



## Conference Agenda



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of the conference  
and webpage here

Policy Conference

# Reimagining Social Protection in MENA

November 19-20, 2023 | Cairo, Egypt

Location: Safir Hotel, Cairo Egypt

Hybrid Event | [Registration link](#)

### Context

Social protection can be broadly defined as the policies and programs concerned with “preventing, managing, and overcoming situations which adversely affect people’s wellbeing” (UN Research Institute for Social Development). It includes policies such as social assistance and social insurance, health care access, and labor market interventions, among others. These policies and programs are essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal #1: “No Poverty”, and as such have become a central point of focus in both international and national policy agendas. In light of this and building on the previous ERF project on Social Protection in Jordan and Tunisia, and also with the generous funding provided by the Ford Foundation, this conference seeks to disseminate the findings of research on social insurance coverage in Egypt while reflecting on the previous findings from Jordan and Tunisia.

Through contributory social insurance and non-contributory social assistance schemes, and other policy instruments like health insurance and free public health care, social protection has been a long-standing key component of the social contract in Egypt. However, with the press of economic and structural reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, this social contract began to fray, with sectoral shifts in growth patterns and profound transformations in the Egyptian labor market that led to worsening inequalities for the middle class and the poor.

In Jordan, there has been an increased focus on establishing a social protection floor through the expansion and improvement of social protection programs, as outlined within the National Social Protection Strategy of 2019. However, in order to achieve the goal of breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty as outlined within the strategy, considerable challenges must be addressed, and adjustments must be made to existing systems.

Tunisia is considered among the countries with the most comprehensive social protection system in the MENA region, with its large contributory and non-contributory schemes. However more than 44% of the working population were still outside the social protection systems in 2019 and there remain entrenched geographic inequalities between the coast and the interior, as well as ill-targeted social spending.

### Objectives

In light of the above, this conference will take place over the course of 2 days to disseminate the findings of several research papers produced in the context of the Economic Research Forum’s project on “Reimagining Social Protection in MENA”. This regional learning event focused on social insurance/social insurance reforms will be structured as follows: The first day will be showcasing the component on social insurance in Egypt and the second will feature work on Jordan and Tunisia.

The conference seeks to encourage discussion of the current state of social insurance in Egypt, while reflecting on and comparing it to the regional perspectives and findings obtained from Jordan and Tunisia. Most notably, the conference will provide space for multiple stakeholders to promote civic engagement, and discuss policy solutions and disseminate and compare and contrast the different research findings across all three countries.



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### Day 1 - Social Insurance in Egypt

#### Welcome Remarks

10:30

11:30

Moderator:  
Sherine Ghoneim

Speakers:  
Ibrahim Elbadawi  
Saba Al Mubaslat  
Ragui Assaad

Keynote Speaker:  
H.E. Nivine El Kabbag

#### Session 3

15:00

16:00

Moderator:  
Rania Roushdy

Dynamics of social  
insurance in Egypt

Speakers:

Caroline Kraftt &  
Cyrine Hannafi

Commentators: Hania Sholkamy  
Amira El-Shal



#### Session 1

11:30

12:30

Moderator:  
Hassan Aly

The landscape of social  
insurance in Egypt

Speakers: Ghada Barsoum  
& Irene Selwaness

Commentators: Aya Gabr  
Abdelrahman Nagy



#### Session 4

16:00

17:00

Moderator:  
Heba Handoussa

Working conditions in  
the paid care economy in  
Egypt: Improvement or  
deterioration?

Speakers:

Caroline Kraftt &  
Maye Ehab

Commentators:  
Heba Nassar  
Irene Selwaness



#### Coffee Break

12:30

12:45

#### Session 2

12:45

13:45

Moderator:  
Magued Osman

Why is social insurance  
coverage declining in  
Egypt? A decomposition  
analysis

Speakers:

Ragui Assaad &  
Sarah Wahby

Commentators: Mervat Sabrin  
Reham Rizk



#### Closing Remarks

17:00

17:15

Speakers:  
Yasmine Fahim  
Ragui Assaad

#### Lunch Break

13:45

15:00

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### Day 2 - Social Insurance in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

#### Welcome Remarks

09:30

09:45

Speaker:  
Ibrahim Elbadawi

#### Lunch Break

13:15

14:15

#### Session 1

09:45

10:45

Landscape of social  
protection in Jordan

Speakers:  
Mary Kawar,  
Zina Nimeh  
& Tamara Kool

Commentators: Nesreen Barakat  
Haneen Sayed

Moderator:  
Ahmad Awad

#### Session 4

14:15

15:15

Social insurance  
in a regional perspective:  
Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia

Speakers:  
Zina Nimeh  
Tamara Kool  
& Guido Heins

Commentators: Vladimir Hlasny  
Oleksiy A. Sluchynsky  
Luca Pellerano

Moderator:  
Heba Handoussa

#### Session 2

10:45

11:45

Landscape of social  
protection in Tunisia

Speakers:  
Imane Helmy,  
Khaled Nasri  
& Mohamed Amara

Commentators: Najat El Mekaoui  
Mohamed Ali Marouani

Moderator:  
Heba El-Laithy

#### Coffee Break

15:15

15:30

#### Debate

15:30

17:00

How can we ensure better  
social insurance  
coverage?

Moderator:  
Ragui Assaad

Should there be complete  
universalism, a universal  
minimum, targeting  
of the poor regardless  
of other assistance,  
or contributory social  
insurance only?

Speakers:

Hania Sholkamy  
& Ghada Barsoum

#### Coffee Break

11:45

12:15

#### Session 3

12:15

13:15

The role of civil society  
in promoting social  
protection reforms  
in Tunisia and Jordan

Speakers:  
Ahmad Awad,  
Asma Ben Hassen  
& Arbia Saleh

Commentators: Farah Al Shami  
Mongi Boughzala

Moderator:  
Pascal Annycke

#### Closing Remarks

17:00

17:15

Speakers:  
Yasmine Fahim  
Ragui Assaad