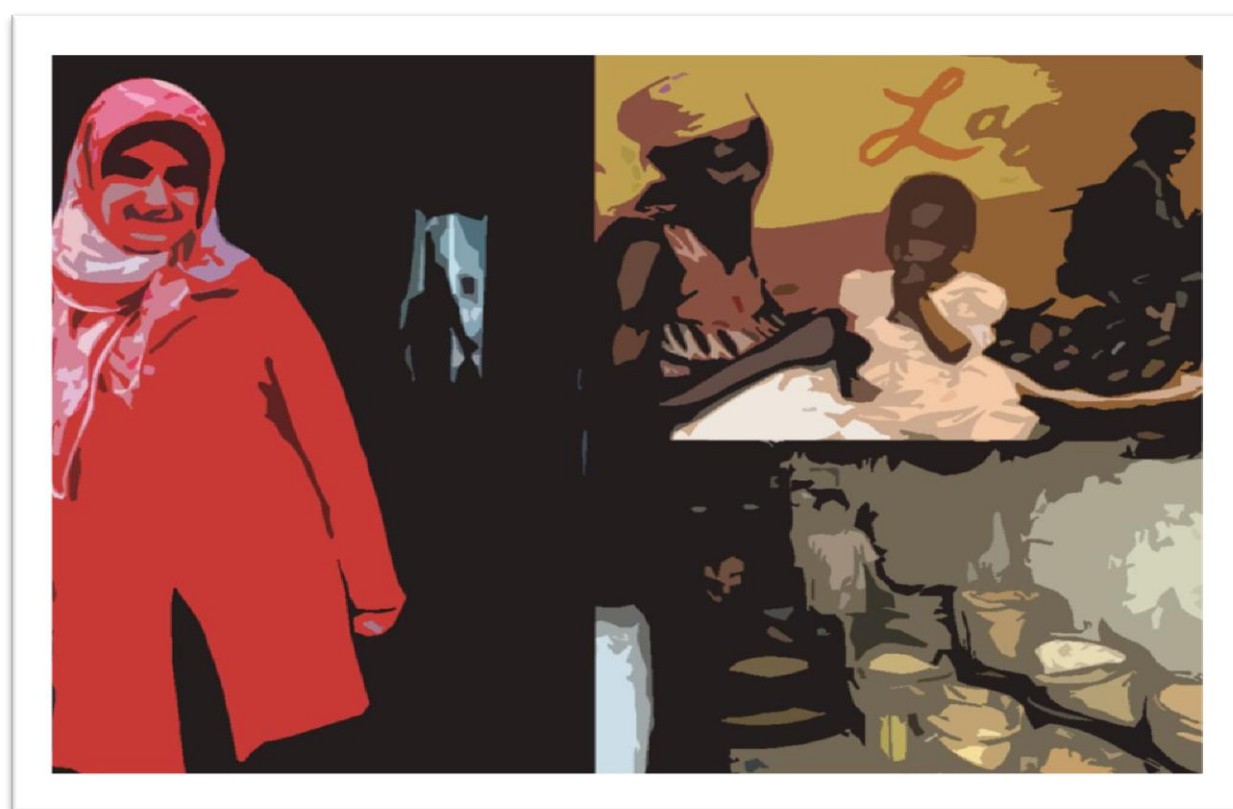


# The State of Gender in OIC Member Countries



OIC Outlook Series  
March 2013



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION  
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH  
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

OIC Outlook Series

# The State of Gender in OIC Member Countries

March 2013



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## Contents

Introduction

Demographic Facts

Health

Education

Employment

Conclusion

### 1. Introduction

Today gender equality and women’s empowerment in all fields of social and economic life is gaining importance from the perspectives of both policy development and human rights. Following international commitments and guidelines most of the development policies have already been based on the principle of incorporating the priorities and needs of both women and men in order to offer equal opportunity for access to all the benefits and services provided to the society. The United Nations Beijing Declaration’s 12 Critical Areas of Concern provided an international framework for action on the advancement and empowerment of women; however there are still some problems regarding integration of gender related aspects into all operational levels of policy implementations across the world (UN World Women Report, 2010).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) “gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women”. Consequently gender relations are the ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Unfortunately, in this type of the word “gender “is often misunderstood as only referring to women. However, gender issues encompass the relationships between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, the division of labour, etc. Furthermore, gender relations impact on household security, the well-being of the family, fertility planning, production and many other aspects of life (Bravo-Baumann, 2000).

Gender related issues have also been incorporated into the political concerns of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action draws attention to the enhancement of the involvement of women in economic, cultural, social and political fields of social life and encourages Member States to sign and ratify the international agreements on the rights of child and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Against this background this special report aims to highlight differences between men and women and, give an insight into the current state of OIC member countries as a group at global level, by comparing them with the world and other country groups. Depending on the gender disaggregated data availability, four important aspects of social and economic life including demographic facts, health, education and employment are discussed to understand the current status of men and women across the OIC. Furthermore the data gaps were discussed in order to highlight the priority areas needed to improve in terms of data availability.

## 2. Demographic Facts

### 2.1. Structure of Population

The structure and changes of a population has a direct effect on the economic and social conditions of a country or region. The major drivers of these structural changes are; population growth, fertility rate and mortality rate and international migration that have to be carefully investigated. In 2010, the total population of OIC member countries was estimated at approximately 1,563 billion people, corresponding to 22.7% of the total world population. Table 1 presents the structure of population in terms of gender in OIC and non-OIC developing countries as well as in the group of developed countries and the world as a whole. According to the table since 1950, the population of the world has increased almost three fold whereas the total population of the OIC member countries has seen a fourfold increase. On the other hand, the population of the developed country groups doubled during the same period. Globally, excluding the developed countries, the number of men was somewhat higher than the number of women, but this cannot be valid for all age groups. In OIC countries there were 102 males for every 100 females which is the same ratio as in the total world population. The trend in population growth is very similar for both males and females, with slight favor for men.

**Table 1: Population by sex (Million people)**

	1950 ....	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population increase (Number of times) 1950 - 2010
<b>OIC</b>	385	811	1 047	1 295	1 563	4,06
<i>Male</i>	195	412	528	653	789	4,05
<i>Female</i>	190	402	518	641	773	4,07
<i>Men per 100 women(1)</i>	103	102	102	102	102	..
<b>Non-OIC Developing</b>	1 541	2 820	3 384	3 895	4 337	2,81
<i>Male</i>	775	1 429	1 717	1 976	2 199	2,84
<i>Female</i>	767	1 391	1 668	1 919	2 139	2,79
<i>Men per 100 women</i>	101	103	103	103	103	..
<b>Developed</b>	606	822	875	933	996	1,64
<i>Male</i>	296	401	428	457	489	1,65
<i>Female</i>	311	421	447	476	506	1,63
<i>Men per 100 women</i>	95	95	96	96	97	..
<b>World</b>	2 532	4 453	5 306	6 123	6 896	2,72
<i>Male</i>	1 265	2 240	2 673	3 087	3 478	2,75
<i>Female</i>	1 267	2 213	2 634	3 036	3 418	2,70
<i>Men per 100 women</i>	100	101	101	102	102	..
<b>OIC as % of World</b>	<b>15,19</b>	<b>18,22</b>	<b>19,72</b>	<b>21,14</b>	<b>22,66</b>	..

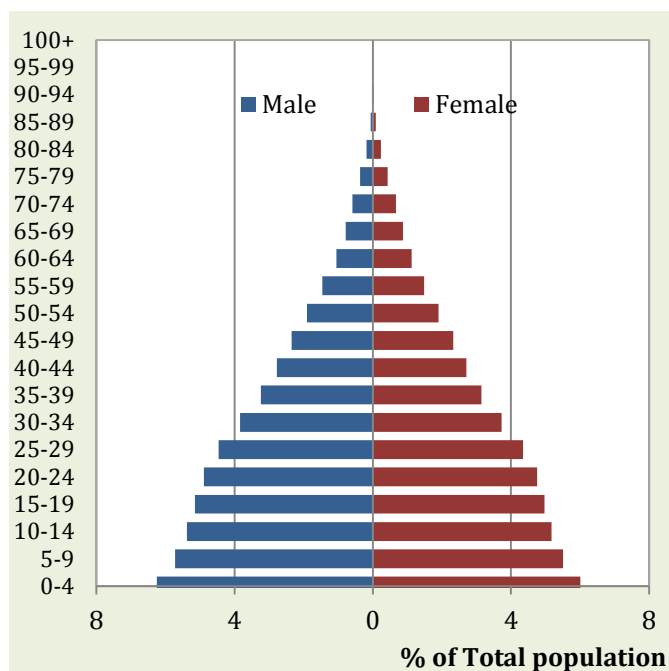
Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database  
(1) This is a demographic term also known as Sex Ratio of a Population and measures the proportion of males to females in a given population

The OIC member countries as a group have the highest population growth rates. This necessitates a careful analysis of the interconnections among different subsets of the population in order to understand the dynamics of population trend at the OIC group level. Consequently, the associated policy implications could be derived after careful analysis of the existing situation such as to take necessary measures for providing opportunities in education and the labor force for young people as well as women in all spheres of the society.

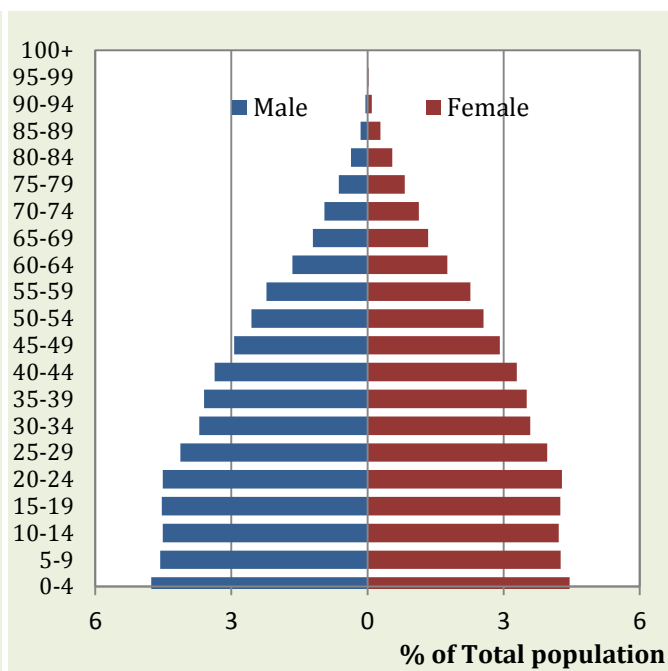
The population pyramid of the world and OIC member countries for 2010 are given in Figures 1 and 2 respectively to provide the basis of the discussion on the essential differences in the structure of the population of the OIC countries comparing with the world. The population pyramid is the most widely used graphical method to depict the structure of population as well as interpret its reproductive capacity by illustrating the percentage of each gender in total population, at different age groups.

The population pyramid of the OIC member countries is wider at the bottom and narrow at the top which means higher percentages of the population in the younger age groups and, relatively small percentages of elderly people. In OIC member countries 54.25 percent of male and 53.3 percent of female population were less than 25 years of age in 2010. However, the male and female percentages of the population were 12.7 percent and 13.8 percent respectively for the group of 50 years age and above corresponding to almost one fourth of the share of the 0-24 age group. A higher percentage of population (about 12 percent) was in the 0-4 age group and was steadily decreasing in the successive age groups. The female population exceeded the male population after age of 55, and from that age on there were increasing numbers of women relative to men in each consecutive age groups. As a conclusion the age pyramid is skewed slightly towards male in the younger age groups and it is considerably skewed towards female in the older age groups.

**Figure 1:** Population pyramid of the OIC MC's, 2010



**Figure 2:** Population pyramid of the World, 2010

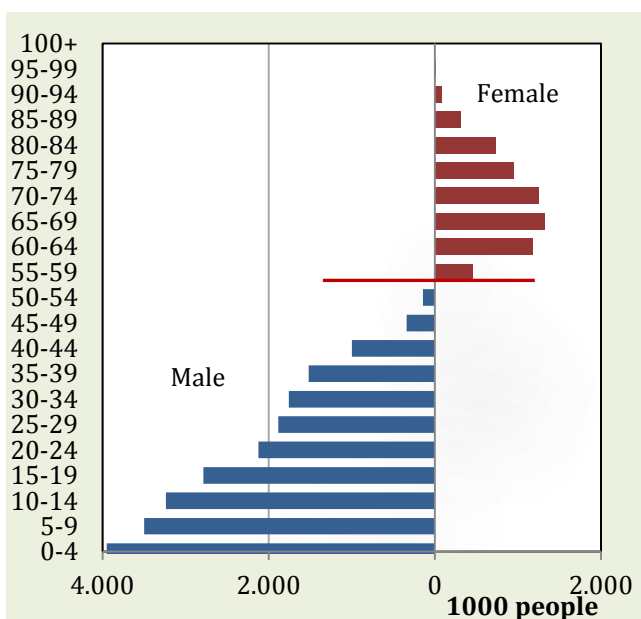


OIC figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

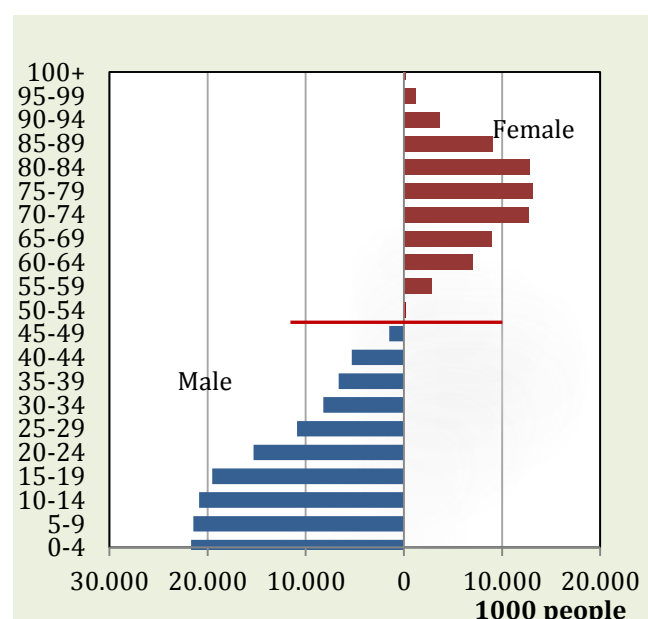
In comparison, the World population pyramid in 2010 shows roughly equal numbers of people in all age categories below age of 45 and tapering towards the older age categories. The percentages of male and female population were 45.4 percent and 43.3 percent respectively in the group of age less than 25 years, 19.4 percent and 21.8 percent respectively for the age group of above 50 years. Unlike the OIC, there was higher proportion of females in the population in the 20-25 age groups and a larger number of males in the 15-19 age groups (Figure 2).

It is a demographically well-known fact that there is a “gender spiral” a term used to describe the surplus of men and women in age groups. It shows that the surplus of men is concentrated in the younger age groups with diminishing ratio and there are more women in the older age groups (World Women Report, 2010). The surplus of women and men by age groups in OIC member countries and world are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, respectively. It is clear that the global female average life expectancy is higher than the OIC average. Moreover, the turning point for the female population in the world to exceed the male population is from age 50, which is less than that in the case of the OIC member countries. Actually, these regional aggregates do not reflect the current circumstances of the individual member countries and, these figures may show great deviation especially for those countries receiving immigrants.

**Figure 3:** Surplus of women and men by age, OIC, 2010



**Figure 4:** Surplus of women and men by age, World, 2010



The OIC figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

## 2.2. Fertility and Life Expectancy at Birth

The fertility rate and life expectancy at birth are two important demographic indicators that can explain changes in the trends and structure of the population. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) refers to the average number of children per women and is a more direct measurement for the replacement level of a population. The replacement level is the number of children needed per women for a population to replace itself. It is generally taken as 2.1 children per women and says that populations below the replacement level ultimately be faced with the danger of extinction. The TFR has been declining gradually across the world and it dropped from 5 children to around 2.5 in the period

1950-2010 (World Women Report, 2010). Table 2 presents the TFR and changes with respect to country groups within the latest ten year period to show the latest trends.

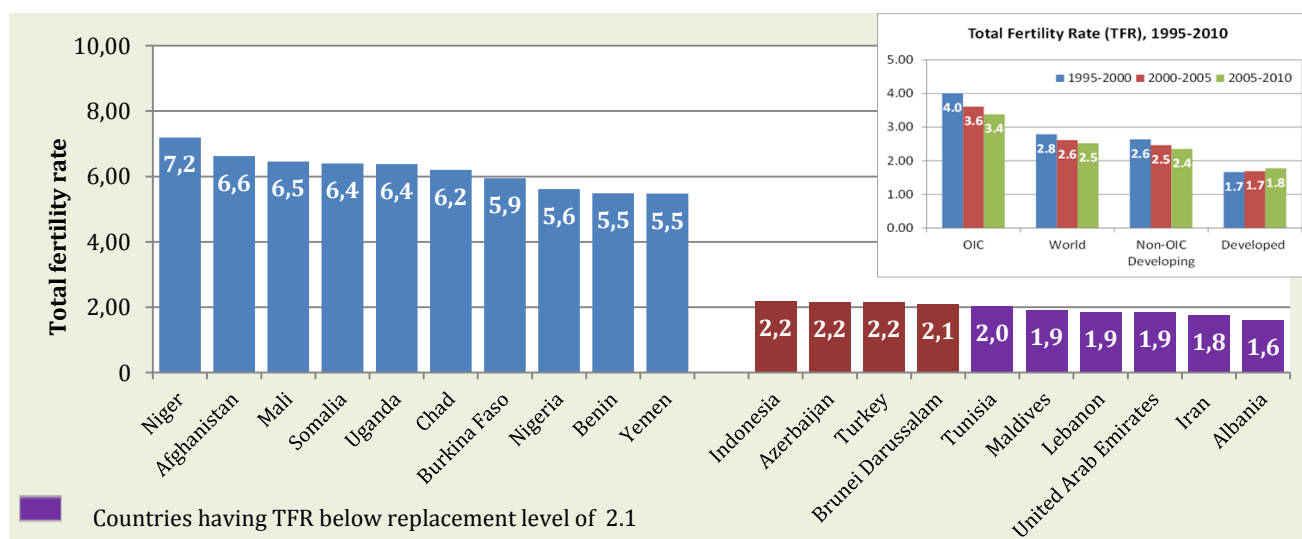
**Table 2:** Total fertility rate (children per women)

	1995-2000	2005-2010	% changes from 2000's to 2010's
<b>OIC</b>	4.00	3.38	-18.34
<b>Non-OIC Developing</b>	2.64	2.35	-12.34
<b>Developed</b>	1.66	1.78	6.74
<b>World</b>	2.79	2.52	-10.71

Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

Although the OIC country group had the highest fertility rate (3.38 children/women) among other country groups during the years 2005-2010, the overall downward trend of the OIC member country group was remarkable. Unlike to the rest of the world the developed country group had an upward trend and their fertility rate increased from 1.66 to 1.78 in the same period. On the other hand the TRF of individual countries varied dramatically across the regions of OIC. Figure 5 shows the 10 OIC member countries with the highest and lowest TRFs. According to the UN World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision data the TFRs of Albania, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Maldives and Tunisia were under the replacement level of 2.1.

**Figure 5:** Top 10 countries with highest and lowest TFRs, 2005-2010



Source: World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

As briefly discussed in the above section women live longer than men particularly after the age of 50 years, thus the number of women is becoming higher than men all around the world after a certain age. Gender disaggregated life expectancy figures are also verifying this demographic fact and show the number of years by which women outlive men. The life expectancy at birth represents the average number of years a newborn child can expect to live given the current levels of mortality in a country. Since it is derived from the age-specific mortality rates thus it is an indicator that can also provide a picture of the overall health status of populations. For the period 1950 – 2010, average life

expectancy at birth in OIC countries increased from 40 years to 63 years for men, and from 42 years to 66 years for women. Although the average life expectancy of OIC member countries has increased by approximately 57 % since 1950, it was still below the world and other country group averages. Table 5 displays the averages of life expectancy at birth by sex and gender gap since 1950. It is clear that there are significant differences in the expected lifespan of men and women among different groups of countries, in particular the group of developed countries has higher values both in expected lifespan and female-male lifespan differences.

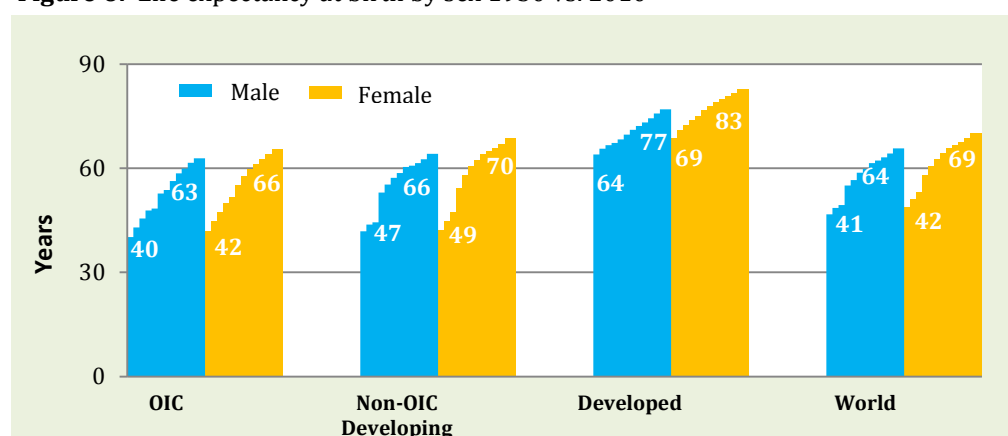
**Table 3:** Life expectancy at birth by sex and female-male gender gap (years)

		1950 ...	1985-1990	1995-2000	2005-2010	Increase from 1950-2010
OIC	Male	40	56	60	63	23
	Female	42	60	63	66	24
	<i>Gender gap</i>	2	4	3	3	1
Non - OIC Developing	Male	42	60	61	63	22
	Female	42	64	66	67	27
	<i>Gender gap</i>	0	4	5	4	4
Developed	Male	64	72	74	77	13
	Female	69	79	81	83	14
	<i>Gender gap</i>	5	7	6	6	1
World	Male	47	61	63	66	19
	Female	49	66	67	70	21
	<i>Gender gap</i>	2	5	4	3	1

Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

According to the 2010 estimations the difference in average life expectancy between women and men for OIC member countries was the lowest among the other country groups and varied by 2-3 years over the period. Figure 6 illustrates the life expectancy at birth figures for the years 1950 and 2010 to depict the gap between women and men as well as changes from 1950 to 2010. This figure also supports the argument that “It is a biological fact that women have advantageous to live longer than men but societal, cultural and economic factors can affect the natural advantage females have over males. Studies show that “the gender gap in mortality is smaller in developing countries because in many of these countries, women have much lower social status than men and are exposed to risks associated with childbirth, factors that can make equal life expectancies” (Yin Sandra, 2007).

**Figure 6:** Life expectancy at birth by sex 1950 vs. 2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database



### 2.3 Marriage and Childbearing

Families are accepted as the basic unit of a society, and marriage is the first step in the formation of a family which is the essential part of a healthy and well-functioning of the society. So changes in the number of marriages and divorces or their ratios to the total population are important elements in the assesment of the current status of the family structure and how is it changing over time. The idea and function of 'family' varies across the world and is in a state of constant evolution. Available statistics on population by age, sex and marital status show that, the age entering into marriage for men and women differs and is strongly linked to their tradition and culture. Yet the average age at marriage for women has always been lower than the average for men but in some regions this difference is considerable.

Table 4 displays the basic indicators related to marriage and childbearing including the crude marriage and divorce rates, legal age for marriage, singulate mean age for marriage (SMAM) and mean age at childbearing by country groups after 2000. These figures show that OIC member countries as a group had significantly lower divorce and higher marriage rates compared to the rest of the world. The average crude divorce rate of the OIC country group was almost the half of the world and one-third of the developed country group averages. On the other hand the OIC countries had the lowest legal age for marriage for women as well as lowest singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) for both men and women. Contrary to the SMAM, the average female mean age at childbearing for OIC member countries was 28.7 years which is higher than the world and non-OIC developing countries and less less than the average of developed countries.

**Table 4:** Basic indicators for marriage, divorce and childbearing, 2000's

	Crude marriage rate <sup>3 (1)</sup>	Crude divorce rate <sup>4(1)</sup>	Legal age for marriage <sup>(2)</sup>		Singulate Mean Age for Marriage (SMAM) <sup>(1)(1)</sup>		Female mean age at childbearing <sup>2 (3)</sup> (2005-2010)
			Men	Women	Men	Women	
<b>OIC</b>	8.67	0.73	15	13	27	23	28.7
<b>Non-OIC Developing</b>	6.16	1.43	15	15	28	25	26.3
<b>Developed</b>	5.80	2.63	17	16	29	25	29.2
<b>World</b>	6.56	1.55	...	....	28	25	27.2

1) Figures calculated from individual country data available at the World Marriage Data 2008 online database

2)Source: UNSD, Indicators on men and women

3) Figures calculated from individual country data available at the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

<sup>1</sup> The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is the average length of single life expressed in years among those who marry before age 50. It is calculated from the proportions of single people by age.

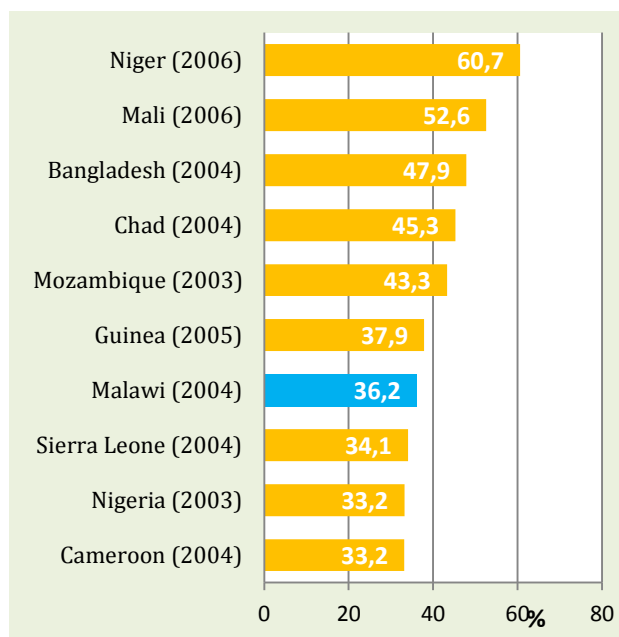
<sup>2</sup> The female mean age at childbearing is the mean age of mothers at the birth of their children if women were subject throughout their lives to the age-specific fertility rates observed in a given year.

<sup>3</sup>The crude marriage rate is the annual number of marriages per 1,000 populations. According to the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 2, marriage is defined as "the act, ceremony or process by which the legal relationship of husband and wife is constituted. The legality of the union may be established by civil, religious or other means as recognized by the laws of each country."

<sup>4</sup> The crude divorce rate is the annual number of divorces per 1,000 populations. According to the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 2, divorce is "a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, that separation of husband and wife which confers on the parties the right to remarriage under civil, religious and/or other provisions, according to the laws of each country

While the age of marriage is generally on the rise, especially in the groups of developed and high income group countries early marriage or marriage below the age of 18 is still widely practiced all around the world. Although most countries have laws that regulate marriage, both in terms of the minimum age and consent, but such laws usually do not apply to traditional marriages. The UNICEF *Early Marriages Child Spouses, 2001* report states that many girls and a smaller number of boys enter marriage without being able to exercise their right to choose their marriage partner. This is more often the case with younger and uneducated girls since assuming a wife's responsibilities usually leaves no room for schooling and almost certainly removes the girl from the educational process (UNICEF, 2001). This also results in early childbearing, which is identified as having higher health risk for both mother and child.

**Figure 7:** 10 countries in the world having higher % of ever married women in age group 15-19, 2000-2006

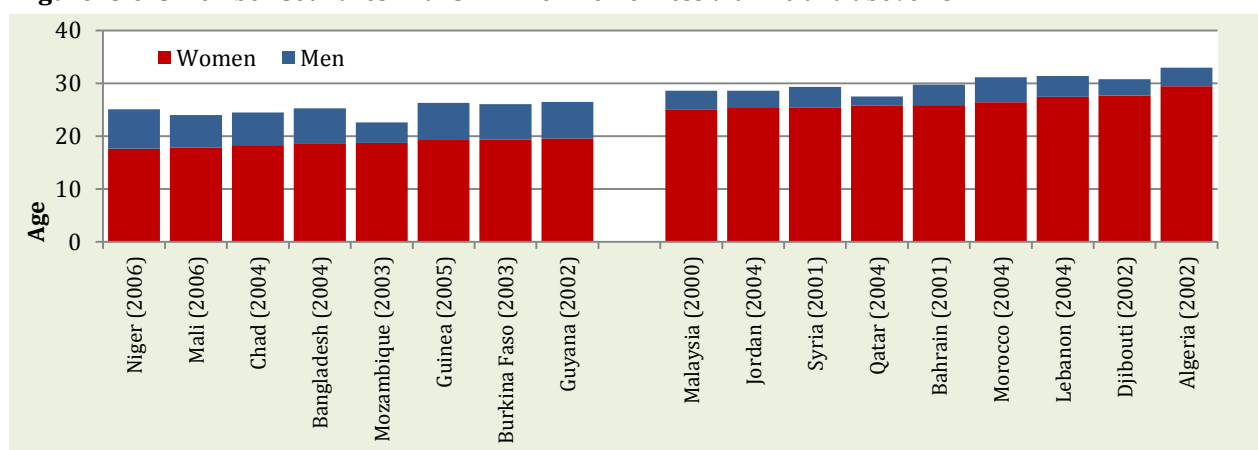


Source: World Marriage Data, 2008

The practice of marrying young girls is still common in many countries around the world. Figure 7 shows the top 10 countries in the world having higher percentage of ever married women in the 15-19 age groups in the period 2000-2008. As shown in Figure 7 according to the available country data Niger had the highest share of ever married females in the 15-19 age group in the world which constituted two thirds of the total of married women in the country. Following Niger, in Mali almost half of the married women were also in that age group as well. Except for Malawi the other countries with a high percentage of ever married women in the 15-19 age group were the OIC member countries.

Figure 8 presents the figures on the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) for the OIC member countries which have lower than 20 and above 25 years of age for women. According to the data presented in the graph the average age of marriage for women in OIC member countries is

**Figure: 8** OIC Member Countries with SMAM for women less than 20 and above 25

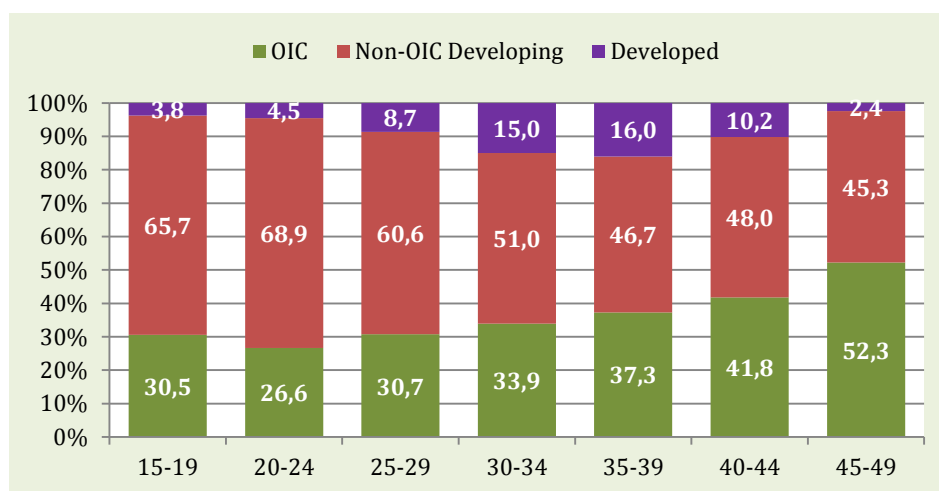


Source: World Marriage Data, 2008

between age of marriage for women at 29.5 and Niger had the lowest at 17.6 years old. The majority of the countries having a lower average age of marriage were the African countries on the other hand those having higher average age of marriage were the upper-middle or high income group countries. The difference in the SMAM between men and women is remarkable in those countries having lower SMAM for women, in contrast to these countries, this difference is relatively small not more than 3 years in the countries having higher SMAM for women.

On the other hand, as shown in Figure 9, the average mean age at childbearing of the OIC member country group was higher than the world averages in the period 2005-2010. The share of OIC country group’s births after 25 years of age slowly increased in the total births for the respective age group while other country group averages decreased.

**Figure 9:** Distribution of births by five-year age group of mother, 2005-2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available at the World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online database

### 3. Health

The health status and problems of women are not the same as those of men. This can be explained by the biological and physical differences between the two as well as by the differences in gender norms of societies e.g. inequities between men and women in accessing health care services. In this section the available statistical indicators on the reproductive health and health of children are presented to give a general idea about the overall health status of OIC women as well as capacity of the health infrastructure in the OIC member countries in comparison with the rest of the world.

The three goals of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are directly related to health issues are; Goal 4 – reduce child mortality, Goal 5 – improve maternal health and Goal 6 – combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Table 5 presents the basic indicators related to the assessment of the progress in the reduction of child and maternal mortality which is the focus of this section. The life expectancy indicator is excluded here since; it has already been discussed in the Demographic Facts section of this report. The average mortality ratios of the OIC country group related to children and maternity were the highest among other country groups. Overall the average maternal mortality ratios of the OIC member country group were the highest, approximately more

than one-half of the world average and twice the average of non-OIC developing country averages in 2010. Despite the significant reduction over the last ten years, higher mortality ratios are still serious challenge for the OIC and non-OIC developing countries.

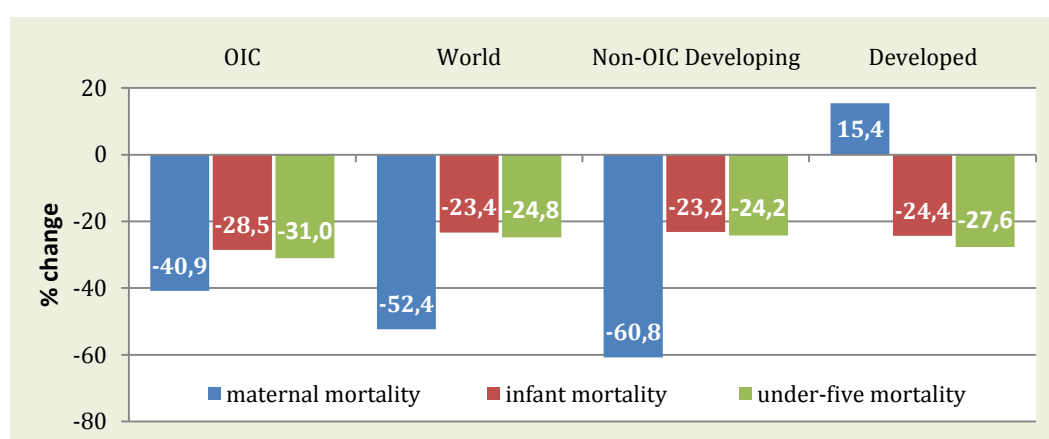
**Table 5: Basic indicators on reproductive and child health**

	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100 000 live births) <sup>5(1)</sup>		Infant mortality (per 1000 live births) <sup>6(2)</sup>		Under-five mortality (per 1000 live births) <sup>7(2)</sup>	
	2000	2010	1995-2000	2005-2010	1995-2000	2000-2010
<b>OIC</b>	462	328	68.0	52.9	99.8	76.2
<b>Non-OIC Developing</b>	291	181	63.9	51.9	93.1	75.0
<b>Developed</b>	11	13	5.8	4.7	7.1	5.6
<b>World</b>	320	210	56.3	45.6	82.0	65.7

Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Health Organisation and World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online databases

Despite the considerable progress that has been achieved worldwide in terms of decreases in child and maternal mortality, this issue is still constitute a challenge and of serious concern in certain regions in the world. Figure 10 depicts the percent changes in these ratios from 2000 to 2010. When these changes compared, it can be concluded that there were significant improvements in the under-five and infant mortalities in OIC member countries and maternal mortality in non-OIC developing countries since 2000. The decline in the average maternal mortality ratio in OIC countries was estimated at 40.9 percent which is far below the decline in the case of the world and other groups. The only positive trend was observed in the case of average maternal mortality ratio of the developed countries during the same period

**Figure 10: Change in maternal, infant and under-five mortalities during 2000-2010.**



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the World Health Organisation and World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online databases

<sup>5</sup> The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is the annual number of female deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management (excluding accidental or incidental causes) during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, per 100,000 live births, for a specified year.

<sup>6</sup> The infant mortality is probability of dying between birth and exact age 1. It is expressed as deaths per 1,000 births.

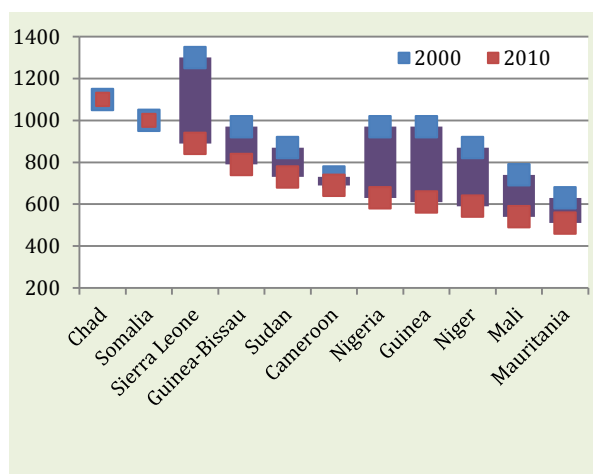
<sup>7</sup> The under-five mortality is probability of dying between birth and exact age 5. It is expressed as deaths per 1,000 births.

One of the major problems in the developing countries is the death and disability of women through their reproductive years as a result of the complications arising during pregnancy and childbirth. The maternal mortality ratio reflects the capacity of the health system to provide effective health care in preventing and addressing the complications occurring during pregnancy and childbirth by monitoring deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth. Each year, more than half a million women die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In this context, Goal 5 of the MDGs calls for the improvement of maternal health by reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters (UNICEF 2008). It has already been discussed above that the OIC country group had the highest maternal mortality ratio and, the lowest decrease among the other country groups, therefore it is important to examine the individual country group averages to understand the regional dimension of this situation.

For the years 2000 and 2010 Figure 11 shows the eleven OIC member countries which had the maternal mortality ratio above 500 deaths per 100 000 births, and Figure 12 shows the ten OIC member countries with the lowest maternal mortality ratios. As far as the countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios are concerned, Chad and Somalia had the highest ratio with 1100 and 1000 respectively in 2010 without any change since 2000. In addition Cameroon and Mauritania also showed no improvement since 2000. Sierra Leone was the third country with the highest value but had a significant decrease since 2000. All the countries having maternal mortality ratio above 500 deaths of mothers per 100 000 births were African member countries.

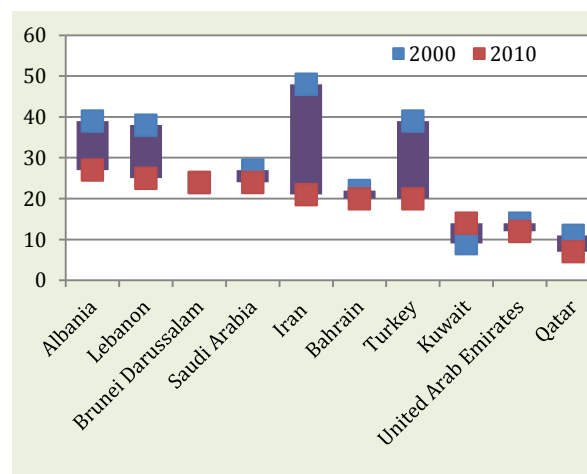
All the ten countries with the lowest maternal mortality ratios in 2010 recorded less than 30 deaths per 100 000 births. Yet, these countries, namely Albania, Lebanon, Brunei Darussalam, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Bahrain, Turkey, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar among them Iran, Turkey, Lebanon and Albania, recorded a substantial reduction in their ratios since 2000. The last three countries with the lowest ratio, namely Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, had averages below the average of the Developed countries. Except for Kuwait, which had a slight increase since 2000, all the other countries had downward trend.

**Figure 11:** OIC Member Countries having maternal mortality ratio above 500 in 2010



Source: World Health Organisation, World Health Statistics

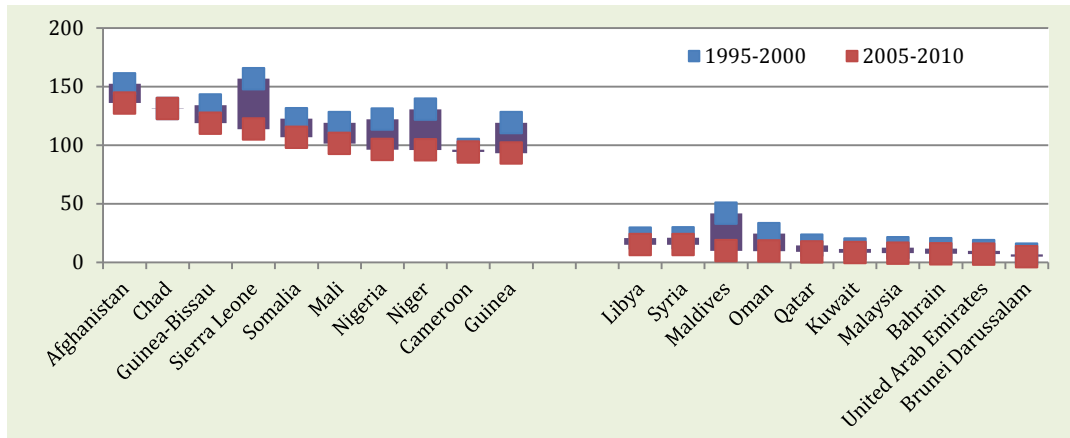
**Figure 12:** Ten OIC Member Countries with the lowest maternal mortality ratio in 2010



Source: World Health Organisation, World Health Statistics

Figure 13 displays the ten OIC member countries with the highest and lowest infant mortalities. Again those at the top of the list, except for Afghanistan, were African member countries. Seven of the lowest ten countries were Arab member countries including five Gulf States and the remaining three of them were East Asian Countries. A significant decline since 2000 was observed in the infant mortality rates in Sierra Leone, Maldives, Guinea and Niger. On the other hand, there was no recorded improvement for reducing the infant mortality rate in Chad and Cameroon which were on the top of the countries with the highest infant mortality figures.

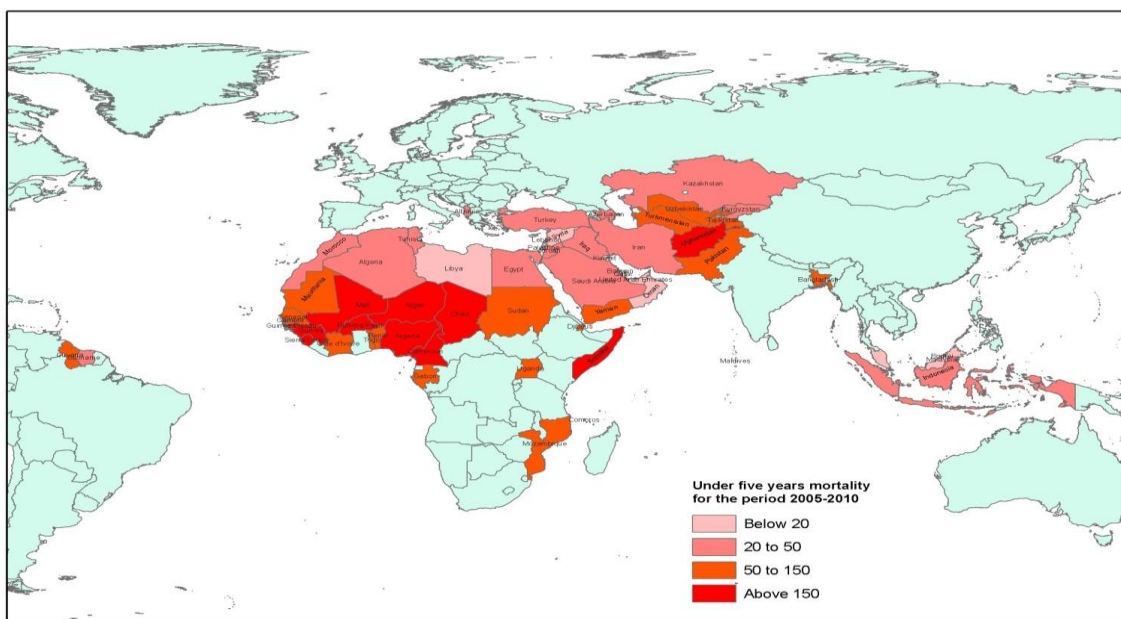
**Figure 13:** Ten OIC member countries with the highest and lowest infant mortality in 2010



Source: World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision

Despite the considerable reduction in child mortality ratio over the last three decades, more than 9.6 million children worldwide still die every year before they reach 5 years old (UN 2009). As shown in the map (Figure 14), this level continues to be high in the less developed regions of the OIC, especially in the African member countries. The gap between the regions of OIC is still high. In 2005–2010 most of the OIC member countries having under-five mortality above 150 deaths per 1,000 live births were in the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

**Figure 14:** Under-five mortality in OIC member countries, 2005-2010



Source: World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision

#### 4. Education

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education an individual has completed; Aggregated at societal level, statistics on educational attainment can give an indication of the stock of human capital – the knowledge and the skills available in a population. A higher level of educational attainment indicates the availability of relatively qualified labour force. So, gender differences in educational attainment are one of the determinants of gender-based differences in labour market participation and outcomes. An increase in the proportion of highly educated women will likely lead to greater opportunities for more diverse and higher paying employment for women (Lopez-Carlos and Zahidi, 2005). The Beijing Platform for Action have been highlighted that education is one of the most important means of empowering women for reducing all kind of inequalities experienced by them. Furthermore, eliminating gender disparities in education is emphasized as the essential point for the achievement of the MDGs targets.

Despite the global efforts to improve the educational attainment of individuals and eliminating gender differences as set forth in the MDG targets, a notable progress has not been achieved since 2000 and there still exist a significant number of illiterate people globally. According to the latest available UNESCO data for 2005- 2010 (see Table 6), the estimated total of illiterate adults was 759 million of which 60 percent are women. The number of adult illiterates in OIC member countries constituted 29.8 percent of the world total (approximately 266 million people); corresponding to approximately 17 percent of the total OIC population. Yet, the figures covering the period 2000 and 2010 show a declining trend in the total number of illiterate youth.

**Table 6:** Number of illiterate people by country groups (Thousand)

	Adult (above age 15)				Youth (between age 15-24)			
	Total		% of women		Total		% of women	
	2000-2005	2005-2010	2000-2005	2005-2010	2000-2005	2005-2010	2000-2005	2005-2010
<b>OIC</b>	264 743	266 078	59.74	60.07	53 248	48 319	65.68	59.52
<b>Non-OIC Developing</b>	500 285	489 280	64.86	64.38	72 387	70 146	68.54	61.63
<b>Developed</b>	4275	3920	44.23	40.89	57	39	50.88	41.03
<b>World</b>	769 304	759 278	62.99	62.75	125 693	118 504	67.32	60.75

Figures calculated from individual country data available in the UNESCO, UIS online database

Basic indicators on educational attainment for the years from 2000 to 2010 are presented in Table 7 to give an idea of the general level of educational attainment as well as participation in different levels of education by country groups. It can be clearly seen that the OIC country group averages on literacy rates are lagged behind the rest of the world averages. On the other hand significant improvement was recorded in the youth literacy rates in favour of females. According to 2010 data, the average female and male adult literacy rates for the OIC countries were estimated as 65.9 and 80.6 percent respectively. Consequently, youth literacy rates for females and males were 80.5 percent and 87.1 percent respectively which indicates that even though the situation has improved for young people the gender literacy gap for adults is still considerably high. In other words, on contrary

to the wider gender disparities amongst adults, the trend is for the male - female literacy gap to become narrower among the youths across the OIC.

**Table 7:** Basic indicators on educational attainment 2000 vs. 2010

		Literacy Rates <sup>8</sup>				Gross Enrolment Ratios (%) <sup>9</sup>					
		Youth		Adult		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
		2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
OIC	Male	81.91	87.15	74.16	80.63	94.06	102.99	45.34	59.37	14.90	20.60
	Female	75.18	80.50	58.39	65.95	84.62	93.86	39.51	56.11	9.30	18.02
	<b>Gender gap</b>	<b>6.72</b>	<b>6.64</b>	<b>15.77</b>	<b>14.68</b>	<b>9.44</b>	<b>9.13</b>	<b>5.82</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>2.58</b>
Developed	Male	na	99.59	na	99.23	102.98	103.70	100.25	102.90	51.92	64.72
	Female	na	99.63	na	98.93	102.13	102.96	101.42	102.57	58.95	79.61
	<b>Gender gap</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>-1.17</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>-7.03</b>	<b>-14.89</b>
World	Male	90.42	92.63	86.95	88.63	103.05	107.24	62.58	71.44	20.21	32.26
	Female	83.92	87.12	76.99	79.72	95.32	104.55	57.41	96.23	14.54	27.77
	<b>Gender gap</b>	<b>6.49</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>9.96</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>7.73</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>5.17</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>5.67</b>	<b>4.49</b>

Figures calculated from individual country data available in the UNESCO, UIS online database

The average gender-disaggregated gross enrolment ratio (GER) figures indicate that males and females were not represented in equal numbers at secondary and tertiary education levels, except in the developed country group (Table 7). From these figures it can be inferred that the general level of educational attainment and female participation is strongly associated with socio-economic conditions of a country. In terms of participation in secondary and tertiary education, the averages of the OIC countries lagged behind the average of the world and far more behind the average of the developed countries. The global gender gap considerably improved in primary education dropping from 7.73 in 2000 to 2.72 by 2010. However, this was not the case for the OIC countries where the gender gap was still about 9 percent points in 2010, but they showed significant improvement in terms of female participation both in secondary and tertiary education. From 2000 to 2010 the gender gap dropped from 5.82 to 3.6 percent points in secondary education and 5.60 percent to 2.58 percent points in tertiary education. Although the gender gap of the OIC countries as a group was better than the world, there is still room for improvement of participation in secondary and tertiary education to attain a similar level to the world averages.

At the individual country level GER figures show remarkable differences among the OIC member countries. Particularly, most of the OIC Sub-Saharan African countries were at the bottom of the list with a significant difference between the participation in each level of education. Again there is a regional diversification among the countries having the highest female GER as shown Figure 15.

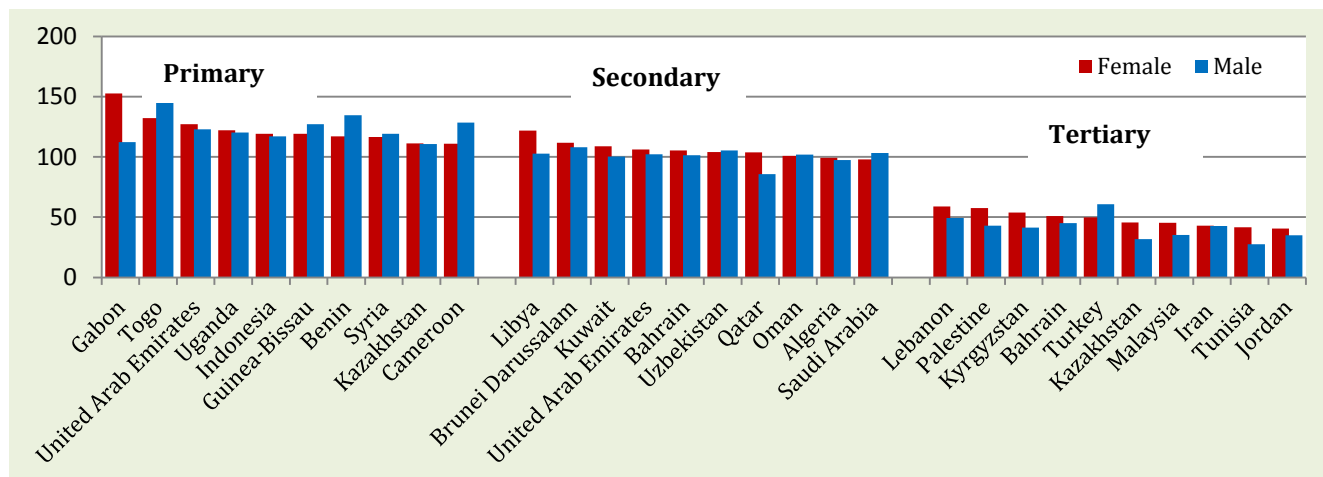
<sup>8</sup> *Literacy rate* is total number of literate persons in a given age group, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. The adult literacy rate measures literacy among persons aged 15 years and above, and the youth literacy rate measures literacy among persons aged 15 to 24 years.

<sup>9</sup> *Gross Enrolment Ratio* is the number of pupils or students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the 5-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age.



It can also be seen that the GER figures were declining across all three education levels. Furthermore, except in Turkey and Iran, the gender gap in tertiary education shifted in favour of females.

**Figure 15:** Top 10 OIC Countries in terms of female GER by education levels, 2010

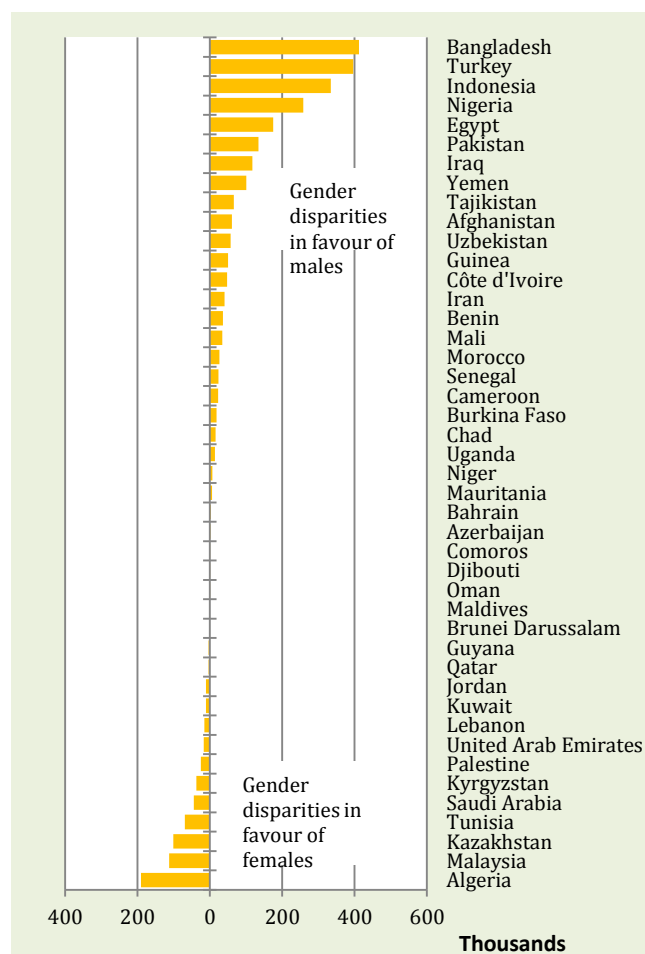


Source: UNESCO, UIS online database

The global trends show that the former dominance of men in tertiary education has been reversed and the gender disparity has shifted in favour of women. As seen in Table 7 unlike other country groups, gender disparity in tertiary education enrolment in the Developed country group was in favour of females and the gap between females and males became much wider in 2010. In relation to tertiary education when the available 2010 data for the forty-four OIC member countries is examined (Figure 16) it can be seen that there were fifteen OIC member countries, which had gender disparities in participation in tertiary education in favour of females. Among them Algeria had the highest disparity with 190 021 more females than males which accounted around 16.6 percent of the total number of students enrolled. On the other hand, thirty of the OIC member countries had gender disparity in favour of males of which Bangladesh had the highest disparity with 412 151 more males than females which accounted 26 percent of the total number of students enrolled.

Apart from Bahrain, Turkey and Iran the remaining seven of the top ten countries with the highest tertiary GER were also among the fifteen countries having gender disparity in enrolment in favour of females.

**Figure 16:** Gender disparities in tertiary enrolment in OIC countries, 2010



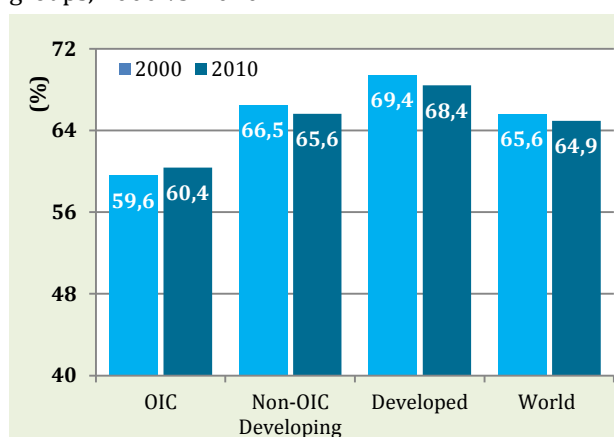
Source: UNESCO, UIS online database

## 5. Employment

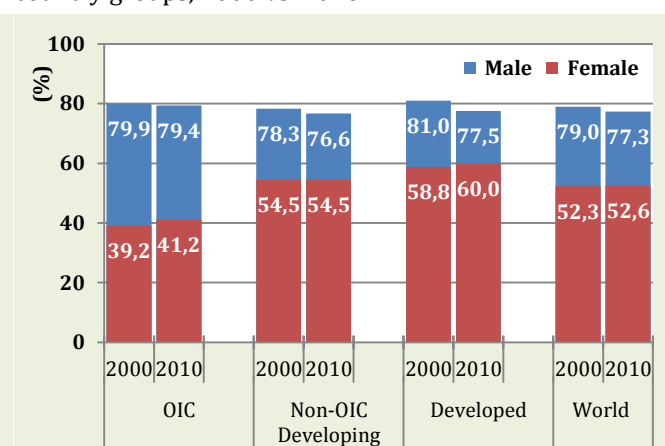
In order to take control of their lives people need to achieve a certain level of financial independence. Due to the social and traditional norms, the types of work that women and men do are different and women are often disadvantaged in accessing employment opportunities. The Beijing Declaration affirms nations’ commitment “to the inalienable rights of women and girls and their empowerment and equal participation in all spheres of life, including in the economic domain” (UN, 1995). The Beijing Platform action identifies women’s role in the economy as a critical area of concern, and calls attention to the need “to promote and facilitate women’s equal access to employment and resources as well as the harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also target achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, as part of MDG1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”(UN World Women Report, 2010).

This section highlights the current circumstances of gender differences in employment through analyzing the trend in the economically active population and labour force participation rates. The labour force participation rate<sup>10</sup> is an important indicators used to assess the labour market behavior of different categories of the population while formulating employment policies. In 2010 the labour force participation rate of the OIC member countries as a group was estimated as 60.4 percent, the lowest figure among other country groups (Figure 17). Although, globally, the labour force participation rates showed a declining trend the OIC member country group displayed a 0.8 percent point increase during the 2000- 2010 period. On the other hand Figure 18 shows the male-female distinction of the labour force participation rates. It is clear that there was a slight improvement in favour of females and declining trend for males since 2000. Despite the fact that OIC member countries had the highest increase with 2 percent points in favour of females between 2000 -2010, their female labour force participation rate was still the lowest among the country groups

**Figure 17:** Labour force participation rate by country groups, 2000 vs. 2010



**Figure 18:** Labour force participation rate by sex and country groups, 2000 vs. 2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO FaoStat and UN World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online databases

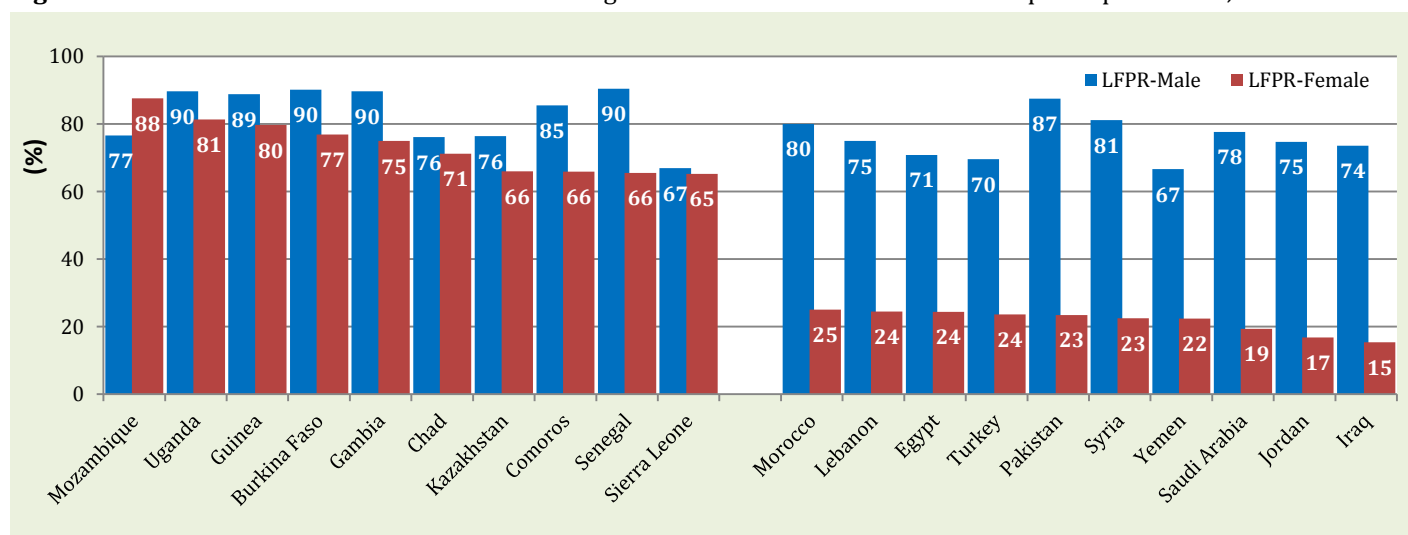
<sup>10</sup>The labour force participation rate measures the portion of the working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working (employed workers) or looking for work (unemployed workers). It is an indicator of the size of the available labour supply as well as, by breaking it down by gender and age groups, the profile of the economically active population. The rate is given by the following formula:  
 [ Labour force participation rate = Labour force ÷ working-age population × 100 ]

with 41.2 percent in 2010. Furthermore the OIC member countries as a group had the highest gender gap in terms of labour force participation rate which was estimated as 38.2 percent points in 2010. Despite the worldwide efforts to eliminate gender differences in accessing employment opportunities, the global female labour force participation rate was still around 50 percent, with the developed country group having the highest rate of 60 percent and the OIC country group had the lowest rate of 41.2 percent in 2010.

Figure 19 shows the OIC member countries with the highest and lowest labour force participation rates for women. The figure also reveals the great difference between the OIC member countries in terms of male-female labour force participation. Among the OIC member countries Mozambique had the highest figure with 88 percent, and at the same time it was the only country that had the gender gap in favour of females. In addition Mauritania, Uganda, Burkina Faso and Guinea also had female labour force participation rates higher than 80 percent. The 10 countries with the highest figures also had the lower gender gap of these Sierra Leone and Guinea had a gender gap less than 5 percent points.

In terms of the lowest female participation in the labour force as shown in Figure 19 Iraq had the lowest figure with 15 percent closely followed by Jordan and Saudi Arabia with less than 20 percent female labour force participation rates. Furthermore, those countries that had the lowest female participation rates also had a higher gender gap in disadvantageous of females. Among them Pakistan had the highest gap with 64 percent points, followed by six countries which had a gender gap higher than 50 percent points including Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Lebanon.

**Figure 19:** The 10 OIC member countries with the highest and lowest female labour force participation rate, 2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO FaoStat and UN World Population Prospects, The 2010 Revision online databases

Table 8 presents the economically active population (also referred to as labour force) in male and female distinction by country groups for the years 2000 and 2010 respectively. According to the available data the global labour force was around 3.3 billion in 2010 of which 39.9 percent were female. From Table 8, it can be seen that total economically active population in the OIC member countries increased significantly in parallel to the increase in their population, but the 34.5 percent increase in the female economically active population was remarkable and reached 211 million people

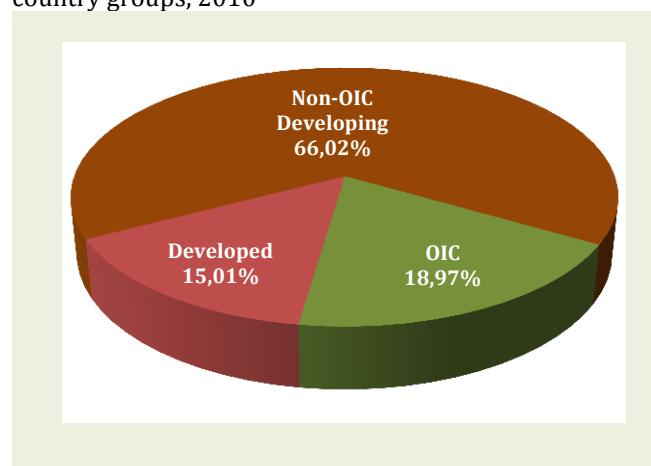
in 2010. With this increase the share of females in total economically active population was estimated as 33.9 percent for the OIC member countries. Yet, it was still the lowest share among country groups. Furthermore, according to the 2010 data the share of the OIC country group in the world total economically active population was 18.9 percent but this share dropped to 15.9 percent for the female economically active population (Figure 20 and 21).

**Table 8:** Economically active population by sex, (Million people)

	Economically active population <sup>11</sup>						Economically active population in agriculture <sup>12</sup>					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	2000	2010	Change (%)	2000	2010	Change (%)	2000	2010	Change (%)	2000	2010	Change (%)
<b>OIC</b>	322.4	411.1	27.52	156.9	211.0	34.49	126.4	133.0	5.20	86.7	101.6	17.22
<b>Non - OIC Developing</b>	1 105.4	1 268.0	14.72	763.7	896.8	17.44	578.4	608.9	5.28	427.1	451.1	5.61
<b>Developed</b>	256.8	271.2	5.60	119.1	220.9	10.96	11.1	7.81	-29.29	6.5	4.7	-28.04
<b>World</b>	1 684.6	1 950.3	15.78	1 119.7	1 328.8	18.68	715.9	749.8	4.73	520.3	557.4	7.13
<b>OIC as % of the world</b>	19,04	21,08	..	14.01	15.88	..	17,66	17,74	..	16,66	18,23	..

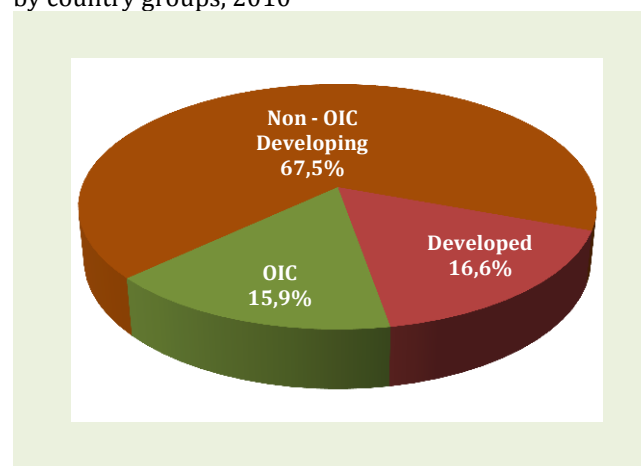
Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat Online database

**Figure 20:** Economically active population (EAP) by country groups, 2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat online database

**Figure 21:** Female economically active population (EAP) by country groups, 2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat online database

When the sectoral breakdown of the employment is considered, agriculture appears to be the most important economic sector in developing and OIC countries. Agriculture is important especially for developing countries in providing employment opportunities to a large portion of the labour

<sup>11</sup> Economically active population refers to the number of all employed and unemployed persons above age 15 (including those seeking work for the first time). It covers employers; self-employed workers; salaried employees; wage earners; unpaid workers assisting in a family, farm or business operation; members of producers' cooperatives; and members of the armed forces. The economically active population is also called the labour force.

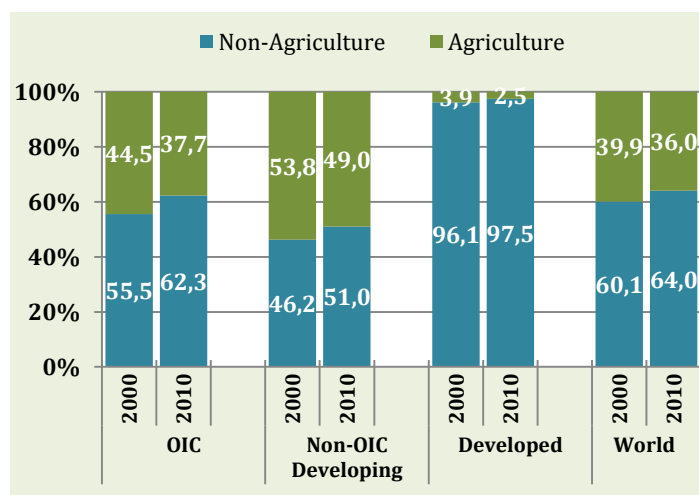
<sup>12</sup> Economically active population in agriculture (agricultural labour force) is that part of the economically active population engaged in or seeking work in agriculture, hunting, fishing or forestry.

force, particularly, to females in rural areas. According to FAO data during the last decade the proportion of the economically active population in agriculture has decreased globally. Contrary to the OIC and Non-OIC Developing country groups, the Developed country group recorded a significant decline in terms of employment in the agricultural sector (Table 8). For the OIC member country group, during the same period the females engaged in agricultural activities increased by 17.2 percent and reached to an average 43.3 percent of the total agricultural labour force in 2010.

Globally the share of agricultural employment is declining and the labour force has shifted to the non-agricultural sectors such as industry and services. In this regard, the shift in the OIC country group was the highest with the share of agriculture in total economically active population dropped from 44.5 to 37.7 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 22).

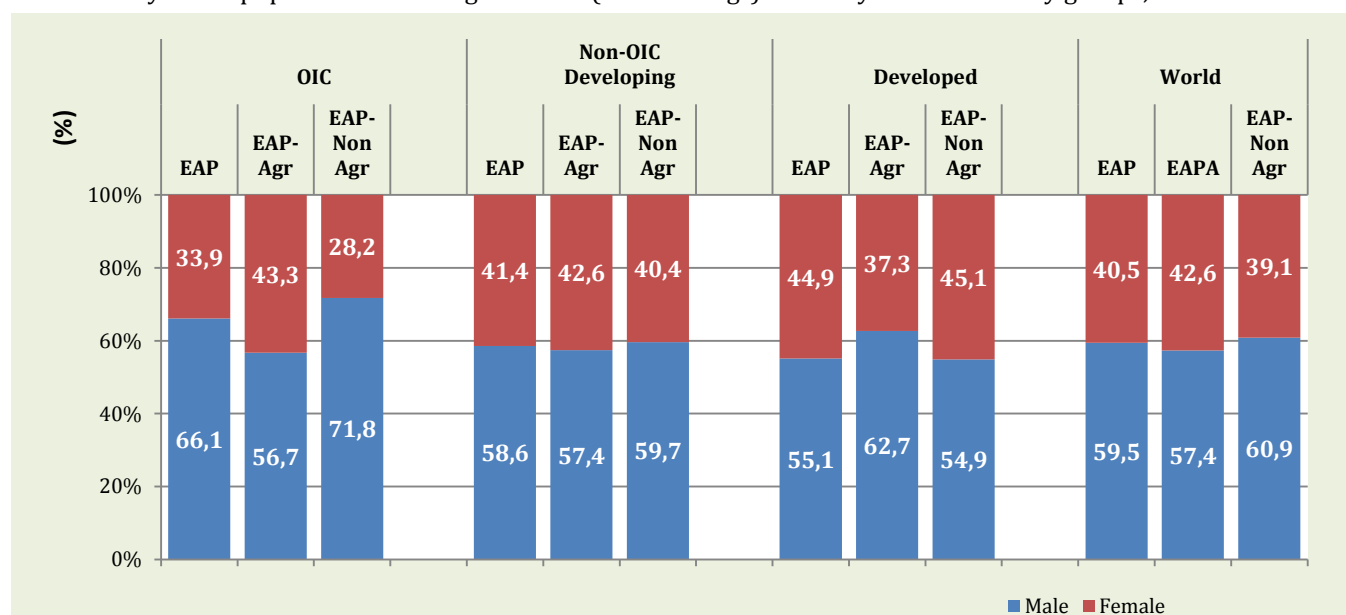
In connection with this trend Figure 23 illustrates the male-female distribution of the economically active population by sectors and again the OIC member countries as a group had the lowest share of female in non-agricultural sector as it was in total economically active population. The share of

**Figure 22:** Economically active population (EAP) by sectors, 2000 vs.2010



Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat online database

**Figure 23:** Economically active population (EAP), economically active population in agriculture (EAP-Agr) and economically active population in non-agricultural (EAP-Non Agr) sector by sex and country groups, 2010

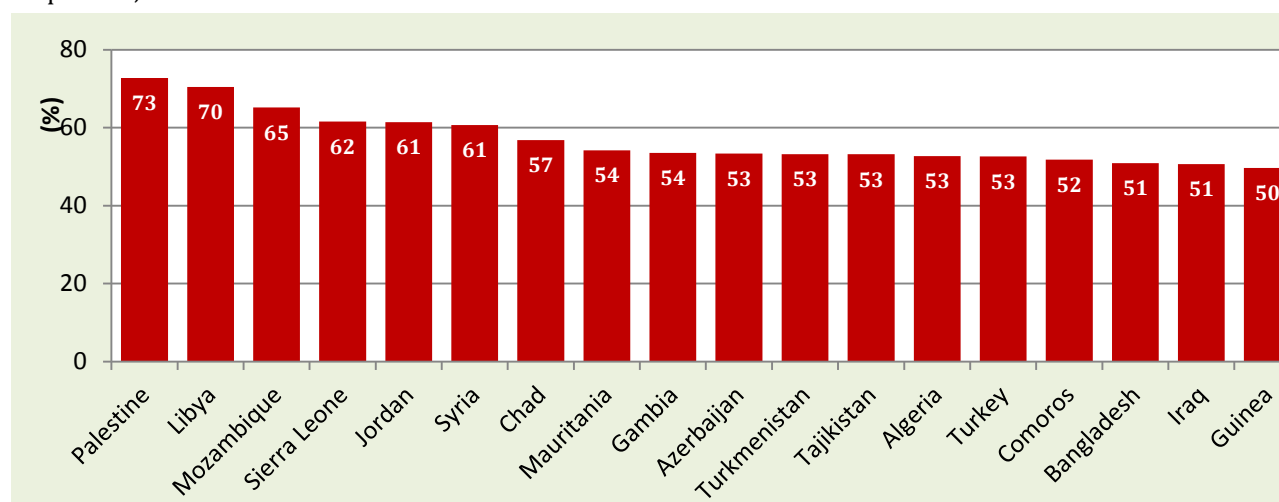


Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat online database

males and females were estimated as 71.2 and 28.2 percent, respectively. In terms of the share of female employment by sector in the OIC member country group had the lowest figure in the non-agricultural sector and the highest figure in agriculture compared to the rest of the world. In 2012 at the global level one third of women were employed in agriculture, nearly half in the services and a one sixth in industry and in most of the developing countries women moved out of agriculture into services sector particularly education and health (ILO 2012).

In 2010, as shown in Figure 23, there were seventeen OIC member countries with a share of above 50 percent of the female economically active population working in agriculture. Palestine had the highest share of females in the labour force at 73 percent followed by Libya (70 percent) and Mozambique (65 percent). Four of the countries with the lowest female labour force participation rates; (See Figure 19) Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Iraq were also in the list of the countries with the higher share of females in agricultural employment.

**Figure 23:** OIC member countries with the share of female economically active population in agriculture above 50 percent, 2010



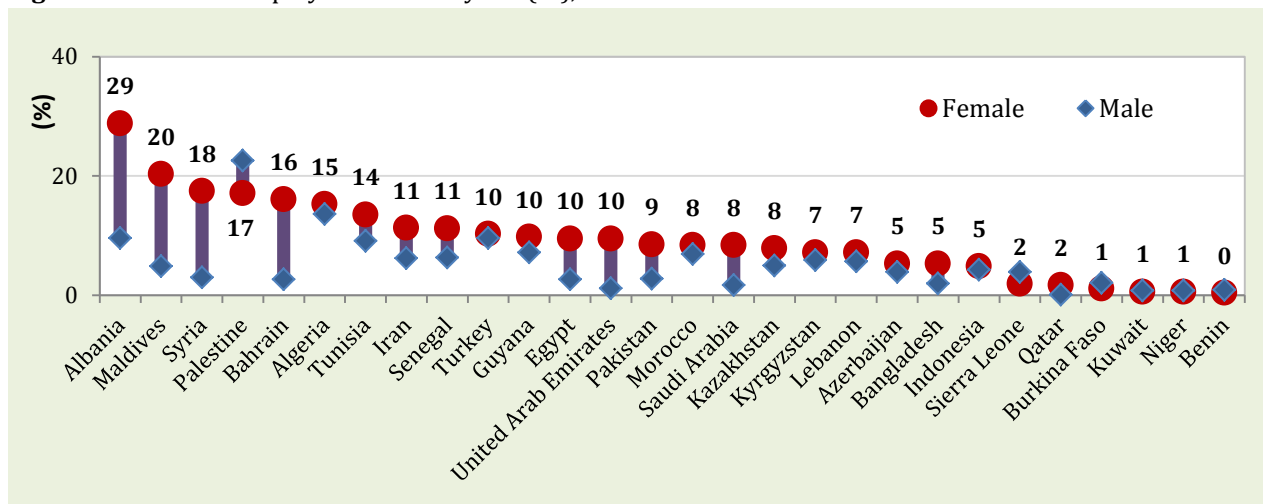
Figures calculated from individual country data available in the FAO, FaoStat online database

According to the ILO report “*Global Employment Trends for Women 2012*”, women have many disadvantages in the labour market including limited choices for employment across sectors (sectoral segregation) and quality of employment in comparison to men. In addition to the social and demographic factors such as family commitments all these disadvantages experienced by women have resulted in the higher unemployment rates for women. Additionally, current projections indicate that women’s paid employment opportunities are likely to remain limited; with female unemployment rates are projected to remain elevated in the short-term. Globally, the gender gap in unemployment had increased from 0.5 to 0.7 percent points by 2011 and, according to the ILO projections there will not be a significant improvement in favour of females regarding the unemployment gender gap within the short-period as well (ILO, 2012).

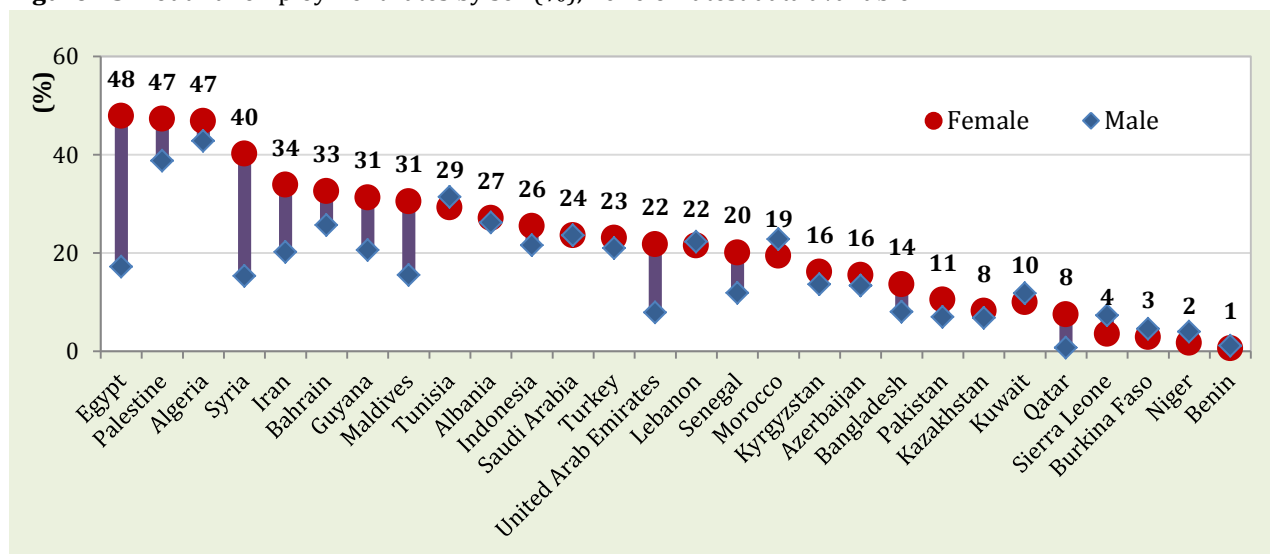
Notwithstanding the difficulty of measuring the unemployment rate<sup>13</sup> especially in the developing world, recently available unemployment rate data of the twenty eight of the OIC member countries were assessed (see Figure 24 and 25) to obtain an understanding of women’s access to the labour market opportunities across the OIC.

These figures show that the female youth unemployment figures were significantly higher than in the adult category. Moreover, in some countries the gender gap was significantly higher in favour of men and Palestine was the only country that had a 5 percent point gender gap in favour of female adults. In addition to Palestine, there were also gender gap in unemployment in favour of women adults in Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger and Kuwait. Although the global gender gap in unemployment was estimated at around 0,7 percent points, this figure ranged from 19 to 0,6 percent points among adults and 30 to 0.9 percent points among youths in the twenty eight OIC member countries, which are considerably higher than the global averages.

**Figure 24:** Adult unemployment rates by sex (%), 2010 or latest data available



**Figure 25:** Youth unemployment rates by sex (%), 2010 or latest data available



Source: International Labour Organisation, LABORSTA online database

<sup>13</sup> Unemployment rate refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment.

## 6. Conclusion

The major findings on the state of gender differences across the OIC member countries can be summarized as follows:

The OIC member countries group has the highest population growth rates compared to other country groups. This growth needs to be carefully analyzed with respect to the different subsets of the population. As a result of this high population growth rate, the OIC country group has the highest percentage of young population aged between 15-24 years.

Although the OIC country group has the highest average fertility rate, the decline in the fertility rate over the years is higher than the rest of the world and, there are some member countries below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman.

On the other hand the OIC country group has the lowest legal age for marriage and average age entering into marriage for women in the world.

While life expectancy is rising with a widening the gap in expected lifespan of men and women all over the world, the OIC averages for men and women as well as female-male lifespan differences are still below the rest of the world's averages, which implies that OIC women have much lower social status than the rest of the world and exposed to more health risks which shorten their expected lifespan.

Despite the efforts so far made to improve reproductive and child health, maternal mortality, infant mortality and under-five mortality rates, these are significantly higher in the OIC country group than the rest of the world, which also indicates lack of health infrastructure capacity across the OIC member countries.

One third of the world total adult illiterates are in the OIC member countries and higher gender gap exists among the illiterate adults, but the gender gap among youth illiterates is becoming narrower over the years.

Participation in secondary and tertiary education are improving with a narrowing gender gap across the OIC, but average GER figures lag behind the world and far more behind the developed country group averages.

The OIC member countries group has the lowest female labour force participation rate with a slightly increasing trend but while the global labour force participation rate remained steady during the last decade hence this was not the case for the OIC country group.

In terms of the share of female employment the OIC country group has the highest share in agriculture and lowest share in non-agricultural sector compared to the rest of the world.

There are significant regional differences and all the issues stated above cannot accurately reflect the detailed current circumstances of the individual member countries, therefore there is an urgent need to undertake country and regional level assessments in order to understand the regional dimension of the gender differences and provide background information for future policy development.



The currently available gender-disaggregated data is not sufficient to carry out an in-depth socio-economic analysis to understand the actual dimension of the gender differences in the OIC group, thus, the availability of and access to gender-disaggregated data need to be improved for OIC member countries.

Based on the preliminary findings of this report it can be concluded that the empowerment of women in order to ensure gender equality is an area of serious concern for the OIC member countries and this necessitates the development of an action plan defining the policy priorities and the means of implementation taking into account the social and cultural realities of these countries. Furthermore, as a follow-up of the achievements realised regular reporting focusing on the most problematic areas of concern regarding women and child health, education and employment with a wider gender perspective has to be established. In this context, improvement of relevant statistics and indicators as well as establishment of necessary infrastructure for data collection can be handled as priority issue by considering unavailability of basic data to be a basis for regular reporting.

The commitments made in the Beijing Declaration adopted in 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women on achieving gender equality and the empowering of women in all walks of life can also be accepted as a milestone to generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation. Resulting from the efforts relevant international organisations and many countries have developed their own strategies to improve the production and dissemination of statistics which reflect the realities of women and men through gender-disaggregated data collection. Yet, due to the complexity of the situation only using gender-disaggregated data collection is not sufficient to understand gender disparities in a multi-cultural environment. Therefore, more detailed ad-hoc research such as investigating violence against women and time use are recommended to go beyond the traditional aspects of relation between women and men in a society (UNSC, 2013).

In fact, the gender statistics field is a new area still under discussion. By considering the current circumstances of gender differences across the OIC member countries, development of strategies to improve the production and dissemination of statistics reflecting the realities of the lives of women and men can be considered as one of the priority issues within the context of statistical capacity development. Besides, it is generally accepted that gender issues are complex, multi-dimensional and politically controversial subjects, which necessitates the adoption of a wider perspective to the related concepts and definitions. Hence, execution of data collection at OIC level, may contribute to further methodological developments and the establishment of common operational definitions regarding gender statistics with reflecting cultural and traditional sensitivities of the OIC member countries.

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