

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

EGYPT CHAPTER LAUNCH

DECEMBER 8, 2020

CONTEXT

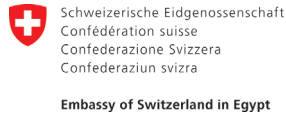
Care is fundamental to our societies and economies. While families are a key site for giving and receiving care, the implications of who provides care and who receives it extend beyond the family sphere (UN Women 2019). The provision of care services and implementation of public policies that could alleviate or redistribute some of the care burden for women and families remain underdeveloped in many countries, including in the Arab States.

The distribution of unpaid care work in Arab States is highly unequal among men and women, with much of the responsibility falling on married women. This represents a challenge to raising women's labour force participation rates, which are among the lowest in the world. 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). Tapping into the potential of the paid care economy – a sector that has received relatively little policy focus in the region – could thus be an important means of supporting women's economic empowerment. Changing demographic trends, such as fertility rates and population aging are also challenging systems of care-provision that rely on women's unpaid labour. 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.

These trends from the Arab States are mirrored in Egypt, where women perform the vast majority of unpaid care work. Whether or not they are employed, Egyptian women spend almost the same amount of time on unpaid care work, which reflects the double burden many women face. Expanding decent jobs in the care sector can be a major driver of private sector growth and women's engagement in paid work (UN Women 2020).

The overarching aim of this project is to produce 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 is built 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 on 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.



This project 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 national partners on care work and care policies in Egypt to present the findings of the report chapter *The Evolution of Paid and Unpaid Care in Egypt* 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 8, 2020, 15:00 Cairo Time (GMT+2), will focus on Chapter 2 of the report, The Evolution of Paid and Unpaid Care in Egypt.

WEBINAR REGISTRATION DETAILS

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

Topic: The Evolution of Paid and Unpaid Care in Egypt

Time: December 8, 2020 15:00 Cairo Time (GMT+2)

[Register here](#)

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8 DECEMBER 2020

WEBINAR MODERATOR: ROMESH VAITILINGAM

15:00 – 15:10

Introduction and Opening Remarks

Ms. Christine Arab, *Country Representative, UN Women Egypt Country Office*

15:10 – 15:30

The Evolution of Paid and Unpaid Care Work in Egypt: Is there room to reduce and redistribute?

Dr. Irene Selwaness, *Assistant Professor, Cairo University*

15:30 – 16:00

Commentary: The road towards recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work in Egypt

Dr. Ragui Assad, *University of Minnesota*

Ms. Gielan Elmessiri, *Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Egypt Country Office*

Dr. Heba Hagrass, *Board Member, National Council for Women*

H.E. Nivine El Kabbag, *Minister, Ministry of Social Solidarity*

16:00 – 16:15

Q&A

Moderated by Mr. Romesh Vaitilingam