



Side Event on the margins of the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development

Population and Inclusive Development in the Arab Region: Building Back Better for All

April 27, 2022

Time: 12:00-13:15 Cairo Time

I. Background

The special theme of the 55th session of the Commission on Population and Development this year will be “Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth”.

Population dynamics, sustained economic growth, and poverty have been focus of several global frameworks, notably the ICPD Programme of Action 1994 and more recently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The interlinkages between the three topics have received increasing attention from academics and policy makers. However, this focus has intensified due the COVID-19 pandemic, and its negative impacts that extended beyond health concerns, to regressing national economies, reversing progress towards development, and threatening the overall wellbeing of individuals, especially the most vulnerable.

Poverty and unemployment continue to plague the Arab region. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted sustainable development and compounded existing challenges. The pandemic has ushered in a new era that compels us to reinvent our economies to be more resilient, socially inclusive, and environmentally sound. An inclusive economy aims to achieve sustainable development by addressing urgent needs for rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Against this backdrop, and in line with the CPD 55th Session thematic focus, the League of Arab States/Population Policies Department, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the United Nations Population Fund-Arab States Regional Office (UNFPA – ASRO), will organize a virtual side event on the margins of the CPD 2022, titled “Population and inclusive development in the Arab Region: Building Back Better for All”.

II. Objectives

In this pursuit, the side event will explore linkages between population, inclusion, and sustainable development in the Arab Region. It will focus on reflecting on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and means to build back better for all people ensuring inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. This session zooms into the distinct yet interrelated issues of population groups including older persons, migrants, youth, women and persons with disability. Given that including the most marginalized and vulnerable is integral to the ‘leaving no one behind’ agenda, the side event will consider how best to prepare for inclusive recovery processes that put populations’ well-being at the top of the agenda.

The main objectives of the planned side event are the following:

- Ensure evolving population dynamics are at the center of the regional sustainable development agenda
- Discuss the state of inclusion in economic growth of population groups in vulnerable situations in the Arab Region
- Reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on population groups in vulnerable situations
- Highlight promising practices in including different population groups in the development process
- Explore policy recommendations to promote more inclusive and sustainable development process for all population groups

III. Date and time and modality

The side event will be organized on April 27th 2022, from 12:00 to 13:15 Cairo Time.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the side event will be held virtually via ZOOM platform. The Zoom link will be shared with confirmed participants in due time.

The language of the Meeting is Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation to English.

IV. Agenda

11:30 - 12:00	Registration
12:00 - 12:10	Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary General, Head of Social Affairs Sector, League of Arab States - Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director, UNFPA-ASRO - Dr. Mehrinaz Elawady, Cluster Leader- Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development, ESCWA
12:10 - 12:30	Session 1: Exploring linkages: population dynamics, vulnerability, inclusive growth, and sustainability in the Arab Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Overview <i>Keynote speaker: Dr. Francois Farah, population and development expert (7 Min)</i> - Member State experience with population policies, development plans, and inclusive growth <i>(TBD) (7 Min)</i> - Q&A (5 min) <p>Moderator: UNFPA</p>
12:30 - 13:10	Session 2: Round table discussion: Putting people at the heart of sustainable economic growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reaping the rewards of the demographic dividend <i>(UNFPA)</i> - Including older persons in economic growth <i>Dr. Sara Salman, Population Affairs Officer, ESCWA</i> - Economic inclusion for women and youth <i>Dr. Ali Fakh, Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Economics, Lebanese American University</i> - Economic inclusion of persons with disabilities <i>Mr. Tarek El-Nabulsi, Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Development and Social Policies Department, LAS</i> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges and opportunities relating to inclusive development for population groups in vulnerable situations? • What are your key policy recommendations for building back better in the

	<p>Arab region?</p> <p>- Q&A (10 min)</p> <p>Moderator: ESCWA</p>
13:10 - 13:15	Closing Remarks

V. Participants

The side event brings together representatives of Arab States, members of the Arab Council for Population and Development, academics, representatives of civil society organizations, as well as experts, researchers and partners from ESCWA, UNFPA, and the League of Arab States.