

***ENSURING EQUALITY  
FOR ALL: ONLY  
TOGETHER, WE CAN  
RECOVER***

***ON THE SIDELINES OF THE WORLD  
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY***

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December 10, 2021 marks the anniversary of the International Human Rights Day, in which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and this year's theme focuses on "Equality", as a necessary principle at the core of the realization of human rights. Human rights must be enjoyed by all people and is not restricted to anyone and cannot be limited to those we love or those who are like us in beliefs and opinions, it is guaranteed to all human beings around the world, and for all groups, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women, immigrants, indigenous people, and stateless people.

Equality is an inherent principle of international human rights law and guarantees it as a guarantee of the realization of other human rights. Most international instruments contain provisions to promote equality and non-discrimination among all. . Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that “all people are equal in dignity and rights.” Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights equalizes the enjoyment of all rights covered by the Covenant between men and women. Equality and non-discrimination were inseparable from the rule of law and the well-being of democracy, and ensuring equality was a guarantee that no one would fall behind in achieving the goals of sustainable development.

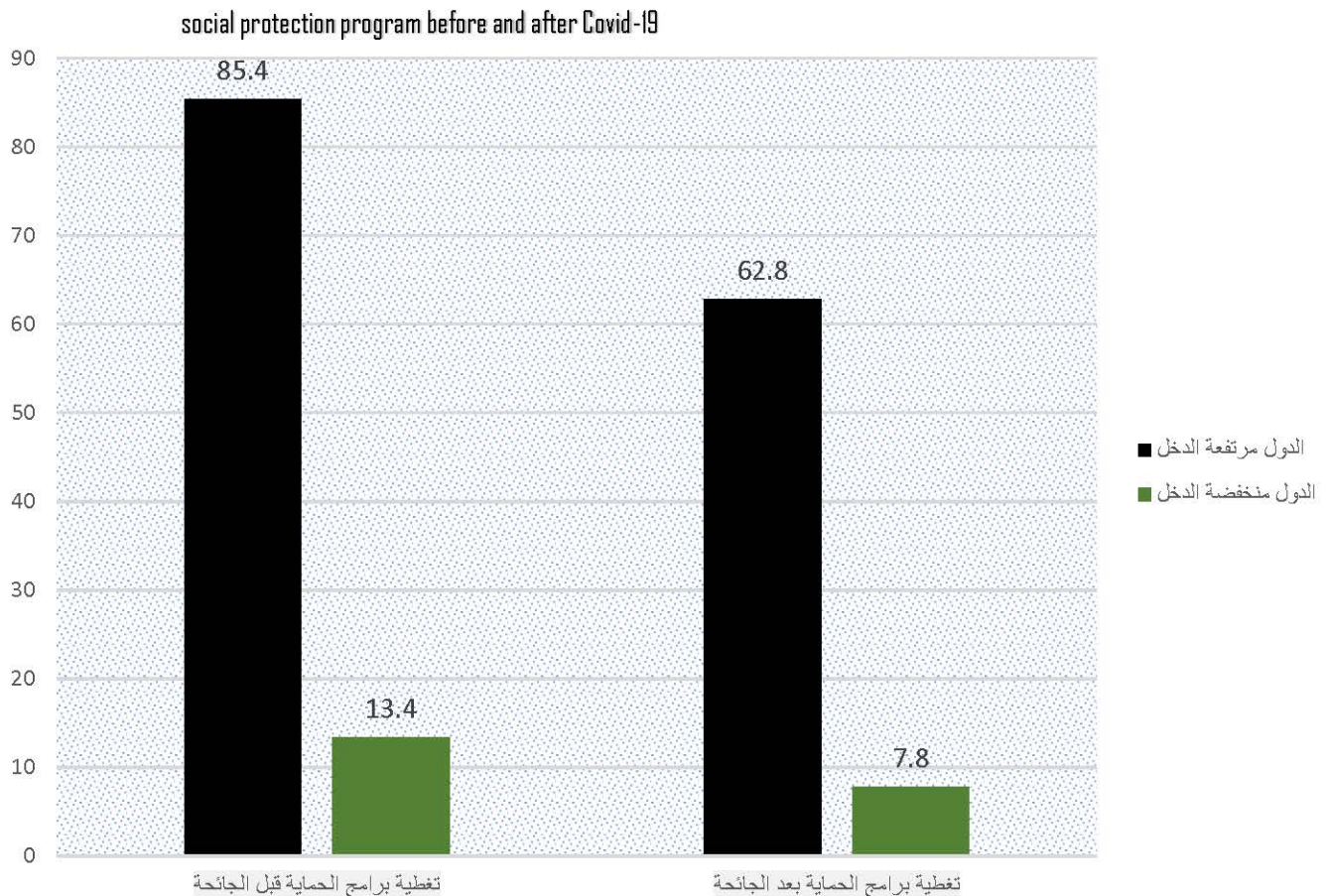
When addressing equality, the issue of gender equality comes at the top of the list of urgent issues, especially after the gap left by the Corona virus pandemic on gender equality, and when addressing this issue we do not mean only de jure equality, but we also mean informal equality or de facto or substantive equality, which is Which is achieved when the effect of the law on women is deceived in practice and the actual discrimination against women is removed. According to Article 4 (first paragraph) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the adoption by states of temporary special measures for equality between men and women does not constitute discrimination.

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights has chosen "Ensuring Equality For All: Only Together, We Can Recover" as the title of the report, considering that recovery efforts from the Coronavirus pandemic will be complemented only by the realization of equality and the fight against discrimination among all human beings. Maat for Peace has chosen to focus in this report on specific themes approved by the United Nations celebrates Human Rights Day for this year, such as the role of equality as a human rights principle in reducing poverty, equality at the level of political participation, as well as the importance of equality in peace-building and equitable distribution of vaccines. In this brief, we also attach importance to the equal right of men and women to nationality, equal pay for work and equal ownership of agricultural land by men and women in view of indigenous peoples.



## Equality as a reason for reducing extreme poverty

The spread of inequality and discrimination in developing countries creates multiple forms of poverty and destitution, and makes some groups in society fall into extreme poverty. On the contrary, achieving equality and combating discrimination reduces poverty rates in these countries and the world in general, and makes achieving the first goal One of the sustainable development goals to eradicate poverty is within reach, and this can be seen with a high degree of confidence during the Corona pandemic and in the recovery stage, the discrimination that was manifested in access to health care, and in the limited access to health facilities and in obtaining vaccines, in addition to the economic effects of the pandemic Some 100 million people in the world will be pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, according to the World Bank<sup>1</sup>. With the aforementioned number likely to rise to 150 million by 2022, as families lost their families and were unable to obtain the basic necessities of life, and women who lost their husbands faced the pandemic with insufficient measures and lost employment opportunities that they obtained before the pandemic<sup>2</sup>. These women lacked social protection in developing and low-income



<sup>1</sup> From Crisis to Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Recovery, The World Bank, Page 3, <https://bit.ly/32JYHPH>

<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 to Add as Many as 150 million Extreme Poor by 2021, The World Bank, 7 October 2020, <https://bit.ly/3EIQdgr>

countries, especially those working in the informal economy, and the epidemic had a disproportionate impact on the business activities run by women, which are informal small or micro enterprises.<sup>3</sup>

Policies to address the epidemic adopted by Governments have left vulnerable groups of facing their inevitable fate and the countries, including the developed ones, only succeeded in providing cash benefits to only about 46.9% of the world's population, or 53.1%, did not receive such benefits during the pandemic, close to 4 billion, the largest number of such persons in less developed and low-income countries, where social protection programs covered only 7.8 per cent of the population. In low-income countries, compared to about 13.4 before the pandemic, even in high-income countries social protection programs covered over 85.4% of the population before the corona virus, but at the end of 2020 this proportion fell to 62.8% of the population in high-income countries.

Inequality and exclusion in these countries have left a range of groups such as women, persons with disabilities, migrants and internally displaced persons unable to recover<sup>4</sup>. In addition to the above, income inequality is the main factor that makes vulnerable groups, especially in low-income countries, bear the brunt of vicious cycles of poverty. Families with high incomes, according to the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, often face external and internal shocks, including Epidemics and disasters with their bank balances and successive revenues, and the impact of those shocks on them is very limited.<sup>5</sup>

The pandemic has demonstrated more than ever the urgent need to endorse social protection and disaster preparedness programs, at the core of which is the realization of the principles of equality, and the rejection of exclusion and discrimination in order to achieve the full recovery of the lowest-income individuals and achieves the sustainable development goals, especially the first goal on poverty eradication.

### **Women's political participation: Equality not yet achieved**

According to the Gender Gap Index Report 2021, the gender gap in political participation continues to represent the largest gap between the four indicators measured by the World Economic Forum Index, which argued that gender parity at the political level could take more than 145 years to achieve.<sup>6</sup> Women held 26.1% of some 35,500 parliamentary seats in 156 countries. In addition, 22.6% of more than 3,400 ministers in 81 countries were appointed as ministers. This section of the report focuses on the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://bit.ly/3xTQILs> بعد انتهاء الجائحة، لنجعل الأولوية للنساء، مدونات البنك الدولي، 18 فبراير 2021، على الرابط التالي:

<sup>4</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, United Nation, Page 27, <https://bit.ly/32Ebljd>

<sup>5</sup> The persistence of poverty: how real equality can break the vicious cycles, Para 6, Page 4, <https://undocs.org/en/A/76/177>

<sup>6</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2021, World Economic forum, page 5, <https://bit.ly/3D7ENLa>



representation of women in the Middle East region, particularly in countries with more recent data, since the region has the lowest representation of women in political participation, particularly at the parliamentary level.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the progress made by women in political participation, especially at the level of representation in parliament, gender equality in this context is still far from being achieved. In Iran, women were represented by a limited number of 16 women, which represents 5.7% of parliament members.<sup>8</sup> In Turkey, women account for 17%, or about 104 of the total members of the Turkish parliament<sup>9</sup>. In Egypt, women won 162 seats in the House of Representatives elected at the end of 2020, including 28 members with the appointment system.<sup>10</sup>

In Syria, the parliament consists of 250 members, and the proportion of women is 12.8%, with more than 28 members. In Lebanon, the percentage of women's representation is lowest and is the lowest among the countries included in this section of the report, as women in Lebanon won seats in the Lebanese parliament, which is 3%, which is a very limited percentage. Women's rights defenders in Lebanon attributed this limited representation to the refusal to the "quota or shares" system and the sectarian representation system, which in many cases excludes women from the forefront of the lists running for parliamentary elections, and makes them at the bottom of these lists<sup>11</sup>. In the Emirates, the number of women parliamentarians increased from 22% to 50%, and women were represented in parliament in Israel only in 30 members. In Saudi Arabia, women were appointed to the Shura Council, the supreme legislative body, and they also won 30 seats. In Jordan, women occupied seven seats out of the total seats in parliament, and in Iraq, according to the Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers, 97 women won in the last elections, an estimated increase of 14 seats over the quota system for women, but despite the progress made by a number of countries in the Middle East in Context of women's representation in parliament, but gender equality has not yet been achieved, with the exception of the United Arab Emirates<sup>12</sup>, which represents women in its Federal Council by about 50%. There is no gender equality in representation in the parliaments of countries, and women constitute only 18.3 of parliament members in the Middle East and in five Countries in the Middle East women represent 6% or less of parliamentarians.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Page 5, <https://bit.ly/3xJxGYf>

<sup>8</sup> Iran denies women participation and decision-making in public life, NCRI Women Committee, 26 April 2021, <https://bit.ly/3d9AOTH>

<sup>9</sup> Turkish parliament sees highest number of female MPs, Dilly News, 4 December 2020, <https://bit.ly/3xJaARk>

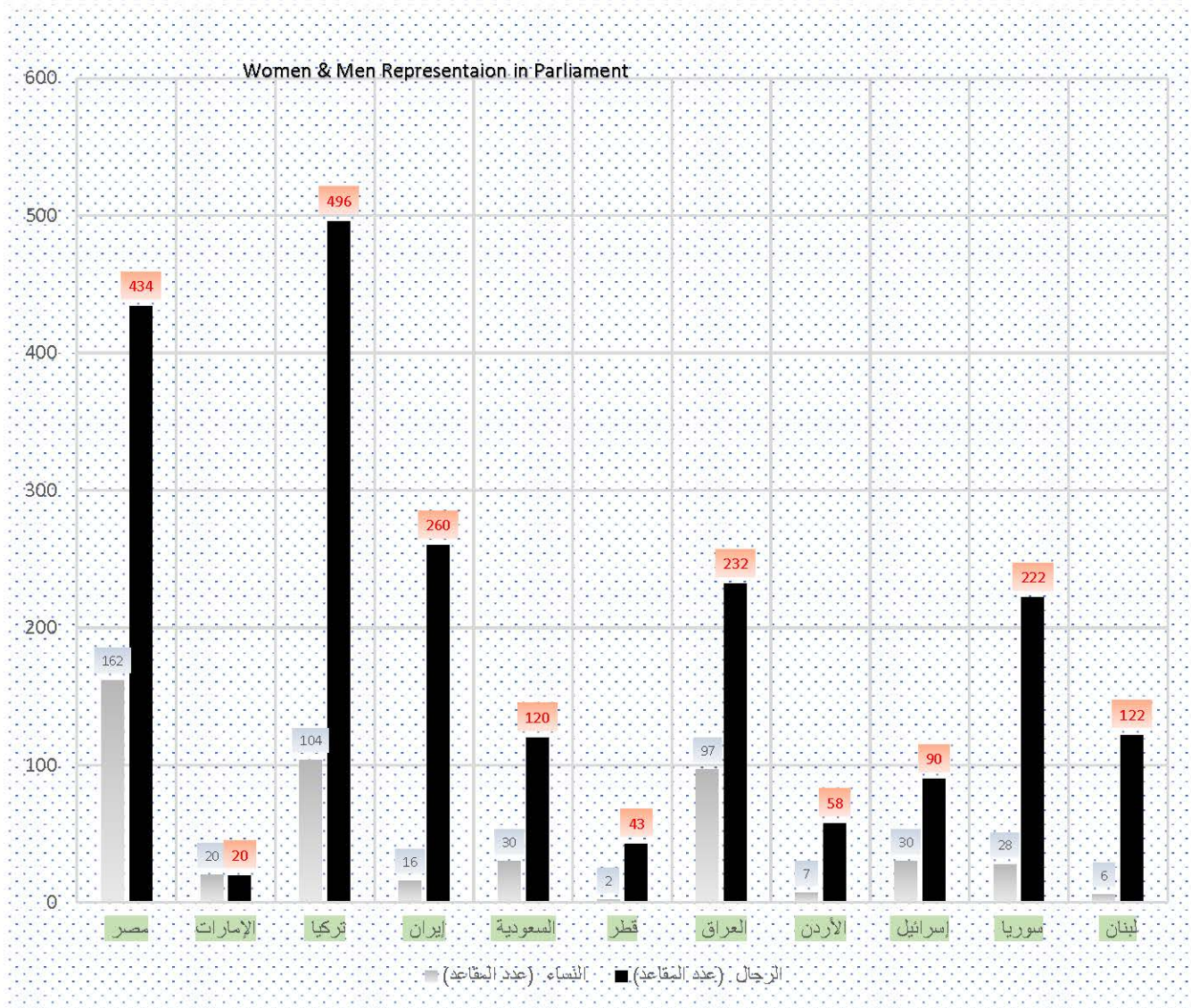
<sup>10</sup> عصر ذهبي للمرأة، العين الإخبارية، 8 يناير 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3rCtf0n>

<sup>11</sup> Women's Participation and Representation in Lebanese Politics: Electoral Performance, Challenges, and the Road Ahead, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Page 20, <https://bit.ly/3o7f0hP>

<sup>12</sup> العراق.. فوز 97 امرأة بالانتخابات وتهنئة من "ادارة التمكين" بـ"الانتصار" الحرة، 12 أكتوبر 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3dmY0Oz>

## Equality in the granting citizenship

About 25 countries in the world continue to deny women equal rights regarding granting citizenship to their children, the majority of which are in the Middle East and North Africa region. In addition, there are over 50 other States that place discriminatory restrictions in their nationality laws that limit access to citizenship for children of women married to foreigners.<sup>13</sup> These restrictions are contrary to the principles and provisions of the Human Rights Act. Article 9 of the second paragraph of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women states that "States shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children."<sup>14</sup> In accordance with paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all



<sup>13</sup> ورقة معلومات حول المساواة بين الجنسين وقوانين الجنسية وانعدام الجنسية، المفوضية السامية لشؤون اللاجئين على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/3d95OTT>

<sup>14</sup> اتفاقية القضاء على جميع اشكال التمييز ضد المرأة، المادة 9 فقرة 2، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3pkaA6x>



States in the Middle East and North Africa region, a child has the right to acquire nationality immediately after birth.<sup>15</sup>

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the inequality between men and women in the right to grant their children citizenship is a cause of statelessness, and this phenomenon is evident in the Arab Gulf States, which are among the areas where women's nationality laws deny equal rights to men to grant citizenship to their children<sup>16</sup>. In Qatar, for example, under the Nationality Act No. 23 of 2005, Qatari women married to foreigners are unable to grant citizenship to their children with the same right as men.<sup>17</sup>

In Kuwait, a woman married to an unidentified father in accordance with Emiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 regarding Kuwaiti citizenship can grant citizenship to her children only upon reaching the legal age, and citizenship is granted according to a decree based on a discretionary recommendation from the Minister of Interior. It was reported that achieving these steps in practice is out of reach.<sup>18</sup> It only happened to a very limited extent, and restrictions are imposed on the Bidoon that prevent them from obtaining birth certificates, and children are born stateless, so they only get what is known as a birth notification. Accordingly, these children are deprived of all services such as education and health. For example, the Ministry of Education in the State of Kuwait refuses to accept the birth report as a reliable document for registration in public schools in Kuwait.<sup>19</sup>

The Horn of Africa is also experiencing a range of discriminatory restrictions in nationality laws and denying women equality with men in granting citizenship to their children in many States. In Somalia, for example, the Citizenship Act does not enable Somali women married to foreigners to grant citizenship to their children in contrast to the right granted to fathers. Ensuring equality between men and women in the granting of citizenship to their children is a necessity and not a welfare that can advance human rights in States that are embarking on the adoption of policies and legislation guaranteeing such equality. In this case, equality and non-discrimination are a safeguard against the dangers of statelessness for entire generations of children and guarantee them access to health care and other social services such as education, social security and easy access to health facilities<sup>20</sup>. Accession to the United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Nationality

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<sup>15</sup> كتيب حول حماية الأشخاص عديمي الجنسية، وفقا لاتفاقية عام 1954 بشأن وضع الأشخاص عديمي الجنسية، ص 74، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/31oqGV4>

<sup>16</sup> مصدر سبق ذكره، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3d95OTT>

<sup>17</sup> قانون رقم (38) لسنة 2005 بشأن الجنسية القطرية، الميزان، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3pk4TWs>

<sup>18</sup> مصدر سبق ذكره، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3d95OTT>

<sup>19</sup> تقرير منظمة الخط الإنساني الموازي لتقرير دولة الكويت الدوري الثاني المقدم إلى لجنة العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/2TKhFBQ>

<sup>20</sup> <https://bit.ly/3d95OTT> مصدر سبق ذكره، على الرابط التالي:

and adherence to the provisions and principles of the Convention without reservations may also expedite the treatment of a range of statelessness in multiple States.

### **Equality as a tool for peacebuilding**

According to the report of the United Nations and the World Bank entitled "Paths to Peace," the collective injustices caused by inequality and increasing discrimination and exclusion among individuals in a single society are inseparable from the outbreak of armed conflicts and violent conflicts and the conflict between groups<sup>21</sup>, as well as from the achievement of equality, which cannot be ignored in terms of post-conflict peace. In many cases, the intensification of armed conflicts was due to the imbalance in wealth-sharing, particularly in the federal States, for example in Indonesia, the gap in the distribution of oil and gas revenues was one of the engines of the conflict between the Islamic Aceh Movement and the Government. According to the Panel of Experts on the Mediation of Disputes over Natural Resources, the sharing of wealth in oil and natural gas was among the first items discussed in their peace negotiations.<sup>22</sup>

Also, one of the fundamental differences between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan region in Iraq was over the sharing of oil and natural gas revenues. Although Article 112 of the Iraqi constitution granted the federal government the management of oil and natural gas extracted from the fields in cooperation with the governments of the producing regions and governorates, a dispute arose after the decades. Which was concluded by the Kurdistan Regional Government with foreign companies, and was the cause of causing a state of instability and a call for the government in Kurdistan to secede from Iraq, which was not achieved<sup>23</sup>. Not only does the outbreak of armed conflict depend on the wealth-sharing gap, but it has been reported that high levels of gender inequality and gender-based violence can be powerful causes of civil war and armed conflict.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, ensuring equality, non-discrimination and exclusion of opposition groups, minorities and the most disadvantaged groups such as indigenous peoples and some other groups such as youth and women. The involvement of civil society organizations in policies related to human rights, development, and peacebuilding in post-conflict phases may drive greater stability in low-income and less-developed countries.

### **Gender equality for work of equal value**

Despite decades of demands for equality between men and women in the workplace, including equal pay for work of equal value, inequality persists with respect

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<sup>21</sup> Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict is a joint United Nations–World Bank Group, Page 109, <https://bit.ly/3rnYQTr>

<sup>22</sup> النزاعات على الموارد الطبيعية: دليل ارشادي لعملية الوساطة، الأمم المتحدة، ص 56، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3G4PM9V>

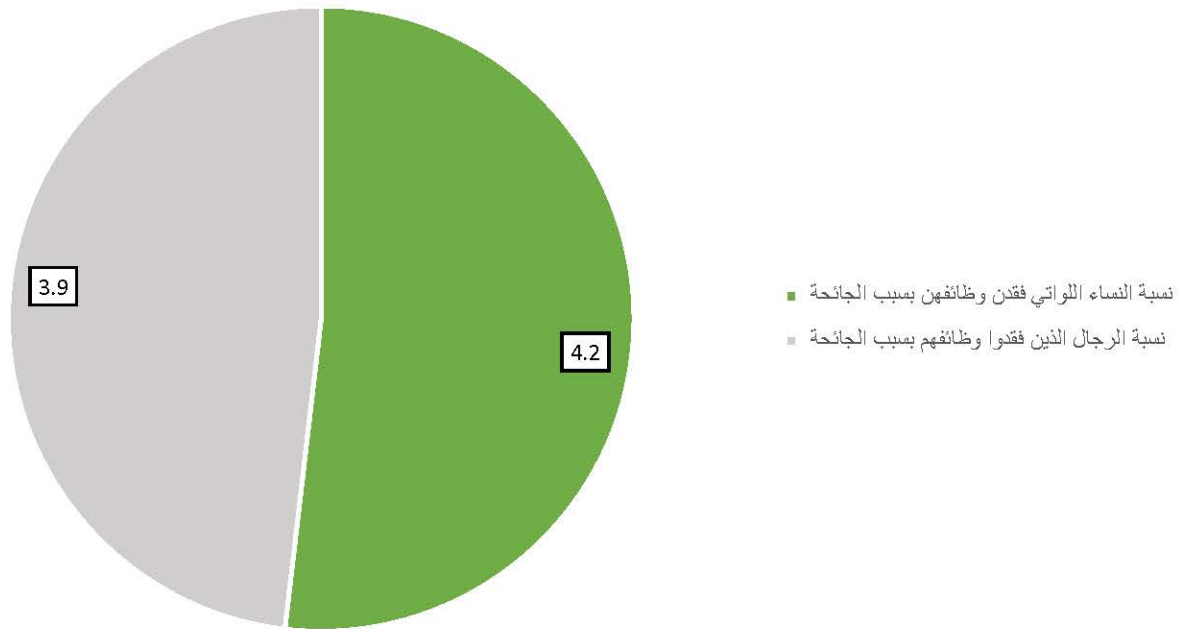
<sup>23</sup> تقاسم الثروات في الدول الفيدرالية: منازعات وحلول دراسة مقارنة، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3G6QzXU>

<sup>24</sup> Human Rights Day 2021, <https://bit.ly/3EegOLL>



to lower pay for work of equal value, contrary to article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and ILO Convention No. 100 on the Right to Equal Pay for Work, the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report shows that discrimination in the workplace may take 267 years. These years have been exacerbated by the crisis of the Corona pandemic. 4.2% of women lost their jobs because of the pandemic, which is the highest proportion of men, 3.9% of whom lost their jobs in various countries.<sup>25</sup>

Percentage of women who lost their jobs due to covid-19 compared to men



Women's low levels of participation in the workforce reduce their economic empowerment. In Saudi Arabia, for example, despite the high rates of women's participation in the labor market, women continue to experience wage discrimination based on work of equal value. In the central and western regions of Saudi Arabia, women in the Saudi private sector earn half of what men earn for work of equal value, if men earn about \$2262, while women earn \$1359 for work of equal value of approximately 48%.<sup>26</sup> In the United States, American women receive 70 cents (100 cents = \$1) for every dollar that men earn and consequently turn to the informal sector or part-time work.<sup>27</sup> In Egypt,

<sup>25</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2021, World Economic forum, <https://bit.ly/3D7ENLa>

<sup>26</sup> <https://bit.ly/3Eh0R7g> عربية، 2 أغسطس 2021، على الرابط التالي: independent فجوة كبيرة بين أجور الجنسين في القطاع الخاص السعودي،

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3D7ENLa>

according to data from the Central Bureau of Mobilization and Statistics on weekly wages in the public, business and private sectors, women earn an average income of 1220 pounds per week for 53 hours of work, while 23 pounds per hour for approximately 1.5 dollars, while men earn an average income of 1295 pounds for 52 hours of work, which means 24.9 pounds per hour of work, equivalent to approximately 1.6 dollars.

Unequal pay for work of equal value also manifests itself between migrant workers, especially migrant workers, and domestic workers. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the wages of migrant workers are 12.6% lower than those of local workers in high-income States and 17.3% are higher than those in low-income States. Discrimination and penalties for wages of migrant workers, including domestic workers and women working in the informal economy, an enormous disparity and income gap exacerbate multiple aspects of inequality and are devoted to discrimination based on nationality contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the core conventions of the International Labor Organization.<sup>28</sup>

### **Equitable distribution of vaccines**

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, equality and non-discrimination, two basic principles in human rights law, had not yet been tested, and the pandemic came to confirm that we need to work more effectively to implement them, as this epidemic has devoted different patterns of inequality and discrimination and exacerbated the suffering of the poorest groups and the marginalization of developing and least developed countries. And even in developed countries, the exposure of indigenous people and immigrants to disproportionate rates compared to the rest of the population in terms of infection with the virus or deaths resulting from it, in the United States, for example, the exposure of people of African descent to higher cases of infection and deaths compared to the rest of the population, and indigenous peoples suffered In various countries of the world, the same high rates are due to the poor health services provided to them even before the pandemic and their limited access to health care facilities.

With regard to the distribution of vaccines, more than 5.7 billion people were vaccinated around the world, 73% of these vaccines were distributed in only 10 countries,<sup>29</sup> which reflects the unfair distribution of vaccines, especially in developing regions and in least developed countries. This disparity in the distribution of vaccines contradicts the rules of international human rights law and reflects a pattern that is

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<sup>28</sup> The migrant pay gap: Understanding wage differences between migrants and national, international Labor Organization, page 17, <https://bit.ly/3dclrdj>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3EegOLL>



different from the spirit of global solidarity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Kovacs Initiative<sup>30</sup> represented a positive step to reduce inequality and disparity in the distribution of vaccines to support efforts to recover poor and developing countries from the effects of the pandemic. that hindered progress towards achieving any progress regarding the right to development, and exacerbated poverty in a wide range of low-income countries, and despite the challenges faced by the initiative, it was able to deliver vaccines to about 20 million people in poor countries until the end of March 2021. The initiative adopts a plan represented in distributing vaccines Sufficient vaccines to protect more than 20% of the population in 92 low- and middle-income countries, with priority health workers, along with the most vulnerable.<sup>31</sup>

Maat for Peace believes that the initiative, despite its importance, will not be able to deliver vaccines to a huge number of people in poor countries, which means the need for more other initiatives, in addition to expanding the current initiative within the framework of international cooperation to support recovery efforts in post-pandemic periods. Because the continued vaccination of citizens in these countries at a very slow rate would hinder any efforts to implement the right to development and would delay the state of recovery in these countries.

### **Equal land ownership: the case of indigenous peoples**

According to the UNDP Gender Inequality Index report, 75% (three-quarters) of indigenous peoples cannot prove ownership of the land on which they live or work. Specifically, in this context, indigenous women face successive obstacles towards ensuring equality between them and men. Female farmers in more than 90 countries where indigenous peoples are present do not have equal rights to land ownership, due to the primacy of customary laws and practices that protect men's ownership and inheritance of land.

These women face double obstacles. On the one hand, they cannot obtain documents proving their ownership of the lands on which they reside, and these lands may be seized for the purpose of establishing development projects for the benefit of the federal governments. On the other hand, they suffer from discrimination in the possession of these lands by indigenous men themselves based on It is based on patriarchal authority and inherited traditions that believe that women have no right to possess these lands. In contravention of international human rights instruments, including the United Nations

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<sup>30</sup> مبادرة لقاحات عالمية يشرف عليها تحالف يضم تحالف اللقاحات ومنظمة الصحة العالمية، وهي ممولة من تبرعات تأتي من الحكومات، والمنظمات، والمؤسسات متعددة الأطراف. وتتمثل مهمة 'كوفاكس' في شراء لقاحات فيروس 'كوفيد-19' بكميات كبيرة، وإرسالها إلى الدول الأكثر فقراً التي لا يمكنها منافسة الدول الغنية في تأمين عقود مع شركات الأدوية الكبرى.

<sup>31</sup> COVAX: How many Covid vaccines have the US and the other G7 countries pledged? BBC, 23 September 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-55795297>

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. And with the consensus expressed by a group of special procedures mandate holders, especially the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, whose annual reports included affirming the right of women to acquire ownership of the lands they cultivate or reside on.

Maat for Peace recommends the following:

- Integrating equality and non-discrimination into all national plans and programs to address disasters and epidemics, thereby reducing the cycle of poverty suffered by vulnerable groups;
- Amending citizenship laws to give women equal rights to pass citizenship to their children as men in line with the overall objective of the I Belong campaign to achieve equality in citizenship laws by 2024.
- Starting developing national strategies and plans to achieve equality and combat discrimination, hate speech, intolerance and xenophobia.
- Including the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the curricula at all levels of education of different States.
- Launching more vaccine-seeking initiatives to poorer and low-income countries and support already existing initiatives such as the Kovacs Initiative
- Ending any policies that disenfranchise indigenous women from tenure and ownership of land in line with SDG 16.