

# Chapter 1: Snapshot of Ageing and Older Persons in the Arab Region



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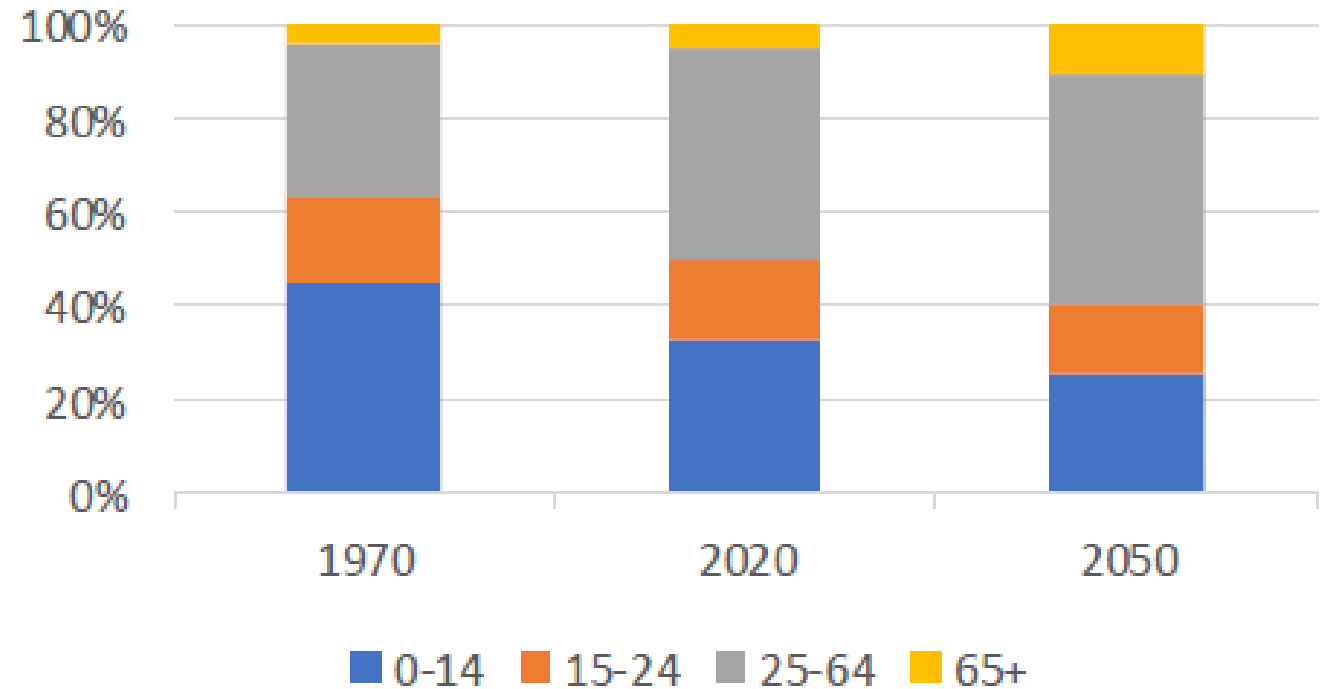
Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



## Demographic trends

- 1970 – 4.5 million older persons, 4% of the population
- 2020 – 20.8 million older persons, 5% of the population
- 2050 – 71.5 million older persons, 11% of the population

## Age structure

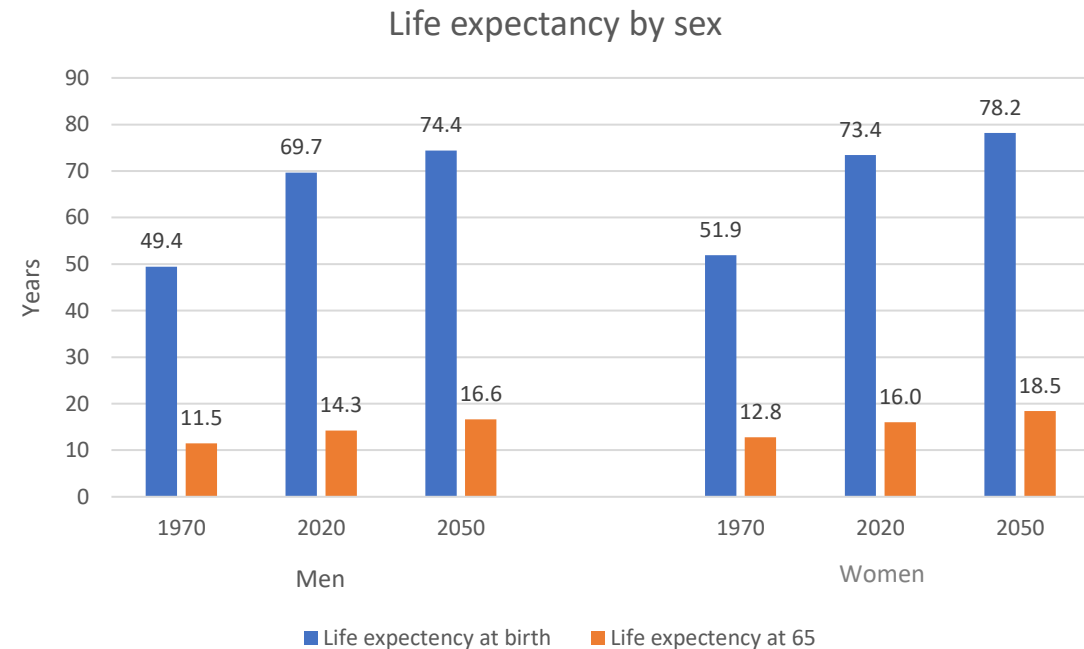


# Underlying dynamics

## Declining fertility

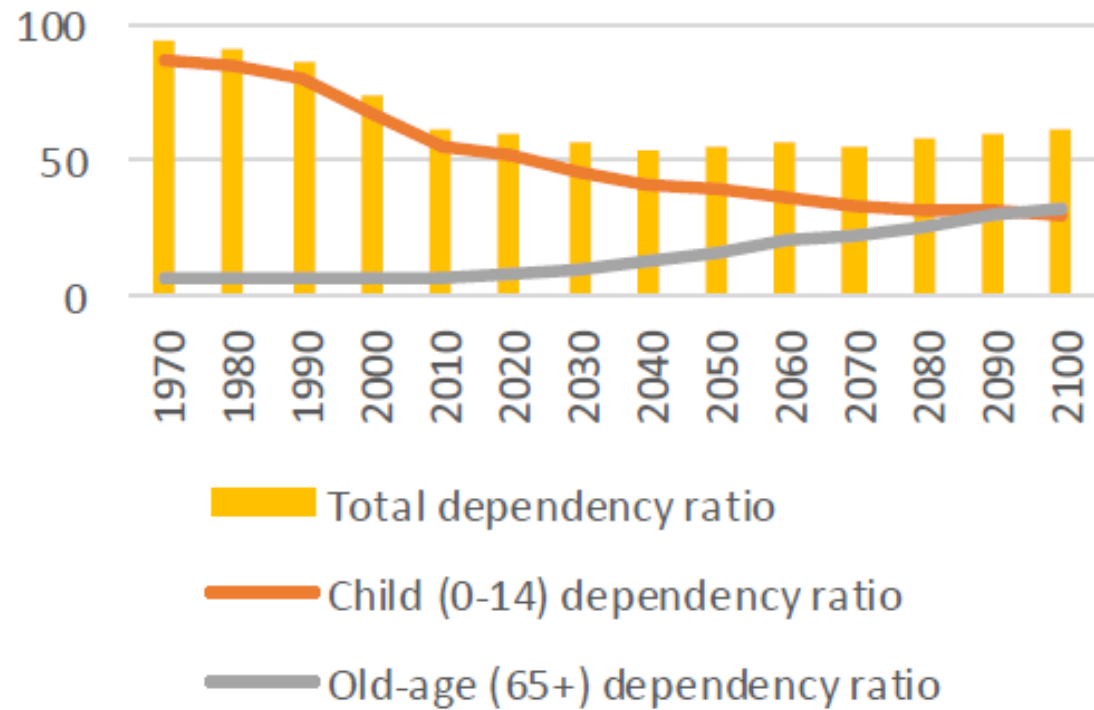
- 1970 – 7.0 children per woman
- 2020 – 3.3 children per woman
- 2050 – 2.5 children per woman

## Rising life expectancy



# Dependency Ratios

Dependency ratios  
(percentage)





# Socio-economic situation

- **Social protection**
  - On average only 37 per cent of older persons above retirement age received a pension in the Arab region in 2020
- **Living arrangements**
  - The percentage of older persons living alone or only with a spouse has risen considerably (e.g. from 19% in 1992 to 43% in 2014 in Egypt)
- **Health**
  - Old age is generally associated with a higher prevalence of non-communicable diseases, as well as disability.
  - Disability prevalence increases from below 5% of age group (25-64) to reach up to 31% in the 65+ age group (where data is available)
- **COVID-19**
  - The COVID-19 pandemic further heightened the vulnerability of older persons in the Arab region
- **Education**
  - Illiteracy among older persons above 65 is widespread in the Arab region. <10 % of rural older women are literate in some countries

# Recommendations

## ❑ Empowering and protecting older persons

- Governments need to take ageing process into account in developing their policies
- Social protection schemes should be more inclusive and responsive to older persons
- Build and expand professional care at home and institutional care
- Provide accessible and affordable healthcare to older persons
- Arab countries and relevant organizations should make available updated, reliable, and accessible data disaggregated by age

# Recommendations

## ❑ **Adopting a life cycle approach to policy making**

- Expand social protection schemes to include informal workers
- Promote healthy habits and provide access to health for all
- Promote active ageing across policies
- Encourage investment and saving habits among the working age population to improve financial security in old age
- Arab countries should invest more in life-long education