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## **Boxed Women in Public Administration—Between Glass Ceilings and Glass Walls: A Study of Women's Participation in Public Administration in the Arab States**

Salma Nasser<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

Inclusive decision-making is necessary in terms of both legitimacy and good policy outcomes. Recognizing this, closing persistent gender gaps in public life has emerged as a critical policy issue as countries increase their efforts to foster inclusive growth and build trust and confidence in public institutions while working towards the SDGs. The public administration determines the manner in which political and economic decisions are implemented and how budgets are planned and spent. Additionally, it is a primary employer for women in many developing countries – particularly in the Arab world. In some countries, women have in fact surpassed parity in terms of public administration employment but still lag far behind the 30% target in leadership positions. Balanced total employment among women and men is important but it is equally important to have women dispersed throughout all the different sectors of administrative governance, as well as equitably represented in all levels of decision-making. Women tend to outnumber men in general positions and decrease significantly in number further up the grade ladder. In addition to the glass ceiling that women face in the public sector, there also appears to be a strong trend of horizontal profiling: "glass walls". Women in the public sector are primarily involved in the traditionally feminized sectors of health, education and social services and almost absent from other sectors such as security and foreign affairs. The status quo represents a challenge to achieving SDGs 5, 8 and 16 and the biggest impediment to adjusting the situation is the absence of relevant data. This paper will examine the gender gap in the public administrations of Arab countries; analyze trends and policy with the ultimate aim of contributing to the development of tracking mechanisms for gender equality in the public administration.

*Keywords:* Public Administration, Civil Service, Gender Equality, Arab States

### **Introduction**

There is a rhetorical global consensus that equal access and effective participation of women and men in political, economic and administrative decision-making is a precondition for democracy and sustainable development. However, the translation of this participation into action and even measurement tools remains underdeveloped. There appears to be a stronger focus on women's access to elected positions as an indicator of access to decision making and very little attention is given to gender equality in the public administration. Gender equality in public

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administration is crucial since the public administration determines the manner in which political and economic decisions are implemented and how budgets are planned and spent. Additionally, a gender sensitized public administration is bound to convert policies into outcomes differently. Finally, it is important to note that while having women in elected office is important, often it has not always automatically translated into better gender outcomes – especially in the absence of a critical mass of elected women to mobilize for gender equality rendering elected women vulnerable to male dominated parties, politics and institutions.

Beyond balanced employment among women and men, it is equally important to have them equally dispersed throughout all the different sectors of administrative governance, as well as equitably represented in all levels of decision-making. This balance can only be perpetuated through sound gender sensitive policies and gender aware civil servants. Only then can a gender perspective be properly integrated into policy implementation and budget planning and spending.

In order to monitor the implementation of gender equality, the United Nations Statistical Commission launched the UN Global Gender Statistics Programme<sup>2</sup>, which is implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). Within the Global Programme, the following indicators have been developed for monitoring of gender equality in public life and decision-making, and the responsible agency for data collection and reporting has been nominated:

- Women's share of ministerial positions (Inter-Parliamentary Union)
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union)
- Women's share of managerial positions (International Labor Organization)
- Share of female police officers (UN Office on Drugs and Crime)
- Share of female judges (UN Office on Drugs and Crime)

Within the Global Programme, the share of women civil servants is an indicator that has yet to be added. This research aims to examine women's empowerment, participation and leadership in the executive branch of the state, and contribute to the availability of up-to-date information on gender equality in public administration and of evidence and analyses to facilitate informed policy and decision-making with the ultimate aim of contributing to the development of indicators and tracking mechanisms for women in the public administration.

Research for 17 Arab countries covered: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen. The information on Syria was based on a desk review only due to challenges accessing data as a result of the prolonged conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> The Global Gender Statistics Programme is mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission, implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and coordinated by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics IAEG-GS. The Programme encompasses:

- improving coherence among existing initiatives on gender statistics through international coordination
- developing and promoting methodological guidelines in existing domains as well as in emerging areas of gender concern
- strengthening national statistical and technical capacity for the production, dissemination and use of gender relevant data
- facilitating access to gender relevant data and metadata through a newly developed data portal (forthcoming).

## **Research methodology**

Initial research and review of literature show that it will take significant effort to access the information needed to gauge women's representation and leadership in public administration and that the data is not always immediately accessible. As the evidence base grows, measures taken to advance women's participation and leadership in the civil service will be available for comparison and analysis.

This Research was designed to build on the knowledge base available for Arab countries with three specific objectives in sight:

1. Map the national tracking systems in place for civil servants in each country including the answers to the following questions:
  - a. What data is available?
  - b. How is it categorized?
  - c. What is the source of data?
  - d. Does the country have a central institution that implements public administration policies and manages the central register of civil service employees?
  - e. What policies are in place regarding the position of women in the public administration?
2. Collect available statistical data on the participation of women in public administration, representation of women in non-elected managerial positions and dispersion of women through horizontal scope of the government;
3. Identify the main challenges to develop recommendations for establishment of effective monitoring mechanisms for participation of women in public administration and in decision-making.

The data presented in the report was collected in the following ways:

- On-line, from open sources (national and international web-sites, as well as reports of the CEDAW Committee and other regional and international organizations);
- Through telephone and e-mail communication with national institutions in charge of public administration policies and central registers of civil servants.

## **Regional context and achieving the SDGs**

Arab States, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab Spring revolutionary movement, are faced with transformational changes to state-society relations which call for a new conception of the functions, role and capacity of the public administration machinery to meet the evolving nature of political and social transitions in the region. To this date most international attention on the post-Arab Spring transformations in the Arab world has, understandably, been on the political and security aspects of these developments – on ensuring new elections, constitutions and security sector reforms. However, if freedoms are not only to be won but also to be sustained, they will need to be reflected and institutionalized in a range of public administration reforms.

As a consequence of political transitions in the region, the public – in both directly affected and neighboring countries- naturally expects newly-won freedoms to be rapidly reflected in the character of public administration. People are calling for a new social contract between state and

citizens, a contract that sees these political changes transformed into better and more responsive service delivery by the state, into growth and jobs, and into new opportunities for men and women to participate in policy making and monitoring public administration performance. As experience in many countries demonstrates, however, reforming public administration to reflect a new political dispensation poses considerable challenges: reform is slow and complex, it arouses considerable resistance from groups entrenched under previous dispensations who are nevertheless often essential for ongoing service delivery, and it requires sustained political consensus and vision to see it through (Rondinelli, 2006).

Public administration, at both the central and local level, generally reflects the orientation and character of domestic politics. In patriarchal and exclusionary societies, women, youth and minorities are often excluded from the public administration. For instance, it is common in many countries to observe a higher proportion of women in lower-levels of the public administration. Only four countries track women's access to decision making positions in the public administration. Women only represent approximately 14.55% women in national public administration leadership in Iraq, 11.8% in Kuwait, 11.15% in Palestine and 30% in UAE (Nasser, 2017). These “glass ceilings” mean that they have limited opportunities for upward progression in the hierarchy and hold lower-ranked positions than men. Women tend to be more present in “support” functions as well as in “traditional sectors” such as education, health and social care, where they generally earn less than their male colleagues. Women therefore face the problem of “glass walls” which limits their opportunities to work in sectors in which the political and economic power is concentrated such as military, police, infrastructure, economics, finance, etc.

Thus, public administration perpetuates gender-biased traditions, attitudes and practices, and this situation often reveals a lack of transparency, effectiveness and inclusion. The participation of women in public administration and in decision-making depends on complex cultural, economic and societal factors and varies from country to country. However, the sound starting point for any effort in this area is the aggregation of reliable and comparable statistics across these countries.

#### *Connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

Monitoring gender equality in the public administration directly contributes to three of the SDGs. Namely, goals numbers 5, 8 and 16. *SDG 5 reads: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* particularly in reference to target 5.5 which is to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. The target is further defined with indicator 5.5.2 which specifically refers to the proportion of women in managerial positions. A main limitation of this indicator is that it does not reflect differences in the levels of responsibility of women in these high and middle-level positions or the importance of the enterprises and organizations where they are employed. There is no consistency among what is classified as a “decision-making” position in the public administration in the countries examined in this study.

Monitoring gender equality in the public administration also contributes to SDG 8, which reads: *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*: Specifically, target 8.5: *By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*. No relevant indicator is developed yet for this target.

Finally, reference can be made to SDG 16: *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*. Within this Goal, two targets are relevant: 16.6 – *Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*, and 16.7 – *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*. There is also, 16.b, which reads: *Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development* – more specifically, indicator 16.7.1.a, which refers to the "proportion of positions (by sex, disability, age, ethnicity, and population group) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public services and judiciary) compared to national distributions."

## **National monitoring mechanisms**

### *Summary of tracking mechanisms in the Arab countries*

Sex-disaggregated data on total public administration employment is publicly available online in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Lebanon only offers sex-disaggregated data on civil servant applicants. There are, however, difficulties in tracking given political contexts. Yemen and Syria, for instance, have been unable to update data given the security setting. In the State of Palestine, data differs between the West Bank and Gaza because of an administrative split. This is also the case in Somalia where there are different policies and numbers for Puntland and Somaliland (UNDP Somalia, 2016).

A number of trends on monitoring gender equality in the civil service hold true across the Arab countries. One major impediment is the lack of consistency in what constitutes the public administration. The scope and definition of public administration/civil service varies from one country to another, depending on the definition in the national legislation. In the majority of countries within the Arab region, this definition applies to the employees in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of national government, as well as to the employees within the regional and local administration of the respective country. However, in several countries the armed forces and the police are included as part of the civil service. Additionally, several Arab countries only track public sector employment with no distinction of civil service employees.

Secondly, few countries collect sex-disaggregated data by employment grade which is a necessary statistic to identify glass ceilings. Additionally, almost none of the countries researched track for "decision-making" occupations. Only Kuwait accounts for "executive positions" and UAE tracks "Decision-making positions in civil service and diplomatic posts". A universal definition for "decision making occupations" within the public administration is a vital step for the effective tracking of gender equality in the civil service.

Third, most of the Arab States publish data on public administration through their national statistics organizations. Civil service ministries are the second most common source of publically available data. There are some countries that have data monitored internally by human resources ministries or ministries of finance, but this data is not made publically available.

**Table 1. Civil service tracking organizations by country**

COUNTRY	TRACKING ORGANIZATION
Algeria	Directorate General Civil Service
Bahrain	Supreme Council for Women <i>Only tracks public sector employees</i>
Djibouti	Ministry of Employment
Egypt	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics <sup>34</sup>
Iraq	Central Statistics Organization
Jordan	Civil Service Bureau
Kuwait	Central Statistics Bureau
Lebanon	Civil Service Council
Libya	Bureau of Statistics and Census
Morocco	Ministry of Administrative Reform and Public Service
Palestine	Central Bureau of Statistics, General Personnel Council, and separate tracking in Gaza
Saudi Arabia	General Authority for Statistics <i>Does not sex-disaggregate data on civil servants</i>
Somalia	National Civil Service Commission
Sudan	Civil Service Chamber, the Ministry of Labour & Administrative Reform and the Civil Service General Department
Tunisia	N/A
United Arab Emirates	Federal Authority for Human Resources <sup>5</sup>
Yemen	Central Statistics Organization

Fourth, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan (in its English publication), and Lebanon only provide a single year of data. Because of these single reports, changes in data collection, and limited definitional guidance, it is difficult to compare data across years. The lack of history makes any meaningful time analysis difficult. There are some countries that do provide a history of data. Kuwait, for instance, has reports dating back to 2002, and its reports from 2014 and 2015 come with Excel spreadsheets. Palestine has a similar history of data and reports for civil servants recognized by the General Personnel Council. Palestine has also undertaken research or evaluation projects on the civil service sector.<sup>6</sup>

Fifth, Kuwait and Palestine are the only countries in the region to make raw data available alongside processed data. The trend for the Arab States is to publish reports or processed statistics tables. Including the raw data alongside the processed data allows the general public to individually analyze trends within its public administration while still offering a ready analysis for others.

Finally, across these reports and summary statistics, it was most common to find

<sup>3</sup>Bahrain also tracks gender disaggregated data for applicant to the civil service but total numbers of the currently employed could not be found.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?Ind\\_id=1104](http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?Ind_id=1104)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/4f1b9a23.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The Central Bureau for Statistics publishes “Women and Public Life” reports and is the main source of publically available data. The reports are in Arabic and English. There is a 2010 report that references data from as far back as 1996. All of the charts in this report are sex-disaggregated. The most recent report is from 2016 and reports on wider data than simply civil service data (e.g. household data, education, and health), but also tracks Grade level and Geographic location. The CBS also publishes time surveys to better understand gender’s impact on quality of life and the time spent on paid versus unpaid work. While it is not specific to civil service, it gives better context to trends in female employment.

discrepancies between the available languages. Many countries published in either Arabic and English or Arabic and French. However, there was more data – and a more consistent history of data – available in Arabic. For instance, Jordan’s Civil Service Bureau has a history of reports in Arabic, while it only covers a single year in English. While these largely focused on recruitment, it allows for an understanding of the progression and evolution of public administration candidates. Additionally, Morocco has two versions of its Ministry of Public Service website: a French and Arabic version. While the French version has certain documents available, the link for public administration data connects to an Arabic-language document. When reports are inconsistent across languages, those discrepancies make it more difficult to access and find relevant data.

The following table overviews the availability of data for each country as tracked by the aforementioned ministries, agencies, or NGOs. While many countries track overall public administration employment by sex, few offer sex-disaggregated data by employment grade, wages, educational level or age. The rows shaded in white summarize sex-disaggregated data, and the rows shaded in grey summarize data that is not sex-disaggregated.



**Table 2. Available data by country**

		TOTAL	MINISTRY OR SECTOR	GRADE OR RANK	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	SALARY	AGE	EDUCATION	REGION
<b>Algeria</b> Single year (2015)	Sex-disaggregated	YES	YES	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	YES	YES	YES	--	--
<b>Bahrain</b> 2013 and 2015	Sex-disaggregated	YES	--	--	--	YES	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Djibouti</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Egypt</b>	Sex-disaggregated	YES	--	--	--	--	--	--	YES
	Not sex-disaggregated		YES	YES				YES	
<b>Iraq</b> 2012	Sex-disaggregated	YES	YES	YES	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Jordan</b> Single year for English (2014) and 2000-2017 in Arabic	Sex-disaggregated	--	--	YES (only 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	YES	--	--	--	--	--	--	YES
<b>Kuwait</b> 2002-2005, 2007-2015	Sex-disaggregated	YES	--	YES	--	--	YES	YES	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	YES	--	--	YES	--	--	--
<b>Lebanon</b> Single year (2010)	Sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated								
<b>Libya</b>	Sex-disaggregated	YES							
	Not sex-disaggregated								
<b>Morocco</b> 2012-14	Sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	YES	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	YES	YES	YES	--	--	--	YES
<b>Palestine</b> <sup>7</sup> 2007-2016 GPC, 2004-2016 CBS	Sex-disaggregated	YES (Both)	YES	YES (Both)	--	--	YES	YES	YES (CBS)
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>KSA</b> 2007-2012	Sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	YES	--	--	--
<b>Somalia</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Sudan</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Tunisia</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>UAE</b> 2012-2017	Sex-disaggregated	YES	YES (only for independent entities)	--	--	--	YES (only for independent entities)	--	N/A
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	YES	--	--	YES	--	
<b>Yemen</b> 2009, 2011-13	Sex-disaggregated	YES	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Not sex-disaggregated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Some countries track additional information related to public administration. Jordan and Lebanon sex-disaggregate data on applicants, and Saudi Arabia makes this available but does not sex-disaggregate. Saudi Arabia also tracks civil servants who participated in trainings (as does

<sup>7</sup> This data covers civil servants tracked and recognized by the General Personnel Council. Gaza has separate tracking for its civil servants available upon request.

Jordan, but sex-disaggregated) and nationality (as does Kuwait, but sex-disaggregated). Kuwait also tracks marital states. Palestine includes information on years of service.

### **Summary of the available data for the Arab region**

The effective and equal participation of women in public administration is contingent to complex cultural, economic and social factors that vary from one national context to another. In recent years, many of the Arab States have begun reforming laws that negatively impact women's status and amending discriminatory articles in existing laws. All the Arab States now have maternity leave legislation.

Women's share of public administration employment in the Arabs States ranges greatly. Only two countries have surpassed absolute parity: UAE (around 66.7% in 2014) and Kuwait (51.8% in 2015). These are followed by Bahrain (47.8% in 2015), Jordan (46% in 2010), West Bank (44%), Saudi Arabia (38% in 2014), Libya (37.5%), Iraq (36.4%), Algeria (35.7% in 2014), Morocco (35.1% in 2014), Somaliland (30% in 2005), Puntland (23% in 2010), Egypt (20.1% in 2016), Yemen (17.8% in 2013) and Gaza (6%). Data on women's share of the public administration was not found for Djibouti, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria or Tunisia.

A number of trends on women's participation in the civil service hold true across the Arab countries. The first of these is that the public administration appears to be a major source of employment for women in the region. While the percentage of women civil servants varies from one to country to another as demonstrated above, it is almost always consistently higher than the overall percentage for women's participation in the labor force, indicating that the civil service is a primary employer of women in these countries. The exceptions are Egypt and Yemen and, to a lesser degree, Somalia.

**Table 3. Women’s labor force participation and employment in the civil service (%)**

<b>WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT RATES</b>		
	<b>WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE (% OF TOTAL LABOUR FORCE)<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE</b>
Algeria	19.3%	35.7% <sup>9</sup>
Bahrain	19.8%	Unavailable
Djibouti	34.9%	Unavailable
Egypt	23.1%	20.13%
Iraq	17.8%	36.4%
Jordan	17.5%	46%
Kuwait	29.6%	52%
Lebanon	24.9%	Unavailable
Libya	26.3%	37.5% <sup>10</sup>
Morocco	26.4%	35.1%
Palestine	20.4%	Gaza: 6%
		West Bank: 44.6%
Saudi Arabia	15.2%	N/A
Somalia	31.1%	Somaliland: 30%
		Puntland: 23%
Sudan	25.3%	Unavailable
Syria	14.7%	Unavailable
Tunisia	26.9%	Unavailable
UAE	12.4%	66.7%
Yemen	26%	17.8%

Another visible trend, from countries where data is available, is that even in the countries where employment in the public administration is near parity, women tend to outnumber men in general positions, whereas men tend to outnumber women in higher grades and decision-making posts. One of the main objectives of the GEPA initiative is to increase women's participation in executive roles and decision-making positions. This is particularly difficult given the absence of a clear definition of decision-making grades and positions in almost all of the countries surveyed.

<sup>8</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dgfp.gov.dz/fr/stat.asp#f>

<sup>10</sup> The site of the Bureau of Statistics and Census has a “Statistical Book” houses a number of reports on government employment. The 2010 publication includes a breakdown of those “Working in the administrative sector”; while this is not clear if it covers public administration, the total number is 22,725 with 8,516 women (37.5%) and 14,209 men.

**Table 4. Women’s participation in the civil service and occupation of decision-making/senior positions**

<b>WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>		
	<b>FEMALE CIVIL SERVANTS</b>	<b>FEMALE CIVIL SERVANTS IN DECISION-MAKING OR SENIOR POSITIONS</b>
Algeria	721,201 of 2,020,172 <b>35.7%</b> 2014	N/A
Bahrain	25,948 of 53,321 <b>47.8%</b> 2015 <i>Tracks “public sector employees”</i>	N/A
Djibouti	N/A	N/A
Egypt	<b>20.1%</b> 2016	N/A
Iraq	499,526 of 1,373,566 <b>36.4%</b> 2012	32 of 331 Director Generals <b>9.7%</b> 2012  61 of 314 Deputy Director Generals <b>19.4%</b> 2012
Jordan	<b>46%</b> 2010	3,737 of 9,142 in 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Categories <sup>11</sup> <b>40.8%</b> 2015
Kuwait	187,902 of 363,016 <b>51.8%</b> 2015	53 of 499 Executive Positions <b>11.8%</b> <sup>12</sup> 2016
Lebanon	N/A	N/A
Libya	N/A	N/A
Morocco	<b>35.1%</b> 2014	N/A

<sup>11</sup> These grades are decision-making 1<sup>st</sup> category is management and 2<sup>nd</sup> is technical (the other grades are “vocational and professional” positions).

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.csb.gov.kw/Socan\\_Statistic\\_EN.aspx?ID=13](https://www.csb.gov.kw/Socan_Statistic_EN.aspx?ID=13)

<b>WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>		
	<b>FEMALE CIVIL SERVANTS</b>	<b>FEMALE CIVIL SERVANTS IN DECISION-MAKING OR SENIOR POSITIONS</b>
Palestine	Gaza: 264 of 4,397 <b>6%</b> West Bank <b>42%</b> 2015	<i>These numbers only refer to civil employees according to the GPC through March 2016.</i>  6 of 37 Deputy Ministers (A1) <b>16.2%</b> 2016  2 of 70 Undersecretary Assistants (A2) <b>2.9%</b> 2016  11 of 83 General Director (A3) <b>13.2%</b> 2016  77 of 628 General Director (A4) <b>12.3%</b> 2016
Saudi Arabia	<b>38%</b> 2014	N/A
Somalia	1,912 of 9,591 <b>19%</b> 2011	N/A
Sudan	N/A	N/A
Syria	N/A	N/A
Tunisia	N/A	N/A
UAE	<b>37%</b> 2017 <i>Tracks "federal government employees"</i>	Decision-making positions in civil service and diplomatic posts <b>30%</b> 2014
Yemen	105,157 of 589,806 <b>17.8%</b> 2013 <i>Tracks the "government's administration and legislation sector"</i>	N/A

In addition to the vertical challenges (glass-ceilings) that women face in the public administration, there also appears to be a strong trend of horizontal profiling (glass walls). Women in the public administration are primarily involved in the health and education sectors, and are almost absent from sectors such as security.

Finally, while most Arab countries have measures to support women's access to elected office – such as quotas – there are very few policies related to the recruitment, promotion or professional development of women in non-elected civil service. Only Djibouti stipulates a 10% quota at decision-making levels in the public administration. Morocco and Saudi Arabia have implemented policies to support gender equality in public administration. In Morocco, the Strategy and Plan for Implementing the Institutionalization of Gender Equality in the Public Service aims to incorporate a gendered approach to employment in the civil service by adapting working

conditions to the social situation of women and better reconciling private and work life.<sup>13</sup> In Palestine, the General Personnel Council and the Ministry of Women are working on policies to increase women in decision-making positions in public administration. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims to increase the percentage of females in civil service, with attention to increasing the percentage of females occupying top positions (defined as Grade 11 and above). However, its goal for decision-making is to have 5% of women in decision-making positions.

**Table 5. Policies to promote women's representation in decision making bodies and policies to promote representation in the civil service**

LEGISLATION AND TEMPORARY SPECIAL MEASURES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION		
	POLICIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING BODIES AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS	POLICIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Algeria	<b>Parliament:</b> 20% to 50% female candidates on electoral lists (IPU, 2015) <b>Wilaya Assemblies:</b> 30% female candidates on electoral lists (Quota Project, 2017)	NO
Bahrain	NO	NO
Djibouti	<b>Parliament:</b> 10% seats in National Assembly (Quota Project, 2017)	Quota Law provides the rule of at least 10 per cent of either sex in senior public positions (Law no. 192, Article 3)
Egypt	<b>Parliament:</b> One-time quota in 2014 (Quota Project, 2017) <b>Local Councils:</b> 25% of seats (Constitution, Article 180)	NO
Iraq	<b>Parliament:</b> 25% of seats (Quota Project, 2017) <b>Provincial, District, and Sub-District Councils:</b> At least 3 female winners	NO
Jordan	<b>Parliament:</b> 15 reserved seats (Husseini, 2016) <b>Municipal Council:</b> 30% of seats (Quota Project, 2017)	NO
Kuwait	NO	NO
Lebanon	NO	NO
Libya	<b>Parliament:</b> 50% candidate list (Quota Project, 2017)	NO
Morocco	<b>Parliament:</b> 60 reserved seats (Quota Project, 2017) <b>Regional Councils:</b> 33% of seats (Ibid)	Strategy and Plan for Implementing the Institutionalization of Gender Equality in the Public Service <sup>14</sup>
Palestine	<b>Parliament:</b> Candidate list requirements (Ibid) <b>Local Councils:</b> Candidate list requirements (Ibid)	NO <sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/file/Rapport%20Phase2\\_Strategieegalite\\_entre\\_sexes\(1\).pdf](http://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/file/Rapport%20Phase2_Strategieegalite_entre_sexes(1).pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/file/Rapport%20Phase2\\_Strategieegalite\\_entre\\_sexes\(1\).pdf](http://www.mmsp.gov.ma/uploads/file/Rapport%20Phase2_Strategieegalite_entre_sexes(1).pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Women and GPC are working on policies to increase women in decision-making positions in public administration

<b>LEGISLATION AND TEMPORARY SPECIAL MEASURES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION</b>		
	<b>POLICIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING BODIES AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS</b>	<b>POLICIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>
Saudi Arabia	<b>Parliament:</b> 20% parliamentary seats	Ministry of Civil Service was to conduct a program to support teleworking and improve women's participation in the civil service
Somalia	<b>Parliament:</b> 30% reserved seats in Garowe Principles (World Bank Group, 2015)	NO
Sudan	<b>Parliament:</b> 25% in all legislative bodies (quota Project, 2017)	NO
Syria	NO	NO
Tunisia	<b>Parliament:</b> 50% on candidate lists (Ibid)	NO
UAE	NO	NO
Yemen	NO	NO

### **Challenges and Recommendations**

The research has demonstrated a number of common trends and challenges across the region. This section will present recommendations for the development of a global tracking mechanism based on the following observations:

#### *Labor force participation and unemployment gender gaps*

There are low rates of participation of women in the labor force and higher unemployment among women. There is a huge gender gap in labor force participation across the Arab countries. Unemployment rates are typically double among women compared to men. This represents a staggering impediment to achieving gender equality and building inclusive institutions and policies and would drastically change if more women had access to decision making positions in the public administration. Additionally, augmenting women's access to public administration positions would have a particularly pronounced impact given that public administration appears to be one of the proffered or more acceptable sectors of employment for women.

Some of the relevant best practices recorded in this regard are providing a forum for women regarding their expectations vis-à-vis representation of how they are treated in the media; Training male and female journalism students and journalists in gender equality; Eliminating sexist stereotypes in school textbooks and integrating gender equality into initial and in-service training for educational stakeholders, e.g. inspectors and trainers; Encouraging sharing and exchange of experience between ministries in gender mainstreaming; Providing training programs and assisting in the forging of networks to empower women in the labor market; Incorporating the relevant SDGs into national policy (SDG 5, 8 and 16); Developing the capacity of gender mechanisms to monitor gender statistics; Advocating for gender mainstreaming in the context of nascent institutions.

It is important to note that the region hosts a number of failed states which will eventually embark on a state and institutional rebuilding process. In this context it is advisable to improve the ownership and implementation of the process of institutionalizing gender equality by anchoring it

in the reforms of specific sectors; Integrate gender equality mechanism into the organizational framework set up for sectoral reforms; Ensure that decision makers are on board and build public consensus around the importance of women's equal participation; Support the legislative and institutional framework empowering women in the labor force and particularly in the public administration; And strengthen national statistical and technical capacity for the production, dissemination and use of gender relevant data.

#### *Gender sensitive policies and affirmative measures for women in public administration*

Women's share of public administration employment varies from country to country. The highest rate of women's employment in the public administration was recorded in UAE (66%) (FAHR, 2017) and Kuwait (52%) (CSB, 2017) and the lowest in Gaza (6%) (UNDP, 2016) and Egypt (20.1%) (CAPMAS, 2017). However, the public administration is the primary employer of women in this region. The rate of women's employment in the public administration almost consistently surpasses women total participation in the labor force – indicating that the civil service is a major source of employment for women in this region. Given that only 2 out of 17 countries examined in this research have reached parity in civil service employment, this highlights the dire need for affirmative measures to support women's access to and development in public administration employment. Policies to support women's access to elected office have been implemented in almost all Arab countries, however, much less attention has been given to supporting women in non-elected civil service: only Morocco, Palestine and Saudi Arabia have adopted affirmative measures in this domain.

Arab states could begin by studying best practices on policies related to the recruitment, promotion or professional development of women in non-elected civil service; Adopting and implementing affirmative measures to support women's access to and development in public administration employment; Developing mechanisms to monitor the implementation of gender sensitive policies; Building capacity of relevant national institutions to monitor and implement affirmative measures and gender sensitive policies; And combining the strategic and operational functions in the design of mechanisms responsible for gender equality at ministry level. Possible medium-term programs to institutionalize gender equality include participatory, multi-dimensional and overarching assessment mechanisms, programs adapted to needs of ministries to support institutionalization of gender equality and setting up an interdepartmental committee for gender mainstreaming in human resources management.

#### *National mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive policies*

National mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive policies in the civil service need to be developed. There are no mechanisms to monitor the implementation of gender sensitive measures. National Gender machineries lack the capacity necessary to be able to take on this role. Monitoring of GEPA-related indicators by central institutions for implementation of public administration and/or management of human resources in civil service is key. Annexed to this paper is a mapping of the central institutions responsible for the implementation of public administration policies in each of the countries under study. The position of these institutions within the respective public administrations, their mandates and coordination capacity vary from country to country. Within this Research, it was possible only to identify the existence of general gender-sensitive policies and some of the specific gender policies in public administration in a few of the countries. However, it was not possible to assess how individual central institutions monitored implementation of those policies or practices related to employment, professional



development, promotions, etc.

Doubtlessly, the starting point would be to develop qualitative indicators for monitoring of gender policies in public administration and organize research related to implementation of gender policies in public administration and the role of main actors (central institutions, gender mechanisms, statistical institutions). In order to do so, Arab states need to develop methodological guidance for central institutions related to monitoring of gender related policies for recruitment, professional development, promotion and advancement in the public administration. There is also a need to develop a methodology for monitoring discrimination and harassment in the public administration. Additionally, compulsory training programs for individual agencies and ministries to monitor the implementation of gender sensitive policies should be created. And finally, it is advisable to establish a roster of experts for complementary initiatives.

#### *Definition of public administration*

The scope and definition of public administration/civil service varies from one country to another, depending on the definition in the national legislation. In the majority of countries within the Arab region, this definition applies to the employees in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of national government, as well as to the employees within the regional and local administration of the respective country. However, in several countries the armed forces and the police are included as part of the civil service. Additionally, several countries only account for "public sector employment" with no distinction to public administration. National statistical offices must adopt a singular definition for civil service and agree on the indicators for gender equality within the civil service.

#### *Definition of decision-making positions in public administration*

Another lacking definition is what constitutes a "decision making position" within the civil service. This indicator is crucial in order to make any meaningful analysis pertaining to gender equality in the public administration. For the few countries<sup>16</sup> for which there is data disaggregated by positions from the civil service census or from primary national sources such as state statistical offices or central institutions in charge of human resource databases, it was difficult to identify the decision-makers. In the national CEDAW reports, it was possible to find the numbers/percentages of women in top management – ministers and to a lesser degree deputy ministers, but not in the middle or low management. For the managerial level lower than sub-ministerial, national legislations have different titles and categorizations of posts and it is difficult to find common features which would help researchers identify the ones that belong to mid- or lower-management. For example, national legislations recognize several types of employees – “state employees”, “civil servants”, “positions”, “officials”, “executives”, etc. and their definitions differs from country to country. In some countries, “executives” have managerial/decision-making power, while in others this category is reserved for the technical staff without any decision-making power.

It is necessary to develop a clearly defined indicator related to the number of women in decision-making positions, in order to enable data comparability in terms of coverage, frequency (time period), definitions and concepts and consider the possibility of developing statistical categories for middle and low management positions in public administration within national categorization of occupations. On a global level it would be very beneficial to organize thorough research on national posts/positions/grade classifications in civil service and develop a glossary

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<sup>16</sup> Algeria (not sex-disaggregated), Bahrain (counts with elected positions), Iraq, Jordan, Morocco (by seniority, not sex-disaggregated), Palestine (by seniority and by grade), United Arab Emirates (by length of service)

with detailed descriptions, with special focus on describing the decision-making level for every post/position/grade classification. Research should be followed by information/education campaigns targeting national statistical offices, central institutions and gender mechanisms in national governments.

### *Glass ceilings*

While women tend to outnumber men in general positions their representation decreases significantly in number further up the position/ grade ladder. Data related to detection of “glass ceiling<sup>17</sup>” depends on numbers/percentages of women in mid- and lower management positions. While we found data on civil service employment by grade for 7 countries only 3 of those tracked sex-disaggregated data<sup>18</sup>. Other relevant data, such as the education level, were possible to find only for 2 countries<sup>19</sup>. Also, we did not find any data related to gender pay gap in any of the examined countries<sup>20</sup>. Gender-sensitive policies in public administration related to recruitment, professional development and advancement are almost non-existing, especially when it comes to monitoring. Some countries report to the CEDAW Committee about the percentage of woman who attend the training events for civil servants, but there is no information on how training is related to professional advancement and promotion.

One of the most crucial resources which women lack in comparison to men is networks. As such a primary recommendation would be to support the building of networks among women in the public administration and expand access to various developmental experiences, and establish formal mentoring programs that provide career guidance and support to prepare women for senior positions. The imbalance in women's share of decision making positions is a reflection of patriarchal culture which relays women in supportive roles rather than roles of leadership. Therefore it is important to sensitize and familiarize all employees about the strengths and challenges of gender, racial, ethnic and cultural differences. With women traditionally charged as principle caregivers: Work/life and family-friendly policies, although they benefit all employees, are an important step in an institution's commitment to hiring, retaining and promoting both men and women. Public administrations adopt policies that recognize and accommodate the balance between work and family responsibilities that impact the lifelong career paths of all employees. Arab states should consider adopting affirmative actions that undertake deliberate positive steps to design and implement promotion procedures that ensure the promotion system provides equal opportunity to all. There is a notable need to strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws: Workplace discrimination presents a significant glass ceiling barrier for minorities and women.

### *Glass walls*

“Glass walls”<sup>21</sup> present another impediment to the creation of balanced and responsive public administrations. In addition to the vertical challenge that women face in the public administration, there also appears to be a strong trend of horizontal profiling. Women in the public

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<sup>17</sup> Invisible barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions

<sup>18</sup> Algeria (not sex-disaggregated), Bahrain (counts with elected positions), Iraq, Jordan, Morocco (by seniority, not sex-disaggregated), Palestine (by seniority and by grade), United Arab Emirates (by length of service)

<sup>19</sup> Kuwait and Palestine

<sup>20</sup> Algeria (not sex-disaggregated), Bahrain (average wages), Kuwait (not sex-disaggregated), Saudi Arabia (not sex-disaggregated)

<sup>21</sup> Invisible barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, that reflect women's occupational segregation within sectors traditionally considered to be ‘soft’ such as culture, education, health and tourism.

administration are primarily involved in the health and education sectors and almost absent from other sectors such as security. When it comes to “glass walls”, we were able to find data disaggregated by institution/ministry for 3 countries<sup>22</sup>. In addition to that, some countries publish data on the numbers/percentages of female employees in the traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as police, defense and army in the “Women and Men” reports, and collect and publish data on women in diplomatic missions.

The first step would be a global methodology for all countries about introduction of the indicator for pay gap monitoring followed by recommendations and guidance for the integration of existing and future human resource management information systems with the salary registers and/or tax register in order to enable regular monitoring of sex-disaggregated data related to salaries. Finally Arab states should monitor sex-disaggregated data at the level of all institutions within the public administration

#### *Difficulty in obtaining data*

For the majority of countries, it was relatively easy to obtain relevant data online, or from national institutions. The situation in Syria also made it impossible to collect any viable information. Some other countries such as Libya were difficult to research as there were unclear classifications for "working in administrative sector" category. Palestine and Somaliland were, to an extent, difficult cases – very little data was available online, the rest required addressing the government. Even where data was accessible, it was insufficient. While many countries track the total number of civil servants by gender, sex-disaggregated data based on age, grade, pay, education is in most cases unavailable. Publically available data is processed. Raw data is not available to the public. There is a significant lack in research about gender issues, gender based discrimination or about women in the public administration. None of the countries within the scope of this research have carried out major research initiatives on women in the public administration. Only Jordan, Morocco, Somalia and Palestine have carried out research or assessment projects of the civil service in general. None of the examined countries reported any research on women in the civil service undertaken over the past five years and the scope of information, presentation, interpretation and frequency of data published by the national statistical offices is modest.

In this regard, further research in the area of women in public administration is necessary, as is the establishment of clear definitions and indicators. International organizations such as the ILO and UNSTATS could assist by developing clear guidance for collection, analysis and presentation of data for the countries that have a decentralized approach to public administration reform and human resource management of civil servants.

#### *Partnerships and synergies*

The final recommendation would be to promote international and regional partnerships to share experiences and good practices in gender mainstreaming and human resources management in the civil service. This involves establishing preventive and corrective mechanisms to mainstream gender into human resources programs and projects; Institutional measures to enable equal representation of women and men at all levels and in all sectors of the Civil Service; Training in gender equality, adapted to the needs of civil servants; Monitoring good practices in gender equality in public administration; Monitoring consistency and synergy between government departments as regards integration of gender equality in human resources management; Promoting

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<sup>22</sup> By sector: Algeria, Iraq, Morocco (not sex-disaggregated), Palestine

discussion to identify measures to promote the full acceptance by government departments of gender mainstreaming efforts; And lobbying and supporting decision makers as regards institutionalization of gender equality in public administration

The following national and regional organizations have been identified as possible relevant partners for exchange of expertise and good practices related to central personnel registers, as well as monitoring of gender policies in public administration in the Arab region:

- Algeria: Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA)<sup>23</sup>
- Bahrain: Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA)<sup>24</sup>
- Egypt: Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO)<sup>25</sup>
- Kuwait: Arab Planning Institute (API)<sup>26</sup> and the Civil Service Commission<sup>27</sup>
- Lebanon: Governance Institutes Forum for Training (GIFTMENA)<sup>28</sup>
- Morocco: Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA)<sup>29</sup> and the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD)<sup>30</sup>
- Saudi Arabia: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)<sup>31</sup> and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA)<sup>32</sup>
- Tunisia: Arab Governance Institute (AGI)<sup>33</sup> and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA)<sup>34</sup>
- UAE: Federal Authority for Government Human Resources<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ena.dz/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bipa.gov.bh/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.arado.org/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.arab-api.org/ar/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.csc.net.kw:8888/csc/ar/home.jsp>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.gift-mena.org>

<sup>29</sup> [www.ena.nat.tn/](http://www.ena.nat.tn/)

<sup>30</sup> <http://cafrad.int/en/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> [www.ipa.edu.sa](http://www.ipa.edu.sa) and [https://www.saudi.gov.sa/wps/portal/SaudiPages/Pages/organizationDetails/organization-ac141!/ut/p/z0/fY3LCoJAFEB\\_xRYu7Y4iYkszEQtpIZHNRoZpmm6POz4Gqb4-ax0tDxzOAQ41cBIjamHRkLhNfOBRk-TpsirCgOXbRcSKVRbsWMb8eBNBpQjWwP9LUyXoy7TUwFthzx7SyUBtei0IX9-VJ6Qf-h8RL13HE-DSkFUPC\\_Vdom0UuUybce4IrUiiGpwj9kpa0z9d9iPUXvN9PCSzN\\_v5Ij4!/](https://www.saudi.gov.sa/wps/portal/SaudiPages/Pages/organizationDetails/organization-ac141!/ut/p/z0/fY3LCoJAFEB_xRYu7Y4iYkszEQtpIZHNRoZpmm6POz4Gqb4-ax0tDxzOAQ41cBIjamHRkLhNfOBRk-TpsirCgOXbRcSKVRbsWMb8eBNBpQjWwP9LUyXoy7TUwFthzx7SyUBtei0IX9-VJ6Qf-h8RL13HE-DSkFUPC_Vdom0UuUybce4IrUiiGpwj9kpa0z9d9iPUXvN9PCSzN_v5Ij4!/)

<sup>33</sup> [www.arabgovernance.org/](http://www.arabgovernance.org/)

<sup>34</sup> [www.ena.nat.tn](http://www.ena.nat.tn)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/home.aspx>

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