

DJIBOUTI

MENA Gender Equality Profile

Status of Girls and Women in the
Middle East and North Africa



Photo Credits
Djibouti © UNICEF/DJBA00100/Pirozzi

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of the material do not imply on the part of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities or the delimitations of its frontiers.

1. BACKGROUND

Demographics	Value	Year
Total population (000)	864	2009
Total adolescent (10-19) population (000)	199	2009
Total under-18 population (000)	372	2009
Total under-5 population (000)	108	2009
Population annual growth rate (%)	2.1	2000-2009
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	3.8	2009
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	94	2009
Life expectancy at birth (years), male	54	2009
Life expectancy at birth (years), female	57	2009
Singulate mean age at marriage, male	31	2002
Singulate mean age at marriage, female	28	2002
Economic indicators		
GNI per capita (current US\$)	1,280	2009
% share of income held by lowest 20 %	6	2002
% share of income held by highest 20 %	47	2002
Sources: UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2011. Life expectancy and economic indicators from The World Bank, Data Catalog, http://data.worldbank.org/ , [accessed in May 2011] Marriage data from UNPD, World Marriage Data 2008, www.un.org/esa/population/		

Gender Gap Index 2010		
For overview of the region, Djibouti is not included		
Rankings of MENA countries with available data	Score	Rank
United Arab Emirates	0.6397	103
Kuwait	0.6318	105
Tunisia	0.6266	107
Bahrain	0.6217	110
Lebanon	0.6084	116
Qatar	0.6059	117
Algeria	0.6052	119
Jordan	0.6048	120
Oman	0.5950	122
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.5933	123
Syrian Arab Republic	0.5926	124
Egypt	0.5899	125
Morocco	0.5767	127
Saudi Arabia	0.5713	129
Yemen	0.4603	134
Source: World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2010 (rankings of in total 134 countries)		

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal system. The judicial system in Djibouti is based on the French civil code. However, in family matters (personal status matters), the laws are mainly derived from Islamic law (Shari'a).¹ The Family Code, which was promulgated in 2002, regulates matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.²

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Djibouti acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1998. Djibouti's combined initial, second and third periodic CEDAW report was presented at the 49th session of the CEDAW Committee in July 2011, with a significant delay of 10 years. Djibouti has not made any reservations to the CEDAW.

Convention on the Rights of the Child. Djibouti ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990 and the two CRC optional protocols in 2011. In 2009, the Government of Djibouti withdrew its reservation to the CRC indicating that the State party does not consider itself bound by any provisions that are incompatible with the country's religion or traditional values. Djibouti has not made any reservations to the CRC optional protocols.³

Nationality rights. Djiboutian women have the same right as Djiboutian men to transfer their nationality to their children. The same rules also apply to both women and men who want to transfer their nationality to a foreign-born spouse.⁴

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World, 2011 Edition (report, online version, www.freedomhouse.org)

² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010

³ See United Nations Treaty Collection (<http://treaties.un.org>) for declarations and reservations made by State Parties

⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010

Divorce rights. According to the Family Code, a woman has the right to seek divorce under certain specific circumstances while a man has the right to request divorce without providing any justification. A divorced woman has the right to alimony and child support if she has custody of the children. A woman can request divorce without the burden of evidence; however, she has to give up any rights to financial compensation and may even have to pay damage to her spouse.⁵ In the CEDAW report (2010) the State party notes: "Given that access to justice is limited for women owing to their high illiteracy rate, lack of information on their rights and absence of legal assistance appropriate to their needs, divorce is very rarely initiated by women."

Guardianship and custody rights. Parental authority is shared between the father and mother, during marriage and in the event of divorce, according to Djibouti's 2010 CEDAW report. The mother may be granted custody after a divorce, although the CEDAW report (or the latest CRC report) does not indicate whether custody is retained only until the child reaches a certain age or not. Despite the fact that parental authority is shared, it is unclear whether legal guardianship is also shared between the mother and the father.

Inheritance rights. Islamic law is applied to inheritance matters. In general, according to Shari'a, the woman's share of the inheritance is less than half of the man's share.⁶ On the possibility of reforming some discriminatory provisions of current laws, the State party has indicated to the CEDAW Committee: "As regards the discriminatory provisions in question, namely the husband's role in the family and women's share of an inheritance, these cannot be amended as they are rooted in our country's higher sociocultural and religious values."⁷

Freedom of movement. Women have the right to travel and move freely without restriction, and to choose where to live. A woman does not need the permission of her husband or guardian in order to obtain a passport.⁸

Protection from child marriage. The minimum age of marriage is 18 for both boys and girls. Marriage below the age of 18 is permitted with the consent of the guardians of the minors or the authorization of a judge.⁹ Child marriages still persist in Djibouti. According to the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey findings (EDIM 2006), 5 per cent of young women aged 20-24 in urban areas and 13 per cent of young women in rural areas were married before the age of 18. Polygyny is permitted according to the Family Code. Information on polygyny was not collected in EDIM 2006.

Protection from gender-based violence. In Djibouti, rape is a crime punishable with sentences of up to 20 years in prison. The current law does not specifically prohibit domestic violence, although it does prohibit "torture and barbaric acts" against a spouse. There is no law against spousal rape in Djibouti.¹⁰ In its response to the CEDAW Committee's questions on the periodic report of 2010, the State party acknowledged shortcomings in the implementation of the provisions that currently are in force in the country to combat gender-based violence and indicated that in order to raise awareness of current laws and procedures, a legal guide has been developed and disseminated to civil society with the support of UNFPA.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. FGM/C is still very common in Djibouti, although the government has taken a number of actions in order to combat the practice. Carrying out FGM/C is illegal and the legislation has been strengthened with harsher penalties. Several information and sensitization campaigns have been carried out and in 2008 Djibouti joined the UNFPA/UNICEF joint global programme to accelerate the abandonment of FGM/C.¹¹ The prevalence of FGM/C is 93 per cent among women age 15-49 according to EDIM 2006 findings. In urban areas, 93 per cent of women are cut, while in rural areas 96 per cent are cut.

5 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010 and CEDAW Committee, Responses [by Djibouti] to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the combined initial, second and third periodic report, CEDAW/C/DJI/ Q/1-3/Add.1, 2011

6 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010

7 CEDAW Committee, Responses [by Djibouti] to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the combined initial, second and third periodic report, CEDAW/C/DJI/ Q/1-3/Add.1, 2011

8 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010, information provided by UNICEF Djibouti on a woman's right to obtain a passport without the permission of her husband/guardian

9 Ibid.

10 U.S. Department of State, 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (report, online version <http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/hrrpt/>) [accessed in May 2011]

11 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010

3. INSTITUTIONS AND MECHANISMS

Governmental response. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Family Welfare and Social Affairs (MPF) is responsible for promoting the rights of women. MPF was established in 1999 and became a full-fledged ministry in 2008. The fact that there was no government body in charge of protecting and promoting the rights of women at the time of the ratification of the CEDAW (in 1998) and the fact that the MPF since its establishment has suffered from administrative and financial problems limiting its ability to follow up on the convention, delayed the submission of the CEDAW reports according to the State party. In December 2010 the MPF started the development of a National Gender Policy, which is currently on-going. The ministry is also involved in implementing the National Strategy for Integration of Women in Development.¹²

Strategies and services responding to gender-based violence. The National Union of Djiboutian Women (UNFD) is an NGO established in 1977 and has since been the main women's organisation in Djibouti. The government collaborates with the UNFD on a number of activities including advocacy efforts to combat gender-based violence and to promote the abandonment of FGM/C. The UNFD has set up (in 2007) a counselling centre for women who are victims of violence, with the support of the MPF.¹³

4. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political representation. Women in Djibouti gained the right to vote in 1946 but it was not until 1986 that they received the right to stand for election. A woman was elected to parliament for the first time in 2003.¹⁴ There are legislated quotas for women for the lower house of parliament. Currently, 14 per cent of the seats are filled by women (in total 9 out of 65 seats).¹⁵

Representation in the legal system. According to the State party CEDAW report there were 29 female judges in the judicial system in 2009.

Civil society. As mentioned above, the UNFD has played an active role as the main women's organisation in Djibouti. The UNFD submitted a shadow report to the CEDAW Committee following Djibouti's first report submission.

5. EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Education. The literacy rate among young women aged 15-24 is only 48 per cent. No data exist in the global databases consulted on the literacy rate of male youth. Girl's net attendance ratio is 66 per cent in primary school and 37 per cent in secondary school. The attendance ratio for boys is similar to that of girls (67 per cent) in primary school but higher in secondary school (45 per cent).

Access to financial credit. The current law makes no distinction between men and women with regard to access to loans and other financial credit. There are small loans and microfinance schemes that aim to encourage women's economic participation in the formal economy.¹⁶

Participation in the labour market. The labour force participation rate (that is, the proportion of the working-age population that actively engages in the labour market either by working or looking for work) among young women aged 15-24 is 46 per cent, while the corresponding percentage for young men is 56 per cent. Among women of age 15 and above, the labour force participation rate is 62 per cent, which is higher than the global average of 52

¹² CEDAW Committee, Responses [by Djibouti] to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the combined initial, second and third periodic report, CEDAW/C/DJI/Q/1-3/Add.1, 2011
¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/2008

¹⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (data updated as of 31 March 2011) and The Quota Project www.quotaproject.org [accessed in May 2011]

¹⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Initial, Second and Third periodic report of Djibouti, CEDAW/C/DJI/1-3, 2010

per cent.¹⁷ According to the Djibouti CEDAW report, women are often employed in insecure and vulnerable jobs in the informal sector.

6. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Maternal health. Djibouti is categorized as making “insufficient progress” towards improving maternal health (MDG5), according to analyses of the reduction of the Maternal Mortality Ratio conducted by the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (MMEIG). The maternal mortality rate for Djibouti is estimated at 300 deaths per 100,000 live births.¹⁸ Some 15 per cent of these deaths are due to HIV. HIV prevalence among young people aged 15-24 is estimated at 1.9 per cent for women and 0.8 per cent for men.

The overall antenatal care coverage (at least once) is 92 per cent, with marked differences between urban and rural areas (94 and 47 per cent coverage, respectively). Coverage in skilled attendance at delivery, which is one of the most critical interventions for safe motherhood, is 93 per cent, with marked disparities between urban and rural areas (95 per cent urban coverage compared to 40 per cent rural).

Early childbearing. In Djibouti, the adolescent birth rate is 27 births per 1,000 adolescent girls aged 15–19.

7. KEY INDICATORS ON THE SITUATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH	YEAR	TOTAL	URBAN	RURAL	POOREST 20%	RICHEST 20%	SOURCE
Contraceptive prevalence (%)	2008	23	-	-	-	-	SOWC 2011
Antenatal care coverage at least once by skilled personnel (%)	2006	92	94	47	-	-	UNICEF global database/EDIM/MICS3 2006
Skilled attendant at birth (doctor, nurse or midwife) (%)	2006	93	95	40			UNICEF global database/ EDIM/MICS3 2006
Adolescent birth rate (number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19)	2000	27					UNFPA, UNPD, MDG database http://unstats.un.org [accessed in May 2011]
Maternal Mortality Ratio (adjusted) (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)	2008	300					WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (MMEIG) / UNICEF global database
Lifetime risk of maternal death, 1 in:	2008	93					

¹⁷ United Nations, DESA, The World's Women 2010, p. 76

¹⁸ WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and The World Bank, 2010, Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990-2008 (Countries with MMR \geq 100 in 1990 are categorized as “on track” if there has been 5.5% decline or more annually, “making progress” if MMR has declined between 2% and 5.5%, making “insufficient progress” if MMR has declined less than 2% annually, and having “no progress” if there has been an annual increase in MMR. Countries with MMR <100 in 1990 are not categorized)

EDUCATION	YEAR	MALE %	FEMALE %	GENDER PARITY INDEX (F/M)	SOURCE
Net enrolment ratio primary school (%)	2006	67	66	0.99	UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006
Net enrolment ratio secondary school (%)	2006	45	37	0.82	UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006
Youth (15-24) literacy rate (%)	2006	-	48		UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006
	YEAR	TOTAL			SOURCE
Share of females among teaching staff (%) in primary education	2008	26			UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011
Share of females among teaching staff (%) in secondary education	2008	24			UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011

CHILD PROTECTION	YEAR	TOTAL	URBAN	RURAL	POOREST 20%	RICHEST 20%	SOURCE
% of women aged 20-24 who were married/ in union before the age of 18	2006	5	5	13	-	-	UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006
Female genital mutilation/cutting among women 15-49 (%)	2006	93	93	96	-	-	UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006
	YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE			SOURCE
% of children aged 5-14 engaged in child labour	2006	8	8	8			UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006

ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	YEAR	% WHO AGREE WITH AT LEAST ONE SPECIFIED REASON	SOURCE
Women (15-49) who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances (%)		-	
Adolescent girls (15-19) who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances (%)		-	

HIV/AIDS	YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE		SOURCE
HIV prevalence among young people (15-24)	2009	1.3	0.8	1.9		UNICEF global database/ UNAIDS
% of young people (15-24) who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV	2006	-	-	18		UNICEF global database/ EDIM/ MICS3 2006

USE OF ICT	YEAR	TOTAL		SOURCE
% of young women (15-24) who used a computer during the last 12 months		-		
% of young women (15-24) who used the internet during the last 12 months		-		

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	YEAR	TOTAL		SOURCE
Number of women in parliament (single/ lower house)	2011	9		IPU, http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm (data updated as of 31 March 2011) [accessed in May 2011]
% women in parliament	2011	14		
Legislated quotas for women for single/ lower house (yes/no)	*	Yes		The Quota Project, www.quotaproject.org [accessed in May 2011*]
Quota type	*	Reserved seats		
Number of women in ministerial positions	2010	2		DAW/DESA, IPU, Women in Politics: 2010 (reflecting appointments up to 1 January 2010)
% women in ministerial positions	2010	11		

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION	YEAR	TOTAL		SOURCE
Labour force participation rate (%), male 15+	2009	79		ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 6th Edition http://kilm.ilo.org Table 1a (ILO estimates) [accessed in May 2011]
Labour force participation rate (%), female 15+	2009	62		
Labour force participation rate (%), male 15-24	2009	56		
Labour force participation rate (%), female 15-24	2009	46		
Total unemployment rate (%), male 15+		-		
Total unemployment rate (%), female 15+		-		
Youth (15-24) unemployment rate (%), male		-		
Youth (15-24) unemployment rate (%), female		-		

MATERNITY LEAVE	YEAR		SOURCE
Maternity leave duration	2004-2009	14 weeks	United Nations Statistics Division, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/tab5g.htm#tech , Table 5g, [accessed in May 2011]. Data compiled between 2004-2009.
% of wages paid in covered period	2004-2009	50 (for public servants: 100 %)	
Provider of benefit	2004-2009	Employer	

Notes:

EDIM=Djibouti Multiple Indicator Survey (name of the Djibouti Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey – Round 3 (MICS3))

The UNICEF global databases are available on www.childinfo.org

For indicator definitions and further information on data sources please see "Guide to MENA Gender Profiles"

n/a = not applicable

8. RATIFICATION OF TREATIES

TREATY	YEAR OF SIGNATURE	YEAR OF RATIFICATION, ACCESSION (A), SUCCESSION (S)	RESERVATIONS
Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953)			
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962)			
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)		2002 (a)	
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)		2002 (a)	
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)		1998 (a)	
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999)			
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	1990	1990	
Amendment to article 43 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995)	n/a	2001 Acceptance	
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000)	2006	2011	
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000)	2006	2011	
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)			

n/a = not applicable

Source: United Nations Treaty Collection, <http://treaties.un.org> [accessed in April 2011]

