

Women, Work and Family in the Arab Region: Toward Economic Citizenship

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What are the Issues?

Across the globe:

- “Feminization of labor” and work conditions
- Female labor force attachment
- Women’s double burden
- Variable or inadequate policies for work-family balance (varies with type of welfare state)
- Advocacy: “Decommodification”
- Migrant domestic labor

In MENA:

- [Low LFP rates](#)
- Female labor “commodification” unattained
- Patriarchal gender contract
- Inadequate [policies](#) to support maternal employment
- Advocacy: enhance FLFP
- Migrant domestic labor

What are the goals?

- Social rights of citizenship (Marshall)
- Economic citizenship (Kessler-Harris, ICESCR, Beijing Platform for Action, ITUC, etc.)
- Decent work agenda (ILO)
- Work-family balance
- Recognition of care work – paid and unpaid
- Citizenship and mechanisms

Social rights for women's economic citizenship: the Arab region and beyond

- The right to gainful employment without the need to obtain the consent of a husband or male relative;
- to own, acquire, manage, and retain property brought into marriage and to control one's own income from gainful employment;
- to obtain a passport and travel abroad without permission of husband or male relative;
- equality in family inheritance;
- to confer citizenship to children or a husband;
- to choose a residence/domicile;
- to participate in social, cultural, community, and union activities and decision-making;
- education and skills upgrading, including affordable adult education and vocational training;
- affordable healthcare and a healthy work environment;
- non-discrimination by employer, including equality in hiring and promotion, and equal pay for equal work;
- the right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace;
- recognition and valorization of care work: paid maternity leave and paternity leave; subsidized and quality childcare; support for home-based elder care; decent wages and training for childcare and eldercare workers.

[Table 1](#)

Table 1 MENA Women's Labor Force Participation Rates in Global Perspective, 1980-85 and 2005-2010^a

		1980-1985	2005-2010
World		55.2	56.9
Latin America and Caribbean		39.6	54.6
East Asia and Pacific		69.6	69.3
South Asia		34.9	36.8
Sub-Saharan Africa		44.1	60.9
North America		61.5	69.1
Europe and Central Asia		58.5	61.4
MENA		22.1	27.9

Table 2. [Female](#) Share of Total Labor Force in MENA Countries, in percent) 1990, 2010

	1990	2010
Algeria	11.9	16.9
Bahrain	17.0	19.3
Egypt	26.5	24.2
Iraq	14.2	17.5
Jordan	14.0	18.0
Kuwait	26.9	23.9
Lebanon	21.1	25.5
Libya	17.7	28.0
Morocco	25.3	27.1
Oman	12.9	17.9
Qatar	14.4	12.4
Saudi Arabia	10.7	14.8
Syria	18.4	15.2
Tunisia	21.6	26.9
United Arab Emirates	9.7	14.5
West Bank and Gaza	12.5	17.8
Yemen	18.9	25.8

Table 3. [International Conventions](#) Signed by Selected MENA Countries, Year of Ratification

Convention	Algeria	Morocco	Tunisia	Egypt	Jordan
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979 (with or without reservations)	1996	1993	1985	1981	1992
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995	Adopted ^a	Adopted ^a	Adopted ^a	Adopted ^a	Adopted ^a
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966	1989 ^a	1979	1969	1982	1975
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	1989	1979	1969	1982	1975
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, 1990	2005	2003	—	1993	—
UNESCO Convention: Discrimination in education, 1960	1968	1968	1969	1962	1976
ILO Convention 111: Discrimination in employment/occupation, 1958	1969	1963	1959	1960	1963
ILO Convention 100: Equal remuneration for men and women for equal work, 1951	1962	1979	1968	1960	1966
ILO Conventions 87 & 98: Freedom of association and right to organize, 1948	1962	—	1957	1957, 1954	1968
ILO Convention 182: Worst forms of child labor	2001	2001	2000	2002	2000
ILO Convention 183: Maternity protection, 2000	—	—	—	—	—
ILO Convention 156: Workers with Families Responsibilities, 1981	—	—	—	—	—

[-Table 4.](#) Ratification of Women’s Rights, Labor Rights, and UN Human Rights Conventions by GCC Countries, Year of Ratification, circa 2012

Convention	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979 (with or without reservations) Optional Protocol, 1999	6/2002	9/1994	2/2006	4/2009	9/2000	10/2004
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995	9/1995		9/1995	9/1995		9/1995
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966	9/2007	5/1996				
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	9/2006	5/1996				
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, 1990						
UNESCO Convention: Discrimination in education, 1960		1/1963			8/1973	
ILO Convention 111: Discrimination in employment/ occupation, 1958	9/2000	12/1966		8/1976	6/1978	6/2001
ILO Convention 100: Equal remuneration for men and women for equal work, 1951					6/1978	2/1997
ILO Conventions 87 & 98: Freedom of association and right to organize, 1948		9/1961				
ILO Convention 182: Worst forms of child labor	3/2001	8/2000	6/2001	5/2000	10/2001	6/ 2001
ILO Convention 156: Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981						
ILO Convention 183: Maternity protection, 2000						
ILO Convention 189: Domestic Workers, 2011						

[Table 5](#). Civil, Political, and Social Rights of Citizenship: A Summary Illustration

Civil rights	Political rights	Social rights
<p>Right to contract</p> <p>Equal treatment under the law</p> <p>Freedom of expression</p> <p>Freedom of religion</p> <p>Right to privacy</p> <p>Control over one's body</p> <p>Choice of residence</p> <p>Choice of occupation</p>	<p>Right to vote</p> <p>Right to run & hold office</p> <p>To form or join a political party or trade union</p> <p>To engage in fund-raising</p> <p>Nationality rights</p> <p>Refugee and contract worker rights</p> <p>Minority rights</p> <p>Dissident rights</p>	<p>Health services</p> <p>Family allowances</p> <p>Primary and secondary schooling</p> <p>Higher education</p> <p>Vocational education</p> <p>Compensatory rights</p> <p>Social insurance</p> <p>Paid maternity leave & subsidized quality childcare</p>

Table 6 Women, Work and Family Arrangements: Market and State Mechanisms

Form of Employment and Gender/ Class Relationship	Support Mechanisms from the Market	Support Mechanisms from the State
Male breadwinner/female carer	Employer-provided social security extended to wife/ mother	Family allowance; tax credit
Male breadwinner/ female part-time earner	Employer-provided social security extended to wife/ mother	Family allowance; social insurance; subsidized child care & pre-school centers
Male breadwinner/ marketized carer	Employer-provided social security extended to wife/ mother	Social support/labor rights extended to domestic worker
Dual earner/state carer	Employer-provided social security to both earners (if not self-employed)	Family allowance; social insurance; paid maternity leave; subsidized child care & pre-school centers; elder care provision;
Dual earner/marketized carer	Employer-provided social security to both earners (if not self-employed); paid maternity leave	Family allowance; tax credit
Dual earner/dual carer	Employer-provided social security to both earners; paid maternity/paternity/ family leave	Family allowance; social insurance; subsidized child care & pre-school centers; elder care provision; tax credit