

Women at work – women’s career progression

Promising practices and policy recommendations

MENA women generally earn significantly less than men and have narrower access to leadership opportunities. They also face sector- and working-hour restrictions and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Equal pay



14 MENA countries* have ratified the **ILO Equal Remuneration Convention**.

A **collective bargaining agreement** was adopted in Jordan to close the pay gap for private school teachers.



Labour codes in Morocco and Jordan mandate “equal remuneration for work of equal value”. Egypt prohibits wage discrimination based on gender. Tunisia includes generic non-discrimination provisions in its labour codes.



Under the leadership of Jordan, the **Equal Pay International Coalition** was launched in the MENA Region to address the gender pay gap.

Policy recommendations



Include a **non-discrimination provision** in the labour code together with **special provisions on women’s rights at work**, such as equal remuneration for work of equal value.

Flexible work



Yemen is the only MENA country that has ratified the **ILO Workers with Family Responsibility Convention**.



Jordan’s **flexible work regulations** cover flex work for female and male employees. Egypt and Tunisia have legal provisions which allow female public sector employees to work part time. Private sector employees in Egypt with family responsibilities also have the right to work part time.

Policy recommendations



Encourage the implementation of **flex work provisions for both women and men so that men** can share family responsibilities.

Professions and working hours



Some countries such as Jordan and UAE have **lifted restrictions on women’s ability to work at night**. UAE has also lifted **restrictions in jobs deemed dangerous**, as well as in agriculture and on the mining, manufacturing, and energy industries.

Policy recommendations



Remove all discriminatory legal provisions related to women’s participation in the labour market such as those that prohibit women from working at night or the same amount of hours as men.

Leadership and role models



Corporate governance codes in Morocco and Jordan mention gender balance on boards. Disclosure-driven policies in MENA help increase women’s representation in the boardroom. UAE has set a minimum quota for women on boards.



The World Union of Arab Banks’ **Charter for Gender Diversity** calls for nondiscrimination in recruitment procedures and promotion.



Countries have passed laws to give more visibility to **women role models in the media**.

Policy recommendations



Enhance gender balance in corporate governance through **quotas** and the inclusion of a **gender equality provision in corporate governance codes**. Include a gender equality perspective in the policy documents guiding the work of **traditional media institutions**.

Sexual harassment at work



The **ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment** and its accompanying Recommendation were adopted in 2019 and are **open for ratification**.



New laws in Morocco and Tunisia **double the penalties** for harassment perpetrators who have authority over the victim. Egypt has introduced more **severe sentences** for perpetrators who have authority over the victims. In Jordan, Bank El Etihad has issued a **sexual harassment policy**.

Policy recommendations



Work with social partners and the ILO towards **ratification of the Harassment and Violence at the Workplace Convention**.

Private sector



The private sector is increasingly aware that gender equality efforts **improve business outcomes**. E.g., Bank El Etihad in Jordan and agribusiness companies in Egypt report positive business growth thanks to their gendersensitive approaches.

Policy recommendations



Research and document national and regional **private sector gender equality initiatives** and give them **greater visibility**.

General Policy recommendations



Revise personal status laws so that women do not need to seek the approval of a male family member to work.



Give legislative recognition to economic violence as a form of violence against women.



Ensure labour inspections focus on and enforce legal provisions for non-discrimination and gender equality.