

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/27/4(Part I)
27 February 2012
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

Twenty-seventh session
Beirut, 7-10 May 2012

Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda

POLICY ISSUES IN THE ESCWA REGION**THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACHIEVING
SUSTAINABLE AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT****Summary**

The Arab Region is in search for a new development paradigm. Challenged simultaneously on the social and economic fronts by high unemployment rates, increasing poverty, food insecurity and insufficiently broad based and diversified economic growth, the political institutions have to respond to the aspirations of the young generation and their expectation towards greater participation in economic and public life and increased attention to social justice and social accountability.

This paper was prepared on the request of the ESCWA Technical Committee in December 2011. On the basis of existing research on economic prospects, labour markets, social policy and sustainable development, this report specifically focuses on the interrelations between the political, economic, social and environmental policy fields. It considers the interdependence of development challenges and looks at possible entry points to harness synergies and build on existing strengths.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT	1-4	3
II. MAKING THE CASE: DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	5-11	3
III. SOCIAL JUSTICE REQUIRES INCLUSION, MOBILITY AND EQUITY	12-25	4
A. Employment	12-17	4
B. Social protection	18-19	6
C. Income inequality, poverty and vulnerability	20-25	7
IV. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY	26-40	9
A. Access to health-care services	26-29	9
B. Access to education	30-33	10
C. Access to safe environment and sustainable use of resources	34-38	11
D. Equity for future generations	39-40	12
V. EQUITABLE POLICY CHOICES REQUIRE PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY	41-49	13
VI. SUMMARY AND THE WAY FORWARD	50-56	16
<i>Annex.</i> Trade union and collective bargaining legislation in ESCWA member countries		20

I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

1. What kind of society is the Arab world striving for? What will the new Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen look like? What should be the cornerstones of the new development approach the region is aiming to devise? In opinion polls as well as on the streets, many people express their dissatisfaction with the past and present status,¹ but what are their preferences for the future?
2. Sustainable development emphasizes a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to participatory decision-making at all levels. It requires strong economic performance combined with social cohesion, stability combined with freedom, solidarity with competition, equity with merit, and it aims at ensuring the well-being of present, as well as future generations.
3. How can this balance be achieved? The diversity of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) region does not allow for answering these questions across the board. Each country will have to make its own choices on the basis of its specific conditions. This report aims to present a conceptual policy framework to describe the intrinsic relationships between social justice, participation and social cohesion in achieving sustainable development and more balanced, inclusive societies.
4. In the current context where popular uprisings continue to shape the new socio-political landscape of the region, the report discusses the challenges that governments face in achieving social justice and proposes a set of cornerstones for aligning participation with the objectives inherent in the concept of sustainable development. As sustainable development rests on collective responsibility to strengthen its three interdependent pillars – economic development, social development and environmental protection² – it argues that more attention must be given to social structures, institutions and cumulative vulnerabilities that reinforce inequality in order to ensure that the development process is balanced and fairer to all. Better policy integration is equally needed to take advantage of the multiplier effects of improvements in individual sectors on other policy domains.

II. MAKING THE CASE: DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

5. There are several ways to measure development. From an economic perspective, the gross domestic product (GDP) is typically used to compare the performance of economies around the globe and to express their development status. GDP is an important indicator of economic capacity and, to a certain extent, the prosperity of societies as a whole. But does it reflect the situation of all its members?
6. GDP has been criticized as being insufficient to measure some of the important aspects of the quality of peoples' lives. Some of the most critical aspects are, for example, that GDP measures only market activity and underestimates services that are provided for free by the government or by family members, it does not measure those environmental costs that are not reflected in market prices, and it does not reflect the equitable distribution of income or wealth. An average per capita increase in GDP may conceal an increase in inequality and thus a deterioration of the situation for large segments of the population.
7. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) thus aim to capture the well-being of people in a more comprehensive way by measuring progress against a defined set of indicators that determine the lives of people. The eight goals³ represent a powerful, unprecedented commitment of governments around the world to be held accountable for measurable social progress. However, since the reporting is based on national averages, the MDGs largely fail to reflect distributional inequalities and the incidence of cumulative disadvantages such as the number of poor households without access to education, health care or water.

¹ Breisinger, C., Ecker, O., and Al-Riffai, P., May 2011, Economics of the Arab Awakening: From Revolution to Transformation and Food Security. IFPRI Policy Brief 18.

² United Nations, 1992, Agenda 21: The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio. For further information see: <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/index.shtml> (Accessed 21 February 2012); United Nations, 2002, Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, p. 2.

³ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (Accessed 14 February 2012).

8. In order to capture such cumulative disadvantages, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, has developed the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).⁴ This MPI has the advantage of capturing complex relations in a single mark, but the combination of disparate indicators into one single index requires fundamental value judgments regarding the weights of each of them.⁵ Also, an adaptation of the weights to national conditions would compromise international comparability, which is one of the strong advantages of the MDGs.

9. Other recent approaches to measuring economic and social progress have called for more attention to the subjective dimension of well-being and to the capacity to lead a healthy and meaningful life.⁶ Based on Amartya Sen's concept of development as freedom, they propose to consider objective indicators such as income, employment, health, education in connection with the voice of people, and 'agency' and happiness simultaneously. In addition, fairness towards the life of future generations, captured in the term inter-generational equity, is increasingly regarded as an important component of social justice.

10. The latest proposal to conceptualize the interrelation between social justice and development is through the notion of social cohesion.⁷ It emphasizes that sustainable growth requires the inclusion of all social groups into mainstream society, a fair distribution of income and opportunities, an investment in education and health, as well as support to voice their aspirations, social accountability⁸ and upward social mobility.

11. The following sections will thus explore some key dimensions of these relationships in the context of ESCWA member countries today.

III. SOCIAL JUSTICE REQUIRES INCLUSION, MOBILITY AND EQUITY

How labour markets determine the social situation of the population and their economic opportunities

A. EMPLOYMENT

12. The labour market is the most powerful mechanism to ensure social integration, the mobility of people according to their talent and their achievement in accordance with their merit. Well functioning labour markets are a key entry point towards economic growth and poverty reduction. Decent employment supports independent lives in full dignity and further supports social cohesion.

13. In the ESCWA region, labour markets do not yet fulfill their economic and social functions. If we consider their capacity to integrate all social groups into productive employment, we must realize that of the 157 million people of working age⁹ in the ESCWA region only about 50 per cent (74 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women) are currently participating in the labour market.¹⁰ Out of these, about 8.5 million (5 million men and 3.5 million women) are unemployed.¹¹ Young people find it especially hard to find their

⁴ For further information about the Multidimensional Poverty Index see: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/mpi/> (Accessed 14 February 2012).

⁵ For further information see: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/african/a-debate-on-multidimensional-poverty-indices> (Accessed 14 February 2012).

⁶ Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J.P., 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, pp. 21-49.

⁷ OECD, 2011, *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, p. 17.

⁸ The World Bank defines social accountability as an approach that relies on civic engagement in exacting accountability from governments. For further information see: <http://go.worldbank.org/Y0UDF953D0> (Accessed 16 February 2012).

⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, *World Population Prospects, 2010 Revision*, available at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/> (Accessed 21 February 2012).

¹⁰ ESCWA, 2011, *Integrated Social Policy Report IV: Labour markets and Labour Market Policy in the ESCWA Region*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/3, p. 20.

¹¹ Based on ESCWA calculations.

place in the labour market: more than 25 per cent of the 15 to 25 year olds in the Middle East and North Africa are currently searching for employment.¹² For women, the risk of unemployment increases with education,¹³ and the share of women in waged employment outside the agricultural sector is the lowest across world regions at 18.7 per cent.¹⁴ If the employment of persons with disabilities is taken as an indicator for the capacity of labour markets to integrate more vulnerable social groups, then employment rates between 15 to 25 per cent in several ESCWA member countries does not demonstrate inclusive capacity.^{15,16}

14. In addition, labour markets in all ESCWA member countries are highly segmented. According to current estimates, approximately a third of GDP and two thirds of employment are located in the informal sector.¹⁷ Since there is almost no mobility from informal to formal sector employment this means that a big part of the working population is locked in mostly low-skill, low productivity, low-value-added types of jobs with little chance to move into better earning and better protected types of employment. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the concentration of national workers mainly in the public sector – whereas the private sector is driven by foreign labour – is still of great concern and poses a different kind of challenge to the sustainability of their development.

15. Labour laws, which in principle are designed to protect all workers, do not reach out to the informal sector. The system of labour governance is underdeveloped as labour inspection is too weak to enforce the law. Labour unions, which could provide an element of self-monitoring of labour regulations and also support their more flexible adjustment to the economic conditions in specific sectors, are restricted in their activities in almost all member countries.

16. Similarly, vocational education, training programmes and other instruments of governmental labour market policy are hardly accessible for informal workers. Employment agencies do not cover the rural areas and therefore these programmes appear to reinforce the existing spatial segmentation of the labour markets. The segmentation of the labour market reflects the division of the economies into well protected public sectors, a few high-value-added industries, which are small employers, such as mining and finance, and a vast majority of micro, small and medium enterprise, which provide the majority of employment but are too small to instigate growth and the innovative dynamics that the economies need. In some countries, a reliance on cheap foreign labour has held back investment in innovation and technological advancement.

17. The inefficiency, inequality and inequity engrained in the duality of the economies and labour markets lies in the fact that (a) the economies do not provide sufficient jobs for medium and high skilled workers so that education investment is lost, and young people especially do not have the chance to utilize or develop their skills;¹⁸ and (b) workers in the informal sector are almost completely unprotected by social security systems, while at the same time the informal sector has to absorb the full impact of economic shocks. The plight of informal workers is often seen as exemplified in the fate of Mohamed Bouazizi, whose desperation triggered the Arab Spring.¹⁹

¹² International Labour Organization (ILO), 2012, Global Employment Trends 2012: Preventing a deeper job crisis, p. 33.

¹³ ESCWA, 2011, op. cit.

¹⁴ United Nations, 2011, MDG report 2011, Statistical Annex, indicator 3.2.

¹⁵ Data refer to Bahrain (2001), Jordan (2004), Palestine (2000), Qatar (2004) and the Syrian Arab Republic (2004). Data on disability are published infrequently and updated figures are not available.

¹⁶ ESCWA, 2010, International and Regional Practices Favouring the Inclusion of Persons with Disability in the Labour Market. E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/WP.4, p. 12.

¹⁷ World Bank, 2011, Economic Developments and Prospects: Investing for Growth and Jobs, p. 37.

¹⁸ ESCWA, 2011, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁹ Foreign Policy, The real Mohamed Bouazizi, Foreign Policy, De Soto, H. 16 December 2011, for further information see: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/16/the_real_mohamed_bouazizi (Accessed 16 February 2012).

B. SOCIAL PROTECTION

18. Social protection in the ESCWA Region almost completely depends on employment status, either through contributions to social insurance that are shared between employers and employees or through labour income, which allows for savings to cover risks. Except for Egypt, Kuwait, and the Syrian Arab Republic, which offer possibilities for pension coverage to all groups of workers, pensions and other social insurance schemes only cover those employed in the formal sector.²⁰ This means that between 40 and in some countries up to 75 per cent of workers are in a vulnerable situation with regard to lifecycle risks or economic shocks.²¹

19. The inequality engrained in this situation lies in the fact that people in public and other usually well protected employment enjoy social protection in addition to employment security, whereas informal workers with less economic security fall out of the system completely. The current demographic windows of opportunity with lower dependency rates present an ideal moment to expand social insurance systems to people in the informal sector. Table 1 shows the extent of coverage by public pension schemes in the region.

TABLE 1. COVERAGE OF PUBLIC PENSION SCHEMES IN ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

	Military	Civil servants	Other employees in public administration	Employees in state-owned enterprises	Private sector employees outside agriculture with a permanent working-contract	Temporary employees	Employees in agriculture	Employers and the self-employed	Domestic workers	Foreigners	estimated effective coverage of all pension schemes (percentage of total working population)
Bahrain	x	x	+	+	+/-*	—	+/-	(+)	—	+	30
Egypt	x	x	+	+	+	x	+	x	x	+	58
Iraq	x	x	x	x	+	—	+	—	—	+	18
Jordan	+	+	+	+	+	—	—	(+)	—	+	55
Kuwait	x	+	+	+	+	+	+	(x)	+	—	21
Lebanon	x	x	x	x	+	—	+	—	—	—	25
Oman	x	x	x	+	+	—	+	—	—	—	10
Palestine	x	+	+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30
Qatar	+	+	+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Saudi Arabia	x	+	+	+	+	—	—	(+)	—	—	23
Syrian Arab Republic	x	x	x	+	+	+/-	+	(+)	(+)	+	35
United Arab Emirates	x	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—	—	10-15
Yemen	x	x	x	x	+	—	—	—	—	+	13

Source: Adapted from Loewe, M., 2009, Pension Schemes and Pension Reforms in the Middle East and North Africa. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, p. 12.

Notes: + covered by the general scheme.

X covered by a separate pension scheme.

— not covered.

+/- partially/some covered.

(+) may enroll on a voluntary basis, but have to pay entire contribution (employer's and employee's share).

* only people employed by enterprises with at least five employees.

²⁰ ESCWA, 2011, op. cit., p. 55.

²¹ Ibid.

C. INCOME INEQUALITY, POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

20. Income is almost completely linked to wages for the majority of the population in the region. However, statistical information on wages is neither sufficiently collected nor sufficiently analysed. A significant disparity between public sector salaries and wages in the private sector is often used to highlight inequities in the current duality of the labour markets. In Egypt, public sector wages in November 2010 were reported to be as much as 60 per cent higher than those in the private sector²² while in Jordan in 2008, the average monthly salary was 26 per cent higher in the public sector than in the private sector.²³ In the Syrian Arab Republic in 2007, the gap was 22 per cent.²⁴ Similar results have been reported for Qatar²⁵ and the United Arab Emirates.²⁶ A number of studies mention high reservation wages in expectation of public sector employment as one of the reasons for unemployment in Jordan²⁷ or in the GCC countries, for example.²⁸

21. While such disparities certainly illustrate the attractiveness of public sector employment, they also highlight the destitution of workers in other parts of the economy. Given the current employment to population ratio, which suggests that one person employed on average supports three to four other people who are either unemployed or not working for other reasons, public sector salaries do not seem excessively high²⁹ and the gap points to unfairly low wages in the rest of the economy.

22. Surprisingly however, such gaps are not reflected in measures of the overall distribution of income and expenditures in the region. GINI indices, which are commonly used to measure inequalities, are relatively low in comparison with other world regions, oscillating between 0.301 (Egypt, 2009) and 0.399 (Oman, 2000).³⁰ These values are similar to or slightly higher than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 0.31 for the 2000s period,³¹ but below all developing regions except South Asian developing countries.³²

23. Similarly, poverty rates in ESCWA member countries have increased over the past 20 years, but are still below other regions of the developing world. The MDG 2011 report stated that 5.8 per cent of the population in Western Asia and 2.8 per cent in Northern Africa lived below the poverty line of 1.25US\$ per day. However, if the poverty line is raised to 2US\$ per day, then around 17 per cent of the population is

²² Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: <http://www.capmas.gov.eg/news.aspx?Nid=503&lang=2>. (Accessed 9 August 2011).

²³ Jordan Times, *Wide Wage Gap Reported Between Public, Private Sectors*. 21 September 2010. <http://www.jordantimes.com/index.php?news=30225> (Accessed 9 August 2011).

²⁴ Kabbani, N. 2009. Policy Outlook: *Why Young Syrians Prefer Public Sector Jobs*. Middle East Youth Initiative Policy Outlook, p. 4. Available at <http://www.shababinclusion.org/content/document/detail/1319/> (Accessed 15 February 2011).

²⁵ Labor Force Sample Survey 2009, State of Qatar, p. 22-23.

²⁶ Tong, Q., 2010, *Wage Structure in the United Arab Emirates*. Working Paper No. 2. Dubai: Institute for Social and Economic Research, p. 4.

²⁷ World Bank, 2008, *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Resolving Jordan's Labor Market Paradox of Concurrent Economic Growth and High Unemployment*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, pp. 4 and 58.

²⁸ Kabbani and Kothari, 2005, *Youth Employment in the MENA Region: A Situational Assessment*. Social Protection Discussion Paper 0534. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, p. 51.

²⁹ European Commission, 2010, *Labour Markets Performance and Migration Flows in Arab Mediterranean Countries: Determinants and Effects*. Volume 1: Final Report and Thematic Background Papers. Brussels: European Commission, p. 41.

³⁰ UNDP, *Arab Development Challenges Report: Understanding and Responding to Demands for Transformative Change in Arab Countries* (forthcoming), p. 24. GINI indices can be measured based on income or on expenditures. For most ESCWA countries both measures reveal similar results. (Ibidem).

³¹ OECD, 2011, *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*. For further information see: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/58/49170768.pdf (Accessed 14 February 2012).

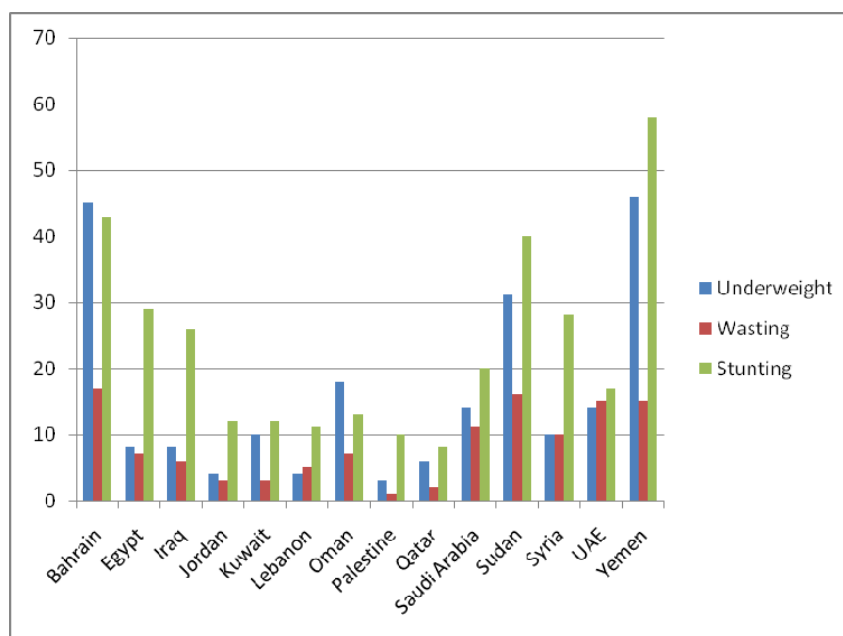
³² UNDP, *Arab Development Challenges Report: Understanding and Responding to Demands for Transformative Change in Arab Countries* (forthcoming), p. 24.

affected.³³ This sharp increase illustrates the high vulnerability of large parts of the population, who are concentrated just around the poverty line, and better reflects the fragility of the structure of the labour market.

24. Given the complex debates around a proper definition of poverty as mentioned above, research has proposed child malnutrition as an alternative indicator to measure poverty and vulnerability.³⁴ Different to the conceptual and practical limitations of income-based measurement, child malnutrition combines several dimensions of poverty (for example hunger, access to clean water and sanitation, maternal health and education) with a forward looking dimension as early childhood nutrition largely determines the intellectual and physical development chances of children.

25. Adopting early childhood malnutrition as a “key source of vulnerability and inequality, and transmission mechanism for inter-generational poverty”³⁵ reveals a rather worrisome picture for some ESCWA member countries. Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen all face high rates of child malnutrition, as defined by the rate of those stunting and/or underweight at 20 per cent, whereas the rate in Yemen reaches 60 per cent, and 29 per cent with high regional variations in Egypt.³⁶ Figure I shows the prevalence of key childhood malnutrition indicators.

Figure I. Prevalence of childhood malnutrition in ESCWA member countries



Source: UNICEF, 2011, State of the World's Children, table 2, p. 92.

Notes: For all data for Jordan and Oman and underweight data for Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the figure source, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of the country. For stunting and wasting data for Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, data refer to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)/WHO reference population.

³³ UNDP, ESCWA and League of Arab States, 2010, The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises. United Nations: New York, p. 5-6.

³⁴ Setboonsarng, S., 2005, *Child Malnutrition as a Poverty Indicator: An Evaluation in the Context of Different Development Interventions in Indonesia*. Asian Development Bank Institute, Discussion Paper No. 21, for further information see: www.adbi.org/files/2005.01.14.dp21_malnutrition_poverty_indonesia.pdf.

³⁵ World Bank, 2011, *Social Safety Nets – Middle East and North Africa Study*, Concept Note, p. 3.

³⁶ Ibid.

IV. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY

How access to health care, education and life resources shapes social justice

A. ACCESS TO HEALTH-CARE SERVICES

26. The impact of cumulative advantages or disadvantages or, in other words, the multidimensionality of poverty and well-being as discussed in chapter II is a specific feature of social justice. However, it is very hard to capture since not only quantitative aspects and physical access are important but also affordability and the quality of services provided. Looking at MDG indicators 4 and 5 related to maternal and child mortality, the Western Asia region has made remarkable progress in improving the health status of the population. Government-run health schemes are the primary mechanism to deliver health services, except in Lebanon, which has a highly privatized system. Concerns relate to notable inefficiencies and shortcomings that result in inequalities in health-care provision and the marginalization of residents in the poor and rural areas.³⁷ The region currently profits from its young population with limited health-care needs. However, rising costs over the medium term may exacerbate already existing inequalities.

27. Stark health disparities between urban and rural populations within countries can be attributed to the fact that the distribution of resources, such as hospital beds, skilled personnel, health-care technology and equipment are not allocated appropriately and evenly.³⁸ For example, not only are health professionals few relative to the size of the population, they are typically concentrated in urban areas.³⁹ In addition, governments spend a disproportionate amount of resources on treatment services and hospitals (as opposed to preventative care), which again are more concentrated in urban areas.⁴⁰

28. Because accessibility and often quality are low, individuals and families seek privatized care. As a result, the region is marked by high out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures.⁴¹ High OOP expenditures are worrying on the individual level because they can drive vulnerable households further into poverty, as well as increase vulnerability with rising health-care costs of an ageing population. In fact, they account for the single largest component of household expenditure after food,⁴² which increases the poverty risk of workers in the low-wage informal sectors.

29. Inequalities in other areas can have a trickle down effects on inequality in health. In the region, children in families with higher income levels or those who have mothers with higher education levels enjoy health care and health levels that are three to four times better than cases of children in low-income families with less-educated mothers.⁴³ This is a testament to the interlinked relationship between poverty, education

³⁷ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*, p. 145-159; World Health Organization (WHO), 2004, *Health Systems Priorities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Challenges and Strategic Directions*, Technical Paper, fifty-first Session, Agenda item 6 (b). (EM/RC51/5). Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Cairo, pp. 6-8.

³⁸ Abdullatif, AA., 2006, *Hospital Care in WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: An Agenda for Change*, International Hospital Federation Reference Book 2005/2006. Geneva: World Health Organization, p. 14.

³⁹ UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*. United Nations: New York, p. 159.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

⁴¹ World Health Organization (WHO), EMRO country profiles-updated August 2010.

⁴² World Bank, 2010, *Who Pays? Out-of-pocket health spending and equity implications in the Middle East and North Africa*. Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Discussion Paper. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, pp. 7 and 17-18.

⁴³ UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*. United Nations: New York, p. 151.

and health, and gives important insight to the channels of inter-generational inequality. Strategies aimed at raising income and female education levels are expected to have a positive ripple effect on health.

B. ACCESS TO EDUCATION

30. Education is increasingly regarded as a key factor triggering multiple benefits or disadvantages and the influence of the mothers' education on infant mortality and the health of children is a testimony to this. In addition, the quality of education determines the intellectual prospects of children and thus their capacity to enjoy their lives in all comprehensiveness. It determines the individual productive capacity and chances of participating in the labour market, and therefore it affects people over the entire course of their lives. Collectively, it determines decisive parts of the productive capacity of entire economies and thus is a key factor to achieve economic growth. A well educated population attracts foreign and domestic investment and positively influences labour productivity. Such positive spillover effects (especially of primary and secondary education), and especially the inter-generational benefits are the main reasons for public and mostly free provision of education. Human resources, together with natural resources and physical, productive capital form the stock of "extended wealth", which needs to be maintained across generations if development is ought to be sustainable.⁴⁴

31. According to the MDG reports, the Western Asia region has made impressive progress over the past decades in school enrolment and literacy.⁴⁵ However, lower overall literacy rates in countries with significant rural populations such as Egypt and Yemen indicate that rural populations may not have experienced the same dramatic increases in literacy as their urban counterparts.⁴⁶ The initially high difference between male and female literacy rates has declined significantly. However, according to the 2005-2009 data, literacy among women in the Arab region is still at 63.5 per cent compared to 89.5 per cent and 91.4 per cent in Latin America and East Asia and the Pacific, respectively.⁴⁷ Iraq, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen are characterized by a large out-of-school population⁴⁸, which draws attention to the impact of conflict and poverty on educational attainment and its negative influence on economic growth.

32. Overall, the distribution of education in the Arab world is still more egalitarian than in other world regions.⁴⁹ However, inequalities are increasing due to an increasing gap between older and better educated younger generations and also due to higher investment to secondary and higher levels of education than to primary levels.⁵⁰ In addition, the quality of education is a cause of grave concern. In this region more so than elsewhere, good education is an important determinant of social and economic status, and inequities in education are an important source of overall inequality.⁵¹ Indications that family background is the most

⁴⁴ Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J.P., 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, p. 67.

⁴⁵ United Nations, MDG report 2011, Statistical Annex, Goal 2, p. 6.

⁴⁶ World Bank, 1998, *Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Strategy Towards Learning for Development. Human Development Network*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, p. 10.

⁴⁷ UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Data Centre: Regional Literacy Rates for Youths and Adults 2005-2009, available at http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=364&IF_Language=eng (Accessed 16 February 2012).

⁴⁸ UNDP, ESCWA and League of Arab States, *The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises*. United Nations: New York, p. xiv.

⁴⁹ World Bank, 2008, *The Road not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, pp. 56, 60.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵¹ Salehi-Ishafani, D., Hassine, N., and Assad, R., 2011, *Equality of Opportunity in Education in the Middle East and North Africa*, p. 3.

important determining factor in achievement in education are of great concern when assessing social justice⁵² especially its inter-generational aspects.

33. Education also shapes the capacity for peoples' involvement in public life, their ability to appreciate policy options and to express preferences. Chapter V explores the relation between participation and public policy choices.

C. ACCESS TO SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES

34. Inequality and poverty in ESCWA member countries are directly related to having limited access to natural resources: water, land, food and energy.

35. Water availability has worsened in recent years due to rapid population growth, unsustainable consumption patterns and climate change. Eleven out of 14 ESCWA member countries are below the water poverty threshold in 2009 and six countries suffer from extreme water scarcity. Intermittent water services most heavily impact the poor, who are forced to spend a relatively large percentage of their income and time to secure drinking water through private water service providers or small-scale technology fixes (for example, water purification units and filters). In addition, the absence of proper maintenance also increases the exposure of the poorest to waterborne diseases.

36. According to the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme, Arab countries are generally on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets on water supply and sanitation, with the exception of the Arab least developed countries and countries in conflict. However, field assessments reveal that these figures do not adequately reflect the state of access to water services in the region. For instance, while access to an improved water source in Jordan and Lebanon is reported to be 100 per cent and 96 per cent respectively,⁵³ many consumers only receive water once or twice a week and rely heavily on bottled water and the delivery of water through tanker trucks to meet basic needs. The achievements of Palestine towards the MDG targets are now mitigated by damage, destruction and the inability to install or maintain water infrastructure due to the ongoing conflict and Israeli security restrictions.⁵⁴ Figure II shows the rate of access for people and countries to improved water sources in the Arab region.

37. Inequities are clearly engrained in the regulation of land markets in most member countries where privileges for limited groups often create shortages for the wider public. Small and medium sized enterprises, in particular, suffer from insufficient access to land.⁵⁵ However even with the best yields, agriculture in the region would not be able to feed all people⁵⁶ and poverty remains at the core of food insecurity. High and growing dependence on imported foods, particularly food commodities that feature heavily in the regular diets of the poor (cereals and sugar), renders them most vulnerable to food price shocks.

38. Rapidly expanding populations, economic growth and a harsh climate in parts of the region have contributed to a rising demand for energy in the Arab world since the early 1990s. Energy subsidies and high inefficiency represent a major factor in very high levels of energy consumption. These subsidies have a

⁵² Ibid., p. 1.

⁵³ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, 2010, Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water, p. 44.

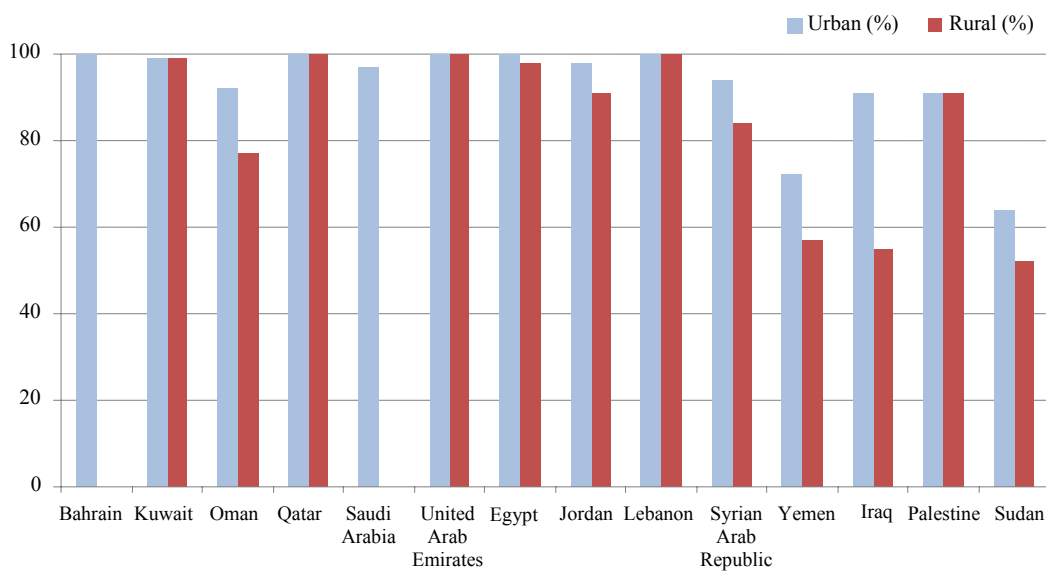
⁵⁴ UNDP, ESCWA and League of Arab States, *The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises*. United Nations: New York, p. 89.

⁵⁵ World Bank, 2009, *From privilege to competition: Unlocking private-led growth in the Middle East and North Africa. Public-private sector cooperation*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, p. 129.

⁵⁶ For further information see: Bishay, F.K, 1998, *Rural Development and Poverty in the MENA region, Where do we stand?* Investment Center, Rome: FAO.

negative impact on the economic structure and result in major distortions in the allocation of public resources, as well as in private investment decisions. They encourage extensive energy use instead of motivating investment in more modern and efficient technology, which could lay the foundation for economic competitiveness, diversified economic structures, and sustainable economic growth. In contrast, the existing, inefficient technology causes air pollution levels that are among the highest worldwide and are expected to cause severe health damages to the population.⁵⁷

Figure II. Water supply coverage in the ESCWA region



Source: ESCWA, based on WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, *Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water-2010 Update* (March 2010).

D. EQUITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

39. The very notion of sustainability comprises the idea that economic development should enhance and not diminish the well-being of future generations. Success will therefore depend on the extent to which we will be able to transfer the 'stocks' of current wealth into the future without diminishing it through the 'flow' of current industrial or other harmful activities that lead to its degradation or depletion. The limitations of economic indicators, which lie in the fact that future scarcity (for example, of fresh water) does not have a price on the current (water) markets and can therefore not easily be measured in monetary terms, have recently resulted in a combination of 'flow' and 'stock' indicators that should capture both, economic well-being and 'foundational' well-being. These variables shall reflect changes in our human and natural environment in a way that appreciates an enlargement of resources such as increased economic investment, but also better health and education of the population along with indicators for resource depletion or pollution through measuring the 'carbon footprint', environmental safety and the depletion of natural resources.⁵⁸ Table 2 represents a relevant set of indicators, proposed by a working group of the OECD, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat, 2008.

⁵⁷ World Bank, 2009, *Tapping a Hidden resource: Energy Efficiency in the Middle East and North Africa*, Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP) report, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J.P., 2009. Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, pp. 77-82.

TABLE 2. SMALL SET OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Indicator domain	Stock indicator	Flow indicator
Foundational well-being	Health-adjusted life expectancy	Index of changes in age specific and morbidity (place holder)
	Percentage of population with post-secondary education	Enrolment in post-secondary education
	Temperature deviations from normals	Greenhouse gas emission
	Ground-level ozone and fine particulate concentrations	Smog-forming pollutants emissions
	Quality-adjusted water availability	Nutrient loadings to water bodies
	Fragmentation of natural habitats	Conversion of natural habitats to other uses
Economic well-being	Real per capita net foreign financial asset holdings	Real per capita in foreign financial assets
	Real per capita produced capital	Real per capita net investment in produced capital
	Real per capita human capital	Real per capita net investment in human capital
	Real per capita natural capital	Real per capita net depletion of natural capital
	Reserves of energy resources	Depletion of energy resources
	Reserves of mineral resources	Depletion of mineral resources
	Timber resource stocks	Depletion of timber resources
	Marine resource stocks	Depletion of marine resources

Source: Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J.P., 2009. Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, p. 81.

40. The application of such indicators should increase attention to the quality of economic growth and ensure that we measure correctly not only the level of production and market transactions, but all direct and indirect aspects of economic growth that determine the level of economic development and the well-being of current, as well as future generations.

V. EQUITABLE POLICY CHOICES REQUIRE PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

How investment in social cohesion supports sustainable development and balanced economic growth

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

41. One main objective of participatory governance is to reach a common, shared vision of society, its institutions, and the rights and obligations of each citizen, the so-called social contract. In this regard, many of the ESCWA member countries have utilized participatory processes to consult with different groups of stakeholders about their development visions and strategies.⁵⁹ Several of these strategies also call for increased partnership between the public, private and civil sectors of society.

42. Policies designed to reach the objectives expressed in the development strategies often depend on the way they are consulted, and on the quality of the overall governance system. Broad based participation and systems of social accountability are increasingly regarded as important markers for the quality of governance, as well as a precondition for achieving balanced economic development. The World Bank regularly monitors six governance indicators, including data on 'voice and accountability'.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ ESCWA, 2009, *Integrated Social Policy Report III: Visions and Strategies in the ESCWA Region*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/4, p. 61.

⁶⁰ World Bank Institute, *Worldwide Governance Indicators*, for further information see: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf_country.asp?region_ID=2 (Accessed 16 February 2012).

43. Examples of successful participation are plentiful in the ESCWA region. In Lebanon, a youth shadow Government emerged in 2007 to monitor and correct the work of ministries. Similarly, a non-governmental organization (NGO) was established in 1996 to monitor electoral reforms and observe elections. In Egypt in 1998, a coalition of civil society associations prevented an imbalanced version of a new labour law from passing through parliament until necessary consultations were held and a different version was passed. In Yemen in 2007, an NGO network worked together to monitor and assist with public policies to combat poverty. In Palestine, newly formed sectoral, consultative councils include civil society organizations as key partners.

44. The numbers of civil society organizations have proliferated. In Egypt for example, records indicate the presence of 27,068 NGOs, which translates as one organization for every 3,018 Egyptians.⁶¹ A similar density of organization was observed in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq. However, most of these organizations (65 per cent) carry predominantly humanitarian mandates with no or limited influence over the choice of policy priorities or policy design.⁶²

45. While consultative practices increase, the space of organized interest groups or collective action is still very limited. Political parties, trade unions and other membership organizations are restricted in their space to manoeuvre and in their ability to shape public policy.⁶³ The freedom of association is covered by the ILO Convention 87, which in the ESCWA region has been ratified only by Egypt, Kuwait, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.⁶⁴ The annex summarizes collective bargaining legislation for ESCWA member countries.

46. Considering that the inclusiveness and fairness of public policy is often the result of the inclusiveness and fairness of the political institutions responsible for shaping it, the insufficient representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in parliaments in ESCWA member countries is important to note as it corresponds to some of the inequalities mentioned above.

47. The representation of women in various Arab parliaments has notably improved from an average of 6.7 per cent of the seats in 2007⁶⁵ to approximately 13.5 per cent in 2011.⁶⁶ Several ESCWA member countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and the Sudan apply quotas in order to increase the representation of women in national parliaments.⁶⁷ However, Egypt recently abolished the quota for women, which resulted in a severe drop of female parliamentarians in the new Egyptian parliament. In Kuwait, women were not allowed to vote or run as candidates until 2005 and in the recent election no female candidate was elected. In Saudi Arabia, for the first time women will be able to run for municipal seats in 2013. In the 2003 national elections in Yemen, only one woman won a seat. In the national assemblies of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates women have no seats.

⁶¹ ESCWA, 2010, *Enhancing Civil Society Participation in Public Policy Processes*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/Technical Paper.1, p. 2.

⁶² Qandil, A., 2010, *Indicators of Effectiveness of Arab Civil Society Organizations*, Arab Network for NGOs, Cairo.

⁶³ ESCWA, 2011, *Integrated Social Policy Report IV: Labour Markets and Labour Market Policy in the ESCWA Region*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/3, p. 67.

⁶⁴ ILO, C87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948. For further information see: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C087> (Accessed 16 February 2012).

⁶⁵ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), *The Arab Quota Report*, 2007, p. 9.

⁶⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) database, Geneva, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> (Accessed 16 February 2012).

⁶⁷ IDEA, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 44.

TABLE 3. ARAB WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

Country	Suffrage rights	Seats occupied by women (%) (Lower or Single House)	Quota for women	Quota type/appointed seats
1. Bahrain	1975	10 (2011)	No	
2. Egypt ⁶⁸	1956	>2 (2012)	Abolished	2011 election law; one woman should be included on each party list
3. Iraq	1980	25.2 (2011)	Yes	Quota law: one out of first three candidates on a list must be a woman
4. Jordan	1974	10.8 (2011)	Yes	Reserved seats; Cabinet adopted a new 'temporary' election law (2010), raising the number of reserved seats for women from 6 to 12
5. Kuwait	2005	7.7 (2011)	No	
6. Lebanon	1952	3.1 (2011)	No	
7. Palestine	1996	12.8 (2011)	Yes	2005 Election law provides for roughly a 20 per cent quota, which is applied to the proportional representation part of the election. Lists are closed
8. Oman	2003	1.2 (2011)	No	Both men and women are appointed to the upper house
9. Qatar	1999	0 (2011)	No	
10. Saudi Arabia	2015	0	No	
11. The Sudan	1964	25.1 (2011)	Yes	Reserved seats: 25 per cent
12. Syrian Arab Republic	1953	12.4 (2011)	No	
13. United Arab Emirates	2006	5 (2011)	No	1 woman elected, 7 appointed
14. Yemen	1970	0.3 (2011)	No	Both men and women are appointed to the upper house

Source: Inter-parliamentary union, <http://ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> and <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>.

48. People with disabilities and youth have not fared much better than women when it comes to electoral access and representation. Only four countries, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Yemen undertook concrete steps to ensure unfettered access to voting stations for people with disabilities who remain grossly underrepresented in elected bodies.⁶⁹ Barriers stand in the way of meaningful youth participation in the ESCWA region. In Jordan, while the voting age is 18 years, candidates must be at least 30. In Lebanon, candidates must be 25, but the voting age is 21.⁷⁰ In Oman, the voting age stands at 21.⁷¹

49. More equal representation of key social groups and their active involvement in policy formulation could therefore improve development outcomes and contribute to social justice and fairness, equality of opportunities and social cohesion as requested in the context of the Arab awakening. Moreover, some international research suggests that participation and equality support economic development and growth

⁶⁸ Moore, H. The Daily News Egypt. Experts Weigh in on Low Female Representation in Parliament. January 2012. <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/experts-weigh-in-on-low-female-representation-in-parliament.html> (Accessed 21 February 2012).

⁶⁹ For further information, see: http://www.electionaccess.org/LR/MiddleEast_LR.htm (Accessed 16 February 2012).

⁷⁰ UNDP, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR). Country Themes: Elections.

⁷¹ Ibid.

either indirectly through better institutions, less social tension and more social stability or directly through better education, better health and higher life expectancy.⁷² Driven by similar concerns, the OECD has recently proposed a set of variables by which social cohesion could be assessed.⁷³ Trust and social inclusion are seen as development indicators of the same importance as income levels and as important enablers of sustainable development.

- *First*, income inequality. Together with such deprivation measures as the poverty gap, it is often considered essential to measuring and monitoring the evolution of social cohesion.
- *Second*, a society's level of cohesiveness. This depends on the participation of its members in the productive economy, where the unemployment rate, another widely used variable in assessing social exclusion, serves as a thermometer for monitoring levels of life satisfaction and the risk of civil tensions.
- *Third*, well-being measures. These are both gauges of a cohesive society's inclusiveness and equality (examples are life expectancy at birth and literacy rates) and instruments for supporting wider, fuller participation in civil society and political life.
- *Fourth*, measures of social capital. They generally include group membership and interpersonal trust.

Source: OECD 2012, *Perspectives on Global Development: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, p. 55.

VI. SUMMARY AND THE WAY FORWARD

50. Experiences around the world show that no magic bullet exists that could solve the complex problems of poverty, inequality and marginalization. Economic growth, though essential, by itself does not necessarily trigger the distributional effects that would lift people out of destitution and reduce income gaps. In fact, countries which succeeded in achieving higher social development dividends and improving the lives of their people have done so by ensuring synergy between economic and social objectives and integrating social concerns in economic development strategies.⁷⁴

51. Participation and social and economic development are inextricably linked insofar as creating an enabling environment for individuals and societies to feel empowered and make sound decisions related to the process of improving their lives. The transition facing some countries in the Arab region at this moment is replete with major challenges that will require an integrated approach of democratic participation and social justice in order to unleash the creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and the development potential of society. One of the main challenges of ESCWA member countries, and especially those in transition to a new development approach, consists in reconciling the functions and the institutions of social policy and social development.

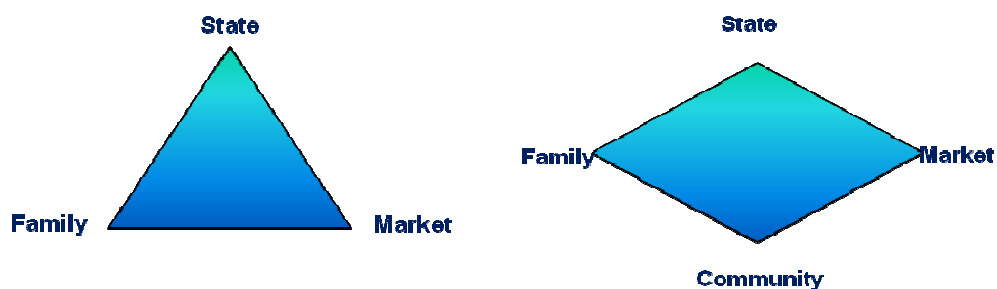
⁷² World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty*, pp. 49 and 56.

⁷³ OECD, 2012, *Perspectives on Global Development: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, p. 55.

⁷⁴ For further information see: ESCWA, 2010, *Social Development Bulletin, Achieving Social Justice for All*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/Technical Paper.2, p. 1.

52. A distinguishing feature of the Arab world is the importance it gives to the family and the community as one of the main sources of social welfare. The other angles of the Welfare Triangle,⁷⁵ or the Welfare Diamond,⁷⁶ i.e. the state, which in Europe bears the main responsibility for social equity, or the market, which is regarded as the most efficient source of equalization and social justice in Anglo Saxon countries, seem to be trusted to a lesser extent in Arab countries⁷⁷ (Figure III).

Figure III. The Welfare Triangle and Welfare Diamond



53. Bearing in mind, however, the three main functions of social policy, it appears that the family and the community in their current state may not be able to fully respond to the needs of societies for their sustainable development.

54. These three main functions of social policy⁷⁸ evolve around:

(a) The need to reduce the impact of lifecycle risks such as old age, sickness, injury, unemployment and disability through social insurance. Together with the imperative to alleviate poverty through different types of transfers this comprises the **social function** of social policy;

(b) The need to widen the productive capacities of a society through an inclusion of all social groups in the growth process and investments in improved health and education of the population represents the **economic function** of social policy. The experience that, social protection cushions the direct impact of economic crises and therefore supports consumption during economic downturns reinforces the importance of this function;

(c) The stabilizing effects of social justice and greater equality finally stand for the **political functions** of social policy as they are seen as vital factors for building trust and social cohesion. Social stability, social cohesion and trust, in turn, influence economic and investment decisions, which add to political stability.

⁷⁵ Based on Esping-Andersen, G. 2008. The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State, in *Welfare States: Construction, Deconstruction, Reconstruction*, Volume II, pp. 3-29. Edited by Leibfried, S. and Mau, S. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁷⁶ Based on Jenson, J. and Saint-Martin, D. 2003, *New Routes to Social Cohesion? Citizenship and the Social Investment State*, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28.

⁷⁷ The Social Policy Section of Social Development Division of ESCWA will explore these relations in more detail in the current biennium and present findings in the next issue of the *Integrated Social Policy Report*.

⁷⁸ See Loewe, M. 2005. *Massnahmen zur Verbesserung der sozialen Sicherheit im informellen Sektor* in Messner, M. and Scholz, I., 2005, *Zukunftsfragen der Entwicklungspolitik*, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, pp. 221-237. Edited by Messner, D. and Scholz, I. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

55. Considering the demands from the people of the Arab world, the request for dignity, voice and inclusion, it is clear that social policy did not fulfill its social and economic or political functions to a sufficient extent. It might be the time to evaluate the current distribution of responsibilities between the state, the private sector, civil society and the family in order to ensure that ESCWA member countries, their institutions and their people are prepared to face the challenges discussed in this report and to guarantee participation and social justice for the sustainable development of their societies.

56. Some key initiatives for ESCWA member countries to move forward on this agenda fall into four broad categories:

1. Improve statistical instruments and monitoring of inequality

(a) Improve statistical systems to include measures of inequality, social exclusion and discrimination. In particular, labour market statistics should be improved upon with regards to data collection on wages and hours worked, social mobility and information about work conditions;

(b) Increase public access to statistical data;

(c) Establish monitoring systems that involve all relevant stakeholders such as government authorities, service providers, civil society groups, local communities and persons with disabilities, and ensure the publication of regular reports.

2. Promote employment and equitable delivery of public services

(a) Develop national employment strategies that aim at promoting employment, social mobility and the inclusion of all social groups into decent work;

(b) Adopt more proactive labour market policies and reach out to persons in the informal sector; develop instruments to improve mobility to formal employment; improve school to work transition for young people;

(c) Develop anti-discrimination legislation to increase the employment of women and of persons with disabilities (especially in the private sector); ensure the fulfilment of the employment quotas for persons with disabilities in the public sector, and establish and enforce rewards/penalties for compliance/non-compliance of private employers;

(d) Develop quality indicators for education and health-care services and develop appropriate monitoring systems; improve relevance of skills to requirements of the labour market;

(e) Expand and improve access to basic services especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

3. Expand social protection and integration

(a) Explore the possibilities to expand contributory social insurance systems to cover all social groups; explore instruments like social pensions and micro insurance;

(b) Explore the possibility to establish a social protection floor for all groups that cannot be included quickly into contributory social insurance schemes;

(c) Ensure adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, child-rearing, widowhood, disability and old age;

(d) Clearly delineate the responsibilities of all parties and institutions involved in the delivery of social services; regulate the activities of private sector providers in order to guarantee access to quality services for all social groups;

(e) Ensure that concerns of persons with disabilities are properly mainstreamed into policies in all sectors in order to ensure equitable access to education, health care, employment, and the ability to conduct an independent and fulfilling life to the greatest possible extent.

4. Expand participation and social accountability

(a) Encourage participation of all social groups in national parliaments and other elected bodies responsible for shaping public policy at local and national levels; enhance the inclusiveness of political parties and other membership organizations; introduce or expand quotas for underrepresented social groups;

(b) Expand the utilization of social accountability mechanisms such as citizen advisory boards, social and economic councils, citizen monitoring of public service delivery in order to improve the quality of services provided to the public;

(c) Enhance the participation of youth and persons with disability and their representatives in the process of policy formulation in all relevant fields and encourage their representation in political institutions and organizations, including the parliament and labour unions;

(d) Encourage the free formation of civil society organizations to strengthen participatory dialogue and social partnership; institutionalize social accountability mechanisms;

(e) Ensure free and fair elections.

Annex

TRADE UNION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEGISLATION IN ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Legislation focusing on trade unions and/or collective bargaining	Freedom of association	Categories of workers excluded from union activity	Collective bargaining	Additional information
Bahrain⁷⁹				
Workers Trade Union Law of 2002.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	Armed forces; police; other civil servants and public employees.	Not protected by law.	Bahrain reversed a ban on unions in 2002 as part of a package of political reforms.
Egypt⁸⁰				
Trade Union Act No. 35 of 1976 as amended in 1995, 1996, 2000 and 2003; Article 56 of the Constitution.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	A minimum of 50 members of the same company are needed to form a union; in effect, this excludes a large proportion of individuals working in smaller companies.	Under the 2003 Labour Act, a collective agreement is only valid if it complies with the law on public order or "general ethics".	Until 2011, all trade unions were required to operate under the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, which made unionization difficult. In March 2011, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions was created and several independent unions have since emerged.
Iraq⁸¹				
Act. No. 71 of 1987 as amended in 2004 and 2000; Decree 8750 (2005).	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	Resolution 150 from 1987 bans all public sector workers from organizing.	Legal and recognized under the 1987 Labour Code.	Decree 8750 (2005) severely limits trade union activities by prohibiting unions from holding funds, collecting dues and maintaining assets. A new Labour Code is being drafted, but has not yet been finalized.
Jordan⁸²				
Labour Law No. 8 of 1996; Interim Act No. 26 of 2010 amending the Labour Code.	Regulated by the Labour Code, but limited since all unions are required to belong to the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions.	Civil servants; foreigners; domestic workers. A minimum of 50 members of the same company or trade are needed to form a union.	Not recognized.	Trade unions require approval from the Ministry of Labour.

⁷⁹ The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Bahrain. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=133, 13 December 2011; BBC News, Qatar to Allow Unions and Strikes, 20 May 2004.

⁸⁰ ILO, Natlex: Egypt; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Egypt. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=15; *Almasry Alyoum*, After 50-year Hiatus, Egypt's First Independent Labor Union is Born, 3 March 2011.

⁸¹ ILO, Natlex: Iraq; ITUC, 2010, Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Iraq. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=135; Trades Union Congress, Iraqi Workers Standing Up for their Rights. Accessed at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17758-f0.cfm>.

⁸² ILO, Natlex: Jordan; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Jordan. Accessed at: <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/+Jordan+.html>.

Legislation focusing on trade unions and/or collective bargaining	Freedom of association	Categories of workers excluded from union activity	Collective bargaining	Additional information
Kuwait ⁸³				
Law No. 6/2010 concerning labour in the private sector. This legislation also covers collective bargaining rights.	Enshrined in the Constitution.	Domestic workers.	Recognized by law.	The authorities have wide powers to supervise trade union finances and records; unions may not engage in any political activity.
Lebanon ⁸⁴				
Decree No. 17386 dated 3 September 1964 governing collective agreements, conciliation and arbitration.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	Government employees; domestic workers; agricultural workers; workers with casual or temporary contracts; Palestinians (due to lack of reciprocal agreements).	Recognized by law.	New trade unions need prior authorization from the Ministry of Labour and union elections are controlled by the Ministry.
Oman ⁸⁵				
Sultan's decree no. 112/2006 amending the labour code related to federations and trade unions; Ministerial Decision No. 294 of 2006; Ministry of Manpower Order No. 17/2007 amending Ministerial Decree No. 294/2006; Ministerial Decree No. 24/2007.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law.	A minimum of 25 employees are required for the formation of a union. Armed forces; police; Government employees; domestic workers.	Recognized by law.	Decrees 112/2006 and 24/2007 granted workers the right to form trade unions. Previously only "representation committees" were allowed. The Ministry of Employment may refuse to register a trade union without substantial justification.

⁸³ ILO, Natlex: Kuwait; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Kuwait. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=138.

⁸⁴ ILO, Natlex: Lebanon; ITUC, Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Lebanon. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=139.

⁸⁵ ILO, Natlex: Oman; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Oman. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=140.

Legislation focusing on trade unions and/or collective bargaining	Freedom of association	Categories of workers excluded from union activity	Collective bargaining	Additional information
Palestine ⁸⁶				
Palestinian Labor Law No. 7 of 2000.	Employers and employees have the right to form trade unions and professional unions.	Domestic workers; families of the employer in the first degree.	Recognized under the 2000 legislation.	The Ministry of Labour can impose arbitration; trade unions may face disciplinary action if they do not accept the outcome of the arbitration.
Qatar ⁸⁷				
Labor Law No. 14 of 2004.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	A minimum of 100 employees are required for the formation of a union. Government employees and non-Qatari nationals are not allowed to organize.	Recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	The Labour Law allows for only one trade union: the General Union of Workers of Qatar. The 2004 law introduced the right to form trade unions and strike.
Saudi Arabia ⁸⁸				
Decision No. 12 of 2001 on the application of rules regarding the establishment of works councils.	Workers' associations are prohibited. Anyone who tries to form a union can be dismissed, imprisoned or, in the case of migrant workers, deported.	Union activity is generally illegal but workers have the right to form workers' committees in workplaces of more than 100 workers. Foreigners are not allowed to join such committees.	No legislation.	In 2011, there were demands for increased association rights by privately employed workers.
The Sudan ⁸⁹				
Labour Code 2000; Trade Unions Act 2010.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	Members of the armed forces; the police; judges; legal advisors to specific arms of the Government.	Partially restricted, in particular in the areas of wage setting and disputes.	The Trade Unions Act only allows for one trade union federation, the State-controlled Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation.

⁸⁶ Palestinian Labor Law No.7 of 2000. Available at: <http://www.jwu.org/about/labor2.pdf>.

⁸⁷ ILO, Natlex: Qatar; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Qatar. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=142; Arab News, Workers in Qatar Win Right to Strike and Form Unions, 21 May 2004.

⁸⁸ ILO, Natlex: Saudi Arabia; Arab News, Saudis in Private Firms Demand Trade Union, 26 March 2011.

⁸⁹ ILO, Natlex: the Sudan; ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Sudan. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=37; Trade Unions Act of 2010 available at: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/85968/96606/F1791016698/SDN85968.pdf>. (Accessed 13 December 2011).

Legislation focusing on trade unions and/or collective bargaining	Freedom of association	Categories of workers excluded from union activity	Collective bargaining	Additional information
Syrian Arab Republic ⁹⁰				
Labour Law No. 17 of 2010.	The Constitution provides for freedom of association, but workers may not establish unions independent of the Government.	Domestic workers; civil servants; family members; agricultural workers. The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) decides which sectors and occupations may unionize.	The right to collective bargaining and unionization is recognized by the 2010 Labour Law.	All workers' organizations must belong to the GFTU.
United Arab Emirates ⁹¹				
Federal Law No. 8/2007 amending law No. 8/1980 on Regulation of labour relations; Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 on Regulation of Labour Relations.	Enshrined in the Constitution. This aside, freedom of association is neither specifically regulated by law, nor explicitly prohibited. The Labour Law does not permit trade unions.	Public sector workers, security guards and migrant workers are not allowed to strike. Migrants can be temporarily banned from working in the country or deported for striking. No active trade unions.	No mention of collective bargaining in the labour legislation.	The Minister for Labour has the power to intervene to end a strike.
Yemen ⁹²				
Labour Code (Act No. 5 of 1995) as amended by Law No. 25 of 1997; Law No. 35 of 2002 on the organization of trade unions for workers.	Enshrined in the Constitution and recognized by law, but strictly regulated.	Civil servants; domestic workers; some limitation of participation for individuals aged 16-18; foreigners, although a proposed new Labour Code would allow foreigners to be members of trade unions.	Recognized by law, although the Government has the right to veto.	All organizations of workers must belong to the General Federation of Workers Trade Unions of Yemen.

⁹⁰ ITUC, 2010 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Unions Rights: Syrian Arab Republic. Accessed at: <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/+Syria+.html>; ILO unofficial English translation of Labour Law No 17/2010 available at: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/84492/93985/F142126570/SYR84492%20English.pdf> pg 4.

⁹¹ ILO, Natlex: United Arab Emirates ITUC, 2011 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: United Arab Emirates. Accessed at: <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/United-Arab-Emirates.html>.

⁹² ILO, Natlex: Yemen; ITUC, 2010, Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights: Yemen. Additional information regarding the legislation accessed at: http://survey.ituc-csi.org/?Page=legal&id_pays=145.