



BACKGROUND GUIDE

WAMUNC XXIV

Arab League

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello! My name is Vidhi Singh and I will be serving as the Chairperson of Arab League, WAMUNC 2022. I'm a second-year undergraduate pursuing B.A. Economics (Hons.) from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi, India. I have a deep interest in International Relations and Public Policy. In my Diplomatic Career, I have attended 60+ Model UN Conferences and have worked with some of the prestigious organizations like International MUN, Harvard MUN India, Geneva International MUN and IEU MUN.

Walking on the principle of "Small Change, Big Impact," I'm a firm believer in intersectional feminism and diplomacy. I want to make WAMUNC not just a success, but also develop a comfortable space where everyone respects each other's nationality, differences of opinions, vision and skills. My advice to prospective diplomats is to internalize this balance—be professional and kind.

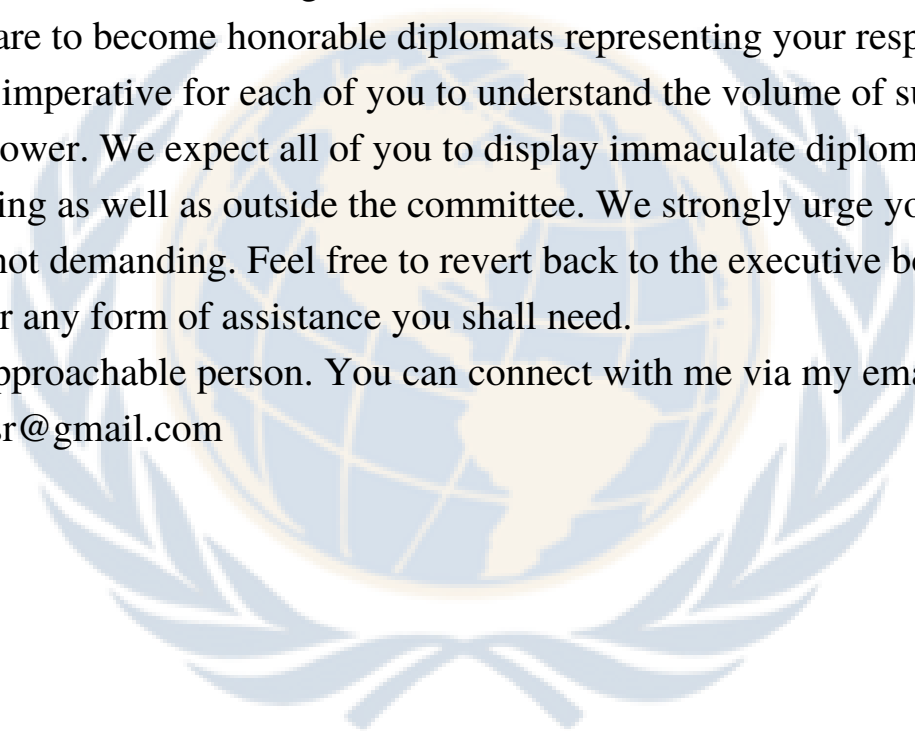
We not only will share the knowledge that's been passed on to us by our mentors, but also impart all the knowledge that we have garnered in the last few years of our MUNing and on our own journey as delegates and EB members. For some of you, this will be your very first conference. We understand that you may have certain apprehensions and inhibitions regarding the various technical aspects of MUNs and we, as your Chair, will continually motivate and guide you through the minutiae of an MUN conference. In order to help you research well, I have prepared this background guide which will introduce you to the committee proceedings, its history, mandate and will further give you an overview of the agenda at hand.

This study guide, although very comprehensive and factual, provides a basic idea of the agenda and arguments in view of the United Nations and may vary from those of the respective country policies. In no way does this guide intend to confine research and thus, the delegates must make it a point not to confine their research.

The guide consists of subjective and factual data with legal arguments, but this is just to make the delegates understand the ways in which they must make their addresses. We encourage you to conduct extensive research individually and then lobby effectively to make the committee benefit from your unique and valuable viewpoint.

We would adhere to Harvard MUN ROPs, figuring prominently in the proceedings with some irregularities as will be necessary as per working methods of the Arab League as well as for facilitating debate, as this will be conducted in hybrid mode. As you prepare to become honorable diplomats representing your respective nations, it is imperative for each of you to understand the volume of such a position of power. We expect all of you to display immaculate diplomacy and courtesy during as well as outside the committee. We strongly urge you to be diplomatic, not demanding. Feel free to revert back to the executive board for any queries or for any form of assistance you shall need.

I'm a very approachable person. You can connect with me via my email:
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COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The League of Arab States (Arab League), which was founded on March 22, 1945 in Cairo, Egypt, is a long-standing international organisation that predates the United Nations. The Arab League, which was founded by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Transjordan (modern-day Jordan), was the first organisation of its sort to attempt to unite Arab States regionally. The organization's founding charter called for the "tight cooperation of member-states" on a wide range of issues, including but not limited to economics, connectivity, cultural affairs, extradition, social affairs, and health affairs.

The Arab League's founding coincided with a significant historical turning point. Colonial powers in the region, like the United Kingdom and France, were exhausted by ongoing World War II combat and desired to devote their attention to domestic concerns. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden reaffirmed his support for Arab unity in 1941, giving another external spur for Arab countries to begin organising. Many of the Arab League's founding five countries were relatively young, having only recently gained independence following numerous waves of foreign influence. As a result, it's not unexpected that the Arab League's stated purpose is to "protect their [member nations'] independence and sovereignty."

The Arab League was founded in large part due to the Pan-Arabism movement. It began as a cultural and literacy movement, but it quickly expanded to include more political views and inspire nationalistic movements. PanArabism highlighted Ummar Arabiyya Wahida Dhat Risala Khalida, "the one Arab nation with an eternal mission," with roots dating back to the founding of Islam. While the Arab League was far from becoming a unified country, it did give hope and an organisational framework for a concept of Pan-Arabism at the time. The Arab League's organisational structure, on the other hand, made achieving this aim a little more challenging. The overall organization is led by a Secretary-General who heads a central Secretariat that handles the organization's administrative matters.

The Council of the Arab League is the organization's primary decision-making body and consists of a representative of each member state. Though decisions can be reached, the "enforcing teeth" of the Arab League to spur member state action tend to be rather weak, as decisions are only binding for countries that sign onto agreements. On top of this weaker political structure, the Arab League would also face a series of political challenges in the second half of the 20th century. Only three years after establishment in 1948, the Arab League's rejection of a UN General Assembly plan for partition, the subsequent outbreak of the Arab Israeli War, and Nakba would foreshadow future coordination problems.

Furthermore, governments frequently faced competing motives and internal strife, preventing coordinated and long-term conflict resolution, particularly in civil conflicts. Despite having meetings on the first Lebanese and Yemeni civil wars, the Arab League severely hampered the situation and was unable to give a verdict, which created a hazardous precedent. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's decision to unilaterally arrange a peace deal with Israel in 1979 further aggravated the Arab League's pre-existing wounds in an organisation beset by fragmentation and the prioritising of personal advantages by leaders. Similar failures to coordinate a response to the more recent Gulf and Iraq conflicts further added to the Arab League's perceived ineffectiveness, particularly on the world arena.

However, the Arab League has seen significant success in other areas, including technical coordination with the creation of the Arab Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1968 and the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization. Distinct examples of non security coordination include a coordinated economic boycott of Israel between 1948-1993, the creation of a regional telecommunications union, and cultural preservation of manuscripts. Furthermore, even when considering security matters, a more comprehensive look at the Arab League's role in mediating conflict finds that the Arab League was an active mediator in 60% of minor conflicts over the period 1945-2008.

The Arab League's 22 member countries are diverse in terms of geography, history, culture, politics, and religion. As do the nations that are regarded to be part of the MENA region as a whole. While there are numerous commonalities and shared citizen complaints throughout the Arab uprisings, differences in the course and aftermath of the protests must be kept in mind while formulating an Arab League response.



BACKGROUND GUIDE

Topic A: Foreign Demilitarization

Background

The Middle East has faced many civil conflicts over the past decade. Internal weaknesses of states, such as a lack of freedom, inequality, and corrupt governments' failure to address the demands of their people, are the root causes of these wars. For proof of this dynamic, consider the demonstrations in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain during the Arab Spring of 2011, as well as those in Iraq, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan, and Egypt in 2019 and 2020.

As long as the existing social, political, and economic challenges exist, protest movements will continue to be a hallmark of the region. Indeed, the economic difficulties triggered by COVID-19, as well as the drop in oil prices, are worsening these issues.

Internal insecurity is the root of instability, while state-on-state competition is what turns little conflicts into long-term civil wars. In the region, there are four opposing coalitions: an anti-reform bloc led by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt; a Turkish-Qatari alliance that is more inclined to backing Islamist parties; Iran; and Israel. When demonstrations erupt and weak states quiver, the blocs seek to fill the void with money, arms in a bid for power.

Small conflicts like Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq become larger, longer-lasting, and more lethal ones, creating terrorist safe havens and major refugee flows.

Over the last two decades, America's activities in the Middle East have added to this situation. Military actions by the United States in Iraq and Libya, as well as to a lesser extent in Syria and Yemen, have exacerbated civil strife. This disarray has only served to strengthen corrupt and incompetent administrations. In countries like Egypt and

Saudi Arabia, the sale of billions of dollars in weaponry has only strengthened the security state. Taking sides in the ferocious rivalry between regional blocs has boosted competitiveness. All of these blunders have one thing in common: a focus on military solutions rather than diplomatic and economic ones. This contrasts sharply with US strategy in Asia and Europe, where the military is an important element of the equation but not the exclusive engine.

Current Situation

Many governments' involvement in the Middle Eastern region, whether in terms of military deployment or economic interests, has made withdrawal a complicated issue. Instead, a long-term, constrained, steady-state strategy to the Middle East is required. A similar issue plagued the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS). It proposed a shift in focus to great power rivalry and a more restricted Middle East strategy that relied on local allies. However, it fell short of articulating a coherent plan for protecting America's interests in the area while avoiding costly deployments and wars.

Today, due to the shale revolution, the US does not rely on the Middle East for much oil (in 2020, Persian Gulf nations accounted for around 10% of overall petroleum imports and 12% of crude oil imports in the United States). The flow of oil out of the region continues to have a significant impact on global markets, but not to the point where the US should be fully responsible for assuring energy resource flow via the region's important choke points.

The flow of oil out of the area continues to have a considerable influence on global markets, but not to the extent that the United States should be solely responsible for ensuring the flow of energy resources via the region's critical choke points.

According to research by the London-based International Institute for Geopolitical Studies, Iran is winning the strategic battle for influence in the Middle East against its adversary, Saudi Arabia (IISS). Iran's regional adversaries have spent billions of dollars on Western weapons, most of which have come from the United Kingdom.

Sanction-bound Iran, on the other hand, has been able to successfully entrench itself across the region and gain a strategic edge at a fraction of the expense. It has a significant – and in some cases, dominant – influence over the affairs of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has tilted the balance of effective force in the Middle East in its favour," the study claims. "By fighting superior conventional troops with influence operations and the employment of third-party forces," the authors claim. The Quds Force, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps' foreign operations branch, has been a crucial component in this (IRGC). The Quds Force, as well as its commander, Maj Gen Qasem Soleimani, report directly to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, bypassing Iran's traditional military systems to operate as a separate organisation. While the US should take actions to defend itself as well as limit and manage the danger, "solving" or eliminating terrorism is a near-impossible aim.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in 2015 by Iran and many international countries, including the United States, and it set major constraints on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. In 2018, President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the agreement, arguing that it failed to limit Iran's missile development and regional influence. A year later, Iran began to defy restrictions on its nuclear programme.

Both Washington and Tehran have stated their desire to return to the original agreement, but they differ on how to get there. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which took effect in January 2016, places constraints on Iran's civilian nuclear enrichment programme. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) plus Germany, collectively known as the P5+1, were at the core of discussions with Iran. The European Union was also present.

Saudi Arabia, for example, said that they should have been contacted or engaged in the negotiations because they would be the most affected by a nuclear-armed Iran. Israel was outspoken in its opposition to the pact, claiming it was too mild.

Bloc Positions

Internal divisions and Member States' capacity to simply opt out of accords have long hampered Arab League members from reaching an agreement on important issues facing the region. Long-standing rivalries and sources of conflict among Arab League member nations have also played a key influence in defining member states' attitudes, sometimes precluding the adoption of measures that might enhance the region's overall security and stability. The informal structure of the organisation has also made it difficult to develop clearly defined and consistent voting blocs or sub-groups. However, there are still significant disparities in problem areas that have influenced voting trends.

One such problem is the concept of collaborating with foreign, generally western, countries to address regional security concerns. Countries like Syria, Libya, and Algeria have vehemently opposed acts that bring foreign powers to the area, often in the name of anti-colonialism. Furthermore, they are particularly concerned about the growing ties between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and the United States. There are also significant political splits in Palestine, with nations such as Egypt and Jordan supporting the Fatah Movement. While they indicate some divisions, each Arab League country tends to have its own intricate web of relationships with other members.

In addition to historical and issue-area divisions, the Arab League's member nations have experienced a rise in sub-regionalism. This tendency has been intensified since the formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981. The Arab Maghreb Union, founded in February 1989, is another sub-regional project. North African efforts, on the other hand, have been far less active than those in the Gulf area. It's also important to remember that the Arab League's 22 members span more than just the Middle East and North Africa, and that these countries, many of which are in Africa, can have a significant impact on the organization's policy responses.

Possible Solutions

This model can become more sustainable and cost-effective, requiring even less US intervention, if some Middle Eastern countries, particularly those closest to the US, improve their ability to pursue their own goals by, with, and through strategies for identifying and working with capable local on-the-ground forces. This will need more strategic collaboration between the US and some of its allies in regions where they have shared interests, as well as a concentration on training small elite counterterrorism and special operations troops in the Middle East by the US.

To guarantee that sufficient safeguards are in place to avoid these missions from becoming perpetually costly investments, two goals should be prioritised in Middle East policy. To begin, the US should concentrate on managing and limiting the problems provided by the region's civil conflicts, as well as terrorism and mass migration. These factors have sparked a backlash in the United States and Europe, resulting in xenophobia, the rise of anti-democratic demagogues, and, ultimately, the fraying of European institutions and the transatlantic alliance, both of which have been key features of the US-led international order and whose health is critical to sustaining both US and European strength in long-term great power competition. Introducing additional nuclear weapons into the world's most conflict-prone area could be hazardous and destabilising, as well as having severe ramifications for the global non-proliferation regime. However, it could also... (something positive to make this a topic of debate within committee)

For years, US politicians have discussed withdrawing from the Middle East. However, if there is no plan in place to do so while safeguarding US interests, the US will not do so. Indeed, a long-term Middle Eastern policy that permits the US to withdraw militarily while focusing on realistic diplomacy and a better assistance plan is a key component of reallocating resources to other priorities, such as successful rivalry with China. The next NDS must outline a fresh Middle East strategy.

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Questions to Consider

1. How can the committee promote cooperation between the sides involved and bring about a settlement?
2. What does the committee think about the influence of Iran on the Middle East and Nuclear Power? How could it be controlled?
3. In what ways can member countries increase their contribution in resolving the crisis?
4. Is it possible for a non-member state to serve as a mediator? If so, how would the negotiations proceed?

Topic B: Gender Disparity

Background

In MENA, just one out of every four women is working or seeking employment, which is half the global average. Unemployment rates for young women can reach 40%, and the employment gap between men and women has nearly quadrupled in the previous 25 years. If current MENA employment rates remain unchanged and all people of working age search for work, there will be 50 million unemployed males and 145 million unemployed women by 2050, according to estimates.

A study of Jordanian women graduating from community colleges was undertaken by the World Bank in 2010. 92% of them intended to seek a job, with 76% anticipating full-time employment. A year later, a follow-up poll revealed some startling findings: just 7% of graduates who had married were working, 14% of those who were engaged were employed, and 21% of single women were employed. Regardless of their marital status, they all exhibited the same desire to work as previously.

Current rules aimed at protecting women, such as those that restrict where and when they can work, sometimes just exclude them by making them less appealing to employers.

However, sitting on the sidelines to be welcomed in is no longer an option. Women played a key part in the 'Arab Spring,' and they will not be silenced any longer. The sooner women are given an equal chance to participate, the sooner the area will reap the benefits of this tremendous, untapped human potential.

It is critical to comprehend the situation in Arab nations through the domination of the Islamic faith, which serves not only as a belief system for the majority of the population, but also as a way of life that pervades all areas of people's everyday lives. The religion of Islam is to be considered as a complete, all-encompassing, and all-inclusive religion. Most Arab nations have aspects from other civilizations, and contrasting cultural values as a consequence of historical exposure to various

influences, whether through invasion/conquest or cultural interaction. As a result, current culture is a fusion of several civilizations, with a strong backbone of traditional Arab heritage. It is important to note that the condition of women throughout MENA cannot be understood without first understanding the social and cultural framework of their environment. As a result, gender issues are inextricably linked to the larger dynamics of society and cannot be isolated from them.

In this regard, it is crucial to note that the drive for gender equality is presently up against a regressive wave that is sweeping the Arab World, as part of the larger Islamic World, and has infiltrated numerous parts of society. As a result, any attempts towards a liberal trend may be defeated by this flood, reversing the trend's course on the basis of misconstrued religious reasons. The outward appearance of this retrograde tendency is religious, but its origins may be traced back to political, social, and economic forces. The widening socio-economic divides between social classes, which have almost polarised the social class structure in most Arab states; the lack of a democratic system can be seen as major underlying factors in this regard, providing fertile ground for a reactionary movement falsely claiming to be Islamic.

As a result of this failure, women have been the most vulnerable group in a historically male-dominated culture. Religion, it's fair to say, is being utilised as a pretext, a ready-made one that promises refuge and salvation to the befuddled. Women's rights are being challenged in this environment, even in cultures with a more liberal framework, such as Egypt. As a result, many of the options that had been offered to women for a long time were called into doubt. This reactionary trend has exacerbated the previously existent disparity between males and females, since it has gained momentum over time as a result of mounting issues in society at the political, economic, and social levels. The earlier decreased gender gap in those cultures that have achieved a relatively high degree of liberalization—in a historically male-dominated culture—In the face of a strong reactionary wave, notably in the fifties and sixties, when the movement for women's rights was at its peak at that period— has come to spread.

Current Situation

While gender inequality occurs on a global scale, the Arab world not only has the largest disparity, but also confronts tremendous hurdles in addressing it. Economic and political insecurity have long plagued the region, which has been exacerbated by socio-cultural barriers and a patriarchal regime. This challenges any progress toward gender equality.

Multiple chronic humanitarian crises, such as those in Syria, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq, exacerbate the situation. Instability is increasingly prevalent. Wars have decimated social safety structures, limited access to safe services and assistance, dislocated communities, and heightened vulnerabilities, resulting in new insecurities for women. Gender equality goals are often dropped from the agenda during times of crisis.

The World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap Report sheds light on the level of gender inequality in the Arab world. Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment are the four dimensions measured in the study. The Global Gender Difference score is at 68 percent, indicating that there is still a 32 percent gap to reduce globally. Gender parity is the furthest away in the Middle East and North Africa, at 40%.

Countries in the Gulf, such as the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, have narrowed economic and health disparities, although pay disparities persist. Women's political engagement in Qatar has climbed from zero in 2017 to about 10% in 2018.

Despite its poor record on women's equality, Saudi Arabia has decreased income disparities and boosted women's involvement in the labour market. Oppressive structures such as male guardianship, on the other hand, continue to exist, restricting women's freedom and movement.

Despite Lebanon's minor success in increasing the proportion of women in parliament, Jordan and Lebanon remain substantially unaltered. Due to lower economic engagement, the gender gap in Oman is wider than in prior years.

In the world's four worst-performing nations, three of which are in the area — Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen – women hold only 7% of executive posts. Twelve of the eighteen nations in the region have regressed . At the current rate, it will take 153 years for the area to bridge the gender gap.

Bloc Positions

Despite its modern image, Lebanon is a compelling case study. Lebanon was classified as one of the worst nations for women in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, and Lebanon are among the world's 10 worst nations for gender equality. Lebanon ranked 135th out of 144 nations in 2016. In 2017, it was ranked 137th out of 144 nations. In 2018, Lebanon was ranked 140th out of 149 nations, below most of its Arab neighbours such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Bahrain.

Despite years of agitation, no legislation prohibiting child marriage exists in Lebanon, leaving religious tribunals with the last say. This problem is worsened in the case of refugees: as a result of the current crisis, rates of underage marriage among Syrian refugees are rising, and girls coerced into marriage have no legal protection from the Lebanese government. This serves as a stark warning that fleeing combat does not always imply that women and girls will be secure.

Patriarchal traditions that emphasize men as breadwinners and women as homemakers limit women's involvement in paid, productive employment. When women work outside the house, they are frequently viewed as only being appropriate for specific occupations. These assumptions reinforce women's disproportionate responsibility of caregiving, limiting their capacity to enter or continue in paid jobs outside the house.

Women's access to work is further restricted by a lack of childcare services and safe transportation. In addition, mismatches between skills and market demand, poor earnings, and a lack of appealing occupations sometimes exacerbate the difficulties women confront in the workplace.

In conflict or post-conflict situations, these limits are accentuated. Access to work is even more constrained for women in countries like Yemen, Syria, and Iraq, with safety concerns, enabling institutions weakened, and chances dwindling — despite the fact that many women unexpectedly find themselves in primary earning responsibilities, frequently with little prior experience or qualifications. There has also been a documented surge in both female-headed households and individuals with disabilities in Arab countries, who are frequently populations in the most need of support.

Refugee women in countries like Jordan and Lebanon may find themselves isolated in foreign areas, susceptible to legislative constraints on their capacity to work and generate an income, aggravated by a lack of knowledge and help to enter the labour market. Prosperity frequently has an adverse relationship with female labour force participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council's more affluent nations, as cultures place a priority on women's 'not needing to work.' Migrant workers play a substantial role in the labour market in these nations, with female migrant workers accounting for a large portion of the domestic workforce, frequently in insecure situations with minimal protection.

Women in Arab countries also confront a slew of additional obstacles posed by topics such as technology, automation, climate change, and demographics. Gender equality in the Arab world is hampered by widespread discrimination, such as uneven pay and restrictive labour regulations, as well as a lack of social security in the areas of unemployment, pensions, maternity, and sickness.

Possible Solutions

Women's roles in the Middle East's businesses and governments are evolving. Given the region's seemingly disparate views and legislation addressing gender parity, those in the West who haven't worked in the Middle East firsthand may find these advances shocking. However, there is a noticeable hunger for change due to the business requirement for diversity.

According to persuasive data from McKinsey, companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 21 percent more likely to achieve above-average growth than counterparts in the fourth quartile. Increased gender diversity is a basic step toward better judgments and higher organisational success, according to the advice. This empirical data, which is frequently revalidated, has led to an increase in anxiety in the Middle East and internationally that organisations who do not adopt its results would lag behind on performance and be unable to recruit top personnel, especially in shifting economic circumstances.

Despite substantial evidence that gender equality correlates stronger economic growth and enhanced human development, the gender gap in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area is one of the world's greatest. The extent and consequences of the gender gap in the region are examined in order to identify potential solutions for eliminating gender inequity. Unlike some of the gender literature, which focuses on supply-side measures such as giving access to schools or contraception, this study argues that success in improving women's economic responsibilities must rely more on changing the demand for women's education and work.

Questions to Consider

1. Have the existing steps to ensure gender equality been effective so far? If not, what new steps can be taken by governments?
2. Do the existing policies and laws restrict the rights of women? If yes, how should they be amended?
3. How can governments ensure protection of domestic violence victims?
4. How can the government and other organizations raise awareness on gender equality? Can it be a part of the school curriculum? If so, how?
5. How can governments take better initiatives on issues of child-marriage, domestic violence and gender biased work environments?

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