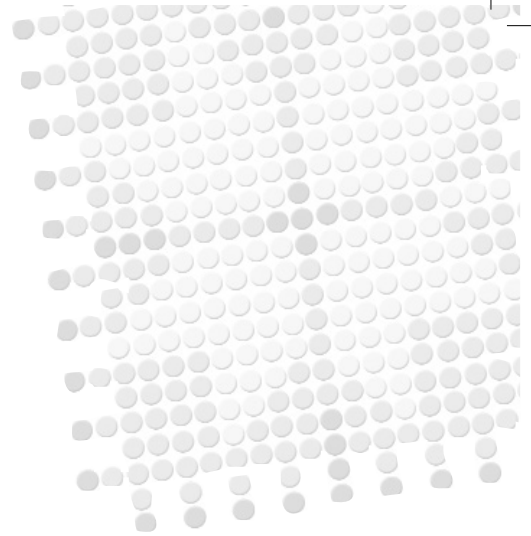
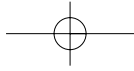
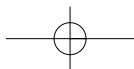
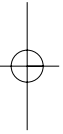


Progress of
Arab Women
2004



Progress of Arab Women

*One Paradigm, Four Arenas,
and more than 140 Million Women*



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The cover:

Over the years, Arab women have been known for their embroidery motifs. The idea of the book cover is derived exactly from this unique art that seeks to preserve the genuine heritage and traditions of Arab societies. It is an art that requires efficiency patience and perseverance .

The book cover is based on the link between the authenticity of the design and the modernity of digital graphics. This link indicates that Arab women look forward to a better future, founded on profound and deep-rooted history.

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Foreword

This report on Progress of Arab Women, commissioned by UNIFEM's regional office in Amman, Jordan, comes at a critical moment. As discussion on economic and political reform in the region intensifies, propelled by the recognition that economic prosperity depends upon more inclusive societies, so too has the discussion of women's status. For while the promotion of women's rights is strongly resisted in many quarters, it is increasingly widely recognized by scholars and political reformers both within and outside of the region, that democracy, development and peace all require progress in advancing the status of women.



The report follows the framework of UNIFEM's biennial report, Progress of the World's Women, in evaluating women's progress along a number of critical indicators. It also monitors the implementation of commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It departs from other reports, however, in that instead of comparing the status of Arab women to that of women in other countries and regions, it situates its analysis of women's status in a historical, political, ideological and social context. It examines the forces of economic globalization that are propelling the move towards change in different countries in the region as well as the geopolitical dynamics that continue to create political obstacles to change. It also highlights a UNIFEM conviction that supporting women's economic security presents an essential and viable platform for their participation in the political arena.

The other thing that distinguishes this study is that throughout, it presents its findings and analysis from the perspective of women themselves. It starts from the premise that in order for women to achieve effective social, economic and political participation, the factors that perpetuate and sustain their exclusion at all levels of decision-making must be addressed. In that sense, this report avoids a view of gender equality as merely one item on a check list to looking at its potential for social transformation.

We congratulate all who contributed to this timely report. Their dedication and commitment to moving the agenda forward should be an important addition to the current domestic, regional and global discussion on the role of Arab women in economic and political change in the region.

Noeleen Heyzer
Executive Director,
UNIFEM

Foreword

As Regional Program Director of the UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office, I have had much interaction with Arab Women and women organizations in the region during the past decade which has witnessed dramatic changes in the social, economic and political arenas affecting people in general and Arab women in particular. Despite all of this, there has been a great deal of work and effort on women's issues by governments and non-governmental organizations at both national and regional levels. National structures and strategies were developed; several conferences and workshops were held; numerous programs for women and girls' capacity building have been implemented; awareness programs of all types have been conducted and plans for mainstreaming gender perspectives were drawn to ensure the advancement of women and a more gender-equitable society. All these efforts have contributed to improving the status and participation of women at different levels.



Today I am pleased and honored to present to our readers the Progress of Arab Women 2004 report, which provides an insight to the world of Arab women and the progress achieved throughout the years. This report was commissioned by UNIFEM Arab States Regional Office and written by Arab experts to reflect the experiences of Arab Women in the context of social, economic and political security. The report is part of UNIFEM's global efforts to document and track the progress of women across the world and comes to measure the progress of Arab women at a very timely phase documenting the achievements since Beijing and paving the road to Beijing +10.

While the report celebrates the achievements of Arab women to this date, it also identifies the challenges and impediments that Arab women face in the context of social, economic and political security by indicating a number of red alerts throughout the chapters. Although, much has been achieved so far, more still needs to be done to ameliorate the status of women across the Region for them to be very effective and powerful within their families, communities and societies.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Hoda Rashad, Hania Sholkamy, Mahmoud Mohieldin, Sahr Nasr, and Salwa Goma who have made this report possible with their valuable contribution and dedication. Thanks also go to Hoda Sharakwy, Kelly Zaug, Anwar El Sherief and the active and devoted group of research assistants. Special thanks to the regional experts for their valuable comments and suggestions. Thanks also to UNIFEM team at the global and regional levels specially Maya Morsy, the Report Coordinator.

It is my hope that the completion of this report heralds a new phase of development and advancement for women in the region and we hope that this report would be a medium through which the rest of the world will know and understand, not only the obstacles that Arab women face, but also what these women have been doing during the past ten years, and what needs to be done in the years to come.

Finally, I invite our readers to interact with the contents of the report and engage in analytical discussions of its findings that will serve as an entry point to the understanding of the work of development in the region.

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AHDR	Arab Human Development Report
ADFM	l'Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CAWTAR	Center of Arab Women for Training and Research
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
ERSAP	Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FDI	foreign direct investment
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
HDR	Human Development Report
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IGWS	Institute of Gender and Women Studies
IMCAW	Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of Women
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
LAS	League of Arab States
LE	Egyptian pound
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NA	data not available
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NCW	National Council for Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SMWIPM	Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US\$	U.S. Dollars
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WLP	Women's Learning Partnership