia	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	16,379,270	20,660,703	24,195,950
Population, female (% total)	44	45	45
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	57 (1992)	69	78 (2005)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	80 (1992)	87	88 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	71 (1992)	79	83 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	81 (1992)	94	95 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	94 (1992)	98	97 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	88 (1992)	96	96 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	84 (1991)	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	82 (1991)	..	..
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	83 (1991)	..	..
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	50	..	..
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	57	..	..
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	..	..
Primary education, teachers (% female)	48 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	52 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	66 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	28 (1991)	60 (2001)	..
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	34 (1991)	60 (2001)	..
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	10 (1991)	26	35
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	11 (1991)	18	23
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	93 (2002)	96 (2004)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	21 (1999)	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	6	4	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	70	73	75
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66	70	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68	71	73
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	18 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	35	23	21
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	44	29	25
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	..
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	2	0
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	7	5
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	2	1
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	23	11
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	96	99
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	70	95
Labor force, total	5,062,902	6,802,783	8,438,029
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	11	13	14
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	14	12 (2002)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	39	12 (2005)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	9	15
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	4	5
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	5	6
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for Syria	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	12,720,920	16,510,861	19,890,585
Population, female (% total)	50	49	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	74 (2002)	74 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	91 (2002)	88 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	83 (2002)	81 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	93 (2002)	90 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	97 (2002)	95 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	95 (2002)	92 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	95 (1991)	92	92 (2001)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	97 (1991)	92	93 (2001)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	96 (1991)	92	92 (2001)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	97	83	113
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	105	89	116
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47	48
Primary education, teachers (% female)	64 (1991)	68	69 (2002)
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	87 (1991)	90	92 (2002)
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	95 (1991)	96	97 (2002)
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	36 (1991)	35	61
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	49 (1991)	38	64
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	14 (1991)	..	..
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	22 (1991)	..	..
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	70 (2002)	93
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	45	58
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5	4	3
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	70	74	76
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	67	71	72
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68	72	74
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	130(2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	31	17	12
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	38	20	14
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	47 (1989)	62	49 (2003)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	23 (1989)	26	23 (2003)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	13 (1989)	8	8 (2003)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	30 (1989)	30	29 (2003)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	40 (1989)	45	43 (2003)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	47 (1989)	43	48 (2003)
Labor force, total	3,624,013	5,893,058	7,908,105
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	26	29	31
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	17 (1991)	17(2001)	18 (2002)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	75 (2002)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	15(1999)	28 (2003)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	6 (1999)	9 (2003)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	8 (1999)	12 (2003)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	39 (2002)
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	21 (2002)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	26 (2002)

Summary Gender Profile for Tunisia	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	8,154,400	9,563,500	10,248,173
Population, female (% total)	49	49	50
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	65 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	83 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	74 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	92 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	96 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	94 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	77 (1991)	94	97 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	94 (1991)	92	96 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	86 (1991)	93	97 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	75	86	117
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	86	87	122
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	47	48
Primary education, teachers (% female)	45 (1991)	50	52
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	90 (1991)	93	97
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	97 (1991)	94	96
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	71	68 (2003)
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	65	61 (2003)
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	7 (1991)	17 (1999)	37
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	10 (1991)	17 (1999)	26
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	69 (1988)	90	..
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	50 (1988)	66	63 (2001)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	45 (2001)	28
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3	2	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	72	75	76
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	69	71	72
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	70	73	74
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	100 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	41	25	19
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	52	31	23
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	0(2001)	0
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	..	..
Labor force, total	2,430,395	3,311,057	3,939,012
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	22	25	28
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	25	25 (2003)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	77	83	79 (2005)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	22	17	17 (2005)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	15	15	13 (2005)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	16	16	14 (2003)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	30	..	29 (2005)
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	31	..	31 (2005)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	31	..	31 (2005)

Summary Gender Profile for the UAE	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	1,773,000	3,247,000	4,364,746
Population, female (% total)	35	33	32
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	88 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	89 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	89 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	95 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	98 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	97 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	80 (1991)	98	100 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	80 (1991)	98	98 (2005)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	80 (1991)	98	99 (2005)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	103	80	100
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	106	80	101
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	48	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	64 (1991)	73	84
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	98 (1991)	77	88
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	100 (1991)	79	88
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	64 (1991)	69	80
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	56 (1991)	66	78
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	14 (1991)	30	37 (2003)
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	4 (1991)	9	13 (2003)
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	..	100 (2003)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	..	..	..
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	4	3	2
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	75	80	82
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	71	76	77
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	73	78	79
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	37 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	13	9	8
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	15	10	8
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	..
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	0	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	9	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	14	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	36	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	86	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	55	..
Labor force, total	905,053	1,880,304	2,664,251
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	10	12	15
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	14	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	3	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	2	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	2	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..

Summary Gender Profile for West Bank and Gaza	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	1,969,967	2,966,000	3,868,915
Population, female (% total)	49	49	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	88 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	97 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	92 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	99 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	99 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	99 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	104	95 (2005)
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	102	96 (2005)
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	49	49
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	59	67
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	..	96	76
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	..	96	76
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	81	92
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	76	87
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	25	53
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	27	44
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	97	99
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	50
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	..	5	5
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	..	74	74
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	..	70	71
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	..	72	73
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	34	24	20
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	40	27	22
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	..	35	34 (2004)
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	..	10	12 (2004)
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	..	11	8 (2004)
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	..	39	28 (2004)
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	..	53	56 (2004)
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	..	51	59 (2004)
Labor force, total	392,641	616,242	796,180
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	12	13	13
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	14	18 (2004)
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	55	59 (2004)
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	12	20 (2004)
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	14	28 (2004)
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	14	27 (2004)
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	29 (2001)	45 (2004)
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)	..	35 (2001)	39 (2004)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)	..	35 (2001)	40 (2004)

Summary Gender Profile for Yemen	1990	2000	2006-2007
Population, total	12,313,576	18,181,733	22,382,108
Population, female (% total)	50	49	49
Education and Training			
Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)	..	..	35 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above)	..	..	73 (2004)
Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	..	..	54 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15–24)	..	..	59 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15–24)	..	..	91 (2004)
Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15–24)	..	..	75 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, female (% of cohort)	..	70 (2001)	65 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, male (% of cohort)	..	78 (2001)	67 (2004)
Persistence to grade 5, total (% of cohort)	..	83	66 (2004)
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	..	36	46
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	..	74	74
Primary education, pupils (% female)	..	38	42
Primary education, teachers (% female)	..	20	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% net)	27 (1991)	46	65
School enrollment, primary, male (% net)	71 (1991)	70	85
School enrollment, secondary, female (% net)	..	21	26
School enrollment, secondary, male (% net)	..	46	48
School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross)	..	4	5
School enrollment, tertiary, male (% gross)	..	16	14
Health			
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	16 (1992)	..	27 (2003)
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15–49)	10 (1992)	..	23 (2003)
Female adults with HIV (% of population ages 15–49 with HIV)	..	..	..
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	8	6	6
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	55	61	64
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	54	58	61
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	54	59	62
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	..	..	430 (2005)
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	98	81	75
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	139	110	100
Prevalence of HIV, female (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, male (% of ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15–49)	..	..	0 (2005)
Labor Force Participation			
Employees, agriculture, female (% of female employment)	83 (1991)	88 (1999)	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of male employment)	44 (1991)	43 (1999)	..
Employees, industry, female (% of female employment)	2 (1991)	3 (1999)	..
Employees, industry, male (% of male employment)	14 (1991)	14 (1999)	..
Employees, services, female (% of female employment)	13 (1991)	9 (1999)	..
Employees, services, male (% of male employment)	38 (1991)	43 (1999)	..
Labor force, total	2,999,051	4,882,748	6,262,943
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	28	27	28
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (%)	..	7	..
Unemployment with primary education (% of total unemployment)	..	..	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	..	8 (1999)	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	..	13 (1999)	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	..	12 (1999)	..
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15–24)	..	..	..
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15–24)
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15–24)

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