

**Expert Group Meeting on the ESCWA, ICJ and OHCHR Study  
“Women in the Judiciary in the Arab Region”  
28-29 November 2018  
Committee Room I (B1 Level), UN House, Beirut, Lebanon**

**Agenda**

**Day 1: Wednesday 28 November 2018**

**8.30 – 9.00 Registration**

**9.00 – 9.30 Opening remarks (ESCWA, OHCHR) and introductions**

**9.30 – 10.45 Session 1: Setting the scene**

The first session will set the scene for the Expert Group Meeting by presenting the regional context regarding women’s presence in decision-making. It will then outline key normative and empirical arguments in favour of women’s presence in the judiciary, including relevant commitments of Arab States. The typology of Arab judicial systems will be briefly introduced. Finally, the session will present the rationale for producing a study on this theme, as well as its outline, and highlight the main challenges to the study’s preparation.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- Why does women’s presence in the judiciary matter?
- How does the structure of Arab judicial systems impact women’s presence?
- Does the design of the study match its purpose?
- How can some of the limitations of the study be addressed?

**10.45 – 11.00 Coffee break**

**11.00 – 12.30 Session 2: Status of women in the judiciary in the Arab region**

The session will discuss key regional trends regarding the status of women in the judiciary in the Arab region, including headline numbers, breakdown by type and level of court, by seniority, as well as women’s presence in judicial training institutes.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the key regional trends regarding women’s presence in the judiciary? How can we explain those? What are some notable exceptions?
- What are the trends regarding women’s presence in the legal field in general? How will they affect women’s participation in the judiciary?
- How do various rules and criteria for the recruitment and career progression of judges affect women’s presence in judicial institutions?

**12.30 – 13.30 Lunch break**

**13.30 – 15.00 Session 3: Barriers to women’s participation in the judiciary**

The session will focus on identifying concrete barriers to women’s entry and progression through the ranks of the judiciary. The session will cover formal and institutional, as well as informal and

socio-cultural, barriers to women's presence in judicial institutions. The focus of the session will be on common trends in the Arab States, although country-specific barriers will also be highlighted.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the main barriers to women's entry in the judiciary?
- What barriers explain women's lesser ability to attain senior positions in the judiciary compared to men in most Arab countries?
- What strategies can be implemented to successfully overcome these barriers?

**15.00 – 15.30 Q&A and conclusions of the day**

**Day 2: Thursday 29 November 2018**

**10.15 – 10.30 Coffee**

**10.30 – 12.00 Session 4: Case studies**

The session will present the main findings of the case studies conducted in five Arab countries (Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, The Sudan and Tunisia) that have a high presence of women in judicial institutions in regional comparison.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are common elements that have enabled women to attain a higher representation in these five countries? What enabling factors are more country-specific?
- What has been the impact of women's presence in the judiciary of those countries?
- What lessons can be learnt from the case studies so that positive practices can be replicated in other Arab States?

**12.00 – 13.30 Session 5: Policy recommendations**

The session will develop a series of concrete of policy recommendations to be implemented by Arab States in order to enhance the presence of women in their judicial institutions, based upon the analysis presented in the study, relevant commitments of Arab States, as well as the good practices identified through the national case studies.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What should Arab States do to increase the representation of women in the judiciary at all levels? How do we ensure that the participation is meaningful?
- What current policies and practices should be reformed and/or eliminated?
- Which other stakeholders should be involved in efforts to improve women's participation in the judiciary?

**13.30 – 14.00 Closing remarks and group photo**

**14.00 – 15.00 Lunch**