



Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Women's Affairs



**Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy:
Promoting Gender Equality and Equity
2011-2013**



Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Women's Affairs

Table of contents



05

Foreword



08

Introduction & methodology



12

The Strategy's points of reference



13

Basic principles of the Strategy



14

Vision statement for the sector

15

Situation analysis

30

National mechanisms in support of citizenship rights and gender



34

Strategic objectives, policies and interventions



40

Monitoring & evaluation

44

Annexes

Preface



Foreword

This Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy is part of national efforts, supported and endorsed by the Council of Ministers, to develop various sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies for the period 2011-2013 in order to serve as a cornerstone for the development of the Palestinian Development Plan for the next three years.

The content of this 2011-2013 Cross-Sectoral National Strategy reflects the Palestinian Authority's (PA) commitment to equality and equity, respect for human rights, and active involvement in eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination. The government's commitment to gender issues is reflected in their presence on the national agenda. In order to translate such commitment into practical and tangible forms, a national cross-sectoral gender strategy has to be formulated.

This Strategy serves to respond to the real needs and solve problems preventing women from enjoying an equal status alongside men in Palestinian society, and to help achieve the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3), "Promote gender equality and empower women," which is consistent with the goals of the PA Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA).

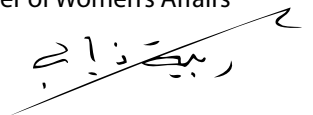
The Strategy highlights multiple challenges requiring full cooperation and coordination between various public institutions, NGOs and the private sector, as well as international and regional organizations supporting women's issues. To this end, MoWA is looking forward to forging close cooperation links with all relevant stakeholders concerned with genuine equality of all citizens irrespective of race, gender or religious beliefs. Such cooperation will necessarily help create a broad base of knowledge, understanding and commitment to the Strategy among all stakeholders.

The Strategy document seeks to promote gender equity and equality by addressing priority gender-related problems. It offers guidance for reducing gender gaps and serves as a reference for developing programs, projects and appropriate gender-responsive actions that would positively influence the living and working conditions of both men and women with equity and equality. It further serves as a basis for advancing the status of women in the society and providing equal opportunities to all citizens in accordance with their varying abilities, skills and conditions.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those whose contributions made this Strategy possible. Special gratitude is due to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN) for its continuous support to MoWA. We would also like to express appreciation to all individuals who have contributed to the development of this Strategy in MoWA, the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD), and all public institutions, NGOs and private sector agencies.

Wishing success to all efforts in support of women's issues,

Rabiha Diab
Minister of Women's Affairs



Groups involved in developing the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy

Ministry of Women's Affairs

HE. Rabeeha Diab
Minister of Women's Affairs

Ms. Fatima Wathae'fi
Head of the Planning Team

Ms. Fatima Radaedeh

Ms. Somod Elhamdalla

Ms. Nabilah Rizq

Mr. Amin Assi

Ms. Fatima Al Batmeh

Ms. Razan Mousa

Ms. Lamis Al Saifi

Mr. Nedal Ka'kban

Ms. Majeda Ma'rouf

Ms. Tha'era Mohamad

Mr. Sami Sehwal

Ms. Aziza Assaf

Ms. Marlain Al Rabadi

Ms. Manar Natour

Mr. Amjad Zaedat

Ms. Wafa Al A'araj

Ms. Elham Sami

Ms. Amal Abu Shanab

Ms. Shereen Abu Rob

Ms. Rola Hanna

Mr. Rami Zaqqat

Other Palestinian Authority Ministries

Ms. Ms. Jalwah Badr
Ministry of Detainees & Ex-Detainees Affairs

Ms. Amal Hammad
Ministry of Education & Higher Education

Ms. Mazena Abu Hakmah
Ministry of Finance

Dr. Suzan Abdo
Ministry of Health

Ms. Nariman Awwad
Ministry of Information

Ms. Nehad Wahdan
Ministry of the Interior

Ms. Amal Abu Sbaih
Ministry of Justice

Ms. Iman Assaf
Ministry of Labor

Ms. Fatima Shana'a
Ministry of National Economy

Ms. Manal Zetawi
Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development

Mr. Mahomud Ataya
Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development

Ms. Shahenaz Saleh
Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development

Ms. Randa Taher
Ministry of Public Works & Housing

Ms. Nawal Al Tamimi
Ministry of Social Affairs

Ms. Mas'ade Muaddi
Ministry of Youth and Sport

Ms. Hanan Al Dureidi
Refugee Affairs Department

Ms. Ahed Abu Amshah
Financial & Administrative Control Bureau

Ms. Hayat Al Bazzar
Council of Ministers

Ali Abu Diak
Ministry of Justice

Ahlam Odeh
Ministry of Agriculture

Maram Sawalha
Ministry of Agriculture

Abeer As-Shawa
Ministry of Transportation

Linda Jadalla
Ministry of Transportation

Hanin Al-Masri
Ministry of Agriculture

Shurouq Abdul-Khaleq
Ministry of Youth and Sports

Hidata Qar'an
Ministry of Economy

Ghada Al-Hitan
Ministry of Education

Nihad Abu Ghazaleh
Ministry of Education

Manal Al-Turk
Ministry of Labor

Shahinaz Saleh
Ministry of Planning

Fadileh Abdul-Hafeeth
Ministry of Tourism

Faimah Ahmad Sa'id 'Asqool
Ministry of Waqf

Jawad Abu Zahra
Ministry of Communication

Rabi'a Mahmoud
Ministry of Youth and Sports

Iman Jarrar
Ministry of Agriculture

Multilateral and Bilateral Organizations

Ms. Alia El-Yassir
UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Head of Office

Ms. Yolanda Iriarte
UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Gender Equality Adviser

Ms. Luna Saadeh
UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Gender-based Violence Consultant

Ms. Carol Ziadeh
UNDP/PAPP

Ms. Zahira Kamal
UNESCO

Ms. Marina Juan Oliva
EU Commission Technical Assistance Office

Ms. Sima Al Alami
UNFPA

Mr. Ziad Sharia
Netherlands Representative Office to the PA

Ms. Rea Bonzi
UNRWA

Ms. Suhair Sawalha
UNRWA

Mr. Riham Jafari
UNRWA

Ms. Sigge Wennesland
UNRWA

Mr. Charles St. George
UNRWA

Ms. Aisha Al Refa'e
UNRWA

Ms. Beatriz Perezmena
OHCHR

Ms. Mary Koussa
World Bank

Ms. Hanna Nakleh
MDG Fund

Ms. Samar Samarah
MDG Fund

Mr. Hanan Jayyous
ILO

Local Organizations

Ms. Mariam Salah
Women Program Center

Ms. Khadejeh Radaedeh
Union of Women's Committees for Social Work

Ms. Ahlam Samhan
General Union of Palestinian Women

Ms. Enaya Kaed
General Union of Palestinian Women

Ms. Mona Al Nammoura
General Union of Palestinian Women

Ms. Lucy Thaljiyeh
We'am Center

Ms. Sahar Qawasmi
We'am Center

Ms. Khawla Al Azrak
Psycho-Social Counseling Centre for Women

Dr. Islah Jad
Birzeit University, Director of Women's Studies Institute

Ms. Rose Shomali
General Director, Women's Affairs Technical Committee

Ms. Nehaya Mohamad
Al Najda Association

Ms. Fatima Al Muaqqat
Maintenance Fund

Ms. Zahira Kamal
Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center

Ms. Rania Sinjelawi
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling

Ms. Suraida Abed Hussain
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling

Mr. Hani Awad
PYALARA

Ms. Evin Al Ja'bari
Tawasol Center

Ms. Afaf Ghatasheh
Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees

Mr. Kifah Al Ja'bari
Happy Homes Society for Culture & Development

Ms. Ohaila Shomar
Sawa

Ms. Lamis Al Hantuli
Miftah

Ms. Do'a Wadi
Business Women Forum - Palestine

Mr. Issam Al Aroui
The Palestinian NGO Network

Mr. Mustafa Al Khawaja
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Ashraf Hamdan
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Ms. Nida Abu Zanat
Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Sheikh Ibrahim Awadallah
Palestinian Dar Al-Efta'

Ms. Sa'ida Al Atrash
Mehwar Center

Ms. Khitam Sa'afeen
Union of Palestinian Women Committees Society

Ms. Sawsan Shunnar
Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committee

Ms. In'am Al Batal
Al Najda Association

Ms. Khadejeh Husain
The Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR)

Mr. Salah Abdul-Atti
The Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR)

Ms. Muntaha Jarrar Al Budeiri
Arab Women's Union Society

Ms. Amneh Al Rimawi
Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

Ms. Marina Zayed
Juzoor Foundation for Health & Social Development

Ms. Ibtisam Zedan
Palestinian Women Struggle Committee Union

Ms. Fatima Mizher
Palestinian Women Struggle Committee Union

Ms. Fawziyeh Judeh
Palestinian Women Struggle Committee Union

Ms. Huda Hamoudeh
Palestinian Woman's Information & Media Center

Ms. Manal Awad
Bader Association

Ms. Iktimal Hamad
Union of Palestinian Women's Committees Society

Mr. Ghasan Abu Hatab
Centre for Development Studies

Ms. Amal Hamad
General Union of Palestinian Women

Ms. Azhar Abu Sha'ban
The Palestinian Developmental Women Studies Association

Ms. Huda Ilayan
Association of Women's Committees for Social Work

Ms. Maha Abu Ramadan
Union of Women's Committees for Social Work

Ms. Amal Abu Eisheh
Development and Gender Association

Ms. Hanin Abu Nahleh
Sharek Youth Forum

Ms. Zainab Al-Ghuneimi
Legal Consulting Center for Women

Ms. Hanan Ahmad Siam
Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development

Ms. Faten Al Bayoumi
Women's Affairs Technical Committee

Ms. Lina Jadallah
Women's and Children's Department

Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSNGS	Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy
FIDA	Palestinian Democratic Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoL	Ministry of Labor
MoLG	Ministry of Local Governance
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoPAD	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PDP	Palestinian Development Plan
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PNC	Palestinian National Council
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP/PAPP	United Nations Development Programme / Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women, now part of UN WOMEN
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
VAW	Violence against Women

Introduction & methodology



Introduction & methodology

Women suffer from apparent discrimination in all aspects of life, as indicated in various studies and data published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). This discrimination is **incompatible with the provisions of international conventions and treaties as well as the Palestinian Basic Law on gender equality, equity of the sexes and equal citizenship of males and females**. Were planning for the national development process not to take gender issues into consideration, it would remain distorted and incomplete, preventing women's real participation in the development process and weakening the utilization of women's valuable contributions on an equal footing with men.

Real and sustainable human development requires focus on the active participation of women in all economic, social, political and cultural spheres. This in turn requires mainstreaming gender issues in all state plans and programs to bridge the gender gap in various fields of life and in order to ensure that national development goals respond to the practical and strategic aspirations and needs of both male and female citizens.

The women's sector is considered "cross-sectoral", suggesting that the different partners in all ministries have an important role to play in bridging gender gaps. Successful strategic plans that adopt the principle of equal citizenship should address the root causes of gender gaps in a way that pays due attention to the visions, expectations and needs of male and female citizens in all social groups. To do so requires the investment of capacities and efforts in all of the different sectors and at all governmental and non-governmental levels, to ensure women's participation in the preparation, drafting, implementation and evaluation of different sectoral plans and strategies.

The process of gender mainstreaming requires clear political commitment and affirmative action policies aimed at women. It also requires the allocation of human and financial resources, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and holding all officials in all state institutions accountable for the outcomes of the mainstreaming and progress in bridging gender gaps.

Palestinian civil society is vibrant and the Palestinian women's and human rights organizations are strong and active. There are numerous studies describing the situation of Palestinian women, their struggles and their participation at all levels of society. Since the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and since the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, political leaders have focused on the roles played by Palestinian women in the national struggle and in different political, economic and social fields. **However, gender issues have not been systematically mainstreamed in the strategies or action plans of the different ministries. In addition, the Israeli occupation and its various arbitrary practices in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip pose significant challenges for institutional work and development, especially in light of Palestinian divisions that include the schism between the West Bank and Gaza Strip** as well as the geographic fragmentation caused by the Barrier and checkpoints. **Recent political and economic challenges**, combined with changes within MoWA and five women ministers having taken office over a short period of time, **have made it difficult to ensure adequate and effective coordination for the mainstreaming of gender issues in the plans and programs of various ministries** within realistic strategic objectives and with the provision of the required human and financial resources to achieve them.

Gender units were created in 24 ministries and governmental institutions shortly after their establishment. MoWA was **established in mid November 2003** and its organizational structure was endorsed by the Prime Minister on 12 April 2004 in session No. 6/07/CM/AQ of 2004 with the aim of ensuring harmonized and coordinated action by all ministries and governmental bodies on gender mainstreaming in all sectors. **Over the past few years, there has been improved women's representation in technical and senior positions in the different governmental institutions and an increased proportion of female staff in the public sector.** Furthermore, the Council of Ministers' decision No. 01/05/13/CM/SF of 2009 was issued on gender mainstreaming in budgeting processes. A number of training courses were held on gender issues, international conventions on women's issues and gender-sensitive budgeting. All of the above developments provide additional strengths that can help this Strategy achieve its goals.

The present Strategy is based on the importance of joint work among the different sectors towards the mainstreaming of gender issues with focus on specific strategic objectives for the period 2011-2013 to be pursued jointly by MoWA and other ministries, in cooperation with women's movements and civil society.

The development of the Strategy adopted the following methodology:

1. **A national team composed of public, NGO and private sector actors** was created to provide leadership and direction for the development of the Strategy.
2. **A technical team composed of MoWA staff** was created **to cooperate in the collection and provision of various sectoral information** to help develop the situation analysis for the Strategy.
3. **The first meeting of the national team was held on 7 October 2009 to discuss the duties and powers of both the national and technical teams.** In addition, **the work plan for the development of the Strategic Plan was presented.**
4. A comprehensive review was carried out of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) 2008-2010 and the sectoral plans developed by a number of ministries, in addition to a review of recently published literature, research and analyses on the situation of Palestinian women, particularly the publications of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).
5. A working paper and concept note were developed on the methodology to be used for the development of the Cross-sectoral Strategy and discussed with the national team on 21 December 2009.
6. Based on the most recent statistics, an analytical report on the situation of women in major sectors was developed. **The national team also developed sectoral studies based on published literature on the situation of women in the corresponding sectors.** These papers were used as a basis for discussion in workshops aimed at identifying the different priorities for the Strategy. A presentation on central issues facing women in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres was developed and augmented by available statistics.
7. **On 20 December 2009, a workshop was conducted for representatives of women's organizations and civil society organizations** from Jerusalem and various parts of the West Bank. The situation of Palestinian women was presented and participants worked in five small groups to identify priorities from a gender perspective in the following categories: economy, employment and poverty; health and education; citizenship rights and nationality law; family law and penal code; and women's political rights and political representation. Participants first identified priorities individually, allowing for reflection on priorities in different fields. They then discussed them within their small groups and each group agreed on the three top priorities for its sector. **The groups also identified necessary interventions** at the governmental and non-governmental levels required to change and bridge gender gaps in laws, regulations and policies that discriminate against women. **The interventions identified also addressed changes needed in the structures and systems of enforcement for these laws, regulations and policies as well as corresponding changes that would need to take place in community, institutional and public culture.**
8. On 23 December 2009, a meeting was held for gender units in various ministries with the Strategy development team. The team presented the situation of Palestinian women as well as ways to mainstream gender issues in general planning and questions to raise to ensure gender mainstreaming across different sectors. Participants then worked in groups to agree on sectoral priorities and governmental interventions. More time was needed to accomplish these tasks, so another workshop was set for 3 January 2010.
9. On 3 January 2010, a full-day meeting was held with gender units from the different ministries. Working in groups, participants identified priority actions for gender mainstreaming in the different sectors and interventions needed in laws, policies, systems, structures and institutional culture to facilitate proper gender mainstreaming. This process was based on detailed sectoral studies on the situation of women developed by the technical team and MoWA studies department.
10. On 4 January 2010, a meeting was held with women's and civil society organizations in the Gaza Strip, where participants worked in groups to identify priority actions and interventions in the different sectors and at different levels, in addition to expected obstacles and proposed solutions. Group work was also based on the aforementioned sectoral studies.
11. Three workshops were held with the participation of MoWA general directors, directors and a number of staff members in which the outcomes of the aforementioned workshops were discussed. Strategic objectives and the policies and activities required to achieve them in the period 2011-2013 were formulated and policies, interventions and activities required for the implementation of the goals of the Cross-sectoral Gender Strategy were discussed.
12. **The first draft of the Cross-sectoral Strategy was developed and sent by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) on 10 January 2010 to MoPAD and the national team for their feedback.** It was also discussed by the Higher Commission at MoWA.
13. **On 2 February 2010, the draft Strategy was discussed in a meeting with MoPAD and suggested modifications were incorporated.**
14. A number of individual meetings and consultations were held with **some ministerial officials and heads of national teams working on the development of sectoral strategies** in order to discuss the plan, its policies and activities. These consultations involved officials from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), Ministry of Labor (MoL), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), and MoPAD. All of the officials **expressed a willingness to include the different sectoral issues and interventions in the plans of their respective ministries.**
15. On 9 February 2010, the Strategy was presented to a number of international donors for discussion and feedback.
16. **On 1 March 2010, the Cross-sectoral Strategy was presented and discussed in a workshop with women's organizations.**

17. On 10 March 2010, the plan was sent to the national team, before submitting its final version to the Council of Ministers for approval.

This **Strategy covers the period 2011-2013**. It will be evaluated on an annual basis in order to incorporate the necessary modifications in light of identified deficiencies and emerging needs.

The formulation of **this Cross-Sectoral Strategy** is based on an institutional analysis of ministries from a gender perspective and **seeks to provide guiding principles on how to consider gender issues in the development work of the different ministries**. These preliminary efforts will allow the adoption of an effective institutional approach to gender issues by the different ministries involved



The Strategy's points of reference



12

The Strategy's points of reference

- **The Declaration of Independence adopted by the Palestinian National Council in 1988, which forbids gender-based discrimination in general rights.**
- **The Palestinian Basic Law.**
- **The National Strategy for Palestinian Women endorsed in 1997, based on international and regional conventions and conferences, including CEDAW.**
- **The Fourth World Conference on Women and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.**
- **Council of Ministers' decision No. 01/05/13/CM/SF of 2009 on mainstreaming gender into governmental budgeting.**
- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 addressing issues related to women in times of armed conflict.**
- **The Palestinian Women's Bill of Rights of 2008.**

Basic principles of the Strategy



Basic principles of the Strategy

13

The Strategy relies on a set of **basic premises and principles**, including:

1. **Supporting policy development** on the basis of national laws and international standards.
2. **Promoting the concepts of democracy, equity and justice.**
3. **Providing protection** to Palestinian women at the national level.
4. **Strengthening women's representation** in national bodies by ensuring their involvement in decision-making positions at all legislative, executive and judicial levels.
5. **Acknowledging women's roles in all sectors** as a basic prerequisite for achieving democracy and human development.
6. **Promoting women's rights** as an integral part of human rights.
7. **Strengthening cooperation and partnership** between Palestinian public institutions and civil society organizations, as well as with relevant Arab and international organizations to ensure awareness of women's issues and reinforce relevant experiences and actions.
8. **Addressing social and cultural constraints** related to women's issues, particularly violence against women (VAW) in the public and private spheres.
9. **Addressing gender issues as cross-sectoral issues** and holding local and international organizations accountable with regard to gender equality.

Vision statement for the sector



14

Vision statement for the sector

A democratic society living in a climate of social justice, where men and women, girls and boys, enjoy equal citizenship rights and equal opportunities in the public and private spheres seeking to build an independent state that effectively and efficiently invests in the abilities and potentials of its male and female citizens for achieving just and sustainable development that broadens the choices of people, with all members of society taking part in it and enjoying its fruits.

Situation analysis

Situation analysis

Up to now, **Palestinian women still face many challenges in the field of gender equality.** At one level, women face challenges **resulting from discriminatory laws, regulations, and policies in force**, including a lack of effective representation in the structures that enforce them. **The prevailing culture in Palestinian society further reinforces traditional norms of patriarchal dominance and stereotypes in dealing with women.** At another level, **women**, both in the same way as men, but **in even harsher ways** at times, **face problems and barriers created by the Israeli occupation's arbitrary and oppressive measures, frequent invasions and violations of fundamental human rights.** Additionally, **the division in Palestinian society** following the second legislative elections, which led to the separation between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, **has increased the severity of problems in the oPt.**

Discrimination against women in laws and regulations and the impact of this discrimination on women **must also be addressed from the perspective of the Israeli occupation's ability to restrict PA powers and capacity to control various fields of daily Palestinian life**, especially with regards to the personal security of all Palestinians. The geographic area in which PA jurisdiction extends lacks contiguity and is fragmented by hundreds of military checkpoints, crossings and administrative obstacles. These military checkpoints, in addition to the Barrier that separates the oPt, have been a major impediment to Palestinians' freedom of movement on their land and their sense of personal security, which has led to devastating effects on the Palestinian economy (World Bank Report 2009, as well as OCHA publications). Israel also implements policies that

restrict the planning and zoning of Palestinian communities, limiting Palestinians' use of land and resources on more than 60 percent of the West Bank classified as Area C in the Oslo Accords. Israel bans all Palestinian construction in about 70 percent of Area C. **The increasing number of Israeli barriers and checkpoints**, in addition to the construction of the Barrier, which will affect the lives of one third of the Palestinian population upon its completion, **aggravate the living conditions of Palestinians in general and women in particular. Women suffer disproportionately from separation from their families, agricultural lands, water sources and schools.** A large number of women have also been denied access to hospitals and health clinics, resulting in the death of many women and babies.

Palestinian women in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip remain subject to discriminatory family laws that regulate marriage, divorce and child custody. Domestic violence and violence against women (VAW) in general, which have increased in recent years, **pose significant challenges. There are numerous examples of discriminatory legislation in force, as well as cultural norms and traditions such as those governing the issues of inheritance, maintenance, property, and available education and employment opportunities**, that prevent women's economic empowerment and make them more vulnerable to poverty. In addition, the structural distortion of labor markets and the concentration of women in certain economic sectors but not others, are among the main reasons leading to the economic marginalization of women.

Citizenship rights: Citizenship rights are “the legal procedures set to define the nationals of a State...with standards outlining the rights and duties of citizens in their relationship with the state,” and “thereby citizenship determines what a person means under the law”.¹ Citizenship rights also constitute “a set of legal, political, social, economic and cultural practices”. Since the right of return for Palestinian refugees has been deferred to part of the final status negotiation issues, the Basic Law reflects the PA’s inability to define who is a Palestinian. Nevertheless, **Article 12 of the Basic Law of 2003 granted women, for the first time, the right to pass their nationality on to their children** (PCBS, 2008).

The Palestinian Basic Law, ratified in 2002 and amended in 2003 and 2005, is the main reference point for legislation in the oPt. It serves as a temporary constitution until the time when Palestinian statehood is realized, at which time the third draft of the amended Palestinian constitution will be adopted.



Article 9 of the Basic Law states that “**Palestinians shall be equal before the law and the judiciary, without distinction based upon race, sex, color, religion, political views or disability**”. **Article 10** states that “**basic human rights and liberties shall be protected and respected**” and that “the Palestinian National Authority shall work without delay to become a party to regional and international declarations and covenants that protect human rights”. **Article 4** states that “**the principles of Islamic Shari’a shall be a principal source of legislation**”. It is noteworthy here that some laws enacted by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) indicate that the terms “citizen”, “employee” or “person” refer to both women and men, reflecting the position of the Palestinian legislature in addressing male and female citizens from a perspective of equality. Article 19 of the draft Palestinian constitution maintains that the term “Palestinian” or “citizen” refers to both males and females. The Palestinian elections law applied in 1996 defines citizenship by descent from a Palestinian father or a Palestinian mother. **The labor law of 2000 also prohibits gender-based discrimination.**

However, in order to ensure that the Palestinian Basic Law or Constitution does not discriminate effectively between males and females, **Article 11 of the Basic Law should be amended to ban discrimination before the law as well as in the law.** Thus male and female citizens would be able to attend courts without any discrimination and be subjected to non-discriminatory laws and regulations. However, laws applicable in the oPt do not criminalize acts of gender-based discrimination. In addition, Palestinians are still subject to different sets of laws that govern their lives: PA laws, Jordanian laws, Egyptian laws and Israeli occupation laws. At times and in certain cases, they are also subject to Ottoman laws. Although a unified judicial system was adopted in 2002 in preparation for the adoption of a unified set of laws covering all Palestinians, the conditions mentioned above have obstructed these efforts. In addition, the adverse conditions prevailing in the oPt over the past years have prevented the discussion of major legislation affecting the lives of women, including the **Palestinian nationality law.**

Nationality laws: Palestinian women do not enjoy equality in the applicable nationality laws. The Jordanian law No. 6 of 1945 is still applicable in the West Bank and the Egyptian nationality law in the Gaza Strip. **Both laws do not afford women the right to grant their nationality to their husbands or children.** In addition, both laws deny a married woman the right to keep her nationality unless she applies to the authorities requesting to maintain her nationality within a period not exceeding one year from the date of her marriage. **However, the Palestinian authorities do not enforce this system and do not deny Palestinian nationality to Palestinian women married to foreigners.** Although a draft Palestinian nationality law has been prepared, this law has yet to be discussed in the PLC for political reasons pertaining to the final status negotiations, the situation of Palestinians in exile and the borders of the Palestinian State.

Marriage to foreigners: Thousands of male and female Palestinians are married to foreigners. Although the Israeli occupying authorities granted Israeli IDs to foreigners who were present in the oPt in 1967, **Israel** has been obstructing family reunification procedures for years. They **deny foreign women married to Palestinians from such IDs and grant them only residency permits for limited periods of time.** When Israeli authorities do offer an Israeli ID to a foreigner married to a Palestinian, the foreigner is required to forfeit his or her original nationality and is not allowed to travel through Ben Gurion Airport. There are more than 600 foreign women married to Palestinians in Gaza and an even greater number in the West Bank, all of whom have no IDs (Palestine Our Home Foundation, 2003).²

¹ www.undp-pogar.org/publications/gender/suad/gendera.pdf

² Israel is the one to grant the permission for the Israeli ID, The Palestinian passport is a mere translation of the Israeli ID, and it is Israel who grants the permission for any Israeli ID. No Palestinian passport can be granted for anybody who does not hold an Israeli IS. All Palestinians living in the Palestinian Occupied territories were given Israeli IDs after the 1967 occupation.



Marriage to Palestinians from the 1948 areas and from Jerusalem: Palestinians married to spouses from the Palestinian areas occupied in 1948 face the problem of not being able to obtain Israeli nationality. Although the Israeli nationality law of 1952 granted Israeli nationality to Palestinians who remained in Palestine in 1948, it denied them the right to grant this nationality to their spouses and children. **The Israeli government has continuously enacted laws and temporary orders that prevent Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip married to Palestinians holding an Israeli passport or Jerusalem ID from obtaining nationality or residency rights.** In 2004 alone, this affected around 21,000 families³. On 15 May 2005, the Israeli Knesset approved the resumption of the application of these orders for women over 25 years old and for men over 35 years old. In addition, marriage between Palestinians in the West Bank and those in the Gaza Strip has also become a problem as a result of the Palestinian divide, denying Palestinians the ability to visit their relatives and causing further disintegration of families.

Palestinians from Jerusalem also face discriminatory citizenship laws that have resulted in the disintegration of thousands of families. **Discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem involves gender-based discrimination as well as the lack of access to justice in the absence of legal instruments to confront discriminatory and oppressive measures and policies. Since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, and in breach of international law and the Geneva Conventions, Israel deals with Palestinian Jerusalemites as permanent residents with no citizenship rights.** Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are required as a matter of policy to provide Israeli authorities with adequate proof that their center of life is within the municipal borders of Jerusalem or they face the revocation of their IDs (the documents that give them the right to movement, residency, work and study). In the period from 1967 through 2008, the Israeli authorities revoked the identity cards (residency rights) of 31,135 Palestinians in Jerusalem using various pretexts. Thus Palestinians in Jerusalem are effectively subjected to policies of ethnic cleansing. Therefore, Palestinian Jerusalemites should be viewed as a priority group for the PA and should receive high levels of attention.

Women's ability to keep their family names: Although Palestinian women were able to keep their family names under Jordanian and Egyptian laws, since the beginning of the Israeli occupation, **Israeli authorities have automatically changed a woman's family name to that of her husband without asking.** Although women's movements in 1996 demanded that women be allowed to keep their family names if they so wished, the names of Palestinian women in Palestinian and Jordanian passports are currently changed to match their names as recorded on their Israeli IDs. This denies women a basic human right stipulated in human rights conventions, particularly article 16(g) in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Application for a passport also entails discriminatory procedures that are still based on the Jordanian law No. 2 of 1969, which was amended in Jordan years ago, but is still in effect in the oPt. This law does not allow women to apply for a passport without written consent from the husband of a married woman or from the legal guardian of an unmarried woman. However, the Palestinian Ministry of Interior issued a circular in 1996 allowing both males and females to apply for a passport without the need for consent from a legal guardian. These procedures need to be re-issued again.

³ Anna Seifert, Separated Families (Jerusalem: Quaker Peace and Social Witness, 2005), 3, available at www.jcdhr.ps/eng/reports-studies/2.html.

Family law

Personal status law: Laws originally derived from the personal status law of 1917 and 1951, based on Hanafi jurisprudence, and amended in 1976, are a major concern for Palestinian women. No significant amendments have been made to this law in Palestine, although Syria, Egypt and Jordan have all made amendments to their own corresponding personal status laws. As a result, a legislative vacuum exists for Palestinian Muslim women. **Provisions related to the age of marriage are a major example of discrimination in this law, as they allow for girls to marry as young as 15 years of age (Hijri).** Provisions on arbitrary divorce and the conditions of marriage contracts are discriminatory as well. **There are no provisions allowing women to initiate divorce themselves (Khulu') or to apply to the court for divorce when the husband fails to pay maintenance.** Despite a number of amendments in recent years, discrimination against women is further reinforced in the law's provisions on compensation for arbitrary divorce and the deprivation of grandchildren from inheritance in case their father dies before their grandfather (The Situation of Palestinian Women, 273, 2003). With regard to **Christian women, each sect applies their own law for marriage and divorce, while State law is applied in determining shares in inheritance of immovable assets.** Thus Christian women too face challenges in terms of their rights related to marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Violence in Palestinian society: The Universal Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, endorsed by the United Nations in 1993, defines **violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"**. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing reaffirmed this definition 1995. The World Conference on Human Rights, which issued the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action in 1993, linked violence with discrimination against women, stating in paragraph 38 that the manifestations of violence include sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, gender-based discrimination, intolerance and extremism. The paragraph states that "in particular, the World Conference on Human Rights stresses the importance of working towards the elimination of violence against women in public and private life, the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and trafficking in women, the elimination of gender bias in the administration of justice and the eradication of any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism" (Gabr, 2008).



Findings of a domestic violence **survey conducted by PCBS in 2005 indicate that 62% of all married women in the oPt have been exposed to psychological violence, 23% to physical violence and 11% to sexual violence at least once (PCBS, 2006)**. In the oPt, VAW exists in urban, rural and camp areas in comparable figures (Table 1). Psychological

violence affects women in the labor force more than those outside the labor force (62% and 52% respectively), while women outside the labor force are more vulnerable to physical violence (12.4% and 10.5% respectively). Women with more education are less vulnerable to all forms of violence (Table 2).

Table 1: Percentage of Ever Married Women Exposed to Any Violence by Husband, at Least Once by Type of Locality and Type of Violence During the year 2005

Type of locality	Type of violence		
	Sexual abuse	Physical abuse	Psychological abuse
Urban	11.2	23.2	62.8
Rural	10.9	23.0	64.9
Camps	9.8	24.1	52.3
Total	10.9	23.3	61.7

Table 2: Percentage of Ever Married Women Exposed to Any Violence by Husband, at Least Once by education attainment and Type of Violence During the year 2005

Education attainment	Type of violence		
	Sexual abuse	Physical abuse	Psychological abuse
Elementary and less	12.0	25.8	62.5
Preparatory	12.2	25.1	64.3
Secondary and above	8.5	19.1	58.4
Total	10.9	23.3	61.7

There is a shortage of studies on the reasons behind VAW, which necessitates research on the causes of this problem and the involvement of men who disapprove of violence in campaigns against VAW.

Femicide crimes under the pretext of ‘family honor’ increased in 2008 (as documented by Al-Muntada). There were 19 cases of femicide in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the youngest victim being three months old and the oldest being 75 years old. Reasons for most of the murders were recorded as “unidentified circumstances” and only 10 cases were recorded as “family honor” killings (eight cases in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip). Nine cases of femicide on the basis of “family honor” have been recorded since the beginning of 2010 up to the time of this Strategy’s drafting. In this time there were also seven cases of incest in the West Bank, but no data was available from Gaza because of the prevailing political conditions. In addition, there have been dozens of cases of psychological, sexual and physical violence in the form of burning, kidnapping, rape attempts, cursing, insulting, threatening, indecent assault, abuse, etc. In 2008-2009, the police recorded 1,112 cases that ranged from severe to mild abuse against women, which were referred to the courts. In 2008, 774 such cases were recorded (forensic medicine report, 2008). In addition, 26 cases of attempted murder of women were recorded by the courts in 2009.

Palestinian society generally perceives violence against men as a public issue, but considers violence against women a private issue. This perception should be addressed in order to ensure that VAW becomes a public issue that the State has a responsibility to address. Low proportions of women refer to the police or to protection centers when they are exposed to violence. Quantitative research indicates that only 1.7% of battered women referred to women’s centers report to the police, 42.9% preferred to talk with their husbands, 30.4% left the house and went to their parents’ house and 26% did not leave their houses (MIFTAH, Domestic Violence in the oPt, 2008).

Published statistics and social studies about VAW have found **many factors behind the problem, including social perceptions of women’s inferiority, non-recognition of their human rights, and social customs and traditions.** These factors all lead to women’s oppression; VAW in the family and workplace; lack of equal opportunities with men in terms of pay, working hours and promotions; and discriminatory laws against women, particularly the penal code. In addition, the increasing violence in Palestinian society is closely tied to many factors related to the repressive practices of the Israeli occupation and their implications on families, the political situation, poverty and unemployment.

The social groups most vulnerable to gender-based violence include children under the age of 15, female adolescents, elderly women, and females with disabilities. However, 2006 PCBS survey on domestic violence did not adequately address the causes and remedies of gender-based violence for these groups. They also have ignored the issue of sexual violence against minors, meaning young women below the age of 18, for cultural and social reasons, and limited the questions in their questionnaires to physical violence, found to be 25%, and psychological violence, estimated at 52.7%, (Domestic Violence: Analytical Study, 55, 2006). Surveys and studies indicate that married women below the age of 18 have a higher risk of being exposed to violence, with 64.5% having reported being subjected to psychological violence and 42.1% to physical violence (Domestic Violence: Analytical Study, 62, 2006). Recently, Palestinian society has witnessed an increased prevalence in the trafficking of young women and prostitution. However, the surveys did not address this issue, as it represents a new and hidden phenomenon that is difficult to identify and measure. Nevertheless, a report was recently issued by the oPt office of UNIFEM (Part of UN WOMEN) presenting examples in Palestinian society of women trafficking, including minors and girls, as well as forced prostitution in various areas of the West Bank (UNIFEM, 2008). **The lack of a laws and adequate executive bodies to protect women victims of violence encourages an increase of violence in Palestinian society.**

The Palestinian society is also witnessing increased rates of violence due to the ongoing Israeli occupation and its oppressive measures, as well as the resulting difficult political and economic situation. **The practices and policies of the occupation are not limited to land confiscation and control of water resources and borders, but also extend to include arrests, house demolitions, and control of movement of Palestinian people and commodities through the numerous checkpoints throughout the oPt.** The impact of siege and isolation on Palestinians has intensified due to Israel's construction of the Barrier, which is turning the West Bank into a series of enclaves or isolated socio-economic areas. All of these measures constitute a policy of collective punishment imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Through the building of settlements and land confiscation, Israel aims at ending the dream of the Palestinian people for an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital. The impact of such practices on Palestinian society has been severe and lasting, affecting the relations between women and men.

Conflict has penetrated every aspect of Palestinian life. **Violence prevails in the public sphere as well as the family sphere, resulting in consequences that should be dealt with by both women and men (The World Bank, 2010).** Although the World Bank report in 2010 on checkpoints and roadblocks notes that "men are the recipients of direct violence, and women have also to bear the indirect cost of violence," women are also direct recipients of all forms

of violence. Direct violence does not apply to men only, as women are also present in both the public and private spheres, as part of the national struggle, prisoners, martyrs, housewives, workers, and more. To date, 34 women remain in Israeli occupation prisons, most of whom are young women, with 13% of them girls under the age of 18. In addition, the majority of those killed in the recent Israel's military operations in Gaza, codenamed "Operation Cast Lead", from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, war on Gaza were women and children.

The situation of women prisoners: As long as the Israeli occupation is still in place, the issue of prisoners, both male and female, will remain a national priority. It should receive significant attention in all plans, policies and interventions, as this group has special needs that require all possible support at a number of different levels. Since the occupation of the oPt in 1967, the Israeli occupying forces have arrested more than ten thousand Palestinian women, who participated in the struggle for freedom. To date, 34 women remain in Israeli occupation prisons.

The release of women from Israeli prisons does not necessarily bring an end to their suffering, as they often then move back into a larger prison of social traditions and norms, where reintegration is by no means an easy task. In spite of some changes brought about by women's strong presence and active role in the public sphere and participation in the national liberation movement, the traditional perceptions of women and their roles in Palestinian society are often still restrictive, hindering women's return to the full exercise of their rights upon release from prison. In relation to women's cultural and social stereotypes, the Israeli occupation has strengthened social perceptions of women as a weak link and a means of pressure. In addition, the Israeli occupation prison system, an essentially masculine system, exposes women in particular to various psychological and health consequences.

Therefore, all relevant and competent bodies should examine the situation of Palestinian women prisoners. They should take all measures to ensure that the enjoyment of women's rights are guaranteed by all laws, especially those laws relating to prisoners of war and in areas of armed conflict. They should prosecute the Israeli authorities for crimes against women Palestinian prisoners in particular, as well as all prisoners in general, which are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and human rights principles. In addition, **violations against Palestinian women in prisons should be documented and necessary legal action should be taken to prevent and monitor such violations, and also to punish the violators.** These violations should be included in various reports published locally, regionally and internationally, in order to raise awareness around issues of women prisoners at all levels, especially legally. The experience of women prisoners throughout the history of the Palestinian national struggle for liberty and independence should be formally documented. This should include the development of a

special record for Palestinian women prisoners throughout Palestinian history, which would include the name and relevant data of each woman prisoner. A database of women prisoners both inside and out of jail should be created and regularly updated with information on the social status of each prisoner and the situation of their families and children.

It is important to elevate the cause of women prisoners to one of national political focus, on an equal level with other discourses raised locally, regionally and internationally. Human rights and international agencies are required to provide psychological support to Palestinian women prisoners while in Israeli detention centers and in exile. They should launch awareness campaigns about the situation of Palestinian women prisoners, targeting society in general. **Women prisoners should also be given voice during the formation of decisions and structures at the national level as well as in political decision-making locally and internationally (negotiations, national dialogue, etc).** Their perspective is important for the formulation of The oPt's future and for the promotion of a society and culture that acknowledges the important role of women in the Palestinian national struggle. Programs should also be organized to rehabilitate women ex-prisoners psychologically, socially and vocationally and ensure that they are duly honored. In addition, women prisoners and their families should be ensured a decent and dignified life and all forms of moral, psychological and material support

should be provided to their families and children, both those born during imprisonment and those whose mothers remain in prison or exile.

Women in the political and public life: International laws regulating political action ensure the right to political participation for all individuals, regardless of demographic characteristics (sex, race, or ethnicity). Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: «Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity... to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives.» In addition, **Article 7 of CEDAW states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country"**. Article 8 of the same convention provides that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations" (CEDAW, 1979, 2). The Palestinian constitution, in Article 9, states: «All Palestinians are equal under the law and judiciary without discrimination because of race, sex, color, religion, political views, or disability" (Amended Constitution of Palestine, 12).



In the absence of a Palestinian Authority, women, different women's institutions and the international community have played a central role in raising and reinforcing women's and community issues and responding to the needs of poor families negatively affected by the repressive practices of the Israeli occupation. **Civil society institutions have contributed to the provision of education and health services, literacy services, vocational training and care centers for women and children.** Upon the establishment of the PA and national legislative and executive institutions, Palestinian women, through their community institutions, have supported the PA in establishing the foundations of a democratic state, both institutionally and legally. In addition, Palestinian women have urged the PA to take the responsibility to ensure an environment that facilitates access to human development programs in Palestinian society. **However, the role played by Palestinian women has not been reflected so far in terms of fair political representation.** To meet this requirement, it has become necessary to develop plans and legislation to increase women's participation in decision-making. **The participation of women in national, judicial and civil institutions, at the level of political decision-making and in political and cultural life is a right enshrined in all international instruments and conventions,** including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Women's participation at these decision-making levels is thus an important indicator of women's status in a society.

Women participate by 7.5% in the Palestinian National Council, the highest body of the PLO. This means that there are 56 women members out of 744 members. In the Central Council, there are five women out of 124 members. However, the 11 women elected in the Revolutionary Council of Fatah in 2009 have automatically become members of the National Council. There is only one woman in the PLO Executive Committee; Hanan Ashrawi was elected by the National Council on 26 August 2009. Studies should now be conducted on the impact of the increased representation of women on the situation of Palestinian women as a whole.

By August 2008, the database of the **General Personnel Council indicated that the proportion of women employed in the public sector was 29.3% of total employees, which is higher than the percentage of women's participation in the labor market. However, the data reveals that the majority of these women are in jobs at the level of grades 1-10** (31.2% of total employees in these such jobs), **with women comprising only 6% of assistant deputy ministers** (two women out of 30 deputy ministers), **12% of general directors** (75 women general directors as compared to 624 men, as of March 2008), **10.3% of directors at A4 level and 18.5% of directors at A, B and C levels.** There are 152 employees in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the West Bank (104 men and 48 women) and 258 in the Gaza Strip (203 men and 55 women). This makes women's proportion 25.1%

of all Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff in the oPt. In 2008, the proportion of Palestinian women ambassadors increased to 5.4% from the 2.1% as of 1992. Overall, representation of women remains low.

The current government has a very high representation of women, with five women out of a total of 23 ministers, meaning that women constitute 21.7% of the total number of ministers.

Women's representation in the PLC: In the PLC, women's representation is similar to that in other fields. While a large gender gap still exists, there has been progress in the status of women following the 2006 elections. Compared with 1996 elections, the proportion of women increased from 5.6% to 12.9% (17 members out of 132 members in 2006, compared to 5 members out of 88 members in 1996). The number of women candidates in the second legislative elections demonstrated an increase from that in the first elections, where the number of women candidates was 70, with 17 of them, or 24.2%, winning in the election. Clearly, **the quota system has played a role in favor of women,** in addition to other critical factors related to support of women candidates from political parties.

Women's representation in local councils: With regard to local councils, the proportion of women was 0.5% of the total members appointed in municipal and village councils and project committees in 1997. The proportion increased to 1.8% in 2000 and to 18% in 2004 and 2005, following four stages of local elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This significant increase in women's representation was largely due to a quota system that was promoted by MoWA and civil society organizations. A number of women leaders were elected to be heads of municipal councils, including Ramallah Municipality, Ibbweh Municipality and Western Bani Zaid Municipality.

A study on women members of local councils in the West Bank revealed a number of outcomes in terms of women's motivations for running for office (MoWA, The oPt, 2009). 60% of women were found to have run for office based on motives related to the issues of women's rights and gender equality, while 26.7% ran for political motives. Another 13.3% of women ran for service-related motives, wanting to participate in the service of the country and in the policy-making of the municipality. **Some women stated that they do not attend local council meetings regularly for social reasons (35.4%), because meeting times are not appropriate (23.5%) and because of travel (17.6%). Women also cited other reasons, such as marginalization, factional influence, transportation, and lack of a quorum (23.5%).**

On the other hand, **45.4% of women participate in social committees,** such as education, culture and women's committees. More specifically, the study found that 42.8% participate in women's committees, 22.5% in financial and



administrative committees, 12.9% in political committees such as public relations and external affairs, 9.6% in health and environment committees, and 9.6% in services committees such as electricity, water, agriculture, zoning and building committees. These participation rates suggest that **women participate more in traditional committees, while men remain in control of committees related to infrastructure and economic projects.**

From the perspective of women surveyed, **the reasons for discrimination in the assignment of tasks between males and females include gender-related reasons in 78.5% of cases, such as perceptions of male dominance; many tasks do not suit women, men accept jobs that are far away, or the assignment of certain tasks to women is not acceptable.** Political reasons account for 7% (factional discrimination) and professional reasons for 14.2%. Difficulties and obstacles faced by women in their work include gender-based difficulties in 35% of the cases, subjective difficulties related to women in 27.5% (such as time management, lack of experience, working outside the house and inability to work full-time), administrative and financial difficulties on part of the Council in 20%, and family and factional difficulties in 17.5%.

Despite progress in the situation of Palestinian women in the **judicial system, women's participation remains limited** and gender gaps are still in place to date. By September 2008, there were **21 female judges as opposed to 159 male judges (13.2%)**. This proportion is lower in Gaza than in the West Bank. The 2008 report *Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics* explains that the lower number of female judges in Gaza could be attributed to the severe competition with men and the high unemployment rate in Gaza. The percentage of women lawyers increased to 17% in the West Bank and 16.3% in Gaza Strip in 2006 from 9.3% and 9.4% respectively in 2000. Two female Shari'a judges were appointed in 2009, increasing the proportion of female judges to 16%. This is considered an achievement in terms of women's professional employment in view of the sensitive and influential nature of this position, as these judges decide in important issues such as marriage, divorce, child custody and maintenance.

With regard to female ambassadors, **there were five women ambassadors by September 2009, out of 106 PA representative offices around the world (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the oPt, 2009)**. In addition, Laila Ghannam was the first woman to be appointed as a Palestinian

governor for Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate in 2009. A woman was also appointed to head the Palestine Capital Market Authority.

Women's representation in political parties: Women constitute 25% of the General Congress of the Fatah Movement, 0% of its Central Committee (as of 2009), 33% of its Revolutionary Council, and 11% of its expanded Movement Council. Based on recommendations made by the General Congress, the Revolutionary Council of the Fatah Movement has recently made a decision to ensure women's representation in at least 20% of leadership positions at the different levels. In the Popular Front, women comprise 10% of the General Central Committee, 20% of the Sub-Central Committee, 11% of the branch leadership and 10.2% of the branch congress. In the Democratic Front, women comprise 19.5% of the Central Committee in the West Bank and 16.5% in the Gaza Strip; 18% of the Central Leadership in the West Bank and 13% in the Gaza Strip; 17% of members of branch committees in the West Bank and 9% in the Gaza Strip; and 6% of the Politburo. In the Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA), women comprise 30% of the Executive Bureau and 19% of the Central Committee. Women also comprise 20% of the Central Committee of the Popular Struggle Front and an average of 25% of all structures of the Palestinian Arab Front. No statistics are available on the proportion of women in Islamist parties. **The proportion of women in the leadership of trade unions is only 8.4% compared to 91.6% of men (as of 2006).**

Women's representation in student councils: In 2006, data revealed that the overall proportion of **women in the membership of student councils in Palestinian universities was 32%**. However, it should be noted that this proportion was not evenly distributed amongst all Palestinian universities. For example, female students have no representation in the student councils in Al-Najah National University in Nablus and the Arab American University in Jenin, which reflects the conservative atmosphere in the areas where these universities are located. Two separate student councils are in place in Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, one for males and another for females, with 22 members in each one. The same applies to the Islamic University, where each council consists of 11 members. This in fact increases the proportion of female participation (PCBS, 2008).

Social situation of Palestinian women

Women and education: Article 10(a) of the Charter of the United Nations provides for the necessity to ensure “the same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training.”

A review of the situation of women and men in the oPt in the field of general education may indicate that women are ahead of men in this field. This is true if we look at the situation in general. However, when examining the results of the population, housing and establishments census conducted by PCBS in 2007, the number of individuals enrolled in education (five years and over) in the West Bank is 1,721,992, including 872,850 males and 845,142 females, while the number of males (five years and over) not enrolled in education and living in urban areas is 372,289 and the number of females not enrolled in education is 310,558. The percentage of girls at the secondary education level was 53.1% of the total number of students at the secondary level in the year 2007/2008. This is due to the high dropout rate among male students at the primary level because of the difficult economic situation that forces them to seek jobs as unskilled laborers. Generally speaking, **opportunities for enrolment in education have become equal for males and females in both the primary and secondary levels. However, important issues** other than increasing access

to education and enrolment rates **remain valid concerns, such as the quality of the education available, to what extent education is able to ensure job opportunities for both males and females, and to what extent education supports change in gender relations towards more equity and equality.**

School dropout rates at the secondary level appear to be higher among females than males (3% for males, compared to 3.8% for females). Many factors play a role in increasing female dropout rates at the secondary education level, including: early marriage, a family's economic situation, the need to provide care to family members, reasons related to school attainment, relations with the school, low awareness of the importance of education both among female students and their families, and obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation (UNESCO, 2007). Reportedly, the Barrier has diminished the ability of 48.4% of families living on its eastern side to access schools, thus creating a burden for MoEHE in searching for alternatives.

With regard to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), in 2007/8 only 4.4% of the total number of secondary level students were enrolled in TVET programs (9% for males and 3% for females). These percentages remain the same to date. Percentage distribution of students in the secondary level by educational track in 2007/8 indicated that both male and female students were concentrated in the literature and science tracks, with only a small proportion attending vocational education, particularly in the fields of industry and agriculture. The gender gap was wider in these



two fields, with female students almost completely absent. In order to convert women's academic attainment into an investment in national production, **the quality of TVET programs should be improved and females should be encouraged to engage in new or untraditional fields of vocational education, especially industry and agriculture, which have the potential of opening up new prospects for employment.** In fact, at least a third of working women in the oPt are employed in the agricultural sector.

Efforts need also to be made to eliminate gender-based discrimination in school curricula. The Human Development Report in 2002 called for strengthening the gender dimension in curricula in light of gender disparities noticed in their language and content. Masculine terms are more commonly used than feminine ones, while illustrations, expressions and stories of women continue to reflect traditional stereotypes.

According to data from the Ministry of Education for the year 2007, there was **a larger number of female students compared to males enrolled in Palestinian higher education institutions in general. However, when examining disciplines where females were concentrated, there appeared to be a high proportion of women in education and social and human sciences. The concentration of women in these traditionally female disciplines can be seen as an extension of women's reproductive role in society. Such concentrations do not facilitate women's employment in non-traditional jobs and do not widen the perspective of their integration in the economy.** This explains the high unemployment rate among women with more than 13 years of education. The proportion of women in vocational and agricultural education is low, despite the high proportion of women working in agriculture. As for men, they are concentrated in social sciences, business and law, followed by education, science, engineering and manufacturing respectively. Their concentration in these fields expands their opportunities in the labor market (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Although the data reveals comparable enrolment rates in education for both genders, **differences are more apparent in terms of enrolment in postgraduate education (at the level of PhD and Masters).** While 10% of males hold BA degrees and higher, only 6.7% of females do. However, this gap is now narrower than it used to be (PCBS, 2008). **Only a very small percentage of women in the oPt hold a PhD degree, especially in rural areas and refugee camps.** In Palestinian urban areas, there are 1,811 men and 225 women holding a PhD and 4,601 men and 1,748 women holding a Masters degree. In rural areas, there are 293 men with a PhD degree, compared to only 22 women, as well as 1,248 men holding a Masters degree, compared to only 252 women. In refugee camps, there are 35 men with a PhD compared to

only 2 women, and there are 158 men and 52 women holding a Masters degree.⁴

Women and illiteracy: Literacy rates remain higher in Palestinian urban areas compared to rural areas and refugee camps. They are also higher in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip for the age group of 15-34 years old. In 2007, the illiteracy rate in the oPt was estimated at 9.5% among Palestinian women and 2.8% among men. Illiteracy rates were highest among women 45 years old or older, reaching around 50%, compared to 25% among men in the same age group.⁵ The total number of illiterate males and females ten years and older in the West Bank was 92,324 out of 1,603,423, with the illiteracy rate among males reaching 2.5% of the total male population and 1.2% of the total urban population. The illiteracy rate among women was 7.6% of total women and 3.7% of the total urban population. In rural areas, the illiteracy rate stood at 7.4%, with the illiteracy rate among rural males standing at 3.3%, constituting 1.6% of the total rural population. The illiteracy rate among rural females was 11.7%, constituting 5.7% of the total rural population. In refugee camps, the illiteracy rate for males was 3.1% of total refugee camp males, constituting 1.5% of the total camp population, while the illiteracy rate among females was 8.8% of total refugee camp females, constituting 4.4% of the total camp population.

These statistics indicate that illiteracy in rural areas was the highest compared with urban areas and camps. **This can be attributed to many reasons, primarily that refugee camps are closer to cities, which allows the culture of the camp to be affected by the prevailing culture of urban areas. In camps and urban areas, lower illiteracy rates are also influenced by higher access to transportation and availability of infrastructure, such as schools.** While data indicates that illiteracy rates are still high, they are actually on the decline.⁶

Women's participation in teaching at different educational levels: Women tend to have absolute dominance as teachers at the preschool education level, but otherwise and aside from some **exceptions, the participation rate of women teachers tends to decrease as the level of education increases.** In the 2007/8 school year, women comprised 55.4% of the school-level teaching staff, while 27% of the community college teaching staff and 15.9% of faculty in universities were women in 2006/7. There has also been a slight increase in the proportion of women holding PhDs, reaching 7% in 2006/7. These low numbers necessitate the adoption of policies to increase scholarships to women pursuing PhD degrees and to provide incentives for women in education without being linked to a specific age.

⁴ PCBS, 2008

⁵ MoEHE, 2007

⁶ MoEHE, 2007

Health status of Palestinian women

Reproductive health: As stated in the document issued by the International Conference on Population and Development, reproductive health can be defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes. It includes family planning, safe motherhood and diseases related to reproductive health. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the rights of men and women to be informed about and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other legal methods of birth control and the right of access to appropriate healthcare services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.”

The West Bank and Gaza Strip have the second highest fertility rate in the Middle East at 4.6 births in 2007, although this was down from 5.1 births in 2000. According to PCBS, only 6.9% of Palestinian women decide the number of children they wish to have (PCBS, 2007). The 2007 MDG report indicated that around 99.0% of births in 2006 were attended by medical personnel and that the rate of births among teenage mothers in 2005 was estimated at 59.8% for the oPt: 55.2% in the West Bank and 67.4% in Gaza Strip. As 39% of Palestinian women get married at an age below 19, many are at risk of complications related to early pregnancy, childbirth and abortion (Juzoor, 2009).



According to PCBS, **around 99.2% of pregnant women receive antenatal health care (Family Health Survey, 2006)**. An UNRWA report affirmed the rate of refugee women receiving antenatal care at 99% and indicated that **the percentage of women receiving postnatal care was 30% (Juzoor, 2009)**. This low rate of postnatal care indicates a lack of awareness among women of the importance of obtaining postnatal care, doctors' failure to inform women about the need to visit a health facility for postnatal care, and the prevailing social norms and traditions that do not allow the free movement of women within six weeks of childbirth. The same report also indicated that 35.6% of pregnant women among the Gaza refugee population were anemic, with the prevalence of anemia reaching up to 45.7% of lactating mothers attending UNRWA clinics (Juzoor, 2009). The proportion of women breastfeeding their babies for at least four months was 33.3% in 2007 (PCBS, 2007).

PCBS data indicated that Cesarean deliveries comprised 15% of total deliveries, with the highest rates in Jericho and the Jordan Valley, reaching 26.3%, followed by 19.5% in North Gaza. These figures are higher than the maximum proportion recommended by WHO, which is 15%. This percentage is noted to be higher in places with fewer Israeli checkpoints, which is an indication that the high percentage of Cesarean sections in these locations is related to procedures applied in gynecological surgery and childbirth management. This is related to the gender-based functional division of work in relation to surgical decision-making.

The rate of currently married women who use a family planning method was 50.6% in the oPt: 55.1% in the West Bank and 43.0% in Gaza Strip. The number of family planning clinics has increased from 102 in 1997 to 197 in 2003 (44 in Gaza and 153 in the West Bank). The MOH runs 44% of these clinics (Juzoor, 2009). The MoH offers tests for pregnant women free of charge, whether enrolled in a health insurance scheme or not. It also provides women with follow up throughout the pregnancy and for 42 days postpartum, as well as providing them with iron and other supplements. However, **there is a need to focus on the quality of medical consultations given by health providers.**

MoH reproductive health centers also carry out free screenings and early detection services for breast cancer. It should be noted, however, that some used medical equipment in these centers is in need of repair. Where these services are lacking, they are purchased from local NGOs. Management services for cancer are usually purchased from Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. However, access to these services requires obtaining entry permits to Jerusalem, which means that a number of cases may be denied the possibility of receiving the proper health services. **Therefore, there is a need to build a central hospital for the treatment of all kinds of cancer cases affecting both men and women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as there is also a need**



to provide the requisite trained specialists to manage these cases. Meanwhile and until the time when this will be accomplished, support should be given to Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem and Shifa Hospital in Gaza to enable them to respond to the needs for cancer treatment at the national level. It is noteworthy that 70 deaths resulting from breast cancer were registered in the West Bank in 2007/8, including 16 cases of women of childbearing age, in addition to 16 deaths due to cervical cancer and 6 deaths due to ovarian cancer. Parallel data are not available from Gaza Strip, although indications exist that cancer cases there too include a number of relatively young women.

The impact of the Israeli occupation on women's health: Israeli checkpoints and the Barrier have a large impact on women's access to health centers and hospitals. In 2009, 68 women were forced to deliver their babies at Israeli checkpoints, leading to the death of 35 babies and five women. **Additionally, according to the national MDG report for the oPt, 10% of pregnant women in the oPt spend two to four hours on their way to health centers or hospitals and 6% spend more than four hours** (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Report: MDG (Millennium Development Goals, 2009).

Women's representation in governmental health institutions: The oPt lacks an adequate number of women in decision-making positions in governmental health institutions. **The percentage of women holding the post of hospital director in the oPt is only 4%, while the percentage of women holding the position of director of health in the Ministry of Health is 12%. Women's representation increases remarkably in lower technical and supervisory posts,** reaching 37% and 46% in jobs such as head of department and head of division in hospitals, respectively. The percentage of women employed in positions like director of nursing in the Directorates of Health is 65%. According to PCBS 2007 statistics, there are 6,389 general practitioners in the West Bank, including 823 women, while there are 1,033 specialists, among whom only 63 are women. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip combined, there are 28 female gynecologists, 466 midwives, 4,355 female nurses and 3,590 male nurses.

Women's representation in health policies: Gender-sensitive health policies are lacking in the oPt. **With the exception of provisions related to the care of mothers and children and public health laws reflecting the reproductive role of women, health laws in the oPt are gender-neutral.** Because women's health is usually linked only to reproductive health, other psychological and health aspects relevant to women go neglected. The national strategy for the advancement of Palestinian women does not adopt a comprehensive approach to health or a life-cycle approach to women's health issues and rights. It does not address health issues of marginalized groups, such as women in remote areas and women with disabilities, or focus on female child health and adolescent health. It also does not grant women the right to abortion even in the case of rape. Furthermore, **Palestinian health policies fail to incorporate the mental health needs of women, including in research, surveys and service provision.** There is a scarcity of mental health services available to women due to a lack of qualified staff, including services for psychiatric diseases. Social beliefs and traditions also hinder access to mental health services by stigmatizing the women and men that seek them. Health policies in the oPt require enhancement in order to become more gender-sensitive.

Health education for Women: Health education programs for women are weak, especially with regard to diseases such as breast cancer and cervical cancer. National health survey data showed a decline in the proportion of women's interest in early screening for breast cancer and cervical cancer, with only 20.4% of women in the West Bank and 27.1% in Gaza reporting to have performed a Pap smear test at least once during the past three years (PCBS, 2007). PCBS data also indicates the low proportion of women who conduct self breast examinations due to lack of awareness among women of the risks of not conducting these tests. **This is in spite of the fact that breast cancer is the main cause of cancer deaths among women in the oPt.** Health awareness targeted at women should therefore be improved to address sexual and reproductive health, as well as the prevention of diseases affecting women, such as breast cancer, cervical cancer and osteoporosis.

Other gender gaps in the Palestinian health system: **Other gaps** in the health system that require attention include **deficient sex-disaggregated data on health issues.** Health centers in certain areas are not able to adequately serve women's health needs, particularly those isolated by Israeli checkpoints and barriers, forcing the MoH to constantly adapt their plans according to new emergency developments. A large number of women also complain of the long distances they have to travel to reach health centers, which in turn affects their ability to make regular healthcare visits.

Palestinian Women and disabilities: According to PCBS data from 2007, the disability rate in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, stands at 5.3% of the total population (PCBS does not provide data on disability rates in Gaza). The number of persons with disabilities in the West Bank was found to be 107,785 persons, including 55,557 males and 52,228 females. PCBS also reports that 30.6% of people with disabilities are illiterate, 34.1% have attended schools and dropped out, while 15.4% have attended schools and graduated. Around 23% of Palestinians with disabilities have never been married, 20.1% are employed and 14.7% are students. Only 45.5% are enrolled in health insurance and 13.1% have UNRWA health insurance. Over 70% benefit from rehabilitation centers. A PCBS report in 2008 on women and men in the oPt indicates that **in spite of the positive position of the Ministry of Education towards the empowerment of people with special needs, there are barriers to their schooling related to their families, particularly the prevalence of families denying females with disabilities access to schooling due to social stigma.** Another barrier to schooling for Palestinians with special needs is structural, related to the lack of appropriate infrastructure and access to equipment. In 2004/5, structural improvements were made in only 523 schools out of 1677 due to inadequate budgeting. Additionally, the Ministry seems to prioritize physical disabilities, but has yet to deal with intellectual and mental disabilities, which would require specialized input.

Economic situation of Palestinian women

Women and the labor market: Despite notable improvement in 2006/7, Palestinian **women's participation in the labor market remains low compared to neighboring countries.** In 2004, the rate of women's participation in the labor force was reported at 12.8% and increased in 2007 to 15.7%, as compared to 67.7% for males. The rate was higher for rural women, reaching 20.4%, which is likely attributable to women's role in farming activities. The overall participation of young people (15-24 years old) in the labor market is relatively low, at 44.2% for males and 8.2% for females in 2007 (PCBS, 2008). **The overall rate of women's participation remained at the same level in the third quarter of 2009, estimated at 15.4%.** The above data indicates low participation of women in the labor market compared to men, meaning that males comprise the vast majority of the Palestinian labor force. **Data from 2008 also indicates a wide gap in the rate of participation of both men and women in the labor force in the West Bank compared to Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2008), which can be attributed to the declining economic conditions in Gaza.** The gap between women's participation in the labor force compared to men lessens with increased education, especially for women with 23 years or more of education, with labor force participation rates reaching 42.8% for females and 66.6% for males (PCBS, 2008).

A further examination of labor force statistics from 2008 shows that **the proportion of women in the labor force increases between the ages of 25-54 years old, reaching its peak (23.3%) in the age group of 35-44 years old.** However, for both women and men, labor force participation rates are low for those above 55 years of age. In the age group of 15-24 years old, labor force participation rates are very low for women and lower than usual for men. For women, **this is attributed to the need to focus on domestic chores and likely reflects women's focus at this time on their reproductive role, early marriage and involvement in education.** As domestic chores are a major determinant of women's participation or non-participation in the labor market (PCBS, 2008), they should be recognized as an official economic activity and be included in considerations in the development of policies addressing the division of labor between men and women.

Women's low overall participation rate in the labor force can be explained by **various factors**, including the fact that **standard measurements traditionally used in official surveys do not account for most work done by women, as the official definition of labor used to measure participation rates neglects the types of economic activities in which women are most often engaged.** For instance, **female labor and economic activity concentrated in the agricultural sector often goes uncounted, while women's representation in other areas, such as the manufacturing sector, while counted, is often quite low (Hamami, 1995).** The distorted and disordered structure of the Palestinian economy due to the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation also influence women's participation rates, as do social norms and traditions that require men to seek jobs and earn an income, while often limiting the role of women to caring for the household and raising children (Suha Canaan, 2009).

A number of other **possible reasons for women's low participation in the labor force** exist as well, such as **low enrolment rates and poor levels of TVET opportunities for women (Suha Canaan, 2009).** A World Bank report in 1995 pointed to the high fertility rate in the oPt and the poor ability of the Palestinian economy to generate job opportunities as among the reasons hindering women's presence in the labor market. Another possible reason still is that **prevailing employment policies in the oPt are not responsive to maternity and motherhood needs (Samia Al-Batma, 2007).** The social **perception of women's role in society and the lower daily wage earned by women compared to that earned by men for the same work are both discouraging factors to women seeking employment and should not be overlooked.** In 2007, the daily wage for women was estimated at NIS 72, compared to NIS 85 for men. Gaps in **Palestinian labor laws and the lack of decent working conditions** also influence women's low participation in the labor market (ILO, 2008).

In 2008, the unemployment rate for females was estimated at 23.8%, compared to 26.5% for males. The gap of female unemployment between regions was wide, measured at

42.8% in the Gaza Strip compared to 16.7% in the West Bank. For males, unemployment rate was 19.5% in the West Bank and 40.2% in Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2008). Hebron Governorate recorded the highest unemployment rate in the West Bank in 2008, followed by Qalqilya Governorate, while Jericho and the Jordan Valley Governorate recorded the lowest unemployment rate among all West Bank governorates. In the Gaza Strip, Khan Yunis Governorate had the highest level of unemployment, followed by Deir Al-Balah and North Gaza (PCBS, 2009).

The highest unemployment rate for both men and women was recorded in the age group of 15-24 years old (youth), reaching 34% for males and 42.5% for females. This was followed by the age group of 25-34 years old, which reached 22.1% for females and 19.8% for males (PCBS, 2008).

The lowest unemployment rate for females was recorded amongst those without formal schooling, at 2.7%, while the highest unemployment rate was reported among those with 13 years of schooling or more, at 37.5% (compared to 17.3% for their male counterparts). In contrast, the employment rate in 2009 for males without schooling was 32.0% (PCBS, 2009). These figures suggest an inverse relationship between education and unemployment, especially for women with 13 years of education or more. This is due to the lack of clear and targeted policies to link the outputs of higher education with the needs of the labor market. **In general, unemployment starts to gradually decrease with the increase of age for both males and females, reaching the lowest rate in the age group of 55 years old or over.** This is largely due to the fact that those 35 years old and above tend to enjoy more stability in their work and avoid the unemployment suffered by younger groups, while the majority of Palestinians who are 55 or older have left the labor force. An additional contributing factor is the accumulation of experience and knowledge that comes with age and is particularly lacking for those in the age group of 15-24 years old, especially when compared to other age groups.

In 2007, poverty and severe poverty rates in the oPt, as calculated according to real monthly consumption patterns of households, were reported at 30.3% and 8.3% respectively. The poverty and severe poverty rates ranged from 51.8% and 35.0% respectively in the Gaza Strip to 19.1% and 9.7% respectively in the West Bank. Poverty tended to increase with the size of the family, with the highest poverty rate (58.5%) found among households with 10 or more members. The poverty rate for households with 2-3 members was significantly lower, at 18%. Poverty rates also differed according to the gender of the head of household, with rates of 32.8% poverty and 21.3% severe poverty for male-headed households, compared to 33.9% poverty and 19.0% severe poverty for female-headed households (PCBS, 2008).

Factors contributing to women's poverty include the impact of Israeli occupation policies on the Palestinian economy; high

unemployment and women's low participation in the labor force; as well as the lesser extent to which women possess land or estates compared to men. Data indicates that only 5% of women possess land or have a share in land, compared to 24% of men. Additionally, only 7% of women own a house or real estate property, compared to 57% of men. These statistics draw attention to the issue of inheritance, in which women often do not receive their fair share. However this problem is often more of a cultural dilemma than a legal one.

Women face both horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market, as their employment is largely concentrated in the service and agriculture sectors, while they also tend to occupy low status jobs. In 2007, 46.2% of all employed women worked in the service and agriculture sectors, 36% in the pharmaceutical sector, and 9.5% in the mining and stone-cutting sector. Women are clearly absent from the construction, transportation, storage and communications sectors. Men, on the other hand, are represented to varying degrees in all sectors and in a more balanced manner than women. In 2007, 33.2% of all employed men worked in the service sector, 22.3% in commerce and restaurants, 13.3% in mining and stone-cutting, 13.5% in construction, and 6.9% in transportation, storage and communications. From these differences in the distribution of male and female employment across different economic sectors, it can be seen that women's employment more often corresponds to societal perceptions of women's role in the public and private domains (PCBS, 2008).

With regard to the occupational distribution of women as measured by PCBS, 40.5% of working women were found in jobs such as technicians, clerks and assistant specialists, followed by 35.5% working in skilled positions in agriculture and fishing. In contrast, the distribution of men across occupations and professions is much broader than that of women (PCBS, 2008). In general, women tend to seek occupations that do not require extended physical exertion, but rather focus on administrative or technical tasks that require appropriate educational attainment. On the other hand, men occupy a wider range of different occupations that may or may not require academic qualifications as much as they require physical effort, such as occupations in crafts, field industries and construction (Suha Canaan, 2009).

A study by the International Labor Organization (ILO) on unprotected employment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip found that "Palestinian informal labor, according to the relaxed definition, has experienced a slight but steady decline since 2000. **Gender-based variation exists in relation to the labor force, with higher proportions of men than women among both formal and informal workers.** According to the relaxed definition, 60% of working women are defined as informal workers, compared to only 16% of total male workers. This is evident in the fact that **women carry out most of the unpaid work and work that is not included in official statistics.** In addition, the proportion of informal labor declines with the increase in men's ages, but it increases as women's ages increase, which is often a result of women's reproductive and caretaking roles" (ILO, 2008).

National mechanisms in support of citizenship rights and gender



National mechanisms in support of citizenship rights and gender

Palestinian NGOs and their relation to gender

Women's issues are central to the achievement of equitable and inclusive development that involves all segments of society equally and without discrimination within a conducive environment governed by law and pluralism, respecting human rights and values and safeguarding the dignity of the individual.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation, Palestinian women have worked alongside men to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. In spite of a long history of Palestinian women's support for community issues in general and women's issues in particular, Palestinian women today continue to fight for the realization of their full economic, social, political and legal rights.

In 1929, the first Palestinian women's conference was held in Jerusalem, during which an executive committee was formed called the Executive Committee of the Association of Arab Women. From this, the Arab Women's Union was later established in Jerusalem and Nablus. In 1948, women's organizations were active in establishing orphanages and relief services for bereaved families through the provision of food, housing, water and clothing. In 1965, **a popular women's organization was established under the name of «the General Union of Palestinian Women,» with the aim of organizing women in the oPt around social and political issues (Ismail, 2002).** By the end of 1967, there were 68 women's charity and relief associations in the oPt. The decision by Palestinian factions to form women's structures in 1978 represented a major shift in the process of recruiting and organizing women in political parties.

A study mapping NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2007 suggested that the number of NGOs had increased by 61.5% since 2000, reaching 1,495 NGOs in 2007 as compared to 926 NGOs in 2000. The majority of these NGOs (70.9%) were reported to work in the field of charities and clubs, while 9.4% worked as development organizations; 7.9% as cultural organizations; 4.5% in the field of training, retraining and rehabilitation; 3.2% as cooperative societies; 1% as relief organizations; 1.4% as research organizations; 1.7% as human rights organizations; and 0.1% in other fields.⁷

Results of the 2007 Palestinian census indicated that 44% of NGOs run cultural, scientific and literary programs; 27% run educational programs; 39% offer charitable assistance; 27% run youth and sports activities; and 10% conduct advocacy activities (PCBS, 2008).

With respect to women-specific programming amongst Palestinian NGOs, the proportion of women's programs rose from 150 (17%) in 2000 to 363 (26%) in 2007. In general, programs related to women, relief, social assistance and advocacy activities have witnessed higher growth than other programs. The proportion of NGOs implementing women's programs as ancillary programs is much higher than those with women's programs as their primary focus. This could be attributed to the fact that women's programs are often added to already existing programs. Data indicates that a high number of NGOs consider women's empowerment through education, microfinance, research, gender training, and women's services as one of their secondary objectives (490 NGOs or 35.5% of the total), whereas 121 NGOs (8.8%) consider women's empowerment their primary goal (MAS, 2008).

This same study indicates that these NGOs face a number of obstacles, including restrictions by donors, constraints by the Israeli occupying authorities, restraints by the local community and others. NGOs **reported their needs in order of priority** as follows: **95.6% cited fundraising, 89% provision of equipment and technology, 78.2% networking relations, 67.7% cooperation on part of the local community, and 50.1% institutional capacity building (MAS, 2008).**

Reference should also be made to women's centers run by UNRWA in refugee camps. Challenges facing these centers include political and economic challenges, as well as poor institutional structures and budget deficits affecting UNRWA's provision of services in general. A focus group held in collaboration with UNRWA in February 2010 reported a number of essential needs for women in refugee camps, including: social empowerment through awareness raising on gender issues and women's rights; health promotion and psychological support through the provision of mental health and reproductive health services; economic empowerment through awareness-raising and the provision of job opportunities; and finally, the need to improve the infrastructure of these centers and provide them with basic materials for job creation projects.

⁷ Al-Maliki, Amjad et al. Census for Non-governmental Palestinian Organizations 2007, MAS, 2008.

How governmental institutions relate to gender

Since the establishment of the PA, the Palestinian government has sought to address gender issues in the public sphere at all levels, starting from the legislative and policy framework level all the way through to the executive level. To this end, **MoWA was established by a decision from the Council of Ministers in November 2003 in order to facilitate gender mainstreaming in different national sectors.** It's establishment also sought to **ensure that women's practical and strategic needs are taken into consideration, alongside with those of men, in national plans and budgets.** Furthermore, **MoWa was designed to carry out monitoring and evaluation of programs and policies aimed at advancing women's situation** in cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders concerned with women's issues.

This is clearly evident in **MoWA's mission**, which seeks to **"ensure a legal and policy framework for achieving gender equality by mainstreaming gender, and empowering women as essential partners in the building of a democratic state"**.

In order to achieve its mission, **MoWA** adopted a **set of objectives** as follows:

1. **To develop government's political commitment towards incorporating gender, democracy and human rights** issues in the policies, plans and programs of various ministries and in the related legislation and laws.
2. To ensure the link **between lobbying and advocacy activities** and the development of policies and laws.
3. **To build and support a network of relations with governmental and international women's organizations** and human rights organizations at the regional and international levels, and to exchange experiences with them in relation to the application of international conventions on women and human rights, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In order to ensure gender mainstreaming across different sectors, **women's units were created in all ministries by the Council of Ministers' decision No. 15/12/09/CM/AQ of 2005. On 28 July 2008, based on a request from MoWA, decision No. 08/65/12/CM/SF was issued to amend the earlier decision, changing the title of women's units to gender units and spelling out the tasks, responsibilities and organizational structures of these units,** in order to contribute to and monitor the mainstreaming of gender issues in ministerial policies, plans and programs. **Governmental commitment towards gender issues was also reflected in the issuing of the Council of Ministers' decision No. 01/05/13/CM/SF in 2009, dealing with the government and ministries adoption of gender-sensitive budgets. However, a gap still exists between the government's political will and the actual implementation of the Council of Ministers' decisions on the ground. Gender units are**

still facing **a number of problems** hindering their ability to perform their duties, mainly:

- Some **ministries lack the will and commitment to implement the decisions**, thus hindering the gender units, which are dependent on ministerial structures.
- **The ministerial gender units lack an adequate number of qualified staff** as well as the required capacity and skills in gender mainstreaming.
- **Gender units also suffer from inadequate budget allocations.**
- **Gender units' staff is often excluded from participation in planning and budgeting.**
- The prevailing culture within ministries is still not supportive of gender issues.
- There is **a low level of coordination and cooperation between gender units** and the other directorates and units within their respective ministries.
- **A comprehensive and sex-disaggregated database is lacking**, for the most part, and where available, often needs updating.
- The work of **MoWA and gender units faces several challenges**, including:
 - Israeli occupation policies and practices, such as land confiscation, control over water resources and borders, settlement building, Judaization of Jerusalem, military checkpoints, and the construction of the Barrier, that prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, where all male and female citizens can enjoy full citizenship rights, including freedom of mobility and access.
 - Palestinian internal divisions, which are adversely affecting the unity of the Palestinian people; obstructing geographic contiguity and communication throughout the oPt; and hindering efforts to protect women's rights, including the prevention of VAW, due to the inability of the PLC to convene and amend applicable laws.
 - Negative culture and social attitudes towards women's role in society, with prevailing stereotypes of women that limit their role to the private sphere and a traditional focus on fertility, childrearing and family care.
 - The existing gap between governmental commitment towards gender issues and the actual application and implementation of this commitment on the ground.
 - Prevailing misconceptions about gender issues by both individuals and groups in Palestinian society.

Planning and gender

Following its establishment in 2004, MoWA developed its first plan of action for the period 2005-2007, focusing on the following strategic objectives: to activate women's role in policy and decision-making positions; to reduce poverty among young women, particularly those supporting their families; and to encourage TVET for young women. However, MoWA has faced several challenges in implementing its plan, primarily the international decision to boycott funding to the Palestinian government following the 2006 legislative elections, as well as the noticeable deterioration in staff performance.

Based on a comprehensive review of the plan and achievements towards its objectives, the national plan of action for 2008-2010 adopted the following strategic objectives: to increase women's participation in policy-formulation and decision-making, to increase women's participation in the labor market, to reduce women's poverty, and to combat VAW.

However, the **Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008-2010 has been criticized for incorporating gender only into the social sector, while failing to consider it in other sectors such as the economic sector, infrastructure, etc.** As a result, gender has clearly been absent in the objectives, programs and budgets of these different sectors.

A review of a number of sector-specific policies and plans revealed that gender concerns were largely absent. Some sector-specific plans were found to be gender-blind, meaning they completely ignored gender issues at the level of situation analysis, vision, objectives and programs. These included, but were not limited to, the Ministry of Telecommunications, Ministry of Transportation, and Ministry of Interior. Some ministries were found to consider gender issues in their plans in terms of gender principles, such as gender equality and equity in service provision. Other ministries were found to consider gender issues at the level of secondary objectives and programs targeted exclusively towards women, which negatively reflected gender-specific budgeting. In general, most ministries' commitment to the principles of equity and equality has not translated into clear gender-specific strategic objectives or action plans that comprehensively and clearly mainstream practical and strategic gender needs into ministry programs. This is the case, at least, for the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.

MoWA's relation with stakeholders

In setting out its priorities, MoWA adopts a participatory approach in both horizontal and vertical directions, and considers gender a cross-sectoral theme. According to this approach, the public, NGO and private sectors should play an active role in setting national gender priorities at various administrative levels through their participation in committees, workshops, discussions and brainstorming sessions. Furthermore, MoWA interacts with all stakeholders involved in the implementation of national plans and programs using various means, including collaboration, coordination, information sharing, subcontracting, networking, support, etc.

Major achievements in relation to gender

It is beyond the scope of the National Gender Strategy to present all **national achievements made in regards to gender** so far. However, the following can provide a summary of major achievements:

- **Endorsement of CEDAW by the Palestinian President in 2009.**

- Governmental commitment towards gender issues, reflected in the **decisions by the Council of Ministers to create gender units within ministries and adopt gender-sensitive budgeting.**
- **Appointment of women in leadership** posts that have traditionally been restricted to men, such as governors, Shari'a judges, and director general of the oPt Capital Market Authority.
- Approval of the incorporation of a women's quota in the electoral lists for legislative and local council elections into the **Elections Law of 2005** for both local councils and general elections.
- In relation to the provision of information on gender issues, accomplishment of several studies on women's political participation in local councils, women in senior management levels of the public sector, gender-sensitive budgeting, reproductive health, VAW and referral services for VAW victims, as well as a number of studies in the field of education on the situation and aspirations of TVET addressed at females, relation of education to the labor market, and other studies related to female professionals and artisans in the oPt. This is in addition to a number of studies in the field of health and reproductive health, as well as others in the field of law.
- Provision of a number of **training programs aimed at sensitizing human resources personnel to gender issues.** Training on gender issues and analytical skills was offered to personnel working in the public sector, including MoWA staff and those working in women's units in the different ministries. Issues addressed in the training ranged from gender concepts, gender mainstreaming, and the development of administrative and practical skills for MoWA staff, women's units in the different ministries, as well as women elected into municipal and local councils. Capacity building activities focused on gender mainstreaming in policies, plans, programs, budgets, databases and statistics, project monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning for women's units in the different ministries, etc.
- Implementation of **numerous awareness-raising, lobbying and advocacy campaigns to support the adoption of gender issues into agendas and policies at official levels,** as well as to raise awareness of women's rights and issues at the community level.
- **Establishment of Tawasol Centers in Hebron, Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin governorates,** with plans to establish seven additional centers in the remaining governorates, including in the Gaza Strip, with support from the Italian Cooperation.
- Implementation of **various job creation programs and projects for women in order to increase their participation in the labor market** and reduce their poverty and unemployment.
- Development of the **Palestinian Women's Bill of Rights in 2008** with support from UNIFEM.
- Establishment of the **Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center in 2006.**
- **The decision by the Council of Ministers to create a national committee on combating violence against women in 2007,** chaired by MoWA.

Strategic objectives, policies & interventions



Strategic objectives, policies & interventions

Overall goal of the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy

To enable Palestinian women to enjoy full citizenship rights by bridging the gender gap in different aspects of life.

Strategic objective 1

To enable women to enjoy family law and civil rights that ensure equality and equity

Policy:

Taking all legal, legislative and operational measures to reinforce the principle of gender equality and equity in personal status and civil rights.

Interventions:

- Enacting the Unified Palestinian Family Law;
- Amending marriage contracts to ensure the inclusion of all rights for Palestinian women;
- Raising awareness among girls and women about their inheritance and property rights, as well as the conditions and terms that they can include in their marriage contracts ahead of time;
- Disbursing funds allocated to the Maintenance Fund from the PA budget;
- Ensuring that the draft Civil Status Law provides for a woman's right to choose between her own or her husband's family name in her personal ID card and passport;
- Documenting marriage contracts and divorce in Shari'a courts, and requiring divorce to be made by court only; and
- Computerizing all data related to marital status and linking all courts through an intranet.

Strategic objective 2

To ensure that Palestinian women of Jerusalem preserve their rights to residency, movement and nationality

Policy:

Taking all measures on the legal and advocacy levels, both locally and internationally, to protect the nationality and residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites in their hometown.

Interventions:

- Exposing racial discrimination practiced by the Israeli occupation court system and revealing the discriminatory nature of Israeli military law, which violates international law by seeking to allow Israeli military leadership to practice full and free discretion;
- Exposing violations practiced by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers against Palestinians in Jerusalem;
- Lobbying for the holding of a convention of states party to the Geneva Conventions in order to hold deliberations on Israel's refusal to apply the Geneva Conventions to the occupied Palestinian territory as well as overall breaches practiced by Israel, a state party, and to agree on the responsibilities of all state parties under the provisions of Common Article One;
- Developing an action plan to utilize international jurisdiction all over the world, particularly in states party to the Geneva Conventions, to prosecute Israeli criminals who have committed and are still committing violations against Palestinian men and women; and
- Protecting Jerusalemite women and raising their legal awareness.

Strategic objective 3

To reduce all forms of violence against women in the occupied Palestinian territory

Policy:

Protecting women from all forms of domestic and sexual violence through the enforcement of prohibitive laws and procedures.

Interventions:

- Enacting a law to protect women from domestic violence;
- Amending the Penal Code to remove any form of gender-based discrimination;
- Amending the Penal Procedures Law with regard to provisions on criminal prosecution that discriminate between men and women in filing complaints; and
- Adopting all interventions stated in the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women, which is to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Strategic objective 4

To improve the status of Palestinian women prisoners

Policy:

Taking all measures required to improve the status of Palestinian women prisoners and released prisoners, and to respond to their needs.

Interventions:

- Documenting the experience of women prisoners throughout the history of the Palestinian national struggle;
- Advancing the cause of women prisoners as a national-level political issue;
- Providing psychological support to Palestinian women prisoners in Israeli detention centers and in exile;
- Involving Palestinian women prisoners in all national decisions, structures and political decision-making processes, working both at the local and international levels; and
- Ensuring a dignified and decent life for women prisoners and their families.

Strategic objective 5

To facilitate women's active political involvement and to activate their role in decision-making

Policy:

- a. Taking all legal and other measures to increase women's participation in the political sphere;
- b. Taking appropriate measures to rectify negative effects of cultural and social heritage regarding women's role in society; and
- c. Taking appropriate measures to enhance women's abilities and skills.

Interventions:

- Amending the Political Parties Law, the Electoral Law, the Professional Associations and Trade Unions Law, the Societies Law and the Civil Service Law from a gender perspective;
- Adopting an electoral system that facilitates and supports the election of women candidates to leadership positions;
- Facilitating the participation of female university students in student councils;
- Developing and implementing a media strategy to address the negative cultural and social heritage regarding women's issues and roles in Palestinian society;
- Modifying school curricula to reflect the importance of women's role and participation in the political sphere; and
- Developing and offering training programs for women to build their capacities.

Strategic objective 6

To improve the quantity and quality of educational services in the oPt from a gender perspective

Policy:

- a. Expanding and activating the compulsory education policy to cover secondary education;
- b. Taking the required measures for incorporating gender issues into school curricula and higher education;
- c. Making all required amendments and measures to encourage enrolment of girls and women in TVET and agricultural education, both at the secondary level and in higher education; and
- d. Taking all measures that ensure access to education for both males and females with special needs.

Interventions:

- Amending and approving the basic education draft law to include compulsory education all the way through the end of grade 12;
- Activating school counseling for girls and raising awareness among them and their families on the disadvantages of early marriage and the importance of education, as well as ensuring concerted work by relevant ministries to address this issue;
- Creating a special fund for poor female students in secondary education and linking it with secondary girls schools in remote areas;
- Modifying some school textbooks from a gender perspective, especially the two standard textbooks on the subject matter of "Contemporary Issues";
- Introducing a compulsory course on gender in all universities and community colleges;
- Enacting the Vocational and Technical Education Law;
- Encouraging girls and women to join TVET;
- Introducing vocational fields of study for girls and women in vocational schools that correspond to the demands of the labor market;
- Increasing awareness among girls, women and families on the importance of agricultural education;
- Enhancing school facilities to adapt to the needs of males and females with special needs; and
- Conducting an awareness-raising campaign to encourage families to enroll children with special needs, especially females, in formal education.

Strategic objective 7

To increase protection of women's health

Policy:

- a. Taking all legal and legislative measures to ensure comprehensive health rights and medical services for women throughout the different stages of their life cycle;
- b. Expanding the provision of specialist services for diseases affecting women (physical and mental health);
- c. Raising women's awareness about their reproductive and health rights; and
- d. Taking affirmative action measures in support of female health professionals.

Interventions:

- Reviewing health-related laws from a gender perspective;
- Mainstreaming gender issues in health policies and practices;
- Monitoring and evaluating the mainstreaming of gender issues in the implementation of health laws and policies;
- Providing health services needed for women's protection;
- Providing the required specialist health personnel for women's care;
- Increasing health awareness among women and in the society on reproductive health and diseases specifically affecting women;
- Adopting an affirmative action policy for the appointment of qualified women to replace a number of retired men in senior health professional positions;
- Offering scholarships to women in postgraduate health studies; and
- Respecting the reproductive role of women by raising or refraining from specifying an upper age limit for academic scholarships for women.

Strategic objective 8

To improve women's participation in the labor market and increase their participation in economic decision-making

Policy:

- Taking all legislative and executive measures to ensure protection of working women from all forms of discrimination in the workplace;
- Taking all appropriate measures to provide job opportunities and social security rights for unemployed women with 13 years of education or more;
- Adopting a strategy for mainstreaming gender issues in ministries concerned with economic activity;
- Adopting a motivational policy to increase women's participation in the labor market; and
- Ensuring legalized social protection for women participating in informal and home-based economies.

Interventions:

- Amending the relevant laws and developing executive bylaws for the Palestinian Labor Law;
- Drafting and developing a strategy for matching the outputs of higher education with the needs of the labor market from a gender perspective;
- Providing facilitation and services to support working women;
- Creating job opportunities for women with 13 years of schooling or more who are unemployed;
- Developing data and information on the labor sector and disseminating it both locally and internationally;
- Mainstreaming gender issues in ministries concerned with economic activity;
- Increasing women's awareness of their legal rights;
- Developing a legal framework validating domestic work as part of the national economy;
- Developing relations with regional and international bodies and organizations concerned with women's economic rights;
- Ensuring a linkage between the inclusive health insurance scheme (once approved) and registration of women working in the informal sector;
- Enacting a law providing partial tax exemption to institutions marketing the products of rural women;
- Providing women's cooperatives with guarantees for tax exemption;
- Providing custom facilitation to institutions exporting the products of rural women abroad and/or marketing them locally; and
- Coordinating with the Ministry of Local Governance (MoLG) and MoNE for the registration of all women working in the informal sector.

Strategic objective 9

To mainstream gender concerns and issues in the work of Palestinian governmental ministries

Policy:

- Seeking the advancement and enforcement of governmental commitment and decisions on gender issues; and
- Ensuring that all measures are taken to mainstream gender issues in ministerial planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Interventions:

- Activating the implementation of Council of Ministers' decision No. 08/65/12/CM/SF on gender units;
- Activating the implementation of Council of Ministers' decision No. 01/05/13/CM/SF of 2009 on the adoption of gender-sensitive budgets;
- Building the capacity and skills of MoWA, gender units and administrative, planning and executive personnel in the approach of gender mainstreaming; and
- Ensuring the provision of sex-disaggregated data.





Monitoring & evaluation



Monitoring & evaluation

Monitoring of the National Gender Strategy will commence as soon as its implementation begins. Information on the implementation process will be shared with decision-makers and planners through reports in order to solicit feedback and help rectify implementation whenever hindered by external factors. Two milestones will be set for evaluation, one during and one upon the completion of the implementation process. **The purpose of evaluation at different stages during the implementation process is to assess whether implementation is on track to achieve its strategic objectives.** The end-of-process evaluation, on the other hand, is envisaged to identify whether the specific and overall objectives of this Strategy have been met and whether implementation has affected appropriate changes in the problems that the Strategy seeks to address. Therefore, **quantitative and qualitative indicators have been set** to allow measurement of accomplishments in the implementation of policies and interventions. **The prime responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the National Gender Strategy will be assumed by MoWA in cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders.** As indicated above, the implementation of this Strategy should involve various governmental and non-governmental actors, including the private sector. Therefore, **gender units are required to assume monitoring and evaluation of progress** in gender mainstreaming and **in the implementation of the present Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy within their respective ministries** and submit periodical and annual reports to MoWA accordingly. Progress will be eventually reported to the Council of Ministers on a regular basis. **NGOs and the private sector will also have the responsibility to monitor progress** each within their domain of activity. Therefore, MoWA needs to develop a clear mechanism for monitoring and evaluation to be agreed upon by all stakeholders.

MoWA, in cooperation with UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN, will finalize the project on developing gender indicators for monitoring and evaluation during 2011. The first phase of the project has been accomplished and the work will proceed during this year for the development of indicators that can be used in the monitoring and evaluation of plan implementation. In addition, MoWA's plan of action includes the **creation of an official gender auditor for gender issues in cooperation with other partners.** Project outputs can be seen as inputs for the observer, which will ultimately become a source of information for the system that will be created by MoPAD to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 2011-2013 Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy.

In addition to the indicators that are expected to be developed by the UNIFEM-supported indicators project, a number of indicators are proposed below to monitor progress in the different areas of the Strategy's implementation in the meantime so that PCBS can work on generating data for their measurement. **The monitoring and evaluation of the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy will generally rely on** the following:

- Close and systematic **cooperation** between MoPAD, MoWA, ministerial gender units and ministry officers in charge of developing sectoral plans.
- The reinforced **role of MoWA and gender units** within other ministries in monitoring progress and accomplishments on an ongoing basis.
- Creation of an **active network** within and **between the different governmental ministries** in support of the Strategy, preferably to include male and female representatives as well as senior-level representatives. The network may also benefit from having members from women's organizations, as well as gender experts.
- **Annual reporting by gender units** through their coordinator (the Minister of Women's Affairs) **to the Office of the Prime Minister** on accomplishments, challenges and proposed actions to overcome problems in mainstreaming gender within the ministries.

Gender indicators

Strategic objective		Indicator
1	Enable women to enjoy a family law and civil rights that ensure equality and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A draft family law submitted - Utilization of marriage contracts that include women's legal rights
2	Enable Jerusalemite women to preserve their rights to residency, mobility and citizenship in Jerusalem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Jerusalem ID cards revoked - Percentage of Jerusalem ID cards regained
3	Reduce all forms of violence against women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of women victims of violence approaching antiviolence centers or women's organizations for advise - Percentage of ever married women who have been subjected to domestic violence at least once - Percentage of unmarried women who have been subjected to domestic violence at least once
4	Improve the status of women prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of documentation of information regarding women prisoners and ex-prisoners - Availability of psychological, social and educational services to women prisoners and ex-prisoners
5	Facilitate women's active political involvement and activate their role in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of women in the Legislative Council, local councils and professional associations - Percentage of senior positions held by women in government institutions out of all senior positions (c and above) - Percentage of women ministers in the Palestinian government
6	Improve educational services in the oPt in terms of quantity and quality from a gender perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dropout rates for girls in secondary education - Proportion of women with higher education degrees (BA and above) compared to men - Illiteracy rate for females in the age group 15-34
7	Increase protection of women's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births - Proportion of women receiving postnatal care - Proportion of women carrying out screening for cervical and breast cancer - Number of centers offering mental health services
8	Increase women's participation in the labor market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of women in the formal sector - Rate of women's participation in the labor market - average daily wage received by women (in NIS) compared to men
9	Mainstream gender in the ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of female staff members in Palestinian ministries - Number of units established in the different ministries - Number of gender interventions included in projects and programs of individual ministries - Percentage of gender disaggregated statistics out of all available statistics of individual ministries



Annexes



Annex A

Glossary

Source: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation/ Ministry of Agriculture, Women's Participation Planning and Development Department. *Operational Manual: Strategic Planning and Gender Integration in Agriculture*. Prepared by: Zahira Kamal, Khamis Shalabi, and Mahmoud Ataya. Ramallah, 2004.

Gender

Gender is a socio-cultural construct that views social, cultural and economic factors specific to a given society as determinant of the characteristics, roles, responsibilities and rights of men and women in that society. Consequently, from birth, both males and females are affected by these factors through different community institutions (family, friends, school, the media), with implications on socialization and growing up into men and women.

Biological sex

Biological sex is a biological construct based on physical factors, such as chromosomes, hormonal composition and the reproductive construction of males and females. In contrast to gender, the construct of sex is largely consistent across societies and times, and though medically possible, is difficult to change.

Gender roles

Gender roles are theoretical constructs used for social analysis. A role reflects a model of behavior by an individual, including certain rights and duties. A role also relates to a certain status and social power. The role of an individual changes according to social and cultural changes in society.

Reproductive role

A reproductive role is linked to the responsibilities associated with reproduction, including caring for and raising the future generations of men and women. Consequent to their biological role in pregnancy and childbirth, women are often associated with the responsibility of domestic chores, such as cooking, laundry and cleaning. It is important for men to also share the responsibilities of childrearing with women and increase the time they spend with their children and in performing parenting activities. Although motherhood is greatly valued in Arab societies, including Palestinian society, the associated reproductive role of women is underestimated and underappreciated. This is evident in Palestinian society's poor level of attention to women's health and education.

Productive role

A productive role refers to the activities carried out by men and women in order to provide the basic necessities, commodities and services, such as food, clothing, housing,

etc. for themselves, their families, or others. This role is assumed by both men and women, although it is often measured in different terms. Men's work is often measured in terms of quantitative wage earned, while the work of women often goes unpaid and is thus difficult to quantify. When both men and women do the same work, such as cleaning, cooking, laundry and ironing, or even agricultural work, men often earn a higher wage than women for performing the same tasks.

Community role

A community role includes activities performed by men and women at the group/community level in order to provide services to the community or contribute to the effective utilization of community resources. Examples include the formation of associations and volunteering in their activities. Practical experience in the Palestinian context indicates that leadership responsibilities in such activities are often assumed by men, while women often assume administrative duties.

Political role

A political role includes activities carried out by men and women at the group/community level that reflect their participation in governmental decision-making and leadership functions at the local or national level. This includes participation in political parties, local and municipal councils and national representative bodies such as parliament. These functions give an improved standing in society. In the Arab world, political functions are most often assumed by men, while women's political representation is weak. Increasing the political role of women and their participation in these activities would ensure a wider representation of the interests of both men and women, as well as contribute to social and economic justice.

Social marginalization

Social marginalization comprises activities, policies, programs and processes of development and relief that lead to the neglect of the priorities, needs and interests of certain individuals or groups, largely reducing their participation in decision-making and hindering improvement of their economic, political and social conditions.

Gender awareness-raising

Promoting a common understanding of policies and concepts related to gender to address and clarify discrepancies. This involves monitoring gender equality, setting objectives, developing skills and engaging beneficiaries.

Gender-based division of labor

A division of labor according to social and cultural patterns that define the roles of men and women, boys and girls, both inside and outside the family, and separate from the biological differences between men and women.

Affirmative action

A policy, plan, program or practice aimed at opposing racial or gender-based discrimination and countering the damage inflicted upon a certain group as a result of discrimination

in terms of employment, promotion or access to job opportunities. Affirmative action includes the removal of barriers towards creating equal opportunities.

Practical gender needs

Immediate needs that require the accomplishment of gender-specific responsibilities within a gender-based division of labor. For women, this means the carrying out their reproductive and productive roles and responsibilities in accordance with traditional gender roles and divisions between men and women. In practical terms, these needs reinforce the primary responsibility of women in child care and domestic chores, and do not address the general factors that cause women's dependency or discrimination against women.

Strategic gender needs

Long-term needs that vary according to different environments and take into account women and men's participation in both family and society. The achievement of strategic gender needs leads to a more effective organization of society in which security is ensured, all forms of discrimination are eliminated, and equal opportunities in education and employment exist for women and men, girls and boys.

Development

An integrated process that seeks to achieve ongoing positive change in individuals and society through concerted efforts and mechanisms. The outcomes of development are often measured by using socio-economic indicators such as income, investment, education and health.

Sustainable human development

An integrated process that seeks to expand the scope of human choices in economic, social and cultural spheres by placing people in the center of the development process itself. On this basis, development is achieved by people, for people. Sustainable human development is associated with the social welfare of citizens and concerned with meeting people's needs. Within this framework, the state is responsible for the adoption of policies and measures to ensure the welfare of its citizens.

Development from an economic perspective

The provision of a minimum standard of living for individuals by increasing production to achieve economic wellbeing, with the idea that this will, in turn, bring about social wellbeing.

Social concept of development

This concept stems from the basis that humans are the target of development and that development can only be achieved by humans and for humans. Therefore, social development is «the provision of opportunities for people to exercise their social and political rights and to secure social justice and equal opportunities.» Based on this concept, the individual is a resource for development rather than a burden, and is the core and purpose of the development process in general.

Women's approach to development

An approach that aims at empowering women by promoting their self-reliance, acknowledging their multiple roles, and responding to their strategic gender needs. In this sense, it challenges other approaches to development by considering women as individuals with the ability to solve their problems if their potential skills are identified and developed.

Gender approach to development

This approach puts the issue of women's development within the scope of the social relations that govern the roles of women and men at the family and societal levels. This approach utilizes the concepts of participation and empowerment to allow women and men to mutually support each other's development and relations to ensure a better quality of life for both women and men as individuals, families and societies.

Gender mainstreaming

A process that aims to restore the balance in power relations between men and women that have developed from differences in their roles and led to unequal opportunities in different aspects of life. Gender mainstreaming seeks to restore balance in these relations by enacting or amending laws and designing programs and projects that take into account the needs of both men and women. It ensures that both men and women participate in the different stages of planning and both benefit from the achievements of gender mainstreaming in such a way as to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunities between men and women in society as a whole.

The right to control and use resources

The right to equal opportunities between men and women in accessing, using and controlling resources, including:

1. Natural resources: land, water and wells, forests, and livestock.
2. Human resources: skills, experiences, crafts, professions (doctors, teachers, farmers).
3. Financial resources: sources of income and inheritance.
4. Material resources: infrastructure, buildings and material assistance.

Strategic planning

The creation of a guide to action that leads to a future goal by following a coordinated set of behaviors over a period of time. This method may use new patterns and alternative ways of doing things to eventually bringing about the desired change.

Internal environment

An analytical element in strategic planning that helps identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization/ institution implementing women's development projects in order to reinforce the strengths and avoid the weaknesses.

Internal environment includes:

1. Administrative systems and practices, including systems for selection and appointment, training, assumption of supervisory and leadership posts, and human resources related to gender promotion.
2. Skills and capacities within an institution with regard to gender analysis and planning.
3. Financial resources allocated to programs that promote women's role and increase their competencies.
4. Ways in which the Ministry of Women's Affairs could contribute to activities that would raise the economic status of women.
5. Time and flexibility in the working environment for considering the multiple roles of women.
6. Lessons learned from the past and how this knowledge is employed in development plans and programs.
7. Other internal organizational factors.

External environment

An analytical element in strategic planning that helps identify opportunities available outside of the organization/institution to assist in project implementation. Examples include community acceptance, an understanding of women's needs, participation in decision-making, and identification of beliefs favoring or hindering women's empowerment.

Monitoring

A process of gathering information on project operations, accomplishments and impact, which project management and stakeholders can use to help make appropriate decisions in steering the project efficiently towards the achievement of its planned objective(s).

Evaluation

The evaluation process is the essential link between good monitoring and management of projects. It includes:

1. Comparing the actual operations, achievements and effects of a project, both for the beneficiary group and society in general, with the project's planned operations, achievements and effects.
2. Analyzing causal relationships between project inputs and outputs.

3. Identifying the effect of external limitations as well as factors facilitating the accomplishment of the project and the achievement of outputs.

Gender indicators

An indicator is a signpost that demonstrates to what extent a project is progressing along its planned path towards its objectives. Indicators provide information that helps to measure change and clarify a project's progress. Indicators are a means with which to help translate raw data taken from statistics, records and administrative documents into information with distinct characteristics and dimensions that can contribute to understanding issues and diagnosing problems in order to identify their direct and indirect causes and develop proper solutions.

Project

A project is a set of activities and resources used to effect a change in a certain situation, usually within a specified period of time. Projects go through several phases similar to a life cycle, starting from an idea and developing into an operational system that leads to results and the creation of a new situation, whereby the cycle then starts again.

Gender objectives

These are desired changes in the field of gender with tangible and clear implications for improvements in social life. An example of a gender objective is increased participation of rural women in agricultural production, which can be seen as part of a larger aim to ensure equal employment opportunities for men and women. An example of a way in which such a gender objective could be accomplished would be through eliminating negative stereotypes surrounding the different gender roles of women and men presented in school textbooks.

Women's empowerment

A process that allows underprivileged men and women to expand their opportunities for acquiring knowledge, accessing resources and influencing decision-making powers, thereby deepening their awareness of the importance of their participation in their communities in order to achieve a certain level of control of their environment and livelihood.

Annex B

Requirements for gender mainstreaming in state plans

1. **Commitment and leadership**

There has been a clear commitment by the head of government in mainstreaming gender into the ministerial programs of the 13th Palestinian government. This commitment has been translated into policies, procedures, trainings and activities. Yet, the head of government still needs to emphasize that mainstreaming gender is the responsibility of every employee in all ministries and governmental agencies. As such, the head of government should hold directors responsible and accountable for gender mainstreaming. MoWA and gender units in the ministries need to be supported in order to carry out their duties and overcome resistance. Sharing and encouraging best practices in gender mainstreaming should also be promoted.

2. **Building the capacity of male and female employees in all state institutions**

Awareness of and responsiveness to gender issues by both male and female personnel are critical elements in the effective mainstreaming of gender within public institutions.

3. **Inclusion of specific policies and programs for women, including affirmative action, until gender balance and equality are achieved**

4. **Provision of adequate funding for gender mainstreaming**

5. **Utilization of tools and guiding principles for gender mainstreaming, analysis of gender discrepancies, and utilization of studies and checklists with regard to data**

6. **Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of gender units in ministries and adoption of appropriate responsive measures**