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**International Council on Social Welfare**

June 2020

### **President's Message: A Changed World**



***Eva Holmberg Herrström, President, ICSW***

After almost 4 months with most of the world in lockdown the COVID-19 virus is still moving around. While Europe and parts of Asia are slowly opening up, much of the rest of the world experience a worsening situation. And even the opening up process have severe restrictions. At this time almost 12 million people have been affected and almost 550,000 died. The figures are probably grimmer in reality as reporting seems to be incomplete in many countries.

We still have a lot to learn about this virus in terms of how long it will last and what effects it will have. It is crucial that the health services are in a position to take care of those who need it. Social distancing and other measures may have to go on for a long time. But the effects go far beyond the illness itself. The global economy is in a huge backlash which it may take years to recover from. Huge support packages are set up, for instance in the European Union.

Unemployment is on the rise, and it will take time before we are back to the situation we had before.

Some jobs are gone for ever. The progress in poverty reduction has come to a halt and poverty is on the way up again. Both UNICEF and Save the Children are very worried about the effects especially for children, and fear that the number of poor children can increase by up to 86 million and reach 672 million by year end.

What we need now is solidarity above all, within the nations, with the neighbouring nations and with all nations. The goal of international development cooperation has for a long time been a percentage of GNI. As GNI is about to fall in most countries, development cooperation will also fall if we do not increase the percentage.



**Unsplash/ Evgeni Tcherkasski**

Another effect of the pandemic is a threat to democracy. Laws are altered or not followed with the argument of combatting COVID-19, increasing the power of the ruling classes. Said to be temporary, we need to watch up so they do not become permanent. ICSW and our members have an important task as watchdogs in terms of both social security and human rights at this time.

**Stay calm, safe and well.**

## FOCUS ON THE MENA REGION: New Political Actors in a World of Inequality

In this edition of ICSW News we take a closer look at the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region with articles from Morocco and Egypt. The presentation of the articles are done by the editor, but you can find the articles in full by clicking at the end of the presentations.

### Rethinking the Social Issue

*Professor Driss Guerraoui at the Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco is also President of the ICSW MENA region.*



Unsplash/Mena

In national contexts marked by worsening social inequalities and deterioration of purchasing power we need to rethink the social question. In a situation with people feeling injustice and frustration a new generation of citizens are emerging - more aware of their rights and powers and more demanding when it comes to dignity, justice and freedom.

We can talk about new and great political actors

made up of «facebookers», bloggers and hackers forming digital networks with formidable

mobilisation and destabilisation capacity. This «party of citizens» can be a vector of change but also an underminer of the foundations of democracy.

There is a need for both supervision, regulation and support by the institutions supposed to be the real intermediaries between the state and the citizens.

Four major challenges need to be taken up:

1) The Governance of Public Policies: Putting citizens at the heart of its concerns, governance need to be more responsible and sustainable.

2) Political: All stakeholders are required to develop a new culture of institutions supported by a systemic approach to economic and social issues.

3) Security: All bodies must ensure the expansion and security of their IT infrastructures to get into the digital age as a platform for democracy renewal.

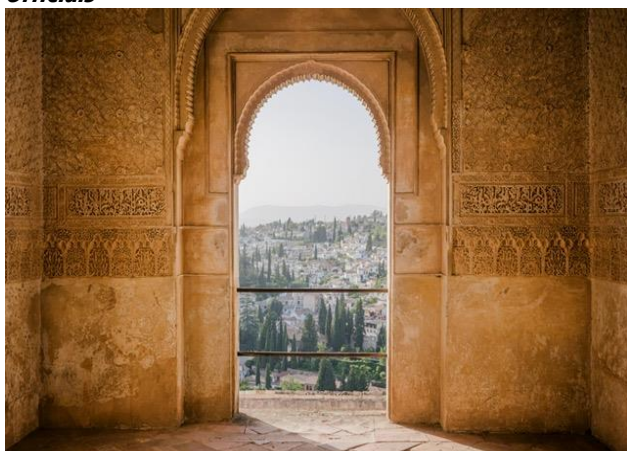
4) Strategy: Constructing institutional buildings that can promote participation at all levels of governance of economy and society, based on dialogue and aiming at ownership.

[Read full article in English](#)

[Read Full Article in French](#)

## The Social Situation in the MENA Region

*Driss Guerraoui and Bachir Tamer, ICSW MENA region officials*



*Unsplash/Victoriano Izquierdo*

The latest UNDP Human Development Report 2019 divides the MENA region countries in four categories: Very high human development (Israel and the six Gulf countries), High human development (Algeria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan, Libya, Egypt and Iran), Medium human development (Morocco, Iraq and the Palestinian Territories), and Low human development (Syria, Djibouti and Yemen).

There are great disparities within and between the countries in education, health, employment and poverty. The population in 2020 is estimated at 464 million people or 5,4 % of the World population. This is estimated to increase to 660 million or 6,8 % by 2050.

### **A low level of education**

The adult literacy rate is evaluated at 79% against 86% worldwide. Some countries have very low rates, such as Yemen with 54 % and only 35 % for women. Average schooling worldwide is 8.4 years, but as low as 3 in Yemen and with 9 other regional countries below the world average.

### **Unemployment: Women and young people most affected**

While unemployment worldwide of young people (15-24 years) is estimated at 12.2 %, it is 26.2 in MENA. Most affected are the Palestinian Territories with 45.9 %. For women, the rate is 39 %, for men 22.8. For young women, the rate is as high as 71.7 % in the Palestinian Territories and 57 % in Libya.

### **Great disparities in health conditions**

There are great disparities in terms of mortality, life expectancy at birth and levels of infant, child and maternal mortality. For infant mortality the figures go from 3 per 1000 in Israel to the highest globally in Yemen and Djibouti. For maternal mortality the figures are down at 3 per 100,000 live births in Israel and the United Arab Emirates, 57 in MENA as such and 248 in Yemen.

### **Significant inequalities in poverty**

While Qatar has a per capita GDP of 126,898 \$ in PPP, Yemen is down at 2,575. With a poverty line at US\$ 1.90 per day, almost 60 % in Syria and Libya live below this threshold.

### **Conclusion**

The MENA region is an area where the demographic pressure is increasing and a population made up largely of young people.

The region is experiencing very serious social problems in many terms, among them very high youth unemployment, very unequal distribution of wealth and high poverty rates. The impact of COVID-19 will worsen the situation and force a radical rethink of social and economic priorities. The major challenge lies in capacity to build new models of development placing human capital at the heart of future priorities.

[\*Read the full article in English\*](#)

[\*Read the full article in French\*](#)

### Social Protection and Economic Reform Policies in Egypt

*Dr. Salah Ahmed Hashem, Secretary General of the Social Work Sector at the Supreme Council of Universities*



*Unsplash/Mika*

This article presents a discussion and national and global history of the terms social protection, social welfare and social security. On the background of UN and ILO definitions it goes into describing Egypt's experience in the field, including an Economic Reform Program supported by the International Monetary Fund.

The article concludes by stating that social protection as a concept is greater than the economy itself and that it cannot be achieved unless governments adopt a holistic vision of economic reform and embodies it in partnership with the civil society and private sector.

[\*Read full article in English\*](#)

### GERMANY: Pursue a strong social Europe in a time of environmental, digital and demographic change



*Unsplash/ Bruno Neurath-Wilson*

The German member association (German Association for Public and Private Welfare/ Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V.) has published an Opinion Paper regarding the European Commission consultation on reinforcing social Europe.

The German Association is calling for the setting of social goals in a European overall strategy from 2021 and for practically-oriented EU structural funding to strengthen social cohesion.

To achieve upward social convergence at a high level, it supports the further implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at EU level and in the member states. In doing so, national, regional and local interests and the interests of civil society should be broadly incorporated in the European process of shaping policy.

[\*Read full article in English\*](#)



**Executive Director - International Council on Social Welfare****Executive Director - International Council on Social Welfare**

The International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), established 1928, is a global, non-governmental organisation in consultative status to the United Nations, and representing a wide range of national member organisations seeking to advance social justice, social welfare and social work and development.

We are now looking for a new Executive Director and CEO to implement the decisions of our General Assembly, Board and Management Committee and having the overall administrative responsibility for our operations.

In addition to the Board and Management Committee the Director will work closely with our President and a full-time Information Officer, based in Uganda.

The applicant can work from any location globally. Fluency in English orally and verbally is a must, other languages an asset. A degree in one of the core areas is necessary in addition to solid project experience in the field, by preference internationally.

Resource mobilisation is a key task, so is ability to communicate with membership and others. Commitment to social inclusion and ethics, knowledge of the operations of the United Nations and other international bodies, analytical skills, ability to build cooperative relationships and understanding of cultural differences will be important.

The Director is at this time offered on a voluntary basis (50%) with a honorarium that can be developed into a salary through project development. Some international travel must be expected.

We are an equal opportunity employer, but especially encourage women to apply.

Expected commencement November 1, 2020.

More information from Eva Holmberg Herrström, President ([eva.herrstrom@icsw.org](mailto:eva.herrstrom@icsw.org))

or Tom Johannesen, Executive Director ([tjohannesen@icsw.org](mailto:tjohannesen@icsw.org)).

Send your application to [tjohannesen@icsw.org](mailto:tjohannesen@icsw.org) not later than August 31, 2020.

Please mark the application and any information request «Executive Director ICSW».

**New dates for ICSW Activity 2020**



*Unsplash Alessandro Moresco*

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, we have rescheduled dates for activities this year:

The Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development in Rimini, Italy is now set for November 8-11, 2020. Early registration deadline is August 31, 2020.

The ICSW General Assembly is set for November 10, 2020 in Rimini. Deadline for nominations to elected bodies is set to September 1, 2020.

With the present gender balance in our Board, women are encouraged to seek nomination

More information on <http://swesd2020.org/>

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**Contributions to the newsletter are welcome!**