



Information Note

**Expert Group Meeting on the UN-ESCWA Study:
“The State of Gender Justice in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities”
16-17 May 2017
UN House, Beirut- Lebanon**

1 – Background:

Gender justice is defined as “bringing about more equitable relations between men and women with the implication that women become defined as equal citizens with equal autonomy and rights in the social order”.¹ The definition looks at the concept both as an outcome in as much as it looks at issues of access and control over resources and as a process that ensures accountability.² Gender justice requires that women and men are able to ensure that power-holders—whether in the household, the community, the market, or the state—can be held to account so that actions that limit, on the grounds of gender, women's access to resources or capacity to make choices, are prevented or punished³. Gender Justice “has equality as one of its fundamental principles, but that extends beyond formal equality to also include a process that ensures strengthening accountability”⁴.

Following the noted definitions, the Arab region shows a gap in achieving gender justice. It is a determining fact that women in the Arab region still face discrimination and injustices de jure and de facto. Gender injustice is still experienced as a process and as an outcome. Women have limited access and control over resources and decent living conditions, and face institutional biasness that hamper the realization of their full citizenship and the full enjoyment of their rights. Arab countries do not take the

¹ M. Charrad, *Unequal Citizenship: Issues of Gender Justice in the Middle East and North Africa*, at 233, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay & Navsharan Singh (ed), (2007), *Gender Justice, Citizenship, and Development*. Available at: http://web.idrc.ca/openebooks/339-3/#page_15

² Anne Maria Goetz, *Gender Justice, Citizenship and Entitlements: Core Concepts, Central Debates and New Directions for Research*, at 15, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay & Navsharan Singh (ed), (2007), *Gender Justice, Citizenship, and Development*. Available at: http://web.idrc.ca/openebooks/339-3/#page_15

³ Anne Maria Goetz, *Gender Justice, Citizenship and Entitlements: Core Concepts, Central Debates and New Directions for Research*, at 15, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay & Navsharan Singh (ed), (2007), *Gender Justice, Citizenship, and Development*. Available at: http://web.idrc.ca/openebooks/339-3/#page_15

⁴ ESCWA, 2015, *Does Gender Justice Matter?*

necessary measures to translate their international obligations into non-discriminatory national legal frameworks. And, even when legislative frameworks are protective, they are not effectively implemented.

In this context, UN- ESCWA has prepared a study on: “The State of Gender Justice in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities”. The study aims to examine the progress achieved to ensure the elimination of discrimination in national legislations, informal and formal policies and regulations combined with a thorough look at the existence and implementation of accountability mechanisms that would ensure the elimination of discriminatory legislation and actions. The tool for analysis and identification of gaps in the enacted national legislative frameworks is the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), particularly article 2, and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 development agenda.

In this connection, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) will be organized to discuss and assess the key findings of the study and to examine policy recommendations directed to various stakeholders. The EGM will serve as an interactive forum to provide constructive and substantive comments on the draft study.

2 - Objectives of the meeting:

The meeting aims to achieve the following:

- (a) To conduct a peer review of the draft study on “The State of Gender Justice in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities”, and assess its key findings and the proposed policy recommendations.
- (b) To serve as an interactive forum to exchange up-dated knowledge and best practices on gender justice

3 – Date and Venue:

The Expert Group Meeting will be hosted by UN- ESCWA at the United Nations House, in Beirut, on 16-17 May 2017.

Registration starts at 8:30 am on 16 May 2017 in B1 level, and the opening will be at 9:00 am at B1 Conference Room II. Upon registration, participants will be provided with ID badges to be displayed at all times while present in the premises of the UN- House.

4 – Language of the meeting:

The official language of the meeting is English. Interpretation services will be provided.

5 - Entry visas for participants from outside Lebanon:

ESCWA Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements for all participants’ travel in terms of flight reservation and ticket issuance. Participants are kindly requested to **send a coloured copy of their valid passport along with contact details** (telephone, fax number and e-mail) to Ms. Hala Attieh, Research Assistant, hala.attieh@un.org, no later than **10 April 2017**.

Very important notice: Please do not purchase your own tickets because the organization cannot reimburse self tickets.

Participants are responsible for applying for a visa to enter Lebanon, from the Lebanese Embassy in their respective countries. In the unlikely event of not being able to apply or receive a visa, ESCWA may assist participants to in the process of obtaining one, provided that they send ECW a coloured copy of their passport by 10 April 2017.

8- Accommodation (for participants from outside Lebanon only):

Participants are responsible for making their own hotel bookings in Beirut. ESCWA Secretariat has taken the necessary arrangements to provide accommodations at discounted prices. In order to view a list of such hotels, kindly visit the following site:

https://iseek-beirut.un.org/system/files/document_link/new_hotel_list_feb-2017.pdf

Participants should contact the hotel directly for reservations as desired, and indicate that they are participating in an expert group meeting at ESCWA, to be entitled for a reduced corporate UN rate. Participants are also responsible for settling their own accommodation bills and other expenses directly with the hotel before departure.

ECW will cover travel and accommodation expenses of participants residing outside Lebanon, in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures. According to UN rules and regulations, ESCWA will provide each participant with a daily subsistence allowance (to cover meals, accommodation and incidental costs) for the duration of the meeting, as well as an additional amount to cover miscellaneous costs of transportation to and from the airport. Transportation arrangements to and from the airport are organized directly by the participants themselves. Daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses will be paid cash, in United States Dollars, to experts in Beirut on the second day of the meeting in B1 reception. **Participants are urged to present their passport, original Boarding Pass, as well as any other relevant documents to ECW staff at the registration desk.**

6 – Correspondence

Please direct all correspondence and queries related to this meeting to the following staff members in ECW.

For inquiries regarding the program, please contact:

Raidan Al Saqqaf (Mr.)	Social Affairs Officer, ESCWA Centre for Women	alsaqqaf@un.org	+961-1-978422
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For inquiries regarding logistical arrangements, please contact:

Hala Attieh (Ms.)	Research Assistant, ESCWA Centre for Women	hala.attieh@un.org	+961-1-978644
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