



State of Gender Integration in National Anti-Corruption Strategies in Arab Countries

Outline



- I. Considerations on fighting corruption and gender equality in Arab countries**

- II. Gender concerns in national anti-corruption strategies of Arab countries ?**

- III. Questions for discussion**



I. Considerations on fighting corruption and gender equality in Arab countries

Arab countries: potential for higher governance and gender equality



Anti-Corruption – a **policy priority** in Arab Countries

- ✓ Parties to UNCAC and other anti-corruption instruments
- ✓ Public sector integrity declared a priority in reform agendas
- ✓ Adoption of anti-corruption strategies by 12 countries

Many national and international stakeholders perceive corruption as a serious obstacle to economic growth, business development and sustainability.

No Arab 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.

Gender equality – reforms are engaged but results limited

- ✓ CEDAW & Additional Protocol and other international commitments & instruments
- ✓ Introduced reservations to core CEDAW provisions which impact gender equality

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

- ✓ Literacy among female youth (15-24) is 88% compared to 92% for male youth.
- ✓ MENA countries have the lowest ratio of female-to-male labour force participation in the world.
- ✓ Female unemployment in MENA is three times higher than global average (20% compared to 6%) and more than twice as high as male unemployment
- ✓ Only 18% women in parliaments today with very different results by country
- ✓ Gender gaps tend to be worse in rural areas with lower educational attainment, impoverished populations, and more prevalent contexts of conflict and political instability.

37% of Arab women (and maybe more) have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime (genital mutilation, rapes, human trafficking, survivors of violence refrain from asking for support or protection)

- Number of Arab countries have adopted gender equality strategies

Anti-corruption strategies in Arab countries



Arab countries promote anti-corruption reforms:

Over a dozen Arab countries have adopted anti-corruption strategies:

- Only a few are operational; for several the timelines have elapsed ;
- Some countries are currently engaged in developing anti-corruption strategies

Strategies are tailored to the domestic social economic and institutional situations: they have similarities and disparities.

1. **Bahrain** 2013-2018
2. **Comoros** 2012 open ended
3. **Egypt** 2019-2022
4. **Iraq** 2021-2024
5. **Jordan** 2020-2025
6. **Kuwait** 2019-2024
7. **Lebanon** 2020-2025
8. **Mauritania** 2011-2014
9. **Morocco** 2016-2025
10. **State of Palestine** 2020-2022
11. **Saudi Arabia** 2007 open ended
12. **Tunisia** 2016-2020
13. **Yemen** 2022-2026

Observations on the gender-corruption links



- ❖ **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 **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 individuals and social groups differently



- Corruption harms all economies and all citizens but more the poor
- Corruption can prevent (poor) women from accessing public services
- Corruption prevents women from attaining power
- In Arab countries, women can be 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

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.

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.

It is essential to:

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

UNDP ambition = Gender mainstreaming

the process of assessing the implications for women and men in any planned action.



II. Gender concerns in national anti-corruption strategies of Arab countries ?

Anti-corruption strategies & gender mainstreaming: a recent preoccupation



Gender mainstreaming : a gender perspective becomes an integral part of the design, implementation and monitoring of any policy, programme and institution.

Anticipating the potential gender-differentiated impacts of policy actions on at the design stage, it is possible to implement gender-sensitive policy actions to maximize opportunities for all and avoid the adoption of measures which increase gender disparities.

Gender mainstreaming in the chain of actions of the anti-corruption strategy

I. Conception, preparation, and development of an anti-corruption strategy:

- not only men should be involved in this process involving inter-governmental and non-government stakeholders.
- Women from the different instances and positions, including high and medium government position, should be involved and effectively consulted/heard.
- Data collected and made available on the differentiated gendered needs.

Gender mainstreaming in the chain of actions of the anti-corruption strategy (cont.)



II. Formulation of objectives, outputs and outcomes: formulate a theory of change involving 1) mission statement, 2) a robust identification of the problems, 3) clarity in terms of the interventions, 4) the outcomes that are needed to impact change, 5) the underlying assumptions for these outcomes to materialize.

Formulation of objectives: take account that women and men often have different needs and concerns/ avoid stereotypes and inequality.

Outcomes : in designing results ask how gender equality will be increased

Outputs: how it will impact women and men and how different groups of women and men

III. Monitoring a strategy's implementation:

The formulation of *indicators* : measuring women's and men's equal opportunities and equal access to resources

Means of verification: to measure effective change and adequate outcomes for women and men. Building on self-assessment reports from involved public institutions, evaluations on-site, use of background surveys and studies, assessment of administrative data, reviews published by observers in the context of international monitoring mechanisms. Also, participation by academics, citizens, and civil society to legitimate the results.

Monitoring report : reflect and address gender issues adequately.

Worldwide : Some very preliminary attempts to gender mainstream in AC strategies

No gender mainstreaming through the full chain of actions anywhere

Gender and the role of women in the AC strategies



Examples of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and the sub-national Kurdistan region of Iraq

- ❖ National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy 2021-2024 of the Republic of Iraq (NACSI),
- ❖ National Anti-Corruption Strategy in the Kurdistan region of Iraq 2021-2025 (ACSK),
- ❖ (updated) National Strategy of Integrity and Anti-Corruption 2020-2025 of Jordan (NACSJ),
- ❖ National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2025 of Lebanon (NACSL)

I. Conception, preparation, and development of the anti-corruption strategies including the strategy's formulation of objectives, outputs and outcomes

- *Consultation processes*: limited information, incl. participation of women in high and medium government position as well as grassroots women associations involvement during the strategies' elaboration. Iraq: woman; several women in Lebanon. No information on women civil society consultation/participation except Lebanon.
- *Gendered specificities in the strategies*: generally inexistent ; e.g. no general societal objectives such as poverty reduction.

Gender and the role of women in the AC strategies of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and the sub-national Kurdistan region of Iraq



- *Objectives and Outputs:* NACSL only reference to awareness raising
 - no gendered approach or scrutiny. Yet, overall: improving access to services
 - specific sectors important to women and children: no gendered considerations (e.g. education NACSJ)
 - improved access to justice: no gendered considerations (e.g. no ref. to women's violence and need to access public services)

II. **Implementation and monitoring**, including in any annual operational plans; and

- absence of a clearly designated and identified monitoring system of the strategies' implementation, &
- no indications of any gendered angle in the weakly qualified mechanisms to assess impact and measure progress in reform implementation.

III. **Periodic revisions and updates** of the AC strategies according to a multi-annual cycle ?

- Periodic revisions seem not be foreseen
- Yet, if they were to be undertaken gendered considerations could be included

IV. **Specific gender inequality and violence against women** strategies

- Hardly a reference to corruption



III. Questions for discussion

Questions for discussion



1. Would you agree with the analysis of the gendered considerations in the anti-corruption strategies of Iraq (incl. KRI), Jordan, Lebanon Are gendered considerations included in any anti-corruption strategy of the Arab region ?
2. If so, which elements have been built into the strategy and what has been the impact?
3. Are any anti-corruption strategies under development into which gendered considerations could be included? Which ones and what would be necessary to ensure gender mainstreaming into those strategies?
4. Should corruption considerations be included into gender equality strategies in the region and if so how ?

