30 YEARS SINCE THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC) IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- All countries in the region have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- LESS THAN ONE THIRD of the region’s population is aware that the CRC exists
- In most countries, conditions for children are perceived to have worsened in the past three years

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

- Children and young people currently account for nearly half of the region’s population, presenting a unique opportunity for economic growth spurred by demographic change.
- Regional life expectancy has increased from 52 before the CRC was adopted to 74 today.
- THREE QUARTERS of all children in need of humanitarian assistance in the region live in conflict-affected countries
- Total internally displaced children: 6 MILLION
- Total refugee children: 6.3 MILLION

CHILD PROTECTION

- ONE IN FIVE GIRLS in the region is married before the age of 18
- FOUR OUT OF FIVE children in every country in the Middle East and North Africa continue to suffer from physical or psychological violence at home or at school
## Education
- More children in the region are in school than ever before.
- Over 14 million children are out of school. Without additional investments, the region will face 5 more million children out of school by 2030.
- Half of all children in the region don’t meet even the lowest benchmark for basic skills in reading, writing, and science.

## Poverty
- Extreme poverty affects over 29 million children in the region.
- Nearly half of all children in the region live in moderate poverty and are deprived of basic necessities including education, quality housing, nutrition, health care, safe water, sanitation, and access to information.
- An estimated seven per cent of children in the region are engaged in child labour.

## Health
- Most countries in the region have drastically reduced child mortality rates from 65 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 21 today.
- The neonatal mortality rate has dropped from 28 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 12 today.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Over 90 per cent of children in the region now have basic access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation services.
- 80 per cent of all children in the region have access to basic hygiene facilities.
COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT

GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS, 2018

› 1,910 children killed
› 4,842 children injured
› 1,240 children recruited into the fighting
› 1,272 children detained
› 190 attacks on education facilities
› 176 attacks on health facilities and medical personnel

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

› Diseases that the world has forgotten about have returned to the Middle East and North Africa including polio and cholera.
› Because of violence in Yemen, nearly 400,000 children are severely malnourished and fighting for their very survival.
› The nine-year war in Syria caused vaccination rates among children to plummet from 80 per cent in 2010 to 47 per cent today.
› In Libya, one in five hospitals and primary health care facilities are no longer functioning.
EDUCATION

› Two in five schools in Syria have been damaged or destroyed.

› Over 2 million children –more than one third of Syria’s child population - is out-of-school and 1.3 million children are at risk of dropping out.

› In Yemen, more than 2 million children are out-of-school, an increase of nearly half a million children since the conflict escalated.

› In Yemen, 2000 schools are unfit for use due to the conflict because they are damaged or being used in the fighting or to shelter displaced families.

› Conflict-affected areas of Sudan are home to most of the country’s out-of-school children.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

› At least 70 per cent of sewage in Syria is untreated and over half of the sewerage systems are no longer functional, exposing children to serious health risks.

› Overall, only one third of Yemen’s population is connected to a piped water network.

ENDNOTES

1. UNICEF, MENA Humanitarian Overview, June 2019
2. UNICEF, MENA Humanitarian Overview, June 2019
3. UNICEF, MENA Generation 2030 report, August 2019
4. UNICEF, Out of School Children in MENA estimates, September 2019
6. 52.5 million children, representing 44.5 per cent of children across Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. UNICEF Child Poverty in the Arab States: Analytical Report of Eleven Countries, 2017
7. Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict, June 2019

MEDIA CONTACTS

JULIETTE TOUMA | Chief of Communication
UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
Tel: +962 79 867 4628 | Email: jtouma@unicef.org

TAMARA KUMMER | Communications Specialist
UNICEF Middle East and North Africa
Tel: +962 797 588 550 | Email: tkummer@unicef.org