

Arab Regional Conference on
Population and Development

Reviewing the Implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration

Regional Report 2018



ICPD25
International Conference on
Population and Development





Acknowledgements

In 2018, this five years review of the implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration (the outcome document of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states, ICPD Beyond 2014, held in Cairo from 24 to 26 June 2013) was carried out as a collaborative effort between the United Nations Population Fund's Arab States Regional Office (UNFPA/ASRO), the League of Arab States (LAS) - Social Sector, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) provided technical assistance in preparing the review.

Preface

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its landmark Programme of Action marked the beginning of a paradigm shift in population and development. Through a historic consensus, 179 world leaders recognized the need to establish a balance between the population of the world and the distribution of its resources. They placed people's well-being at the centre and acknowledged individuals' rights to make their reproductive choices freely and responsibly. They also agreed that women's empowerment is a precondition to development. For the first time, the international community called for a rights-based approach to addressing the relationship between population, economic development and human rights.

In 2013, the 20th anniversary of ICPD, the Arab States came together to review progress and renew their commitment to this revolutionary but unfinished agenda with a specific focus on region-specific challenges. With the support and collaboration of the League of Arab States, the United Nations Population Fund – Arab States Regional Office, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Africa, this effort resulted in the adoption by member States of the Cairo Declaration, which charted the way ahead for the Arab region's quest to fulfil the ICPD promise.

Five years after reaching this regional consensus and committing to operationalizing its

principles and objectives, and on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action, Arab countries met again under the auspices of UNFPA, LAS and UN ESCWA in Beirut in October 2018 to review the progress in the implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration. This Arab regional report reviews the implementation and progress made by Arab Countries and sums up the regional findings including the key messages emanating from the three-day multi-stakeholder conference that acknowledged the progress achieved, but also called for the need to intensify efforts in areas where countries reflected insufficient progress.

Regional and country-specific evidence shows that the Arab region has indeed made remarkable progress towards achieving the promise of the 1994 (ICPD) and delivering on the commitments of the 2013 Cairo Declaration. Periodic regional reviews have noted discernible declines in infant, child and maternal death rates; improved sexual and reproductive health and a reduction in unmet needs for family planning and reproductive health services; increasing school enrolment ratios; improved gender parity in education; a decrease in extreme poverty rates; and improved access to safe water and sanitation.

However, the same evidence has also shown that progress was not even among and within countries. Several pivotal challenges remain insufficiently addressed. These include

low quality education; high unemployment rates, especially among young people; the lack of adequate youth-friendly services and weak youth participation; limited economic and political participation of women; rapid urbanization and noticeable developmental disparities between urban and rural areas; persistent structural and cultural obstacles to gender equality; and the prevalence of gender-based violence. These and many other long-lasting challenges are further exacerbated by the region's complex context and recent changes mainly due to protracted conflicts, and fluctuations in population dynamics, all resulting in severe humanitarian crises, unprecedented forced population movements, and the reversal of development gains in affected countries and their neighbourhood.

The regional review report traces the progress Arab countries have made on the four core components of the Cairo Declaration, namely ensuring dignity and equality for marginalized and vulnerable groups and populations,

providing universal access to reproductive health and reproductive rights, taking a rights-based approach to address international migration challenges, and working towards environmental sustainability.

The review also highlights areas where further efforts should be invested, and the partnerships needed to accelerate progress to meet the ambitious aspirations of the ICPD Programme of Action and the regional framework agreed upon in the 2013 Cairo Declaration. Echoing the key messages of the 2018 regional conference, the report includes a set of concrete recommendations highlighting the need to invest in data and statistics, to create an ICPD observatory, to invest in institutional capacity building through the establishment of regional learning platforms, to develop more effective review modalities and framework with measurable indicators and to support the recently established Arab population and development council within the League of Arab States.

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Executive summary

The five-year implementation review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, the outcome document of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states (ICPD Beyond 2014) held in Cairo from 24 to 26 June 2013, was jointly led by the Arab states regional office of the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and the League of Arab States. The Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo provided technical assistance in preparing the review report.

The review comes at a challenging period for the Arab region, which is aspiring to reach development goals while facing serious political, economic and security difficulties. The report documents the current status and progress in the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD Beyond 2014) Framework of Actions in 13 Arab States from the four Arab subregions: the Mashreq (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine); the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia); the Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf (Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates); and least developed countries (Somalia and Sudan). The review is based on governmental responses to a structured survey covering most dimensions of the 129 action recommendations of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, which was adopted by representatives of Member States of the League of Arab states at the 2013 Regional Conference

on Population and Development in the Arab states (ICPD Beyond 2014). In addition to the filled questionnaires, the review made use of available information from voluntary national reports and the countries presentations during the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Five Years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration, which was hosted by ESCWA in Beirut from 30 October to 1 November 2018.

The Regional context

The Arab region is one of the most diverse regions in the world, both demographically and economically. It includes Egypt, with a population approaching 100 million, plus countries with populations of less than three million such as Bahrain and Qatar. The 22 Arab states range from some of the wealthiest countries in the world to some of the poorest. With fragile economies, vulnerable financial institutions and persistent political instability and security issues, the region faces serious developmental challenges. Several Arab states have suffered, or continue to suffer, from occupation, armed conflict, civil war, terrorism, forced displacement, political instability, economic crises, or severe environmental challenges. Countries such as Palestine, Sudan, Somalia and Iraq have experienced occupation, instability or protracted armed conflict over extended periods (from years

to decades), while others such as Syria, Libya and Yemen, relatively new to the list, are now undergoing severe crises that threaten not only their development prospects but the basic survival and human dignity of entire generations.

Nevertheless, the region has made remarkable progress towards achieving the vision of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the Millennium Development Goals. Periodic regional reviews have documented: discernible declines in infant, child and maternal death rates; improved reproductive health care and family planning services; a reduction in unmet needs for family planning and reproductive health services; increasing school enrolment ratios; improved gender parity in education; a drop off in extreme poverty; increased urbanization; and improved access to safe water and sanitation. Progress has not been even throughout the region and some countries clearly lag behind. Several major challenges remain. These include: high unemployment rates among young people; low quality of education; a lack of adequate youth-friendly services; weak youth participation; weak economic and political participation of women; developmental disparities between urban and rural areas; persistent cultural obstacles to gender equality; and the prevalence of gender-based violence.

Ongoing population dynamics in the region such as irregular migration, displacement and rapid urbanization also pose great challenges causing environmental strains in large urban agglomerations. Yet the decline in birth and death rates has ushered many of the region's countries into a period of potential demographic dividend, characterized by

proportionally large working-age populations and low dependency ratios. In order to take advantage of the positive changes require in the age structure, require investment in human capital, promoting the skills and opportunities of young people, protecting their human rights, and encouraging their economic, political and civic participation. The ICPD Beyond 2014 vision, if incorporated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, offers an effective framework to achieve these preconditions and thus allow the region's potential demographic dividend to be realized.

Implementing the action recommendations of the 2013 Cairo Declaration

1) Dignity and equality

- Of the responding countries, ten have clear policies for poverty alleviation and for economic empowerment through income-generating and employment programmes. Nine other countries have programmes that aim at correcting geographical imbalances in investment and economic opportunities. Some countries also target specific vulnerable population groups -- e.g. female-headed households, unmarried women and people with disabilities.
- Generally, issues of poverty and marginalization are best addressed through subsidies and income transfer rather than through structural changes aimed at redistributing resources and opportunities. This underscores the need to adopt an equity and human rights-based approach that is anchored in equality of opportunities and transformative changes.

a. Women

- The issue of women's empowerment and gender equality has been selected by population councils in the Arab region as one of four priority areas (the other three being youth empowerment, reproductive health, and international migration). However, there are still strong cultural and structural obstacles to be overcome if the desired progress is to be made in this area.
- Of the 11 countries that responded to this section of the survey, 10 had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and changed some laws in order to comply with the Convention. Nine of these 10 countries have lifted some of the reservations they originally had to the Convention. Tunisia alone has lifted all its original reservations.
- Six of the 11 responding countries have formulated strategies or programmes in response to the United Nations Security Council resolutions related to protecting women and girls from violence in situations of armed conflict and to adopting a gender-sensitive approach in conflict resolution and peacemaking.
- Most Arab states had established institutions (councils, commissions or ministries) dedicated to women and gender equality issues prior to 2013. Since the 2013 Cairo Declaration, four of 10 responding countries have established new institutions addressing these issues. Also, the 10 responding countries have either formulated new national strategies or policies for gender equality, or have reviewed and updated existing ones.

- All 10 responding countries have adopted laws or policies to support and promote women's political participation, including setting quotas for elected and appointed representative councils. Nine countries are implementing policies or programmes to promote women's economic participation and operate programmes against early and forced marriages and against gender-based violence. However, only six countries have programmes promoting male and local community involvement in gender equality efforts.

b. Migrants and displaced persons

- While the section of the survey on women and gender issues elicited detailed responses, only a few countries responded to the section on migrants and displaced persons, yielding scant information. This may be because this part of the survey was not referred to the national bodies mandated with handling migration and displacement issues or it could be due to a lack of relevant information in the responding countries.
- Available responses indicate that some of the responding countries have policies or programmes addressing migrants and displaced persons, in accordance with the 2013 Cairo Declaration.

c. Young people

- Young people are given high priority in the development agenda across the Arab region. All 11 countries responding to this part of the survey have formulated national strategies and policies on young people

and all are investing in creating decent jobs for young people and in improving their employability. Ten of these countries have programmes aimed at upgrading the quality of education and linked to the needs of the labour market, in addition to programmes designed to help increase enrolment.

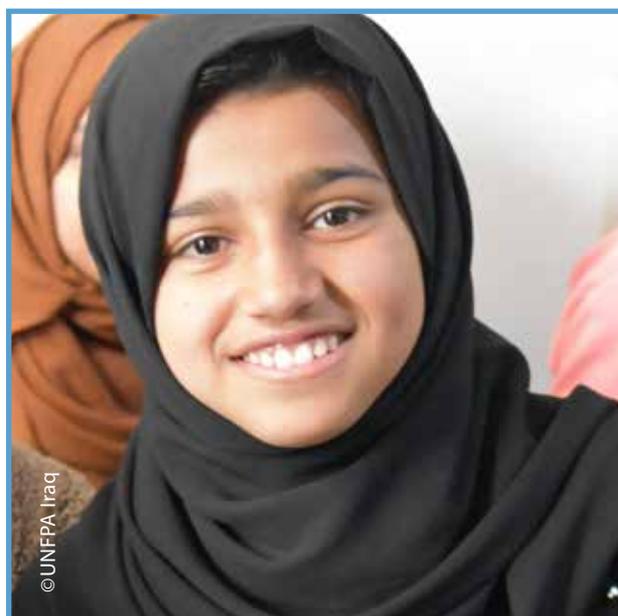
- The 11 responding countries are also implementing programmes to promote and enhance political and civil participation by young people. All of the countries also have sexual and reproductive health programmes targeting young people. Five of the responding countries have programmes addressing irregular migration.

2) Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

- Sexual and reproductive health is another priority area in the Arab region. Responding countries went into considerable detail when answering this part of the follow-up survey. Since 2013, eight of the responding countries have formulated new strategies on reproductive health or have reviewed and updated existing strategies.
- In all responding countries, at least some reproductive health care services have been integrated within primary health care. All countries have expanded and improved services related to maternal health, family planning, and prevention and treatment of sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Ten of the 13 responding countries are also investing in planning relevant human resources with a view to

upgrading their skills or improving their geographic distribution.

- Eight of the responding countries have programmes that aim to provide access to sexual and reproductive health care for all, without discrimination based on gender, nationality, displacement status or marital status.
- In a few countries, however, especially those with pro-natalist population policies, family planning services are limited and are not fully integrated within primary health care.
- Despite the high priority given to sexual and reproductive health, there is still a noticeable lack of focus on reproductive rights and individual choice. The main challenge here is adopting a human rights-based perspective and overcoming cultural obstacles that may stand in the way of making sexual and reproductive health information and services accessible to all individuals, especially making them appropriately available to adolescents and unmarried young people.



3) International migration

- International migration is another of the four priority areas in the region. Its importance and the challenges it presents are reflected in the long and detailed list of relevant recommendations in the 2013 Cairo Declaration. Yet only a few countries responded to this part of the follow-up survey, and then it was to provide only limited information.
- Egypt and Morocco are the only responding countries to have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. No Arab country has ratified the International Labour Organisation's Domestic Workers Convention.
- Five of the responding countries have national strategies on international migration. Five other countries have policies or programmes addressing human trafficking while only four have policies addressing irregular migration. Four countries have policies related to migrant remittances.
- Five responding countries have policies aiming at encouraging and involving emigrants and promoting their contribution to development efforts in their countries of origin. Among four responding countries of destination, only two have programmes that provide services to immigrants and that address discrimination against them.
- In general, adherence to the detailed recommendations of the 2013 Cairo Declaration in this regard appears weak. This may be due to the fact that there was a limited response to this part of the survey, and compounded by the complexity of migration policies.

4) Environmental sustainability

- Almost all responding countries answering this part of the survey, underscored the emerging importance of environmental sustainability in the region. All responding countries have formulated, or are in the process of formulating, national policies and programmes for the management of environmental resources and for recycling solid waste.
- Eight of the responding countries have policies addressing issues of high population growth in large urban agglomerations, while only three have policies or programmes addressing the challenges of threatened and environmentally vulnerable areas.

5) Governance

- Several parts of the follow-up survey relate to aspects of governance such as availability of data and research, partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and international cooperation. A lack of responses to several of these questions, however, limited the attempt to acquire a complete picture of population and development governance in the Arab region.
- Available responses show that Iraq and Jordan stand out in this regard, followed by Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia. There is some diversity across the three dimensions, with some countries focusing on data and research and other countries focusing on partnerships with civil society or on international cooperation.

The way forward: accelerating progress

The results of the implementation review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration demonstrated both the commitment and the significant effort by Arab states to recognize and realise the ICPD's vision. The results also highlight the unfinished agenda and identify the challenges remaining. The review report concludes with this set of action recommendations that build on these findings and the in-depth understanding of the regional context.

- 1) Establish regional learning platforms building on the manifest commonalities of topical concerns and challenges in Arab states. These commonalities coexist with variables that can be used as catalysts for positive change by sharing best practices and lessons learned.
- 2) Adopt a result-based, goal-oriented approach, making best use of the overlap and complementarity between the ICPD vision, the SDGs. Meanwhile, the specificity of the ICPD agenda should be recognized and translated into clearly defined targets and indicators, with every effort made to ensure that the data required for monitoring those indicators is available, accessible and of high quality.
- 3) Invest in a data and information movement and develop an ICPD observatory. This calls for policy-relevant research in addition to building databases to address the information gaps.
- 4) Address cultural and social constraints, changing negative social norms while building on and protecting positive cultural features.
- 5) Adopt an equity lens, enshrined in a human rights-based approach, in all policies and actions targeting the realization of the 2013 Cairo Declaration agenda. This implies a focus on fairness, correcting existing imbalances and preventing future imbalances by changing the whole distribution of disadvantages.
- 6) Invest in institutional strengthening and capacity development, with a focus on collaboration, planning and management skills and mechanisms, in order to build the solid base needed for recognizing and implementing this set of recommendations.
- 7) Recognize and act on the elements of good and effective governance. In particular, focus on multisectoral structures, accountability processes, data accessibility, and participatory approaches.
- 8) Agree on and enhance a Cairo Declaration review modality, targeting a shift from measuring change towards supporting change that can be measured. Earlier recommendations about building pan-Arab channels for lesson sharing, investing in observatories and policy-support research, and acknowledging the complementarity between ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions and the Sustainable Development Agenda are all steps in this direction.



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Introduction

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), with its comprehensive Programme of Action, set the global consensus on the multi-dimensionality of the population and development agenda. Signalling a paradigm shift, ICPD has moved population policy and programmes away from a focus on human numbers to a focus on respecting human rights and investing in the wellbeing of individuals. Twenty years later, a global review of the ICPD Programme of Action confirmed its continuing validity while highlighting the need to develop a new framework of action that responds to the changing development environment.

As mandated by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 65/234), the operational review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 included a global survey, global meetings on specific themes, and regional conferences on population and development. In 2013, each of the five major regions, including the Arab states, organized a regional conference. These inputs merged into the Framework of Actions for the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014, representing the culmination of the United Nations' review of progress, gaps, challenges and emerging issues in relation to the ICPD's Programme of Action. The ICPD Beyond 2014 report gathered and analysed data from 176 United Nations Member States, who contributed to the survey, alongside inputs from civil society and academia.

The 2013 Cairo Declaration, adopted by representatives of Member States of the League of Arab States at the 2013 Regional

Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states, represented the consensus of the Arab countries on the way forward in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014. This report presents the results of a systematic review of the implementation of the Cairo Declaration five years after its adoption.

The implementation review of the Cairo Declaration is based on responses to national follow-up surveys sent to the governments of the Arab states. The review also makes use of information from voluntary national reports. An executive summary of implementation review was shared with delegates at the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Five Years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration, hosted by ESCWA in Beirut from 30 October to 1 November 2018. This report incorporates inputs from Arab governments to that Regional Conference. These include presentations of voluntary reports by delegates from seven countries that also responded to the follow-up survey (Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia) as well as from three other countries (Libya, Mauritania and Syria).¹ It should be noted, however, that the issue of non-response from several countries in the region, could not be fully addressed by referring to other sources since no comparable formal resource exists for many non-responding countries.

The review report is divided into four chapters. The first chapter sets out the context for the review -- briefly introducing the demographic,

¹ Further information on the Regional Conference, including presentations of the voluntary reports, is available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/ar/events/> - المؤتمر العربي-الإقليمي - للسكان والتنمية-خمس-سنوات-بعد إعلان-القاهرة-لعام-2013

social and political context in the Arab region before, at the time of, and after the adoption of the Cairo Declaration. The first chapter also outlines the 2013 Cairo Declaration and how it relates to the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action and the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions. The methodology used to analyse responses to the governmental survey is introduced in the second chapter. The third chapter, which comprises the main bulk of the report, presents the results of this analysis in two forms: (1) summary statistics on the implementation efforts in the region, as reflected by the governmental responses to the survey; and (2) select examples from particular countries, in boxes, that serve to highlight successful practices. This report provides a general overview of the regional effort. It is not intended to cover separate detailed listing of activities for each country. The final chapter concludes the report by summarizing the main findings and introducing a set of recommendations and guidelines for future action.





1 Background

1.1. The Regional context

The Arab region is one of the most diverse in the world. The region includes the 22 Member States of the League of Arab States, with a total population of around 390 million in 2015.² According to 2016 population estimates, while around 100 million people live in Egypt, the most populous Arab country, at the other end of the scale, countries such as Bahrain and Qatar have populations of less than three million.³ The economic diversity in the region is hardly less striking than the demographic disparities; the region includes three of the 10 wealthiest countries in the world (Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates), as well as Yemen, one of the poorest.⁴ Other findings from the latest Human Development Report illustrate the diversity of the region: while the region as a whole achieved medium human development in 2015, it included five countries whose human development levels are described as very high, six countries whose human development levels are high, four countries of medium human development and seven countries with low human development (including Syria which was classified among

countries with medium human development before 2015).⁵ Developmental disparity is also apparent within individual countries in the region, especially between urban and rural areas.⁶

With fragile economies, vulnerable financial institutions and persistent political instability and security issues, the Arab region faces serious developmental challenges.⁷ Several countries in the region have suffered from, or continue to suffer from, occupation, armed conflicts, civil wars, terrorism, forced displacement, political instability, economic crises, environmental degradation, or famine. States such as Palestine, Sudan, Somalia and Iraq have experienced occupation, instability or armed conflicts for years or decades, while other countries such as Syria, Libya and Yemen, while relatively new to the list, are now undergoing severe crises that threaten not just their development prospects but the basic survival and human dignity of entire generations.⁸

5 United Nations Development Programme. 2016. Human Development Report 2016: *Human Development for Everyone*. New York, USA: United Nations Development Programme.

6 United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab states. 2016. Arab Human *Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*. New York, USA: United Nations Development Programme.

7 United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab states. 2009. *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Securities in the Arab Countries*. New York, USA: United Nations Development Programme.

8 UNICEF. 2017. Syria Crisis: 2017 Humanitarian Results. https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/_UNICEF_Syria_Crisis_Humanitarian_Situation_Report_Year_End_2017.pdf; Yemen Humanitarian Situation Report Dec 2017. https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Yemen_Humanitarian_Situation_Report_Year_End_2017.pdf

2 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2016. *Demographic Profile of the Arab Region: Realizing the Demographic Dividend*. Beirut, Lebanon: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

3 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2017. *2016 Demographic Yearbook*. New York, USA: United Nations, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.R/46.

4 United Nations Development Programme. 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*. New York, USA: United Nations Development Programme.

In spite of the many challenges facing Arab States, the region has made remarkable progress towards achieving the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the post-2000 Millennium Developmental Goals. Periodic regional reviews have documented noticeable declines in death rates, especially maternal deaths and the deaths of infants and children. These reviews have also noted improved reproductive health care and family planning services; declines in unmet needs for family planning and reproductive health services; increasing school enrolment ratios; improved gender parity in education; declines in extreme poverty; increased urbanization; and, improved access to safe water and sanitation.⁹

Progress, however, has not been even throughout the region. Some countries clearly lag behind. Major challenges include high unemployment rates among young people; low education quality; weak economic and political participation by women; developmental disparities between urban and rural areas; persistent cultural obstacles to gender equality; and, the prevalence of gender-based violence, early marriage, and female genital mutilation in some countries. The main challenges to environmental stability include high population growth, especially in large urban agglomerations, as well as pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, unsustainable consumption patterns, water shortages, and the potential impacts of climate change. In addition, the global great recession of

2008/2009, followed by the political instability triggered by the 2011 Arab Spring, severely interrupted hoped for progress.¹⁰

The demographic forces playing out in the region deserve particular attention. The decline in fertility rates has resulted in a changing age structure that has seen the share of the working-age population increasing and the age dependency ratio approaching its lowest point. These age structure changes are conducive to higher productivity, lower consumption and greater investment, hence being termed a “demographic dividend” or opportunity. However, a demographic dividend is temporary, good for a few decades at most. In addition, the benefits that can accrue from these optimal demographic conditions do not occur automatically. They require a supportive and equitable environment garnered by investing in human capital, promoting the skills and opportunities of young people, protecting their human rights and encouraging their economic, political and civic engagement and participation. It is also important to recognize that demographic dividends depend on the pace of the decline in fertility, and hence on investment in sexual and reproductive health care and in family planning services. In short, benefiting from the demographic dividend is conditional on an enabling set of policies dealing with public health, family planning, and education as well as appropriate economic policies that encourage savings and promote open and flexible employment.¹¹

Eventually, the age structure changes resulting from the fertility decline will produce an ageing

9 United Nations Population Fund Arab states regional office. 2010. *Arab states regional report: Fifteen-Year Review of the Implementation of the ICPD/PoA in the Arab World*. Cairo: United Nations Population Fund Arab states regional office; United Nations and League of Arab states. 2013. *The Arab Millennium Development Goals Report: Facing Challenges and Going Beyond 2015*. Beirut, Lebanon: ESCWA.

10 Ibid.

11 Bloom, D., D. Canning and J. Sevilla. 2003. *The Demographic Dividend: A New Perspective on the Economic Consequences of Population Change*. Santa Monica, California, USA: RAND.

population with a large proportion of old people. This ageing transition will pose a new set of challenges, including high dependency and pressure on health care services. Population ageing is fast approaching in Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia and is expected to affect the rest of the region before long.¹²

Migration, whether voluntary or forced, regular or irregular, is another crucial demographic force in the Arab region. The 2013 Cairo Declaration highlights international migration as a priority issue, and Member States' national population councils also selected it as one of four priority areas (the other three - sexual and reproductive health, women empowerment and gender equality, and youth empowerment). As discussed later in this report, a lack of information and other demands are hindering progress in harnessing the potential benefits of international migration, and in controlling its potential adverse effects.



12 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2017. *Population and Development Report Issue No. 8: Prospects of Ageing with Dignity in the Arab Region*. Beirut, Lebanon: ESCWA.

1.2. From Cairo's ICPD Programme of Action to the Cairo Declaration

In September 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo. The landmark event was attended by over 11,000 participants representing United Nations bodies, governments, and intergovernmental and civil society organisations, making it the largest intergovernmental conference on population and development held thus far.¹³ The ICPD Programme of Action, with its focus on human rights and on individual choice and autonomy over demographic goals alone, marked a major turning point, introducing a new paradigm to global thinking on population and development. The ICPD Programme of Action was adopted by 179 governments, representing a remarkable international consensus. It offered a broad and comprehensive approach to address the multi-dimensionality and interdependency of population and development issues, covering as many as 44 dimensions, grouped within 14 chapters.¹⁴ It had, therefore, the potential to inspire an integrative agenda; however, in practice this has not been realized. Instead, implementation has been mainly selective, relying on a sectoral approach.¹⁵

The Programme of Action specifically required governments to build necessary databases and

13 United Nations Population Fund. 2004. *Programme of Action Adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September, 1994*. New York: UNFPA, E/25,000/2004.

14 Ibid.

15 United Nations. 2014. *Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014: Report of the Secretary-General*. New York: United Nations, A/69/62.

monitoring mechanisms to facilitate periodic assessment of implementation. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), working closely with other United Nations agencies and bodies, has taken the lead in carrying out five-year periodic reviews of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The reviews have been based on data generated by Member States, including standardized global surveys of governments, global thematic meetings, and multi-stakeholder consultations. United Nations Regional Commissions have conducted regional reviews that fed into the global five-year reviews. The reviews of the Arab region have been led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Another key partner, the League of Arab States (LAS) has helped carry out regional reviews. Prior to the 2013 global survey, LAS's Directorate of Population Studies, in collaboration with UNFPA and ESCWA, conducted reviews in 2005 and in 2009, via national surveys. Building on the 2009 regional review, the Arab States adopted the Doha Declaration,¹⁶ which recognized the demographic window of opportunity and began expanding youth opportunities, building institutions, enhancing networking and developing information systems.

Over the years, periodic assessments like those mentioned have shown steady progress in acceptance of the ICPD's vision and in implementing its recommendations. The reviews also continued to document challenges, including the lack of financial resources earmarked for ICPD-related activities, persistent sociocultural constraints

and inequalities, fragmented implementation and weak governance systems.¹⁷

In response to General Assembly Resolution 65/234 of December 2010, and in recognition of the passage of 20 years since the ICPD, a global operational review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action was carried out. The evidence examined by the global review reconfirmed the validity of the ICPD's emphasis "that increasing social, economic and political equality, including a comprehensive definition of sexual and reproductive health and rights, that reinforced women and girls' human rights, was and remains the basis for individual well-being, lower population growth, sustained economic growth, and sustainable development." The review also documented the many accomplishments in the two decades since the 1994 ICPD, especially in the reduction of extreme poverty and progress in gender parity.¹⁸ The review noted, however, that progress has been fragmented and unequal. In addition, the emergence of new challenges, realities and opportunities necessitated the adoption of a new framework that emphasises a systematic, integrated and comprehensive approach to population and development.¹⁹

16 UNFPA, LAS, ESCWA and Permanent Population Committee. 2009. Doha Declaration. Arab Conference on Population and Development: Facts and Perspectives, Doha, Qatar, 18-20 May.

17 United Nations. 1999. Twenty-first special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations A/54/442; UNFPA. 2005. *ICPD at 10 – The World Reaffirms Cairo: Official Outcomes of the ICPD at 10 Review*. New York: UNFPA; UNFPA. 2010. *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Results and Recommendations from ICPD-at-15 Process*. New York: UNFPA.

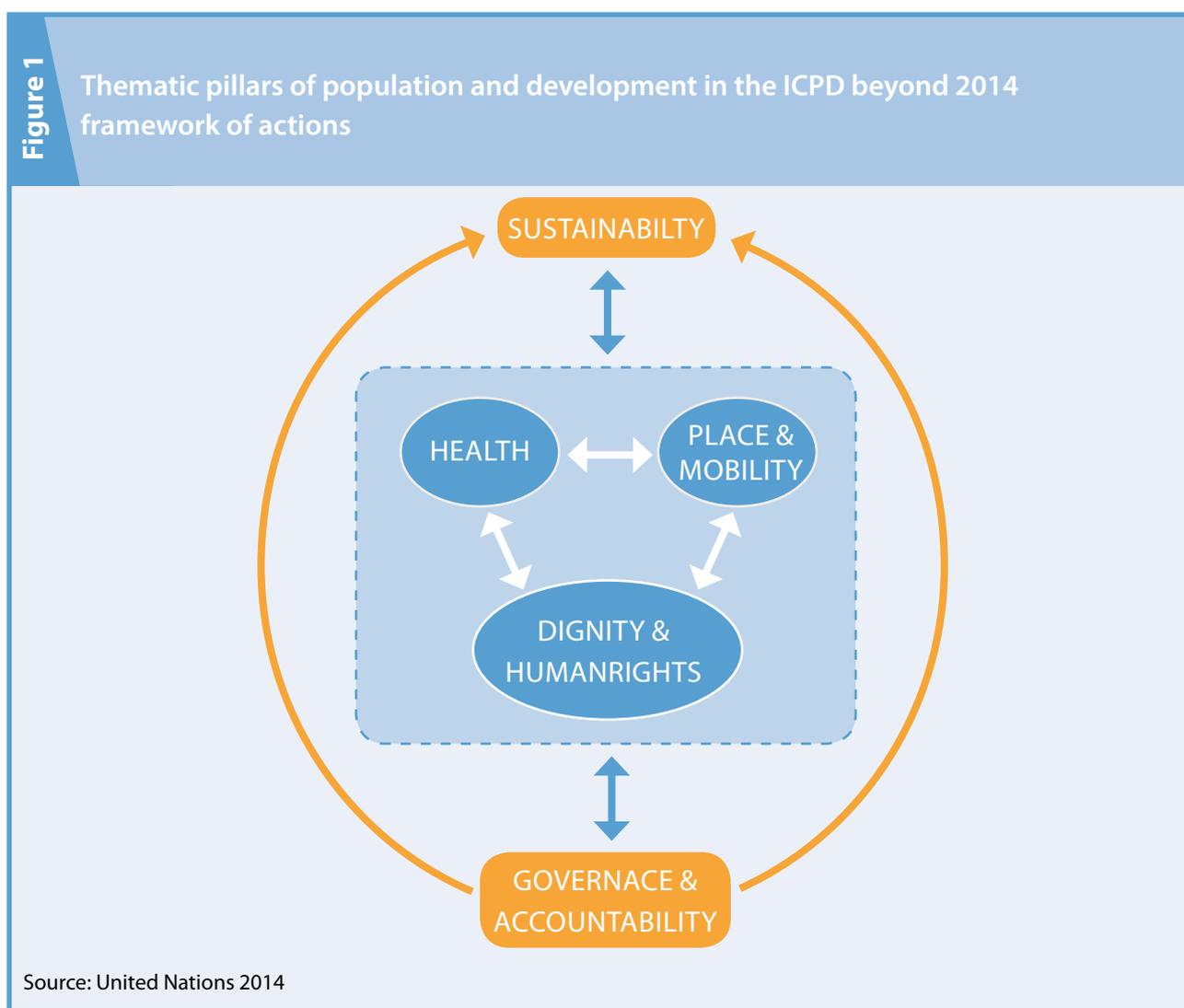
18 United Nations (2014), op. cit. footnote 15.

19 For example, reduced global fertility has created a demographic dividend in some countries while increasing the burden of an ageing population in others; the information revolution has created a window of opportunity, increasing the aspirations of young people, but at the same time diffusing patterns of unsustainable consumption; in addition, increasing within-country and between-country inequalities have resulted in higher levels of internal mobility and international migration.

The main outcome of the operational review was the development of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions.

Building on the paradigm underlying the ICPD Programme of Action, the new framework acknowledges that human aspirations for dignity and human rights, including good health, security of place and mobility, are the ultimate motivation for development. Although the framework recognizes the interlinkage and reciprocity of those aspirations, it treats them as distinct thematic pillars holding together the

numerous principles, objectives and actions within the chapters of the ICPD Programme of Action. Building on the ICPD's vision, the framework adds two further thematic dimensions: governance and accountability of governments as duty bearers and vital actors; and sustainability, which acquires special standing given the current environmental crisis and the recognized unsustainability of the current patterns of production, consumption and emissions.²⁰ The framework is illustrated in Figure 1.



20 United Nations (2014), op. cit. footnote 15 : Page 4, Figure 1.

The ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions was built on a series of regional review conferences on population and development. The Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States was held in Cairo from 24 to 26 June 2013, resulting in the Cairo Declaration, which provided region-specific guidance on the implementation of ICPD Beyond 2014 in the region. The regional agenda was structured around four main pillars:²¹ dignity and equity (covering women, migrants and displaced persons, young people, older persons, and people with disabilities), health, place and environmental sustainability (covering internal migration, international migration and environmental sustainability), and governance (including international cooperation and partnership). Under these four pillars, representatives of Member States of the League of Arab States assembled in Cairo agreed to a set of 129 action recommendations.²² They are listed in Appendix A.

The period after the 2013 Cairo Declaration witnessed another watershed moment for the global development agenda, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2015 United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development garnered remarkable global endorsement, attended as it was by a large number of heads of states and governments and high-level leaders from

business and civil society. The 2030 Agenda, essentially a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships was the successful outcome of an open and inclusive process to reach consensus on the way forward for development in the post-2015 era. Building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comprising 169 targets, were adopted. Intended as a comprehensive and transformative vision, they are a pledge that no one will be left behind.²³ The SDGs and the 2030 Agenda together provide an opportunity to enhance the realisation of the ICPD's vision by anchoring its aims within a broader system using strong evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Complementing this synergy, the human focus of the ICPD, and the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions, can provide a much-needed human face for the 2030 Agenda by recognising that populations are both instruments and targets of development.²⁴



21 The final framework adopted by the global review has five pillars (see Figure 1). At the time of the Cairo Conference in 2013, however, only four pillars were recognized, as sustainability was embedded under place and mobility rather than treated as a separate pillar.

22 LAS, UNFPA, ESCWA and UNECA. 2014. *ICPD Beyond 2014 Arab states Report: Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World - Main Findings and Future Perspectives*. Cairo: United Nations Population Fund Arab states regional office.

23 United Nations. 2015. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, General Assembly Seventieth Session Agenda Items 15 and 16: Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. United Nations A/RES/70.1.

24 United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs. 2015. *Population 2030: Demographic Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development Planning*. New York, USA: United Nations ST/ESA/SER.A/389.

1.3. The Five-year review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration

In preparation for the five-year review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, the League of Arab States sent survey forms to Member States' national population councils in November 2016 requesting information on implementation efforts.²⁵ Member States collected the required data during 2017 and returned the completed questionnaires during the first quarter of 2018. This review is based mainly on those survey responses.²⁶ It should be noted that the survey investigates implementation efforts rather than achievement indicators. This is in part a reflection of the Cairo Declaration itself, which includes a set of action recommendations but does not set specific goals to be achieved through those actions.

Thirteen governments responded to the survey: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. By the time this report was drafted, six of these countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia) had shared voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Cairo Declaration and of the ICPD Beyond 2014. While Yemen did not respond to the survey questionnaire, it did share a voluntary report combining progress on the ICPD with progress

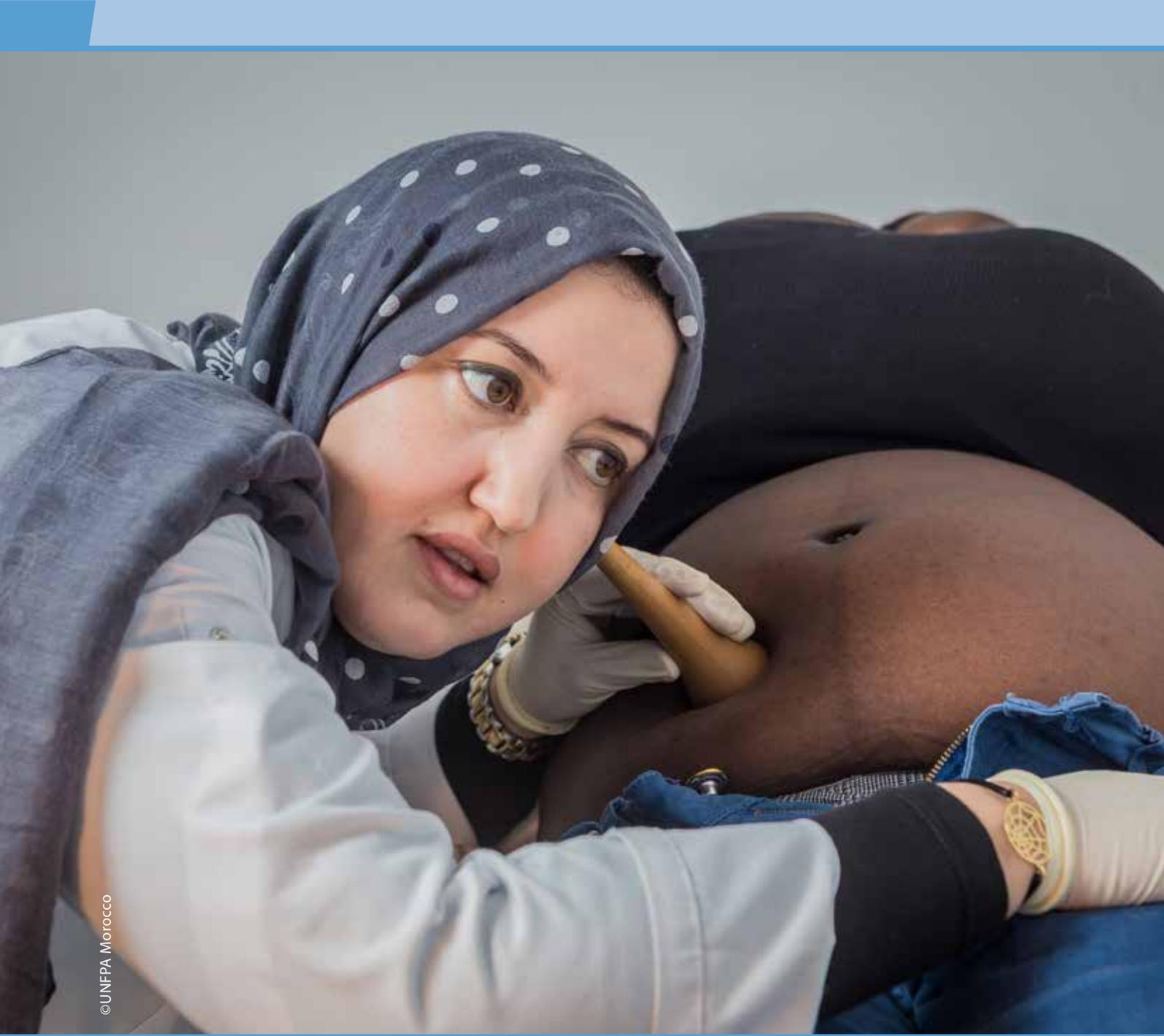
on the SDGs.²⁷ In addition, the 2018 Regional Conference on Population and Development in Beirut featured presentations of voluntary reports from Libya, Mauritania and Syria, plus presentations from seven countries that had already responded to the survey.



²⁵ The survey design partly reflects the four priority issues identified by the national population councils at their fifteenth meeting in 2014. These priority issues are: sexual and reproductive health; women's empowerment and gender equality; youth empowerment; and international migration.

²⁶ Additional information from voluntary national reports and presentations to the 2018 Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development has been used to complete the review.

²⁷ Due to the outbreak of armed conflict in Yemen, the information could not be updated after 2013. As a result, the experience of Yemen is excluded from this review.



2 Methodology

This review synthesizes the responses provided by 13 countries to the follow-up survey. The survey is arranged around six topics. They do not strictly correspond to the five dimensions of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions (presented in Figure 1), which guided the topical classification of the items in the 2013 Cairo Declaration. The analysis of responses to the follow-up survey encompassed the following steps:

- 1) Situating the Cairo Declaration within the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions and establishing the correlation between the national survey and the Cairo Declaration helps set up the review process by identifying the main population and development issues prioritized by the Cairo Declaration, thereby guiding the design of the analytical framework;
- 2) Designing the analytical framework;
- 3) Performing data analysis;
- 4) Synthesizing the findings.

These steps are discussed in more detail in the following sections. At the end of this chapter, Figure 2 depicts the four steps of the methodology and shows how they are connected.



2.1. Situating the Cairo Declaration and the follow-up survey

The 1994 ICPD Programme of Action covered 13 aspects of population and development.²⁸ As mentioned above, the Framework of Actions of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process simplified the original ICPD categorization by proposing five interlinked pillars to comprise the ICPD vision: (1) dignity and rights; (2) health; (3) place and mobility; (4) sustainability; and (5) governance and accountability.²⁹ The 2013 Cairo Declaration adopted the same framework, and its recommendations are categorized more or less under the same five pillars (sustainability is incorporated within the place and mobility dimension --see Appendix A).³⁰

²⁸ These are: (1) the interrelationship between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development; (2) gender equality, equity and empowerment of women; (3) the family, its roles, rights, composition and structure; (4) population growth and structure; (5) reproductive rights and reproductive health; (6) health, morbidity and mortality; (7) population distribution, urbanization and internal migration; (8) international migration; (9) population, development and education; (10) technology, research and development; (11) national action; (12) international cooperation; and (13) partnership with the non-governmental sector. United Nations Population Fund (2004), op. cit. footnote 13.

²⁹ United Nations (2014), op. cit. footnote 15

³⁰ There are a few minor differences in the terminology; the first pillar in the Cairo Declaration is named 'Dignity and Equality' instead of 'Dignity and Human Rights' and the final pillar in the Cairo Declaration is 'Governance', not 'Governance and Accountability'. LAS, UNFPA, ESCWA and UNECA. 2013. *Cairo Declaration – Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World: Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states (ICPD Beyond 2014)*, 24 - 26 June 2013. Cairo: United Nations Population Fund Arab states regional office

While the dimensions of the Cairo Declaration are spelled out in detail within the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Action, the number of action recommendations included (129) is too large to be examined individually. It is therefore necessary to review the implementation of these recommendations collectively within each of the five pillars of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions, with limited focus on individual recommendations.

The follow-up survey groups relevant implementation efforts into six categories: (1) dignity and equality (population programmes and poverty alleviation); (2) women and gender issues; (3) displaced persons, migrants, and forced displacement; (4) young people; (5) sexual and reproductive rights and health; and, (6) international migration and development. These groupings differ somewhat from those adopted in the Cairo Declaration, reflecting the main gaps and priority issues identified in the 2014 review and beyond. However, there is clear correlation between the specific items of the national survey and the action recommendations of the Cairo Declaration. More importantly, how the survey categories fit within the five pillars of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions becomes readily apparent as each response is allocated a place under one of the pillars.

It should be noted, however, that some aspects of the Cairo Declaration were not covered by the national survey. For example, the survey did not address implementation of the Cairo Declaration recommendations as they pertained to elderly people, persons with disabilities³¹ and internal migration. Also, some

issues covered by the Cairo Declaration were not explicitly included in the survey. In order to complete the review, additional information from voluntary national reports was used.³²

2.2. Designing the analytical framework

In order to carry out the regional review, the detailed survey responses provided by the governments of the Arab states had to be converted into quantitatively manageable measures such as counts. A schema for combining responses across countries was required.

The adopted schema starts with the recommendations of the Cairo Declaration, under individual categories. The main dimensions covered by the recommendations are specified, allowing for the limitations imposed by the survey questions. These dimensions are then considered as implementation categories covering such types of implementation as ratification of international treaties, strategies, general policies and specific actions.

For example, under the heading of women, the 2013 Cairo Declaration lists 13 recommendations (see Appendix A). The first two recommendations relate to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The next four recommendations speak generally to other indications of commitment to fighting gender-based discrimination and to mainstreaming gender equality and women's

³¹ Information relevant to persons with disabilities is not completely absent from the responses to the national survey. Persons with disabilities, as a vulnerable group, were explicitly covered by other Cairo Declaration recommendations, and hence by some items in the national survey grouped under other population and development issues, such as dignity and equality, and reproductive health and rights.

³² These include presentations to the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Five Years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration, Beirut, 30 October to 1 November, 2018, op. cit. in footnote 1.

empowerment. Three more recommendations address the challenge of child marriage. The tenth recommendation specifies the need to involve men. The final three recommendations all deal with gender-based violence. Therefore, five dimensions are covered by this set of recommendations: commitment to CEDAW; other indicators of commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment; fighting early marriage; involving men; and, addressing gender-based violence. Corresponding to these five dimensions, the responses to the follow-up national survey can be classified according to the following information: (1) whether or not CEDAW was ratified, whether reservations to CEDAW were lifted, whether CEDAW's provisions were translated into national laws; (2) establishment of new institutions addressing gender equality and women's empowerment, drafting and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes to advance gender equality, empowerment of women economically, and enhancing of women's political participation; (3) whether there are policies and actions to fight child marriage; (4) whether men are involved in gender equality efforts; and (5) whether there are strategies, policies or programmes to address gender-based violence.

Similarly, for other pillars, dimensions and implementation categories were identified by examining the specific recommendations in the Cairo Declaration and the corresponding questions in the survey. Using this schema, each response is classified under one of the identified broader implementation categories.

It should be emphasized that each of the five pillars of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework

of Actions is a cross-cutting underlying principle of the population and development agenda that must be manifested in all, not just some, of the recommended actions. For example, any and every recommendation should be implemented with due attention to human dignity and rights -- that is, with no discrimination, with no one left out and with special care in addressing vulnerabilities and risks. Gender equality is also a strong cross-cutting principle. All recommendations should therefore be consistent with the rest of the five pillars and need to be implemented in keeping with the special concerns of those pillars. Although the Cairo Declaration recommendations listed under a specific pillar are considered the most relevant to that pillar, other recommendations listed under a different heading could be also relevant.

Equally important to note is that many of the recommendations in the 2013 Cairo Declaration tend to be generic and do not clearly specify the actions recommended. This can make it hard to determine which actions constitute acts of implementation. So, in several instances, results are influenced by interpretations adopted when designing the follow-up survey form and/or in the survey responses provided by the responding countries.

For a government to be credited as implementing the Cairo Declaration, the cited actions have to have been taken after 2013. Strict adherence to this rule, however, could result in misleading conclusions. At the time of the 2013 Regional Conference of Population and Development, different countries were at different stages of implementing the ICPD

Programme of Action.³³ A country, for example, might have gone beyond the implementation of some Cairo Declaration recommendations well before 2013 as a result of its commitment to the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action. For this reason, it may be advisable to avoid being strictly bound by the 2013 timing threshold. Otherwise a thorough review of what was accomplished prior to 2013 and what has been accomplished since would be needed and that, unfortunately, is not feasible given the available responses. While the follow-up survey explicitly asks about the timing of specific actions and frequently indicates that questions relate to actions taken since 2013, responses were not sufficiently consistent to ensure that such a threshold was attained or if indeed respondents had adhered to it. This should be kept in mind when reading the following results, which serve both as progress report and baseline situation analysis.

An important limitation of the adopted framework is a product of the unweighted counting procedure. When counting across countries, all actions are treated equally, even when clearly they are not. Two reasons explain why this problem could not be avoided. Firstly, because the number of responding countries is small, breaking down implementation categories would effectively transform the analysis into a collection of case studies. Secondly, in several cases, the details provided on the implementation activities were insufficient to gauge their scope or

effectiveness, which precluded any attempt at weighting the responses.

The details and quality of the responses differ both between countries and between survey sections within the same country. Issues with completed survey forms include missing responses, i.e. where a respondent did not answer the full survey or complete all sections, or did not complete all questions within sections. In addition, there are several examples of partial or incomplete responses. In several places, requested information was not provided, mostly with regard to date of implementation. Responses in some cases also fail to mention important implementation actions, especially when a specific sector was asked to provide all the responses on an essentially multi-sectoral issue. The diversity of response sources differs between countries as well as across development pillars within the same country. The responses provided by Somalia were especially limited, and therefore not included in the counting scheme adopted to provide summary statistics for implementation efforts. References to these responses, however, are included in the comments of the review analysis.

In order to deal with these limitations, individual country cases are presented, to help provide examples of the opportunities and the challenges faced in the implementation of the Cairo Declaration. In addition, voluntary national reports are used to provide further information to complete the picture of the status of implementation through further notes and observations. The quantitative analysis, however, is exclusively based on the survey responses.

33 United Nations Population Fund Arab States Regional Office (2010), *op. cit.* footnote 9; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia. 2014. Arab States Report about the Findings of the Global Survey for the ICPD Beyond 2014. Beirut, ESCWA (in Arabic, unpublished); LAS, UNFPA, ESCWA and UNECA (2014), *op. cit.* footnote 22.

2.3. Data analysis

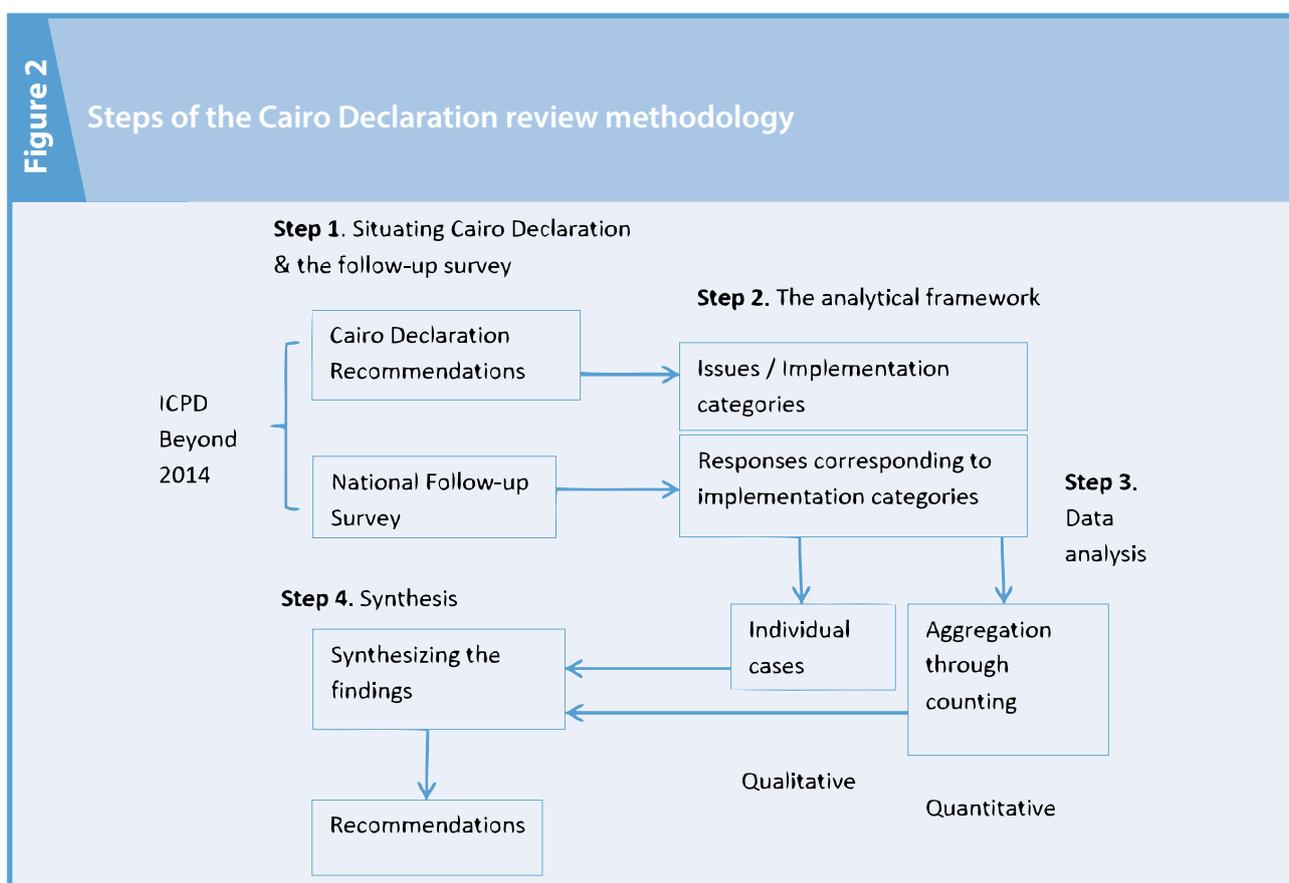
Adopting the proposed analytical framework, the responses to each national follow-up survey were converted into a set of binary indicator variables (1 if yes, 0 if no) for each implementation category under each issue. The detailed information provided in the responses is not lost, however. Under each category, notes are added to provide more information on implementation activities and their timing. The indicator variables created are then summed across countries to provide summary statistics for regional implementation within each population and development issue. Qualitative analysis of the detailed information from the added notes is used to provide context and depth to the summary statistics. Boxes documenting good practices of implementation in particular

countries make use of these detailed answers. It should be noted that the details provided in the highlighted models are based on the governmental responses and do not reflect an independent evaluation by objective reviewers.

2.4. Synthesizing the findings

The synthesis of the findings includes identifying commonalities and differences, highlighting achievements and gaps, and discussing opportunities and challenges. This synthesis, combined with additional information from voluntary national reports, forms the basis for a set of recommendations, which are introduced in the final chapter of this report.

Figure 2 summarizes the four steps of the methodology and shows their interlinkage.





3 Results: review of the implementation of the Cairo Declaration

The results of the analysis of the governmental responses, using the analytical framework described above, are presented here under five headings that correspond to the five pillars of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions.³⁴ Under each heading, or subheading, the main categories of actions implicit in the set of the most relevant Cairo Declaration recommendations are first identified, followed by a description of the status of implementation as inferred from the responses to the follow-up survey. In addition to the summary statistics of the status of implementation in the full group of responding countries (Somalia excepted since provided details were insufficient for inclusion in the quantitative analysis), selected individual responses are highlighted in boxes. These boxes mostly describe unique or noteworthy practices. Some are examples reflecting practices occurring in several countries in the region and not specific to the countries highlighted in the boxes.

3.1. Dignity and human rights

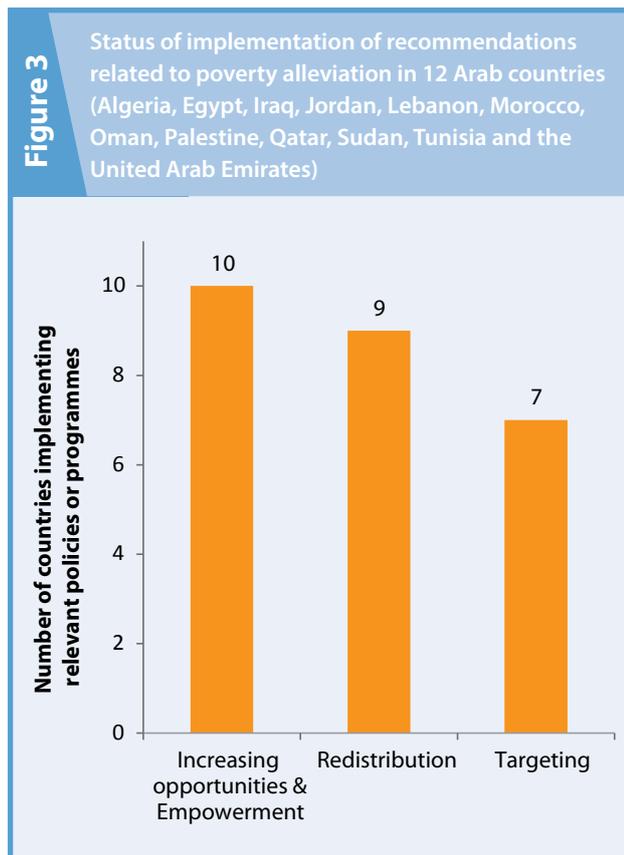
Under the Cairo Declaration, this pillar is termed 'Dignity and Equality'. The first set of action recommendations in the Cairo Declaration addresses poverty alleviation. According to these recommendations, countries are encouraged to work on three parallel fronts. First, they need to invest in increasing available

opportunities ensuring full utilization of human capital to advance socioeconomic development. Second, they should aim at correcting imbalances in opportunity and resource distribution. Third, special categories of vulnerable groups, mainly women and female-headed households, are to be targeted with special safety nets.

The follow-up survey asked explicitly about these three groups of recommended actions. Figure 3 shows how responsive the responding countries are to these three sets of recommendations. Ten out of the 12 countries have clear policies as well as specific programmes for poverty alleviation and economic empowerment, through investing in income-generating projects and enhancing employment opportunities. Providing no details, Somalia also indicated the existence of poverty alleviation programmes, drawing attention to income generation and employment strategies. Although some of the programmes in the responding countries began well before 2013, several are post-2013 initiatives. Algeria, Jordan and Morocco follow strategies providing integrated income-generating programmes. While some Egyptian poverty alleviation programmes are among the oldest in the region, new programmes with clearer visions are being implemented also. Tunisia is starting to address social protection through a new social contract built on the 2014 Constitution (see Box 1). This interesting example acknowledges that poverty alleviation programmes in Tunisia before the 2011 revolution had not adopted an explicit human

³⁴ The second pillar is named 'Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights' here, instead of 'Health', to better reflect the nature of the Cairo Declaration's recommendations.

rights-based approach, and so had failed to promote equality. Also worth noting is that Palestine, in its voluntary report to the Regional Conference on Population and Development, stressed a shift in social support away from providing emergency-based charity towards development and economic empowerment.



Nine of the responding countries also have programmes to correct geographical imbalances in investment and opportunities ensuring full utilization of human capital to advance socioeconomic development. An example from Egypt on addressing geographical imbalances is presented in Box 2. Fewer countries target specific groups by providing vulnerable families and individuals with safety nets as part of their poverty alleviation programmes. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Tunisia target female-headed households and/or unmarried women, while people with disabilities are also targeted in Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Oman.

Box 1 TUNISIA

Reforming social protection with a focus on accountability

In spite of Tunisia's long history of focusing on socio-economic development, the 2011 revolution has illustrated the limitations of these policies and highlighted previously unrecognized pockets of poverty in the country. Therefore, a new social contract upholding human rights, equality and accountability was enshrined in the 2014 Constitution and translated into structural reforms in the 2016-2020 development plan. The reformed social protection policy has three layers that cover the different needs of the Tunisian population. The most basic layer ensures that everyone has a right to a minimum level of income and to health care services. In particular, that minimum is guaranteed to elderly people, people with disabilities and those incapable of work. In addition, there is a mandate to provide enough resources for children's education, nutrition and health care.

A focus on accountability is what sets this reform apart from a typical social protection policy. It goes beyond general guidelines to mandate feasibility studies and developing input/output matrices for needed reforms. It also adopts a community-based approach to poverty alleviation that entails decentralization in policy development, implementation and evaluation. Other important features of the new policy approach include unifying all social protection laws under a single code and adopting objective multi-dimensional inclusion criteria to ensure fair social protection coverage.

Box 2 **EGYPT****Mapping and correcting for geographical imbalances**

The Egyptian government produces periodic statistical reports on different demographic and socio-economic indicators at the district level. These indicators are used to identify priority areas for intervention. The Poverty Map tool, developed in Egypt to identify the poorest districts and villages, is one such approach for guiding public policy and resource allocation in a way that corrects for existing geographical imbalances.

A. Women

The recommendations related to women's empowerment and gender equality within the Cairo Declaration can be grouped under four headings: (1) mainstreaming gender equality through legislative actions, especially by embracing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with no lingering reservations; (2) promoting gender equality by building a supportive environment, encouraging community participation, involving men and empowering women; (3) controlling early and forced marriage and responding to the needs of survivors of such marriages; and (4) addressing gender-based violence (GBV). The survey of Arab states mostly covered these four dimensions, and all 12 countries, except the United Arab Emirates, responded to this part of the survey. Sudan provided responses to the first part of this section only.

As shown in Figure 4, 10 countries among the 11 that responded to this section have ratified

CEDAW (Sudan and Somalia are the only Arab countries yet to ratify it).³⁵ Nine of those 10 countries have withdrawn some of their original reservations about the Convention; however, Tunisia is the only country to have lifted all its initial reservations. The 10 responding countries that have ratified CEDAW have taken some legislative measures to adhere to it. Mostly, these measures have dealt with family and personal status codes, laws that allow parents to pass their nationality on to children, and penal codes, in a concerted attempt to make these laws less discriminatory. Another important question is whether the national legal system permits citizens to invoke the Convention in courts, as it should. It is also of interest to know how often this is done and where it is permitted. These practices are neither included in the Cairo Declaration recommendations nor in the national follow-up survey.

In addition to CEDAW, there are also a number of important United Nations Security Council resolutions that call for the protection of women and girls from violence in situations of armed conflict, and for the participation of women and girls and the adoption of a gender perspective in prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in peacebuilding.³⁶ Six of the 11 responding countries (Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Sudan) have formulated strategies or started to implement

³⁵ United Nations Treaty Collections, Status of Treaties, Chapter IV: Human Rights, 8. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en

³⁶ 36 Texts of the four resolutions can be found at the following link to all United Nations Security Council resolutions: <https://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml>. Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000; Resolutions 1820 in 2008; Resolution 1888 in 2008; and Resolution 1960 in 2010.

programmes to incorporate Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1960. The Syrian government, as noted in its voluntary report presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development, is contemplating a national reading of Resolution 1325, as a step towards developing a national executive plan. All these countries are either close to or within areas of violent conflict and have large numbers of refugees or displaced people.

Figure 5 summarizes the status of implementation of other recommendations related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Almost all Arab countries have designated national institutions for women and gender issues (whether council, commission or ministry). Most of these bodies predate the Cairo Declaration. However, since 2013, four of the 10 responding countries have established new institutions dedicated to gender issues. These include a state ministry for women's affairs in Lebanon, a cabinet unit in Iraq, a consultative council and a number of gender observatories in Morocco and ministerial units in Tunisia. All responding countries have formulated new, or reviewed existing, strategies and policies on gender equality. Although there is high inter-country variability in the number and breadth of these strategies and policies, it is evident that women's empowerment and gender equality is a main priority issue for this set of responding countries. Two interesting examples are given in Boxes 3 and 4, documenting the pathway to gender mainstreaming in Algeria and tackling women's empowerment in Jordan. The majority of questions in this part of the survey went unanswered by Sudan, but the answers that were given documented the existence of a national policy for women's empowerment, as well as a national strategy for family development.

The prioritization of women's empowerment and gender issues is also evident in the high number of countries reporting on their implementation of specific recommendations in the 2013 Cairo Declaration. Almost all the responding countries were able to provide examples of such implementation. A number of countries, including Morocco and Oman (as highlighted in the voluntary reports which they presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development) have reviewed several pieces of legislation and introduced others, with the aim of protecting women and enhancing their enjoyment of their human rights. Syria, with support from UNFPA, has established a Domestic Violence Observatory, as noted in its voluntary report presented to the Regional Conference.



As shown in Figure 5, nine of the responding countries are implementing policies or programmes to promote women's economic participation (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia); 10 countries have legislation, policies or programmes to enhance the political participation of women, including installing,

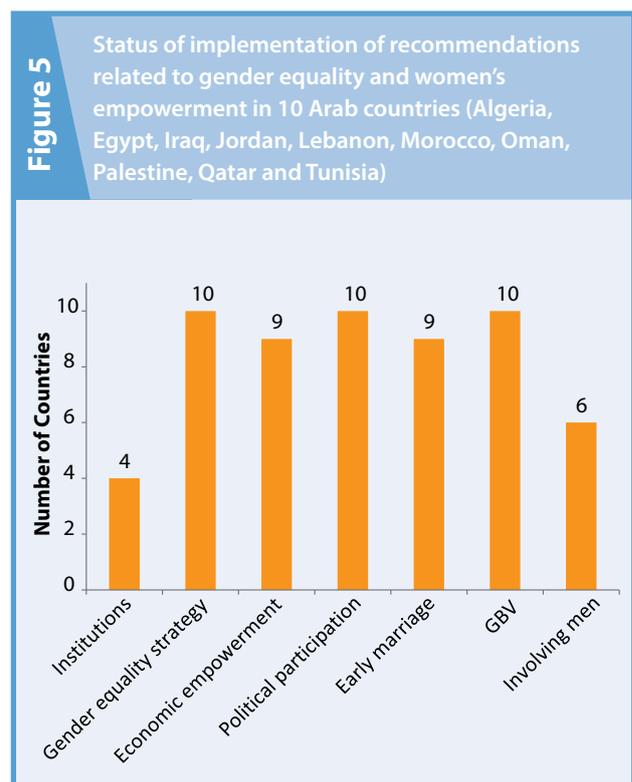
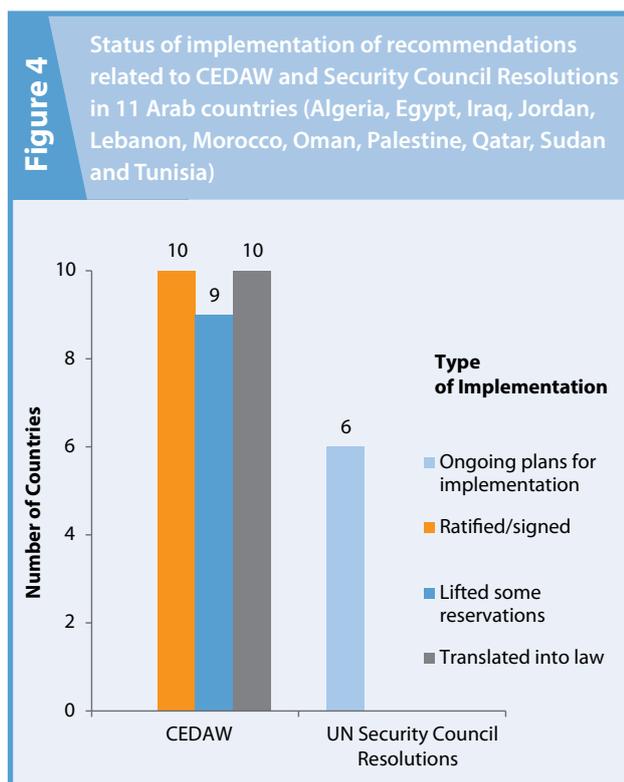
or proposing to install, quota systems for elected and appointed assemblies (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia); nine countries have programmes against early and forced marriages (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine and Qatar); and 10 countries have programmes addressing gender-based violence (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia). However, only six countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine and Tunisia) have gender equality programmes designed to involve local communities and, most importantly, men.

In its responses to the follow-up questionnaire, Somalia has indicated its commitment to women empowerment and to fighting violence against women and FGM. Mauritania, in a voluntary report presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development, has shown evidence of its investment in the political and economic participation of women.

Box 3 ALGERIA

Mainstreaming gender equality starts with the Cabinet then is incorporated everywhere

Like most national charters, the Algerian Constitution stresses gender equality and the protection of women from all forms of discrimination. However, Algeria is noteworthy for the comprehensive approach adopted in recognizing this constitutional obligation. Starting in 2007, the Algerian cabinet has adopted a gender perspective in all policies as well as in national and local programmes. Mainstreaming gender equality is the mandate of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women Affairs. The 2007-2014 national strategy for women's integration was followed by the 2010-2014 national plan for women's empowerment. A number of laws have been passed that support affirmative action and quota systems to increase women's share of job and promotion opportunities, as well as their presence on elected councils. Underlying these efforts is a focus on providing quality data and on partnerships with the private sector and civil society.



Box 4

JORDAN

Increasing women's participation goes hand in hand with protecting women

Jordan's 2025 vision, 2016-2018 development work plan and 2013-2017 women's national strategy feature a number of policies on women's empowerment. Increasing women's economic and political participation is placed at the centre of a number of these policies. Legislation is effectively used to that end, through adopting a quota system in national and local representative assemblies and developing a labour code that embraces flexible working conditions. Simultaneously, the Jordanian government focuses on protecting women as they assume an increasingly active role in society. Protection is sought through several channels, including reforming the penal code to better address gender-based violence, and providing safe havens for survivors of domestic violence, as well as developing a national plan to implement the UN Security Council no 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security."

B. Migrants and displaced persons

In contrast to the detailed answers provided to questions related to women and gender equality, information from the follow-up survey on refugees and displaced people is rather sparse. Three countries (Oman, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates) completely bypassed the relevant section of the survey. Two more countries, Egypt and Palestine, responded to only a few questions in this section.

Morocco and Qatar did not report cases of displaced people or refugees within their borders in contrast to Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia,

which did. Egypt has reported dealing with displaced people from Sinai through ad hoc programmes implemented by the Ministry of Social Solidarity. No further information was provided by Egypt on the implementation of the relevant set of Cairo Declaration recommendations. Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia have detailed strategies and programmes to address the needs of refugees and displaced persons. Examples are given in Box 5 on displaced persons in Iraq and Box 6 on refugees in Lebanon. In a voluntary national report presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development, Jordan also documented the efforts extended to integrating Syrian refugees, including providing access to jobs.

Morocco has a national strategy on migration and asylum, which pays attention to the rights of refugees and displaced persons, especially in relation to access to social and health care services and protection from violence. Qatar, though it has no specific strategy for refugees, has programmes within the national context that are in line with the Cairo Declaration recommendations insofar as they fulfill and respect migrants' rights to education and health care. Qatar also implements programmes that support refugees and displaced persons in other countries (Iraq, Syria and Somalia).

Palestine, which represents a special case in terms of refugees, has dedicated institutional bodies for refugees and displaced persons. The government of Palestine, however, declined to respond to the specific questions related to this set of recommendations in the Cairo Declaration, noting that those recommended measures were applicable to refugee-receiving countries but irrelevant in the case of a country under occupation that is essentially a refugee-sending country.

Box 5 IRAQ**Displacement crisis managed through leadership and coordination**

Starting in June 2014, a year after the Cairo Declaration, Iraq experienced large flows of displaced people. The Ministry of Migration and Migrant Affairs, established in 2005, along with its local branches, assumed responsibility for dealing with the crisis through a national policy aimed at addressing the essential needs of the displaced population groups. Working with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, access to education and decent jobs was granted to residents in temporary camps. The Central Statistical Agency collected updated information about the displaced people through special surveys. Water and sanitation services were provided to secured temporary residential camps. Eventually, routes for safe return were provided.

Box 6 LEBANON**Responding to refugees with a focus on dignity and rights**

Since 2011, Lebanon has received a large number of Syrian refugees. The first step in the response was the establishment of institutions needed to address the crisis, through establishing an ad hoc cabinet committee for refugee affairs, in addition to a refugee portfolio within the cabinet. While developing a national policy for refugees, response programmes were being implemented. These included surveying emerging population movements and researching the conditions of refugees. Refugees' needs are met by providing free education and health services. In addition, the Lebanese government upholds and protects the dignity and human rights of the refugees through a commitment to unforced return and avoiding deportation.



© UNFPA Iraq

C. Young people

Young people are a priority age group throughout the Arab region, made all the more salient by the youth bulge that marks the region's demographic profile. This unprecedentedly large group of young people is facing historic challenges of political instability, threats of violence and extremism, high unemployment and rapid social change. The Cairo Declaration stresses the need to tap into the potential of young people as a powerful demographic dividend, to increase their opportunities and choices to fulfil their potential and to empower them as active participants in the development of their communities and society at large. The recommendations therefore aim at ensuring

the rights and participation of young people and enhancing their human capital to ensure that they have the capabilities to spur social and economic innovation.

Figure 6, which summarizes country responses to the follow-up survey, shows that all responding countries have developed national strategies for youth. An example from Oman is discussed in Box 7. National institutions dedicated to youth exist in most countries. It is not clear, however, whether any of those institutions were established after 2013. Ministries or national councils for youth typically also include the sports portfolio in their mandate.

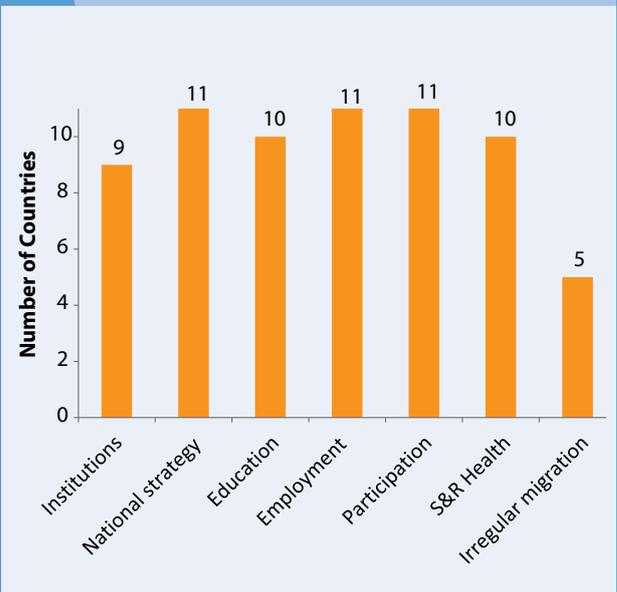
Programmes to improve education quality, to make education more relevant to the labour market (e.g. via school-to-work transition programmes) and to increase education accessibility are almost universal. All responding countries have policies and programmes aiming to ensure young people's access to decent jobs, to increase their skills to make them more employable and to encourage youth entrepreneurship. The United Arab Emirates, which provided only limited responses to this part of the survey and is not included in Figure 6, answered the questions related to job creation, skills and entrepreneurship positively.

The 11 responding countries also indicated that they are implementing several programmes to encourage young people's political and civic engagement. Programmes on reproductive and sexual health targeting young people are being implemented by almost all responding countries.

Only five of the responding countries (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia) are implementing programmes to discourage irregular migration among young people.

Figure 6

Status of implementation of recommendations related to young people in 11 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan and Tunisia)



Box 7 OMAN

National strategy for youth built on an ethos of participation

The Omani National Committee for Youth is developing a national strategy for youth. There are already a large number of programmes addressing the health, educational, employment and entrepreneurship needs of youth in Oman, but these programmes are guided by sectoral policies. In order to develop an integrated, multi-sectoral strategy, Oman acknowledges the necessity of a comprehensive needs assessment. Involving young people themselves in the process transforms them from passive beneficiaries into active participants. In addition, a series of localized investigative meetings are being carried out in six governorates to inform the development of the strategy. In both cases, participation is seen as the key to success.

D. Older persons

This topic was not included in the follow-up survey. Some insights, however, can be obtained from the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) by ESCWA in 2017, carried out mainly through the administration of a national survey.³⁷ Ten Arab countries have responded to the survey: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia. The analysis of the responses showed that all responding countries had established institutions dedicated to older persons, such as ministerial units or national commissions, and most of the countries had drafted national strategies to deal with ageing-related issues.

While there seems to be a push in several countries towards promoting early retirement in the public sector, older people are encouraged to remain economically active in the private sector. Although all reporting countries indicated that non-communicable diseases among older people are a major health issue, precise national statistics are still lacking. Initiatives for screening and early detection of chronic diseases are underway in a number of responding countries.

In Arab countries, care for the elderly is considered to occur mainly in the family setting, a concept embraced by the Cairo Declaration recommendations. Country responses to the MIPAA follow-up survey confirm this view. The report on the MIPAA review, however, noted the new challenges resulting from social and demographic changes, including the increasing pace of ageing concurrent with the

decline in birth and death rates, the decline in traditional multi-generational family settings and the increase in the number of displaced older persons and those in emergency situations. Morocco and Tunisia were noted for innovative approaches to accommodate those changes, such as mobile care units and surrogate families.

E. Persons with disabilities

All Arab countries except Somalia have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and most have ratified it.³⁸ Only three (Comoros, Libya and Palestine), however, ratified the Convention after 2013, and could therefore be said to have done so per the Cairo Declaration recommendation.

The follow-up national survey does not allocate a separate section to persons with disabilities. Some countries, however, have voluntarily mentioned them as a vulnerable group in other sections of the survey. Four countries (Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Oman) indicated that they explicitly target persons with disabilities via their poverty alleviation programmes. Since this information was not in response to a specific question, similar targeting may also exist in other countries.

A question explicitly pertinent to persons with disabilities included in the follow-up survey relates to their access to reproductive and sexual health care. Five countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Qatar) noted that national health systems and policies guarantee the access of people with disabilities to all health

37 اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغرب آسيا. 2017. *عملية المراجعة والتقييم الثالثة لخطة الشيخوخة في الدول الأعضاء في الإسكوا: عمل مدريد الدولية للشيخوخة*. بيروت: الأمم المتحدة.

38 United Nations Treaty Collections, Status of Treaties, Chapter IV: Human Rights, 15. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=en

care services, while two countries (Oman and the United Arab Emirates) mentioned that accessibility is incorporated into national policies targeting persons with disabilities.

The latest report on disability in the Arab region was published by ESCWA in 2018. The report highlights the shortage in data on disability in the region and stresses the need to integrate disability with other aspects of marginalization in efforts to achieve inclusive development, rather than treating disability in isolation.³⁹



3.2. Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is another priority issue in the population and development agenda in Arab countries. This is not only reflected in the long list of recommendations included in the Cairo Declaration (Appendix A), but also in the rather long section allotted to it in the follow-up

survey. Confirming the priority status of this issue, as shown in the first recommendation in the relevant Cairo Declaration section, all 12 responding countries provided detailed and mostly positive responses to this section. Since 2013, eight of the reporting countries have formulated new strategies or reviewed and updated existing strategies on reproductive health. Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Sudan have explicit reproductive health strategies and policies, while relevant strategies and policies in Oman come under birth spacing and women's health. In the four remaining countries (Lebanon, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates) where no reproductive health strategy has been developed, relevant programmes are situated within overall health care policies and strategies. Although the majority of these programmes were in place before 2013, the last five years have witnessed the addition of new programmes and the expansion of existing ones.

The set of Cairo Declaration action recommendations related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights is long and detailed. Some of these recommendations overlap with others that fall under other ICPD pillars, especially those regarding women and youth. The remaining recommendations can be grouped under three broad headings: (1) increasing accessibility to SRH services and information, and avoiding discrimination and exclusion based on age, sex, nationality or marital status; (2) improving the quality of SRH care services and making them more compliant with human rights requirements; (3) developing the needed human resources to achieve higher accessibility with better quality.

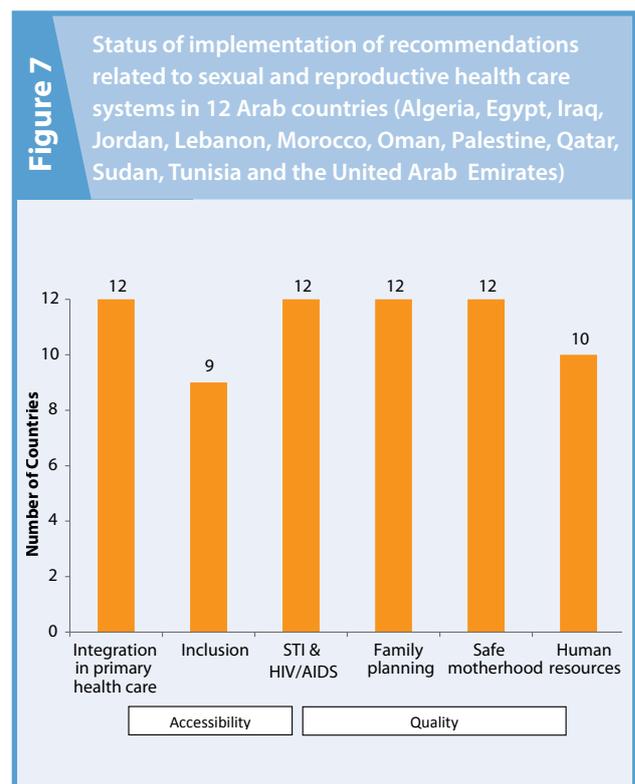
³⁹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2018. Disability in the Arab Region 2018. Beirut, Lebanon: ESCWA.

Figure 7 summarizes the main responses provided by the 12 Arab states on the implementation of SRH related recommendations. The first two columns relate to improving accessibility through integration within primary health care and through explicit inclusion policies. The following three columns indicate the availability of improved services in three SRH dimensions: sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; family planning; and, safe motherhood. The last column indicates the investment in better qualified and purposely planned human resources.

The responses summarized in Figure 7 confirm the priority status of sexual and reproductive health in the Arab countries. All responding countries have integrated at least some sexual and reproductive health services within primary health care. In addition, all countries have expanded and improved services related to maternal health, family planning, and prevention and treatment of sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Ten of the responding countries are planning for and investing in expanding and raising the skills of their medical human resources and achieving a better geographical distribution of qualified personnel (an example of the latter from Qatar is given in Box 8). Eight of the countries have programmes aiming at improving the access to sexual and reproductive health care to address the needs of more young people, men, persons with disabilities, migrants and displaced people, and/or unmarried individuals. Family planning services are more limited in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and are not well-integrated within primary health care, according to their responses to the survey.

Evidence of investment in sexual and reproductive health was documented in

Mauritania's voluntary report, presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development. This includes national programmes for birth spacing, reproductive health and prevention of HIV/AIDS. The allocation of resources to reproductive health and the reduction of delivery costs have also been noted.



Box 8 QATAR**Developing human resources in the health sector is essential for integrating reproductive health within primary health care**

The Ministry of Health in Qatar is investing in integrating reproductive health, especially pre- and post-maternity care, in the primary health care sector, while improving the quality of services and promoting breastfeeding. In recognition of the need to have a sufficient cadre of qualified personnel, a national strategy for human resources in the health sector was developed. Periodic assessment of human resource needs and continuous on-the-job training are integral parts of the human resources policy in the health sector. Training topics include reproductive rights, identifying cases of gender-based violence and fighting stigma.

Given such assertions of strong compliance with the recommendations, it may be more helpful to focus on some of the few places where governments respond in the negative. In Iraq, Palestine and Sudan, no programmes exist to promote men's access to sexual and reproductive health services and information. Survey responses in Jordan, Morocco and Sudan indicate there are no efforts to address discrimination based on marital status when it comes to accessing sexual and reproductive health services. An absence of human resource planning is noted in Lebanon, while a lack of public programmes for screening for and treating cervical cancer is noted in Oman. In Qatar, there is a lack of nutritional promotion programmes for pregnant women. In Algeria and the United Arab Emirates, it seems

there are no programmes providing sexual and reproductive health care services and information to youth and adolescents. In Egypt and Tunisia, survey responses note that the geographical distribution of youth-friendly reproductive health clinics is imbalanced and that the number of clinics has remained static since 2013.

3.3. Place and mobility**A. Internal migration and displacement**

The follow-up survey did not include a section dedicated to internal migration, residential distribution or urbanization. The few recommendations that could potentially be gauged by the survey responses dealt with service provision for displaced people because of an overlap with the section in the human rights pillar dealing with refugees and displaced people. However, as noted above, very little information was provided by Arab region governments in response to that set of questions.

As might be expected, Syria's voluntary report presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development stressed displacement as a high priority issue. Of particular concern is the challenge of guaranteeing the return of refugees and avoiding permanent negative impacts on the population structure. Another pressing challenge that was noted concerns the compounding of internal displacement and poverty. Attempts to deal with these challenges mainly rely on humanitarian assistance. However, a developmental approach is being

adopted gradually, with a special effort being made to empower female heads of households in rural areas.

B. International migration

International migration is the fourth priority issue in the Arab region, along with women, youth and reproductive health. The set of relevant recommendations included in the Cairo Declaration stands out in contrast to the rest of the recommendations because of their specificity, which makes monitoring them easier. Reflecting the prioritization of international migration in the population and development discourse in the region, the last section of the follow-up survey is dedicated to developmental issues connected to international migration. In addition to a set of common questions, specific questions are addressed to countries of origin or countries of destination.

Almost all Arab countries receive migrants, including transient migrants. This is even the case with those countries more likely to be on the sending end of migration flows. Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia responded to questions addressed to both sending and receiving countries. Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, while declaring that they receive migrants, did not provide responses to the survey questions addressed to receiving countries. Oman, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates did not respond at all to the international migration section of the survey, while Algeria provided only a few responses.

Figures 8 and 9 summarize the responses related to key actions taken in response to Cairo Declaration recommendations from

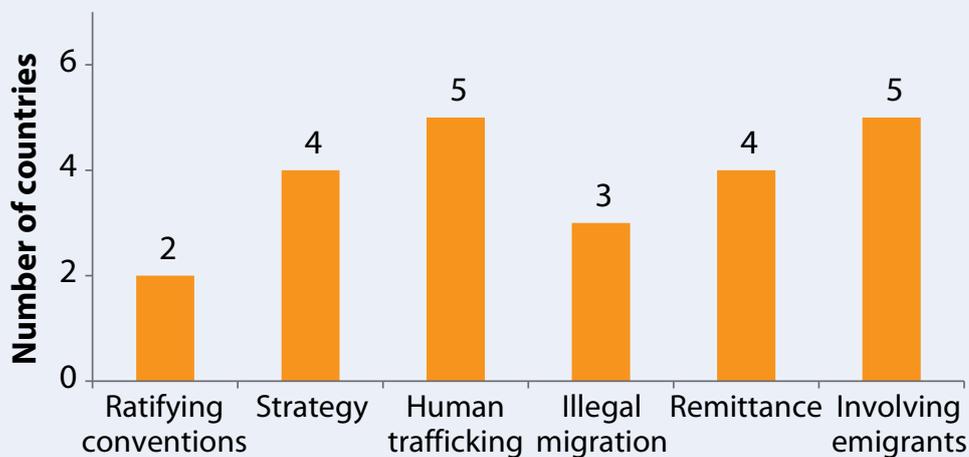
the point of view of countries of origin and of countries of destination, respectively. The countries represented in Figure 8 are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, while Figure 9 summarizes the answers of Iraq, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia.

Only two of the responding countries (Egypt and Morocco) have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and none have ratified the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189). The Iraqi government, as noted in the voluntary report it presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development, is currently deliberating ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This Convention is signed by Syria, as noted in its voluntary report to the Regional Conference.



Figure 8

Status of implementation of recommendations related to international migration in seven Arab countries sending migrants (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia)



Five countries (Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia) have developed national strategies related to international migration. Five reporting countries (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia) have policies and programmes fighting human trafficking. Only four countries (Egypt, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia) address irregular migration. Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia have policies related to remittances. Among the seven sending countries, five have policies to involve national emigrants. Two countries among the four receiving countries (Iraq and Morocco) have programmes to promote immigrants' access to services and address discrimination against immigrants. Box 9 documents a good example from Morocco of comprehensive migration policies.

It might be concluded from these responses that the responding Arab countries have yet to commit completely to following the detailed sets of recommendations agreed upon in the Cairo Declaration, and that the prioritization of the issue has not been translated into specific policy directions. However, the low response rate precludes reaching a definite conclusion about implementation efforts in the region.

It should also be noted that international migration governance, in contrast to domestic issues, requires bilateral, regional and global collaboration that is harder to achieve, especially under a potential conflict of interest between sending and receiving countries. In addition, international migration governance is a relatively new part of the global development agenda compared to other areas such as gender equality.

Figure 9

Status of implementation of recommendations related to international migration in four Arab countries receiving migrants (Iraq, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia)



3.4. Sustainability

Eleven of the reporting countries responded to the questions related to environmental sustainability, with only Oman bypassing that section. Somalia answered 'No' to the question on addressing interaction between population and sustainable development, provided a list of environmental issues to be a future focus, and skipped the other questions. Figure 10 summarizes the responses of the 11 countries. It seems that environmental sustainability is accorded clear importance in all the countries, probably driven forward by the 2016 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. All 11 countries have policies and programmes for the management of environmental resources and biodiversity. Policy and programmes promoting solid waste recycling are also universal. Boxes 10 and 11 show examples from the United Arab Emirates and Sudan.



Box 9 MOROCCO

A sending and receiving country where emigrants are perceived as national resources and immigrants' rights are protected

With a ministry dedicated to Moroccans abroad and migration affairs, and an approved national strategy on Moroccans abroad, the Moroccan government is working to capitalize on its role as a country of origin of international migration flows. International and bilateral cooperation is an integral part of the Moroccan migration policy. This includes partnership with the European Union, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization, in addition to partnerships with individual countries such as Germany, France, Belgium and Senegal. The strategy works on two parallel axes; while securing borders and fighting irregular migration, regular migrants are helped to remain connected with their country of origin. New and secure channels for remittances have been developed. Providing local investment opportunities and developing effective mechanisms to benefit from qualified emigrants also feature within the strategy.

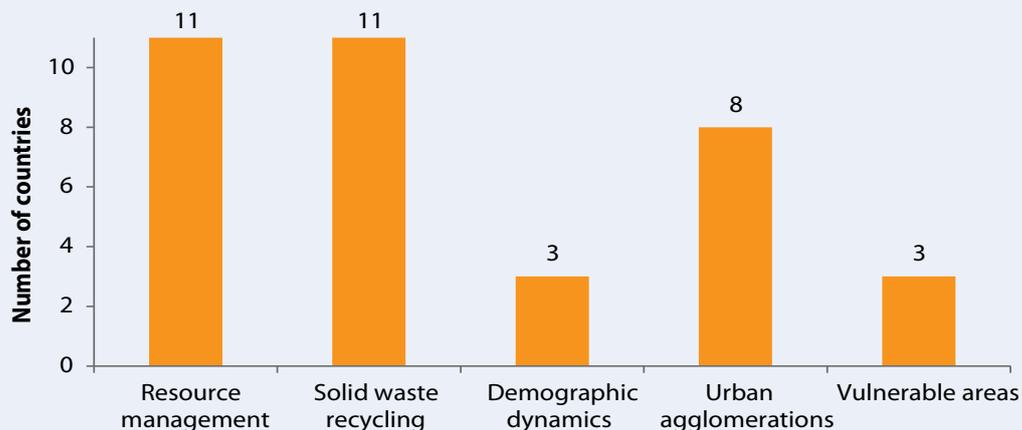
As a migrant-receiving country, Morocco has a national strategy for migration and asylum in which non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle. The strategy also calls for necessary legislation, institutions and programmes for the protection of women and children, upholding family unification, and integrating migrants and refugees.

All reporting countries except the United Arab Emirates answered positively when asked whether they have formulated policies to address the environmental implications of demographic dynamics. The specifics provided about those policies, however, do not indicate the presence of a demographic dimension, other than in Jordan and Lebanon, where policies address the environmental impact of the influx of Syrian refugees, and in Algeria, where a comprehensive plan for regional development is being implemented.

In some countries, the policies cited tend to address the environmental impact of special economic activities, mining, for example, in Sudan and chemical manufacturing (Iraq and Tunisia). Problems of large urban agglomerations, which are partly outcomes of demographic dynamics, are addressed in all the countries with the exception of Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Environmentally vulnerable areas seem to be the focus of dedicated policies and programmes in only three countries, Algeria, Iraq and Sudan.

Figure 10

Status of implementation of recommendations related to environment sustainability in 11 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates)



Box 10 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Investing in a green economy

Through its strategy on biodiversity, green development agenda and environmental upgrading programmes, the United Arab Emirates seeks to create a more sustainable economy. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment is coordinating with other Emirati authorities in implementing a set of green agenda initiatives and programmes. These include building waste recycling industries and developing environmental regulatory mechanisms to control the carbon footprint of old and new projects. Future directions will focus on switching to sustainable production and consumption patterns and the preservation of fresh water.

3.5. Governance and accountability

Governance and accountability, unlike the others, is manifested in the choices made by governments in implementing the recommendations of all five pillars in the ICPD Beyond 2014 agenda. For this reason, there is a strong overlap between the set of recommendations presented under the title 'Governance' in the Cairo Declaration and those that fall under other sections.

Box 11 SUDAN

Coping with climate change and vulnerable environmental systems

A large country with several economic challenges, Sudan is bracing for the new challenge of climate change. In 2015, a national programme for adaptation to this challenge was established. Among other measures, new, sustainable agricultural approaches are being promoted and supported. In 2016, Sudan adopted a national plan to address the problem of oil spills in the Red Sea that destroy fishery livelihoods. The Sudanese government is dealing also with the adverse environmental impact of mining. Additionally, the government is developing a strategic national plan for dealing with emergencies.

The follow-up survey asked governments about three aspects that fall under this pillar: data and research; partnership with civil society and the private sector; and international cooperation. Countries provided responses that fell under different sections. This meant that the counting

schema adopted so far in summarizing overall responses could not effectively apply in this instance. Instead, the answers are summarized in Table 1. Somalia did not respond to the relevant set of questions.

Iraq and Jordan stand out among the reporting countries in terms of the level of governance reflected in these three dimensions. Close behind are Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia. Other countries presented a problem given the absence of information provided in their responses. The issue of information dearth in Somalia is presented in Box 12, while the importance of international cooperation in the special case of Palestine is discussed in Box 13.

Investment in data and research about reproductive and sexual health appears as a common feature in the responding countries. Investment of this kind was highlighted in particular by the voluntary report Sudan presented to the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Even Libya, in the face of severe political and security challenges, has developed a strategy for investment in data and statistics, including, as noted in its voluntary report presented to the Regional Conference, carrying out surveys with support from UNFPA.

It is essential, nonetheless, to go beyond the simple yes or no answers presented in the table. Nine countries point to having data and research on young people, for instance. However, when asked what groups of young people they have included in surveys since 2013, the variability across this set of countries emerges. The responses are summarized in Figure 11. Persons with disabilities are the group most likely to be the subject of special surveys. Jordan sets the pace as the country that has devoted special surveys to the largest number of groups. In addition to studying people living with or at elevated risk of HIV/

AIDS, those dealing with substance use, and persons with disabilities, Jordan has carried out special surveys on refugees. At the other end of the spectrum, responses provided by Sudan showed no indication of surveys having been conducted on any of the special groups of youth. In the case of Egypt, responses indicated that the country solely surveyed used drug users. It should be noted, however,

that lack of surveys does not imply a lack of interest. Lebanon, for example, indicated having special interest in all the categories included in Figure 11, in addition to refugees and prisoners. Lebanon is excluded from the Figure because of its negative response to the question about carrying out surveys to study the needs of young people. The cause of the negative response requires further research.

Box 12 SOMALIA

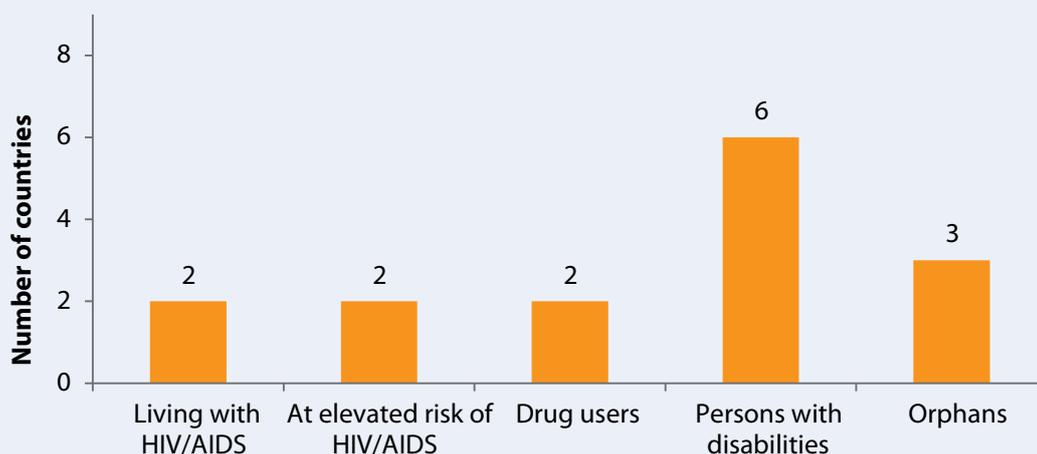
Information dearth does not curtail the commitment to progress assessment

The Federal Republic of Somalia stands as a special case among the 13 countries responding to the national follow-up survey because of the obstacles it faces due to an acute lack of information. The most recent census was carried out in 1974. Since then, only a few representative sample surveys have been implemented for special purposes. This data limitation is further complicated by weak national institutions, the result of a long history of political instability, during which time Somalia was without a central government up until 2012.

Unlike some other respondents that skipped entire sections, Somalia responded to all sections, albeit providing answers to a very limited number of questions in each section. Because the answers were limited, no details were provided with regards to policies or programmes, when cited. Despite the challenges associated with its inadequate information base, the government of Somalia showed commendable interest to respond to the follow-up survey. This reflects the country's keenness to assess the progress in implementing the recommendations of the Cairo Declaration and to compensate for the delay in achieving the ICPD vision in face of natural (drought) and human (conflict) obstacles.

Figure 11

Status of implementation of recommendations related to environment sustainability in 11 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates)



Box 13 PALESTINE
International cooperation is essential for life under unrelenting occupation

Palestine is under an occupation that controls its economy, resources, land, roads and ports. Life under occupation entails a large number of insurmountable challenges. With the determination and unbreakable spirit of the Palestinian people a given, daily life under such challenges depends on effective cooperation with a large number of international partners. These include the European Union, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and relevant United Nations organizations including UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP. Palestine is committed to the international development agenda and is party to different international conventions and agreements. Principles and guidelines embedded in such conventions are incorporated into the policies adopted by the Palestinian State. The required reporting on adherence to the international agenda is one incentive to provide updated statistics and research on different population and development topics.

Table 1. Existence of specific governance and accountability mechanisms for different population and development issues in 12 Arab countries

Population & development issue	Algeria		
	Data & research	Partnership with civil society	International cooperation
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	No	No	Yes
Young people	No	No	No
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	Missing	Missing	Missing
Egypt			
Women & gender	No	Yes	Missing
Refugees & displaced	Yes	No	Missing
Young people	Yes	Yes	Missing
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	Missing	Missing	Missing
Iraq			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Yes	Yes	Yes
Young people	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jordan			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Yes	Yes	Yes
Young people	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	Yes	Yes	Yes

Missing: No response to relevant question

Table 1 (continued): Existence of specific governance and accountability mechanisms for different population and development issues in 12 Arab countries

Population & development Issue	Lebanon		
	Data & research	Partnership with civil society	International cooperation
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	No	Yes	Yes
Young people	No	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Yes	Yes	No
Morocco			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Yes	Yes	Yes
Young people	Yes	Yes	No
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oman			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Missing	Missing	Missing
Young people	Yes	Yes	No
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Missing	Missing	Missing
Palestine			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Missing	Missing	Missing
Young people	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	No	No	No

Missing: no response to relevant question



Table 1 (continued): Existence of specific governance and accountability mechanisms for different population and development issues in 12 Arab countries

Population & development Issue	Qatar		
	Data & research	Partnership with civil society	International cooperation
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	No
Refugees & displaced	Yes	Yes	Yes
Young people	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Yes	Yes	No
Sudan			
Women & gender	Missing	Missing	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Missing	Missing	Missing
Young people	Yes	No	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Missing	Missing	Missing
Tunisia			
Women & gender	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees & displaced	Yes	Yes	No
Young people	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	Yes
International migration	No	Yes	No
United Arab Emirates			
Women & gender	Missing	Missing	Missing
Refugees & displaced	Missing	Missing	Missing
Young people	Missing	Missing	Missing
Reproductive health	Yes	Yes	No
International migration	Missing	Missing	Missing

Missing: no response to relevant question





4 Concluding observations and the way forward

The results presented in the previous chapter may be summed up succinctly as follows: much has been accomplished over the last five years - the way forward leaves much still to be done. Since the adoption of the Cairo Declaration in 2013, many countries have sought actively to address the development issues it identified. However, as they continue to be challenged by changing global and regional realities, a more concerted and targeted effort is needed to address the persistent gaps.

Below is a brief summary of the results, accompanied by broad brush-stroke observations that serve to guide the articulation of key recommendations for the way forward, which are presented in the second part of this chapter. The recommendations are also guided by a detailed reading of the survey findings as well as by an informed understanding of the specificities and impediments that may impact results.

4.1. Summary and observations

Poverty and vulnerability are at the forefront of many policy decisions in the Arab region. There are concrete examples of policies, anchored in solid disaggregated evidence that use a broad social interpretation of poverty that goes beyond monetary deprivation and that recognize the importance of empowerment and investment in contextual conditions. These are based on

defined multi-dimensional aspects of human poverty. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirmed the importance of multi-dimensional approaches to poverty that go beyond economic measures of deprivation.⁴⁰

The impact of such endeavours can be sustained and strengthened through institutionalizing an approach that reaches further than transfers of benefits and targeting disadvantaged groups. Such an approach needs to be fully aware of the importance of a fair distribution of resources and transformative opportunities. Switching from a charity to a social justice perspective, aiming to address issues of social stratification remains a challenge. Such engagement would ensure that the deprivation and disadvantage in society is not clustered by geographic residence, ethnic background, gender or any other social classification. A people-centred human poverty approach would help in translating economic growth into social returns. The ICPD framework could be instrumental in this regard.

Women's empowerment and gender equality are other priorities that have benefited from explicit commitments, specialized institutional structures, legislative changes, mainstreaming of gender into policies, and the allocation of dedicated financial resources.

⁴⁰ The global Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) answers the call to better measure progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 1 – to end poverty in all its forms – and opens a new window into how poverty, in all its dimensions, is changing. The 2018 global MPI casts light on who is multidimensionally poor, where they live and how they are deprived.

The key impediments in the Arab region are not necessarily limited state commitment and willingness to act. Social norms and gender dynamics can hinder the ability of states to intervene. These impediments pose particular challenges for policies that attempt to address issues that have traditionally been relegated to the private sphere, including such harmful traditional practices as female genital mutilation and forced and early marriage. Clearly, patriarchy is a strong aspect of Arab culture that poses a major challenge through its imposition of rigid gender norms and power imbalances.

Acting within this specific socio-cultural context, the state should attempt to mainstream the principles of human rights, equality, non-discrimination and protection. This requires a high degree of political will combined with effective efforts to secure endorsement, ownership and participation from society as a whole.

Forced **migration and displacement** in the Arab region have not been adequately covered in countries' responses to the follow-up survey. Many countries in the region are shouldering the burden of humanitarian crises, and are calling for wider support and sharing of responsibilities. This issue also raises many concerns relating to balancing the human rights of the displaced, the ability of the state to take on additional responsibilities, and the concerns of national populations faced with competing pressures on their survival prospects. The discourse on human rights needs to seriously consider the dilemma faced by national bodies and to find innovative ways to balance individual rights with increased pressures on state resources and capacities.

International cooperation, through increased funding and a win-win approach to population mobility, is an important support for those countries taking on additional responsibilities while ensuring respect for human rights.

International migration is a priority issue in the region, which makes the lack of information on this topic alarming and a matter of concern.

As may be expected, the lists of priorities related to international migration have the least amount of overlap across the responding countries.⁴¹ This is a great challenge because international migration by definition cannot be addressed without international cooperation. Migration is a complex issue and addressing migration-related challenges goes well beyond the reach of individual governments. The Cairo Declaration suggests a clear set of guidelines for addressing international migration, and effective approaches should be developed through bilateral and international cooperation to encourage countries in the region to adopt these guidelines and the human rights perspective they foster. The intergovernmental efforts under the United Nations, culminating in the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in December 2018 in Marrakesh, represent a clear watershed that can substantially enhance such cooperation.

One priority that is common to all countries in the region, and that can be used as a point of regional convergence, is the need to measure

⁴¹ Indeed, a single country that is simultaneously both a country of origin and a country of destination for migrants may have somewhat conflicting priorities when it comes to migration issues such as whether to encourage free transfer of remittances to sending countries or to put obstacles to such transfer in order to ensure that migrants' income is spent within receiving counties.

and to understand the types and causes of different migration streams as a precondition to any effort towards regulating migration and maximizing the attendant benefits to both sending and receiving countries.

Fertility and mortality declines in some parts of the region have resulted in major changes in the age structure of populations. Changes like these can present opportunities, as in the case of the demographic dividend, in well-prepared countries that have invested effectively in human capital. Alternatively, the youth bulge and the increasing number of older persons may pose new challenges to Arab countries, requiring new and innovative approaches. When children were the largest segment of the population pyramid, a focus on care provision was natural. The new age structure necessitates a focus on young people's well-being and participation.

Arab countries stand at different stages of the demographic dividend (pre-dividend, early and late). Past experiences in other countries have shown the preconditions necessary to transform the demographic dividend into an economic dividend. Accordingly, harnessing the demographic dividend should be viewed as an entry point and as an orientation that requires well-conceptualized and contextualized policies and planned actions, country by country.

Such an orientation appears to be finding a place in the policy discourse and initiatives in the region. This is clear from the specifics of the 2030 vision in several Arab countries. Whether this is translating into effective and informed policies leading to actual change is, however, not yet clear. Many questions and issues on

the youth agenda and strategy fronts have yet to be answered. There is also a need to learn from successful models and to avoid pitfalls, through adopting country-specific approaches guided by effective monitoring and evaluation.

Sexual and reproductive health services are accorded priority in the population and development agenda in the region. What is yet to appear, however, is a focus on reproductive rights and individual, free and informed choice. When a focus on family planning in countries concerned about high population growth is contrasted with neglect or ambivalence around similar services in countries targeting a rise in population growth, it is hard not to infer that the national agenda rather than individual choice prevails in guiding the allocation of resources. Strong cultural constraints might also be inhibiting the granting of sexual and reproductive health rights, including access to care and access to sexual education and information without discrimination.

The topic of sexual and reproductive rights remains a sensitive one, inherently value-laden and complex. This reinforces the need to handle the issue with care and due sensitivity to the prevailing culture of the region. This means upholding its positive cultural aspects while delicately addressing its negative aspects.

The countries covered in the review seem to be embracing the environmental sustainability agenda. However, a move from general strategies to programmes addressing specific environmental challenges may not be on solid ground yet in several countries. Investment in information and in-depth research might be the first step in guaranteeing a move to locally customized evidence-based actions.

Governance is a concept that applies both to vision and leadership in prioritizing development issues, as well as to the approach, structures and tools adopted for effective implementation.

Some aspects of effective governance, such as entrusting multidisciplinary high-level bodies with the population and development agenda, are clearly in place. However, many dimensions of effective governance that have not been fully covered in country reports and that require further consideration remain, among them: the political leverage of these institutions and their ability to coordinate among the various stakeholders of such a broad agenda; the existence of intersectoral structures and resources needed to address complex challenges; the availability and accessibility of the evidence base; and, partnerships and international cooperation.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the ICPD's vision remains unfinished business in the Arab region. It is especially important not to lose sight of that vision in the wake of the strong momentum in favour of the SDGs. Indeed, the links between population and development should give the ICPD agenda a new mission within the people-centred SDGs. The ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework is an instrumental tool for monitoring population-related goals within the overall 2030 Agenda, with a highlighted focus on human rights and social justice. That said, it is crucial to recognize that the ICPD agenda cannot be fully submerged within the SDGs. While there is a substantial overlap, it has to be kept in mind

that several dimensions included in the ICPD are not covered by the SDG agenda.

Just as the ICPD's vision can benefit from the SDGs' monitoring framework, so too could the ICPD add a much-needed human focus to the 2030 Agenda. The boxes inserted within the review findings presented in the previous chapter were purposely selected to convey some of the main dimensions of the Cairo Declaration and the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions. Clearly, the main principle underlying the ICPD framework is the centrality of human rights, social justice and universal participation. Without upholding these principles, the SDGs would fail to gain popular support. This reciprocal relationship between the vision of the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda underscores the need to treat them as complementary rather than competing.

The adoption of a rights-focused approach ensures that human dignity and equality will always remain key ICPD issues. The specific groups to be addressed may change, but the main rationale of fighting discrimination, marginalization and the unequal distribution of burdens should remain the same. The rights-based approach also upholds the right to informed choice, which implies that individual choices are not to be sacrificed in the name of the public good. Lessons learnt from population policies both within and outside the Arab region have confirmed that people's choices can never be sacrificed in order to build the public good; rather, it needs to be built on the common ground between the individuals and the state.

4.2. The way forward

The implementation review is not an end in and of itself, but rather a first step towards guiding future efforts for the realization of the ICPD commitments. The review findings demonstrate the commitment and significant efforts of Arab governments. They also highlight the unfinished agenda and shed light on a number of common challenges. The following recommendations aim at accelerating progress and supporting national efforts to recognize the ICPD's vision, and also at achieving the SDGs, especially the ICPD-related goals. These recommendations build on the findings and in-depth observations summarized above. The ideas below were presented at the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development in Beirut and fed into the set of key messages that summarized the outcome of the deliberations during the conference. These messages are presented in Appendix B.

1. Establish regional learning platforms around topical concerns

Setting common regional priorities could benefit by pooling resources and exchanging experiences. The question is whether enough such common priorities exist.⁴² Different countries experience different types of challenges and therefore have different sets of topical concerns. Nevertheless, when asked at

various sections of the survey to state national priority issues, responding governments provided lists that had large commonalities. For example, within the women's empowerment agenda, all responding countries expressed a focus on empowering women economically and politically and on institutionalizing gender equality. Most responding countries also considered the need to increase youth economic and social participation, and to prioritise the fight against the spread of extremism and radicalism and risky behaviours such as substance abuse. Promoting sexual and reproductive health, including services addressing the premarital needs of adolescents and youth, was a common topical priority across responding countries. Another common focus that could benefit from intergovernmental cooperation is the focus on environmental sustainability and adapting to climate change.

In addition to common topical concerns within priority areas, there are also common challenges that could benefit from opening pan-Arab channels for experience sharing and policy dialogues.

The commonality of topical concerns and challenges exists hand in hand with variability across countries and issues. However, such variability can be used as a catalyst for positive change. The differences, particularly those noted at the end of the section devoted to sexual and reproductive health, clearly make the point that each country faces its own challenges. Yet the boxes demonstrate that each state also has success stories. These success stories offer valuable opportunities for sharing of best practices and lessons learned. The same can be said about the variability across issues. It pays to understand what attributes make a specific issue more or less addressable and amenable to intervention.

⁴² The existence of common priorities may be inferred from the consensus regarding the Cairo Declaration and from the four priority areas agreed upon by the population councils in the region (women, youth, sexual and reproductive health and international migration). However, the detailed topical concerns within each of these priority areas can still differ significantly among Arab states.

2. Adopt a results-based, goal-oriented approach

The review of the Cairo Declaration is about implementation of policies and programmes. An implicit assumption is that specific actions can help achieve positive outcomes. The links between actions and outcomes, including the outcomes themselves, have not, however, been adequately investigated. The ICPD implementation agenda would benefit from the adoption of a results-based, goal-oriented approach and a monitoring and evaluation framework. This would include a clear set of indicators covering implementation processes such as inputs, activities and direct outputs as well as outcomes and impact indicators.

Developmental goals provide a good blueprint for this kind of goal-oriented approach. The SDGs and the 2030 Agenda could be a potential vehicle for the advancement of the ICPD agenda.⁴³

There is, of course, a good overlap between the Cairo Declaration objectives and the SDGs. On examining this overlap, specific SDGs were identified as being closely linked to the population agenda.⁴⁴ Furthermore, a regional participatory effort led by LAS, UNFPA/ASRO and ESCWA highlighted a minimum set of priority goals, targets and indicators responsive to the ICPD's vision and the Cairo Declaration. This set of 39 population-based SDG indicators, prioritized for the Arab region, offers an excellent base to build upon.

43 High Level Task Force for ICPD. 2015. Indicators for a Transformative, High-Impact & People-Centred 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Leading Options for Global, Thematic, Regional and/or National Levels. <http://icpdtaskforce.org/resources/IndicatorsTaskForceProposalsAugust2015.pdf>; Youssef, Hala. 2017. Regional Initiative to Monitor ICPD-Based SDGs: Tools and Partnerships. https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/u593/3_unfpa-_presentation_on_icpd.pdf

44 For more details see: www.unfpa.org/sdg.

Despite the overlap, the specificity of the ICPD agenda should not be overlooked. There is a need to acknowledge and prioritize essential dimensions of ICPD not covered by the SDGs. This entails identifying additional sets of action recommendations, the implementation of which are easier to measure, as well as developing ICPD-sensitive indicators that are not covered by the SDGs, and then advocating for making the data required to monitor these indicators available, accessible and of high quality.

3. Invest in a data and information movement and develop an ICPD observatory

Generally speaking, the dearth in data and information is a pervasive problem facing population and development efforts in the region. Addressing the information gap should therefore be a high priority. To do this, there must be investment in building relevant databases and in filling information gaps. Innovative approaches to data generation and utilization should be adopted, including generating research that goes beyond simple description. Policy-relevant research is needed that is based on an understanding of the contextual opportunities and challenges facing the realization of the ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions and the commitments of the 2013 Cairo Declaration.



4. Address cultural and social constraints

Changing negative social norms while building on and protecting the many positive features of Arab culture is one of the most difficult tasks. Such tasks do not lend themselves easily to state intervention. Understandably, these norms, particularly on the gender and human rights front, continue to be a priority for action, while also continuing to be resistant to change. More importantly, human rights are still not central to the agenda.

Development thinking provides valuable lessons on how to approach this elusive goal of transformation and how to ensure sustained participatory and effective efforts. Building on these lessons is a must for the achievement of goals and for sustaining progress.

5. Adopt an equity lens and a human rights-based approach in addressing disadvantages

The progress demonstrated in many dimensions of the Cairo Declaration highlights the need to ascertain that the gains are shared fairly by all groups in society. It is now quite clear that achieving development goals at national levels is not enough, as some population subgroups might exceed targets while others lag far behind.

The concern with inequalities is reflected in the endorsement by Arab states of all the SDGs. In particular, Goals 3, 5 and 10 are explicit in their pursuit of well-being for all, of gender equality, and of reducing inequalities. The key words permeating the SDGs and their associated targets are “universal” and “for all”.

The review of the Cairo Declaration demonstrates the many efforts that are underway to reduce inequalities and address vulnerability and disadvantage. The poverty alleviation efforts, the targeting of vulnerable women and the services provided to the displaced are but a few examples among many.

The recent past has seen a call to move beyond solely targeting the disadvantaged to address the underlying structural causes that generate disadvantage. This call differentiates between an inequality framing and an inequity framing. While the former addresses inequality as part of the moral duty of the state to reduce sufferings, the latter adds an ethical imperative by tracing the causes of inequality to unequal and unfair distribution of opportunities and resources. The equity framing not only allows for correcting existing imbalances and improving the conditions of the specific group targeted; it also adds to the existing efforts a concern for achieving sustained impact through preventing future imbalances and changing the whole distribution of disadvantages. It is therefore, a preventive rather than a curative approach.

The call here is to explicitly and consciously adopt an equity lens, enshrined in a human rights-based approach, in all policies and actions stemming from the 2013 Cairo Declaration agenda. An equity lens focuses on the fair provision of transformative opportunities, power, resources and services to disadvantaged social groups. The integration of social justice into all adopted policies and actions and an explicit concern with the differentiated impact of policies on different social groups would realize the commitment of Arab states to “leaving no one behind”.

6. Invest in institutional strengthening and capacity development

The Cairo Declaration agenda is an ambitious endeavour. It requires knowledge, skills and expertise on many fronts. The move from what to do to how to do it is quite complex. The earlier recommendations need a solid base recognizing new development approaches, skills for undertaking highly specialized tasks, an ability to collaborate across sectors and disciplines, and planning and management systems and tools.

Existing mechanisms for institutional support (like those active within UNFPA, ESCWA and LAS) can be used more systematically to foster efficacy and strengthen intersectoral actions by supporting capacities to integrate population dynamics into development policies, championing intersectoral actions, and by ensuring the adoption of a rights-based approach and equity lens to help deal with the challenges.

7. Recognize and act on the elements of good and effective governance

Some pillars of good and effective governance are especially appreciated by Arab states. These include commitments to development goals and international partnerships, the concern with inequality, the establishment of high-level institutions, and the implementation of ambitious programmes, as are documented in this review and in voluntary national reports.

Other pillars that may be in need of special attention include multisectoral structures and mechanisms, accountability processes,

data accessibility, information sharing, and participatory approaches. These are briefly discussed below.

The whole-of-government responsibility and the inherently integrative agenda of the ICPD and the SDGs are both welcome and challenging. Such features have promoted collaboration among many government sectors, and the adoption of multisectoral interventions. However, institutionalization of such approaches has yet to materialize.

Outstanding examples of high-level institutional structures and implementation practices characterized by holistic perspectives and active cooperation by different actors have been cited throughout this review. As the review has noted, the completed survey forms are not only of the highest quality but are most informative when responses are provided by multisectoral teams. Such teams are assembled when the issue under consideration is treated as a multisectoral issue and when this happens, it appears to make a real difference.

The establishment of high level councils (for women, youth, population, or the SDGs) in different countries typifies the adoption of a multisectoral approach. The political leverage of these councils, their coordinating mechanisms, their ability to lead intersectoral actions, and the existence of effective modalities and resources for intergovernmental collaborations can support or hinder the realization of development goals.

A key feature of the whole-of-government responsibility approach and the mandate assigned to the established councils is the monitoring of goals and the accountability

process. The shift from reporting on inputs and shortage of data to a goal-oriented approach anchored in the availability and accessibility of data and information is a pillar of effective governance.

Last but not least is the need to open all channels to participation. Societal endorsement and ownership of the 2013 Cairo Declaration agenda are crucial for its success. Grounding the agenda in realities on the ground and involving all stakeholders should be considered an essential component for success. The participation of civil society and the private sector are now recognized as prerequisites for sound policy formation, and not just for effective implementation. Nor can the importance of involving young people in these stages be overstated.

The lessons from some innovative approaches piloted by civil society can inform national endeavours. Their contributions, alongside those of the private sector, as partners and as catalysts of financial and human resources, are becoming indispensable. The participatory pillar of good and effective governance goes beyond a seat at the table - the many stakeholders must be involved in preparing the meal as well as serving it.

8. Agree on and endorse a Cairo Declaration review modality

National and international reporting modalities are well-established assessment mechanisms. However, the introduction of too many reporting instruments can clearly overburden countries, particularly when the sole emphasis is on data and indicators.

The Arab region could benefit from a shift from a data movement to a policy-support

movement. The focus of the development partners should not be confined to measuring change but to supporting change that can be measured. The earlier recommendation that pan-Arab channels be opened for lesson sharing and debates on the Cairo Declaration and its implementation is a step in this direction.

As a reporting modality, the Cairo Declaration five-year review did not benefit from the responses of all Arab countries. This may be partly due to reporting fatigue, as noted above, or to the content of the questionnaire. This only serves to underscore the need to develop these tools in such a way that they become a welcome mechanism for guiding national and regional efforts.





Action recommendations of the Cairo Declaration

A. Dignity and equality

- 1) Address the issue of social and economic inequality, through redressing the maldistribution of wealth and increasing opportunities ensuring full utilization of human capital to advance socio-economic development;
 - 2) Direct due attention to the rights and responsibilities of the family and all its members to ensure protection, wellbeing, stability and productivity;
 - 3) Implement poverty reduction strategies and programmes aimed at vulnerable groups especially women, while paying more attention to women heading households, and provide them socio-economic support;
 - 4) Urge governments to develop plans and programmes to enhance the role of women in family bonding and cohesion and educating young people on the values of citizenship;
- a. Women**
- 5) Call upon all countries that have not done so, to consider signing and ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol and translate its provisions into law and practice and develop strategies to uphold United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1188 and 1960 in ways consistent with the sovereignty of the state;
 - 6) Call upon Arab countries to consider removing any remaining reservations to any of the articles of CEDAW;
 - 7) Commit to ensuring political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls without discrimination on the basis of religion, belief, ethnicity, or national origin;
 - 8) Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment principles in all development plans with special attention to education and communication programmes and strategies; and work to provide equal opportunities and an enabling environment;
 - 9) Protect the rights of women to effective participation in the conduct of public affairs as well as decision-making circles and adopt measures and advocacy mechanisms to promote their inclusion;
 - 10) Address legal and cultural challenges to promote women's equal opportunities in urban and rural areas, and in occupational mobility, especially at management, executive and political levels;
 - 11) Reform marriage laws to prevent child marriage and to ensure protection and well-being of the girl child, make registration of marriage in official registry

system compulsory, and address issue of personal status legislation to enhancing the rights of women and children in the family;

- 12) Implement programmes and measures by involving community leaders, civil society and youth in addressing the underlying causes of child marriage, and raise awareness about the serious consequences of child marriage when it comes to health and survival;
- 13) Implement programmes aimed at changing community attitudes and behaviour with special attention to child-marriage, girls' education and employment, and ensure girls' rights to education and information, including those who happen to be married;
- 14) Enhance involvement of men and boys and encourage male participation and an equal sharing of responsibilities by supporting programmes that promote gender equality in rights and opportunities;
- 15) Measures to further protect women should include: appropriate legislation where such does not exist and st, fully implementing existing legislation; developing national plans of action that include monitoring, and reporting; making all forms of violence against women a criminal offence whether within or outside the family; enabling women to exercise their full rights; and, promoting the systematic collection of data on gender-based violence;
- 16) Strengthen national systems and partnership with international organizations, civil society and youth as relevant to build capacity and raise awareness among all stakeholders involved

in the prevention and response to GBV and abuse of the older persons, (involving health professionals including mental health, police, security actors, etc.);

- 17) Strengthen coordination and create alliances and partnerships with local communities, civil society and young people, to mobilize efforts to prevent gender-based violence;

b. Migrants and displaced persons

- 18) Commit to the protection and fulfilment of the rights of all migrants, including refugees and displaced persons, essential prerequisites to maximize their contribution to countries of origin and destination alike;
- 19) Pay special attention to the population and development conditions in the Arab states affected by occupation, war and conflict -- especially refugees, displaced persons and forced migrants;
- 20) Emphasize the importance of protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all migrants including displaced persons, refugees and victims of trafficking, key to maximizing their contributions to countries of destination and origin alike;
- 21) Ensure the protection of all human and labour rights of international migrants from and within the Arab region;
- 22) Pay particular attention to the population and development situation in Palestine and emphasize how sustainable development and the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development are hindered

because of the Israeli occupation and its implications for sustainable development and human rights;

c. Young people

- 23) Improve the quality of and access to education to adequately respond to the labour market needs in the Arab region for young people's economic development, job creation and active civic participation; the Doha Declaration (2009) focuses on education quality as the ultimate goal of educational reforms in the region and highlights the need for building systems of quality assurance and evaluations;
- 24) Ensure the right of young people to decent work through effective policies and programmes that generate stable, safe, secure, non-discriminatory employment, especially with regard to gender; this should provide a decent wage, opportunities for career development, respect the rights of young people at work, including the right to fair hiring and adequate housing as well as the right to join and organize labour unions, consistent with international conventions;
- 25) Develop youth capacity for interaction and building healthy social relations; prevent social isolation; promote sexual and reproductive health awareness through guidance and parental support that is consistent with young people's developing capacities;
- 26) Commit to prioritizing job creation and a skilled work force by increasing investment, including the private sector, in programmes that foster youth entrepreneurship and provide capacity building to young people through training programmes, using formal and non-formal curricula, education, vocational and employment counselling, and quality paid internships; offer social protection, mentoring and expertise sharing so that young people, including persons at risk of being marginalized, can acquire the necessary information and skills to access decent work opportunities;
- 27) Actively involve young people in all policies and mechanisms of national and regional programmes, including planning, implementation and decision-making, monitoring and evaluation;
- 28) Enable effective participation of young people as volunteers and leaders of social change without being subjected to exploitation, violence or deprivation of rights;
- 29) Activate various mechanisms and joint Arab institutions dealing with youth issues for enhanced networking in support of greater efficacy and feasibility;
- 30) Nurture an enabling environment that empowers, values and invests in older persons' accumulated life experience and capabilities and recognizes the societal and economic opportunities associated with ageing, thus reaping the rewards of the "longevity dividend";
- 31) Work with stakeholders to ensure that ageing is mainstreamed into the broader development processes, including poverty reduction strategies, across all sectors and

d. Older persons

agencies involving governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as civil society and the private sector; support legislation initiatives to enable families care for the elderly; plan for anticipated increase in the numbers of aged;

- 32) Ensure support for the ageing within the natural family setting, a core element in Arab culture often reflected in laws and ensure that existing services, living conditions and the environment are responsive to this essential goal;
- 33) Focus on the human rights paradigm for advocating and implementing ageing policies and involve grassroots and civil society organizations as well as older persons themselves; this includes recognising their rights to financial security, health and social care and safe environments;
- 34) Ensure that all older persons, particularly older women, can live with dignity and security, free of discrimination on the basis of age and free of potential abuse and violence aimed against them; encourage governments and local municipalities as well as urban planners and architects to take into consideration the specific needs and functional capacities of older persons when designing housing, public buildings, mass transportation, outdoor public spaces and private homes; support and encourage establishment of associations and networks of older persons;
- 35) Promote the "life cycle" approach for disease prevention and control as a method of advancing health and well-being in old age, plus adoption of the "active aging"

framework, with its emphasis on health system reform to strengthen the focus on health promotion, disease prevention and early screening as opposed to traditional "therapeutic" practices; also, promote health education materials that teach "self-care" and support the messages of "primary prevention" as a way of enjoying a healthy life;

- 36) Advocate for the inclusion of geriatrics specialization within the education programmes such as family medicine at universities and for the inclusion of ageing diseases within the health basket;

e. Persons with disability

- 37) Call upon Arab countries that have not done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol and translate its provisions into law and practice;
- 38) Call upon Arab countries that have not done so to adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for implementing the rights of persons with disability and modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disability in any aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life;



B. Health

- 39) Ensure that sexual and reproductive health is among health sector priorities, and an integral part of the national health plans and public budgets, with clearly identifiable allocations of resources and expenditures;
- 40) Adopt the “life-cycle” comprehensive approach to ensure reproductive health, and the elimination of child marriage, forced marriage and early pregnancy; educate and provide high-quality services so that couples in the Arab region can make reproductive decisions based on accurate and reliable information and exercise their rights to access quality services without financial, institutional or any other obstacles, taking their right to privacy into account;
- 41) Establish mechanisms that foster health providers’ compliance with human rights, ethical and professional standards, including full disclosure of complete scientific information, and ensure regulations are in place that such information and services are made available regardless of providers’ personal beliefs, or objection upon suspicion;
- 42) Ensure that policies concerning fertility in Arab countries are based on the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and that they have the information and means to do so, taking into account the need for such policies to be based on evidence and best practices;
- 43) Expand coverage by increasing the number of health units that provide family planning/reproductive health services; ensure availability of female health providers and establish partnerships with civil society and Arab private sector;
- 44) Increase access for men and male adolescents to sexual and reproductive health information, counselling and services in support of family health;
- 45) Improve quality of services by enhancing health workers’ skills and capabilities, by diversifying available contraceptive method mix, and by ensuring effective counselling, while respecting and protecting the rights of clients in an environment free from any form of discrimination;
- 46) Using all available means, improve skills and capacities of all service providers in health units responsible for sexual and reproductive health services so that they can serve women more capably and with better quality;
- 47) Develop policies to encourage personnel in the health sector to remain in their home countries and to motivate them to work in remote areas; Introduce and implement policies, incentives and mechanisms for capacity building of health workers and decentralized service; adjust human resource policies to address the issue of the health sector brain drain and provide solutions to retain health care providers;
- 48) Develop new approaches to maternal health service delivery that can reduce costs and ensure sustainability – e.g. by transferring experiences from one Arab

country to another such as community participation in improving access to maternal health or the use of qualified cadres to provide family planning services in remote areas where human resources are constrained;

- 49) Give young people access to high quality affordable, youth-friendly health services including age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services plus information that is relevant and, specially tailored to their age group's needs, while ensuring privacy and confidentiality, without any form of discrimination or stigma;
- 50) Enhance health of young people including their mental health and address irresponsible behaviour involving smoking, drinking, drugs, and road safety;
- 51) Dedicate urgent attention to adolescent reproductive health, particularly prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, by providing access to age-appropriate services with due respect to cultural values and religious beliefs, and in partnerships with civil society organizations and NGOs;
- 52) Make culture-sensitive, age-appropriate sex education available both in and out of school, that addresses gender and life skills differences to help equip young people to be able to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections; promote values of tolerance, mutual respect and the importance of refraining from all forms of violence;
- 53) Encourage young people to acquire skills and assume responsibility for their own behaviour and to respect the rights of others so that they develop non-discriminatory values, an appreciation of gender equality, and understand the need to combat sexual abuse, gender-based violence and harmful practices;
- 54) Ensure that all victims/survivors of gender-based violence have immediate access to basic services, including 24-hour hotlines; psycho-social and mental health support; treatment of injuries; and provide vital post-rape care, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention and access to police protection, safe housing and shelter, that includes documentation of cases, forensic services and legal aid plus referrals and longer-term support;
- 55) Design and implement public education campaigns and community mobilization on human rights and laws related to sexual and reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights and reinforce a culture of acceptance, respect, non-discrimination and non-violence;
- 56) Eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls; and engage men and boys, policy-makers, parliamentarians, law enforcement officials, educators, health care providers, the private sector, journalists and media in general, in creating an environment that is conducive to enjoyment of these rights by all;
- 57) Amend or enact laws and policies in order to provide high quality sexual and reproductive health services and to

protect the reproductive rights of all and enable every individual the right to enjoy the highest level of reproductive health without discrimination;

- 58) Eliminate child and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting as soon as possible; prohibit practices that violate the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls such as forced sterilization and forced abortion, or discrimination in education and employment due to pregnancy and motherhood, age or family status;
- 59) Protect the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, and prohibit all forms of stigma, discrimination or violence against them;
- 60) Respect and implement legislation related to ensuring reproductive health rights for working women such as maternity and child care leave;



C. Place and environmental sustainability

a. Internal migration and displacement

- 61) Secure access of internal migrants to the benefits of employment, labour market, health, education, land and housing policies by ensuring equal conditions that facilitate migrant integration;
- 62) Include migration policies and programmes in development planning and ensure availability of the financial resources needed to implement them;
- 63) Develop ambitious urban planning strategies to revitalize the role of medium and small towns and cities by encouraging public and private investment;
- 64) Provide land, housing and utilities, secured by the State, for current and future urban residents, living in squatter areas in Arab region cities;
- 65) Create employment opportunities and provide quality utilities and social services, including education and health, and increase investment in the agriculture sector and rural areas in order to combat unemployment and poverty in those areas;
- 66) Enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to displacement and migration due to climate change, and relocation plans, as needed, at the national, regional and international levels;
- 67) Prevent displacement as much as possible by facilitating voluntary internal migration with special support for displaced persons

seeking to return to their original location; pay due attention to all aspects of internal migrant women's special needs in all measures taken;

- 68) Strengthen service provision with a multi-sectoral response to all forms of violence associated with armed violence and displacement that targets women, young people and children, and secure funding to ensure that appropriate multi-sectoral gender-based violence response services (health, psycho-social, security and legal) are accessible to all conflict-affected populations; local and national governments and humanitarian response organizations should facilitate effective communication between professionals in various relevant sectors;
- 69) Commit to addressing the living conditions of people in large urban centres as a priority, while ensuring equal access to quality and affordable basic health and social services for all, including those living in rural and sub-urban areas as well as the very poor and people with disabilities;
- 70) Ensure equity in access to services, by providing adequate geographic coverage in both urban and rural areas, and by making services free or affordable;

b. International migration

- 71) Acknowledge the benefits of international migration and its positive contribution throughout its economic, social and cultural dimensions in countries of destination and origin;
- 72) Integrate the financial, human and social benefits of migration in development plans in countries of origin;

73) Recognizing that remittances are private resources of international migrants and their families, incentives should be provided to put them at the service of development; to this end:

- Countries of origin and destination should commit to reducing remittance fees by promoting competition and diversifying banks and other means or channels for formal remittances;
- Countries of destination should consider tax exemptions on financial transfers to countries of origin;
- Countries of origin and destination, within immigration regulations, should consider setting up social security systems for migrants that allow accumulation of contributions and transfer of entitlements;
- Countries of origin should consider diversifying channels of investments in individual and community projects and providing incentives to maximize remittances;
- Encourage experiences and practices aiming at better use of return migrants to fill labour needs in countries of origin in order to enhance social sectors such as health and education;

74) Skills acquisition is a major benefit of international migration; in order to maximize its contribution to development:

- Countries of destination should consider establishing systems for accrediting the skills acquired by migrant workers;
- Countries of destination should consider organizing and supporting programmes for migrants wishing to

return to their home countries; such programmes to include training for public employment services in home countries, training of return migrants on how to look for jobs, training on initiating projects like establishing small and medium enterprises, and support establishing commercial business with receiving countries;

75) The social, financial and human capital accumulated by Arab immigrants is a major asset for development; in order to make the best use of it:

- Countries of destination should encourage diaspora trans-national activities, using tax incentives, and providing financial, technological and administrative support;
- A register of such activities should be set up so as to encourage similar venture activities;
- Countries of origin should also encourage trans-national activities through incentives and other forms of support;
- To encourage the trans-national contribution of migrants, countries of origin should ensure and guarantee their full entitlement to their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights;

76) Highly-skilled international migrants respond to critical demand for work in certain sectors and occupations in countries of destination so in order to avoid the detrimental effects of highly-skilled migration and to maximize its positive contributions:

- Destination countries should study and make periodic projections of demand in their labour markets, which should allow countries of origin to design appropriate education and training policies;
 - Establish adequate links that can enhance the management of skilled migration; this includes direct labour matching mechanisms, provision of labour market information, enhancement of training and education; such projections can be the basis for cooperation between countries of origin and destination;
 - Countries of destination should cooperate in setting up registers of highly-skilled migrants who could be called upon to contribute to development in their countries of origin;
 - Countries of destination should consider supporting university and research institutions in countries of origin, which should increase the number of graduates who can meet internal and external demand for labour; such support would facilitate improved working terms and conditions, and job satisfaction, and could result in fewer people desiring to migrate;
 - Research should be conducted to ascertain the feasibility of the return of "migratory brains" to the Arab countries;
- 77) Systematically combat all forms of hatred against expatriates, especially against Arab migrants as well as against migrants in the Arab region;

- 78) Combat smuggling and trafficking in human beings in accordance with provisions of the Palermo Convention of 2000 on cross-border crime and its protocols to combat smuggling and trafficking;
- 79) Improve inter-country and multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation to ensure the orderly flow of migration and minimize recourse to undocumented migration;
- 80) Consider developing pre-departure programmes to inform and prepare potential migrants for the migration journey and to warn them about smuggling and trafficking;
- 81) Mainstream migration into national development policies and into the post-2015 development agenda;
- 82) Encourage ratification of all core international conventions on human rights and labour rights of migrants, including the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) and the International Labour Organisation on Domestic Workers Convention (2011);
- 83) Generate, analyse and disseminate periodic statistical information on international migration to help formulate and implement policies on the basis of evidence and related research;
- 84) Support coordination between sending and receiving countries to ensure the orderly flow of migration and to reduce irregular migration, and heighten awareness of the dangers of irregular migration networks and issue warning about smuggling and trafficking in human beings;

c. Environmental sustainability

- 85) Ensure full understanding of the interaction between population, environment, climate change and economic development to create a foundation for sustainable development that takes into account the current and future size, composition, needs and rights of the population;
- 86) Remove barriers to sustainability through increased use of clean technology, including innovation, sound governance, systematic awareness creation and sensitization of the public to sustainable consumption behaviour that is beneficial to the environment;
- 87) Regional and local climate change response measures must take into account the distribution, vulnerability, and resilience of the targeted populations;
- 88) Initiate a large scale plan for development of coastal zones based on a coastal defence strategy, with full support to the residents of these areas, including minimizing displacement and providing developmental alternatives where displacement is unavoidable;
- 89) Identify capability gaps and needs of local communities in addition to building institutional capacities to achieve long term progress -- only possible through monitoring programmes which continuously assess ecological, demographic and socio-economic performance of the region and the adequacy of environmental planning;
- 90) To better manage natural and environmental resources requires activating institutions at all levels - local,

national, regional and global - along with independent juridical systems and good governance;

91) Promote and develop environment-friendly production and consumption patterns through research and clean technology, and technical cooperation between countries and regions;

92) Young people, as agents of change, should be engaged in environmental protection efforts through concrete durable contributions that influence the mindsets, attitudes and behaviour of their peers and communities; , they should be educated and develop practical skills in disaster preparedness and learn about adaptation to climate change, the potential consequences of climate change and global environmental degradation, and about the technological and social foundations of sustainable development; youth can and must make sustainable choices with regard to consumption and lifestyle, know about green jobs and how to develop the innovations necessary to achieve sustainability;

d. Governance

93) Call upon countries that have not ratified core international human rights treaties and conventions to do so and encourage those who have to take actions to achieve gender equality and equity for balanced and respectful relations between men and women in the region at societal and community level and within the family;

94) Conduct scientific research to study the situation of the elderly and identify their

needs; and develop active ageing policies to utilize the knowledge and experience of the older population; support the collection of age and sex-disaggregated data and research on ageing, including national surveys that monitor the situation of the elderly and ensure they are made available to inform policymaking;

95) Integrate women's empowerment and take measures to alleviate all gender-based discrimination in I macro and sectoral development plans and strategies, especially by ensuring access to equal opportunities, health services, employment, resource management and independence when it comes to financial decisions; and, urge governments to enact decisions and legislation to broaden women's participation in political and legislative decision making.;

96) Develop alternative strategies and programmes to enrol girls in the education system and provide them with the same opportunities as boys to continue their education, including secondary and higher education;

97) Secure funds for population programmes; and develop ways and mechanisms to sustain financing by establishing Arab trust funds with Arab private sector participation;

98) Pay due attention to the current high fertility rates in some countries of the region and devise appropriate rights-based policies and programmes;

99) Call upon the Arab countries to avail and disseminate national-level and sub-national data on population; conduct

qualitative studies to analyse the underlying social determinants of reproductive health; assess the impact of population strategies at the national and sub-national levels;

- 100) Create and strengthen relevant institutional capacity to ensure effective integration of population dynamics into development planning as well as efficiency and accountability; ensure effective coordination of all relevant social and planning bodies;
- 101) Integrate population dynamics into development planning at national and sub-national levels in order to comprehensively address population and development issues;
- 102) Call on Arab countries to conduct population censuses periodically and to disseminate results on a timely basis in accordance with established standards; analyse and use these data, and vital statistics systems including registration of births and deaths, which are based on data classification by population groups, as well as the survey data, for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes;
- 103) Governments of Arab countries, League of Arab States, United Nations organizations and relevant agencies at the local level should support research, data collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of high quality and timely censuses, vital statistics and, for the purpose of evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation, adopt detailed methodologies to ensure programmes meet the demands of local conditions; enhance capacities to deal with different population challenges in different geographical areas; prioritize the needs of the population and under-served areas;
- 104) Consider integrating the impact of sustainable development, environment and social responsibility in all trade negotiations including social impacts on women, girls, young people and the poorest groups; commit to address, as a priority, the living conditions of people in large urban centres while ensuring equal access to quality and affordable basic health and social services for all, particularly for the vulnerable and poorest groups;
- 105) Ensure firm commitment to democracy, justice, transparency, integrity and equal representation in all governance processes, in a way that enables youth and older people to participate in the national development process, allowing them access to management opportunities, employment, innovation and a fair distribution of wealth;
- 106) Reinforce the culture of democracy and participation among youth through education, the arts and literature plus all forms of communication media;
- 107) Ensure that young people are key partners in decision making that involves and concerns them, their families and their communities, by making them equal partners in development, not passive beneficiaries;
- 108) Ensure compliance with equal and equitable representation in politics, as well as promoting girls' access to higher education levels, and addressing harmful

practices against young women and girls, including forced and child marriage, gender-based violence and all other forms of discrimination;

- 109) Promote the participation of young women and young men from rural areas, and young people at risk of marginalization in public debates and decisions;
- 110) Expand youth participation and empowerment by establishing and/or strengthening institutional mechanisms that allow for meaningful youth participation in decision-making (especially for those most marginalized); ensure young people have access to the information they need to exercise their human rights; strengthen the capacities of youth-led organizations and networks so that they can fulfil their potential as active and equal members of society;
- 111) Establish a dynamic, up-to-date, gender-, age-, and locality-disaggregated, population-based database to keep abreast of rapid demographic, socio-economic and health changes in the region in order to ensure effective successful policies and programmes; promote relevant research, especially on vulnerable older persons, and in-depth analysis of existing data as powerful tools for evaluation of policies and practices;
- 112) Establish enabling legal and policy frameworks to prevent and respond to gender-based violence including national justice systems to ensure accountability for all forms of violence perpetrated during humanitarian emergencies; ensure that

such crimes are excluded from amnesty provisions or mitigating measures. ensure unimpeded access to justice and legal assistance to all;

- 113) Enact and implement laws that allow education in an environment free from discrimination, violence, and abuse;
- 114) Initiate national campaigns, through the media and educational curricula and by strengthening the capacity of formal education and informal education systems and community groups to fight violence against girls, and to raise awareness and change behaviours in the short term; strengthen programmes to provide safe spaces for girls, based on best practices, in order to improve their knowledge, skills and self-confidence so that they can live a decent life in the wider community where they belong;
- 115) Ensure universal access to free, quality, comprehensive education at all levels in a safe and participatory environment by adopting a rights-based approach to education, (formal, informal and non-formal) taking into account the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly girls;



e. International cooperation and partnership

- 116) Arab countries should benefit from all forms of international cooperation, within the framework of adapting to climate change and in facing up to its consequences and other environmental developmental and population issues;
- 117) Improve coordination and partnerships among local, national and international development partners including civil society to: a) strengthen the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population programmes; and b) resource mobilization in order to strengthen the health system and address priority health issues in particular the high maternal mortality and low contraceptive prevalence rates in some countries; funding mechanisms like the Paris declaration for donor harmonization, the Accra declaration of new aid and funding modalities can serve as a tool for more effective donor programming and funding for MDG 5 targets to improve maternal health and reduce maternal mortality;
- 118) Provide financial, technical and institutional support to national population commissions/councils in order to have legislation in place that facilitates them playing active roles, and urge countries that lack such institutional to establish same as soon as possible;
- 119) Call on the League of Arab States and UNFPA, and other organizations to develop plans and programmes to enhance capacities of national councils/commissions and similar bodies, and provide assistance to countries in the process of establishing such institutions;
- 120) Encourage the development of regional initiatives on population and development to increase regional coordination and to mobilize resources and maximize returns;
- 121) Provide the financial resources necessary to achieve the objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 and its close association with the SDGs, and call upon international donors to fulfil their financial pledges in Cairo in 1994 in order to provide the necessary resources to achieve the goals of population and development beyond 2014; including Arab countries to fulfil the announced obligations;
- 122) Promote international cooperation efforts, including the development of joint programmes and initiatives, the strengthening of policy dialogue and coordination, transfer of knowledge and technology, and the allocation and mobilization of financial and technical resources, for international cooperation in the area of population and development;
- 123) Call upon the League of Arab States, United Nations organizations, and other international and regional organizations to increase their support for building regional and national capacity in the field of research and the collection and dissemination of data through censuses and sample surveys focusing on young people, women and children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and others,

and to enhance capacities in the field of in-depth analysis using relevant software packages;

- 124) Expand availability of quantitative and qualitative data covering population and development issues, trends and characteristics of migration, drawing on specialized research and scientific studies to forecast future trends;
- 125) Call upon governments to reduce forced migration and confront and solve problems arising therefrom, and to provide protection and services to forced migrants, refugees and displaced persons and to facilitate their return;
- 126) Encourage international cooperation with a view to maximizing the contribution of migration to development and to protect and ensure the rights of international migrants;
- 127) Countries of origin and destination should cooperate in the formulation and implementation of policies aiming at facilitating the reintegration of return migrants in their own labour markets and societies;
- 128) Countries of destination should formulate and implement policies that foster the integration of migrants and their families, without discrimination, in their workplaces and societies;
- 129) Promote and strengthen partnerships with the private sector in the design, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of population and development programmes and policies, particularly in the areas of service

delivery and commodity production and distribution; expand collaboration and support at all levels including North-South and South-South to promote exchange of experiences that speed up implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.





Appendix

B

key messages from the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: five years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration

BEIRUT, 30 OCTOBER TO 1 NOVEMBER 2018



Introduction

- 1) The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Population Fund and the League of Arab States organized the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Five Years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration, which was held at the United Nations House in Beirut from 30 October to 1 November 2018.
- 2) The conference constituted a high-level regional platform to review and follow up on the implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration emanating from the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states on the theme “Development challenges and population dynamics in a changing Arab world”, which was held in Cairo from 24 to 26 June 2013 to review the implementation of the Programme of Action resulting from the International Conference on Population and Development that was held in Cairo in 1994. The Programme of Action represented a paradigm shift in the approach to population; it established a solid link between population, steady economic development and sustainable development; and went beyond a quantitative view of population to a broader perspective which recognizes that investment in individual capacity, dignity and human rights is the foundation of sustainable development.
- 3) The Arab Regional Conference’s agenda comprised 10 sessions, which included a presentation of a draft regional report on progress in achieving the goals of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, and country presentations on the issue. Presentations and discussions focused on the links between population and sustainable development. The conference, which coincided with the start of the fourth implementation year of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provided an opportunity for participants to review the links between the 2013 Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets, to explore ways to include population dynamics and issues in development planning, and to improve

measuring tools and identify mechanisms to monitor the population dimension in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

- 4) Fourteen Arab countries presented their voluntary national reviews. The presentations and discussions helped determine priorities, trends and emerging issues in the region, and assess progress and identify gaps in implementing the 2013 Cairo Declaration in Arab countries. The conference also provided an opportunity to consider successful experiences.
- 5) Participants agreed on several key messages, which were grouped according to the issues discussed at each session of the conference. The present report will be submitted to the Commission on Population and Development at its fifty-second session as a document setting out the key messages from the Arab region. The present report will also be submitted to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

Key messages from the 2018 Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development

A. General messages (1)

- 1) Reaffirm the 2013 Cairo Declaration emanating from the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab states on the theme "Development challenges and population dynamics in a changing Arab world" as a comprehensive vision on population issues, and reconfirm commitment to its principles and goals aimed at achieving dignity, equality, respect for human rights and gender mainstreaming and at empowering population groups, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized;
- 2) Work on facing structural challenges and social, economic, cultural and environmental obstacles to reduce disparities between countries and achieve the goals of the Cairo Declaration;
- 3) Recognize the challenges caused by demographic changes and transformations in some Arab countries, and adopt a new approach that balances between individual freedom and the common good and that takes into account population dynamics in development planning at the national and subnational levels, so as to achieve balanced development based on a strong political will, a clear vision, planned budgets, disaggregated and timely information and data, and cohesive, integrated and inclusive cross-sectoral programmes that involve all stakeholders;
- 4) Emphasize the links between the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda, and stress the importance of focusing on the population dimension in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- 5) Stress the role of young people as a creative and pioneering force, and the importance of empowering them economically, socially and politically and of building their capacity,

enriching their knowledge and involving them in developing, implementing and following up on policies and population programmes, so as to capitalize on the demographic dividend;

- 6) Confirm the centrality of women's role and the importance of empowering them economically, socially and politically and of involving them in decision-making;
- 7) Work on ensuring a paradigm shift in the approach to population issues, from one focused on controlling population growth, to a rights-based approach that enshrines human rights, including reproductive rights according to the Cairo Declaration, and freedom of choice to achieve gender equality and empower women, girls, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons and the most vulnerable social groups;
- 8) Commit to the principles of good governance to ensure strong, efficient, transparent and accountable institutions that work to formulate, implement and review population-related development policies;
- 9) In implementing the 2013 Cairo Declaration, promote participatory work between all government stakeholders, parliaments and civil society organizations, including youth organizations, religion-based organizations, academia, research centres, the private sector, trade unions, political parties, the media, United Nations entities working in the Arab region and the League of Arab States;
- 10) Stress the importance of ending conflicts and achieving stability in the Arab region, and the positive implications of doing

so on population development and on achieving desired goals.

B. Population policies and development planning in the Arab Region: Trends and national responses

- 1) Ensure that national legal frameworks, such as constitutions, legislation and budgets, adopt a rights-based approach to create an environment that supports the development, implementation and review of population policies;
- 2) Ensure the inclusion of population priorities in national development plans at the national and subnational levels and broaden participation in policy development, implementation and evaluation to achieve effective policies that respond to population priorities, by building national capacity and knowledge of inclusive development;
- 3) Ensure that population policies are consistent with the principles of global frameworks, including the 2013 Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda, and are participatory, innovative, inclusive and cross-sectoral to promote concerted efforts and coordination between institutions;
- 4) Ensure that population policies and development planning take into account the local level and address development disparities between urban areas and between urban and rural areas;
- 5) Ensure the flexibility of population and development policies to respond to changes and developments at the national,

regional and global levels, and stress the importance of periodically reviewing them through clear and measurable methodologies and indicators;

- 6) Confirm the need to address the negative effects of political and security crises on populations, which could include limited access to reproductive health services and contraceptives, increased maternal mortality, the spread of early marriage, child labour and cheap labour, fewer employment opportunities, and limited access to education, especially among refugee children, and difficulties in collecting and updating data;
- 7) Stress the importance of developing new indicators in line with situations in conflict-affected countries, and incorporating them in population policies and plans. Emerging indicators include those on migration, especially forced displacement, on the impact of conflict on household structures and components, and on the role of women in households and society;
- 8) Affirm the important role of religion-based institutions in supporting population and development issues, and the need to involve clerics in raising awareness on population issues;
- 9) Ensure the active participation of civil society organizations in evaluating and following up on public policies, establish clear mechanisms for that purpose, and adopt specific standards for associations that might be entrusted with that task;
- 10) Confirm the need to develop an effective monitoring and follow-up system, and the needed statistical systems, which provide

the necessary indicators to monitor progress in achieving the goals of the 2013 Cairo Declaration and the SDGs.

C. Interlinkages between the 2013 Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda

- 1) The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are fully consistent with the values, principles and provisions of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, including focusing on a rights-based approach in methods and policies and in monitoring and evaluation;
- 2) Integration between the Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda does not require their merger and is not limited to a reciprocal relationship or common issues. The Programme of Action set out in the Cairo Declaration has specificities and topics not covered by the 2030 Agenda, and has mechanisms, methods and cumulative expertise that require it to remain an independent programme that complements the 2030 Agenda;
- 3) It is vital to increase understanding of the links between the Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda to review population issues in the context of implementing the SDGs. The Cairo Declaration and the 2018 Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development are highly significant in the review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda at the national and regional levels. The Cairo Declaration and the review of its Programme of Action assisted in establishing a foundation and roadmap for sustainable development in the Arab region that take into account equality, human rights and population issues;

- 4) Arab countries must consider the population dimension when preparing voluntary national reviews that assess progress in achieving the SDGs, and which are submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- 5) In the future, the review of the Cairo Declaration should be coordinated in parallel with the review of the 2030 Agenda, conducted once every four years, to ensure that the findings of the Cairo Declaration review and its commitments are inputs in the review of the 2030 Agenda;
- 6) The Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda urge countries to produce and disseminate data disaggregated by gender, age and urbanization level, among others, to develop population policies that achieve the slogan of the 2030 Agenda on ensuring that no one is left behind and to institutionalize partnerships;
- 7) The 2030 Agenda provides countries with the opportunity to operationalize the commitments set out in international development frameworks on population and development, including the Cairo Declaration, by creating an appropriate environment for systematic work aimed at achieving goals and monitoring means of implementation, such as knowledge, technology, data and financing. In the 2030 Agenda, heads of states and governments unanimously confirmed the outcomes of all United Nations conferences, which laid solid foundations for sustainable development and specifically noted the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. They also reaffirmed their commitments to following up and reviewing those conferences as part of the follow-up and review of the SDGs, so as to achieve sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels;
- 8) The 2030 Agenda enshrines the principle of partnership, especially with civil society and the private sector that play a key role in implementing programmes on population and development, assessing their effectiveness and monitoring progress.



D. Ensuring a life of dignity for all: empowering priority sociodemographic groups

- 1) Provide social protection to the entire population in the context of comprehensive social and economic structural reforms that enshrine human rights, justice, dignity and equality;
- 2) Empower marginalized and the most vulnerable social groups, especially adolescents, young people, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and migrants, and involve those groups in developing economic and social policies and in the sustainable development process;
- 3) Take into account the concept of family and intergenerational relationships and include it in discussions on population issues, and incorporate households in population policies as a social unit that affects individual and social wellbeing;
- 4) Conduct a critical review of some social values and customs that perpetuate social stereotypes regarding girls, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and refugees, and that support practices that limit the rights of those social groups and weaken their capacity;
- 5) Promote cooperation between governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and trade unions to build upon the positive aspects of cultural patterns and societal values and to tackle their negative aspects, and involve religious institutions and academia in supporting population and development issues and raise awareness thereon.

1. Young people

- 6) Empower young people so as to benefit from the demographic window by increasing their economic participation and providing them with decent and formal employment, developing policies aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship, self-employment and vocational and technical training, and enhancing the link between education outputs and skills-building. It is also vital to include young people in social protection systems, reduce their sense of exclusion, protect them from extremism, and build their trust in their states by involving them in decision-making and encouraging their political participation;
- 7) Focus on different subgroups within youth groups, including adolescents, students, spouses, parents and workers, which requires developing policies that take into account the varied needs of those groups;
- 8) Stress the importance of youth access to information, skills and opportunities to enable them to realize their full potential and play their fundamental role as drivers of positive change in their societies and countries so as to benefit from the demographic dividend;
- 9) Reduce youth unemployment by assessing labour market needs and guiding education institutions and students (young women and men) towards specializations that facilitate access to the labour market.

2. Persons with disabilities

- 10) Adopt an inclusive approach to ensure the economic, political and social participation of persons with disabilities; this approach

must respect their rights and provide comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, and must go beyond the provision of care to focus on their empowerment and promote their role in all economic, social and political fields;

- 11) Allocate budgets to provide services that guarantee and facilitate a dignified life for all by incorporating disability issues in national development plans and programmes.

3. Women

- 12) Guarantee women's rights as an integral part of human rights, and promote women's political participation as a prerequisite for democratic transition;
- 13) Overcome structural obstacles and social restrictions that hamper women's advancement and self-realization and impede their participation in the development process, review legislative systems to create more opportunities for women's empowerment and protection from all forms of discrimination and violence, and improve the policy environment to support their employment and economic participation, especially by ensuring labour market access to young women;
- 14) Confirm the importance of empowering women in times of conflict, especially women heads of households;
- 15) Ensure that development strategies and plans are gender-responsive, and monitor budgets allocated to supporting gender equality in the context of sustainable development.

4. Older persons

- 16) Highlight care for older persons as a regional priority, especially in view of changing social roles and demographic transformations in the region;
- 17) Develop policies and programmes that take into account older persons' needs and guarantee their autonomy, such as systems for social protection, retirement, comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive care, and protection against violence, neglect and physical and psychological abuse.

E. Ensuring a healthy life for all: achieving the outcomes of the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development and the SDGs

- 1) Broaden the definition of health to include its multiple dimensions, including sexual and reproductive health, chronic and infectious diseases and mental health;
- 2) Adopt a life-cycle approach that takes into account age and social status, and develop interlinked and consistent health programmes and services that reflect the multiple dimensions of health and their interconnections and interactions;
- 3) Recognize the link between the right to choose, fertility rates and population growth, and stress the importance of providing quality information, health care and reproductive services for the entire population, especially young people, women, people living in rural and isolated areas, persons with disabilities and older persons;

- 4) Translate international commitments on sexual and reproductive health for all into rights-based policies, implement awareness raising programmes on sexual health, especially for young people, people living in rural and isolated areas and people in conflict situations, and mobilize the required budgets to implement those programmes;
- 5) Achieve universal health coverage and provide quality, low-cost health care and sexual and reproductive services for all, especially poor and vulnerable groups;
- 6) Address the lack of data on the sexual and reproductive health of wide segments of the population;
- 7) Provide youth-friendly services for sexual and reproductive health, offer health and psychological services to women and girls survivors of physical, sexual and mental abuse, raise health awareness and train service providers in that field, and incorporate sexual education in education programmes and develop those programmes to properly educate future generations;
- 8) Formulate policies and programmes that meet the health needs of older persons, including hospital care and primary health care, which requires training medical and nursing staff, establishing geriatrics departments in medical schools, reducing out-of-pocket expenditures, and developing data on older persons' health;
- 9) Respond to health challenges resulting from migration and displacement, including limited access to sexual and reproductive services, gender-based violence, sexual assault, forced marriage, child marriage, and the physical and psychological effects of conflict;
- 10) Strengthen the role of non-government organizations in providing health services for migrants and refugees to rapidly meet their needs and to bridge gaps in service access and provision to migrants and refugees in the region;
- 11) Develop programmes and monitor budgets to combat sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, collect relevant data, and establish a database for that purpose;
- 12) Urge Arab countries to ratify the Arab AIDS Strategy and increase national programmes to combat AIDS, including through prevention, treatment and care for individuals living with HIV, and respect the rights of that social group.



F. Mobility and environmental sustainability

- 1) Recognize that population issues, including those related to urban development, environmental sustainability and migration governance, are intertwined and intersect, and avoid addressing them as stand-alone sectoral issues with individual goals that are independent from other goals;
- 2) Reduce irregular migration and expand the scope of safe, orderly and regular migration to empower migrants and benefit from the economic opportunities offered by migration, and to protect migrants from the dangers of human smuggling and trafficking;
- 3) Adopt a rights-based approach in dealing with migrants, refugees and displaced persons, especially children, women, young people, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities, and work on integrating them, helping them adapt in host countries and meeting their needs, including access to information and reproductive health services;
- 4) Work on altering stereotypes of migrants and refugees from burdens for host countries to viewing them as a real development opportunity;
- 5) Work together to tackle the drivers of migration and displacement in the Arab region by promoting country stability and coordinating efforts to protect rights and strengthen the rule of law;
- 6) Respect the rights of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law, particularly the right to return, and galvanize political and financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to ensure its continuity;
- 7) Increase international support to countries hosting refugees to enable them to continue providing inclusive services and care to refugees;
- 8) Adopt innovative new approaches to urban management and expansion and develop related policies in line with population policies to ensure the sustainability of cities and the wellbeing of inhabitants, and strengthen social services and economic and investment opportunities for people living in rural areas to avoid marginalization that drives internal migration and movement to cities;
- 9) Stress that the environment is a human right and adopt flexible policies that respond to population growth and human movement and that address their negative impact, including increased energy consumption, water waste and rising emissions that contribute to climate change;
- 10) Review individual practices regarding natural resource consumption, and raise awareness of consumption practices that contribute to environmental sustainability;
- 11) Recognize the environmental dimension as a main driver of migration and displacement, given its direct impact on populations, especially the most vulnerable among them;
- 12) Focus on data and statistics and on conducting studies and research to assist decision-makers and the international community in making decisions and developing policies that take into account migrant rights and offer them protection.

G. Moving forward: mobilizing means of implementation and follow-up mechanisms

- 1) Affirm that the Programme of Action and the Cairo Declaration are necessary mechanisms for implementing the 2030 Agenda;
- 2) Operationalize national population policies by adopting effective implementation and follow-up mechanisms that involve all national stakeholders;
- 3) Promote the role of population institutions by increasing their independence, broadening their mandate, building their capacity and strengthening their coordination role;
- 4) Secure sufficient budgets to cover the costs of projects and programmes on population and sustainable development in national plans;
- 5) Promote the role of parliaments in addressing various population issues through holding the government accountable and monitoring the budget, and by incorporating population dynamics into adopted policies and following up on the implementation of the Cairo Declaration;
- 6) Stress the importance of periodically reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action and the 2013 Cairo Declaration in a transparent, bold and objective way using measurable indicators, and that runs in parallel with SDG reviews;
- 7) Recognize the important role of data and the need to collect them and check their quality, sustainability and ease of access; use data in evidence-based policy development and decision-making; consider new technological tools and work on forging partnership to that end;
- 8) Build the knowledge of decision makers who develop national and local sustainable development plans regarding population issues, sustainable development principles and the needs of vulnerable groups, especially women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants, on how to incorporate those needs in policies and subsequently in plans and budgets;
- 9) Stress the important role of civil society and the private sector, and join flexible coalitions that push for achieving gains in population and development issues;
- 10) Take measures that guarantee to strengthen and promote the relationship and trust between government and individuals.



H. Other messages

- 1) The United Nations Population Fund is committed to supporting Arab countries in facing population challenges, including by providing reliable, accurate and detailed data, to tackling all forms of violence against women and girls and child marriage, to eliminating financial and technical obstacles that impede access to information and reproductive and sexual health services, and to supporting young people and building their leadership capacity;
- 2) Urge international and regional institutions providing support to be aware of country priorities and aim to meet them, and focus on the importance of employing a bottom-up approach to population issues to ensure national ownership and accountability for all stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector;
- 3) Intensify efforts to enable the newly established Arab Council for Population and Development of the League of Arab States to perform its functions so as to promote and coordinate work on population issues at the Arab and regional levels;
- 4) Invite the United Nations Population Fund and the League of Arab States to support a project on women and family health so as to provide additional data on the status of women, households and other groups during the life cycle.









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