

Committee: ECOSOC-The Economic and Social Council

Agenda Item: Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women in Developing Economies.

Country: Lebanon



Lebanon is a Middle Eastern country with over 6 million people that is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and Lebanon is the second smallest country in the Middle East and in the Arab World. Lebanon's southern border is shared with Israel, while Syria borders Lebanon to the east and north, and the western edge of the country is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea.

Lebanon as we know has been in existence for just over a century, first under French mandate and, since 1943, as an independent state. It was a founding member of the United Nations and played a key role in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

Lebanon's constitution asserts the equality of rights and duties among all citizens, however there are limitations for women, and rural women in particular, to fully participate and benefit from economic opportunities, due to prevailing gender norms and limited access to productive resources and services (FAO, 2021) Women's participation in agriculture is limited by their restricted access to key inputs and services. Although the Lebanese law does not discriminate with regard to acquiring productive resources, women in general do not buy land owing to social norms; land ownership is predominantly exclusive to men, while rural women remain relegated to farming small or remote plots of fragmented land. Women's access to other productive resources (credit, technology, services etc.) is also limited, and trainings, extension services and technological innovations do not usually target the needs of women, who are seldom encouraged to participate in such activities. Lebanon's prosperity has significantly diminished since the beginning of the country's economic crisis in 2019, which has crippled its economy, shut down its previously lucrative banking sector, reduced the value of its currency, and caused many Lebanese to emigrate in search of better prospects. In Lebanon, existing structural challenges prevent equal opportunity in the economic spheres. Despite legally being able to register companies, seek employment and run businesses, women still face challenges that relate to issues of financial exclusion and access to credit, a mismatch between skills and labour market opportunities, and social stigma and stereotypes. In 2017, the Gender Gap Index indicated that Lebanon ranks 133rd out of 144 in Economic Participation and Opportunity. While the gender gap in education has been mostly eliminated, this has only had a small positive impact on women's participation in the economic life, with women's labour force participation standing at 26%, compared to 76% of men.

The European Union Delegation to Lebanon commissioned a gender analysis to provide insight into whether gender inequalities persist in Lebanon. The Gender Analysis looks into the causes of identified inequalities, how they intersect with other inequalities and how they impact on human rights enjoyment and/or benefits produced by, and access to, development efforts. The Gender Analysis is also expected to provide an understanding of the Lebanese government's commitment and capacity to work on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues.

This Situation Analysis (SA) report describes the key findings and recommendations focusing on:

1. Promotion of women's economic empowerment.
2. Prevention and protection of women & girls from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

At the point of finding a solution to this issue to have collective action – from policy changes and legal measures to social initiatives and individual behaviour. It involves recognizing and addressing systemic biases and creating an environment that respects and values diversity. Women have made gains in labour force participation and wages, and they've increased their presence in the highest-paying jobs. Some of that progress has stalled in recent years, however, and large gender gaps persist at the top levels of government and business leadership. Gender inequality and the climate crisis are two of the most urgent challenges of today. As we better understand and make the critical connections between gender, social equity and climate change, it's time we take action towards solutions.

References:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Lebanon>

<https://www.unocha.org/lebanon>

<https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/lebanon>

