

**Expert Group Meeting for
The Middle Class in Arab Countries Report**

UN House, Beirut 9-10 May, 2023

Day One: Tuesday, 9 May 2023	
9:00 – 9:30 am	Registration
9:30 – 10:00 am	Opening Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting Objectives and Agenda Marwan Khawaja, Chief Demographic and Social Statistics, ESCWA
10:00 – 10:30 am	Coffee break
10:30 – 11:30 am	Session 1: Conceptualizing and measuring the middle class in the Arab region Moderator: Christian Oldiges, Regional Adviser & Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA Presenter: Marwan Khawaja, Chief Demographic and Social Statistics, ESCWA Discussant: Mike Savage, Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics Open Discussion
11:30 – 12:30 pm	Session 2: The middle class in Arab countries Moderator: Ossama Safa, Chief of Social Affairs, ESCWA Presenter: Wafaa El Baba, Research assistant, ESCWA Discussant: Adib Nehme, Senior consultant on poverty and development policies, Arab NGO Network for Development Open Discussion
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch break
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Session 3: Economic status of the middle class: The case of Egypt, Jordan and Palestine Moderator: Sherine Al Azzawi, Professor of Economics (Santa Clara University), Labor economist and microeconomist (UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States) Presenter: Vladimir Hlasny, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA and Rihab Baltaji, Economic researcher, ESCWA Discussant: Elena Ianchovichina, Deputy Chief Economist, World Bank Open Discussion

2:30 – 3:30 pm	<p>Session 4: Informal middle class employees: The missing middle</p> <p>Moderator: Farah Al Shami, Senior fellow, Arab Reform Initiative Presenter: Salim Araji, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA Discussant: Aya Jaafar, Labour Economist, ILO</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
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Day Two: Wednesday, 10 May 2023	
9:00 – 10:00 am	<p>Session 5: Social protection and the middle class: Evidence from Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia</p> <p>Moderator: Marco Schaefer, Senior Social Affairs Officer, ESCWA Presenter: Irene Selwaness, Associate professor, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University Discussant: Hania Sholkamy, Associate Research Professor at the Social Research Center, AUC And Khaled Moheyddeen, Senior Social Protection Specialist, World Bank</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
10:00 – 11:00 am	<p>Session 6: Fiscal policy impact on poverty and vulnerability of middle class: A case study of Egypt</p> <p>Moderator: Sara Smierciak, MEI Research Fellow, Harvard University Presenter: Niranjan Sarangi, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA and Nathaniel Martin, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA Discussant: Ishac Diwan, Director of Research, Finance for Development Lab, Paris School of Economics</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
11:00 – 11:30 am	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30 pm	<p>Session 7: Impact of conflict on the middle class in the Arab region</p> <p>Moderator: Hassene Kassar, Professor of Sociology, Universite de Tunis Presenter: Youssef Chaitani, Chief of Section on Conflict and Development, and Raffaele Bertini, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA Discussant: Sawsan Abdulrahim, Associate Professor, AUB</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
12:30 – 1:30 pm	<p>Session 8: The skills of the middle class in Arab countries</p> <p>Moderator: Salim Araji, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA Presenter: Le Wu, Economic consultant, ESCWA Discussant: Chahir Zaki, Professor of Economics, Cairo University</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>

1:30 – 2:30 pm	<i>Lunch break</i>
2:30 – 3:30 pm	<p><i>Session 9:</i> Policy implications</p> <p>Moderator: Youness Abouyoub, Chief of Governance and State-Building, ESCWA</p> <p>Presenter: Marwan Khawaja, Chief Demographic and Social Statistics, ESCWA</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
3:30 – 4:00 pm	<p><i>Closing session</i></p> <p>Conclusions and Recommendations</p>