



Joint press release by UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UN Women, ESCWA, FAO, OCHA, UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNRWA, WFP, OHCHR, ILO, UNOPS, UN Habitat, and UNESCO

Cairo, 07 March 2017 – Despite progress in advancing gender equality globally, women in the Arab region remain underrepresented across all spheres of life, including in the workforce. Thus, UN agencies are putting the gender gap in equal employment at the center of their efforts in connection with International Women's Day on 8 March, at a critical time when the humanitarian situation and fragile contexts are mushrooming across the region with grave impact on women and girls.

This year, the #womensday theme focuses on “Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030” and seeks to build momentum for the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The world of work has been undergoing great and rapid changes largely due to the forces of globalization and the digital revolution.

Women in the Arab world are marginalized across the board and gender-based discrimination persists within and across countries. Within the world of work, the participation rate of women in any labor force is three times lower than that of men. Economic inequalities include gender gaps in the labor force, pay and work entitlements. According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Report, 13 of the 15 countries with the lowest rates of women participating in the labor force are

in the Arab/MENA region.

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