The Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security
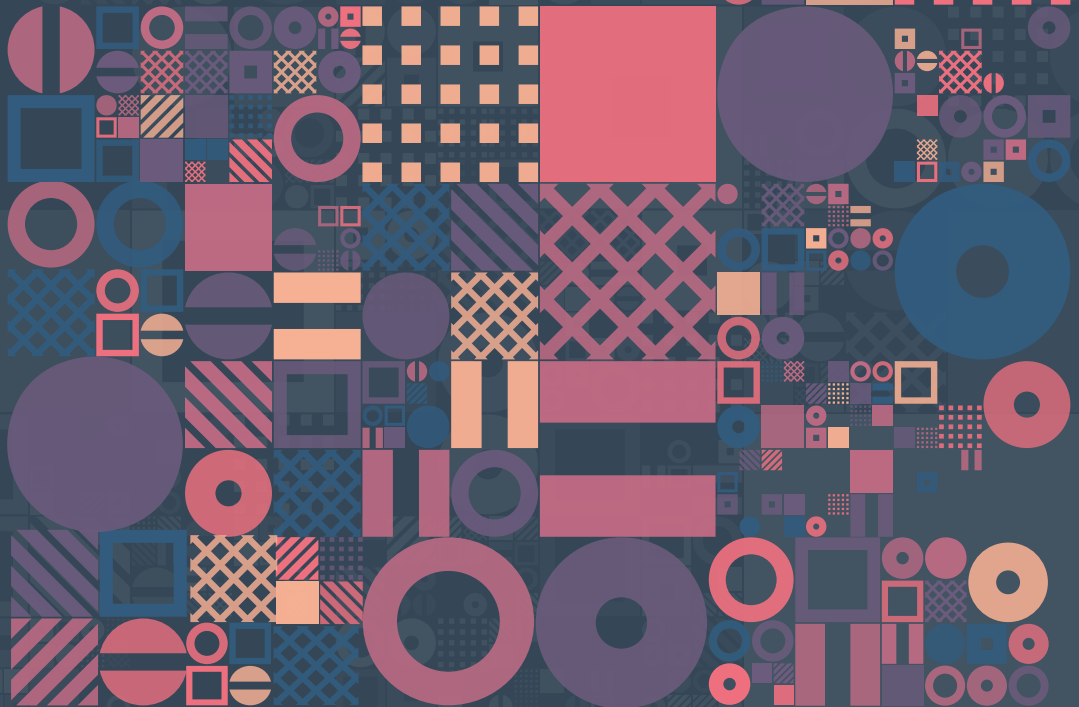
2023-2028

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recognition of the importance of joint Arab action to support peace and security in the Arab region and to enhance the roles of youth and their contributions to their societies, the Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports, in its forty-fifth session held on May 26, 2022, adopted Resolution No. 1010, which paved the way for the development of the Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security (2023 -2028). This strategy was built with the objective to serve as a tool and a road map to implement and advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (2250, 2419, 2535) in the Arab region and to enhance the cooperation at the regional level.

The Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security aims to support the efforts of Arab countries, through a vision that enhances the role of Arab youth and their effective participation, their positive contribution to issues of development, peace, and security, as well as to direct young men and women in the Arab world to build safe Arab societies where peace, security, stability, and prosperity reign through their active participation in the social, political, and economic life, by enhancing their role in decision-making processes and increasing their political and civil participation, achieving economic security, ensuring the right to education and digital inclusion, promoting the principle of gender equality, ensuring freedom of movement, and addressing climate change issues, and by adopting the values and principles of effective youth leadership, including all young men and women.

The Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security is composed of (5) five chapters, the first chapter, an introduction to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, the vision, the mission, and the methodology adopted in developing the strategy, the second chapter, focuses on the context analysis that takes into account youth and highlights the issues that affect the peace and security of Arab youth, the third chapter focuses on the basic concepts and guidelines that must be taken into account in all stages of implementing the strategy, the fourth chapter, emphasizes the priorities and objectives of the strategy that are linked to the five pillars of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250; participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration, the fifth and final chapter highlight the implementation approach that defines the next steps on both levels; national and regional, and shed the light on the achievements of the Arab region on the youth peace and security agenda.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda

Young people are key to building and sustaining peace. Since the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (UNSCR 2250)[1] on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) on 9 December 2015, and subsequent Resolutions 2419 (2019) and 2535 (2020), the role of young women and men have been increasingly recognized, both globally and in the Arab Region, as positive and integral to building peaceful, sustainable and prosperous societies. The binding Resolution,[2] represents a fundamental shift in our understanding of the roles that young people play in resolving and preventing conflict and maintaining peace and security, calling for the meaningful participation of youth in decision-making at all levels.

The Arab Region, currently with the largest number of youth, has played a crucial role in supporting United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250. In August 2015, during the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security[3] in Amman, Jordan, young people mobilized to demand a greater voice in peace and security efforts. Moderated by Jordanian Ahmad Alhendawi, the first-ever United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the Forum culminated with the adoption of the 'Amman Youth Declaration',[4] which called for greater partnerships with young people for peace and security, combating violence, gender equality and young people's empowerment. This marked a turning point in recognizing young people's role in peacebuilding through a multi-level, intergenerational conversation that defined a new international agenda, known as the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda.

Resolution 2250 was presented by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan following an initiative from Crown Prince Hussein Bin Abdullah II, during the Kingdom's Chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council. The Resolution attracted significant interest from governments, other national and international actors, young peacebuilders and civil society. It offers a new narrative for young women and men. It gives recognition and legitimacy to their contributions. It brings visibility to their needs and priorities. It promotes their representation and participation. It fosters partnerships with youth, and ensures an evidence-based approach and accountability. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 identifies five pillars of action: Participation, Prevention, Protection, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration. It calls for the adoption of mechanisms that address the underlying causes of conflict and insecurity, and allows for the meaningful participation of young women and men in peace processes and in maintaining peace and security.

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1. United Nations Security Council (2015). Resolution 2250.

2. The title of UNSCR 2250 is "Maintenance of International Peace and Security" which is a reference to Chapter 7, Article 39 in the UN Charter. Security Council Resolutions under Chapter 7 are binding

3. The Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security was held in Amman on 21–22 August 2014, hosted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and co-organized by UN entities (OSGEY, PBSO, UNDP and UNFPA) and civil society partners (Search for Common Ground and UNOY).

4. Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security (2015). Amman Youth Declaration.

Since 2015, momentum for youth, peace and security has increased, and two subsequent United Nations Security Council Resolutions have been adopted: UNSCR 2419 in 2018 and UNSCR 2535 in 2020.[5] UNSCR 2419 calls for the meaningful inclusion of young women and men in building peace at all levels.UNSCR 2535 calls for the institutionalization of the resolutions, and encourages United Nations Member States to take action, specifically to design Youth, Peace and Security dedicated local, national and regional roadmapsIt also includes a request to strengthen capacities of Member States and regional organizations, and to provide safe spaces for youth to ensure their meaningful participation.

The first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes[6] was co-hosted by the governments of Finland, Qatar, and Colombia in 2019. This was followed in 2022 by a virtual High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes[7] which culminated in the launch of a High-Level Joint Statement[8] by the governments of Qatar, Colombia and Finland. The Joint Statement highlighted their continued support for the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and encouraged Member States to advance actions at the country-level. Moreover, a five-year Strategic Action Plan for Youth Inclusive Peace Processes was launched,[9] in addition to a Guide for Public Officials on Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.[10]

Momentum around the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda has grown in conjunction with an increasing focus on conflict prevention throughout the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The United Nations Sustaining Peace Agenda[11] aims to prevent the outbreak, escalation or recurrence of conflict, address the root causes of conflict, bring an end to hostilities, ensure national reconciliation, and move towards recovery, reconstruction and development. Importantly, the Sustaining Peace Agenda reaffirms the crucial role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflict and building a lasting peace.

Taken together, the three resolutions (2250, 2419 and 2535) form the basis of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, shedding light on how peace and security are inextricably linked to the broader agenda of young people's roles in sustainable development. The meaningful inclusion of young women and men is key to achieving the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the principle of leaving no one behind- particularly Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies -[12] and the global commitment to "leave no one behind."

5.   United Nations Security Council (2018). Resolution 2419; United Nations Security Council (2020). Resolution 2535.

6.   United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. First International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes.

7.   United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. World leaders renew commitment to "Youth, Peace and Security" agenda.

8.   Joint Statement. Governments of the State of Qatar, Colombia, and Finland.

9.   Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (2022). We are in this Together: Operationalizing a Five-Year Strategic Action Plan for Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes.

10. Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022). Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials.

11. United Nations General Assembly (2016). Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture; and United Nations Security Council (2016). Resolution 2282.

12. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and United Nations Development Programme (2017). Fast facts: youth as partners for the implementation of the SDGs.

1.2 Vision, Mission and Fundamental Values

Against this background, and in recognition of the importance of joint Arab action to support peace and security in the region and to enhance the roles and contributions of young women and men in society, the Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports adopted in its 45th session on 26 May 2022 Resolution 1010, paving the way for the development of a Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security for the years 2023–2028.

Vision

Active and positive Arab youth participating in issues of development, peace, and security.

Mission

Arab societies are fully capable of achieving young women and men's participation in all social, political and economic fields of life through enhancing their role in decision-making processes, increasing their political and civil participation, achieving economic security, guaranteeing the right to education and digital inclusion, promoting gender equality, ensuring freedom of mobility, and addressing security and climate issues.

Fundamental Values

Young people effective leadership; all young women and men inclusion, cooperation and participation in decision-making; political commitment; good governance; justice and rule of law; gender equality; effective monitoring and evaluation.

The goal of this Strategy is to act as a tool and a roadmap for the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and the three United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250, 2419 and 2535 in the Arab region, and to strengthen coordination and cooperation at the regional level in support of the efforts of Arab countries. Specifically, the Strategy aims to:

- Facilitate the recognition and support of efforts of young people in the Arab States in peace and security;

- Enhance partnerships and collaboration among key stakeholders (youth, Member States, civil society, academia, media, private sector and regional and international partners);

- Facilitate the development of youth-led and youth-centred national policies, strategies, action plans and programmes by the Member States and other stakeholders who promote inclusive participation of youth in the area of peace and security;

- Increase youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels;

- Invest in youth efforts and initiatives in peacebuilding field;

- Incorporate Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in national policies and programmes;

- Support young women participation and enhance their leadership role in peacebuilding field; and

- Promote partnerships and cooperation between partners (stakeholders) on the implementation of Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

The Strategy is rooted in the belief that young people are positive contributors to their societies, and their meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security ultimately benefits everyone. Across the Arab Region, many young women and men, individually or as part of civil society organisations, are ready working to prevent conflict and to promote peace and reconciliation. Young people contribute to civic awareness efforts against violence, to support peaceful elections and good governance, to prevent violent extremism and promote social cohesion, to volunteer and initiate community-based development projects that complement the efforts of national governments.

The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda is relevant for countries in conflict, in a post-conflict phase and also for those experiencing relative stability. This Strategy provides a regional framework and offers guidance for the implementation of the three United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs 2250, 2419, 2535). It is up to national authorities to determine how best to implement these recommendations for their own contexts.

The Strategy revolves around the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction to Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, and Vision, Mission and Methodology of the Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security;

- **Chapter 2:** Youth-sensitive context analysis, which sheds light on key issues affecting the peace and security of youth in the Arab States;

- **Chapter 3:** Key terminology and guiding principles of gender equality, leave no one behind, do no harm to young women and men and conflict-sensitivity that should be mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the Strategy;

- **Chapter 4:** Strategic priorities and objectives, which revolve around the resolution's five pillars of action: Participation, Protection, Prevention including spreading a culture of peace, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration; and

- **Chapter 5:** Implementation approach, which outlines the next steps on the national and regional levels, starting with developing action plans, and thus presenting existing achievements on Youth, Peace and Security in the Arab Region.

1.3 Methodology

This Strategy is guided by global, regional and national frameworks on youth and peace and builds on existing efforts in the Arab Region towards the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

The Strategy was developed through a series of in-depth consultations with a range of stakeholders, held between December 2021 and September 2022, as well as a questionnaire to Member States to review all existing efforts on Youth, Peace and Security, and a desk review of national youth strategies, regional studies and analyses and policy guidelines. During the process, a Technical Support Group was established to support the League of Arab States in the development of the Strategy, consisting of two youth representatives, and representatives from the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States (UNLOLAS), the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for the Arab States (UNDP RBAS), and the Arab States Regional Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Recognizing the central role of young women and men in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, the preparation process involved more than 300 young people taking into consideration the engagement of a diversity of young people to ensure their views were reflected already at the design phase. Altogether, the consultation and data collection process involved over 300 young women and men, in addition to representatives of the Ministries of Youth and Sports of Member States, experts representing the UN and other partners.

For more details please see the Annex on Participatory Methodology.

Collecting views of Arab youth through an innovative online dialogue

In an effort to reach out to a diversity of young people across the Arab States and include their visions and priorities in the Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security, the League of Arab States (LAS) organized an online survey and dialogue in collaboration with the UN DPPA, using an interactive platform that allowed young participants to interact with the hosts and each other.

The invitation, targeting young people living in the Arab region between the ages of 18-29, was circulated widely through youth networks and social media. The dialogue included an interactive survey, which revolved around questions on the meaning of peace and security, the challenges that young people face, and the vision they have for creating more peaceful and secure societies. The dialogue was attended by 295 young people (176 young women, 114 young men, 5 preferred not to disclose their gender), representing at least 13 Arab countries. Students and working young people were represented in equal measures while 11% were unemployed or homemakers. The majority of respondents were from urban areas, with 26% only living in rural areas or small towns. The participants could anonymously answer open and close-ended questions in writing, vote in polls and vote on each other's answers.

2 CONTEXT ANALYSIS: YOUTH IN THE ARAB REGION

A youth and gender-sensitive context analysis is a prerequisite for any successful implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

This chapter provides an overview of the context in the Arab Region, with a focus on the socio-economic, political, and security-related situation for young people.

Youth, Peace and Security are intrinsic to all aspects of development. Peace, security, development and human rights all affect each other, and for all to progress in tandem, young people must be included in all realms of society.[13] Understanding young people's wants, needs and concerns is essential to identify the causes and drivers of conflict, as well as determining opportunities to build and maintain peace. A better understanding of young people is also key to correcting damaging narratives and policies that affect young people.[14]

2.1 Context

The Arab Region is youthful. Children and young people under the age of 30 constitute 60% of the total population.[15] In 2015, the number of young people aged 15 to 24 was estimated at over 71 million, and will increase to over 92 million by 2030,[16] while those aged 15 to 29 are estimated at 110 million.[17] Country estimates for the youth population range from 20% to 80% of the total, with the discrepancies owing to varied definitions for youth.[18] Young people in the region present a huge demographic dividend, and are key to promoting peace, civic and political engagement, prosperity and development in the region.

The Arab States are notable for a diverse range of development contexts, including high income, middle income, low income countries and countries in different stages of conflict. Young people in the Arab Region are not a homogeneous group but are diverse in their use of language, their religious beliefs, regional affiliation, tribal allegiances and ethnicity. Young women and young men are part of many systems, entwined into the fabric of their societies, and are segmented by age, gender, education, geography, policy and resources. Depending on where they live, youth in the Arab States are subject to an array of opportunities and challenges.

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13. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2018). The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

14. Folke Bernadotte Academy (2020). Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook.

15. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. ESCWA response to the UN Youth Strategy, Social Development Bulletin, Vol 7, No. 2, Feb 2021.

16. Ibid.

17. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Impact of Covid-19 on Young People in the Arab Region, Policy Brief, 2020.

18. Based on an analysis of national youth strategies, UN common country analyses and the UN sustainable development cooperation and partnerships frameworks with governments.

In terms of the Human Development Index, which measures countries' average achievements in key dimensions of human development such as living a long and healthy lives, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living.[19] The region is spread across four categories. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries[20] enjoy high human development, while the countries of the Maghreb[21] and Mashreq[22] represent those of high and medium high human development. The countries of the southern tier of the Arab Region[23] are found in the category of low human development.

About 30% of the total population in the Arab Region live in conflict-affected areas.[24] Young people are disproportionately affected by, and involved in, violence and armed conflict: as soldiers, as combatants, and as members of military groups, but also as victims of violence, through arbitrary arrests, through injury and disability, displacement and sexual and gender-based violence.[25] Conflict and political instability exacerbate the wider challenges young people face. They undermine social and civic trust, entrench a culture of violence, disrupt social norms and order, and deplete the resilience of institutions and systems.

Governments across the region are working to combat violent extremism and terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking and organized crime.[26] The highly publicized profiles of recruits into violent extremist groups has put a spotlight on youth, with a growing concern over their radicalization. Yet only a minority of young people are engaged in such violence. It is far more common that youth are the victims of violence perpetrated by extremist groups, or are the subject of excessive security measures. [27] In response, young women and men in the Arab Region have taken up action to combat violent extremism, from online and offline advocacy campaigns to reduce violence, to promoting the disengagement and reintegration of former fighters, and supporting education initiatives. Empowering and engaging young people and supporting the positive role they play in society is central to the prevention of violent extremism, as is highlighted in the Arab Regional counter-terrorism strategy, adopted by the Arab Interior Ministers' Council in March 2022.[28]

Government programmes in the region are geared towards creating or maintaining safe and stable societies, safeguarding the rights of the people and the rule of law, and improving

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19. United Nations Development Program. Human Development Index (2021).

20. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait.

21. Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania.

22. Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon.

23. Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia, Comoros, Yemen.

24. UNDP (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

25. Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (2022). We are in this Together: Operationalizing a Five-Year Strategic Action Plan for Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes.

26. Based on an analysis of UN common country analyses and the UN sustainable development cooperation and partnerships frameworks with governments.

27. United Nations Development Programme (2020). Frontlines. Young people at the forefront of preventing and responding to violent extremism.

28. League of Arab States (2022). Arab strategy for countering terrorism. See also: Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (2020). Toward an Arab strategy to counter violent extremism and radical thinking and address their effects.

and sustaining public services. At the same time, governments' capacities to respond to a multitude of social, economic and political challenges have been constrained by conflict, political division, fragmentation of governance structures, and inefficiencies and a lack of transparency in civil service. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the entire region, although to varying degrees, impacting on governance, the economy and society, and challenging the open civic space in the region.[29] Institutions have struggled to address the needs of all segments of society, including those of young people, women and vulnerable groups.[30]

2.2 Youth Perspectives on Peace and Security

To young people, peace and security mean much more than the absence of violence or the end of conflict: the young people who were consulted in the preparation of the Strategy supported the view that peace means the safety and freedom to express one's views, the acceptance of others, justice, equality and social responsibility, and the respect for human rights, in addition to stability, security and the absence of conflict and wars. They called for teaching the values of peace, tolerance and conflict resolution, strengthening governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and creating equal opportunities for all segments of society to ensure stability and a sustainable peace. They emphasized the role of citizens in peace-building more than dialogue between political leaders or for international assistance.

The young people consulted defined security as a sense of safety and stability in one's life and about one's own future. Security was also described as the freedom of thought and opinion, respect for laws, and between different segments of society. These views are also found in the concept of human security,[31] which is defined as the freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity, and taking comprehensive, people-centred preventive measures that enhance the protection and empowerment of all individuals and communities.

The majority of young women and men expressed concerns about conflict or the threat of conflict in their societies, with youth living in volatile contexts more concerned than others. Other threats to that youth highlighted were the spread of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, and the threat of violence or harassment by those who have more influence. The situation of migrants and refugees, organised crime and terrorism and the return of foreign fighters were also of concern to some, although to a lesser extent.

The majority of young women and men believe that the Arab peoples have a shared culture and way of life. Heritage, language, religion, history, customs and traditions were all noted

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29. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

30. Based on an analysis of UN common country analyses and the UN sustainable development cooperation and partnerships frameworks with governments; and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2021). Towards an Arab governance index.

31. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/290.

as common factors. Young people also considered their dream for peaceful and prosperous societies as a common one. Yet they also mentioned factors that create differences and separation between the peoples of the region, including discrimination and inequalities, a lack of knowledge and awareness about or tolerance towards others, and different political aspirations within the region.

2.3 Political Participation and Civic Engagement

In developing this strategy, young people repeatedly voiced a strong desire for their equal and meaningful inclusion in civic and political participation. Meaningful engagement with youth can help lay the groundwork for the stability and enhanced legitimacy of governments. A number of studies have documented youth in the region growing increasingly frustrated due to lack of action on their key concerns, namely safety, education, unemployment, disempowerment and lack of positive engagement in decision-making.[32] The Arab Spring was a turning point for many countries in the region, as young women and men in the Arab Region became aware of the importance of participation and its relevance for them, their societies and their future. Consequently, governments are increasingly acknowledging their aspiration to participate in the decision-making process. [33]

The number of young people, girls and women of all ages that are members of political parties in the Arab Region are low.[34] Young people remain under-represented in parliaments of most Arab countries,[35] although important legislative amendments have been made in a number of countries to facilitate youth participation in recent years. In terms of civic engagement, Arab young people are more drawn to community activities such as charity, volunteerism and interpersonal support, while young people's membership in charitable and humanitarian organizations is slightly lower than the global average (at around 16%).[36] Arab youth participate less in formal civil society organizations than all other regions (19%) and more through non-formal social movements.[37] The reluctance of Arab youth to participate through formal channels is also reflected in the low youth voter turnout across the region (at 48%).[38]

Among the young women and men consulted, most reported being active in a youth organization, movement or network, with more young men involved than women. They

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32. United Nations Children's Fund (2019). MENA Generation 2030. Investing in children and youth today to secure a prosperous region tomorrow.

33. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

34. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Governance and the Future of the Arab World.

35. United Nations Development Programme (2013). Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.

36. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era. Based on a study conducted in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

37. United Nations Development Programme (2013). Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.

38. United Nations Development Programme (2013). Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.

reported being engaged in a wide range of activities, from peacebuilding, democracy and human rights and gender equality, to environment and climate change, health, entrepreneurship and education, supporting marginalized groups and organising youth exchanges. They also engaged in political and religious activities, although to a lesser extent. However, only half reported voting in the last national elections, and slightly over a third said they had voted in local elections. In terms of civic activities, young people reported having shared posts of social importance on social media, participated in youth-led activities organised by universities or schools, and volunteered for causes that were important for them. Only a minority had contacted elected representatives, participated in political campaigns or signed a petition to advance causes they cared about.

These trends should not automatically be interpreted as disinterest among young people, as they can also point to a lack of adequate skills, spaces, mechanisms and tools available to participate. The youth consulted for this Strategy pointed to a lack of confidence among young people about their voice being heard or of their views being considered. To explain the low civic participation, they mentioned young people's fear of repercussions or getting into trouble, a lack of awareness about the mechanisms and importance of participation, and lack of spaces and platforms to interact with each other and with decision-makers. They called for specific actions from authorities to increase young people's participation in peace and security, for example moral and financial support for youth-led activities and youth leadership, youth-led meetings and events, civic skills building for young people, integration of youth participation into educational establishments, the inclusion of young people in decision-making, and broader and more systematic dialogue with youth.

2.4 Economic Security

Concerns around unemployment, lack of decent job opportunities and poverty were key issues for the youth that were consulted in the preparation of the Strategy. Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon: worldwide, it is estimated at 15.6% in 2021, more than three times the adult rate.[39] The Arab Region has some of the highest rates of youth unemployment, especially among young women, which are estimated to be nearly 30% (26% for young men and 42% for young women between the ages of 15-24).[40] The percentage of Arab youth not enrolled in education, employment, or training (NEET)[41] is high, at 20% for young men and t 42% for young women.[42]

All Arab countries have higher rates of youth unemployment than among their populations. Unemployment is particularly high among young women, who carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid home and family care work, limiting their economic participation. A

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39. International Labour Organization (2022). Global employment trends for youth 2022.

40. International Labour Organization estimates for 2021, taken from World Bank Data. Estimates for Palestine are retrieved from the UN Development Assistance Framework for State of Palestine 2018-2022.

41. NEET: Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

42. International Labour Organization (2022). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2022.

staggering 85% of young working-age Arabs work in the informal sector, with limited or no access to social and health insurance or credit facilities.[43]

At the regional level, acute poverty is relatively modest, and before the COVID-19 pandemic, multidimensional poverty -- capturing deprivations in health, education, and living standards that a household or person faces simultaneously[44] -- was in decline.[45] However, multidimensional poverty is still prevalent and not confined to the least developed countries. About 14% of the population in low and middle-income countries are multidimensionally poor[46] with high disparities between rural and urban areas, and different provinces or states within countries.[47] For young people, poverty and a lack of job opportunities are compounded by a lack of access to affordable housing, especially in urban areas,[48] hindering young people's transition to independent adulthood, including for the opportunity to marry and start families.[49]

2.5 Education and Digital Inclusion

Education is a core concern for peace and security for youth all over the world.[50] Global studies show consistent links between inequality in education and the likelihood of violent conflict.[51] Educational institutions also serve as crucial sites for interlocution between young people and the state, and for building social cohesion, peaceful attitudes and a sense of belonging.

The Arab States have achieved large quantitative gains in educational indicators, with high rates of school enrollment, nearly universal access for primary level schooling and up to 70% of access for secondary education.[52] Some discrepancies are notable within the region,

43. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Impact of Covid-19 on Young People in the Arab Region, Policy Brief, 2020; United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era; and International Labour Organization (2022). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2022.

44. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index. Multidimensional poverty considers deprivation across three dimensions and 10 indicators: health (child mortality, nutrition), education (years of schooling, school attendance) and living standards (drinking water, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, housing, assets).

45. United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Poverty and Human Development. Institute (2021). Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking Disparities by Ethnicity, Caste and Gender. The report presents data for seven countries: Jordan, Tunisia, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, and Egypt.

46. United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Poverty and Human Development. Institute (2021). Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking Disparities by Ethnicity, Caste and Gender.

47. League of Arab States, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Children's Fund, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2017). Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report. The analysis covered 10 countries: Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Comoros, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Yemen; as well as an analysis of child poverty in Palestine.

48. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2020). Arab Sustainable Development Report.

49. United Nations Development Programme (2013). Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.

50. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2018). The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

51. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2017). Youth, peacebuilding and the role of education.

52. United Nations Development Programme (2013). Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.

with minority groups and young people with disabilities tending to remain out of school in many contexts.[53] The higher the level of schooling, the fewer women, rural and the poorest populations have access to it.[54] As noted already, the percentage of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the Arab Region is high (19.7% for young men and 41.9% for young women).[55] Besides strengthening universal enrollment in school, government strategies[56] The Arab emphasize developing the skills of young women and men, striving for higher quality of learning, more flexibility and a greater focus on 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, media literacy, creativity and innovation.[57]

Alongside sharing knowledge and skills, schools help shape social and cultural values, norms, attitudes and dispositions. They can play an important role in catalysing increased civic engagement among youth, and furthering the values of peace and non-violence. Yet research indicates that many young people in the Arab Region do not feel safe at school. 41% of students in the Arab region experience bullying and corporal punishment is still practiced in many schools, and remains legal in many countries.[58]

These factors can seriously undermine efforts to promote peacefulness and non-violence, while also more generally impacting the attitudes and norms that young people adopt.

Developing young people's digital skills is critical to their success at school and at work later in life, and can increase civic engagement. Digitalization and the internet have been touted as engines for equality due to their potential to expand opportunities across all segments of society, accelerate social mobility, and give marginalized groups a voice. Social media and digital platforms are valuable for linking young people and their communities and facilitating volunteer action. They can also be platforms for youth to voice their concerns and share their ideas, and to connect to authorities through online services, feedback mechanisms and knowledge platforms.

The Arab region sits slightly above the global average for internet access at home,[59] with internet penetration at 58% in 2017.[60] Yet a notable digital divide persists: more men use the internet than women (61% against 47% in 2019), and more urban households have

53. United Nations Children's Fund (2015). Equity, Educational Access and Learning Outcomes in MENA; and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2021). The Arab Gender Gap Report 2020. Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2021). The Arab Gender Gap Report 2020. Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

55. International Labour Organization (2022). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2022.

56. Based on an analysis of national youth strategies, UN common country analyses and UN partnership and sustainable development cooperation frameworks with governments.

57. Faour, M. (2013). A Review of Citizenship Education in Arab Nations. Washington, DC: Carnegie Middle East Center; and United Nations Children's Fund (2019). MENA Generation 2030. Investing in children and youth today to secure a prosperous region tomorrow.

58. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

59. International Telecommunication Union (2021). Digital Trends in the Arab States Region in 2021.

60. World Bank (2019). World Development Indicators.

access to the internet than rural households (74% against 38%).[61] An estimated 64% of social media users (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others) in the Arab States are under the age of 30 in addition to Snapchat, and women make up about one third of social media users.[62]

Despite the huge benefits from modern communications tools the web and social media are also fertile grounds for misinformation, polarising narratives and violent extremist views that can trust and social cohesion in. As elsewhere in the world, mis-and-disinformation has increased in the Arab Region.[63] Young people consulted for the development of this Strategy called for more action to address hateful narratives on social media. They were concerned about fraud, the misuse of personal data, cyberstalking and surveillance as threats to their personal security. Globally and in the Arab Region, increasing digitalization requires a commensurate increase in citizen's digital, media and information literacy. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, young people across the globe are able to make use of digital tools to come together for civic action online, but at the same time, this exposes young civic actors to increased online harassment and censorship.[64]

2.6 Gender Equality

Strengthening gender equality is key to the stability, security and prosperity of the Arab Region. As reaffirmed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325[65] on Women, Peace and Security, and by the Arab action plan for the implementation of the Resolution,[66] women play a key role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, so ensuring their equal participation is essential. Research has shown that gender inequality increases the likelihood that a state will suffer internal conflict.[67] The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda presents a valuable opportunity to promote gender equality by defining what roles and norms young men and young seek to fulfil, and encouraging more non-violent practices and gender equality principle.[68]

61. International Telecommunication Union (2021). Digital Trends in the Arab States Region in 2021. The exception is the GCC countries: in Oman, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, women were using the internet more than men; in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain both genders were even.

62. Salem, F. (2017). The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policy Making in the Arab World. Volume 7. Dubai, United Arab Emirates: MBR School of Government.

63. Bebawi, S., and Mutsvairo, B. (2019). Journalism Educators, Regulatory Realities, and Pedagogical Predicaments of the "Fake News" Era: A Comparative Perspective on the Middle East and Africa. Journalism and Mass Communication Educator.

64. United Nations Security Council (2022). Youth and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General.

65. United Nations Security Council (2000). Resolution 1325.

66. League of Arab States, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, Arab Women Organization (2016). Executive Action Plan "Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security" 2015-2030.

67. Hudson, V. et al. (2012) Sex and World Peace. Columbia University Press; Caprioli, M. (2000). Gendered Conflict. Journal of Peace Research Vol. 37, No. 1; Caprioli, M. and Boyer, M. A. (2001). Gender, Violence and International Crisis. The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 45, No. 4.; Herbert S. (2014). Links between gender-based violence and outbreaks of violent conflict. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Applied Knowledge Services.

68. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Peacebuilding Office (2018). The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

The Arab States have shown progress towards gender parity in the public sector, women's economic empowerment and secondary education for girls and women. The "Arab Charter on Human Rights" is an important legal document recognizing the equality between women and men in rights and duties, dignity and freedoms, and prohibiting all forms of violence or abuse against women, both in the public and private spheres of life. In recognition of the need to empower women and end discrimination, 20 Arab countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, significant challenges remain. The Global Gender Gap Index, which measures gender parity across economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, suggests that compared to other regions, the Arab States have the second-largest gender gap yet to close of 146 countries included in the 2022 analysis, the Arab States ranked on both sides the average, between 68th to 140th positions.

Young women experience specific forms of marginalization based on their gender and age. There are major gaps in young women's labour force participation and economic empowerment. Inequalities in care policies, social care service provision and social norms contribute to their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.[69] Also, women are twice as likely to be illiterate as men, and the higher the level of schooling, the fewer women attend.[70] Political participation of young women remains low, and despite progress towards the 30% parliament women representation target, women's average share in parliaments among the Arab States is still below 20%.[71]

The Arab States have worked to reduce gender-based violence through judicial reforms, directives and guidelines.[72] Recognising that gender-based violence is a violation of human rights, undermines women's safety, security, mental health and bodily integrity and prevents their human development and fulfilment. Still, in a survey conducted in nine countries of the region, approximately 20% of women expressed concerns about intimate partner violence.[73]

In situations of conflict and crisis, young women face all forms of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation, slavery, forced marriage and human trafficking.[74] Conflict and insecurity also exacerbate the risk of child marriage, a challenge facing several Arab countries, violating the rights of young girls and typically putting an end to their education.

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69   United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

70. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2019). The Arab Gender Gap Report 2020. Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

71.   Ibid.

72. Based on an analysis of UN common country analyses and UN partnership and sustainable development cooperation frameworks with governments; and United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

73. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2020). Rapid Assessment the Effects of Covid-19 Violence against Women and Gendered Social Norms.

74. League of Arab States (2015). Regional Strategy. Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security; League of Arab States, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, Arab Women Organization (2016). Executive Action Plan "Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security" 2015-2030.

[75] Female genital mutilation, a practice in some countries, similarly violates the rights and bodily integrity of young women and girls and impacts their well-being, inflicting severe emotional and physical trauma and potential health risks.[76]

2.7 Youth Mobility

The Arab region's multiple humanitarian crises and high levels of displacement have a notable impact on social cohesion.[77] Displaced youth are particularly at risk of exclusion, due to discrimination and violence in schools, decimation of family assets and livelihoods, limited freedom of movement, restrictive labour laws, and a higher incidence of disability and lack of documentation. Young people whose lives have been disrupted by war or conflict are often at serious risk of facing challenges to mental health and psychosocial well-being.[78]

In 2020, the Arab States hosted around 41 million migrants and refugees, of which 33 million came from within the region.[79] Notably, some 29% of these migrants and refugees are children and young people aged 15-24. In 2018, 61% of all migrants and refugees originated from the Mashreq, while countries in conflict and in the southern tier figure among the top countries for internally displaced persons.[80] In the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, migrant workers constitute between 55-87% of the overall population.[81]

Apprehension and concern about youth, peace and security are often associated with sudden population movements and growing youth urbanisation, whereby young migrants, refugees and internally displaced people may falsely be treated as potential threats and a drain on the social security system, rather than seeing them as the resilient and economically innovative resource they are.[82] For young people, education and work are important drivers of mobility,[83] as are multidimensional poverty and inequality and other factors, such as climate change, instability, violence and conflicts.[84]

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75. Based on an analysis of UN common country analyses and UN partnership and sustainable development cooperation frameworks with governments; and United Nations Children's Fund (2018). A Profile of Child Marriage, Middle East and North Africa.

76. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2019). The Arab Gender Gap Report 2020. Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries where FGM is a common practice have demographic characteristics in common, including a relatively young population, high fertility, high mortality and lower urbanisation.

77. World Values Survey (2022). Wave 7 2017–2022.

78. United Nations Children's Fund (2019). MENA Generation 2030. Investing in children and youth today to secure a prosperous region tomorrow.

79. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2022). Situation Report on International Migration 2021: Building forward better for migrants and refugees in the Arab Region.

80. World Bank (2018). Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict.

81. Based on an analysis of UN common country analyses and UN partnership and sustainable development cooperation frameworks with governments; and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2022). Situation Report on International Migration 2021: Building forward better for migrants and refugees in the Arab Region.

82. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2018). The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

83. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2022). Situation Report on International Migration 2021: Building forward better for migrants and refugees in the Arab Region.

84. NSD-S Hub and Policy Center for the New South (2021). The Challenge of the Youth Bulge in Africa and the Middle East.

Many young people move from rural areas to cities for education and employment. Yet across the world, youth are a consistently underemployed or unemployed group in cities.[85] The Arab Region is undergoing rapid urbanisation: by 2050, 75% of the population is expected to be living in urban areas.[86] Only the countries of the southern tier remain mostly rural.[87] Urban planning does not always adequately account for the needs of young people, often because they do not have the right to vote or participate in local decision-making processes. Young people's grievances in urban areas are often exacerbated by unaffordable housing, high urban land prices, and often legal barriers to mortgage lending.[88]

2.8 Climate and Security

While climate change is rarely the primary cause of conflict, it can hinder peacebuilding and act as a risk multiplier, exacerbating underlying vulnerabilities and compounding grievances.[89] Environmental issues and climate change adversely affect future generations as they enter adulthood, leaving today's and tomorrow's youth facing a greater risk from extreme weather patterns and natural disasters. Unchecked environmental degradation like pollution and poor air quality shortens life expectancies for youth who must endure unhealthy air throughout their lives. The Arab Region is the most water-scarce,[90] food import-dependent part of the world, experiencing faster-rising temperatures than the world average because of climate change.[91] Protracted cycles of drought and loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services contribute to escalating levels of food, energy and water insecurity. With the MENA Regional Climate Week[92] in Dubai, and COP27 in Egypt,[93] climate change is poised to become a top issue in the Arab Region.

Young men and women have been at the forefront of galvanising global action for the environment and against climate change and acting for peace and climate in their communities. A growing number of individuals and youth organizations engage in the topic, and social movements around them have been organised online and offline. This enthusiasm was echoed by the young women and men consulted for this Strategy who prioritised pollution and environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters as security issues. Climate change was the top concern in Gulf Cooperation Council

Migration and the Brain Drain.

85. United Nations Habitat (2020). World Cities Report. The value of sustainable urbanization.

86. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

87. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2016). Demographic Profile of the Arab Region: Realizing the Demographic Dividend.

88. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2020). Arab Sustainable Development Report.

89. Security Council Report (2021). The UN Security Council and Climate Change.

90. 13 Arab States are among the world's 19 most water-scarce. Our World in Data 2022.

91. United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era.

92. Middle East and North Africa Climate Week 2022. Output Report.

93. 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

countries, while pollution and environmental degradation was more of a concern in the rest of the region. About half of the youth consulted felt that the sudden rise of food prices, famine or the risk of famine were causing insecurity in their societies.

Impact of COVID-19 on youth

For young women and men across the globe, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are showing in increased youth unemployment, more difficult education to work transitions and disparities in educational performance. This is particularly true for young people living in rural areas and those with disability, as well as young women. Prolonged lockdowns, school closures and lack of access to recreational, sports and social venues, in addition to job losses and pay cuts, posed a serious threat to the physical and mental health of youth. According to data, severe depression is already a leading cause of morbidity among young men aged 15-24 and young women aged 20-24 in the Arab region. The lockdown and home quarantine increased violence against young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, while making it more difficult for abused youth to access services such as school counselling, hotlines and shelters. Despite significant progress in health over the past decades, Arab youth still suffer, to varying degrees, from inadequate health provision and access to health facilities. This is especially true for youth in rural areas, and youth with disabilities, as well as young people in contexts of conflict.

Sources: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Impact of Covid-19 on Young People in the Arab Region, Policy Brief, 2020; and United Nations Children's Fund (2019). MENA Generation 2030. Investing in children and youth today to secure a prosperous region tomorrow.

Values and attitudes of youth

In a globalised world, young people's horizons are being reshaped by their growing access to information and varied world views via social media and the internet. They are increasingly aware of other young people around the world, a fact which changes and reshapes their expectations and aspirations. Urbanisation and technology use have led to a rise of individualism, to varying degrees in different Arab countries and among socio-economic groups. Nevertheless, religion and family remain the core of Arab societies, and extended families and clan and tribal relationships are central to social organisation, sometimes replacing the role of the state for social protection and security. A survey of 3400 young people aged 18-24 from 17 different Arab countries showed that youth view religion as most important to their personal identity, followed by nationality and family or tribe. Language, gender and Arabic heritage were seen as significantly less important. At the same time, 73% agreed religion plays too big a role in their societies, while 77% pointed to a need to reform religious institutions. Traditional values and culture are held in esteem by youth, with nearly three quarters keen to preserve these values. Most respondents prioritise preserving their religious and cultural identity, although a significant number also call for creating more tolerant, liberal and globalised societies (ranging from 25% to 45%, depending on the subregion).

Sources: United Nations Development Programme (2022). Arab Human Development Report. Expanding Opportunities for an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in the Post-Covid Era; and ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller (2022). Arab Youth Survey 14th Annual Edition. The survey was conducted in 50 cities in the region, covering Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen, with the sample split 50:50 men/women.

3 KEY TERMINOLOGY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3. 1 Definition of Youth

Young people are not a uniform social category. Youth is a transition from childhood to adulthood that has biological, social, economic, political, and cultural markers which are context-specific and socially constructed. As a social grouping, young people are a heterogeneous group determined by several other factors such as their gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity and religion, and should not be treated as a homogeneous group. The statistical definitions of a young people vary across the Arab States and international organisations. The Arab Policy for Youth and Sports defines youth as an age phase between 15 and 25, while the UNSCR 2250 defines youth as those aged 18–29 but notes the variations that exist at national and international levels. The United Nations defines youth as people between the ages of 15 years and 24 years, "for statistical purposes" and "without prejudice to other definitions by Member States." For the purposes of the Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security, the UNSCR 2250 definition is used (ages 18-29).

Sources: United Nations Security Council (2015). Resolution 2250; and United Nations Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly (1981). A/36/215.

3.2 Definition of Peace and Security

The Arab Strategy defines peace as not only the absence of violent conflicts, but also the presence of justice and equity, economic development and functioning institutions as well as societal attitudes that foster peace. In line with the global Sustaining Peace agenda, the Arab Strategy understands peacebuilding as aiming to prevent the outbreak, the recurrence or the continuation of armed conflict. Peacebuilding is treated not only as a post-conflict activity, but should be a priority in all contexts and take place simultaneously with development and humanitarian activities.

The Strategy takes a wide definition of security and relies on the concept of human security, which encompasses several dimensions, including political and community security, economic and personal security as well as food, environmental and health security. This definition is an expansion of the meaning of security as public order and protection against unlawful activities. Security is therefore seen as a subjective state in which an individual or community feels free from want, free from fear and free to live in dignity.

Sources: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 290/66; and United Nations Security Council (2016). Resolution 2282; and Galtung, J. (1964). An Editorial. Journal of Peace Research, 1 (1), pp. 1-4.

3.3 Definition of Meaningful Youth Participation and Youth Leadership

The Arab Policy for Youth and Sports encourages the empowerment of young people to participate in decision-making, and to provide them with the full opportunity to contribute to economic, social and cultural development in their societies. The policy supports providing young people both the choice to make decisions in their lives, and the environment that enables them to advance their own interests and needs. Youth participation refers to young people having the right, the means, the space and the support to engage in positive societal change. It can take place through formal, political processes or non-formal activities such as volunteer action and campaigns. As for supporting youth leadership, it refers to supporting young people to become engaged citizens, creative problem solvers and innovative thinkers, effective leaders, and successful changemakers.

As noted in the UNSCR 2250, participation is meaningful when youth are genuinely heard, and they are able to influence decisions on issues that concern them and take part in implementing and monitoring these decisions. This means moving away from youth being the target of actions, and having a decorative or tokenistic role, to young people initiating and leading action and sharing decision-making as equal partners. From a rights-based perspective, young women and young men have the right to be informed and consulted and to have their voices taken into account regarding all matters that have a direct or indirect impact on their lives and futures. From an efficiency perspective, ensuring that diverse groups of young people are engaged and have a say in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes can significantly improve the relevance, legitimacy, sustainability and impact of peace and security projects. Policies, strategies and programmes related to Youth, Peace and Security therefore need to ensure that young people are guaranteed their right to participate throughout decision-making processes.

Sources: See Hart's Ladder of Participation in United Nations Children's Fund (1992). Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship; and United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy (2021). Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook.

3.4 Guiding Principle: Gender Mainstreaming

To promote equality between all young women and men, gender-sensitivity and gender mainstreaming should be applied throughout the implementation of this Strategy. While the term sex refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. As highlighted in the Regional Arab Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, integrating a gender perspective in questions related to peace and security is of essence.[94] A gender-aware and gender-responsive focus is essential to the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, as young women and men are affected by, and contribute to, peace and security in specific

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94   League of Arab States (2015). Regional Strategy. Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security.

ways, and face different stereotypes and narratives related to their societal roles. Young women may face greater challenges to participate in social and public life, and are affected by violence in particular ways, such as sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence. Young men also face specific challenges such as being forcefully recruited in the context of armed violence, or being expected to adopt aggressive behaviour as a symbol of manhood.[95] Stereotypes related to gender -- viewing young men as security threats and young women as victims -- fail to acknowledge the diverse experiences and needs of young women and men.[96] Policy-makers and practitioners need to adopt a gender-sensitive approach while also identifying the synergies between the Youth, Peace and Security and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.[97]

3.5 Guiding Principle: Leave No One Behind

Youth are diverse. They have different and intersecting characteristics and identity affiliations such as gender, socio-economic background, religion and ethnicity. It is critical to recognise this and to adopt an inclusive approach that takes into account the multiple layers of identity that a young man/woman has, specifically focusing on those who are the most disadvantaged. The "principle of leave no one behind" is a central commitment of all UN Member States to end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals.[98] Applying the principle in the implementation of the Strategy requires reaching out to marginalized young women and men, and combating discrimination and rising inequalities within countries that undermine young people's agency as rights holders.

The principle of leaving no one behind draws attention to how young men and women are simultaneously included or excluded based on different identities, affiliations or characteristics, namely: gender; socio-economic background; educational background; ethnicity, origin, or linguistic group; religion; special needs; political ideology or affiliation; status and experience as a refugee, migrant, or internally displaced person; and geographical location, urban or rural background.[99] Taking an intersectional approach in the planning and implementation of the Strategy is key to ensuring that no person is left behind in the process.

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95   Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022). Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials.

96   United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy (2021). Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook.

97   United Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018). Young women in peace and security: At the intersection of the Youth, Peace and Security and WPS agendas.

98   United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2017). Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development.

99   Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022). Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials.

3.6 Guiding Principle: Do No Harm to Youth and Conflict Sensitivity

The implementation of the three United Nations Security Council Resolutions (2250, 2419 and 2535) requires special consideration for the well-being and safety of youth involved. The principle of do no harm means ensuring the physical and emotional safety of young people participating in peacebuilding activities; providing mental health and psychosocial support to youth affected by trauma arising from violence; sensitivity to inequalities, including those borne out of exclusion and marginalization, divisions and tensions among youth; observing high ethical standards when working with youth; and consciously refraining from raising expectations or giving false hopes to young people. In many contexts across the world, young men and women experience discouraging sociocultural pressures as a result of their peacebuilding efforts as well as political, financial, legal, economic and digital barriers.[100] The principle of do no harm stresses the imperative to identify, avoid and mitigate any possible risks related to or caused by the planned engagement of young men and women.

This approach is closely related to the concept of conflict-sensitivity,[101] which aims at avoiding inadvertently triggering negative impacts when working in conflict or polarised settings while also maximising peaceful impact. This means that plans and actions towards the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda should be based on a clear understanding of the context, of the impact of the intervention on the context; and upon this understanding, avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

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100   Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (2021). If I disappear. Global report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space.

101   Saferworld (2004). Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding.

4 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The priorities of the Strategy are organised around the resolution's five pillars of action: Participation, Protection, Prevention -including spreading a culture of peace, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration.

This Strategy envisions an Arab Region where:

1) the role, influence and meaningful participation of diverse young women and men in decision-making, conflict prevention and sustaining peace are strengthened;

2) the role of young women and men in renouncing violence and promoting a culture of peace has grown;

3) young men and women's rights are realized, and youth in conflict situations and are working on peace and conflict prevention are protected;

4) partnerships with youth on peace and security have increased; and,

5) the specific needs of young women and men and communities in post-conflict contexts are taken into account.

4.1 First Priority Area: Participation

A central priority of this Strategy is to increase the opportunities for young women and men to participate in all levels of decision-making, in order to prevent and resolve conflicts and to promote sustainable peace and security. Participation plays a significant role, as by increasing the opportunities for young men and women to participate and influence decision-making process, it is possible to increase their confidence not only in their own future, but also in the functionality of social structures and national, regional and international institutions, thus contributing to the building and maintenance of sustainable peace.

A new approach towards youth is required, moving from a top-down approach towards dealing with youth as leaders and partners (youth leadership). Meaningful participation of youth goes beyond nominal consultation and requires that young men and women have the opportunity to participate not only in decisions concerning them and their futures, but also in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of these decisions.

The Strategy recognises that young men and women participate in peace and security efforts on two mutually influencing levels: the institutional or formal levels of decision-making, and the consultative and non-formal levels such as social media, volunteerism and civic activism. All youth contributions are valuable and often reinforce one another; safe participation of young people on both levels should be supported and guaranteed.

Meaningful participation requires not only building the skills and capacities of youth, but it also requires dedicating resources and spaces for them: supporting exchanges between young people, partnerships with youth organizations and networks, funding for youth-led initiatives, and showcasing positive examples of youth-led efforts in the media and in policy dialogues. New and innovative tools and platforms for youth to exert influence should be developed while considering accessibility for all young men and women, regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic or religious identity or socio-economic status. The role of civil society as a bridge between youth and decision-makers should be strengthened, as should dialogue between generations.

In contexts of conflict or post-conflict, the Strategy calls for the inclusion and ownership of young women and men in peace and reconciliation processes. Peace processes, now more than ever, demand inclusive and transparent steps and more sustainable outcomes. Young men and women are, and must be, at the heart of peace and reconciliation processes. They play an inherently important role in the prevention of violence, as well as in establishing and maintaining peace and the implementation of peace agreements and reconciliation measures. Successful practices and lessons learned from the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 should be considered in this matter.

Objective 1: Identifying and addressing challenges and obstacles to the meaningful participation of young women and men

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Conducting research and collecting gender- and age-disaggregated data that generates knowledge on youth, peace and security; systematically studying youth needs, priorities and aspirations to support successful and inclusive youth policies and programmes, taking into account the intersecting identities of young women and men, and the diversity of contexts they live in.

- Increasing awareness among institutions and authorities working with youth and working on peace and security topics on the importance and principles of meaningful youth participation; evaluating existing policies and programmes relevant to youth, peace and security.

- Raising awareness among young men and women and strengthening their skills in citizenship, human rights and democratic values, to both improve their ability to participate and understand the decision-making process, and to build their confidence in the systems and structures and participation mechanisms such as political parties and civil society organizations, paying special attention to young women, young people with disabilities, young people in rural areas and living in poverty and marginalised youth.

- Paying attention to the availability of accessible, safe and inclusive spaces for all young women and men to participate, regardless of their background, on the levels of both formal political participation and non-formal civic participation, while strengthening intergenerational dialogue and the collaboration between young people and elders; strengthening the vibrancy and openness of civic space.

Objective 2: Increasing the meaningful participation of young men and women in decision-making on questions related to peace, security and reconciliation processes, and raising awareness of the positive role of young women and men

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Raising awareness among government institutions and authorities about the related United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and the positive influence of young people's participation in peace and security matters; highlighting the specific role of young women in peace and security, and not neglecting the gender dimension when discussing the participation of young people.

- Supporting the systematic participation of diverse youth representatives in political activity and decision-making and in key meetings related to peace and security and their planning and follow-up; fostering joint and inclusive decision-making and co-leadership to enhance trust between youth groups and policymakers and institutions to move away from nominal to meaningful youth participation.

- Engaging young men and women in all stages of programming on peace and security through joint planning, consultations, surveys, youth-led data collection and research and by maximising their contributions to the design, implementation and evaluation of activities, and facilitating usage of remarks with diverse young women and men groups for inclusiveness and accountability purposes.

- Facilitating cooperation and exchanges among youth of the Arab Region in order to share ideas, experiences and good practices; supporting the integration of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda into existing youth civil society networks.

- Strengthening the digital access, digital skills and digital literacy of young women and men for increased civic participation; developing, together with youth, new, safe and innovative participation and influencing opportunities for young people, making use of digital technologies and social media platforms.

Objective 3: Increasing the number of young women and men who meaningfully participate in peace and reconciliation processes

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Strengthening young peacebuilders' capacity in peace and reconciliation processes through training and intergenerational mentoring; promoting young peacebuilders' mutual dialogue and sharing of experiences.

- Ensuring the participation of diverse groups of young women and men, of different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in peace agreements to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these agreements, paying specific attention to the participation of young women, while also including marginalized youth, persons with disabilities, youth in rural areas and refugees and displaced youth.

- Raising the capacity and awareness of officials and other relevant actors to include the voices of young women and young men in various stages of peace processes; integrating of the Youth, Peace and Security perspective in national and regional efforts toward crisis management, conflict resolution and humanitarian and peace work.

4.2 Second Priority Area: Protection

This Strategy emphasises the commitment of Member States to respecting and ensuring the human rights of all individuals, including young women and men. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of young people requires tackling discrimination and removing barriers that prevent them from realizing their rights.

Measures are needed to address structural discrimination that marginalized youth face, such as young people living in poverty or in rural areas, minorities youth, illiterate youth, victims of physical and psychological violence, young people with special needs and young refugees and displaced persons -- and to protect and respond to their special needs on the economic, educational and social levels, working in cooperation with organizations that have special expertise in these issues. Furthermore, action is needed to address school violence and bullying, child marriage and gender-based violence.

Young women and men in all contexts have the right to participate in the life of their communities. They should be empowered to realize their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and access to information. In order to meaningfully participate in building and maintaining peace, young people need safe spaces to come together, express their views and participate in decision-making. Young men and women should be protected from all types of violence. Civil society, religious and cultural organizations play an important role here, embracing young people, protecting them, meeting their social needs, and providing platforms through which they can share their views.

It is important that the activities of young politicians, youth leaders and young volunteers and civic activists are guaranteed and supported through networking and partnerships. Civically and politically active young people, and especially those who are acting for conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation, may face violations and threats, so must be protected from mental, physical, sexual and gender-based violence. Young people must also learn about human rights and about the human rights tools available to them.

In conflict-affected contexts, all young civilians should be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law and the "Responsibility to Protect", an international norm holding each state responsible for the protection of its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.[102] The specific needs and perspectives of young women and men living in contexts of conflict must be taken into account in humanitarian and peacebuilding activities, and young people must be respected, protected and treated humanely.[103] Young victims of conflict-related human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, crime and torture must be supported and protected, and their recovery and reintegration to society ensured.

Objective 4: Strengthening the protection of all young men and women and their rights, and the prevention of the marginalization of young people

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Strengthening the prevention and tackling of racism, discrimination, gender inequality and human rights violations that young people face, paying special attention to marginalized youth, such as young people living in poverty or in rural areas, illiterate youth, victims of physical and psychological violence, young people with special needs, and young refugees and displaced persons.

- Promoting relevant authorities' responsibility and ability to identify and intervene in human rights abuses in a youth-sensitive, conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive manner, including but not limited to efforts to combat violence at home and school and bullying, gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation, paying special attention to making reporting easier and to supporting victims.

- Raising awareness and knowledge among young people about their rights and existing mechanisms for them to claim their rights and seek protection.

- Strengthening the paramount role of civil society and religious and cultural organizations in embracing young people, protecting them, meeting their social needs, and providing platforms through which young people can share their grievances.

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102   United Nations General Assembly. World Summit 2005 Outcome Document A/RES/60/1.

103   Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2020). With us & for us: Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises; and Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action.

Objective 5: Strengthening the protection of all young men and women from all types of violence in situations of conflict

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Raising awareness among young women and men of the key principles of humanitarian law and international criminal law.

- Supporting and protecting young victims of serious international crimes, such as human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, crime and torture; ensuring their recovery and reintegration to society.

Objective 6: Strengthening the protection of young peacebuilders and civic activists and the realization of their rights

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Protecting the civil rights of all young people, their right to participate in building peace and security and to participate in political and public affairs, and reducing and combatting their discrimination and exclusionary treatment.

- Providing a safe and open civic space, and accessible environments for youth civic and political actors, in particular protecting young women, marginalized populations, and youth living amid conflict, insecurity and violence.

- Increasing awareness of officials and legislators as well as young people on harassment, intimidation, hate speech and of the available legal remedies for victims; increasing the digital literacy of young civic and political actors for safer civic participation online.

4.3 Third Priority Area: Prevention and Spreading Culture of Peace

This Strategy emphasises the importance of preventive measures that aim to address the underlying structural factors of violence and conflict, such as inequality, poverty, discrimination, exclusion and human rights violations, and recognises the important role of young people in prevention and in spreading a culture of peace and non-violence.

Young women and men's challenges include economic insecurity, unemployment and precarious work, delayed transition from school to work and family life and adulthood, unequal access to quality education and health services. Insecurity is also caused, for

example, by gender-based violence, bullying at school, and harassment faced online and offline. Special attention must be paid to the multidimensional challenges that young women and men in contexts of conflict are facing.

Young people, both in stable and in fragile circumstances, must be offered economic, educational, professional and social opportunities that support their independence. The safety and well-being of young people must be improved by promoting equality, strengthening the inclusion and civic competence of young people, and increasing their capacity to lead their own lives and contribute positively to society. The right to recreational activities must be safeguarded for young people from all socio-economic backgrounds. Recreational activities help create empowering experiences of belonging and increase social capital and self-esteem.[104]

Addressing the structural factors of violence and conflict, and preventing the marginalization of youth also prevents violent radicalisation, as extremist movements often seek to recruit marginalized young people who long for community and a sense of meaning in their lives.[105] At the same time, young people should not only be seen as victims or potential perpetrators of violence, but also as positive factors and active actors in the prevention of violence and the promotion of peace. The Strategy recognises young people's role in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism, as potential peacebuilders, taking a holistic approach to these security threats.[106] The Strategy calls for a move from a securitised approach towards youth when dealing with violent extremism and unrest to the use of preventative measures and a soft power approach that directs attention to the social and economic needs of individuals and the society.

The role of formal and non-formal education in peace, human rights andnon-violence must be strengthened in education and sports circles through youth work and using sports as a tool for peacebuilding as well as targeting teachers and youth workers, and providing tools to prevent violent extremism. Efforts should be made to combat violence against young women and men, and bullying in schools and educational institutions, on the internet and in recreational activities. Mental health and social skills should be promoted, for example, by strengthening the teaching of emotional and interaction skills. At the same time, young people's role as peer educators should be recognized and their capacities and opportunities to promote social cohesion and peaceful, tolerant, multicultural and interreligious societies should be strengthened. Dialogue among young people with different backgrounds and opinions, and between generations should also be encouraged. The critical role that religious and cultural organizations and leaders play in conflict resolution and reconciliation and promoting a culture of peace should be supported.

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104 See for example: Morton M. and Montgomery P. (2011). Youth Empowerment Programs for Improving Self Efficacy and Self-Esteem of Adolescents, Campbell Systematic Reviews 6(1); and United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Sport for Development and Peace (2022). Thematic paper: The contribution of sport to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

105 United Nations Development Programme (2016). Preventing violent extremism through promoting inclusive development, tolerance and respect for diversity.

106 United Nations. Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism; League of Arab States (2022). Arab Strategy for Countering Terrorism.

Preventive actions must also pay attention to digital technology. Social media and technological advances offer new platforms and networks through which young people can learn, interact with each other and with authorities, and positively engage with their communities. Young people's skills and expertise in creating platforms for civic engagement should be recognized and supported. At the same time, resilience against polarising and extremist thinking, misinformation and other harmful materials shared online must be fostered. Media literacy and critical thinking should be promoted in educational circles and youth work. Preventive actions should also be taken against online discrimination, harassment and hate speech that many young people, especially young women and minorities, are subjected to. These phenomena are not only harmful to the prevention objective, but also undermine and threaten societal trust, peacefulness and cohesion. Prevention should be enhanced by introducing human rights and peace education into educational curricula, by increasing young people's interaction skills and media literacy, and by promoting social justice, equality and equity.

Finally, climate change poses a threat to peacebuilding and security, exacerbating the vulnerabilities and challenges that many young people face in the region. Thus, it is important to combat environmental problems, such as pollution, water-scarcity and the reduction of biodiversity, which threaten young people's living conditions, livelihoods, well-being and perception of safety. It is equally important to recognise that young people are responding to crises and acting for peace and climate in their communities through presenting innovative solutions to bridge the gaps and spear climate action, hence it is necessary to involve them in climate policy decisions and discussions. This positive role of young women and men in climate action should also be further supported and strengthened, and their practices shared and upscaled.

Objective 7: Creating an enabling environment for youth leadership and addressing inequalities that affect the economic, educational and social opportunities of young women and men

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Preventing discrimination and enhancing gender equality in education and the labour market and dismantling structural discrimination that affects segments of young people.

- Improving young people's educational and economic opportunities, especially for young people in rural areas and moving into urban areas, youth with special needs, young migrants, refugees and displaced youth; supporting youth that are not in education, employment or training to find their pathway in society; ensuring comprehensive and responsive services for all young people including on mental health.

- Investing in meaningful activities for young people that respond to their interests and aspirations, and that foster contemporary skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, media literacy, digital and technological literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills.

- Promoting the inclusion of young women and men in the planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives on economic, educational, professional and social opportunities, paying attention to the inclusion of disadvantaged youth in the process.

Objective 8: Strengthening societal resilience, promoting values of peace and non-violence through formal and non-formal education, and strengthening the civic mission of schools, sports organizations and youth organizations

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Strengthening the role of conflict resolution skills and non-violence (including democracy and human rights education, peace education, gender equality, non-discrimination and dialogue) in education, sports and youth active institutions and in the education of teachers and youth workers; conducting research on teaching and spreading the culture and principles of peace and non-violence to understand the best methodology for each context.

- Combating the spread of misinformation and extremist viewpoints by increasing youth media and technological digital literacy and critical thinking skills in schools and youth active institutions, and by providing young women and men with training and activities that increase their resilience against misinformation and extremist viewpoints.

- Raising awareness and communicating to the public, institutions and authorities about the importance of non-violence and protecting young people from violence at home, in school, in sports and public spaces, and about the role of education to spread peace and combat marginalization, violence and conflicts; paying special attention to the digital environment in order to eliminate hate speech, discrimination and harassment that youth may face online.

- Engaging with civil society organizations, religious and cultural organizations whose teachings promote understanding, tolerance and moderation and that promote respect for human values, non-discrimination and equality between young women and men, recognising them as important partners in the Peace and Security Agenda.

Objective 9: Harnessing the potential of young people to promote peace and non-violence and prevent violent radicalisation and extremism

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Strengthening positive narratives around young people as agents for more peaceful and secure societies, countering negative stereotypes about young people and negative gender roles that may contribute to violence and insecurity.

- Supporting peace-promoting youth organizations and peace networks across different spheres of society and developing new channels and mechanisms for young people to promote peace and non-violence; encouraging youth-led initiatives in culture, sports and art to promote peace; recognising the role of young people as experts in social media and new technologies, encouraging them to create new platforms for the promotion of peace.

- Supporting dialogue among diverse young women and men that cross cultural, religious and political divides; collaborating with cross-border youth organizations and networks engaged in dialogue-promotion and peace work; creating an enabling environment for youth to take leadership in community cohesion efforts.

- Promoting intergenerational dialogue and understanding, and dialogue between youth and the authorities responsible for providing services to young people, helping dissolve cultural barriers and avoid intergenerational mistrust, and building bridges between people of different ages, roles and responsibilities

- Moving away from a securitised approach towards youth when dealing with violent extremism to the use of preventative measures and a soft power approach that addresses the grievances of young women and men; acknowledging that the vast majority of youth do not engage in violence, while also recognising young people as essential and equal partners in efforts to prevent violent extremism.

Objective 10: Supporting and harnessing the potential of young men and women to promote climate action for peace and security

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Raising political awareness of and responsiveness to climate and peace issues, highlighting the initiatives led by youth and youth organizations in the climate and peace nexus.

- Raising awareness among youth and civil society organizations on the intersection of the climate and peace movements to enhance collaboration and the uptake of youth-led ideas and initiatives; enhancing quality and access to youth-friendly information on climate change and sustainable peace.

- Supporting networks for young climate activists and peacebuilders to address climate challenges and concerns and exchange knowledge and experiences to aid their climate action and peacebuilding efforts.

4.4 Fourth Priority Area: Partnerships

This Strategy recognises the importance of diverse partnerships and active participation of different types of societal actors as the basis of sustainable peace. Partnerships with young people are essential not only for preventing violent conflict and maintaining peace, but also for strengthening democracy and a rules-based multilateral system. The effective implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda involves many different actors in a cross-cutting manner, including ministries and institutions, the academic community and NGOs, and above all, young people and youth organizations.

Partnerships and cooperation with young people must take place on an equal footing and in a positive spirit of intergenerational dialogue. Young women and men are equal and necessary partners to ensure lasting peace, and should not only be treated as beneficiaries. Through cooperation with governments, young people are empowered and the legitimacy of their actions is strengthened. Successful partnerships with youth require investing in young people's capacity and leadership, supporting their peer-to-peer learning and exchange of expertise, promoting opportunities for their participation, open exchange of information, support and active listening during dialogues. Intergenerational partnerships also require setting out clear expectations to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments, avoiding tokenistic or paternalistic attitudes, finding common issues of concern across generations, and providing mutual mentorship where both young people and older generations can learn from each other.

Cooperation with informal youth groups and movements is also important to ensure pluralism. As the global youth climate movement has shown, young people do not always need an NGO or other organization behind them to create a positive impact. Social media and digital platforms offer new places for discussion and opportunities for broader participation and are increasingly used by youth as tools for creating and maintaining national and international networks.

Partnerships with youth should take place in all stages of the implementation of the Youth, Peace and SecurityAgenda, from design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation, as designated in United Nation Security Council Resolution 2535. Young people should be empowered and encouraged to participate within the government, as young public officials or civil servants working at Ministries and other government agencies, within parliamentary or public consultative councils, as members of political parties, as young researchers and experts in academic institutions, and in inter-governmental organizations, working groups and task forces. The establishment of multi-stakeholder national and regional coalitions

to implement the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda will help in advocacy, knowledge generation on the Agenda, information sharing, coordination and partnership building, and the capacity strengthening of young actors at the national, regional, and international levels.

Objective 11: Strengthening the role of young men and women as key partners in peace work

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Strengthening the capacity of relevant institutions, authorities and policy-makers as well as youth organizations, youth coalitions and youth councils on how to translate the principles of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda into tangible results; promoting intergenerational partnerships between ministries, civil society organizations and youth, intersectoral mentoring and sharing of information and experiences about peace and security topics.

- Promoting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and related goals in dialogue with regional and international partners in all relevant contexts; promoting the direct participation of youth representatives, both women and men, in these dialogues.

- Encouraging youth-leadership and autonomy in the implementation of Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, with clearly defined tasks and responsibilities, with dedicated resources to youth-led initiatives programmes and initiatives that guarantee youth sustained and continued engagement.

- Acknowledging the important role that many young activists already play in promoting peace and security; highlighting their achievements in regional forums and mechanisms and in the media; and investing in media, communication and advocacy strategies around the Youth Agenda in a systematic and continuous manner.

- Encouraging exchanges between youth within the countries and regionally, to share ideas, successful experiences and lessons learned, and encouraging the establishment of national youth coalitions or councils dedicated to implementing Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, which can later form a regional coalition around the Agenda.

4.5 Fifth Priority Area: Disengagement and Reintegration

Under this priority area, as per United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, specific attention is paid to the disengagement and reintegration of former young participants in extremist groups who have engaged in violent conflict and wars, including disarmament and demobilisation. This priority area also addresses reintegration and rehabilitation of young women and men following deradicalisation from violent extremist groups, release from prison or youth detention centres or recovery from social marginalization, including efforts to prevent recidivism and re-recruitment into armed or violent extremist groups. Assisting former young participants in extremist groups, former members of violent extremist groups, former prisoners and detainees to gain a foothold in society helps prevent recidivism, while constituting an entry point for reconciliation and social cohesion in the community as a whole.

Disengagement and reintegration are long-term processes with social, economic and political dimensions. Their success is influenced by factors such as the choices and capacities of the individuals concerned to shape a new life, the overall security situation, family and support networks, and the psychological well-being and mental health of the individuals and the wider community concerned.[107] Community-based approaches that address the root causes of the conflict consider the needs of the individuals as well as the needs of the receiving communities' imperative for the reintegration and acceptance of former young participants in extremist groups, members of violent extremist groups, prisoners and detainees. Accordingly, the community-based approach allocates resources to the benefit of the community in a balanced manner minimising the stigmatisation of the reintegrated youth, and contributing to the reconstruction of the social fabric.

More evidence is needed as to what constitutes successful disengagement and reintegration programmes, as they are under-researched processes due to their opacity and difficulty of access.[108] Yet there are indications that young people themselves constitute key enablers of disengagement and reintegration of their peers, and promoters of acceptance and social cohesion. Generally speaking, ensuring a young person's access to education and work opportunities is an integral part of their disengagement and reintegration, and in the efforts to prevent their exclusion and marginalization. The psychosocial needs and mental health of the individual must also be considered. Disengagement and reintegration measures must also be conflict and gender-sensitive and inclusive. In addition, families of affected young people must be supported during the process.

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107   United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre. Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards.

108   Glazzard, A. (2022) Violent Extremist Disengagement and Reintegration: A Framework for Planning, Design and Evaluation of Programmatic Interventions, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.

Objective 12: Applying community-based approaches to address the special needs of young people formerly engaged in violence or crime and their communities, and strengthening the potential for young people's positive contributions in disengagement and reintegration efforts

This objective can be advanced, for example, by:

- Designing evidence-based, human rights based, responsive and effective initiatives on disengagement and reintegration that are gender- and conflict-sensitive and take into account the context-specific situation of former young participants in extremist groups, members of violent extremist groups, prisoners and detainees, the groups that they may have engaged in as well as the communities they return to.

- Developing regional and context-specific tools to better understand the root causes behind the engagement of individuals in violence, including understanding the role that misinformation plays in the recruitment process of some young people in violent extremist groups.

- Where appropriate, supporting the safe and secure exit of individuals engaged in violence acts by providing sustainable livelihoods and other pathways out of violence, complemented with meaningful participation in decision-making and peace processes; in contexts of conflict, and where applicable supporting to the extent possible the peaceful transition of armed groups and formations into political social entities with meaningful participation of youth.

- Establishing a common understanding of the principles of disengagement and reintegration among relevant stakeholders and adopting the United Nations standards.

- Supporting young people's participation in the planning and implementation of disengagement and reintegration measures; supporting partnerships with youth and peace organizations as well as civil society and cultural and religious organizations.

- Ensuring that former young participants in extremist groups, members of violent extremist groups, prisoners and detainees have access to education and job opportunities while addressing the concerns and grievances of the families of the youth, and the economic and social needs of the communities as a whole.

- Supporting the psychological and social recovery of former young participants in extremist groups, members of violent extremist groups, prisoners and detainees, their families and the communities they live in.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2535 encourages Member States to take action towards the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, for example through developing local, national and regional roadmaps and policies and programmes. Possible ways to implement the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda include:[109]

- Developing Youth, Peace and Security regional and national roadmaps and action plans, integrating the strategic priorities and objectives within existing roadmaps and plans, and integrating the objectives into other relevant frameworks and political processes such as constitutional reforms.

- Crystalizing Youth, Peace and Security policies and programmes, integrating the strategic priorities and objectives into existing programmes, and integrating the objectives into one or more policy domains.

- Developing Youth, Peace and Security-focused projects, and integrating the strategic priorities and objectives into existing projects.

- Developing youth-focused services, creating or reinforcing enabling and supporting services for young people that promote the priorities and objectives of the Strategy.

These options to implement the Strategy should not be seen as contradictory or unintegrated but rather as possibilities to be adapted, combined, and interlinked according to national contexts. A combination of actions at different levels makes it possible to best respond to the varied priorities and needs of young people in different contexts. Regardless of the approach, it is important to ensure a participatory process that engages young people of diverse backgrounds and youth-led and youth-focused organizations and groups, and to apply the principles of gender equality, leave no one behind, conflict-sensitivity and do no harm.

5.1 Actions supporting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda

Governments in the Arab Region are taking more action in applying the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in their youth policies and developing national strategies and frameworks on Youth, Peace and Security. Tunisia was the first country to develop a national strategy for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, based on data collected through a

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109 Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022). Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials.

national youth survey,[110] studying results,[111]and holding wide-ranging consultations with young people -- including marginalized youth, youth organizations, youth in municipal councils, youth in media, and male and female students. The Tunisian strategy revolves around four pillars: participation, culture of non-violence, prevention, and partnerships.

In Jordan and in Iraq,[112] national coalitions on Youth, Peace and Security have been established. These coalitions are strong examples of multi-stakeholder platforms that include governments and diverse youth and civil society groups.

National Youth, Peace and Security coalitions have also been set up or are planned for the State of Palestine, Somalia and Tunisia.[113] In Yemen, the United Nations supported the establishment of Youth, Peace and Security Pact,[114] consisting of 30 young women and men from across the country, to enhance the role of youth in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. National Coalitions seek to elevate the voices of youth, increase youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels and enhance coordination and partnerships between youth and governmental actors working on Youth, Peace and Security.

Youth representation quotas in parliaments and youth councils are examples of mechanisms that enable youth political agency and guarantee that young people's perspectives and needs are taken into account. Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco have adopted electoral youth quotas,[115] enhancing the selection and promotion of young candidates, and helping in increasing the level of political engagement of young people. Jordan has made a set of constitutional and legislative amendments whereby the age for running for parliamentary elections was reduced from 30 years to 25 years. In Qatar, the Youth Council,[116] an advisory committee for the Ministry of Sports and Youth, is elected by the youth to promote their priorities, while also training young people to take leadership and work for conflict resolution. In Algeria, the Supreme Youth Council[117] is a constitutional, elected body of an advisory nature to the President of the Republic, cooperating with the Ministry of Youth to empower young people economically, politically and socially. In Kuwait, a consultative Youth Council is concerned with analysing the reality, needs and potentials of young people and enhancing their participation through consultations and recommendations to decision-makers.[118] In Bahrain, the annual Youth Summit[119] is a platform that brings together young people and officials from the public sector to discuss the challenges of the country and find

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110 Republic of Tunisia Ministry of Youth and Sports. Executive summary of the national youth survey 2018-2019.

111 National Youth Observatory and United Nations Population Fund (2020). Youth facing violence.

112 The Jordan Youth, Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition was launched in 2017, the Iraqi Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in 2020.

113 United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2021). System-Wide Annual Results Report for the Arab Region 2020. As delivered through the UN Development System.

114 United Nations population Fund. A New Youth, Peace & Security Pact for Yemen.

115 Inter-Parliamentary Union. Global data on national parliaments.

116 Qatar Ministry of Sports and Youth. Qatar Youth Council.

117 Algeria Ministry of Youth and Sports. Création du conseil supérieur de la jeunesse.

118 Kuwaiti Youth Council.

119 Gov Youth Empowerment Summit.

creative solutions to these problems. In Yemen, the state created the Supreme Council of Youth with a mandate to supervise public policy, while also guaranteeing a youth quota of 20% in various branches of government.[120]

Overall, Arab countries have adopted multiple approaches in responding to the developmental needs of youth, ranging from mainstreaming youth in national developmental policies to designing and implementing national sectoral strategies focusing on a specific issue. For example, in Iraq, young people were consulted for the 2030 Strategy. The Ministry of Youth and Sports conducted several surveys and engaged youth in the planning of a National Youth Vision 2030.[121] In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth established a political institute to prepare youth leaders to act in both the youth government and the youth parliament. Moreover, the National Committee for Women's Affairs included a pillar on Youth, Peace and Security in the second national plan of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, while the Ministries of Youth and Environment developed programmes focused on the role of youth in the face of climate change impact.

Several countries have adopted national youth laws, development strategies, policies and action plans, with priorities -- many of which intersect with the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda -- focused on education and technology; employment and entrepreneurship; governance, citizenship skills, volunteerism, participation and leadership; and health and recreational activities. In Jordan, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya and Egypt, national youth strategies and visions also include specific priorities related to peace and security, tolerance and promotion of a culture of non-violence. Many have also conducted ad hoc trainings or consultations on Youth, Peace and Security.

On a regional level, the League of Arab States has paid great attention to the youth sector and to young people's essential role in building and sustaining peace and development efforts. The guidance note to the Arab Policy for Youth and Sports (adopted by the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers in 2001) prioritises United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, peace and security and the strengthening of a culture of non-violence and peace, and highlights the role of youth cooperation and peer-to-peer work, while also pointing to the protection of youth in conflict-affected areas. In 2019, the Council issued Resolution Number 907 which included a recommendation to support the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, specifically through the seventh European Arab Youth Forum and Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security held in Budapest, Hungary in cooperation between the General Secretariat, Social Affairs Sector, Youth and Sports Department and the Youth Council of Europe.

It is noteworthy that the first regional workshop on Youth, Peace and Security was hosted by Jordan in 2016, through which the Arab Region youth were consulted to contribute to "The

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120 Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022). Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials. Examples on Advancing Youth, Peace and Security.

121 Iraq Ministry of Youth and Sports, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund (2021). Youth Vision 2030.

Missing Peace" study with the challenges and needs of Arab Region youth. The first-ever Youth Forum in the Arab Region was organised in 2018 in Morocco by the the United Nations Population Fund, the World Organization of the Scout Movement, and the Mediterranean Forum for Youth, launching a Regional Strategic Framework on Youth, Peace and Security, fostering the region's commitment to the Agenda.[122] In 2020, a Regional Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security was established: it is an independent entity and platform that brings together youth-led civil society organizations from the region to hold dialogue, share experiences, take collective action and connect with other stakeholders at national and international levels.[123]

These examples point to the interest that the countries in the region have in advancing young people's active role and contribution to peace and security. Yet continued political will, strengthened partnerships with youth and sufficient investments in the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda are necessary to ensure that meaningful participation of youth in maintaining peace and security is sustained.

5.2 Implementing the Strategy in the Arab States

When deciding on the best ways to implement the Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security, the following may be considered: the national context and the priorities and needs of young women and men, especially those young people engaged in peace and security efforts; existing capacities and resources and the level of support of all relevant stakeholders, including the trust and support of young women and men and the roles that they can take; the risks and challenges related to the social and political context, especially in conflict-affected contexts; as well as past experiences and lessons learned resulting from similar efforts.

Considering that multiple policy domains are related to the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, the Strategy promotes interministerial communication and cooperation to foster a broad awareness of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and policy coherence. Clear mandates are important in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders to ensure implementation moves forwards. Policy actions at different levels and domains should mutually support and reinforce one another.

The implementation of the Strategy on a national level requires establishing a mechanism for its implementation, building the capacities of young people and relevant stakeholders, allocating human and financial resources, collecting data, mapping and research, conducting appropriate communication and advocacy, and monitoring and evaluating the progress made.

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122 United Nations Population Fund, World Organization of the Scout Movement, Mediterranean Forum for Youth (2018). The Youth Forum in the Arab Region.

123 MENA Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security.

5.3 Implementing the Strategy at the Regional Level

The success of this Strategy requires intensified coordination and cooperation at the regional level. A youth-inclusive, regional action plan will be developed and outputs and indicators will be specified to support regional implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Arab Strategy and measure progress achieved. A working group will be set up to develop the previously stated, including Member State representatives, young people and youth organizations, research institutes and experts and international partners. The outputs and indicators will be youth-focused and take a gendered, intersectional and conflict-sensitive perspective. The regional action plan will include three mutually reinforcing streams:

1) institutionalization and policy;

2) strengthening the role of official institutions and youth and their capacity and knowledge solutions; and

3) coordinating partnerships with the bodies concerned with application.

The regional action plan will also include a timeline and a monitoring and evaluation framework, a financing plan as well as a communication and advocacy plan.

1) *Institutionalization and policy*

Progress in the implementation of this Strategy will require strengthening the political will and commitment to UNSCRs 2250, 2419 and 2535; sensitising relevant institutions and stakeholders to the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda; organising regular public and internal presentations and seminars to inform about the relevance of implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, including promoting the leading efforts of members of government, civil society and youth who are championing the Agenda, and collecting and sharing success stories from the region; creating and sustaining opportunities for dialogue, and especially intergenerational dialogue between youth and policy-makers; and creating incentives and recognition for the commitment and dedication of Member States to Youth, Peace and Security actions. It also entails mapping and updating regional strategies and policies to ensure they are youth-inclusive and that the Strategy priorities and objectives are mainstreamed in regional efforts.

2) *Strengthening the role of official institutions and youth and their capacities and knowledge solutions*

Progress will require following a participatory approach of the various partners in the process of implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, as well as upping the capacities of institutions, youth, leaders and policy-makers and other stakeholders through allocated training and programming resources on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Capacity strengthening resources must be gender-responsive, context specific, and tailored to specific needs, with identifiable indicators of change, and should take a long-

term approach. Progress will also require consistent efforts to collect data and evidence on youth and youth programmes; systematic documentation and sharing of information on youth, peace and security initiatives at national and regional levels; guidance and practical toolkits updated or developed for youth and institutions and public officials; and conscious effort to collect data on Youth, Peace and Security and use available data and evidence to inform national and regional policies and programmes on Youth, Peace and Security.

3) *Coordinating partnerships between bodies concerned with application*

Progress will require concerted collective efforts to generate greater impact. A community of practice is the backbone through which this Strategy can be implemented, through which Member States, civil society, young people, and international organizations coordinate and co-lead efforts on the implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy benefits from the establishment of resourced and committed coordination mechanisms and focal point networks to lead, review, monitor, and sustain its priorities and objectives. The community of practice is also essential for taking stock of lessons learned and realigning the Strategy as well as reflection on the continuation in following years. Partnerships and concerted efforts are needed to allocate sufficient financial and human resources in implementing the Strategy and to sustainable financing that will enable youth co-leaderships throughout the Strategy priorities and objectives.

Progress will also be contingent on how Strategy priorities and objectives are presented and communicated between and among stakeholders, the way media reports and projects the contributions of youth to peace and security in the Arab Region, and interactions between youth groups and other stakeholders. Therefore, transparent communication and effective advocacy will be crucial to rebuilding trust and engagement between and among youth, institutions, civil society groups and partners.

As part of the mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security, the League of Arab States General Secretariat will establish a mechanism for periodic follow-up with Member States on the progress made in implementing this Strategy and the regional action plan, which will include performance indicators.

6 CONCLUSION

The Regional Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security reinforces the call for action on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in the Arab States. Young people are the greatest asset of the Arab Region, and are major partners in the realization of the dream of a stable, prosperous and conflict-free region. The majority of Arab youth not only advocate for non-violence, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, but also represent an important resource to be tapped by stakeholders through targeted initiatives to be guided by this Strategy. The Member States of the League of Arab States will also participate in developing a common action plan, including the projects, activities and proceedings helping in achieving the Strategy objectives.

The principles and objectives of the strategy are also consistent with the New Agenda for Peace that came within the high-level tracks within the United Nations Declaration on on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United, entitled "Our Common Agenda," which is an action plan to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the sustainable development goals, and its goal is to establish an action plan to strengthen multilateral agreements, especially the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to accelerate their implementation, and to bring about a tangible change in people's lives. Our "Common Agenda" includes recommendations for engaging youth through a meaningful, effective and diversity-sensitive approach, in addition to the need to listen to youth, and to remove barriers to their political participation, and to measure the progress achieved through the "Youth in Political Life" indicator.

The New Agenda for Peace focuses on promoting peace and preventing conflicts in order to reduce strategic risks, strengthen international capacities, as well as to identify and adapt to new risks, to reshape responses to all forms of violence, to invest in prevention and peacebuilding, to support regional prevention, and to put women and girls at the center of security policy, the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space through a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space.

ANNEX:
Participatory Methodology in the Development of the Strategy

The Strategy was developed through a long-term consultative process engaging multiple stakeholders, first building their knowledge about the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and then consulting their views on the main principles and priorities for the Strategy. The preparation process engaged a diverse group of young people to ensure their views were fully reflected early on.

A participatory approach was also applied to the context analysis, involving consultations with young women and men and government representatives, to increase the legitimacy, relevance and quality of the analysis. Data for the analysis was collected through an extensive review of national youth strategies, United Nations and government development cooperation frameworks, United Nations common country analyses, international and regional studies and reports, and key global indices.

The consultation and data collection process involved over 300 young people, in addition to representatives of the Ministries of Youth and Sports of Member States and experts representing the UN and other partners. A total of six regional consultations and trainings were held between December 2021 and September 2022, as well as a questionnaire to Member States mapping existing efforts on Youth, Peace and Security:

- **Mapping of Policies and Programmes of Arab countries on Youth, Peace and Security, November 2021:** the League of Arab States conducted a mapping of existing efforts of the Member States on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, and more widely, on the engagement and empowerment of young people. A questionnaire was sent to all Member States, later complemented with a desk review of publicly available resources.

- **Advancing Youth, Peace and Security in the Arab Region: Regional Training of Youth Trainers, 13-15 December 2021, Tunis, Tunisia**: co-organised by the League of Arab States, the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States (UNLOLAS) and the Arab States Regional Office to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and attended by 30 youth leaders nominated by 10 Member States,[124] and revolving around the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and the main principles for its youth-led implementation.

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124 Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iraq, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Yemen.

- **Advancing Youth, Peace and Security in the Arab Region: Regional Consultation to Develop the Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security, 16-17 December 2021, Tunis, Tunisia:** attended by representatives of 11 Ministries of Youth and Sports,[125] members of existing national Youth, Peace and Security coalitions and other youth networks engaged in Youth, Peace and Security, as well as regional and international partners supporting Youth, Peace and Security programmes and initiatives. The goal of the consultation was to consolidate existing efforts in the region towards United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, and identify common priorities for the Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security.

- **Orientation Training on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, 28-30 March 2022, Cairo, Egypt:** Saff members from the League of Arab States attended a three-day orientation training on Youth, Peace and Security principles which was facilitated by the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States (UNLOLAS) and carried out by the United Nations Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Office to the League of Arab States and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA). The training introduced the participants to the concepts of meaningful youth participation and civil society engagement, and identified good practices and pathways for implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. A Technical Support Group was established to support the League of Arab States in the development of the Strategy, consisting of focal persons from the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States (UNLOLAS), the United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA), the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for the Arab States (UNDP RBAS), the Arab States Regional Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and two youth representatives.

- **Expert Group Meeting: Developing a Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security for the Arab States, 12-13 September, online:** the League of Arab States organised an online expert group meeting in cooperation with the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States (UNLOLAS), bringing together 11 representatives of Youth and Sports Ministries.[126] The discussions focused on the key priorities and recommendations by Member States for the Strategy, while also mapping out the opportunities, needs and challenges that Member States perceive in its planning and implementation.

- **Youth Electronic Dialogue on Peace and Security:** the League of Arab States organised an online dialogue on 17 September 2022 in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) Office to the League of Arab States and the United Nations Innovation Cell, using an interactive platform to reach a diverse group of young women and men across the Arab Region. The invitation was circulated through League of Arab States and partners' youth networks and social media to attract attention, participation was open to any young people in the Arab Region between the ages of 18-29. The interactive survey revolved around questions

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125   Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Yemen.

126   Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt.

on the meaning of peace and security, the challenges that young people face, and the vision they have for creating more peaceful and secure societies, and was attended by 295 young people (176 women, 114 men, 5 preferred not to disclose their gender), representing at least 13 countries of the region.[127] Students and working young people were represented in equal measures while 11% were unemployed or homemakers. The majority of respondents were from urban areas, with 26% living in rural areas or small towns. The participants could anonymously answer open-ended or close-ended questions in writing, vote in polls and vote on each others' answers.

- **Regional Youth Consultation:** Developing a Regional Arab Strategy on Youth, Peace and Security for the Arab States, 23-25 September, online: the regional youth consultation was organized by League of Arab States and brought together 24 youth representatives from 11 Member States,[128] to outline the key priorities and recommendations by young women and men.

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127   Jordan (n=76), Tunisia (n=9), Algeria (n=9), Saudi Arabia (n=3), Sudan (n=13), Syria (n=13), Iraq (n=15), Palestine (n=17), Lebanon (n=17), Libya (n=12), Egypt (n=51), Morocco (n=31), Yemen (n=19), Other (n=9). The dialogue targeted youth aged 18-29 (n=177) but also included youth <18 (n=64) and >29 (n=54).

128   Jordan, Tunisia, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco.