



# GENDER EQUALITY IN YEMEN

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## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive and sustainable development of any country requires an effective participation of women equally with men in all different fields, to achieve prosperity and build peace.<sup>1</sup>

Gender Equality is at the top main priorities of the international community. All agencies and institutions are working on programs aimed to filling gender gaps, through a number of projects and interventions such as: integrating the equality matter into policies and laws, promoting women empowerment decisions in decision-making positions, updating the national social strategy, implementing programs that support girls enrollment in education and their retention during the general education, supporting women in obtaining title deeds and other important assets, ensuring a necessary funding to initiate their entrepreneurial enterprises, standing by the gender equality outcomes that require businesses integration into various sectors, ensuring initiatives continuity over long periods of time. In fact, there are still lots of challenges that prevent us from achieving equality between men and women in our country. However, the prompt efforts exerted by the international community to help Yemen, remain mandatory in order to reduce the existing gender disparities.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, at its session held in 2016, highlighted women empowerment in connection with the sustainable development. This session generated a historic commitment to implementing the sustainable development plan respecting gender considerations. At its sixtieth session, (E/27/2016) the Commission approved recommendations by consensus. It provides a detailed plan about the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> at the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in 2018, a consensus was reached in regard of means of achieving gender equality and women and girls empowerment.<sup>3</sup>

We shall note, that the Charter of the United Nations which was adopted in San Francisco in 1945, is the first international treaty indicating in specific terms the establishment of gender equality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stipulates in Article 2 that every human being is entitled to all rights and freedoms mentioned in this Declaration without any gender discrimination and without disparity between men and women.

The international resolutions continue to improve the conditions of women and to advance their rights. For instance with the Convention's adoption of the Political Rights of Women and the International Covenants on Human Rights (civil and political rights, social and economic rights) in December 20th 1952, moreover, the International Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women issued in 1967, stipulates women's right to vote in elections and to be equal with men before the law. The United Nations approved Gender Equality legislation in 1979 that was put into force in 1981. It is the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women that is increasingly acknowledged, as it represents the international legitimacy for women rights.

While Gender Equality and fair treatment of women and girls are considered as moral imperative, global data analyses, evidences and experiences show that women participation promotes growth and economic stability, in particular in times of challenges, and building peace and security through empowerment and access to decision-making positions.

<sup>1</sup>The United Nations, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (A) 60793-03

<sup>2</sup>UN Women, Women Empowerment in connection with Sustainable Development, Commission on the Status of Women, the approved conclusions, 2016.

<sup>3</sup>UN Women, Challenges and Opportunities in achieving Gender Equality, Rural Women and Girls, Commission on the Status of Women, approved conclusions 2018.

## **1.1. BACKGROUND:**

Yemen is facing multiple challenges including conflict, displacement and economic instability. This negative environment has had a direct impact on women and girls, limiting their ability to access services and livelihoods, and to obtain equal opportunities with men.

Yemen is facing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, there are 21.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, while 80% of the population lack food, safe drinking water and adequate health services. These repercussions result from a number of overlapping emergency crises hitting the country, such as the violent conflict, the economic collapse, the recurring natural disasters, the sharp deterioration in livelihood level and the spread of violence against women.<sup>4</sup>

We shall note that girls and women are among the most affected category by the consequences of war, almost 80% out of 4.5 million displaced people in Yemen are women and children. Families supported by women currently represent 26% of the total displaced families. Political conditions and social behaviors discriminating women are deeply established, which aggravates inequality indicators and hinders women's access to basic services.

Although, Yemeni women play an influential role in public life, yet it has not been translated into an adequate representation that meets their real potentials. The political practice in Yemen reflects a fragile reality towards women participation, and the discouraging conditions hinder their access to spheres of power and decision making. This remained restrained by the reality problems and the complexities of the post-war scene that increased women suffering and exclusion, when the feminist movement lost the advantages they achieved in the last years, at the conflict eruption.

We shall mention that the deteriorating situation of women in Yemen has become strongly present in International reports, recording shocking results that do not preserve the minimum of their rights. It was ranked (155) in the Gender Gap Index in 2021, compared to (115) in 2015, that is still going on until this date, in reference to a big disparity in the implementation of equal rights among men and women.

The Mahram (male guardian) requirement has been largely imposed on women, including legal humanitarian activists, which bans women from traveling without a family member “male” companion who is legally authorized. Access to basic services and the freedom of movement, has also become a greater challenge for girls and women requiring a Mahram and legal identification documents, due to lack of security measures and discriminatory laws.<sup>5</sup>

## **1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

*Through this research we try to achieve the following goals:*

- 1-** Highlighting Gender Equality and analyzing the gap between the two different sexes in Yemen since 2010, through 2015, until conflicts erupted in 2020.
- 2-** Disclosing the structural gender inequality in the peace building processes around the country.
- 3-** Determining the mechanisms that were adopted by Humanitarian Response Programs and Plans in Yemen, to ensure the integration of the Gender Equality approach in all policies and programs.
- 4-** Evaluating the results achieved by the National Plan for Women, Security and peace between 2020 and 2022, and the challenges it encounters.
- 5-** Analyzing the conflict side effects on all activities carried out by the Girls and Women Rights Program.

<sup>5</sup> UNFPA United Nations Population Fund – Humanitarian Response for the United Nations Population Fund in Yemen 2023, April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> UNFPA United Nations Population Fund, previous reference.

### **1.3. RESEARCH INQUIRIES:**

*The research sought to answer all the following inquiries:*

- 1- What is the size of the gender gap in Yemen, since conflicts eruption in 2015 until 2022, and what are the appropriate programs and mechanisms to ensure gender equality?
- 2- How serious is the structural gender inequality in existing peace building processes in Yemen? Are there any efforts to involve women in the peace building processes?
- 3- What are the strategies and the mechanisms that have been adopted by Humanitarian Response programs and plans in Yemen to ensure the integration of the gender equality approach into all policies and programs?
- 4- What has been achieved and not achieved in the National Plan for Women, security and peace during 2020 and 2022?
- 5- What are the side effects of the ongoing conflicts occurring in Yemen on all Girls and Women Rights Program?

### **1.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH:**

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it discusses an issue heading the humanitarian files, as nowadays, there is no such issue that attracted global and national attention and evoked a heated argument about its references and foundations, such as Gender Equality issue in various forms, terms and expressions, including gender, sexuality and feminism. At the same time, this research attempts to unveil the true role of the restraining power centers in Yemen, represented by the speech of the extremist Islamic movements and the dominance of tribal trends and traditional ideology within the ruling institution which seek to undermine women's status and detract from their right to equality between men and women as a moral and religious value that cannot be circumvented.

## **2.THE METHODOLOGY ADOPTED IN THIS RESEARCH:**

This research's methodology and expression adopted the documentary analytical approach through a group of primary, secondary and documentary resources. On the other hand, qualitative and quantitative data were collected using local, regional and international desk review (literature review).

### **2.1. DESK REVIEW**

The research's methodology includes the detailed desk review process of all available documents, including the scientific, technical and administrative strategies, policies, projects and reports, evaluations, work plans, local and international reports etc..., obtained from some authorities, some websites, from the World Bank, in particular data, quantitative information and statistical indicators that were extracted from primary data as well as from other relevant documents about humanitarian assistance such as access, equity and gender equality.

## **3. LOCAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS:**

### **3.1. GENDER EQUALITY IN YEMEN:**

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, signed by Yemen earlier, calls for the enactment of national legislations that prohibit discrimination, and recommend temporary special measures to promptly achieve real equality among men and women, by amending social and cultural forms that are contributing to an established discrimination. But the problem that is widely criticized is that Yemen concurs international conventions and agreements, and ignores the harmonization of national laws with international legislatives. However, the reports in this regard indicate the volume of imbalances in the political and national practice due to the Yemeni government lack of moral commitment to the rules of the International Law of Human Rights. Decision-makers did not seriously consider discussing the reasons of women's low participation in the labor market until this date, although it is deeply connected to the development features that are based on the principle of liberating restrictions that are shackling women, in order to unleash their creative capabilities, achieve their self-fulfillment and ensure their participation in the development of their societies on the political, economic and social levels.



### **3.1.1. GENDER EQUALITY IN YEMENI LAW AND LEGISLATIONS:**

The Yemeni constitution, after unification has been ratified in 1990, stipulated that all citizens are equal before the law, equal in public rights and obligations, without any discrimination due to sex, color, origins, profession, social status or ideology. This text includes a clear and decisive acknowledgment of the gender equality principle in rights and duties, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on The Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signed by the southern part government previously known as the democratic Yemen in 1984 and their legal effects naturally generated the new Yemeni government.

During the civil war in 1994, the constitutional amendment generated a dangerous coup, and witnessed a noticeable retraction in the legislator's position on women's rights. The constitutional government acknowledged the fact that all citizens are equal in public rights and obligations, excluded the equality rule before the law, after abolishing the text pertaining to citizens equality before the law, which collide with the Article 2 of the Convention on The Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that urges member states to incarnate the principle of equality among men and women in their national constitutions and legislations. It also contradicts the article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that establishes the right to equality before the law, as Article 20 of the International Covenant engaged all joining states to take the necessary legislative measures to prevent any call for discrimination, hatred or violence.

Article 31, of the Yemeni constitution that was amended in 1994, stipulates that (women are part of men, entitled of rights and obligated by duties which is guaranteed and required by the Islamic Law, and it is stipulated by law) and legitimates the discrimination against women. It is an unfair engagement to controversial interpretations, and a different perspective of the religious discourse, and its position on the principle of equality among men and women against the value of justice as an alternative that is strongly and effectively integrated nowadays, in any intellectual or legal debate on women's issues, whereas jurisprudential readings have been subject to various influences and references, but there is no doubt that flaws of the correct understanding indicate a frustrating reality , where negative cultural heritage and customs are mixed with some provisions.

The problem of this constitutional amendment has taken effect when the legislator became liberally entitled to amend the statutory laws with insignificant arguments and illogical justifications, including Personal Status Law No.20 of 1992, which enclosed the amendment of more than third of its texts by Law No. 28 of 1998, and then it was amended on April 10th 1999, to establish the worst legal model that recognizes and encourages minor girls marriages.

As a result of the constitutional amendment, the Crimes and Penal Code issued by Presidential Decree No.12 in 1994 enclosed a number of explicitly discriminatory texts, including the discriminatory text pertaining to honor crimes, whereas man murders or tries to kill his wife or one of his ascendants or descendants or whoever commits adultery with her, when caught red-handed, there is no retribution for that, and it does not punish those who carry out the retribution as a substitute to the law and judicial bodies, under the pretext of protecting honor, while the same law is applicable to the prescribed punishment when a woman commits the crime of murdering her husband for the same reason and in the same situation and circumstances. All the aforementioned, is considered a blatant violation of human rights and international conventions ratified by Yemen.

### **3.1.2 EVOLUTION OF GENDER EQUALITY DISCOURSE IN YEMEN AFTER UNIFICATION:**

The Gender Equality discourse has witnessed a noticeable decline since the war in 1994, due to the control of political Islam alliance, with the collusion of totalitarian power poles and the impact of traditional tribal forces within the government, and the formulation of a dark reactionary project aimed at weakening women's participation in public life, veiling that approach with religion, as a scarecrow to terrorize women defenders and gender equality supporters, for political purposes and objectives that often use women as a huge numerical force in polls queues in order to change votes indicators in the parliamentary elections in favor of the dominant traditional forces, as happened after the so-called Revolution of Change in 2011.

Although, this sweeping revolutionary movement generated a prominent women presence in creating the scenario of change just as men, as their performance was strongly demonstrated in the demonstrations and protest marches in various fields, where women were subject to beating, threats, insult and arrests, which raised their hopes high towards achieving equality in a society where freedom, dignity and respect for human rights prevail. However, it is unfortunate

that these aspirations collided with a painful reality that turned against all women sacrifices, it was characterized by the failure of their claims in a familiar scene, not only in Yemen, feminist movements in some Arab countries faced the same fact as well.

Actually, the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen for reconciliation and search for political settlement options, under international sponsorship in 2012, established a vital turning point in women's role recovery. The comprehensive National Dialogue experience was characterized by an unparalleled success, as women's voices boomed and rocked the corners of the conference halls with a conscious struggle aimed for extracting their well-deserved entitlements for the next stage.

Women in Yemen have endured a lot of suffering, marginalization, economic and social constraint under a government discourse that reviews women's achievements in order to polish authorities' image. For many years, this discourse has succeeded in falsifying awareness and spreading a misleading belief that women in Yemen had obtained their full rights, in a humiliating reality that crushes women and men. Just as the media arsenal was formulating the lie at that time, stating that Yemen was witnessing the brightest era of democracy, the same machine was promoting the discourse of Gender Equality.

However, no one can deny the outcomes document of the National Dialogue, which explicitly stipulated the principle of complete equality between male and female citizens for the first time, considering that this document shall establish a consensual basis for the formulation of the upcoming constitution. However, this was worthless, when the conflict repercussions once again, turned against all the achievements that were accomplished. Therefore Yemen has entered a more complex phase, in terms of the Yemen's crisis various aspects, and the joining of foreign regional parties, that marginalized the issue of Gender Equality, as it has never been discussed in any dialogue, negotiations, government report, or national strategy since the war eruption in 2015. It is not listed in any national agenda nor at the top priorities of this stage according to the conflict parties, whose disasters are severely worsening, and all Yemeni people pay a heavy tax, especially miserable and vulnerable categories such as women and children.

### 3.1.3 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOR FORCE:

We can analyze government policies against labor force, and women involvement in the labor market, by adopting the World Bank Data for Yemen, which indicates the existing gap between men and women in the labor market. Table (1) discloses the average rates of the labor force and working women as percentages of the total labor force and the total female population.

Table (1) indicates the percentage rate of labor force and working women in Yemen between 2010 and 2022.

YEAR	LABOR FORCE SL.TLF.TOTL.IN	LABOR FORCE AVERAGE RATE OUT OF THE TOTAL LABOR FORCE		LABOR FORCE AVERAGE RATE OUT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION (male/female)	
		MALE* SL.TLF.TOTL.MA.Z.S	FEMALE** SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS	MALE*** SL.TLF.CACT.MA.ZS	FEMALE**** SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS
2010	5,491,295	87.39	12.61	68.65	9.96
2011	5,582,610	88.68	11.32	68.17	8.75
2012	5,677,003	89.85	10.15	67.72	7.70
2013	5,777,525	90.91	9.09	67.30	6.78
2014	5,882,886	91.87	8.13	66.89	5.97
2015	6,153,998	92.02	7.98	67.82	5.93
2016	6,403,465	92.10	7.90	68.47	5.92
2017	6,652,109	92.15	7.85	69.04	5.93
2018	6,894,546	92.17	7.83	69.50	5.95
2019	7,138,301	92.18	7.82	69.91	5.97
2020	7,295,686	92.18	7.82	69.49	5.92
2021	7,534,852	92.21	7.79	69.93	5.93
2022	7,815,910	91.93	8.07	70.38	6.20
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>		<b>91.2</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>GROWTH RATE</b>		<b>0.007</b>	<b>-0.062</b>	<b>0.004</b>	<b>-0.065</b>

Resource: World Bank (<https://data.albankaldawli.org/country/yemen-rep?view=chart#Social>)

We note from the aforementioned table that the general average rate of the male labor force is equivalent to 91.2% of the number of people aged 15 and above, which meets the International Labor Organization (ILO) definition for the economically active population, they represent the labor force involved in goods and services production in a limited period of time, and this does not include the unemployed people. Here

\* Average rates of male labor force participation as percentages of the total labor force

\*\* Average rates of female labor force participation as percentages of the total labor force

\*\*\* Average rates of male labor force participation as percentages of the total male population <sup>15</sup> years and above

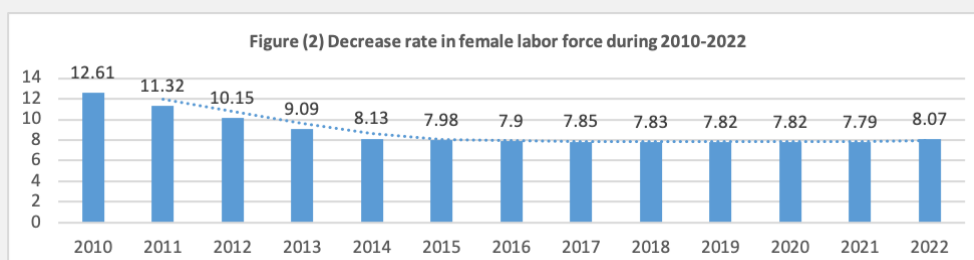
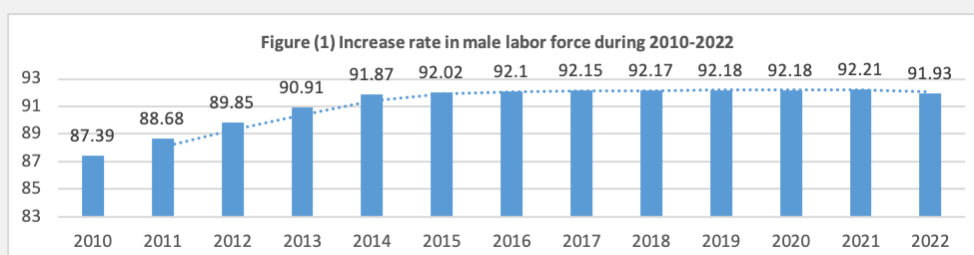
\*\*\*\* Average rates of female labor force participation as percentages of the total female population <sup>15</sup> years and above

emerge the large gap in comparison with the female labor force percentage that represents a small average rate of 8.8% of the total labor force. This indicator describes women’s participation rate in labor force.

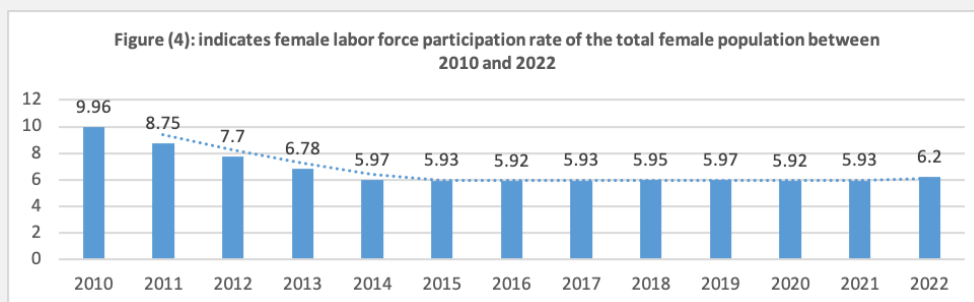
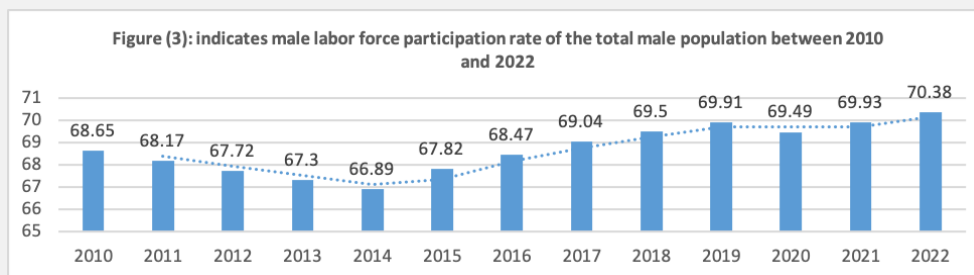
The large gender gap appears in the indicator of the female labor force participation rate as a percentage of the female population aged 15 and above, as a small percentage equivalent to 6.7%, as shown in the overall average, compared to the male labor force participation rate as a percentage of the male population of the same age group equivalent to 68.7%.

Table (1) and Figure(2) indicate the decrease in the number of females participating in the labor force, according to percentage rates of the female labor force participation rate indicator as a percentage of total labor force between 2010 and 2022, with a negative growth rate of 0.062 - this indicates a general decline in female participation in the labor force during that time, and it represents the lowest average of 7.79% in female labor force participation index of the total labor force during the year 2021, as shown in Figure (2) below.

On the contrary, Table (1) and Figure (1) indicate an increase in male number participating in the labor force, according to percentage rates of male labor force participation rate indicator as a percentage of total labor force between 2010 and 2020, with a positive growth rate of 0.007 ,and this indicates a general increase in male participation in the labor force during that time, and it represents the highest average of 92.21% in male labor force participation index of the total labor force during the year 2021, as shown in Figure (1) below.



In the female labor force participation index, of the total female population aged 15 years and above, and according to percentage average rates of this indicator at the same period of time, as it shows in Table (1) and Figure (4), there is no increase in growth rate, as it negatively declines by an average of 0.065 – this confirms the outcome aforementioned, and it represents a lower rate of 5.92% in female labor force participation index of the total female population during 2015 and 2020 as it shows in Figure (4) below.



On the contrary, Table (1) and Figure (3) indicate the increase of male labor force participation of the total male population aged 15 years and above, and according to percentage average rates of this index for the same period of time, it appears that the growth rate of the male labor force participation is equivalent to 0.004, and this indicates a general increase of the male labor force participation during the same period of time. It represents the highest percentage of 70.83% in the male labor force participation index out of the total male population aged 15 years and above during the year 2022 as it shows in Figure (3) above.

These indicators reflect the large and clear gap between the two sexes in the labor force participation and labor market, as the gap persists and still exist among males and females, female participation is the lowest in comparison with male participation in the state's employment structure over the last past decade as mentioned above, which involve a number of obstacles that are hindering Yemeni women from accessing the labor market equally with men, such as:

the patriarchal societal culture, lack of opportunities for the same market access, in addition to social stereotypes in the Yemeni society's perspective on women, that establish the fact that women should remain within the indirect care department, managing family affairs, raising children and following up the reproductive role tasks , while men fulfill their productive roles, considered as main family providers.

Structural inequalities impede women and girls access to basic services, generating a significant gender gap in literacy and basic education and high maternal mortality rates among others. During the year 2022, these factors were aggravated by the increased imposition of Mahram (male guardian) requirements, especially in areas subject to the de facto authority. This condition prevents women from traveling between governorates or to other country regions, or internationally without a male relative companion and the permission of her family. This condition, which severely restricts freedom of movement, has a significant impact on women and girls access to services and their ability to work and pursue education and their participation in the public and political life. This, in turn, aggravates lack of economic insecurity and weakens the rights of female-headed families in particular. Dealing with freedom of movement challenges is an important element in improving access to services on a broader scale.<sup>6</sup>

The Mahram (male guardian) requirement subverted the humanitarian community's ability to deliver life-saving aid, especially to women and girls. Food insecurity has worsened and women access to protection and health care services has been limited, generating mental and physical health repercussions. Access to basic services and freedom of movement represents a greater challenge for women and girls who lack legal identification documents due to discriminatory laws and procedures.

While in the South, under the internationally recognized Yemeni government, since two years, human rights activists and active women in feminist movement have launched extensive media advocacy campaigns and pressure initiatives on the authorities to abolish the travel regulations list that requires women guardianship as well as guardian approval when issuing a travel document. The government in Aden represented by the decision of the Minister of Interior has agreed to abolish this list in 2021.

### **3.2. STRUCTURAL GENDER INEQUALITY IN PEACE BUILDING PROCESS:<sup>7</sup>**

In 2015, through the cooperation between the Office of the Special Envoy and UN Women entity, “Al Tawafuq” group or the Yemeni Women’s Consensus Group for Security and Peace was established as a consultative mechanism. The group was directly managed by the UN Women entity, it flourished to include about 60 Yemeni women by end of 2018. In 2016, the Office of the Special Envoy invited a delegation of seven Yemeni women from the Feminist Consensus Group to Kuwait even though women hasn’t had any direct role in negotiations.

In the middle of 2018, the Office of the Special Envoy established Yemeni Women’s Technical Advisory Group with the support of UN Women and the Yemeni Feminist Consensus Group. The Yemeni Women’s Technical Advisory Group was initiated with 8 Yemeni women, three of them were selected from “Al Tawafuq” group and the other five from other components, in the middle of 5 ,2020 members of the Yemeni Feminist Technical Advisory Group also became members of the Feminist Consensus Group.

In September 8 ,2018 members of the Yemeni Women’s Technical Advisory Group joined Geneva consultations on Yemen. They took part in submitting 3 different documents, specifically about economy, politics, and building confidence, in order to contribute to those consultations. In that same year, in December 6 ,2018 members of the group were present in Stockholm to discuss with the parties, and they were daily meeting with the Special Envoy and his team.

The Yemeni Women’s Technical Advisory Group consists of women from diverse backgrounds such as economics, human rights, and governance, as well as women with political expertise. Members of the Women’s Technical Advisory Group often take part in political issues consultations based on their expertise.

The Special Envoy Office seeks to promote the role of the Advisory Group by integrating active feminist, as an expression of the international adherence to women’s right to participate in all peace processes, their advisory role aims to compensate their exclusion from dialogue and negotiation committees.

Women have a fundamental right to contribute to shaping the future of their countries and societies. Women’s constructive participation has been proven in peace processes, by improving the quality and the sustainability of peace. Consultations with women organizations and



women representatives are vital to the Special Envoy work office, and despite the COVID-19 crisis, UN Special Envoy and his office continue to engage women through the use of digital means.

The Office of the Special Envoy remains committed to strengthening its efforts to pursue gender integration in accordance with UN standards and commitments, to implementing gender analysis and considerations into activities, planning and integration, as well as ensuring women's representation by a minimum of 30% in all Meetings and initiatives led by the Special Envoy Office of the UN Secretary-General in Yemen.

### **3.3. GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN YEMEN:**

The country has remained at the bottom of the global gender gap index issued by the World Economic Forum for more than 13 consecutive years<sup>8</sup>. Gender inequality is deeply established in a patriarchal tribal society with unequal gender roles, where cultural and traditional norms are advanced, which in turn, fuels the attitudes that have a negative impact on the physical and mental-being of women and girls. Under the impact of these principles, the protection of women is often connected with men, while ensuring women's participation in decision-making processes at any level is considered impossible, and therefore obtaining official data about women and girls participation remains a challenge, collecting data pertaining to gender equality is a potential threat to traditions and culture, and this equally affects the humanitarian organizations duties, the comprehensive protection and the humanitarian environment in Yemen<sup>9</sup>.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy and Accountability Framework on Gender Equality and Women and Girls empowerment in Humanitarian Action (2017) highlights the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women in humanitarian action, which requires a humanitarian response based on a comprehensive analysis of inequality between men and women. The policy clearly expresses the responsibility of the Humanitarian Country Team and the Cluster Coordination Mechanism between Sectors in strategy implementation. In 2022, in order to activate these commitments, improve their engagement with harmed people, and settle Gender Equality in the Yemeni's humanitarian response. The Humanitarian Country Team and the Cluster Coordination Mechanism integrate Gender Equality in accordance with Inter –Agency Standing Committee (IASC) handbook issued in 2018, in respect of gender in humanitarian action as follows.<sup>10</sup>

**Gender – based analysis:** multiple groups tried to improve regular data collection and analysis sorted by gender, age, handicap and diversity, as an evidence of the conflict disparate impact as well as different needs and capacities.

**Tailored activities:** ensuring that activities are designed according to population different needs, based on gender and age groups. Adopting measures to ensure safe access to aids in accordance with different gender and age groups.

**Constructive participation:** different gender and age groups have a great impact on project/program response decisions at all stages such as (participating in needs assessment, response design, monitoring and reviewing the peers in response).

**Age and Gender equality Indicator according to Inter – Agency Standing Committee (IASC):** Clusters will apply the IASC Gender and age indicator tool in design and monitoring.

<sup>1</sup> Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Women OSESGY, Women, Peace and Security available at <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/ar/>

<sup>2</sup> From A to Z: Gender and Conflict Analysis in Yemen”, Research Report CARE, Gender Standby Capacities Project, IASC and Oxfam, October 2016 available on: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.in/files/resources/tr-yemen-gender-conflict-analysis-2016-en\\_0.pdf/](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.in/files/resources/tr-yemen-gender-conflict-analysis-2016-en_0.pdf/)

<sup>3</sup> Humanitarian Response Plan 2022 Yemen: “Humanitarian Program Planning Cycle” OCHA document on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team” April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Previous reference

### **3.4. THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) ON WOMEN, SECURITY AND PEACE 2020-2022:**

The International Resolution 1325 was adopted unanimously by members of the Security Council in October 2000. The resolution highlights the vital role of women in peace building, and all the efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security. It is a document of 18 different points highlighting four interconnected topics: prevention, protection, participation, reconstruction and recovery. Gender Equality and women empowerment became a global peace and security matter due to this resolution, as it highlights women needs at the recovery stage, considering that humanitarian response to women's requirements would contribute to stability and lasting peace.

The truth is that member states of the United Nations, are the main responsible for implementing resolutions pertaining to women, peace and security, in partnership with stakeholders, civil society, international and regional organizations and the media. The application of this resolution varies in its national context, including national action plans pertaining to women, peace and security.

At the beginning, the political establishment in Yemen often underestimated the response to the Action Plan on Women, Security and Peace declared by the United Nations, which heavily affected the political and legislative position in Yemen that remained unaware of the international resolutions backgrounds, in regard of women empowerment issues in general, and promoting their entitlements to security and peace in particular, under the plea of pressures exerted on the government to advance priorities and remedy the deteriorating conditions generated from the devastation caused by the war, especially in the areas subject to the legitimate, internationally recognized government, which has had a negative impact on the deterioration of the official political and legal perspective towards women's issues identification, and promoting women's participation in construction and reconstruction, therefore, undertaking their roles at this difficult and complex stage.

In May 2020, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs issued a statement that initiates the National Plan for Yemeni women regarding the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution No.1325, "women, Security and Peace"; the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs confirmed the government's adherence to look after women and prioritize their situation, believing in their role in introducing change and preventing conflicts, in building societies on the grounds of equality and social justice in order to achieve human dignity. The statement displays the plan that represents an important project to protect women and promote their status and role by taking practical measures, programs, and projects to protect them and resist domestic violence, leading them to decision making centers and integrating their needs in the future development plans".

This statement confirms that the action plan generates from the Yemeni government's commitment to international conventions and laws, to protecting women during conflicts and to promoting their participation in peace building paths, and responds to the UN resolution in regard of "Woman, Security and Peace", and all international covenants that our country has ratified, in particular, International Humanitarian Law and the Declaration of Universal Human Rights and other international agreements and laws. The government called upon all donors and international partners, including international and local organizations to support this plan and therefore implement it and achieve its goals in order to advance Yemeni women status.

The National Action Plan of resolution 1325 is the most popular plan, which is translated into local actions. It naturally includes the labor force of the relevant ministries and obtains the localization efficiency through its influence and actions at the local level, in collaboration with civil society organizations, in particular, those led by women, and their integration into executive activities aimed at all societal powers, local and administrative authorities, including security forces and the judiciary.

**In order to implement resolution 1325, The National Action Plan depends on the following pillars:**

**The participation:** Increasing women participation at legislative, executive and judicial authority, in security and army, in local and international mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the International convention on human rights in the diplomatic corps, fighting conflicts and peacekeeping.

**Prevention:** establishing early warning mechanisms that take gender into consideration, increasing women's participation in preventing extremism and violence, activating laws and legislations, and qualifying police and army cadres to prevent violence against women.

**Protection:** providing health, psychological and legal support services to women and girls who are victims of violations and violence, developing guidelines for service providers, implementing programs to empower women in times of conflict and beyond, and providing education for girls, and establishing rehabilitation centers for women and girls exposed to violence.

**Relief/Recovery:** fulfilling the needs of vulnerable groups including displaced girls and women, refugees and victims of violence, by providing relief and care services, involving women in disarmament plans, relief efforts and humanitarian aid, and implementing immediate programs that empower women to integrate into host communities.

### **3.4.1 PRIORITIES FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN:**

It is important to involve civil society organizations, regional and international organizations, governmental institutions and other parties in providing appropriate climates that promote and advocate the implementation of the National Plan, with the importance of integrating the elements of the main international resolutions on Women, Peace and Security into the programs and plans of ministries, such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Justice as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Women's Affairs Committee.

However, the governmental commitment to establishing partnerships, declaring a coordinating body, establishing follow up and accountability procedures, along with developing stakeholders

capacities in order to raise awareness and develop new practices; remain one of the most important conditions for ensuring the implementation of the National Plan for Women, Peace and Security. Analyzing strategic data for the National Plan, determining time zones, monitoring and evaluating a framework and budget, are crucial components for ensuring the National Plan implementation in participatory responsibility.

The Yemeni government expressed its commitment to implementing resolution 1325, by designing its National Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and developing an institutional structure and referential frameworks, during 2019, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It was approved by Prime Minister's resolution No. 75 of 2019, and inaugurated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 2020. The resolution confirms the state's moral and social responsibility for restraining war repercussions on women, and the acknowledgment of the authorities, decision makers, policy makers and security agencies for the volume of burdens that women increasingly bear as a result of conflicts persistence and the aggravation of violence against women, and taking the necessary emergency legal and service measures to reduce war outcomes on women and girls, involving them in all settlement and reconciliation operations, and conflict resolution.

The government shall empower women in senior leadership and decision making positions, in accordance with their qualitative and specialized capabilities, their increasing expertise, and their recognized professional competences in all fields. When the Presidential Leadership Council appoints eight female judges as members of the Supreme Judicial Council, considered as the highest judicial authority in accordance with the constitution, for the first time in the history of Yemen, it brought hope to new opportunities to achieving Gender Equality in our country.

### **3.4.2 CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL PLAN ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY:**

- The negative impact of the parties' conflict of interests, forming the National Plan structure, founded on the principle of quotas, and thus the overlap of political agendas with commitment to women's entitlements priorities at this stage.
- The weakness of the state's institution and the dependency on fragile coalition settlements, threatened by the liberation of the reconciliation contract, is still reflected in the directives and programs

performance of the National Plan on Women, Peace and Security, especially in terms of promoting protection mechanisms, uncertain about the implementation of strict legal and security measures against women's violence and vulnerable groups violation especially women and girls.

- Gender perspective has not been systematically integrated into the policies and decisions issued in recent years, in terms of ministerial formation or the appointment of deputies, representatives, and general directors, within a narrow and limited scope, whereas decisions to form peace committees, including committees for civilians protection, pacification and monitoring ceasefire etc. were announced, exempting security women, despite official acknowledgment of their competences, their field capabilities, by granting them promotions and high military ranks that remained captive to office prestige.

- Failure to implement broad assessments and analytical studies in regard of the reality of women's needs during the conflict and recovery phase, means to remedy the failure in evaluating women's work, whether it is low paid or unpaid care work, and to be limited to implementing interventions based on preconceived notions.

- These existing imbalances between government institutions and civil society organizations, considering the excessive restrictions on civil society work due to the tensions of local power struggles, would cause a serious rift in achieving real partnerships to implement plan activities.

### **3.5. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CONFLICT ON GIRLS AND WOMEN RIGHTS:**

Due to protracted conflict, women, girls, boys and men have faced different risks, and therefore have been victims in various ways. When humanitarian organizations do not perceive the different needs, vulnerabilities and capabilities of women, girls, boys, and men, they risk providing unfair aid and promoting existing inequality.<sup>11</sup>

Women and girls are among the most affected groups by the crisis, as about 80% of the 4.5 million displaced people in Yemen are women and children. Families headed by women currently represent 26% of the total displaced families. Discriminatory social behaviors against women and their economic and social integration are still firmly established, which geminate inequalities and hinder women's access to basic services.<sup>12</sup>

The impact of armed conflicts and tensions on the humanitarian situation and women, was not limited to a specific area, thus has expanded to multiple regions in Yemen, in terms of security, materials and morals, as they feel fear and insecure, they lack resources and public services, health care, poverty and hunger, displacement and homelessness along with their children in search of safety and live hood, after the loss of their husbands, the sole family provider, and they bear the burden of supporting their children, in addition to being exposed to harassment, and psychological, sexual and verbal violence, which doubles women's suffering. Perhaps, the deprivation of their human rights is one of the worst effects that wars and conflicts have generated, such as their right to live in dignity, in security and stability, their right to education, to work, and to movement, and their right to live without poverty. In this regard, many studies have shown that women are those who suffer most in times of conflict, considering their increasing responsibilities towards their families.

Indeed, women and girls are suffering disproportionately from violence. Although these conditions have existed long before the conflict, yet they have geminated now, pushing communities and families to resort to harmful accommodation strategies in order to survive, with limited shelter options and the disintegration of formal and informal social protection mechanisms. Girls are increasingly exposed to the risks of early marriage, human trafficking, begging, child labor, and others. Women and girls with special needs are also facing greater risks of violence in society, in times when available services lack adequate qualifications to fulfill the needs of this category<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Humanitarian Response Plan <sup>2022</sup> – Yemen: previous resource

<sup>14</sup> Humanitarian Response for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Yemen <sup>2023</sup>, UNFPA, April <sup>2022</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Previous reference.



#### **4. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*Following the research local context analysis, in respect of Gender Equality and the National Plan on Women, Security and Peace, the paper came up with a set of recommendations that can be highlighted as follows:*

- 1-** We shall continuously intensify efforts, in order to promote women education, training, to develop their skills and provide economic and employment opportunities for women, ensuring protection from sexual and gender-based violence.
- 2-** The Yemeni government shall invest in the significant positive change towards women that occurred in the region, and promote the modern and civil ideas that oppose the stereotypical culture based on discrimination and inferiority, in particular since they became a difficult figure in the pursuit of equality and social justice.
- 3-** The Yemeni government shall adhere to implement and fully enforce the National Plan on Women, Security and Peace, however the success and the implementation of the National Plan on Women, Security and Peace depends on the support of the cooperation of the international community and local societies.
- 4-** The Yemeni government shall develop a plan to restrain the impact of the extremist religious movement's ideas, and break free from the shackles of traditional hegemony, and emancipate from the absurdity of the tribal perspective with regard to women's empowerment and support community enlightenment initiatives towards women empowerment in all economic, cultural, political, military and security fields, and rationalize the religious, moderate and fair discourse of the governmental authorities on the pulpits of mosques, in respect of women.
- 5-** The Yemeni government shall increase the provision of opportunities, to empower women in decision making positions, and engage them to draw up the state's general policy towards societal issues in general and women entitlements in particular, considered as a vital element to every department in all state institutions.
- 6-** We shall establish a strong political movement to promote the rights of the Yemeni women and improve their status in Yemeni society, and provide the necessary support and resources to promote their role and empower them in the peace building process.

**7-** We shall promote and activate laws that ensure women's rights and amend discriminatory legislative texts against women and abolish the constitutional text that restrain Gender Equality principle, due to unapproved interpretations.

**8-** We shall prepare and educate society about women roles, in providing services such as men, and their role in protecting the family and community cohesion, through conferences, workshops, and discussion panels, to change society's attitudes towards respecting women's status and preserving their prestige.

**9-** We shall take the necessary protection measures, to ensure women engagement in police and security services side by side with men, concerning the logistical, legal and security aspect, to prevent any transgressions or abuses that might hinder their performance , or cause their withdrawal from the security institution.

**10-** The leaders of the security services shall empower policewomen and look after them, and provide additional incentives and rewards for security women, and urge them to practice administrative and military discipline. They shall provide them with security and legal protection, support them smoothly in fulfilling their roles, and continuously support their rehabilitation and training, and provide nurseries to guard their children while they perform their duties, because it would encourage women wishing to join police and security institution.

**11-** We shall activate official audio, visual and print media and produce instructive and directing television programs, to correct misconceptions and support concepts promoting women's engagement in state institutions in particular, security and police, and their role in promoting the culture of law and order, and contributing to society's promotion and advocacy for their positive role and encouraging their integration in this field, complementing men role.

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## APPENDIX (1)

**(Results of the field survey held on samples from the private sector, from the civil society, female employees and female university students)**

***“Changes in women freedoms and rights during war years – Sana’a”***

◆ The total number of the distributed questionnaires is 150, 100 questionnaires were distributed to female employees from the private sector and civil society, while 50 questionnaires were distributed to female university students.

◆ The number of filled out forms that were received was 139 forms, equivalent to 93% of the total distributed forms, 91 forms were filled out by female workers from the private sector and civil society, and 48 forms filled out by female university students.

◆ The majority of the two targeted samples age groups varied:

- Between 20 – 30 years, 45%
- Between 30 – 40 years, 43%

**3/4 – 77% of the targeted women confirmed the increase of discrimination and violations against women during the war years, the most important reasons for this are listed in order:**

- 1- Policies and directives issued by the existing authority – 73%
- 2- Society's negativity and the deterioration of civil parties role – 67%
- 3- Organized mobilization and the impact of discourses in worship places - 65%
- 4- The male culture, which has recently geminated – 64%

5/ 65% of the targeted women indicate that judicial provisions regarding discrimination or gender equality have changed and worsened, while 16% of them believe that they have remained as they are.

6/ - As per the harassment and the discrimination practiced against women, opinions were divided as follows:

- 1- Educational institutions (schools and universities) – 77%
- 2- On the streets and public places – 61%
- 3- In workplaces – 57%
- 4- Within family – 24%

#### **The additional answers provided by the targeted women were:**

- Restrictions and discrimination policies take place in government institutions as well, in terms of separating between female and male employees, and reserving some governmental and non- governmental positions exclusively to males.
- Exclusion and exemption of women from senior positions.
- Speech loudspeakers in some public places, slogans and paintings hung in markets and on street walls targeting women and reminding them of piety, covering, wearing the Hijab and the Niqab and their commitment by staying in their homes....etc.
- They are also restrained in restaurants, cafes and English institutes.
- Female students are greatly affected Because of male and female student's separation in universities, since doctors look after the majority of students which are males.

7/ - As per the decline of work opportunities available for women in the private sector and civil society, majority of the opinions 60% agreed with this, while 22% did not agree with this.

8/ - As per the diminishing capacities available for girls education, 69% of those targeted approve this opinion, while 17% do not approve it.

9/ - The study confirms that women are suffering from different forms of violence as follows:

- 92% are suffering psychological violence.
- 79% are suffering verbal violence.
- 40% are suffering physical violence.

10/ - As per targeted women opinions, the most prominent types and forms of discrimination and violations of women's rights and freedoms are described as follows:

- 1- Wearing the Hijab is mandatory 95%
- 2- Separating female and male students in universities and institutes 91%.
- 3- Requiring the Mahram presence (male guardian) when traveling between cities and outside Yemen 81%.
- 4- Preventing bilateral or group conversations between male and female universities students 73%.
- 5- Separating boys and girls students in schools 67%.
- 6- Requirements in clothing and external appearances, (including makeup, nails length, wearing accessories, prohibiting tight and colored pants, belts on pants, high heels shoes. .... )64%.
- 7- Separating male from female employees in private and governmental establishments and facilities.52%
- 8- Imposing the veil (borko'o) 25%.
- 9- Some of the targeted women suffer from the requirement of having a mahram when leaving the house 24%.

*Additional opinions were stated regarding discrimination practices, represented by religious sermons on Fridays targeting women and women outings. Provocations are continuously carried out against women's work during the so-called compulsory cultural lectures imposed by the authorities on all male and female employees forcing them to attend weekly, every Wednesday. Women are also prevented from working in restaurants, under the threat of closing the restaurants that are employing women, even though they are working in the family section. Women and men are also prevented from entering the family section of restaurants unless they are holding a marriage certificate. In addition to preventing student mingling at graduation celebrations .... Etc.*

11/ - As per targeted women's opinion, the most prominent reasons for restricting women's freedoms and rights are the following:

- 1- Sectarian ideological reasons implemented by the de-facto authority 76%.
- 2- Deterioration of education and increase in illiteracy and ignorance 68%.
- 3- The tribes moved to Sana'a as a result of the war, therefore traditional tribal culture and customs dominated civil culture 51%.

12/13 – As per the presence of specific official bodies to receive women's complaints about discrimination and abuse, 39% of those targeted confirmed the absence of these bodies while 37% do not know whether it exists or not. 41% confirm that there is no justice, and 24% sometimes get justice, compared to only 3% confirming that there is justice. It is believed that this small percentage is limited to controversial issues and not human rights issues.

14/ - As per the targeted assessment of the public opinion opposing the increasing processes of discrimination and violation of women's right and its effectiveness.... 44% of the targeted confirm the presence of oppositional public opinion tendencies, but they are limited, while 35% of them do not notice any movement in this regard and consider public opinion as negative.

15/ - As per Yemeni's parties positions, and whether they have action programs to confront the increasing policies of discrimination and violations of women's rights... 71% of those targeted confirmed that Yemeni parties do not have any positions or programs in this regard. And only 23% considered their presence relative and limited.

16/ - Targeted women's assessment of the role of civil society towards violation of women's freedoms and rights, came as follows:

- The role of civil society is negative 51%.
- Weak role 47%.
- Positive role 02%.

*These indicators show that the role of civil society and its various organizations in the areas subject to the de-facto authority, are considered negative and weak by an average of 98%, and the severe security restrictions are certainly a major reason for this.*

17/ - As per the targeted assessment of the role and positions of Yemeni Women Associations and the Yemeni Women's Union in Sana'a, which is the most important, towards discrimination and violations of women's rights and freedoms.... Their answers came as follows:

- 57% Negative.
- 42% Acceptable.
- 01% Excellent.

*It is believed that the percentage of 42% supporting the roles and positions of women's associations and the Yemeni's Women Union being "acceptable" is an exaggerated percentage, and may not be logical, considering the reality, the complete stagnation of these institutions activities and the security restrictions, in particular policies of discrimination and violations of women's freedoms and rights.....and considering the targeted additional answers and opinions as well, in regard of these institutions status, the most prominent can be summarized as follows:*

- Women's associations and women's union have been absent for a long time, and feminist societal entities have always been marginalized.
- Associations and organizations that were working to restrict women violations have been closed. The National Committee for Women, the Yemeni Women's Union and women's associations no longer exist, and they have no positions or roles towards discrimination policies or violations against women, as the de-facto authorities have appointed their supporters, what is called "Zeinabeyyat" in the leadership of the Yemeni Women's Union in Sana'a, and they have become in control of the work and union activities.
- The role of the Yemeni Women's Union has ended more than 8 years ago.
- Absence of women's associations' role and almost a complete failure in carrying out their duties.
- Some of the targeted women have not heard about the existence of any feminist association supporting or standing by women, from the beginning of war until now.
- Feminist associations are not having any role nor any intervention, and there is no position to reject these violations.
- We suffer from attacks, harassment, and numerous violations without any position from the Yemeni Women's Union.

