



## **Expert Group Meeting**

### **Property and land ownership and women's entrepreneurship in the Arab region**

#### **13 December 2021**

#### **Background**

In the Arab region, women's inheritance rights and property ownership is enshrined in the law. However, in practice, women's ownership of property and land is minimal compared to men. This is attributed to societal reasons: in many cultures in the region, women face social pressure to renounce their rights in favour of male heirs and are encouraged to entrust their inheritance to a male relative. Many countries in the region, including Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, are making reform efforts to address barriers to law enforcement and property registration, and institute measures to protect women's inheritance and secure women's land rights.

Excluding women from land and property ownership impacts both equity and equality. It is suggested that when women do not have access to property or land, they are also less likely to be employed and to be entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship has a range of positive effects on economies as a whole; on the other hand, global figures highlight the extreme inefficiency of shutting women out of the labor market. Limiting women's employment and entrepreneurship has enormous economic consequences – for the women, their families, and, above all, for society as a whole.

A draft study entitled "Property and Land Ownership and Women's Entrepreneurship in the Arab Region" by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) investigates the link between property ownership and women's entrepreneurship in the Arab region, with a specific focus on Jordan and Egypt. In particular, the report involves three interrelated steps: (1) the development of a conceptual model; (2) identifying appropriate micro-level survey data; and (3) using regression analysis to study the link between property ownership and entrepreneurship.

All in all, the study provides strong evidence that land/house ownership correlates positively with increased employment and entrepreneurship of women (in both Jordan and Egypt). However, there is little evidence that land/house ownership increases women's bargaining position in the household or that it decreases gender-based violence. Based on these findings, the report also includes recommendations for future work and further data collection on the topic.

The Expert Group Meeting aims to engage expert opinions on the draft study; validate the study's findings; and collectively develop relevant and actionable recommendations for member States in the Arab region.

The Expert Group Meeting will take place on-line over Microsoft Teams on 13 December 2021, from 15:00 – 18:00 (GMT +2). English will be the language of the Expert Group Meeting.

#### **Objectives of the Expert Group Meeting**

The Agenda of the Expert Group Meeting broadly follows the outline of the draft study and seeks to address the following objectives:

Presentation and discussion of the draft study, "Property and land ownership and women's entrepreneurship in the Arab region". In particular, the experts will have the opportunity to discuss the study's conceptual framework, methodology, data and main findings. In addition, experts are also expected to help in articulating directions for future research and policy recommendations.



## Experts

In addition to the participation of experts from ESCWA, the Expert Group Meeting will engage the knowledge and experience of experts from the Arab region and globally in a discussion on the report's methodology and main findings and present recommendations to augment the study. Experts will include external reviewers, reviewers from ESCWA and other UN agencies, and reviewers focusing on Jordan.

The EGM will further seek to examine possible methodologies and recommendations to follow up on this study to better understand the precise mechanisms behind the land/property-entrepreneurship nexus and make recommendations on designing appropriate policies.

## Provisional Agenda

<b>Expert Group Meeting</b> <b>Property and land ownership and women's entrepreneurship in the Arab region</b> <b>13 December 2021</b>	
15:00 – 15:10	Welcome Remarks and Introductions
15:10 – 15:55	<p><b>Conceptual Framework and Methodology</b></p> <p>This session will share an overview of the study's conceptual framework and methodology.</p> <p>Session Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the framework appropriate for understanding property and land ownership and women's entrepreneurship in the Arab region? If not, then what is?</li> <li>• What other conceptual frameworks might contribute to better understanding the impact of land ownership and women's entrepreneurship on women and the economy in the Arab region?</li> <li>• Is the methodology that was utilized clear and understandable? If not, how can it be further clarified for the reader?</li> <li>• Were the data and methodology used appropriate to the conceptual framework developed? If not, what is missing?</li> </ul>
15:55 – 17:10	<p><b>Presentation of Findings</b></p> <p>This session will present country-level data on the link between women's land/property ownership and entrepreneurship in the Arab region, with a specific part of the session relating to formal financing in Jordan, and then present key findings of the larger study.</p> <p>Session Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the findings relevant to the situation of women's economic empowerment in the selected countries?</li> <li>• What are the key takeaways from these findings for you?</li> <li>• What can be done to share the findings in the most concise and impactful manner?</li> </ul>



17:10 – 18:00

**Recommendation session on the way forward**

This session will aim to develop recommendations on how to take this study forward and identify policy recommendations for Member States.

Session Questions

- Suggestions for future research building on the present study and advancing the enforcement of property rights.
- Policy recommendations for member States.