



# **Strengthening governance through anti-corruption and gender equality efforts**

**Second Regional meeting of the  
Women's Alliance for Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab  
countries**

Lebanon, 25-26 July 2022

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I. Reminder :

# 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. Regional governance and equality observations

1) Anti-Corruption – a policy priority but ...

the phenomenon is perceived by many national and international stakeholders as a serious obstacle to economic growth, business development and sustainability.

# MENA countries' commitments and importance for better understanding of the gendered lense of corruption



## 1) UNCAC :

- All Arab countries, except Syria, are Parties.

UNCAC includes many acts that must be criminalized as corruption :

- bribery (Giving and taking) by any public official, international public official, private sector officials;
- embezzlement,
- trading in influence,
- illicit enrichment and abuse of functions;
- obstruction of justice;-
- concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption;
- private sector corruption.

# Arab countries have also adhered to other policy instruments to fight corruption and promote integrity – some examples

	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				
Libya								
Morocco								
Palestinian Authority				N/A				
Tunisia								

Note: Blue refers to adherence to the instrument or existence of legislation, body or strategy. White refers to non-adherence to the instrument or absence of legislation, body, or strategy. Grey refers to strategies under development but not yet implemented.

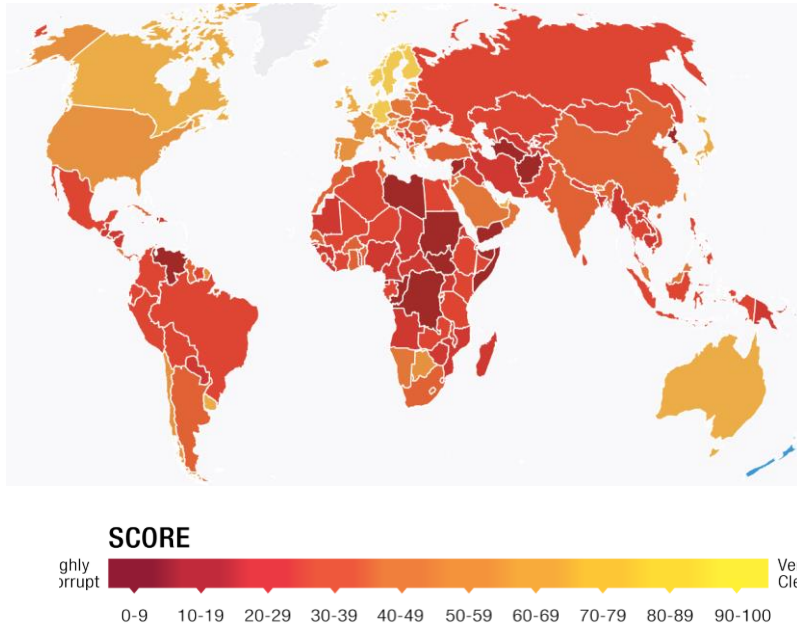
Source: Author's own elaboration based on national and international measures and instruments.

**Public sector integrity is declared priority in Arab Countries' policy reform agendas**



# International assessments attempt to evaluate corruption: Transparency International

## CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI) (2020)



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.**

*MENA: average score of 39 out of 100 in the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for the fourth consecutive year.*

***MENA states are struggling to achieve tangible results against corruption.***

*According to TI, no country has registered a significant CPI improvement in the last decade.*

- Political misconduct and private interests
- Multiple long-running conflicts
- Further corruption and human rights abuses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **United Arab Emirates** (CPI score: 69) and **Qatar** (63) are the top performers in the region while war-torn **Libya** (17), **Yemen** (16) and **Syria** (13) score the worst.

# Other corruption perceptions Indices - Scores of different Arab countries (2019)

Country	CPI score 2019	CPI Rank	Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index	Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings	Global Insight Country Risk Ratings	World Justice Project Rule of Law Index
U.A.E	71	21	71	21	6,26	70
Morocco	41	80	29	37	35	39
Egypt	35	106	29	37	35	31
Iraq	20	162	29	20	10	NA
Libya	18	168	21	20	10	NA
Sudan	16	173	13	20	22	NA

# International reviews: Observations



International reviews point towards :

- Gaps in the anti-corruption laws,
- Gaps in the implementation of the laws, and
- Gaps in the good governance practices of public institutions.

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

# Regional governance and equality observations

2) Gender equality – reforms are engaged but ...

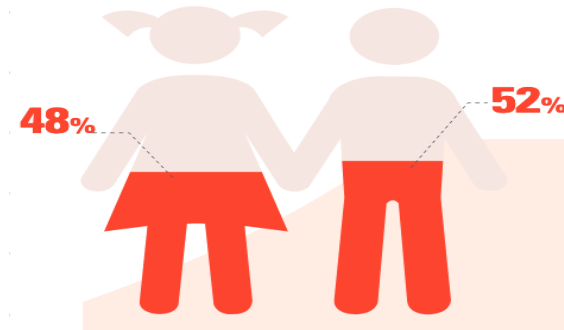
Arab States have lower levels of women's education and labour force participation than other regions with similar income levels

# Major International and regional commitments



- **CEDAW & Additional Protocol,**
- *ILO Conventions,*
- *Beijing Declaration,*
- *Arab Charter on Human Rights,*
- *Cairo Declaration,*
- *2030 Agenda for Sustainability*

**428 million people  
across the region**



**Reservations to CEDAW** at the time of signature, ratification or accession to the treaty, on the condition that the reservations are not “incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention” (Article 28, paragraph 2)

Introduced reservations exclude or modify the effect of certain CEDAW provisions:

- Article 2 : application of the convention at the national level and taking all necessary measures to prevent discrimination against women. **Declarations or reservations** : application of Article 2 ***provided it does not conflict with provisions of Islamic Sharia law.***
- Article 9 :equal rights between men and women with respect to the nationality of their children – Jordan has maintained its reservation, while Libya did not enter a reservation on that article.
- Article 15 paragraph 2 covers the right to conclude contracts and administer property. Algeria and Morocco introduced reservations, however, on the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their domicile.

### Introduced reservations :

- Article 16 guarantees equality in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, including the rights of equal ownership, acquisition, management and administration as well as disposition of property by both spouses. Lifted by Morocco (2011) and Tunisia (2014). Algeria's indicates that the article "shall not contradict the provisions of the Family Code", Egypt's that it "shall not prejudice the Islamic Sharia's provisions whereby women are accorded rights equivalent to those of their spouses so as to ensure a just balance between them", and Libya's that it "shall not contradict any of the rights guaranteed to women by the Islamic Sharia".

### No reservations placed :

- Article 11: non-discrimination against women in employment and labour-standard requirements such as the right to work, the right to the same employment opportunities, the right to equal remuneration, the right to social security and the protection of pregnancy and maternity
- **and yet ...**

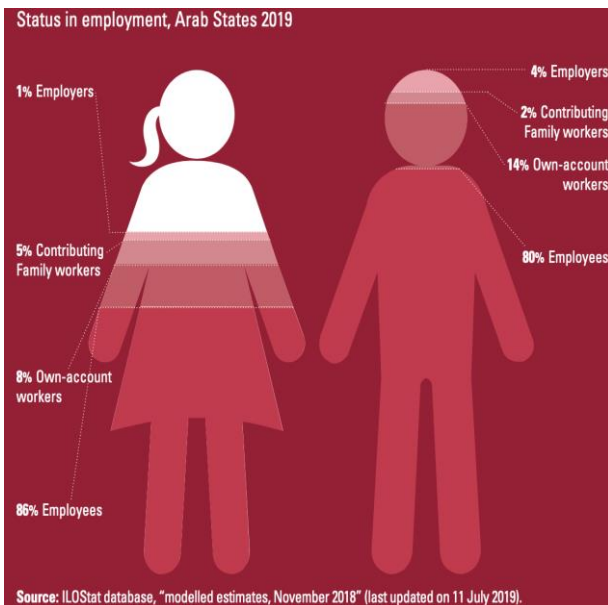
# Arab States have or almost achieved gender parity in primary education.



- Gender gaps widened as the level of education rises.
- Literacy among female youth (15-24) is 88% compared to 92% for male youth.
- **The gap is affected by income:** girls in rural areas and from the poorest households have lower attendance rates in primary and secondary school.
- **A number of institutional, structural and normative barriers also contribute to gender gaps:** safety concerns for girls traveling to school; lack of access to hygiene products; family and household responsibilities; early marriage.
- When young females have access to education, **girls outperform boys in learning outcomes throughout the region.**
- educational gains achieved by women are yet to translate into greater empowerment and participation in public life.



# Gender segregation in the labour market



**MENA countries have the lowest ratio of female-to-male labor force participation in the world.**

**Women's highest labour force participation rate is the lowest rate recorded for men**

**Female unemployment in MENA is three times higher than global average (20% compared to 6%) and more than twice as high as male unemployment.**

There are differences across countries whereby female unemployment is as high as 40% in Yemen and as low as 2% in Kuwait. **Unemployment rates are higher among women aged 15 to 24.**

- Women are more likely to be in vulnerable jobs in **Egypt, Morocco, Yemen and West Bank and Gaza**; in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan it is the opposite.
- They are more contributing family workers & are in lower wage jobs.
- Women work more than men when combining time spent on unpaid work (daily chores, housework, including caregiving), personal activities and leisure time
- **MENA is the region with the lowest rates of women in management positions** worldwide (6% on average), particularly West Bank and Gaza, Yemen, Iraq and Jordan. Syria is the only country where more than 20% of firms have female top managers, followed by Djibouti with close to 15%.



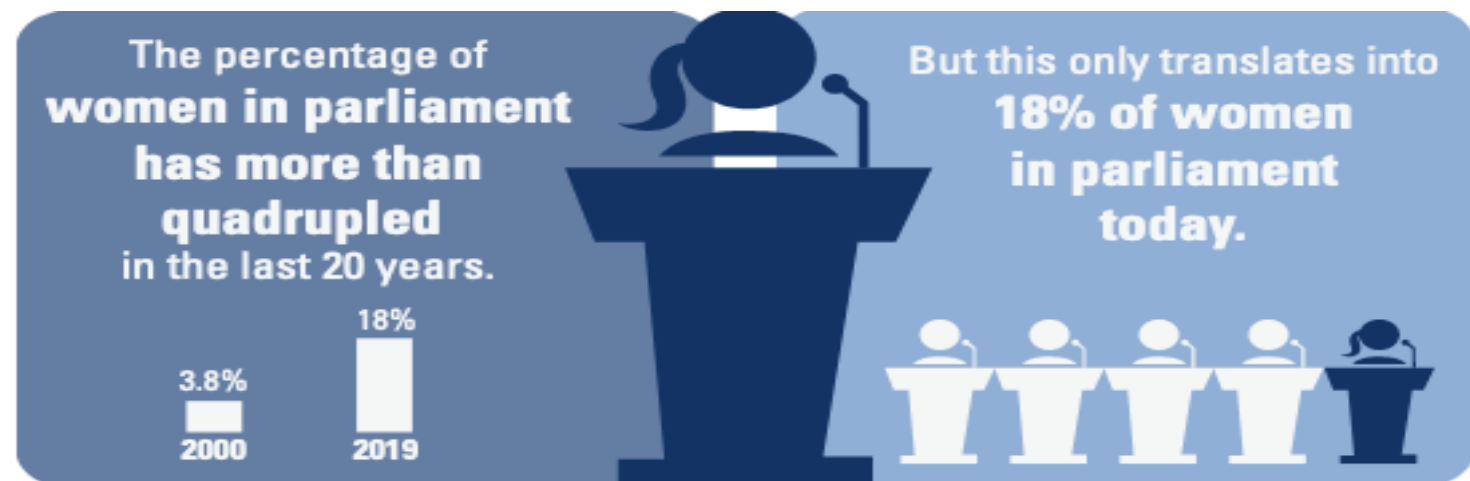
# Public life and decision-making

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 of **most** Arab countries recognize that women's and men's civil and political rights are equal.

But this does not necessary translate into women realization of their full civic, legal and political rights.

Women's educational advancement has not witnessed an equally advancement in their political representation in the formal realm of government.



# **III. Corruption and gender links in political and economic life**

# 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 on the basis of their superior morality is an ill-conceived presumption.
- ❖ The **patriarchal structure** incidence is shown by some authors who found that women in Australia are less tolerant of corruption, but no such evidence was found in three Asian countries.
- ❖ 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

# **IV. Understanding gender differences in perceptions and experiences of 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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