

International Labour Standards and Care Work

The role of Parliamentarians in accelerating the achievement of women's economic empowerment under SDG5 in the Arab region

Focus on care policies



Zeina Mezher

Project Manager, ILO Regional Office for Arab States

January 2024

International Labour Standards (ILS)

- The value of **International Labour Standards** lies in their contribution to human rights, social justice, decent work, economic stability, poverty reduction, social dialogue, sustainable development, and international cooperation.
- They provide a framework for creating **decent, fair, and equitable conditions for workers worldwide**.
- ILS are adopted through a multilateral process within the International Labour Organization (ILO). Discussions and negotiations take place in committees and conferences involving **representatives of governments, employers, and workers**. The final adoption occurs at the annual International Labour Conference, where proposed conventions and recommendations require a two-thirds majority vote.
- Once adopted, member states decide whether to **ratify the conventions**, making them legally binding at the national level. The ILO provides **technical assistance** to support implementation at the national level, and there is a system of **independent monitoring** to ensure compliance.
- The ratification process often involves approval by the country's legislative body, and **once ratified**, the convention becomes a **legally binding** part of the country's legal framework and launch a national process of legal reform.
- **Even if a country has not ratified** a particular convention, it may still **be involved** in discussions and activities related to the promotion and implementation of the standards and could use them as a **reference to reform national laws and strengthen law enforcement**.

Complementarity of International

**Fundamental
Principles &
Rights at
Work**

Migrant
Workers

Discrimination
(Employment and
Occupation)

Equal
Remuneration

Nursing
Personnel

Domestic
Work

Maternity
Protection

Selection of main ILS related to care work and relevant Ratifications in the Region

Title and no. of Convention	Ratification per country
Equal Remuneration Convention No.100 المساواة في الأجر	Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, OPT, KSA, Syria, UAE, Yemen
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) No. 111 اتفاقية بشأن التمييز في الاستخدام والمهنة	Egypt, Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, OPT, Qatar, KSA, Syria, UAE, Yemen,
Workers with family responsibilities No. 156 تكافؤ الفرص: العاملون ذوو المسؤوليات العائلية	Yemen
Maternity protection No 183 حماية الأمومة	Morocco
Migrant workers No. 97 العمال المهاجرون	Algeria , Morocco
Migrant workers No. 143 العمال المهاجرون	-

Title and no. of Convention	Ratification per country
Nursing Personnel No. 149 العاملون في مجال التمريض	Egypt, Iraq
Part-time worker No. 175 العمال ذوو الدوام الجزئي	-
Social security No. 102 الضمان الاجتماعي	Iraq, Jordan, OPT, Libya, Syria, Morocco
Social dialogue, the right to organize and representation No.87 الحوار الاجتماعي، حق التنظيم والتمثيل	Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, OPT, Libya, Syria, Yemen
Occupational Safety and Health No.155 السلامة والصحة المهنية	Algeria, Bahrain, Syria
Child labour No. 138, 182 عمل الأطفال	Egypt, Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, OPT, Oman, Qatar, KSA, Syria, UAE, Yemen
Home worker/Domestic work No. 177, 189 العمل المنزلي	-
Violence and Harassment No. 190 القضاء على العنف والتحرش في عالم العمل	-

What role could MPs play in relation to ILS and Care?

- ▶ **Evidence based research:** Lead and participate in evidence based research to assess the impact of ILS on promoting women empowerment, participation in the workforce, gender equality, social justice
- ▶ **Legislation and Policy Advocacy:** Introduce and advocate for legislation that aligns with international labor standards on gender equality. This may include laws addressing equal pay, non-discrimination, maternity protection, and work-life balance.
- ▶ **Budget Oversight:** Ensure that national budgets allocate resources for the implementation of non-discriminatory labour policies and programs. This includes funding for initiatives related to maternity protection, childcare facilities, care for older persons and persons with special needs etc..
- ▶ **Ratification of International Conventions:** Advocate for the ratification of relevant ILS related to care work and encourage the government to adopt and implement conventions such as those addressing equal remuneration, maternity protection, etc..
- ▶ **Oversight and Monitoring:** Establish mechanisms for parliamentary oversight and monitoring of government efforts to comply with ILS.
- ▶ **Encourage and facilitate social dialogue** among employers, workers, and government, fostering collaborative forums to address discrimination in workplace and promote equality.

For more information:

[Introduction to International Labour Standards \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org)

[ILO 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, ILO \(2022\)](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/international-labour-standards/lang--ar/index.htm)

<https://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/international-labour-standards/lang--ar/index.htm>

<https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/lang--ar/index.htm>

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_862128.pdf

Zeina Mezher

Email: Mezher@ilo.org

International Labour Organization

Regional Office for Arab States

Aresco Centre – Justinien Street - Kantari

Riad El Solh 1107-2150

P.O.Box 11-4088

Beirut, Lebanon

Tel: +961 1 752400

Fax: +961 1 752405