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LAUNCH EVENT¹

Report: Gender Justice and the Law in the Arab Region: *what will it take to achieve the SDGs?*

10-11 December, Beirut, Lebanon, 2018

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch the report <i>Gender Justice and the Law in the Arab Region: what will it take to achieve the SDGs?</i> ▪ Create media interest in the findings of the regional study and promote it as a baseline for measurement of progress on gender equality within the 2030 Agenda ▪ Work with a group of champions and legal advocates to identify the most relevant issues for which the momentum is ripe to promote change
Organizers	UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and ESCWA
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arab and international media representatives based in Beirut; ▪ Government representatives; prominent judges, prosecutors and lawyers; parliamentarians; women’s machineries; women, youth and human rights activists; NGOs and CSOs working on women’s rights and access to justice; academia and think tanks from the region; ▪ Local diplomatic community and donors ▪ UN Agencies (regional and country offices)

1. Background

In the Arab states region, multiple sources of law, the persistence of customary practices, the lack of coordination of the judicial and security sectors to effectively deliver justice, as well as economic, cultural and socio-political factors act as serious impediments for women to access justice, hindering the achievement of gender equality and therefore the Sustainable Development Goals, specially goals 5, 10 and 16. ²

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) including domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual assault, sexual harassment, child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), trafficking in persons, sexual slavery and honor-based crimes are prevalent in the region.

Furthermore, gender norms centered around preserving family honor perpetuate impunity towards perpetrators of violence. This is manifested through discriminatory laws that provide inadequate protection of women (for example: in several countries in the region, the penal code exonerates a rapist from

¹ The organization of the launching event, has partially been supported by the government of Japan. Any promotional material will include the Japanese flag and will indicate “From the People of JAPAN”.

² SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

punishment if he marries his victim and honor crimes allow for mitigating circumstances to reduce their criminal sentence), and even when such rights and protection are recognized in the law, their inconsistent enforcement or implementation reinforced by patriarchal norms that view women and girls in a subordinate role often impede access to justice, and obstruct women's empowerment.

To support identifying the legal measures that prevent GBV and to encourage policy and institutional reforms that bring down structural barriers to women's empowerment, UNDP worked together with UN Women, UNFPA in 18 countries in the Arab region, and the 3 agencies collaborated with ESCWA at regional level to produce a regional report on *Gender Justice and the Law in the Arab Region – What will it take to achieve the SDGs?*

Each country report highlights the main legal barriers preventing women's access to justice and legal protection from GBV in the Arab States. Furthermore, country level findings are summarized in a 2 pager to highlight the deficits between national laws and international standards and the steps that will be needed to achieve many of the targets agreed upon in the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Objectives of the Launch and accompanying workshop

The objectives of the launch are to widely share and disseminate the country findings with key government representatives; judges, prosecutors and lawyers; parliamentarians; women's machineries, women and youth rights activists from the Arab region and beyond.

The discussions organized during the launch event (day 1) and subsequent technical workshop (day 2) will provide an opportunity to highlight the key challenges in the region to eliminate gender discrimination in the law and ensure women's access to justice and their legal protection.

In particular, the launch and workshop will aim to:

- A) Highlight the status of gender justice and the law in the region, and stress that law reform will constitute a key driver for achieving SDGs across the Arab region;
- B) Facilitate the ownership by national governments and encourage their commitments to introduce potential future reform in the penal codes, family law, nationality law and labor laws;
- C) Create media interest in the topic to support future advocacy for law changes and reforms;
- D) Identify potential regional and national evidence based advocacy initiatives to improve gender justice in the region;
- E) Leverage strategic regional partnerships on gender justice with regional structures;
- F) Raise awareness of the [online legal database](#) (e-platform) launched by UNDP, UN Women, and CAWTAR in 2016. It includes more than 3600 laws, as well as legal profiles from 20 Arab Countries, all of which are searchable through an online portal.

Proposed Agenda

LAUNCH EVENT

Gender Justice and the Law in the Arab Region – What will it take to achieve the SDGs?

Venue – Beirut, Lebanon

Date – 10-11 December 2018

Time	10 December 2018
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:45	<p>Opening remarks: Gender Equality and the 2030 Agenda by Mourad Wahba, UNDG Chair and UNDP Regional Director</p> <p>Presentation of the report and main findings by John Godwin, Lead Author of the report</p> <p>Key Note Speaker – Asma Khader, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist</p>
09:45 – 11:00	<p>Gender discrimination in Nationality laws and Personal Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maya Morsy, President of the Nacional Council for Women (NCW), Egypt (TBC) - to speak about the nationality law - Neziha Labidi, Minister of Women and activist, Tunisia (TBC)– to speak about recent reforms in personal status to eliminate gender discrimination - Amal Basha, Women’s Rights Activist and Chair of the Sister’s Arab Forum for Human Rights, Yemen – to speak about child marriage - Zoya Jureidini Rouhana, KAFA Co-founder and Director, Lebanon - to speak about model law on domestic violence <p>Facilitator: Rula Amin, Former Journalist and CNN / Al Jazirah Anchor</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 – 12:45	<p>Penal Codes in the region – Prosecution of perpetrators and protection of victims of violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deqa Yasin, Federal Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Somalia (TBC) - to speak about the reforms being introduced to ensure sexual violence and rape is prosecuted in formal courts instead of using customary practices - Rana Hussein, Jordanian journalist and human rights activist, Jordan (TBC) – to speak about Honor Crimes - Najat Razi, Présidente de l'Association Marocaine pour les Droits des Femmes, Morocco (TBC) - to present on how Morocco changed the ‘Rapist marrying the victim law’

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Azza Kamel, CSO from Egypt - <i>to speak about FGM</i> - To be identified - <i>to speak about prosecution of sexual violence in conflict</i> <p>Facilitator: TBC</p>
12:45 - 14:00	<p>Women's access to economic and financial assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobna El Helal, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Egypt, Egypt (TBC) - <i>to speak about access to finance for women</i> - Samir Aita, President of the Arab Economists Circle, Economist at Le Monde Diplomatique, Syria (TBC) - <i>to speak about labor rights for women</i> - (TBC) - <i>to speak about property rights</i> - Bochra Belhaj Hmida, President of the Commission for Individual Freedom and Equality, Tunisia (TBC) - <i>to speak about inheritance</i> - Lubna Ahmed Al-Kazi, Founder and director of the Women's Research and Studies Center - <i>to speak how Kuwait is supporting private sector to empower women, and how this is changing the society</i> <p>Facilitator: TBC</p>
14:00 - 14:15	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Mohammad Naciri Regional Director of UN Women Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director of UNFPA</p>
14:15	Lunch

Time	<p>DAY 2 - Workshop with Practitioners and Activists Meeting with experts, Governments, Civil Society and UN Agencies from the region to identify next steps and priorities across the region. Speakers/facilitators</p>
9:00 - 9:30	Opening Remarks
9:30 - 11:00	<p>Gender Justice & the Law: what will it take to achieve the SDG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of main findings of <i>Gender Justice & the Law</i> - Presentation of e-Platform - Presentation of Gender Justice report, ESCWA <p>Facilitated Discussion - Lina Abirafeh (TBC), Director Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW)</p>
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 - 13:30	Changes in the Penal Codes and Family Laws to provide Justice for women

	<p>Topics for discussion to be addressed by lawyers, prosecutors and judges on how to change laws: for example, marry your rapist law, right to pass nationality to children, honor crimes, domestic violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mrs Dalenda Larguech (TBC), Director General of the Tunisian Center of Research, Tunisia - Mr. Raed Asfour (TBC), Judge at the High Judicial Council, Palestine - Mr. Aid Ahmed Ibrahim (TBC), Prosecutor of the Republic, Djibouti - Ms. Nadia Ait-Zai, Lawyer (TBC), Algeria - Dr Attiat Moustafa (TBC), Director of the Unit of Violence Against Women, Sudan - Judge Ihsan Barakat (TBC), First female judge to be a member of the Court of Cassation, Jordan <p>Facilitated Discussion: Maha Yahia (TBC), Head of Carnegie Middle East</p>
<p>13:30 – 14:30</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>14:30 – 16:30</p>	<p>Changing social norms and attitudes for gender equality in the Arab Region</p> <p>Challenges and opportunities in the region in changing patriarchal norms and attitudes towards women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hadil Abed Alaziz (TBC), Director ARDD, Jordan - Dr. Maya Morsy (TBC), President of the Nacional Council for Women (NCW), Egypt - Ghida Anani (TBC), Director of ABAAD resource centre for Gender Equality, Lebanon - Waad Alhlaili (TBC), Founder of the first women’s shelter for domestic violence survivors in Kuwait - Nesmah Mohammed (TBC), Social and Political Activist, Yemen <p>Facilitated Discussion: Diana Moukalled (TBC), Journalist</p>
<p>16:30 – 17:00</p>	<p>Way Forward and Conclusions</p>