



Strengthening governance through anti-corruption and gender equality efforts

**Meeting on Gender Dimensions of Corruption:
Views from Lebanon**

Beirut, Lebanon, 27 July 2022

Outline



- I. Global Integrity and Gender Equality Mandates**
- II. National governance observations**
- III. National equality observations**
- IV. Global observations on corruption and gender links**
- V. Understanding gender differences towards corruption to shape anti-corruption reforms**



I. Global Integrity & Gender Equality Mandates

Key international governance and gender equality instruments



Gender Equality

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ;
Dec. 1979, in force Sept. 1981; 189 State Parties.

prohibits all forms of discrimination, against all groups of women, in all spheres of life (political, civil, legal, social, cultural and sexual and reproductive realms)

 explicit link to corruption

Anti-corruption

UN Convention against Corruption ; Oct 2003; 188 State Parties (August 2021)

Core values : fairness, accountability and transparency, equality before the law

 explicit link to gender

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development = conceptual and operational link between anti-corruption, gender equality and women's empowerment



- 1) For U.N., corruption = "one of the biggest impediments" to achieving the SDGs**
- 2) Gender equality : - a precondition for sustainable development;
- a fundamental driver for more inclusive and equitable societies**

- 1: No Poverty.
- 2: Zero Hunger.
- 3: Good Health and Well-being.
- 4: Quality Education.
- 5: Gender Equality.***
- 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.
- 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.
- 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- 10: Reduced Inequality
- 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- 13: Climate Action
- 14: Life Below Water
- 15: Life on Land
- 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions**
- 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

***gender equity is cross-cutting in the 16 other objectives**





II. National governance observations

Lebanon' scommitment to fight corruption

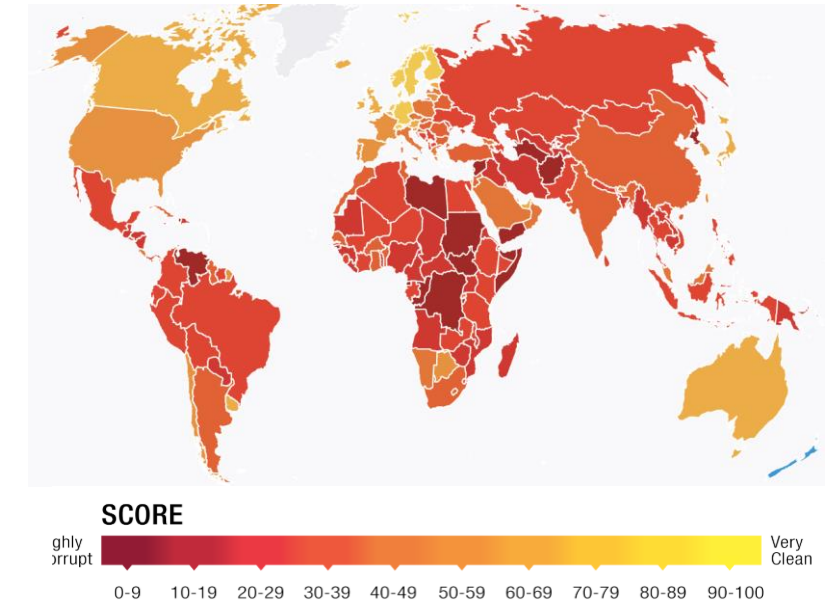
- 1) UNCAC Party
- 2) Adherence to different anti-corruption instruments (below)
- 3) Adoption in recent years of several anti-corruption laws and the National Anti-corruption Strategy.

	UNCAC	OECD Anti-Bribery Convention	OECD Guidelines on MNE	AU Convention on Preventing & Combating Corruption	Arab Convention Against Corruption	Existence of national anti-corruption legislation	Specialised Anti-Corruption Body	National Anti-Corruption Strategy
Algeria								
Egypt								
Jordan				N/A				
Lebanon				N/A				

Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index 2021

The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption. While there are exceptions, the data shows that despite some progress, ***most countries are failing to make serious inroads against corruption.***

- Lebanon is the 154 least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, (2021 CPI)
- It has the highest rate of reported bribes paid to access public services in the region (CPI 2019).



Score

24/100

[What does the CPI score mean?](#)

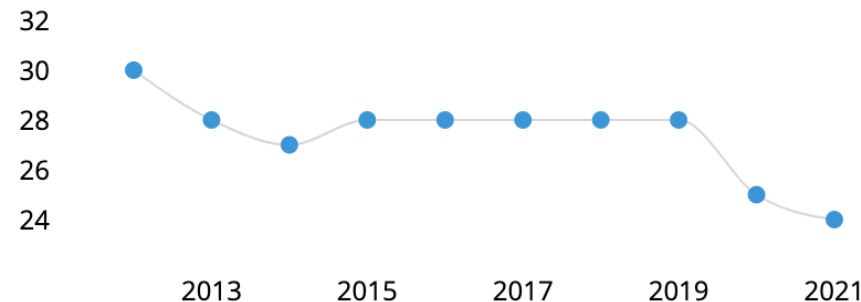
Rank

154/180

Score change

↓ -1 since 2020

Score changes 2012 - 2021



International Observations



International reviews point towards :

- Gaps in the anti-corruption laws, eg. New public procurement law has loopholes that allow information, conflicts of interests and company owners to remain hidden
- Gaps in the implementation of the laws: Several laws passed in the last two years are nowhere near being enforced.
- Gaps in the good governance practices of public institutions, eg. public procurement processes and financial transparency & not accounting for the role of civil society organisations.
- Collapse of the Lebanese state, attachment of stringent conditions on obtain the smallest amount of international assistance

Political parties, public administration, the Parliament and the police are perceived as the most corrupt institutions of the country == All levels and branches of government and all policy processes need to be concerned by integrity as a foundation of political, economic and social structures.

Corruption is conducive to the development of high degrees of informality and directly undermines the emergence of a competitive private sector and a skilled workforce AND informal employment is particularly high among women, resulting in poor earnings and low-quality jobs



III. National equality observations

National commitments and results

- 1996: **CEDAW** (Convention on the Elimination all Forms of Discrimination Against Women)
- Late 1990s, adoption of gender mainstreaming in the collection and analysis of gender statistics (IWSAW, YEAR).
- Compared to other Arab countries, the Lebanese legal system is considered fairly progressive and there are no legal restrictions limiting women in engaging in income-generating activities

BUT

Gender Inequality in Lebanon is considered stark

High gender gap exacerbated by the crisis

- 145 out of 153 countries on the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum (or 14th out of 19 Middle East and North African Countries). It is deteriorating
- **Literacy rate** : overall 95.07%; male literacy rate is 96.85%, females is 93.31%.
- **Female labour force participation rates** : low at 29.3 per cent, compared with the labour force participation rate of men (70.4 per cent) in 2018–19.
- Almost one-third are working in high-risk sectors; 23.8 per cent in household activities; 20.5 per cent of female employment in the education sector.
- Women account for only 30.5 per cent of total employment, and make up 61.3 per cent of workers in human health and social work activities = COVID frontline.
- COVID-19 crisis also exacerbated pre-existing employment and education disparities

Context : Since October 2019, a wide segment of the population has fallen below the poverty line, with livelihoods of those already living in poverty worsened due to inflation, a decline in employment opportunities, and a reduction in basic social service provision

Source : ILO/UNICEF (2022) Synthesis of the crisis impact on the Lebanese labour market and potential business, employment and training opportunities

Public life and decision-making



Women empowerment requires that women have a say in all the decisions that affect their lives at the local, national and international levels.

The constitutions recognize that women's and men's civil and political rights are equal.

No electoral quota to promote representation of women in parliament = Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments : 5 (31 Tunisia)

Lowest rates of women's representation in political decision-making.

2019 :four female ministers in the 30-seat cabinet, among whom was the first woman in the Arab world to hold the position of Minister of Interior



In **Lebanon**, it took **39** years and in **Libya** **48** years between being granted the right to stand for election and a woman being appointed to parliament :

Women's vulnerabilities



- Deep structural inequalities and deficiencies (e.g. confessional system, refugees from Palestine, Syria, Iraq etc.)
- Significant gap exists in Lebanon in terms of educational achievements between public and private education, which is reducing equality of opportunity among children.
- Structural constraints that carry the seeds of discrimination and women's vulnerability are rooted in laws and regulations, sectarian dynamics, socio-cultural values, decision-making structures, public policies and development strategies, ongoing conflict and security problems, and a rise in social conservatism. (USAID, 2012)

IV. Global observations on Corruption and gender links

Arguments on the gender-corruption link

- ❖ **Fairer sex myth:** difference in behavioural characteristics and that women are often selfless than men; women are less involved in corruption and accept less bribes. But it was shown that promoting women into high-level positions based on their superior morality is an ill-conceived presumption.
- ❖ The **difference of opportunities** argument suggests that women lack the knowledge and opportunities in partaking in corruption as women are generally excluded from « male-dominated patronage » and corruption network.
- ❖ **Fairer system** : observation that in liberal democracies, where equality, fairness and meritocracy are promoted, women's political participation increases including among opposition candidates, free journalism and an independent judiciary and corruption is lowered. A less predictable the public administration's sex composition, the lower the level of corruption. Some suggest that this link is reduced in autocratic systems.
- ❖ The **risk averse attitude** that characterizes women is also put forward to explain the gender-corruption relationship. This argument is further reinforced by studies that argue that women are more severely punished when engaging in corruption, in particular where there is a high probability that bribery will be discovered and punished. However, when corruption is risk free, there is no gender difference.
- ❖ The **helping 'behaviour** shows that when women are involved in political decisions, they are generally considered more likely to engage in public services and social spending relevant to the needs of their own gender.
- ❖ **Gendered forms of corruption** : men are more sensible to “greed” corruption, whereas women are more likely than men to perceive that corruption is driven by need.

Corruption impacts differently individuals and social groups



- Corruption prevents women from attaining power
- Corruption prevents women from accessing public services
- Women victims of corruption when seeking employment, running businesses in both the formal and informal sectors
- Women's statistically lower literacy levels = lack of knowledge of their rights and entitlements to services and public programmes, leaving them more vulnerable to bribery demands, including non-monetary corruption.
- More vulnerable individuals are less able to access justice & corrupt in the law enforcement systems erodes the protection and advancement of people's rights under the law. & gender biases within the structure of justice

V. Understanding gender differences towards corruption to shape anti-corruption reforms

Anti-corruption effectiveness ?



- ✓ **Anti-corruption** and **gender equality** efforts tend to be *mutually reinforcing*
- ✓ **Synergies between the two** can **strengthen policy decisions** and **legal frameworks** which in turn enhance women's empowerment and their increased participation in social, economic and other activities.

It is essential to:

- include a gender perspective into any preliminary analysis;
- improve the overall understanding of the complex interrelation of corruption and gender.

Methodological challenges:

- ❖ insufficient data, including cross-country information,
- ❖ lack of understanding and evidence of the causal mechanisms behind the possible relationship between gender and corruption.

Understanding the different approaches to gender in the fight against corruption



Gender equality must include equal rights, but also demands equal access to services and resources, economic opportunities and political voice; it calls for reviewing gender traditional roles and stereotypes.

Gender neutral policies are mostly applied and by virtue do not specifically target men or women. It is assumed that the effects of the policy are uniform across the spectrum. Such policies may however ignore the various roles, responsibilities and capabilities men and women may have due to their gender societal realities. They may thus be gender blind.

Gender-blindness means that the various socially determined roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of men and women are ignored. Gender blind policies and activities are based on knowledge derived from usually men's activities and the assumption that those affected by the policy or activity have all the same needs and interests.

Gender perspective: is a means to consider an issue while paying specific attention to the potentially different ways that men and women are affected. Such an exercise can also be referred to as using or looking through a "gender lens". Thereby, actual or potential differences between men and women and their experiences are highlighted.

Gender sensitivity/awareness: includes recognising, acknowledging, and showcasing existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporating a "gender perspective" into strategies and actions.

Gender mainstreaming relates to the process of assessing the implications for women and men in any planned action.



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