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POPULATION IN THE ARAB REGION: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Changing age-structure of the population plays a key role in shaping national development strategies and plans. This and other demographic trends are posing major challenges as well as opportunities for the Arab region. Challenges include dealing with the issue of unemployment and job creation, the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, the provision of services in rapidly urbanizing contexts as well as building and funding social security systems. The demographic changes that are unfolding in the region have implications on main social aspects such as marriage, employment, childbearing, women's status, the family unit and care for the elderly population.

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the trends and levels of key demographic indicators in the Arab region. It is one of a series of reports published on a biennial basis to present policy-makers and researchers with a regional reference that delineates the trends and patterns of various demographic and socio-economic indicators and underlines their impact on development. In addition, the paper will also address the issue of ageing. The issue of ageing gains importance in light of the tenth anniversary of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2012. Despite the fact that the population of the Arab region is relatively young and the ageing phenomenon is at a rather early stage, this phenomenon cannot be underestimated due to the significant socio-economic and health challenges that it would pose. Accordingly, it is important that Arab countries exert efforts and take measures to adjust to the changes brought about by an ageing population. The paper proposes general recommendations aimed at advancing equity and the social inclusion of older persons and at improving their quality of life, to help create a 'society for all ages'. The main source of data for the core demographic indicators in this profile, including population size, growth, mortality, fertility, age group distribution, etc. is the World population Prospects: The 2009 Revision, in addition to other United Nations statistical databases.

II. TRENDS AND LEVELS OF KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

A. POPULATION SIZE

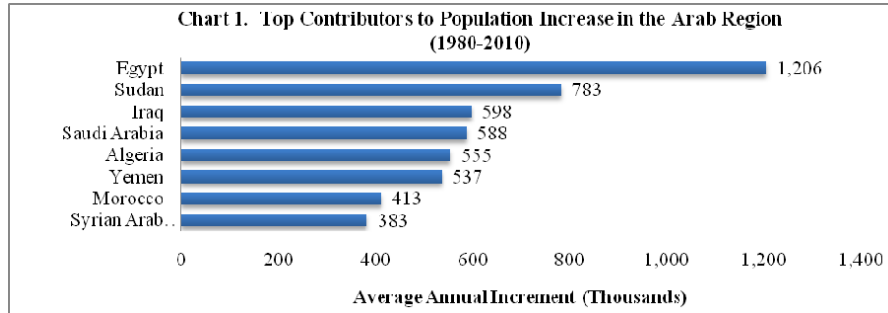
The total population of the Arab region reached 357.4 million in 2010 making up 5.2 per cent of the world population,¹ and rising by 184.7 million from the 1980 level, where it stood at 172.7 million. By 2025, the population of the Arab region is projected to reach 467.9 million or 5.8 per cent of the world population. It is important to note that there is a significant variation in population size between countries of the region, with Egypt representing 22.7 per cent of the region's total population (81.1 million), followed by Sudan (43.6 million or 12.2 per cent); Algeria (35.5 million or 9.9 per cent); Morocco (32.0 million or 8.9 per cent); Iraq (31.7 million or 8.86 per cent); Saudi Arabia (27.4 million or 7.7 per cent); Yemen (24.1 million or 6.7 per cent); and the Syrian Arab Republic (20.4 million or 5.7 per cent). Projections show that Egypt will remain by far the most heavily populated country in the Arab region, with the total population reaching 88.2 million in 2015, 94.8 million in 2020 and 100.9 million in 2025. On the other hand, countries like Comoros, Djibouti, Bahrain and Qatar have the smallest population size in the region, accounting for 0.22 per cent, 0.25 per cent, 0.34 per cent and 0.49 per cent of the total population of the region respectively (Table 1 of the statistical annex).

B. POPULATION GROWTH

In the past three decades, the Arab population has grown at an average rate of 2.42 per cent per annum as compared to 1.5 per cent for the rest of the world. Nevertheless, the rate of growth of the Arab population has been declining and is projected to reach 1.96 per cent on average in 2010-2015, 1.88 percent in 2010-2020 and 1.80 per cent in 2010-2025 respectively. At the same time, the population growth rate varies significantly between the countries of the Arab region, with the highest population growth rate between 1980

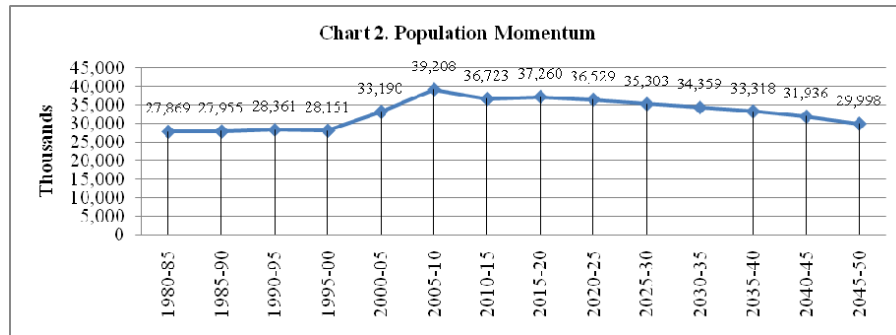
¹ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

and 2010 observed in Qatar (6.90 per cent), the United Arab Emirates (6.67 per cent) and Bahrain (4.20 per cent). This is likely due to increased migration to these countries. Countries of the region which experienced the lowest population growth were Somalia (1.24 per cent), Lebanon (1.38 per cent), Tunisia (1.61 per cent) and Morocco (1.63 per cent). The population growth rate that prevailed between 1980 and 2010 produced an increase of approximately 184.7 million persons to the total population of the region; that is to say that every year, an extra 6.2 million persons were added to the total Arab population. The increments were mainly focused in the most heavily populated countries, with Egypt accounting for an additional 1.2 million annually and contributing 1.97 per cent to the annual 1980-2010 population increment (Table 1 of the statistical annex). The principal contributors to population increase in the region during the period 1980-2010 are presented in chart 1.



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

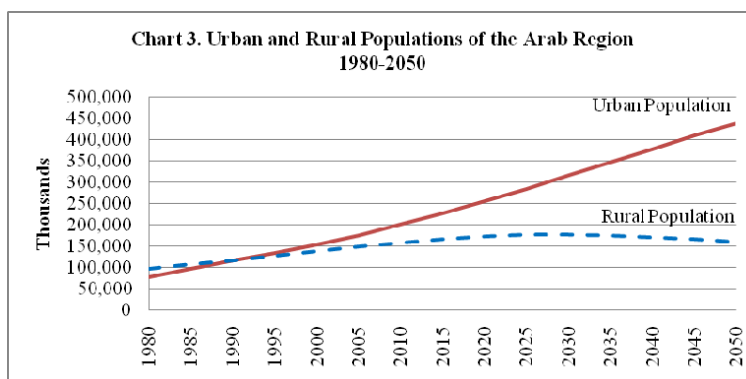
The Arab population will continue to grow due to the population momentum. The high rate of population growth that prevailed in the past three decades will cause the population increment to increase to a maximum point between 2005 and 2010 by adding 39.2 million people (chart 2). This will affect the region's capacity to tackle existing as well as imminent social, economic and political challenges.



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

C. POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

According to the 2009 Revision of the World Urbanization Prospects,² the world urban population amounted to 3.42 billion people by mid-2009 thereby surpassing the world rural population (3.41 billion) for the same period, signaling that the “world has become more urban than rural”. The situation in the Arab region is very similar. Between 1980 and 2005, the urban population of the region increased at an average rate of 3.33 percent per annum, going up from 76.3 million, or 44.1 per cent of the total population of the region, to 175.3 million or 54.1 per cent. Projections show that the region’s urban growth rate will decline to 2.42 per cent per annum during the period 2005-2025, most probably because of lower population growth rates in general. Nonetheless, the urban population will continue to grow and will reach 284.4 million or 61.6 per cent in 2025 (Table 2A of the statistical annex). It is important to note that there are considerable variations in the urbanization level between countries of the region. Among the most highly urbanized countries of the region in 2005 were Kuwait (98.3 per cent of the total population), followed by Qatar (95.4 per cent), Bahrain (88.4 per cent) and Lebanon (86.6 per cent). At the other end of the spectrum, there are Comoros (27.9 per cent), Yemen (28.9 per cent), Somalia (35.2 per cent) and Sudan (36.5 per cent), which continue to be highly rural. It is expected that all countries of the Arab region would be over 50 per cent urban by 2050 (Tables 2A and 2B of the statistical annex). The total number of urban and rural populations of the Arab region between 1980 and 2050 is illustrated in chart 3.



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision, online data <http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/index.asp?panel=1>.

D. FERTILITY LEVELS AND TRENDS

The total fertility rate is defined as the average number of children a woman has during her reproductive life.³ During the past three decades, the unweighted average total fertility rate for the Arab region declined from 6.28 live births per woman in the period 1980-1985 to 3.41 in the period 2005-2010 thereby changing the age structure of the Arab population. Nevertheless, it is still above the world average of 2.52 live births per woman for the same period, and above the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. It is likely that the Arab region will reach replacement level fertility around 2050. Although the total fertility rate is eventually expected to drop in all countries of the region, there are disparities in the pace

² Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision, Highlights (page 2). Available electronically on: http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Documents/WUP2009_Highlights_Final.pdf.




³ ESCWA (2002). Population and Development: The Demographic Profile of the Arab Countries. Available electronically on: <http://www.escwa.un.org/popin/publications/new/DemographicprofileArabCountries.pdf>.

of decline in fertility levels between the countries of the region, with different patterns of decline identified as illustrated in the table below. The table provides fertility trends for countries of the region over four decades (1985-2025). In the table, Arab countries are divided into three groups including countries whose fertility rates are above five live births per woman; countries whose fertility rates are between five and three live births per woman; and countries whose fertility rates have dropped to less than three live births per woman. As a matter of fact, three of the twenty-two Arab countries had fertility levels below replacement level in 2005-2010, namely Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Tunisia. By 2050, fourteen Arab countries (excluding Somalia, Comoros, Iraq, Yemen, Mauritania, Palestine, Sudan and Djibouti) are expected to either be at or below replacement fertility level (Table 3 of the statistical annex).

TABLE. TREND OF FERTILITY LEVEL

1985-1990	1995-2000	2005-2010	2015-2020	2020-2025
Yemen	Yemen	Somalia	Somalia	Somalia
Oman	Somalia	Yemen	Comoros	Comoros
Somalia	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Comoros	Yemen	Yemen
Jordan	Sudan	Iraq	Iraq	Iraq
Occupied Palestinian Territory	Iraq	Mauritania	Mauritania	Mauritania
Djibouti	Mauritania	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Occupied Palestinian Territory
Saudi Arabia	Comoros	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan
Iraq	Djibouti	Djibouti	Djibouti	Djibouti
Sudan	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	Jordan	Jordan
Mauritania	Oman	Syrian Arab Republic	Syrian Arab Republic	Egypt
Comoros	Jordan	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Syrian Arab Republic
Syrian Arab Republic	Syrian Arab Republic	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Egypt	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Bahrain	Kuwait
Algeria	Qatar	Bahrain	Kuwait	Bahrain
United Arab Emirates	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Oman	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Egypt	Morocco	Qatar	Qatar	Qatar
Qatar	United Arab Emirates	Algeria	Morocco	Morocco
Morocco	Kuwait	Morocco	Algeria	Algeria
Tunisia	Algeria	Kuwait	Oman	Tunisia
Bahrain	Bahrain	Tunisia	Tunisia	Oman
Kuwait	Lebanon	Lebanon	Lebanon	Lebanon
Lebanon	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates	United Arab Emirates	United Arab Emirates

Note: Countries have been classified based on the World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data, published by the United Nations http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

	Countries with fertility rates above five live births per woman.
	Countries with fertility rates between five and three live births per woman.
	Countries with fertility rates below 3 live births per woman.

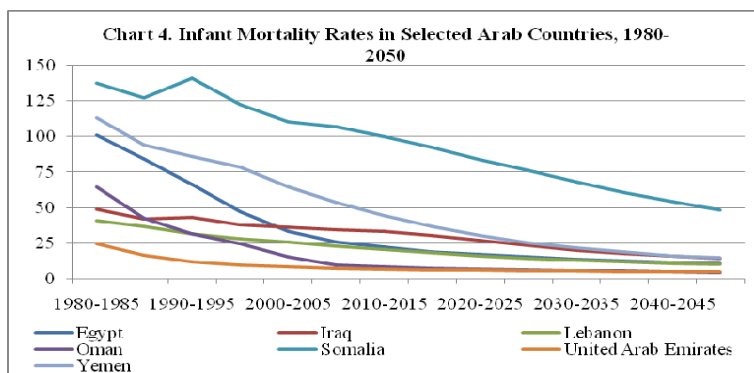
E. GOVERNMENTS PERCEPTIONS AND POLICIES ON POPULATION GROWTH AND FERTILITY

The past two and a half decades have witnessed changes to the population policies of several Arab countries on population growth and fertility. In 1996, a total of eight countries viewed the rate of population growth as too high and only seven countries intervened to lower it; while four countries (Iraq, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) viewed the rate as too low and attempted to raise it. In comparison, in 2009, the number of countries considering the population growth rate to be too high increased to eleven, and those intervening to lower it increased to thirteen countries; whereas only one country, Kuwait, considered the rate to be too low and sought to maintain it.

The governments' perceptions of and policies pertaining to fertility levels have also changed, albeit to a lesser extent. While eight countries viewed their fertility rates to be too high and nine devised policies to lower them in 1996, the number of countries regarding fertility rates as too high rose to nine in 2009 with the number seeking to lower fertility increasing to twelve countries. On the other hand, the number of countries attempting to raise fertility increased from one (Iraq) in 1996 to two (Kuwait and Qatar) in 2009. The remaining countries (twelve in 1996 and eleven in 2009) perceived their fertility rates to be satisfactory (Table 4 of the statistical annex).

F. MORTALITY LEVELS AND TRENDS

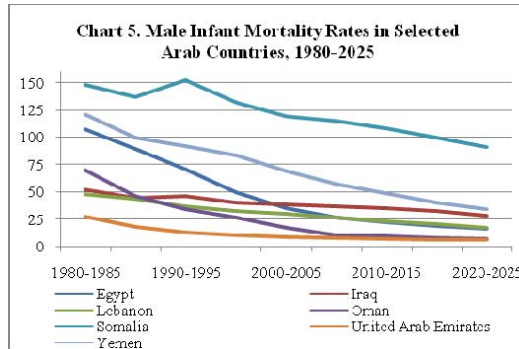
The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), an indicator of population health, is defined as the number of children per 1,000 live births who die in the first 12 months of life.⁴ The IMR for the Arab region has shown a remarkable decline over the past three decades, dropping from approximately 69 per 1,000 live births for the period 1980-1985 to about 34.1 per 1,000 live births for the period 2005-2010, which is lower than the world average of 45.6 per 1,000 live births. Nevertheless, variations between countries exist. IMR rates range from 6.9 per 1,000 live births in the United Arab Emirates for the period 2005-2010 to 106.7 per 1,000 live births in Somalia. The lowest IMRs are found in Bahrain (7.2/1,000), Kuwait (8.1/1,000), Qatar (8.8/1,000) and Oman (9.4/1,000), and the highest in Djibouti (82.1/1,000), Mauritania (77.3/1,000), Comoros (72.2/1,000), Sudan (63.8/1,000) and Yemen (53.3/1,000). The IMR for the Arab region is projected to fall to around 30.6 per 1,000 live births for the period 2010-2015 and 24.3 per 1,000 live births for the period 2020-2025 respectively (Table 5 of the statistical annex). The decreasing trend in IMR for selected Arab countries is illustrated in chart 4.



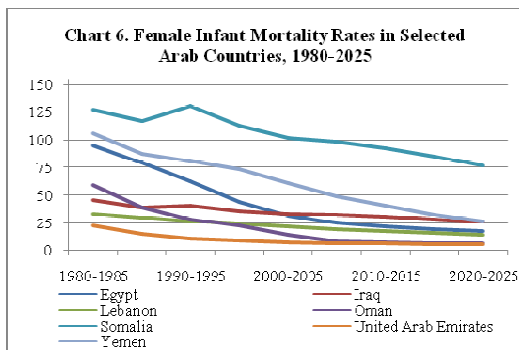
Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

⁴ Ibid.

If we look further into male and female IMRs, we notice that there are variations between the two groups whereby the IMR is generally higher among infant males than it is among infant females. For instance, the IMRs for infant males and females for the period 1980-1985 were respectively 148.3 and 126.9 in Somalia, 120.8 and 105.9 in Yemen, 106.9 and 95.0 in Egypt, 69.5 and 59.1 in Oman, 51.9 and 45.7 in Iraq, 47.5 and 33.2 in Lebanon, and 27.1 and 22.0 in the United Arab Emirates. As the IMRs improved over the years, this trend continued. Nevertheless, the gap between male and female IMR considerably narrowed. Thus, for the period 2005-2010, the IMRs for infant males and females stood at 114.5 and 98.7 in Somalia, 57.3 and 49.2 in Yemen, 36.9 and 32.1 in Iraq, 26.8 and 25.0 in Egypt, 26.3 and 19.0 in Lebanon, 10.5 and 8.3 in Oman, and 7.6 and 6.1 in the United Arab Emirates respectively. The decreasing trend in IMR for male and female in selected Arab countries is illustrated in charts 5 and 6 below.



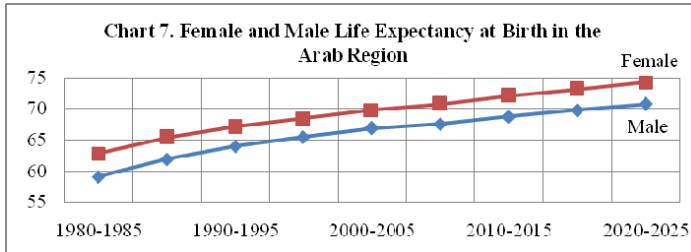
Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.



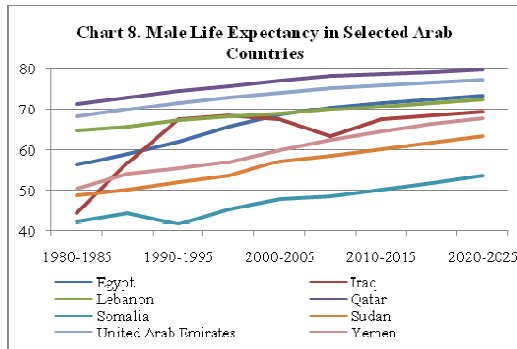
Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

The gains in life expectancy for both males and females over the past three decades have been remarkable. In 1980-1985, the unweighted average life expectancy at birth for the Arab region was estimated at 59.1 years for males and 62.8 years for females. It increased to 67.6 years and 70.8 years respectively for the period 2005-2010, which implies that men and women are at present living around eight

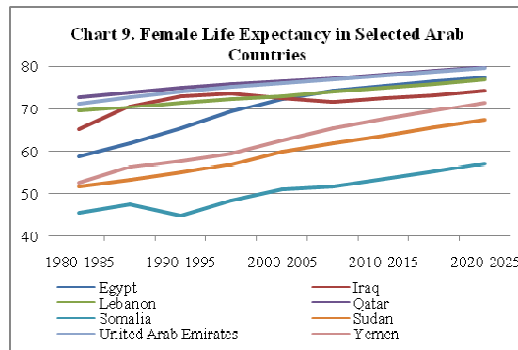
years longer than they used to in the 1980s. Projections show that this increasing trend will continue, with variations between countries. Life expectancy at birth is projected to reach 78.5 years in Qatar during the period 2010-2015, the highest for the region. On the other hand, it is projected to reach 51.7 years in Somalia for the mentioned period, which means that Somalia is unlikely to meet the target of 70 years set by the International Conference on Population and Development for 2015 (Cairo, 1994). The same applies to Djibouti (58.5 years), Mauritania (59.2 years), Comoros (61.7 years), Sudan (62.0 years), Yemen (66.1 years) and Iraq (70.2 years) (Table 6 of the statistical annex). The gains in life expectancy for males and females in the region as well as in selected Arab countries are illustrated in chart 7 and in charts 8 and 9 respectively.



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.



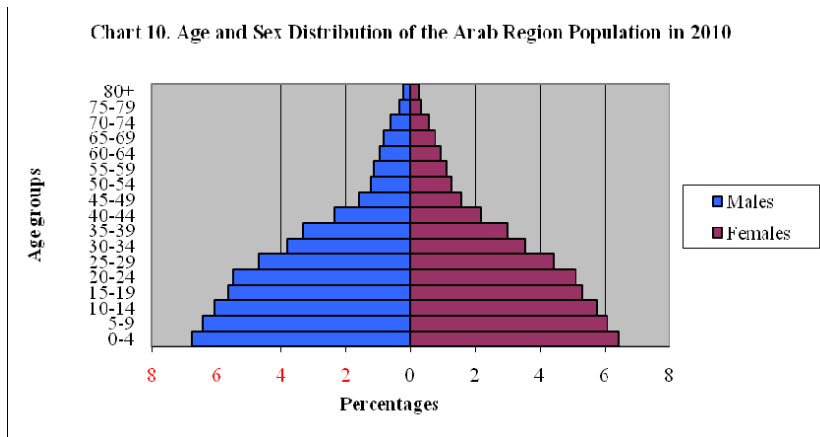
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Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

G. POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE

The age-sex distribution of the population of the Arab region in 2010 shows that the youth bulge is underway. The youth bulge is a result of the interplay between the decline in fertility and the population momentum. The impact of the fertility transition can be seen in the shrinking base of the population pyramid and the bulging of the higher age groups (Chart 10).



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

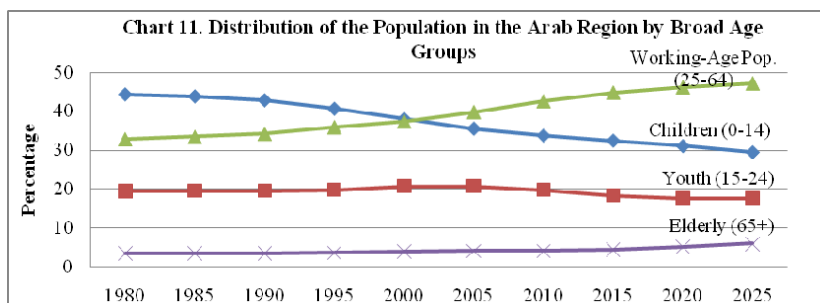
With approximately one third of the region's population being under age fifteen and almost one fifth aged 15 to 24, the Arab region has a relatively young age structure. It is noted that while the absolute number of children aged 0-14 increased from 76.7 million in 1980 to 104.6 million in 1995 and 120.7 million in 2010, the proportion of children aged 0-14 has in fact declined from 44.4 per cent of the population in 1980 to 40.7 per cent in 1995 and 33.8 per cent in 2010. This trend is projected to continue whereby the

absolute number of children aged 0-14 will reach 137.8 million in 2025, which is equivalent to 29.5 per cent of the Region's population (Chart 11 and table 7 of the statistical annex).

At the same time, the youth population, representing the age bracket 15-24 has more than doubled in absolute numbers between 1980 and 2010, increasing from 33.5 million to 70.3 million respectively. It is projected to increase to a total of 82.1 million by 2025. As to the youth population's proportion, it increased from 19.4 per cent of the region's population in 1980 to 20.7 per cent in 2000, remained at the same level in 2005 and dropped to 19.7 per cent in 2010. This downward trend will continue and is projected to reach 18.3 per cent in 2015 and 17.6 per cent in 2020, as the decline in fertility becomes greater and the population momentum slows down (Chart 11 and table 7 of the statistical annex).

On the other hand, the working-age population excluding the youth group (25-64 years) is growing in size more rapidly than other age groups. A total of approximately 95.4 million in absolute numbers was added to this population group over the past three decades. In 1980, the working-age population excluding youth amounted to 56.5 million (32.7 per cent) and increased in number to 151.9 million in 2010, which is equivalent to 42.5 per cent of the Arab population. Projections show that this increasing trend will continue whereby this population group will reach a total of 220.5 million by 2025 corresponding to 47.1 per cent of the Arab population (Chart 11 and table 7 of the statistical annex). With appropriate social and economic policies, the employment of this population group can significantly contribute to growth and prosperity.

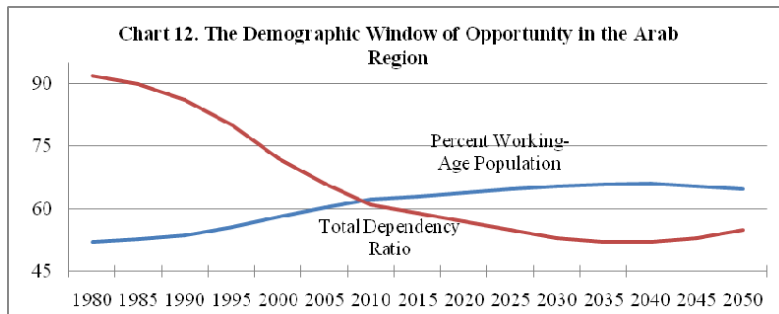
The elderly population (65 years and over) represents 4.1 per cent of the total population of the Arab region and is projected to reach 5.1 per cent in 2020 and 5.9 per cent in 2025. In absolute numbers, this is equivalent to 14.6 million in 2010, 22 million in 2020 and 27.5 million in 2025 respectively. Whereas the pace of increase in the proportion of the elderly population has been relatively slow over the past one and a half decades, it is expected to accelerate after 2020 (Chart 11 and table 7 of the statistical annex). Accordingly, by 2030, seven Arab countries are projected to have more than 8 per cent of their population aged 65 and over, namely Tunisia (12.1 per cent), Lebanon (12.0 per cent), Morocco (10.5 per cent), Algeria (9.0 per cent), Bahrain (9.0 per cent), Egypt (8.7 per cent), and Oman (8.3 per cent). The number of countries in this group is expected to increase to fourteen by 2050, with the addition of United Arab Emirates (28.0 per cent), Qatar (21.2 per cent), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (17.4 per cent), Kuwait (16.1 per cent), Saudi Arabia (15.1 per cent), Jordan (12.8 per cent), and the Syrian Arab Republic (12.8 per cent). For the former countries, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over would reach 25.4 per cent in Bahrain, 22.5 per cent in Oman, 21.4 per cent in Tunisia, 21.0 per cent in Lebanon, 19.1 per cent in Algeria, 17.7 per cent in Morocco, and 14.2 per cent in Egypt by 2050.⁵



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm

⁵ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

Population age-structure analysis shows that over the past three decades, the total dependency ratio⁶ of the Arab region has decreased from 92 per cent in 1980 to 61 per cent in 2010, and is projected to reach 59 per cent in 2015 and 55 per cent in 2025. This is mainly due to a substantial decrease in the child-dependency ratio, which fell from 85 per cent in 1980 to 54 per cent in 2010, and is expected to reach 46 per cent in 2025. The old-age dependency ratio was more steady over the period 1980 to 2010. It is projected to increase after the year 2015 to reach 8 per cent and 9 per cent in 2020 and 2025 respectively (Chart 12 and table 8 of the statistical annex). Overall, the Arab region is witnessing an increase in the working age population (15-64) combined with a decrease in the total dependency ratio, producing a situation where large working age cohorts are supporting a smaller number of dependents. This will present prospects for an increase in savings and investments and contribute to economic growth. Such transition creates a demographic window of opportunity, which is projected to continue for about a twenty-five year period (till 2035). Nevertheless, in order to benefit from this opportunity, countries in the region will have to put in place the right economic and social policies to allow the conversion of savings into investment, the creation of jobs, the promotion of education, and the matching of labour supply and demand, as well as the creation of sustainable social infrastructure in preparation for ageing.⁷



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Population and Social Development Section, based on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

Even though ageing is not regarded at the moment as a key issue for the Arab region, it cannot be underestimated given the changing demographic situation in the region and the growth in the absolute numbers of the elderly population. As mentioned above, 4.1 per cent of the total population of the Arab region is presently aged 65 years and over compared to an average of 15.9 per cent for the developed regions,⁸ where the ageing phenomenon is more advanced. It is important to note here that there are variations between countries of the region to the effect that those who have high fertility rates will experience a slower pace of population ageing, whereas those where fertility rates had declined quickly, such as Lebanon and Tunisia where 7.3 per cent and 7.0 per cent of the population is aged 65 and over respectively, will age rapidly. Besides, considering the increase in the absolute numbers of people aged 65 and over for the past three decades shows that the total for this group more than doubled by 2005 moving from 5.9 million (1980) to 12.8 million (2005), and reaching 14.6 million in 2010. This is mainly due to increased life expectancy. As indicated earlier, projections show that the absolute numbers of this age group will get to 22 million in 2020 and 27.5 million in 2025 respectively.

⁶ The ratio of the economically dependent population to the working age population.

⁷ Ageing is a process reflecting an increase in the proportion of the elderly in a population and a decrease in the proportion of children, followed by a reduction in the proportion of people of working age. This comes as a result of transition from high to low fertility levels and the continuous increase in life expectancy.

⁸ <http://esa.un.org/wpp/unpp/p2k0data.asp>.

The increase in the absolute numbers of persons aged 65 and over would pose different challenges, such as meeting the health care and social security needs of the elderly, especially for those countries of the region that are ageing more rapidly. Taking into account the fact that the old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase after 2015 and that the pace of this increase will accelerate after 2030,⁹ addressing the challenges brought about by an ageing population becomes more pressing. Therefore, policy makers need to plan in advance and create the right policy environment to enable them to properly respond to potential future challenges.

In summary, although the population of the Arab region is relatively young and the phenomenon of ageing in the region is still rather at an early stage, this phenomenon cannot be underestimated due to the significant socio-economic and health challenges that it would pose. As stated in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, "... Population ageing is a universal force that has the power to shape the future as much as globalization".¹⁰ Consequently, it is important that Arab countries exert effort to adjust to the changes brought about by an ageing population, and take measures to meet the challenges and benefit from the opportunities that result from this phenomenon. Over and above, the issue of ageing gains more importance in light of the tenth anniversary of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2012), and will be tackled in the next section of this paper.

"... Population ageing is a universal force that has the power to shape the future as much as globalization".

United Nations (2002). Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April 2002.

9

	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Old-Age Dep. Ratio for the Arab Region	10	12	13	16	18

Old-Age Dependency Ratio for the Region calculated by ESCWA based on World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, online data http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm.

¹⁰ United Nations (2002). Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April 2002, p. 19.

III. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE AGEING PHENOMENON: FUTURE IMPLICATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the Second World Assembly on Ageing held in April 2002, Governments adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Declaration, which follows a comprehensive approach to development, linking the issue of ageing to other United Nations human rights and social and economic development frameworks. The Plan and its Declaration also underline the importance of adopting a positive approach in addressing ageing issues and surmounting the negative stereotypes linked to ageing. The Plan of Action highlights three priority areas to build a society for all ages: “older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments”.¹¹ Governments have the prime responsibility for attaining the goals of the Plan of Action, in partnership with civil society institutions, the private sector and older persons themselves.

When considering the issue of ageing, a rights-based approach to development must be followed. This necessitates a major shift in the way older persons are perceived; instead of regarding them as ‘objects’ of charity, they should be viewed as ‘subjects’ with rights who are able to make decisions on matters of concern to them and as active members of society. Population ageing should be tackled from both a demographic perspective and a life cycle perspective. From a demographic standpoint, ageing is a process that results from the transition from high to low fertility and the continuous reduction of adult mortality, thereby changing the age distribution of the population from younger to older. Decreasing fertility levels are the key determinants of the timing and scope of the ageing process, whereas increased life expectancy plays a role in accelerating this process by adding to the number of older people. From a life cycle standpoint, ageing represents “a process of individual progression through the life course, particularly its latest stages”.¹² Both perspectives and the consequences they bring at the social and individual and consequently family levels require consideration. As stipulated in the International Plan of Action on Ageing, a prime objective “is to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights”.¹³

“The aim of the International Plan of Action is to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights”.

United Nations (2002). Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid 8-12 April 2002 (A/CONF.197/9)

Global demographic trends show that the older persons’ population group is increasing both as a proportion of the total population and in absolute numbers. Compared to developed countries, the ageing process in developing countries is happening at a faster pace and at lower levels of socio-economic development, which is leaving developing countries with less time to adjust to the consequences of population ageing.¹⁴ The situation in Arab countries is not very different. The ageing process in Arab countries has been taking place at a rapid pace, outstripping the available mechanisms of social and welfare support in some countries. In fact, the ageing process in Arab countries is posing more demands and challenges than it did in developed countries due to resource scarceness and an absence of safety nets, in

¹¹ United Nations (2009). Department of Economic and Political Affairs, Population Division. World Population Ageing 2009 (ESA/P/WP/212).

¹² Bob Huber (2005). Implementing the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing (UN/POP/PD/2005/21). Paper presented to the Expert Group Meeting on Social and Economic Implications of Changing Population Age Structures. Mexico City, 31 August - 2 September 2005.

¹³ United Nations (2002). Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002 (A/CONF.197/9), p. 7, paragraph 10.

¹⁴ See reference 10.

addition to other internal factors such as urbanization, migration patterns, changing family structures and political upheaval, as well as external factors, mainly globalization. Consequently, it is very important for Arab countries to prepare well to be able to manage the demands of an increasing ageing population.¹⁵

In what follows, an overview of the demographic characteristics and the socio-economic characteristics of the older population in the Arab region will be presented, along with the role of the family in providing care for the elderly and general recommendations in line with the three priority directions set in the International Plan of Action.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLDER POPULATION IN THE ARAB REGION

It is important to reiterate that despite the fact that the elderly population represents a small percentage of the total population (4.1 per cent in 2010), the ageing issue should be awarded due attention given the increase in the absolute number of older persons, which more than doubled between 1980 and 2005, going up from 5.9 million to 12.8 million. The older persons' population reached 14.6 million in 2010, and is projected to increase to 22 million in 2020 and 27.5 million in 2025.

As is the case globally, owing to the fact that the life expectancy of women exceeds that of men, women represent the majority of the older population in the Arab region, a phenomenon referred to as the "feminization of ageing".¹⁶ Besides, a remarkable characteristic of the ageing process, including in the Arab region,¹⁷ is that it is "progressive", in the sense that the segment of the oldest old (persons aged 80 or over) is growing at a faster rate than the other segments of the elderly population.¹⁸ Another characteristic of the ageing process in the Arab region is that it is more pronounced in rural areas. Two factors are viewed as key determinants of ageing in rural areas, namely urban to rural migration of the elderly once they retire, and rural to urban migration of the population of working age in pursuit of job opportunities. In addition, the migration of women of childbearing age could accelerate the ageing of rural population because of the ensuing reduction in birth rates in rural areas.¹⁹

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLDER POPULATION OF THE ARAB REGION THAT AFFECT THEIR WELL-BEING

The situation and circumstances of older persons in the Arab region differ subject to a country's level of social and economic development. Nevertheless, there are similar social and economic characteristics that most of the elderly in the region share, and which impact their well-being and the quality and type of care presented to them. Such characteristics include but are not limited to rural urban disparities in terms of access to services; low literacy levels; gender disparities which generally put older women in a more precarious situation than older men; and prolonged labour force participation due to inadequate economic capacity and pension and health coverage schemes.²⁰

¹⁵ Abba Mehio Sibai and Nabil Kronfol (2008). Situation Analysis of Population Ageing in the Arab Countries: The Way Forward Towards Implementation of MIPPA (E/ESCWA/SDD/2008/Technical Paper.2).

¹⁶ ESCWA (2002). The Arab Plan of Action on Ageing to the Year 2012 (E/ESCWA/SD/2002/WG.1/8). Presented to the Arab Preparatory Meeting for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Beirut, 5-8 February 2002, p. 9, paragraph 41.

¹⁷ ESCWA (2007). UNESCWA Contribution to the Report to be Submitted by RCNYO for the Commission for Social Development at its Forty sixth-session in 2008.

¹⁸ See reference 10, p. 23.

¹⁹ ESCWA (2008). The Demographic Profile of Arab Countries: Ageing of Rural Populations (E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/Booklet.1/Rev.1).

²⁰ See reference 13.

Rural-urban disparities are essentially manifested by higher rates of poverty and inadequate provision of fundamental social and health services in rural areas.²¹ Rural ageing has implications on development since it will eventually impact “social organization” and related institutions such as the family and the household unit.²²

Gender disparities increase the vulnerability of older Arab women. Given that the majority of Arab women work in the informal sector, or engage in unpaid work, they do not qualify for old-age pensions, and have to depend on the earnings and benefits of the male wage earner or on the support of charity organizations where available. They are often deprived of social and health benefits in their old age. In fact, the “provision of health insurance and pension schemes, as well as enforcement of legislation that address the vulnerability of the impoverished older persons remain a challenge to many Arab countries”.²³

Moreover, the probability of widowhood in old age is greater for Arab women than it is for men given the fact that women have higher life expectancy, and that men tend to re-marry after being widowed or divorced and to marry women from younger age groups. This places older women at a disadvantage and affects their emotional and economic well-being. Older women in the region are more prone to experience lack of support, whether from a spouse because of widowhood or a caregiver because of their economic disadvantage, which also limits the options they have regarding altering their household environment to suit their functional capacities. Basically, the likelihood of living alone in old age is considerably higher for Arab women than it is for Arab men.²⁴

As regards the literacy levels of older persons, there are considerable differences between countries of the region, which vary from less than one per cent in Yemen to fifty per cent in Jordan. Higher educational attainment is an important aspect as it is usually linked to better economic and health status among the elderly population. Variations in literacy levels also exist between older women and men, in favour of older men. Past trends for the region show that males benefited from earlier access to education and longer years of schooling than females. Nevertheless, this will no longer be the case for the next generations of older persons for most Arab countries. Current data show that the gender gap in schooling will narrow down thereby reducing women’s disadvantages.²⁵

Concerning labour participation, a big proportion of the elderly in the region stay in the workforce beyond the legal retirement age because they are financially dependent and live in difficult conditions, which are aggravated by the absence or inadequacy of old-age pensions and health insurance schemes. This situation is not expected to improve anytime soon. In effect, with the exception of public sector employees, there is no or minimal and inequitable coverage of pension systems and health insurance schemes for older persons in most of the Arab countries. This represents a critical issue that requires immediate attention as it severely impacts the well-being of the elderly population. Even when such schemes are in place, the general approach to social policy formulation and implementation has been rather sectoral and not comprehensive and integrated (i.e. part of a wider framework for socio-economic development), resulting in an array of programmes that are not very well coordinated.²⁶

²¹ See reference 10.

²² See reference 18, p. 3.

²³ See reference 13, p. 4.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

C. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

The family still plays an important role in providing care for the elderly population in the Arab countries. As a result, only a small proportion of the older persons are institutionalized, although accurate estimates in this connection are not available; neither is information on the quality of care provided in nursing homes. Nevertheless, the role of the family in offering care for older persons is diminishing due to several factors including urbanization, migration, increased participation of women in the labour forces, changing social norms as a result of modernization, as well as political instability in some countries of the region. The extended family structure is being increasingly replaced with the nuclear family because of new socio-economic realities, which is negatively affecting family cohesion; and societal values are changing, bearing a negative impact on inter-generational relationships. Consequently, the traditional role played by the family as the primary care provider for the elderly cannot be generally banked on anymore in the future²⁷.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

One overarching recommendation has to do with the importance of integrating demographic factors and concerns into the development planning process. This is imperative given the implications of a changing population age-structure on development in general and on socio-economic aspects of development in particular.

More specific recommendations aimed at advancing equity and the social inclusion of older persons and at improving their quality of life, to help create a 'society for all ages' are presented below. The recommendations will center on the priority areas identified in the International Plan of Action on Ageing and on some important tools for policy formulation and implementation.

(a) 'Older persons and development'

- The formulation of social policies targeting older persons would benefit from following an integrated approach in order for such policies to be successful and to maximize impact. Moreover, Governments could seek to specify well-defined targets for social programmes targeting older persons and to fully involve actors such as the private sector and civil society in the development of such programmes.
- Pension schemes should be made available for older persons. This will provide them with some kind of income security and promote social security for the aged. Evidence suggests that basic non-contributory pension schemes financed from public proceeds are manageable even for low-income countries, depending on the political will and the rate of economic growth. Arab countries could have a social pension system which includes both contributory and non-contributory schemes. The latter would offer minimum benefits and would be funded from progressive taxation. In addition, it is recommended that poverty reduction strategies include policies designed to improve the income security of older persons, especially women.
- Governments could devise employment policies that seek to increase the extent of women's and older workers' participation in the formal segment of the labour market. This will enhance the full participation of the elderly in society as well as the sustainability of pension schemes. Increasing work opportunities for older persons would necessitate taking a number of measures including the accommodation of workers' needs as they grow older, the enhancement of the conditions of work, the counteraction of any form of discrimination based on age, and the promotion of positive perceptions of older workers. In fact, Arab countries need to make use of the 'demographic window of opportunity' as it occurs. This could materialize by creating

²⁷ Ibid.

adequate numbers of decent job opportunities, which will contribute to increased revenue from taxation and developing social protection schemes. This will in turn help older workers to have better financial security when they retire.²⁸

(b) 'Advancing health and well-being into old age'

- Given the variations in health coverage of older persons in Arab countries, there is a need to put in place comprehensive policies to minimize if not remove existing inequities. Improvement in 'absolute' and 'relative' health could be realized all across the social spectrum. This is rooted in a strategy that promotes strong and universal primary care at the base of the health system and as part of a bigger social policy. In addition, programmes that provide long-term care are also needed.
- In order to ensure that the old and poor are not discriminated against, Governments would need to regulate health insurance. Since the financial cost of treating 'catastrophic illnesses' is enormous, and could push older persons into poverty, Governments might want to consider bearing the ensuing cost. To be able to do this as well as meet other health-related challenges, Governments will have to deal with health-related risks as part of a comprehensive integrated social policy plan.²⁹

(c) 'Ensuring enabling and supportive environment'

- To enhance the well-being and integration of older persons in society and help create a 'society for all ages', Governments would have to secure credit facilities for the elderly to help them alter their dwellings to suit their functional capacities. Governments would also have to account for the special needs of the elderly when designing public space and public services by ensuring easy and secure access to public buildings, and seating and special fares in public transport, etc.
- Governments should seek to provide special attention to the elderly in rural areas, since they mostly endure the consequences of a weak defective infrastructure, weak economy and reduced care by the family due to increased rates of migration of the working age population in pursuit of better opportunities. Accordingly, it might be important for Governments to attempt to reduce variations and inequity in regional development as part of a comprehensive social policy that promotes balanced development and poverty reduction.
- Governments could encourage relatives providing care to older persons at home by offering them financial incentives, including reduction in taxes and extension of credit facilities, to assist them in such efforts. Concomitantly, older persons should be encouraged to take advantage of existing 'social capital' and 'neighborhood ties', which could make up for the diminishing role of the family in providing support and care for the elderly.
- NGOs and civil society institutions should expand their work to include the provision of care and support to the older population in their home environment. At the same time, Governments must regulate the work of such organizations by means of developing norms and standards.
- Advocacy campaigns are important and could be used by Governments to help raise awareness and understanding of the problems faced by older persons; to promote a positive image of the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

elderly and overcome harmful stereotypes; and to promote support for the development and or amendment of plans, policies, approaches and legislation to make them more friendly and accommodating for the needs and concerns of the elderly population group.³⁰

(d) Making use of essential tools for policy formulation and implementation

To advance the attainment of priorities, it is recommended that tools such as evidence-based policies, mainstreaming of ageing issues into development, a participatory approach to planning and execution, and indicators to gauge implementation progress be used:

- The collection of data to inform policy is crucial and enhances credibility, transparency and accountability. Policy formulation should benefit from methodical and impartial data that has been thoroughly collected, researched and analyzed.³¹ Given that the Arab region is hampered by data shortage and by data that is not comparable, it is important to develop mechanisms to draw on in undertaking research on older persons, to determine vital issues that require assessment, to standardize definitions and measurement and to use comparable indicators that follow international norms and standards. It is also important to disseminate statistics and to share experience and knowledge on the issue of data compilation among countries of the region.³²
- The development of policies and programmes for older persons cannot be done in silos and will need to take into consideration the overall policy environment context. This is in order to advance the integration of older persons and issues of concern to them into all life aspects, whether social, economic, political or cultural. Thus, the mainstreaming of ageing would imply that all issues of relevance and significance to older persons that fall within the realm of responsibility of different government entities (ministries of health, finance, transportation) be considered altogether using an integrated and comprehensive approach. This will help promote equitable development.
- Following a participatory approach in planning, designing, implementing and monitoring policies is recommended. In this respect, participatory policy research is very important. It involves the local people by promoting the use of methods that allow them to undertake their own analysis. Building partnerships with civil society institutions is very important to the success of such an approach, which is expected to bring about benefits including a wider circle of information sources that can be used to develop policies; the identification of policy and programme priorities that mirror peoples' needs and concerns; and the monitoring of implementation of such policies and programmes and introducing amendments if necessary to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery.
- Designing measurable indicators aimed at assessing the progress made in the implementation of policies and programmes targeting older persons, and at identifying achievements and areas in need of improvement is of utmost importance.³³ This will help advance accountability by promoting the implementation of evaluations at project and programme as well as overall policy levels, and the sharing of results with all stakeholders.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Economic and Social Council (2008). Further Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: Strategic Implementation Framework (E/CN.5/2009/5).

³² See reference 13.

³³ See reference 30.

³⁴ See reference 13.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Population ageing comes as a consequence of the demographic transition and the ensuing declines in fertility and mortality levels. In the Arab region, fertility declines started at a later stage as compared to the more developed regions of the world and advanced at a relatively faster pace; and life expectancy has been continuously increasing with more and more people expected to survive into old age. Declines in fertility³⁵ are changing the age structure of the population in the Arab region; albeit the rate and pace of decline of the total fertility rate differs between countries of the region. For the period 2005-2010, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Tunisia had fertility levels below replacement level. By 2025, five more countries will converge below 2.1 live births per woman, namely Oman, Algeria, Morocco, Qatar, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Although the population of the Arab region is relatively young, the absolute number of persons aged 65 and over more than doubled over a span of three decades, increasing from 5.9 million in 1980 to 14.6 million in 2010. While the pace of increase in the proportion of the elderly population has been relatively slow over the past one and a half decades, it is expected to accelerate after 2020. There are variations between countries of the region whereby countries that have high fertility rates will experience a slower pace of population ageing, and countries where fertility rates had declined quickly, such as Lebanon and Tunisia,³⁶ will age rapidly. By 2030, almost one-third of Arab countries are projected to have more than 8 per cent of their population aged 65 and over.³⁷ The proportion should increase to approximately two-thirds by 2050.³⁸

As the ageing phenomenon is becoming more and more evident in the Arab region, it is important to note that such development is taking place at lower levels of socio-economic development when compared to the more developed regions. Thus, it is imperative that governments in Arab countries put policies in place to deal with the challenges brought about by an ageing population. Analyzing demographic transitions, age-structural changes and the ageing phenomenon at both national and regional levels is of prime importance in order to develop the necessary plans, programmes and policies to promote and enhance economic development and the wellbeing of the population at large, especially the elderly.

Since it is expected that the ageing phenomenon will bring about various challenges to Arab countries, Governments will need to strengthen their institutional capacity to adequately deal with such challenges. As such, Governments are urged to adopt an integrated approach to social policy formulation based on the principles of equity and intergenerational solidarity. Policies will need to ensure that appropriate social security schemes and health insurance programmes are put in place, empowering older persons and allowing them to maintain their independence and self-sufficiency. Social support mechanisms will have to be devised, comprising support provision to the family to facilitate its role in caring for the elderly. Promoting a participatory approach to developing, implementing, following-up on and evaluating ageing policies and programmes should be encouraged together with mainstreaming ageing into development plans, programmes and policies. Last but not least, the thorough and methodical collection and analysis of comparable data to inform policy formulation will need to be promoted.

³⁵ The unweighted average for the Arab region declined from 6.28 live births per woman in 1980-1985 to 3.41 in the period 2005-2010.

³⁶ In 2010, 7.3 per cent of the population of Lebanon and 7.0 per cent of the population of Tunisia is aged 65 and over respectively.

³⁷ The countries are: Tunisia (12.1 per cent), Lebanon (12.0 per cent), Morocco (10.5 per cent), Algeria (9.0 per cent), Bahrain (9.0 per cent), Egypt (8.7 per cent), and Oman (8.3 per cent).

³⁸ The countries are: United Arab Emirates (28.0 per cent), Bahrain (25.4 per cent), Oman (22.5 per cent), Tunisia (21.4 per cent), Qatar (21.2 per cent), Lebanon (21.0 per cent), Algeria (19.1 per cent), Morocco (17.7 per cent), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (17.4 per cent), Kuwait (16.1 per cent), Saudi Arabia (15.1 per cent), Egypt (14.2 per cent), Jordan (12.8 per cent), and the Syrian Arab Republic (12.8 per cent).

STATISTICAL ANNEX

Table 1. Population Size and Growth in the Arab Region

Country	Mid-year Population (1,000)		Projected Population (1,000)					Annual Population Increment (1,000)*	Annual Growth Rate*	Annual Growth Rate*	Annual Growth Rate*	Annual Growth Rate*
	1980	2010	2011	2015	2020	2025	2050	1980-2010	1980-2010	2010-2015	2010-2020	2010-2025
Algeria	18,811	35,468	35,980	37,954	40,180	42,043	46,522	555	2.11	1.35	1.25	1.13
Bahrain	358	1,262	1,324	1,404	1,508	1,588	1,801	30	4.20	2.13	1.78	1.53
Comoros	329	735	754	832	933	1,041	1,700	14	2.68	2.48	2.39	2.32
Djibouti	340	889	906	975	1,066	1,166	1,620	18	3.20	1.85	1.82	1.81
Egypt	44,952	81,121	82,537	88,179	94,810	100,909	123,452	1,206	1.97	1.67	1.56	1.46
Iraq	13,744	31,672	32,665	36,977	42,684	48,885	83,357	598	2.78	3.10	2.98	2.89
Jordan	2,299	6,187	6,330	6,797	7,366	7,906	9,882	130	3.30	1.88	1.74	1.63
Kuwait	1,377	2,737	2,818	3,087	3,394	3,700	5,164	45	2.29	2.41	2.15	2.01
Lebanon	2,795	4,228	4,259	4,385	4,516	4,624	4,678	48	1.38	0.73	0.66	0.60
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	3,063	6,355	6,423	6,606	7,083	7,465	8,773	110	2.43	0.77	1.08	1.07
Mauritania	1,518	3,460	3,542	3,869	4,298	4,742	7,085	65	2.75	2.23	2.17	2.10
Morocco	19,567	31,951	32,273	33,570	35,078	36,406	39,200	413	1.63	0.99	0.93	0.87
Occupied Palestinian Territory	1,510	4,039	4,152	4,648	5,317	6,027	9,727	84	3.28	2.81	2.75	2.67
Oman	1,181	2,782	2,846	3,059	3,290	3,470	3,740	53	2.86	1.90	1.68	1.47
Qatar	222	1,759	1,870	2,033	2,199	2,289	2,612	51	6.90	2.90	2.23	1.76
Saudi Arabia	9,801	27,448	28,083	30,538	33,535	36,226	44,938	588	3.43	2.13	2.00	1.85
Somalia	6,436	9,331	9,557	10,607	12,237	14,152	28,217	97	1.24	2.56	2.71	2.78
Sudan	20,071	43,552	44,632	49,072	54,919	60,811	90,962	783	2.58	2.39	2.32	2.23
Syrian Arab Republic	8,907	20,411	20,766	22,184	24,079	26,009	33,051	383	2.76	1.67	1.65	1.62
Tunisia	6,457	10,481	10,594	11,026	11,518	11,921	12,649	134	1.61	1.01	0.94	0.86
United Arab Emirates	1,016	7,512	7,891	8,374	9,174	9,867	12,152	217	6.67	2.17	2.00	1.82
Yemen	7,945	24,053	24,800	27,980	32,232	36,698	61,577	537	3.69	3.02	2.93	2.82
Total Arab Population*	172,699	357,433	365,002	394,156	431,416	467,945	632,859	6,158	2.42	1.96	1.88	1.80

Source: United Nations, 2011. *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 2A. Urban Populations and Urban Growth Rates in the Arab Countries

Country	Percentage of Urban Population															Urban Growth Rate*		
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	1980 - 2005	2005 - 2020	2005 - 2025
Algeria	43.5	48.0	52.1	56.0	59.8	63.3	66.5	69.3	71.9	74.1	76.2	78.2	80.1	81.9	83.5	3.73	2.26	2.12
Bahrain	86.1	87.2	88.1	88.4	88.4	88.4	88.6	89.0	89.4	90.0	90.6	91.2	91.8	92.3	92.8	3.06	1.88	1.79
Comoros	23.2	25.5	27.9	28.3	28.1	27.9	28.2	29.2	30.8	33.3	36.5	39.9	43.5	47.1	50.7	3.27	3.42	2.81
Djibouti	72.1	74.6	75.7	76.1	76.0	76.0	76.2	76.8	77.6	78.8	80.2	81.5	82.7	83.9	85.0	3.66	1.77	1.79
Egypt	43.9	43.9	43.5	42.8	42.8	43.0	43.4	44.4	45.9	48.1	50.9	54.1	57.2	60.3	63.3	2.13	2.07	2.10
Iraq	65.5	68.8	69.7	68.8	67.8	66.9	66.2	66.0	66.6	67.7	69.4	71.4	73.3	75.1	76.9	2.88	2.32	2.35
Jordan	59.9	66.3	72.2	78.2	78.3	78.3	78.5	79.0	79.8	80.8	82.0	83.2	84.3	85.4	86.4	4.74	2.13	2.02
Kuwait	94.8	97.9	98.0	98.1	98.2	98.3	98.4	98.5	98.6	98.6	98.7	98.8	98.9	98.9	99.0	2.85	2.10	1.97
Lebanon	73.7	79.4	83.1	84.8	86.0	86.6	87.2	87.9	88.6	89.3	90.0	90.7	91.3	91.9	92.4	2.18	0.93	0.90
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	70.1	75.5	75.7	76.0	76.4	77.0	77.9	79.0	80.3	81.6	82.9	84.1	85.2	86.2	87.2	3.01	2.03	1.88
Mauritania	27.4	35.0	39.7	39.8	40.0	40.4	41.4	43.1	45.4	48.4	51.7	55.0	58.2	61.3	64.4	4.25	2.88	2.90
Morocco	41.2	44.8	48.4	51.7	53.3	55.2	58.2	61.2	64.0	66.6	69.2	71.6	73.9	76.0	78.0	2.94	2.13	2.02
Occupied Palestinian Territory	62.4	65.2	67.9	70.4	72.0	73.1	74.1	75.3	76.6	77.9	79.4	80.8	82.2	83.5	84.7	4.37	3.21	3.10
Oman	47.6	57.1	66.1	71.7	71.6	71.9	73.0	74.3	75.7	77.1	78.7	80.2	81.6	82.9	84.2	4.81	2.27	2.19
Qatar	89.4	90.1	92.2	94.1	94.9	95.4	95.8	96.2	96.5	96.7	96.9	97.1	97.3	97.5	97.6	5.67	4.58	3.74
Saudi Arabia	65.9	72.6	76.6	78.7	79.8	81.0	82.1	83.2	84.2	85.2	86.2	87.2	88.1	88.9	89.7	4.42	2.21	2.11
Somalia	26.8	28.1	29.7	31.4	33.2	35.2	37.4	40.1	43.0	46.3	49.9	53.4	56.9	60.3	63.7	2.14	3.89	3.93
Sudan	20.0	22.4	26.6	30.5	33.4	36.5	40.1	43.8	47.4	51.0	54.5	58.0	61.3	64.6	67.7	4.96	3.75	3.58
Syrian Arab Republic	46.7	47.9	48.9	50.1	51.9	53.8	55.7	57.9	60.2	62.7	65.4	68.0	70.4	72.8	75.0	3.59	2.92	2.78
Tunisia	50.6	53.8	57.9	61.5	63.4	65.3	67.3	69.2	71.2	73.2	75.2	77.0	78.8	80.5	82.0	2.73	1.51	1.46
United Arab Emirates	80.7	79.8	79.1	78.4	80.3	82.3	84.1	85.6	86.8	87.9	88.8	89.6	90.3	91.0	91.7	5.65	2.53	2.34
Yemen	16.5	18.4	20.9	23.8	26.3	28.9	31.8	34.9	38.2	41.7	45.3	49.1	52.8	56.5	60.2	5.92	4.57	4.45
Total Arab Population*	44.1	47.0	49.5	51.1	52.6	54.1	55.7	57.5	59.4	61.6	63.9	66.4	68.7	71.1	73.3	3.33	2.49	2.42

Source: World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 2B. Rural Populations and Rural Growth Rates in the Arab Countries

Country	Percentage of Rural Population															Rural Growth Rate*		
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	1980-2005	2005-2020	2005-2025
Algeria	56.5	52.0	47.9	44.0	40.2	36.7	33.5	30.7	28.1	25.9	23.8	21.8	19.9	18.1	16.5	0.51	-0.35	-0.41
Bahrain	13.9	12.8	11.9	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.4	11.0	10.6	10.0	9.4	8.8	8.2	7.7	7.2	2.24	1.23	0.97
Comoros	76.8	74.5	72.1	71.7	71.9	72.1	71.8	70.8	69.2	66.7	63.5	60.1	56.5	52.9	49.3	2.27	1.77	1.54
Djibouti	27.9	25.4	24.4	23.9	24.0	24.0	23.8	23.2	22.4	21.2	19.8	18.5	17.3	16.1	15.0	2.84	1.17	1.01
Egypt	56.1	56.1	56.5	57.2	57.2	57.0	56.6	55.6	54.1	51.9	49.1	45.9	42.8	39.7	36.7	2.27	1.29	1.07
Iraq	34.5	31.2	30.3	31.2	32.2	33.1	33.8	34.0	33.4	32.3	30.6	28.6	26.7	24.9	23.1	2.64	2.43	2.18
Jordan	40.1	33.7	27.8	21.8	21.7	21.7	21.5	21.0	20.2	19.2	18.0	16.8	15.7	14.6	13.6	1.21	1.54	1.27
Kuwait	5.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	-1.79	0.94	0.80
Lebanon	26.3	20.6	16.9	15.2	14.0	13.4	12.8	12.1	11.4	10.7	10.0	9.3	8.7	8.1	7.6	-1.17	-0.31	-0.41
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	29.9	24.6	24.3	24.0	23.6	23.0	22.1	21.0	19.7	18.4	17.1	15.9	14.8	13.8	12.8	1.59	0.72	0.47
Mauritania	72.6	65.0	60.3	60.2	60.0	59.6	58.6	56.9	54.6	51.6	48.3	45.0	41.8	38.7	35.6	1.89	1.51	1.26
Morocco	58.8	55.2	51.6	48.3	46.7	44.8	41.8	38.8	36.0	33.4	30.8	28.4	26.1	24.0	22.0	0.69	-0.31	-0.39
Occupied Palestinian Territory	37.6	34.8	32.1	29.6	28.0	26.9	25.9	24.7	23.4	22.1	20.6	19.2	17.8	16.5	15.3	2.41	1.96	1.78
Oman	52.4	42.9	33.9	28.3	28.4	28.1	27.0	25.7	24.3	22.9	21.3	19.8	18.4	17.1	15.8	0.67	0.95	0.80
Qatar	10.6	9.9	7.8	5.9	5.1	4.6	4.2	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.14	2.76	1.99
Saudi Arabia	34.1	27.4	23.4	21.3	20.2	19.0	17.9	16.8	15.8	14.8	13.8	12.8	11.9	11.1	10.3	1.26	0.70	0.58
Somalia	73.2	71.9	70.3	68.6	66.8	64.8	62.6	59.9	57.0	53.7	50.1	46.6	43.1	39.7	36.3	0.56	1.69	1.61
Sudan	80.0	77.6	73.4	69.5	66.6	63.5	59.9	56.2	52.6	49.0	45.5	42.0	38.7	35.4	32.3	1.61	0.75	0.61
Syrian Arab Republic	53.3	52.1	51.1	49.9	48.1	46.2	44.3	42.1	39.8	37.3	34.6	32.0	29.6	27.2	25.0	2.46	1.17	0.93
Tunisia	49.4	46.2	42.1	38.5	36.6	34.7	32.7	30.8	28.8	26.8	24.8	23.0	21.2	19.5	18.0	0.28	-0.30	-0.40
United Arab Emirates	19.3	20.2	20.9	21.6	19.7	17.7	16.0	14.4	13.2	12.1	11.2	10.4	9.7	9.0	8.3	5.23	0.18	0.10
Yemen	83.5	81.6	79.1	76.2	73.7	71.1	68.2	65.1	61.8	58.3	54.7	50.9	47.2	43.5	39.8	3.03	1.79	1.63
Total Arab Population*	55.9	53.0	50.5	48.9	47.4	45.9	44.3	42.5	40.6	38.4	36.1	33.6	31.3	28.9	26.7	1.72	1.03	0.88

Source: World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/wup2009/unup/>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 3. Fertility Trends in the Arab Countries, 1980-2050 (children per woman)

Country	1980-1985	1985-1990	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050
Algeria	6.49	5.29	4.13	2.89	2.53	2.38	2.14	1.96	1.82	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.63	1.66
Bahrain	4.63	4.08	3.35	2.89	2.62	2.63	2.43	2.27	2.13	2.02	1.92	1.85	1.80	1.76
Comoros	7.05	6.00	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.08	4.74	4.43	4.13	3.87	3.63	3.42	3.23	3.06
Djibouti	6.60	6.40	5.85	5.11	4.52	3.95	3.59	3.28	3.02	2.80	2.62	2.47	2.34	2.23
Egypt	5.20	4.80	3.90	3.50	3.15	2.85	2.64	2.46	2.32	2.20	2.10	2.01	1.94	1.88
Iraq	6.35	6.15	5.80	5.40	5.12	4.86	4.53	4.23	3.96	3.71	3.48	3.29	3.12	2.96
Jordan	7.05	6.44	5.14	4.34	3.60	3.27	2.89	2.60	2.38	2.20	2.05	1.93	1.84	1.76
Kuwait	5.10	3.34	2.20	2.93	2.24	2.32	2.25	2.20	2.16	2.13	2.11	2.10	2.10	2.09
Lebanon	3.90	3.31	3.00	2.70	2.09	1.86	1.76	1.68	1.63	1.59	1.58	1.59	1.61	1.64
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	7.18	5.65	4.10	3.25	3.00	2.72	2.41	2.17	1.98	1.83	1.72	1.64	1.60	1.61
Mauritania	6.28	6.06	5.78	5.40	5.04	4.71	4.36	4.04	3.74	3.48	3.25	3.05	2.88	2.73
Morocco	5.40	4.45	3.66	2.97	2.52	2.38	2.18	2.03	1.90	1.81	1.73	1.68	1.66	1.65
Occupied Palestinian Territory	7.05	6.43	6.59	5.77	5.05	4.65	4.27	3.93	3.63	3.37	3.15	2.96	2.79	2.65
Oman	8.32	7.85	6.27	4.46	3.01	2.52	2.15	1.89	1.71	1.57	1.47	1.43	1.44	1.49
Qatar	5.45	4.50	4.01	3.30	3.01	2.40	2.20	2.04	1.92	1.81	1.73	1.67	1.64	1.62
Saudi Arabia	7.02	6.22	5.45	4.51	3.54	3.03	2.64	2.37	2.17	2.01	1.88	1.79	1.72	1.67
Somalia	6.70	6.70	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.40	6.28	6.23	5.95	5.64	5.33	5.01	4.69	4.39
Sudan	6.34	6.08	5.81	5.51	5.13	4.60	4.22	3.88	3.56	3.29	3.05	2.85	2.68	2.54
Syrian Arab Republic	6.77	5.87	4.80	3.96	3.39	3.10	2.77	2.52	2.31	2.15	2.01	1.90	1.81	1.74
Tunisia	4.92	4.14	3.13	2.32	2.04	2.04	1.91	1.80	1.72	1.67	1.65	1.66	1.69	1.72
United Arab Emirates	5.23	4.83	3.88	2.97	2.38	1.86	1.71	1.60	1.53	1.49	1.48	1.50	1.54	1.59
Yemen	9.23	8.93	8.24	6.98	6.10	5.48	4.94	4.39	3.97	3.63	3.35	3.11	2.92	2.75
Total Arab Region*	6.28	5.61	4.86	4.23	3.72	3.41	3.14	2.91	2.71	2.55	2.41	2.30	2.21	2.15

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 4. Government Perceptions and Policies on Population Growth, Fertility and Family Planning

Country	1996					2009				
	Population Growth		Fertility Level		Access to Contraceptive Methods	Population Growth		Fertility Level		Access to Contraceptive Methods
	View	Policy	View	Policy		View	Policy	View	Policy	
Algeria	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Bahrain	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Comoros	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Djibouti	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	No support	Too high	Lower	Too high	No intervention	Direct support
Egypt	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Iraq	Too low	Raise	Too low	Raise	No support	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	No intervention	Direct support
Jordan	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Kuwait	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	Maintain	No support	Too low	Maintain	Too low	Raise	Direct support
Lebanon	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Indirect support	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Direct support
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	No support	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	No support
Mauritania	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Morocco	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Satisfactory	Lower	Direct support
Occupied Palestinian Territory	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Oman	Too low	Raise	Satisfactory	Maintain	No support	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	Lower	Direct support
Qatar	Too low	Raise	Satisfactory	Maintain	No support	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	Raise	Direct support
Saudi	Too low	Raise	Satisfactory	Maintain	Limits	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	No	No support

Table 4. Government Perceptions and Policies on Population Growth, Fertility and Family Planning

Country	1996					2009				
	Population Growth		Fertility Level		Access to Contraceptive Methods	Population Growth		Fertility Level		Access to Contraceptive Methods
	View	Policy	View	Policy		View	Policy	View	Policy	
Arabia									intervention	
Somalia	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Indirect support	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Indirect support
Sudan	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support
Syrian Arab Republic	Satisfactory	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Satisfactory	Lower	Direct support
Tunisia	Satisfactory	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Satisfactory	Lower	Satisfactory	Lower	Direct support
United Arab Emirates	Too high	No intervention	Satisfactory	No intervention	No support	Satisfactory	Lower	Satisfactory	Maintain	No support
Yemen	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support	Too high	Lower	Too high	Lower	Direct support

Source: United Nations, 2009. *World Population Policies, 2009*

Table 5. Infant Mortality Rates in the Arab Countries, 1980-2050 (per 1,000 live births)

Country	1980-1985	1985-1990	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050
Algeria	70.1	50.4	42.2	36.6	29.6	25.0	21.5	18.6	16.5	14.8	13.4	12.2	11.3	10.5
Bahrain	21.9	16.4	14.1	11.5	9.1	7.2	6.7	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.1	4.8	4.5	4.3
Comoros	105.5	95.2	89.3	83.5	77.8	72.2	62.8	55.0	48.0	41.7	36.0	31.2	27.2	24.0
Djibouti	125.1	116.9	109.2	100.0	91.1	82.1	75.0	66.5	58.2	50.8	44.2	38.4	33.4	29.0
Egypt	101.1	84.6	66.6	47.0	33.1	25.9	22.0	19.0	16.8	15.1	13.5	12.4	11.4	10.5
Iraq	48.9	41.8	43.4	38.1	35.9	34.6	33.3	30.5	26.9	23.1	20.1	17.6	15.8	14.3
Jordan	44.4	36.0	30.6	26.7	23.6	21.0	19.1	17.8	16.6	15.2	13.8	12.5	11.6	10.7
Kuwait	21.6	16.4	13.3	11.3	9.7	8.1	7.6	7.1	6.6	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.0	4.8
Lebanon	40.6	36.8	31.4	28.1	25.6	22.7	20.2	17.9	15.6	14.0	12.7	11.5	10.6	9.9
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	50.0	38.0	28.3	20.5	17.7	15.0	13.2	12.0	10.9	10.0	9.3	8.7	8.1	7.6
Mauritania	93.1	80.9	76.7	75.7	76.5	77.3	69.9	63.7	57.9	51.7	45.3	39.7	34.9	30.8
Morocco	96.3	78.6	63.3	51.4	41.3	34.1	28.5	24.6	21.4	18.8	16.9	15.3	13.9	12.8
Occupied Palestinian Territory	53.0	40.0	32.9	27.6	24.6	22.2	19.5	17.5	15.9	14.4	12.9	11.8	10.9	10.1
Oman	64.4	42.5	31.4	24.4	15.3	9.4	8.4	7.1	6.5	5.9	5.5	5.1	4.8	4.5
Qatar	28.2	22.6	18.1	14.4	11.3	8.8	8.2	7.7	7.3	6.9	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.6
Saudi Arabia	57.0	42.3	30.2	22.2	19.4	18.5	16.2	14.5	13.0	11.8	10.9	10.1	9.4	8.8
Somalia	137.8	127.2	141.3	122.6	110.6	106.7	100.0	92.4	84.0	75.9	68.1	60.8	54.1	48.1
Sudan	106.5	99.1	91.2	81.1	70.2	63.8	57.3	50.9	45.1	40.0	35.6	31.4	27.8	24.8
Syrian Arab Republic	49.9	36.2	26.1	20.8	17.4	15.0	13.8	12.5	11.5	10.7	9.9	9.2	8.6	8.1
Tunisia	64.1	48.9	34.4	27.1	23.5	20.8	18.4	16.5	14.8	13.3	12.2	11.2	10.3	9.5
United Arab Emirates	24.6	16.6	11.8	9.7	8.2	6.9	6.6	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.0	4.8	4.6
Yemen	113.5	94.0	86.2	78.6	64.8	53.3	44.4	36.6	30.2	25.2	21.4	18.5	16.1	14.4
Total Arab Region*	69.0	57.3	50.5	43.6	38.0	34.1	30.6	27.3	24.3	21.7	19.3	17.2	15.5	14.0

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 6. Life Expectancy at Birth in the Arab Countries by Gender, 1980-2050 (years)

Country	1980-1985			1985-1990			1990-1995			1995-2000			2000-2005		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Algeria	60.2	62.6	61.4	64.7	67.1	65.9	66.6	69.1	67.8	67.9	70.4	69.2	69.7	72.2	71.0
Bahrain	69.3	72.3	70.5	70.8	73.3	71.9	71.7	73.9	72.7	72.6	74.5	73.4	73.3	74.9	74.0
Comoros	51.0	55.0	53.0	53.0	57.0	55.0	54.3	58.0	56.1	55.7	59.0	57.3	57.0	60.0	58.5
Djibouti	47.8	50.7	49.2	49.2	52.2	50.7	50.6	53.5	52.0	51.8	54.8	53.3	53.2	56.0	54.6
Egypt	56.3	59.0	57.6	59.0	62.0	60.5	62.0	65.5	63.7	65.7	69.3	67.4	68.6	72.4	70.5
Iraq	44.5	65.2	53.3	56.8	70.7	63.3	67.6	73.2	70.3	68.3	73.7	71.0	67.6	72.6	70.1
Jordan	66.8	69.4	68.0	68.6	71.0	69.7	69.8	72.2	70.9	70.6	72.9	71.7	71.2	73.6	72.3
Kuwait	69.8	72.6	70.9	71.1	73.5	72.1	72.0	74.1	72.8	72.6	74.5	73.3	73.1	74.9	73.7
Lebanon	64.7	69.5	67.0	65.6	70.5	68.0	67.2	71.6	69.4	68.2	72.4	70.3	68.9	73.2	71.0
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	60.6	64.2	62.4	64.5	68.9	66.4	66.9	71.7	69.0	69.3	74.5	71.6	70.5	75.7	72.8
Mauritania	52.8	55.6	54.2	53.9	56.8	55.4	54.9	57.9	56.5	55.3	58.4	56.9	55.6	58.8	57.2
Morocco	58.0	61.4	59.7	60.9	64.6	62.7	63.5	67.5	65.5	65.6	69.8	67.7	67.5	71.8	69.6
Occupied Palestinian Territory	62.8	66.1	64.4	65.5	68.7	67.1	67.3	70.4	68.9	68.9	71.9	70.4	69.8	72.9	71.3
Oman	62.1	64.7	63.4	67.2	69.8	68.4	71.1	73.4	72.1	72.4	74.5	73.2	73.6	75.2	74.3
Qatar	71.3	72.8	71.9	73.0	74.0	73.4	74.5	75.0	74.7	75.8	75.9	75.8	77.0	76.6	76.9
Saudi Arabia	63.3	65.4	64.2	66.3	68.6	67.3	68.6	71.1	69.6	69.6	72.4	70.7	70.7	73.4	71.9
Somalia	42.4	45.6	43.9	44.4	47.6	45.9	41.8	44.9	43.3	45.3	48.5	46.9	47.8	51.0	49.4
Sudan	48.8	51.7	50.2	50.2	53.2	51.7	52.0	55.1	53.5	53.7	57.0	55.3	57.2	60.1	58.6
Syrian Arab Republic	65.9	69.2	67.5	68.5	71.4	70.0	70.8	73.4	72.0	72.2	74.8	73.5	73.1	75.9	74.5
Tunisia	62.7	65.7	64.1	65.3	68.8	67.0	68.3	72.1	70.1	70.1	74.0	72.0	71.1	75.1	73.0
United Arab Emirates	68.1	71.3	69.2	70.0	72.9	71.1	71.6	74.1	72.5	72.9	75.2	73.8	74.2	76.2	74.9
Yemen	50.3	52.6	51.5	54.0	56.3	55.2	55.5	57.9	56.8	57.1	59.6	58.3	60.0	62.6	61.3
Total Arab Region*	59.1	62.8	60.8	61.9	65.4	63.6	64.0	67.1	65.5	65.5	68.5	67.0	66.9	69.8	68.2

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 6. Life Expectancy at Birth in the Arab Countries by Gender, 1980-2050 (years)
[Continued]

Country	2005-2010			2010-2015			2015-2020			2020-2025			2025-2030		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Algeria	70.9	73.7	72.3	71.9	75.0	73.5	72.8	76.1	74.5	73.7	77.1	75.4	74.4	78.0	76.2
Bahrain	74.0	75.4	74.6	74.7	76.1	75.3	75.3	76.7	75.8	75.9	77.4	76.5	76.5	78.3	77.2
Comoros	58.3	61.0	59.7	60.3	63.2	61.7	62.0	65.1	63.5	63.6	66.9	65.2	65.0	68.5	66.7
Djibouti	55.2	58.0	56.6	57.0	60.0	58.5	58.9	62.3	60.6	60.6	64.2	62.4	62.3	66.2	64.2
Egypt	70.5	74.3	72.3	71.6	75.5	73.5	72.5	76.6	74.5	73.4	77.5	75.5	74.2	78.4	76.3
Iraq	63.4	71.7	67.3	67.6	72.6	70.2	68.4	73.4	71.0	69.4	74.4	72.0	70.6	75.6	73.2
Jordan	71.7	74.3	72.9	72.2	75.2	73.6	72.7	75.8	74.2	73.3	76.4	74.8	73.9	77.2	75.5
Kuwait	73.5	75.2	74.2	74.0	75.9	74.8	74.5	76.5	75.3	74.9	77.1	75.8	75.5	77.8	76.4
Lebanon	69.9	74.2	72.0	70.7	75.1	72.9	71.7	76.0	73.9	72.6	77.0	74.9	73.5	77.9	75.8
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	71.7	76.9	74.0	72.7	77.9	75.1	73.6	78.7	76.0	74.4	79.4	76.9	75.1	80.1	77.7
Mauritania	55.9	59.2	57.5	57.4	61.0	59.2	58.7	62.5	60.6	59.9	64.0	62.0	61.4	65.7	63.5
Morocco	69.0	73.4	71.2	70.3	74.9	72.5	71.4	76.0	73.7	72.3	77.0	74.7	73.2	77.9	75.6
Occupied Palestinian Territory	70.6	73.8	72.2	71.5	74.8	73.1	72.3	75.7	73.9	73.0	76.4	74.7	73.7	77.2	75.5
Oman	70.9	74.8	72.6	71.4	76.4	73.4	72.7	77.4	74.2	73.6	78.3	75.0	74.4	79.1	75.8
Qatar	78.1	77.3	77.9	78.7	78.2	78.5	79.2	79.0	79.2	79.7	79.8	79.5	80.2	80.4	80.2
Saudi Arabia	72.2	74.4	73.1	73.2	75.6	74.2	74.0	76.6	75.1	74.8	77.6	75.9	75.5	78.4	76.7
Somalia	48.7	51.8	50.2	50.1	53.4	51.7	51.8	55.2	53.5	53.7	57.2	55.4	55.6	59.3	57.4
Sudan	58.6	62.0	60.3	60.2	63.8	62.0	61.9	65.7	63.7	63.5	67.4	65.4	64.9	69.0	66.9
Syrian Arab Republic	73.9	76.9	75.3	74.5	77.7	76.1	75.2	78.6	76.8	75.9	79.3	77.6	76.5	80.0	78.2
Tunisia	71.9	76.0	73.9	72.6	77.1	74.8	73.4	77.9	75.6	74.2	78.8	76.5	74.9	79.5	77.2
United Arab Emirates	75.3	77.0	75.9	76.0	78.0	76.8	76.6	78.8	77.4	77.3	79.6	78.0	77.8	80.3	78.6
Yemen	62.5	65.4	63.9	64.5	67.7	66.1	66.3	69.7	68.0	67.8	71.6	69.7	69.2	73.2	71.2
Total Arab Region*	67.6	70.8	69.1	68.8	72.1	70.3	69.8	73.2	71.4	70.8	74.3	72.4	71.7	75.4	73.5

Table 6. Life Expectancy at Birth in the Arab Countries by Gender, 1980-2050 (years)

[Continued]

Country	2030-2035			2035-2040			2040-2045			2045-2050		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Algeria	75.2	78.8	77.0	75.9	79.6	77.7	76.5	80.3	78.4	77.1	80.9	79.0
Bahrain	77.2	79.0	77.8	77.7	79.8	78.5	78.3	80.5	79.1	78.9	81.1	79.6
Comoros	66.3	70.0	68.1	67.5	71.3	69.4	68.6	72.5	70.5	69.6	73.5	71.5
Djibouti	63.8	67.7	65.7	65.1	69.1	67.0	66.3	70.3	68.3	67.6	71.7	69.6
Egypt	74.9	79.2	77.0	75.6	79.9	77.8	76.3	80.6	78.4	76.9	81.2	79.1
Iraq	71.7	76.7	74.3	72.6	77.6	75.2	73.5	78.5	76.0	74.3	79.2	76.8
Jordan	74.7	78.1	76.3	75.4	78.9	77.1	76.1	79.6	77.8	76.7	80.3	78.4
Kuwait	76.2	78.6	77.1	76.8	79.4	77.8	77.4	80.1	78.4	78.0	80.7	79.0
Lebanon	74.3	78.8	76.6	75.0	79.5	77.4	75.7	80.2	78.1	76.4	80.8	78.7
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	75.8	80.8	78.4	76.4	81.4	79.1	77.1	82.0	79.8	77.7	82.6	80.3
Mauritania	63.0	67.4	65.2	64.5	69.0	66.7	65.9	70.4	68.1	67.1	71.7	69.3
Morocco	74.0	78.7	76.4	74.8	79.5	77.2	75.5	80.2	78.0	76.2	80.8	78.6
Occupied Palestinian Territory	74.5	78.1	76.3	75.2	78.9	77.1	75.9	79.7	77.8	76.6	80.3	78.4
Oman	75.1	79.8	76.5	75.8	80.5	77.2	76.4	81.1	78.0	77.1	81.7	78.7
Qatar	80.7	81.1	80.8	81.2	81.7	81.4	81.7	82.3	81.9	82.2	82.8	82.4
Saudi Arabia	76.2	79.2	77.4	76.8	79.9	78.1	77.4	80.6	78.7	78.0	81.2	79.3
Somalia	57.6	61.3	59.4	59.4	63.3	61.3	61.2	65.2	63.1	62.8	66.9	64.8
Sudan	66.3	70.4	68.3	67.4	71.9	69.6	68.5	73.5	70.9	69.5	74.8	72.1
Syrian Arab Republic	77.1	80.7	78.9	77.7	81.3	79.5	78.3	81.9	80.1	78.8	82.5	80.7
Tunisia	75.6	80.2	77.9	76.3	80.9	78.6	76.9	81.5	79.2	77.5	82.1	79.8
United Arab Emirates	78.4	80.9	79.1	78.9	81.5	79.6	79.5	82.1	80.2	80.0	82.7	80.7
Yemen	70.4	74.5	72.5	71.5	75.7	73.6	72.4	76.8	74.6	73.3	77.7	75.5
Total Arab Region*	72.7	76.4	74.4	73.5	77.3	75.3	74.3	78.2	76.2	75.1	79.0	76.9

Table 7. Distribution of the Population in the Arab Countries by Broad Age Groups

Country	Distribution of the Population Aged 0-14										Distribution of the Population Aged 15-24									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Algeria	45.8	44.9	43.1	39.7	34.2	29.7	27.0	26.3	25.1	22.8	19.3	20.2	20.4	21.1	22.6	22.6	20.6	17.1	15.0	15.4
Bahrain	34.5	33.4	32.6	30.1	28.1	27.3	20.0	20.8	21.1	19.8	22.0	16.0	16.4	16.5	16.8	17.0	14.9	11.1	10.9	11.3
Comoros	46.5	47.5	46.2	43.8	41.3	41.7	42.6	42.1	40.2	38.1	19.5	19.0	19.5	20.8	22.2	20.7	18.1	18.2	19.6	20.5
Djibouti	45.3	44.6	44.2	43.4	41.3	38.5	35.8	34.3	33.3	32.1	19.5	20.0	19.9	19.8	20.3	21.2	21.6	20.4	18.8	18.1
Egypt	42.5	41.8	41.0	38.8	36.0	33.1	31.5	30.2	28.7	26.8	19.8	19.6	18.9	19.4	20.7	21.3	19.7	17.9	17.3	17.1
Iraq	46.7	46.6	46.3	44.5	43.5	43.5	43.2	41.5	39.8	38.0	18.2	19.6	21.0	21.4	20.7	19.8	19.6	19.7	19.9	19.8
Jordan	48.8	47.0	46.6	41.1	39.8	36.9	37.5	33.6	30.9	28.1	19.5	20.3	21.6	22.0	21.7	21.8	21.5	20.1	19.7	19.2
Kuwait	40.0	36.9	35.7	28.6	26.6	24.2	26.7	25.6	23.5	21.0	17.9	17.4	18.7	15.6	15.4	15.7	15.5	13.5	14.1	15.2
Lebanon	39.3	37.9	36.1	32.2	30.5	27.6	24.8	22.0	20.7	19.5	20.3	20.6	20.4	19.5	18.6	18.6	17.9	17.6	15.9	13.9
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	47.0	47.3	43.5	38.3	32.4	30.6	30.4	31.2	28.7	25.0	18.2	19.1	21.1	23.2	24.7	22.1	17.7	16.3	17.1	18.3
Mauritania	45.6	45.3	44.9	44.0	42.7	41.2	39.9	38.7	37.3	35.7	19.7	19.9	20.1	20.4	20.4	20.2	20.0	19.7	19.6	19.6
Morocco	42.5	41.6	39.7	37.3	33.6	30.3	28.0	26.4	25.0	23.3	20.7	20.0	20.2	20.6	21.1	20.9	19.6	18.0	16.4	15.8
Occupied Palestinian Territory	49.9	48.9	48.0	48.1	47.4	45.8	42.5	40.1	38.6	37.3	19.1	20.3	20.3	19.8	19.6	19.7	21.2	21.8	20.4	19.3
Oman	45.6	46.0	45.6	40.3	36.7	32.1	27.2	27.5	24.8	20.4	17.6	16.3	16.0	16.3	22.1	22.3	21.9	12.1	14.2	17.0
Qatar	33.5	28.7	28.3	27.0	26.1	21.4	13.5	14.6	14.4	13.0	20.1	15.6	13.7	13.1	14.3	13.1	14.6	11.2	14.8	13.0
Saudi Arabia	44.7	43.0	42.7	41.3	38.6	33.5	30.3	29.0	27.5	25.1	17.8	17.9	17.9	16.1	18.8	18.3	18.0	16.0	15.0	15.7
Somalia	46.2	45.1	44.4	43.2	44.1	44.6	44.9	44.6	44.2	44.0	19.0	19.5	19.9	20.6	19.3	18.3	18.6	18.9	19.4	19.4
Sudan	44.7	44.6	43.9	43.1	42.3	41.4	40.1	38.5	36.9	35.3	18.8	19.0	19.4	19.7	19.8	19.7	19.7	19.8	19.8	19.4
Syrian Arab Republic	48.7	48.2	46.7	43.6	40.1	39.1	36.9	33.1	29.6	27.2	19.6	20.0	20.6	21.7	22.4	22.3	20.4	21.1	20.8	19.3
Tunisia	42.0	40.1	38.1	34.3	30.0	25.7	23.5	22.8	22.3	20.8	21.1	20.8	20.0	19.8	20.7	20.8	19.0	15.9	13.7	13.7
United Arab Emirates	28.3	32.1	31.1	26.9	25.6	19.5	17.0	16.2	15.3	14.2	18.2	14.3	15.8	15.7	16.0	16.8	16.1	11.7	10.9	10.1
Yemen	49.4	51.5	53.0	50.9	48.8	46.3	44.2	43.2	41.8	39.8	19.2	18.6	17.9	18.0	20.7	22.1	22.1	21.1	20.1	20.1
Total Arab Population*	44.4	43.9	42.9	40.7	38.1	35.6	33.8	32.5	31.1	29.5	19.4	19.5	19.5	19.8	20.7	20.7	19.7	18.3	17.6	17.6

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 7. Distribution of the Population in the Arab Countries by Broad Age Groups [Continued]

Country	Distribution of the Population Aged 25-64*										Distribution of the Population Aged 65+									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Algeria	30.8	31.1	32.9	35.5	39.0	43.1	47.8	51.6	53.9	54.5	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.1	4.5	4.6	5.0	6.0	7.2
Bahrain	41.3	48.0	48.7	51.2	52.7	53.1	63.0	65.7	64.3	62.7	2.1	2.7	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.4	3.8	6.2
Comoros	31.0	30.6	31.5	32.4	33.6	34.8	36.6	37.0	37.2	37.9	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.9	3.3
Djibouti	32.9	33.0	33.5	34.3	35.7	37.4	39.4	41.5	43.9	45.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.9	4.3
Egypt	34.3	35.0	36.3	37.7	38.9	40.9	43.7	46.0	47.4	48.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.7	5.0	5.9	6.7	7.7
Iraq	31.1	29.9	28.8	30.2	32.0	33.0	34.0	35.7	36.9	38.7	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.5
Jordan	28.2	28.8	28.2	33.6	35.2	37.7	37.0	42.3	45.1	47.9	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.7
Kuwait	40.5	44.4	44.2	53.7	54.9	56.8	55.3	58.1	59.6	59.6	1.6	1.4	1.5	2.1	3.1	3.4	2.5	2.8	2.8	4.1
Lebanon	35.1	36.4	38.3	42.1	44.2	46.8	50.0	52.7	54.7	56.4	5.3	5.0	5.2	6.2	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.6	8.8	10.2
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	32.5	31.4	32.8	35.6	39.6	43.5	47.6	47.4	48.5	49.9	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.4	3.8	4.3	5.0	5.8	6.8
Mauritania	32.2	32.3	32.4	32.9	34.2	35.9	37.5	38.7	40.1	41.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.4
Morocco	32.7	34.4	36.3	37.8	40.6	43.5	46.9	49.6	51.4	52.0	4.2	4.0	3.8	4.4	4.7	5.3	5.5	6.0	7.2	8.9
Occupied Palestinian Territory	28.7	28.6	29.5	30.0	30.7	32.0	33.5	35.0	37.8	40.0	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.5
Oman	34.2	35.2	36.1	41.1	38.8	42.8	48.3	56.8	56.7	56.3	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.5	3.6	4.3	6.2
Qatar	45.0	54.6	56.8	58.5	58.0	64.2	70.9	72.9	69.4	71.6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.4	2.5
Saudi Arabia	34.6	36.6	36.8	40.0	39.2	45.1	48.7	51.6	53.1	53.6	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.6	3.4	3.0	3.0	3.4	4.5	5.6
Somalia	31.9	32.5	32.7	33.3	33.8	34.3	33.8	33.7	33.4	33.6	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.9	3.0
Sudan	33.6	33.5	33.6	34.0	34.6	35.5	36.7	37.9	39.3	40.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.3
Syrian Arab Republic	28.2	28.5	29.3	31.1	33.8	34.9	38.7	41.5	44.3	47.2	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.9	4.3	5.4	6.4
Tunisia	33.2	35.0	37.3	40.2	43.0	46.6	50.6	53.9	55.3	55.1	3.7	4.0	4.6	5.8	6.4	6.9	7.0	7.4	8.6	10.3
United Arab Emirates	52.3	52.3	52.0	56.3	57.4	62.9	66.4	71.3	72.0	72.1	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.7	3.6
Yemen	28.9	27.6	26.8	28.3	27.9	29.0	31.1	33.1	35.3	37.1	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.9
Total Arab Population*	32.7	33.3	34.1	35.8	37.3	39.7	42.5	44.7	46.1	47.1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.4	5.1	5.9

Table 8. Trends in Dependency Ratios in the Arab Countries, 1980-2025

Country	Child Dependency Ratio										Old-age dependency ratio									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Algeria	91	87	81	70	56	45	40	38	36	33	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	9	10
Bahrain	54	52	50	45	40	39	26	27	28	27	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	5	8
Comoros	92	96	91	82	74	75	78	76	71	65	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	6
Djibouti	86	84	83	80	74	66	59	55	53	51	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7
Egypt	78	77	74	68	61	53	50	47	44	41	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	12
Iraq	95	94	93	86	82	82	81	75	70	65	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	6
Jordan	102	96	94	74	70	62	64	54	48	42	7	8	7	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
Kuwait	68	60	57	41	38	33	38	36	32	28	3	2	2	3	4	5	4	4	4	5
Lebanon	71	66	61	52	49	42	36	31	29	28	10	9	9	10	11	11	11	11	12	15
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	93	94	81	65	50	47	47	49	44	37	4	5	5	5	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mauritania	88	87	85	82	78	73	69	66	62	59	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Morocco	80	76	70	64	54	47	42	39	37	34	8	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	11	13
Occupied Palestinian Territory	104	100	96	97	94	88	78	70	66	63	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	6
Oman	88	89	87	70	60	49	39	40	35	28	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	9
Qatar	51	41	40	38	36	28	16	17	17	15	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	3
Saudi Arabia	85	79	78	74	67	53	46	43	40	36	6	5	5	5	6	5	4	5	7	8
Somalia	91	87	84	80	83	85	86	85	84	83	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Sudan	85	85	83	80	78	75	71	67	62	59	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Syrian Arab Republic	102	100	93	82	71	68	62	53	45	41	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	8	10
Tunisia	77	72	66	57	47	38	34	33	32	30	7	7	8	10	10	10	10	11	13	15
United Arab Emirates	40	48	46	37	35	24	21	19	18	17	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	4
Yemen	103	111	118	110	100	90	83	80	75	70	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	5
Total Arab Population*	85	83	80	73	66	59	54	52	49	46	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	9

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, can be accessed online at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

* Calculated by ESCWA

Table 8. Trends in Dependency Ratios in the Arab Countries, 1980-2025 [Continued]

Country	Total dependency ratio									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Algeria	99	95	88	77	62	52	46	46	45	43
Bahrain	58	57	53	48	44	43	28	30	33	35
Comoros	98	102	97	88	79	80	83	81	76	71
Djibouti	90	88	87	85	79	71	64	61	59	57
Egypt	85	83	81	75	68	61	58	56	55	53
Iraq	103	102	101	94	90	89	87	81	76	71
Jordan	110	103	101	80	76	68	71	60	54	49
Kuwait	71	62	59	44	42	38	41	40	36	34
Lebanon	80	75	70	62	59	53	47	42	42	42
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	97	98	85	70	56	52	53	57	53	47
Mauritania	93	92	90	87	83	78	74	71	67	64
Morocco	87	84	77	71	62	55	50	48	47	48
Occupied Palestinian Territory	109	104	101	101	99	93	83	76	72	69
Oman	93	94	92	74	64	54	42	45	41	36
Qatar	54	43	42	40	38	29	17	19	19	18
Saudi Arabia	91	84	83	78	72	58	50	48	47	44
Somalia	97	92	90	85	88	90	91	90	89	89
Sudan	91	91	89	86	84	81	77	73	69	66
Syrian Arab Republic	109	106	100	89	78	75	69	60	54	50
Tunisia	84	79	74	67	57	48	44	43	45	45
United Arab Emirates	42	50	47	39	36	26	21	20	21	22
Yemen	108	116	123	116	106	95	88	85	80	75
Total Arab Population*	92	90	86	80	72	66	61	59	57	55