

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

TUNISIA CHAPTER LAUNCH

DECEMBER 9, 2020

CONTEXT

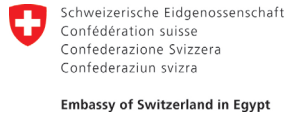
Care is fundamental to our societies and economies. While families are a key site for giving and receiving care, the implications of who provides care and who receives it extend beyond the family sphere. The provision of care services and implementation of public policies that could alleviate or redistribute 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, with much of the responsibility falling on married women. This represents a major obstacle 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 Tunisia, where women spend more than five times as much time on unpaid care work as men. Among them, married women spend the most time- twice as much as unmarried women. Most paid care-sector are in the public sector, particularly in education and health, while the private sector dominates in personal care and early childhood education. The care sector suffers from two major limitations: the quality of the services provided as reflected by the average qualifications of its workers, and the poor quality of employment as reflected by levels of informality (UN Women 2020). Expanding decent jobs in the care sector can be a driver of economic growth.

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 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 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 9, 2020, 16:00 Tunis Time GMT+1, will focus on Chapter 5 of the report, The Care Economy in Tunisia.

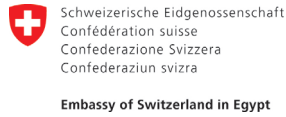
WEBINAR REGISTRATION DETAILS

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

Topic: The Care Economy in Tunisia

Time: December 9, 2020 16:00 Tunis Time (GMT+1)

[Register here](#)



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

9 DECEMBER 2020

MODERATOR: AHLEM BOUSSERWEL	
16:00 – 16:10	Introduction and Opening Remarks Ms. Maria Begoña Lasagabaster, <i>UN Women Representative, UN Women Tunisia and Libya Office</i>
16:10 – 16:30	The Care Economy in Tunisia Dr. Abdel-Rahmen El Lahga, <i>Associate Professor, University of Tunis</i>
16:30 – 16:50	Commentary: The road towards recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work in Tunisia Ms. Ahlem Bousserwel, <i>Programme Coordinator, UN Women Tunisia and Libya Office</i> Ms. Malika Mejri, <i>Director of family affairs, Ministry of Women, Family and Elders</i> Ms. Samia Ben Massoud, <i>Association Amal for Children and Families</i>
16:50 – 17:00	Q&A Moderator Ms. Ahlem Bousserwel