The Arab States region has the lowest rate of women participation in the workforce at 27%.

For the Region as a whole, female labor force participation has increased slowly; by an average of only 0.17 percentage points annually over the last 3 decades.

Within MENA, the women's workforce participation varies widely from 5 percent in the Republic of Yemen to 48 percent in the United Arab Emirates.

Women unemployment is more than double the rate of Men's unemployment. Economic and social pressure drive women into vulnerable labour and the informal sector.

Women of the region mainly participate in the agriculture and civil services. The percentage of the women employed drops to 18% if the non-agriculture sector is included.

Not surprisingly, the lowest participation rates are in fragile or conflict-affected countries, including Iraq, the Palestine, and the Republic of Yemen, where concerns about women's safety and mobility clearly are more salient.

Similarly, only 5% of the women in the MENA region own or manage their own business, compared to the global average of 23-26%.

Very few women are found in upper management and executive positions in the region. Women of the region made up 23% of the executives in Morocco, 17% in the UAE, 16% in Egypt and 7% in Qatar.

The gender pay gap in the non-agricultural formal sector 11 per cent in Jordan, 14 per cent in Egypt and 28 per cent in Tunisia. The gap is larger in the private sector (17 per cent in Jordan, 35 per cent in Tunisia).