

PROGRESS OF WOMEN IN THE ARAB STATES 2020:

THE ROLE OF THE CARE ECONOMY IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

REGIONAL LAUNCH

December 7, 2020, 15:00 Cairo Time (GMT +2)

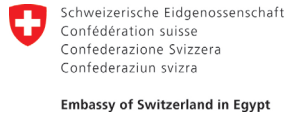
CONTEXT

Care is fundamental to our societies and economies and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the degree to which care – particularly of children, the elderly and the ill or disabled – is a global public good. While families are a key site for giving and receiving care, the implications of who provides care and who receives it extend beyond the family sphere. The provision of care services and implementation of public policies that could alleviate or redistribute some of the care burden for women and families remain underdeveloped in many countries, including in the Arab States. At the same time, satisfying unmet needs for care for young children, the elderly, ill and disabled will require investments in the development of paid care services throughout the region.

It is in this context that UN Women and ERF are publishing the report “*Progress of Women in the Arab States 2020: the role of the care economy in promoting gender equality*” as well as evidence-based policy recommendations for investment in the care economy in the Arab States as part of a regional companion report to the UN Women’s 2019-2020 Progress of the World’s Women report “*Families in a changing world: public action for women’s rights*”.

The regional companion report builds on unique microdata analysis of unpaid care work and paid care sectors, with case studies focusing on four countries of the region. The report provides an overview of the concept of the care economy and the demographic and social context of care provision in the Arab States, including in-depth case studies of Egypt, Jordan, the State of Palestine and Tunisia. It reviews the status of key care policies and services related to paid leave, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and elder care across the region.

The report demonstrates the extent to which the distribution of unpaid care work in Arab States is highly unequal. In some countries of the region, the ratio of women’s to men’s time spent in unpaid care reaches 19:1. The vast majority of time in unpaid care is performed by married women. This represents a major obstacle to raising women’s labour force participation rates, which are among the lowest in the world, as well as to improving other measures of gender inequality. Paid care services can play a major role in redistributing unpaid care work and be an important source of employment for women (UN Women 2020; ILO 2018). Women are overrepresented in paid care work in the region, and particularly in the early childhood care and education and social work sectors. However, there are significant challenges with job quality in the private paid care sector, including informality, gender wage gaps and lower levels of worker education. Tapping into the potential of the paid care economy – a sector that has received relatively little policy focus in the region – is thus an important means of supporting women’s economic empowerment



as long as investments in this sector are made with a view to protecting job quality and supporting the professionalization of vulnerable paid care sectors.

The publication of this report is supported by the regional programme “*Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine*”, which is jointly implemented by UN Women and ILO and generously funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), as well as by the generous contribution of the Swiss Development Cooperation through the Regional companion report to UN Women’s 2019-2020 Progress of the World’s Women report: “*Families in a changing world public action for women’s rights*” project.

REPORT LAUNCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the report launch webinar series is to bring together the ERF research team, UN Women representatives, as well as national partners on care work and care policies to present the findings of the report and discuss related policies.

REPORT LAUNCH ORGANIZATION

The report launch will convene December 7-9, 2020 in a webinar series, which includes five sessions that will provide ample time to zoom in to each report chapter, and an opportunity for Q&A.

The webinar to be held on December 7, 2020, 15:00 Cairo Time (GMT +2), will focus on Chapter 1 of the report, *The Care Economy in the Arab States: towards recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work*.

WEBINAR REGISTRATION DETAILS

UN Women and ERF Office invite you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: The Care Economy in the Arab States

Time: December 7, 2020 15:00 Cairo Time (GMT +2)

[Register here](#)

**PROGRESS OF WOMEN IN THE ARAB STATES 2020:
THE ROLE OF THE CARE ECONOMY IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY**

7 DECEMBER 2020

WEBINAR MODERATOR: ROMESH VAITILINGAM	
15:00 – 15:15	<p>Introduction and Opening Remarks</p> <p>Ms. Susanne Mikhail Eldhagen, <i>Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States</i></p>
15:15 – 15:40	<p>The Care Economy in the Arab States: Presentation of key findings and recommendations</p> <p>Dr. Ragui Assad, <i>University of Minnesota</i></p>
15:40 – 15:50	<p>Chapter Commentary: towards recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work</p> <p>Ms. Laura Turquet, <i>Policy Advisor, Research and Data Team, UN Women Headquarters</i></p> <p>Dr. Ghada Barsoum, <i>Associate Professor and Chair, American University in Cairo</i></p>
15:50-16:00	<p>Q&A</p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Romesh Vaitilingam</p>
16:00-16:10	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>H.E. Alexandra Rydmark, <i>Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan</i></p> <p>H.E. Paul Garnier, <i>Ambassador of Switzerland to Egypt</i></p>