

Population

Towards Better Life For Population

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- **Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022: Women and Children Axis.**
- **Dialogue Questions with Mr. Sultan Al Kuwari, Vice Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee in the State of Qatar.**
- **Main Article: Qatar Population Status 2019, Through the Report of the Permanent Population Committee.**



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Editorial

I am pleased to present to our valued readers the forty-eighth issue of Sukkan "Population" Magazine. The first topic in this issue is a detailed presentation of one of the axes of Qatar population policy (2017-2022) represented in the "Women and Children" axis, which shows a remarkable increase in the participation of Qatari women in the labour force. Thanks to this increase, the State of Qatar is moving towards achieving the content of Target 5 of SDG 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, namely: "Achieve full and productive employment and providing decent work for all women and men." This progress is linked to the expansion of educational opportunities for women by a set of factors, mainly the State's endeavor to achieve the targets of SDG 4 "By 2030, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The State of Qatar also pays special attention to childhood, as today's children are the future of tomorrow. To this end, Qatar has increased its concern with children, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, culturally, and all that relates to children's well-being and empowerment in education and health. This has resulted in many achievements in this field, the most important of which are the continuous increase in the net enrollment rate in primary education for both male and female children, and the provision of support, protection and all the requirements of comprehensive healthcare for children. This issue's dialogue with Mr. Sultan Al-Kuwari, Vice Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee in Qatar, presents the basic goal of the Population Policy, namely: Achieving balance between population growth and the requirements of sustainable development in a way that guarantees a decent life for the people of Qatar, improves their capabilities, expands their options and raises the level of their participation in the advancement and elevation of the Qatari society. To achieve this goal, the new Population Policy 2017-2022 identifies six axes: Population and Labour Force; Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment; Education, Training and Youth; Public Health and Reproductive Health; Women and Children; and the Elderly and People with Disabilities. Each of these axes has a main goal and a number of sub-goals. The dialogue also clarifies the mechanisms adopted by the Permanent Population Committee in following up the implementation of the new Population Policy action plan; mainly the formation of six working groups representing various ministries and government and non-government institutions, under the supervision of experts and researchers of the PPC Technical Office. The task of these working groups is to monitor and follow up the implementation of every qualitative or quantitative measure included in Qatar Population Policy document 2017-2022.



Dr. Saleh M. Al-Nabit
Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee

The Issue's main article reviews the Report of the Permanent Population Committee entitled "Qatar Population Status 2019: Two Years After the Launch of the Population Policy". The article includes a systematic approach that combines qualitative monitoring and quantitative measurement. It further highlights the key achievements that have been made and the challenges still facing the implementation of Qatar Population Policy action plans.

"Spotlight" section reviews the Planning and Statistics Authority's celebration of the World Statistics Day, which is observed globally on 20 October every five years. This year's celebration was under the theme "Connecting the World with Data We Can Trust", which is the unified theme of the United Nations Statistical Commission, based on the importance of having reliable data in the world.

Dr. Saleh bin Mohammed Al Nabit
Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee

Qatar Population Policy:

Women and Children Axis



Prepared by Dr. Youssef Brik,
the P PC

In the previous issue No. (47) of Sukkan "Population" Magazine, we shed light on the fourth axis of Qatar Population Policy (2017-2022). In this issue, we will focus on the fifth axis: "Women and Children". This axis includes two main components, namely:

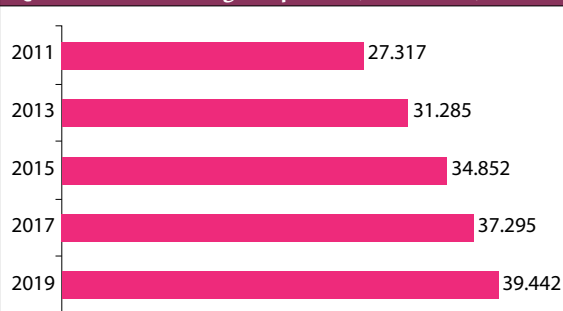
First: Women

With the continued spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), the State of Qatar is relentlessly working to limit its negative impact on women, and to preserve the gains and achievements that have been made in the field of empowering Qatari women that have contributed, alongside men, in the efforts to address this pandemic, which made them appreciated and acclaimed locally and internationally. There are many indicators reflecting the achievements in empowering Qatari women, mainly:

Increased participation in economic activities:

According to the following figure, the number of economically active Qatari women reached (39,442) in 2019, compared to (27,317) in 2011, a total increase of (12,125) women within eight years and an annual increase of (1,516) women. This increase has resulted in expanding the participation of Qatari women in the labour force, reaching about 37% of total Qatari labour force in 2019, up from about 34% in 2011.

Evolution of the number of economically active Qatari women during the period (2011-2019)



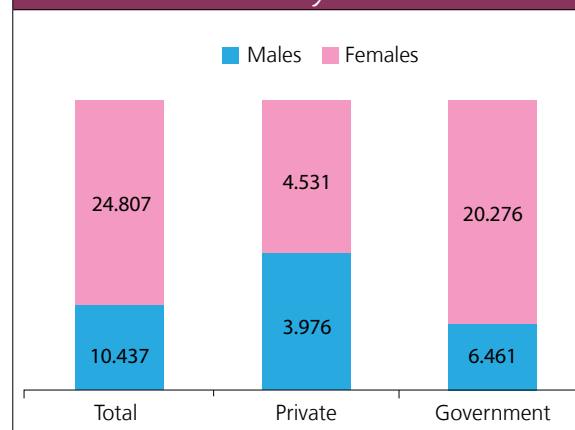
Source: PSA, Sample Labour Force Survey, various years

With the increase in the economic participation rate of Qatari women, Qatar is moving towards achieving Target 5 of SDG 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030: "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value".

Increase in the number of girls in higher education:

The following figure indicates that the total number of female students in public and private universities amounted to more than double the number of male students in the academic year 2018-2019. The number of female students reached 24,807, while the number of male students did not exceed 10,437 during the same academic year.

Number of university students by sex and type of education for the academic year 2018-2019



Source: PSA, Education Statistics, Chapter 4, 2019

There is no doubt that the number of girls in higher education in Qatar is related to the expansion of educational opportunities in this system. This expansion is, in turn, related to a set of factors, mainly the State's endeavor towards achieving the targets of SDG 4: "By 2030, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Participation in public life:

Day after day, Qatari women prove their worth to participate in public life and all vital fields. Whether they are employees, leaders or officials, they provide a qualitative addition to all the tasks entrusted to them. Qatari women have assumed the position of minister, member of a municipal council, ambassador, university president, director of public and private institutions, judge... etc.

The participation of Qatari women in public life has been based on a cultural heritage instated by the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, which emphasizes the active role of women in society, and which enshrines the principle of equality between citizens in rights and duties, stressing the prevention of discrimination on the basis of sex, and equal opportunities to enjoy services and equally participate in all domains.

Qatar National Vision 2030 reflects those constitutional principles and legal legislations related to the empowerment of women. Thus, QNV 2030 affirms support for the role of women in society, enhancement of their capabilities and enabling them to participate in various fields, especially economic and political and those related to decision-making.

In practice, the State of Qatar is the first Gulf country in which a woman held a ministerial position, in 2003, followed by the appointment of three ladies in different ministries in different years. In furtherance of these and other achievements in the field of women's empowerment, Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022, in its primary goal, calls to "support women's societal participation, and provide the necessary conditions to increase their participation in the labour force while preserving family cohesion".

In order to achieve this goal, the Population Policy sets the following target:

Support women's societal participation. This target has been transformed into a set of measures, namely:

- Expand the areas of women's participation, especially in the labour force.
- Expand initiatives and programs that support women's participation in the fields of public life.
- Provide an environment that contributes to achieving compatibility between women's work and family responsibilities (part-time work, remote work ...).

Second: Children

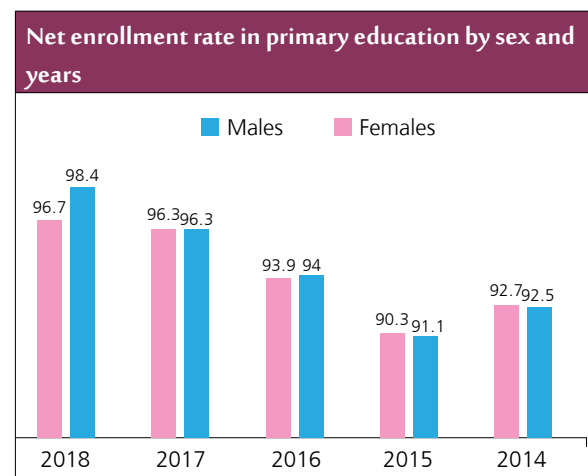
According to the latest statistics issued by the Planning and Statistics Authority, the number of children aged (0-14) years reached (398,435) in 2019. Thus, they constitute about 14% of total population of Qatar. A remarkable convergence is observed in the percentage of male and

female children in total population, accounting for 7.3% for males and 7% for females of the aforementioned total.

The State of Qatar is paying special attention to this age group, considering that today's children are tomorrow's future. Hence, the more you invest in them today, the more you reap achievements tomorrow. Such achievements will contribute to the progress and prosperity of this country. To this end, Qatar has increased its concern with and care for children, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, culturally, and all that relates to children's well-being and empowerment in education and health. This has resulted in many achievements in this field, mainly:

High Net Enrollment Rate in Primary Education:

In embodiment of the State's Constitution, which stipulates in Article (49) the right to education for both sexes, the following figure shows equal educational opportunities, the absence of major differences between both sexes, and that the Qatari educational system has been able to provide equal educational opportunities for males and females without any disparities. The figure also shows a continuous increase in the net enrollment rate in primary education for both males and females, reaching 96.7% for females and 98.4% for males in 2018, as Gender Equality Index reached 0.98.



Source: PSA, Education Statistics, various years

This indicates that Qatar has early achieved Target 5 of SDG 4 "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations."

Support and Protection for Children:

Child protection issues receive special institutional and even societal attention in the State of Qatar. This attention is evident in the multiple government and semi-government institutions supporting children, especially those subjected to abuse. In addition to the Family

Consulting Center (Wifaq) and civil society institutions, government institutions, such as Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women, provide a range of services to children who are subjected to various types of violence, as shown in the following table.

High Basic Vaccination Rate:

In line with Qatar's developmental orientations, government and non-government institutions related to various aspects of childcare seek to provide all the requirements of comprehensive healthcare for children in Qatar. According to the following table, the percentage of children vaccinated during their first year is close to the percentage of coverage in many diseases that affect children during the first year of life.

In support of these and other achievements in the field of childhood,

Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022

calls, in its primary goal to "preserve family cohesion and ensure a safe environment for children."

In order to achieve this goal, the Population Policy sets the following target:

- Ensure a healthy environment in various phases of the child's growth. This target is translated into the following two actions:
- Establish a children's hospital and increase the number of units and departments within the existing hospitals in municipalities.
- Strengthen measures to protect children from exposure to various types of violence and enhance school health services.

Aspects of child support and protection by type of service, nationality and gender, 2018

Type of Service	Qataris			Non-Qataris			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Counseling and guidance	24	21	45	19	23	42	43	44	87
Social, psychological and legal counseling	71	89	160	58	52	110	129	141	270
Sheltering	9	4	13	2	5	7	11	9	20
Rehabilitation services	943	543	1,486	311	229	540	1,254	772	2,026
Total	1,047	657	1,704	390	309	699	1,437	966	2,403

Percentage of basic vaccination coverage during the first year of life, 2014-2018

Type of Immunization and Vaccination	Year				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Tuberculosis (BCG)	90	97	97.3	98.5	98.6
Polio Drops (third dose)	99	99	98.1	97	98
Triple Vaccine (third dose)	89	99	98.2	97.1	98
Hepatitis B (third dose)	89	99	98.2	96.9	98
Measles / Measles, Mumps and Rubella (third dose)	100	91	91.2	99.9	99.9
Hemophilus Influenza (third dose)	89	99	98.2	97.1	98
Chickenpox Vaccination (first dose)	--	100	100	100	99.6
Pneumococcus	100	96.1	96.6	97.7	98.4

Source: PSA, Health Services Statistics, Chapter 6, 2018.

interview with Mr. Sultan Al Kuwari, Vice Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee in the State of Qatar

Q1: What is the main goal of the new Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022?

The main goal of the population policy is: Achieving balance between population growth and sustainable development requirements in a way that ensures a decent life for the people of the State of Qatar, elevates their capabilities, broadens their options, and raises the level of their participation in the advancement of the Qatari society.

Q2: How can this goal be achieved?

To achieve this goal, the new Population Policy 2017-2022 has identified six axes, each of which has a main goal and a number of sub-goals. These axes are:

- Population and the Labour Force (main axis). It aims to: "control population growth rates during the period 2017-2022, leading to a gradual reform of imbalances in the demographic composition." Among its goals are: increasing the number of citizens, supporting the trend towards a knowledge-based economy, limiting the recruitment of foreign workers, getting rid of redundant labour, working on a balanced distribution of workers of different nationalities on professions, and limiting the concentration of certain nationalities in some professions.
- Urban growth, housing and the environment;
- Education, training and youth;
- Public health and reproductive health;
- Women and children;
- The elderly and people with disabilities.

Q3: What are the mechanisms adopted by the Permanent Population Committee in following up the implementation of the new Population Policy action plan?

The PPC has formed six working groups representing various ministries and government and non-government institutions, under the supervision of experts and researchers of the PPC Technical Office. The task of these working groups is to monitor and follow up the implementation of every qualitative or quantitative measure included in Qatar Population Policy document 2017-2022, according to the main and subsidiary authorities concerned with the implementation of this or that measure. After completing the data collection process, these groups present the results of their monitoring and following up the implementation of the population policy action plan to the PPC Technical Office, which in turn audits, reviews and includes these results in the annual national report "Qatar Population Status".



Q4: How do you evaluate the cooperation of the concerned authorities in implementing Qatar Population Policy action plan with the aforementioned working groups?

Based on the fact that the Population Policy is a national project par excellence, and based on what the working groups have accomplished to date, we can say that the ministries and government and non-government institutions concerned with implementing this action plan have been keen to provide us with the data and information necessary for our work. We hope that this cooperation will continue and increase in the coming days.

Q5: What are the practical measures included in the new Qatar Population Policy document which aims to control the rapid population growth rates?

The comprehensive development renaissance witnessed in the



The Path of Sustainable Development in the State of Qatar: Progress and Challenges. An interesting discussion at Qatar Foundation

country necessitated the recruitment of a large number of foreign workers, which in turn led to high population growth rates. Although population growth has decreased in recent years, the new Population Policy action plan has established a set of measures to ensure control of population growth rates; namely:

- Rotation of expatriate labour force: i.e. retaining existing labour force and benefiting from them in new projects, stipulating hiring priority for workers residing in the country by the project-awarded companies.
- Facilitating the employment of family members residing in Qatar.
- Granting incentives to private sector companies to replace expatriates with citizens for suitable jobs in the private and mixed sectors.
- Limiting the rise in number of domestic workers by following up the implementation of the stipulated upper limit for workers for a single family.

Q6: Qatar is considered one of the most attractive countries for expatriate workers. What is the impact of the increase in expatriate workers on the demographics?

Yes, the open recruitment in recent years to cover the accelerating needs of the various development, economic and service sectors has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the population of Qatar, as the total population of the state increased about 25 times between 1970 and 2019 (from 111,000 in 1970 to 2,800,000 in 2019). Although the expatriate labour has played an important role in achieving comprehensive development renaissance and moving forward the wheel of progress that has been and is still witnessed in Qatar at various levels, their large numbers have greatly contributed to causing an imbalance in the State's demographics. This imbalance has had various effects and repercussions.

In this context, Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 has developed a

set of practical solutions that can contribute to counter and limit these repercussions.

Q7: In light of the drives of Qatar National Vision 2030, what are the measures taken by Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 for the gradual transformation towards a knowledge-based economy?

Having a knowledge-based economy is one of the most prominent drives of Qatar National Vision 2030. To achieve this goal, the new Population Policy has identified a number of measures such as: Expanding the scope of automation (i.e. converting machines into automatic ones) in various fields of economic activity; Awarding bids to private sector enterprises according to the extent of their commitment to modernizing and automating their production methods; Focusing on recruiting and retaining expertise and specialists in knowledge-based economy, and reducing reliance on temporary consultants; Utilizing expatriate labour force in developing and training national cadres; Encouraging educational institutions to grant Qataris overseas scholarships in specializations related to knowledge-based economy ... and so on.

Of course, these measures are not achieved in one go. Some of them can be achieved within a relatively short period while others need more time.

Q8: How can the Population Policy contribute to creating a balance between population growth and the requirements of sustainable development?

I referred to the six axes of the new Population Policy, and that "population and the labour force" is the main axis, as it is concerned

with addressing population growth and demographics. As you may well know, the rapid population growth came as a result of bringing in large numbers of manpower needed to implement the ambitious development plans of the State as national human resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of these plans. Today, after the completion of some development projects and the near completion of others, the population of the country has relatively stabilized. It may even begin to gradually decline over the next few years in the event of moving towards a knowledge-based economy, getting rid of redundant labour, reducing the recruitment of unskilled workers ... and other measures proposed by the Population Policy.

Q9: What about the Population Policy's vision of youth empowerment?

Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 has been keen on calling for diversification of institutional initiatives that support youth participation in development, social and cultural fields, and coordination between them, in addition to ensuring equal opportunities for young people of both sexes, as well as other measures to ensure that they are able to participate effectively in all aspects of social life.

This population policy vision is based on the broader vision related to empowering citizens and enhancing their capabilities in all aspects of life by providing educational, health and social services, and activating the values of justice, equity, cooperation, integration and security. Accordingly, the present and future generations will be able to contribute to and benefit from the development process and ensure a prosperous and secure life. All of this is stipulated in QNV 2030.

Q10: In a related context, what are the prominent measures adopted by Qatar Population Policy regarding women empowerment?

The State of Qatar has repeatedly affirmed its keenness to empower women and provide support and the environment that would enhance their political, social, economic and cultural rights. This concern is embodied in QNV 2030 and the National Development Strategies. In addition, the Population Policy calls for supporting women's societal participation and creating the conditions required to increase their participation in the labour force while maintaining family cohesion and ensuring a safe environment for children, through a set of measures, such as:

Expanding the areas of women's participation, especially their participation in the labour force.

Expanding initiatives and programs that support women's participation in public life.

Providing an environment that contributes to achieving compatibility

between women's work and family responsibilities (part-time work, remote work ...).

Q11: In conclusion: As a statistical advisor in the office of HE President of the Planning and Statistics Authority, kindly tell us about the use of statistical data and indicators in formulating and following up the implementation of Qatar Population Policy.

The vital role of statistics in the work of states and political, economic and social organizations and institutions, whose major projects or decisions are often linked to the availability of relevant statistical information, data and indicators, is well known to all. Thus, the first Qatar Population Policy (2009-2014) and the second one (2017-2022) would not have seen the light without the statistical data provided by Qatar Statistics Authority, which has modern databases that conform to international standards.

In order to justify the preparation of the aforementioned Population Policy, it was necessary for those in charge to monitor the State's population reality and know the peculiarities of the Qatari society and its needs, which required the use of accurate and reliable statistical data and indicators produced by Qatar Statistics Authority.

In a related context, statistical data and indicators were not only necessary to justify the preparation of the Population Policy, but also to follow up on its implementation, by monitoring the progress made in implementing the procedures and targets included in its action plan, in addition to the statistical presentation and analysis of issues related to the State's demographic and developmental reality. This, in turn, has contributed to drawing a comprehensive panoramic image on the population and development status in Qatar by highlighting the most prominent achievements and existing challenges.

All of the above confirms, once again, the difficulty of making a sound population and development planning without the availability of accurate, comprehensive and reliable statistical data and indicators.

The success of development plans and projects depends on the availability of such data and its use in the form of statistical figures and indicators that reflect the studied reality.



Main Article

Qatar Population Status 2019

Permanent Population COMMITTEE REPORT



Prepared by Dr. Youssef Brik,
the PPC

Within its annual plan, the Permanent Population Committee issued its national report entitled "Qatar Population Status 2019: Two Years After the Launch of the Population Policy", which adopts an integrated methodological approach that combines qualitative



monitoring and quantitative measurement, highlighting the most important achievements as well as the challenges still facing implementation of the action plans of this policy.

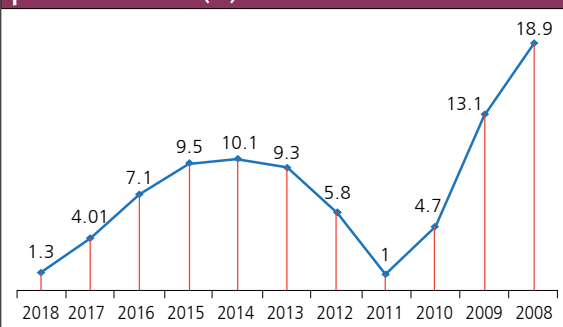
The aforementioned report contains six chapters, in addition to the preface, introduction and conclusion. Each of these chapters deals with one of the axes of the population policy, reviewing the goals and procedures which have been translated into a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators as methodological tools for monitoring progress in implementing the population policy. These chapters are:

First: Population and the Labour Force

In light of the results of the follow-up of the implementation of the population policy goals, and based on the latest local and international statistical data, the report reviews the main achievements in the field of population and the labour force, such as:

Decline in the annual population growth rate in Qatar: Despite the overall increase in total size of the population during the period 2008-2018, the annual growth rate fluctuated during the period 2008-2014. However, this rate has been declining significantly since 2014, as shown in the following figure:

Annual population growth rate in Qatar during the period 2008-2018 (%)



Source: PSA

This decline is due to the change in the structure of development activities and the State's implementation of many development projects that require intensive labour. In addition, the State has taken measures to limit labour recruitment and get rid of the redundant labour, which is called for by the Population Policy.

- Increase in the rate of skilled and highly skilled labours: The radical treatment of the demographic imbalance related to the increase in the number of expatriates lies in the realization of QNV 2030 that calls for moving towards a knowledge-based economy. Modernizing and automating the means of production and services will necessarily lead to reducing the need for manpower on the one hand, and improving the quality of recruited foreign labour on the other hand.

In this context, the report indicates that the proportion of highly skilled workers (legislators, senior management personnel, managers, specialists, technicians and assistant specialists) and skilled workers (clerks, service workers, vendors in shops and markets, and skilled workers in agriculture and fishery) rose from 23% in 2010 to 31% of total number of non-Qatari workers in 2018, and from 28% to 34% of total Qatari and non-Qatari workers.

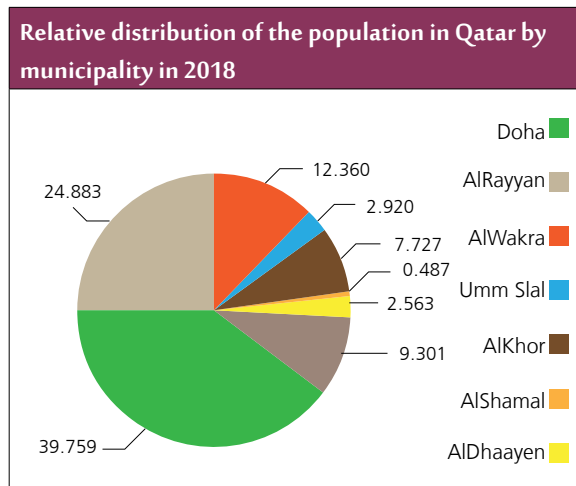
Despite the progress made in achieving Qatar Population Policy goals, the second phase of the follow-up of implementing the action plan of this policy has indicated that there are a few challenges that prevent the achievement of some goals, mainly:

- Decrease in crude birth rates of Qataris.
- Decrease in total fertility rate of Qatari women.
- High proportion of gender above normal levels.

Second: Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment

In light of the results of following up the implementation of the sub-goals during the second phase, and based on the latest local and international statistical data, the report reviews main achievements in the field of urban growth, housing and the environment, such as:

- Relative decline of the population of Doha: Despite the overall increase in total size of the population of Doha during the period 2010-2018, the percentage of population decreased from 47% to 39.8% of total population of Qatar during the same period. The following figure shows the relative distribution of the population in Qatar by municipality in 2018.



Source: PSA, Sample Labour Force Survey - Statistical Analysis 2018

- Air Quality: Maintaining and protecting air quality from various sources of emissions is one of the main global issues and a concern for people who suffer from overcrowding and urban and industrial sprawl at the expense of green spaces, in addition to the huge increase in the number of vehicles on the roads and inside major cities. Thanks to the efforts made by the concerned authorities in Qatar, the air in Doha city is free from pollutants.

Despite the relentless efforts to transform urban centers (existing and new) outside the two municipalities of Doha and Al-Rayyan into areas of attraction and stability for citizens and residents, the results of the second follow-up phase of the implementation of the population policy action plan indicate that there are a few challenges that hinder the implementation of some measures in order to achieve the relevant goals. The main challenges here are:

- Imbalance in the geographical distribution of the population.
- Insufficient incentives to settle in municipalities outside the

municipalities of Doha and Al-Rayyan.

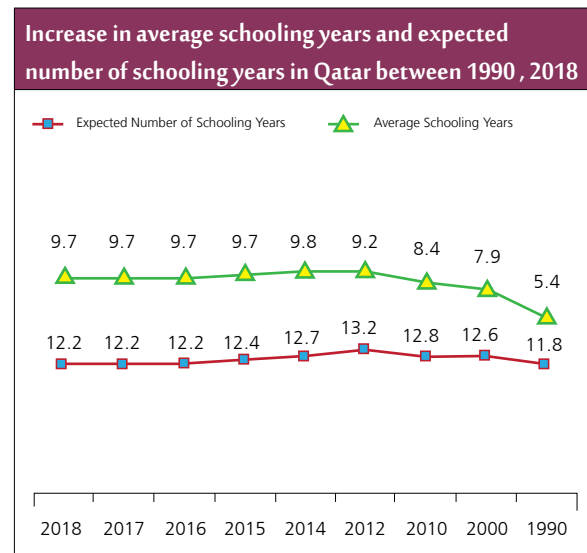
- Lack of national programs or plans that encourage owners, investors, designers and real estate developers to provide green and environment-friendly buildings.

Third: Education, Training and Youth

The results of the second follow-up phase of implementing the population policy indicate tangible progress in achieving the population policy goals in the field of education, training and youth.

The most important indicators of this progress are:

- Increase in the average schooling years and the expected number of schooling years: Perhaps some of the most important results of the State's sponsorship of the education sector in recent decades is the increase in the expected number of schooling years and the average schooling years between 1990 and 2012. Later on, the two indicators moved towards relative stability as shown in the following figure:



Source: hdr.undp.org/en/composite/trend

Besides health and per capita gross national income, the average schooling year index and the expected number of schooling years have contributed to the ranking of the State of Qatar among the countries with very high human development, as it ranked 41 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Program in 2019.

Improvement of the educational level of youth aged 15-24 years: In 2018, the number of youth in Qatar reached about 350,000, which is about 13% of total population of Qatar. Qataris represent (16%) of total population of this age group, while non-Qataris represent (84%). Given the importance of this segment, Qatar has paid special attention to youth of both sexes, by empowering them and raising their various fields of participation. The educational system has succeeded in improving the levels of education and knowledge attainment of this

segment; males and females alike. The following figure shows that the educational levels of Qatari youth underwent some transformations between 2011 and 2018, as holders of university degrees and above, in addition to diploma and high school, showed an increase in conjunction with an increase in educational attainment of Qatari youth, as the percentage of those who finished primary school and above increased to 99% in 2018.

As for the challenges that prevent the achievement of some of the population policy goals in the field of education, training and youth, they are mainly:

- Lack of a clear research agenda and a national policy in the field of scientific research.
- lack of a national training framework.
- Lack of a national strategy for youth.

Fourth: Public Health and Reproductive Health

The results of the second phase of the follow-up phases of the implementation of the population policy shows that important achievements have been realized in the field of public health and reproductive health, represented by a number of indicators, mainly:

- Expansion of health facilities: Qatar's advanced ranking on the Legatum Prosperity Index reflects the efforts aimed at upgrading the Qatari health sector, which has witnessed large investments in health infrastructure, especially the construction of new hospitals, health centers, clinics and other health facilities, as shown in the following table:

Increase in life expectancy at birth: According to the estimates in the UN Human Development Reports issued in different years and listed in the following figure, life expectancy at birth in Qatar increased from

(71.9 years) in 1998 to 75.5 years in 2007 and then to 80.1 in 2018.

Thus, life expectancy in Qatar is 7.5 years higher than life expectancy worldwide, which was 72.6 in 2018, according to UNDP Human Development Report in 2019.

Despite the many achievements that have been realized in the Qatari health sector, which are witnessed by all and sundry, the results of the second phase of the follow-up phases of the implementation of the population Policy action plan indicate that there are a few challenges that hinder the implementation of some measures in order to achieve the relevant goals. The main challenges here are:

The biggest challenge facing the health sector is the ability of this sector to keep pace with the growing population of the country.

There is no real drive at present to provide supportive programs that will limit the decline in fertility and reproduction rates among Qatari women.

Lack of programs or plans to provide a hotline to help the public deal with simple cases.

Fifth: Women and Children

The results of the second phase of the follow-up phases of the implementation of the second Qatar Population Policy indicates prominent achievements in the field of women and children, represented by a number of indicators, mainly:

Increase in Qatari women's participation in economic activities:

According to the Planning and Statistics Authority data, the number of economically active women in Qatar reached (285,843) in 2018, at a rate of 13.7% of total economically active population in the country.

The number of economically active Qatari women reached (38,554) in 2018, representing 13.5% of total economically active women in Qatar.

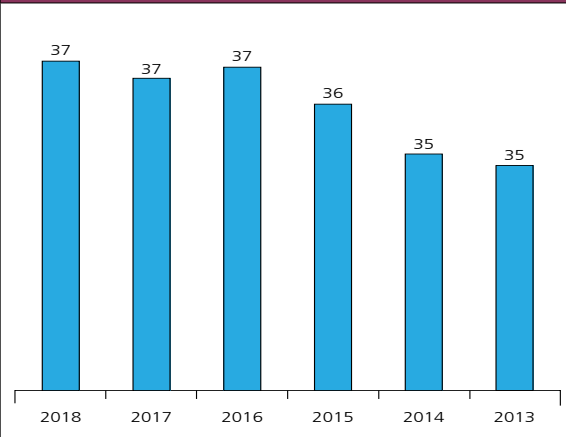
The following figure shows an increase in Qatari women's participation rate in economic activities from 34.7% in 2013 to 37.1% in 2018.

Number of hospitals, health centers, clinics and pharmacies, 2012-2018

Description	Years						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government Hospitals	9	9	9	10	10	14	14
Private Hospitals	4	4	4	4	4	5	6
Health Centers	23	21	21	22	23	26	27
Children's Emergency Center	7	5	5	5	5	5	5
Hamad Foundation Outpatient Clinics	8	8	8	9	11	62	53
Medical Commission	1	1	1	3	4	4	4
Qatar Petroleum Clinics	10	12	5	22	22	19	19
Private Sector Clinics	373	419	487	642	853	417	490
Private Pharmacies	304	340	147	414	449	265	327
Private Test and Radiology Labs	54	62	76	62	74	50	54

Source: PSA, Health Services Statistics, various years

Qatari women's economic participation rate between 2013 and 2018



Source: PSA, Labour Force Survey, various numbers.

- ❖ Comprehensive health coverage for children: According to mid-year estimates of 2018 issued by the Planning and Statistics Authority, the number of children (0-14 years) reached more than 385,000, i.e. about 14% of total population of the country.

In line with the State's development orientations, government and non-government institutions related to various aspects of childcare seek to provide all the requirements of comprehensive healthcare for children in Qatar. According to the report, the percentage of children vaccinated during the first year is close to the percentage of coverage of many diseases that affect children during the first year of life.

Despite all of the above, the results of the second phase of the follow-up phases of the implementation of the Population Policy action plan indicate that there are a few challenges that hinder the implementation of some measures in order to achieve the goals related to women and children. The main challenges here are:

- ❖ Women's participation in public life, especially the political one, is weak.
- ❖ Urgent health services for children in municipalities.
- ❖ Protecting children from harmful practices resulting from the spread of modern means of communication.

Sixth: The Elderly and People with Disabilities

Based on the results of the follow-up of the implementation of the sub-goals during the second phase and based on the latest local and international statistical data, here is a review of the prominent achievements that have been realized in the field of the elderly and people with disabilities.

- With regard to the development and improvement of care services provided to the elderly and people with disabilities, the health services provided to members of these two groups, whether in specialized centers or at home, are continuously improving.

In addition, there are entertainment places, special clubs and entertainment trips and celebrations of national and other occasions.

- There are also special outlets to facilitate the transactions of the elderly and people with disabilities in a number of ministries and government and non-government institutions. Practical measures have been taken to meet the needs of this group when designing and planning modern cities, facilities and streets, although some of them are still in the process of legislation. The Urban Planning Department at the Ministry of Municipality and Environment sets special conditions and specifications that take into consideration the needs of these two groups while designing buildings and facilities. There are also plans in some ministries and government agencies to involve the elderly in the car parks assigned for people with disabilities.
- The main goal of the Population Policy in the field of the elderly and people with disabilities meets with SDG 10, which affirms the need to reduce inequalities based on sex, age and disability, and with SDG 11 related to "making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Hence, Qatar has provided access to green spaces and public places for all segments of society, especially women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Despite the achievements realized for the elderly and people with disabilities, the second phase of the follow-up phases of the implementation of the Population Policy action plan shows that there are a few challenges that hinder the implementation of some measures in order to achieve the relevant goals. The main challenges here are:

- Rehabilitation plans for the elderly people coming to retirement are still in the planning phase. The programs of the Empowering and Caring for the Elderly Center (Ehsan) are limited to individual skills, such as training on the use of smart phones and their applications.
- A significant number of Qatari employees retire before the legal retirement age, especially Qatari women, which poses a challenge to the population policy that calls for increasing the percentage of citizens among the economically active in population.
- Developing statistical work mechanisms for people with disabilities, especially population censuses, so that these mechanisms can monitor their actual size in society.

In conclusion, the total goals of the second phase of the follow-up phases amount to (18) goals, and (77) procedures, (38) of which have been implemented in whole or in part, i.e. 62% of total quality measures.

Based on the above, it appears that the development process in Qatar

is a product of multiple sectoral development policies, which has undoubtedly affected the reality of many measures to follow up the implementation of Qatar Population Policy in its second phase, thus highlighting a natural disparity in the levels of implementation of the follow-up measures. A number of factors intervene in explaining this disparity in the levels of implementation of policy measures, including those related to the behaviour of individuals and groups, especially those related to women and youth choices and their orientations towards marriage, establishing a family, reproductive levels ... etc.

This requires long-term measures to affect the components of natural growth, especially those that could help raise the percentage of Qataris of total population of the country. There are as well the long-term interventions that are related to the introduction of profound adjustments in the structure of the national economy, such as adopting a knowledge-based economy, so that the nature of the population policy axes, their components and possible areas of intervention play a vital role in determining the levels of achievement.

SPOTLIGHT

Planning and Statistics Authority Celebrates World Statistics Day (20 October 2020)



The Planning and Statistics Authority celebrated the World Statistics Day, which is observed worldwide on the twentieth of October every five years. The celebration this year came under the theme “Connecting the World with Data We Can Trust,” which is the unified theme of the United Nations Statistical Commission based on the importance of having reliable data in the world we live in today. The celebration was limited to electronic platforms due to the current exceptional health conditions associated with Covid-19.

On this occasion, HE Dr. Saleh bin Muhammed Al Nabit, President of the Planning and Statistics Authority, stressed the importance of the World Statistics Day for statistical data producers and users in the public and private sectors. “The celebration reminds us of the achievements made in the field of the availability of official statistics related to the economic, social and environmental conditions in the country, and indicators related to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030” he added. Dr. Al Nabit thanked the partners in the public and private sectors for providing the Planning and Statistics Authority with the necessary data, and also thanked all citizens and residents for their cooperation with the PSA by providing the required data, wishing everyone continued health and wellness.

The United Nations General Assembly, during its sixty-ninth regular session, held on 3 June, 2015 in New York, approved the celebration of the World Statistics Day every five years in all member states after it was celebrated for the first time in 2010, in accordance with

Resolution 64/282.

The PSA celebration comes to affirm the importance of statistical data in the process of sustainable development and the formulation of strategies that achieve it, highlighting the essential role statistics play in monitoring the progress made by countries towards achieving their development goals in specific time periods. This, in turn, will help to draw a clear picture of institutions in order to make appropriate decisions and interventions in national development projects on the one hand, and rapid and accurate response to emergency conditions on the other hand.

In July 2019, the Planning and Statistics Authority launched “Qatar Census 2020” project, which is one of the most important and broadest statistical projects that are implemented once every five or ten years, as it draws an accurate and complete picture of the society during a specific period of time. Its data represents a key base for population, housing and establishments statistics that are of interest to planners, researchers and decision-makers to draw up effective strategies and plans towards achieving sustainable development. The methods used in the implementation of “Qatar Census 2020” are among the most up-to-date statistical methods, as they depend on modern technology and electronic linking between databases. The PSA has effectively completed most of the phases of “Qatar Census 2020”, but the current exceptional circumstances have led to suspension at the phase of the final fieldwork for researchers.

Main activities and events of the Permanent Population Committee and its technical office in Q3, 2020

Celebrating Qatar Population Day 2020

The Permanent Population Committee has been celebrating Qatar Population Day in late October of each year, with the aim of raising awareness of population issues, in the context of comprehensive development plans and programs, especially Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy. This year, Qatar Population Day coincides with the continuing outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), which has led to great economic, social, psychological and health repercussions on various countries of the world, including Qatar, which has dealt with this epidemic efficiently. The credit goes to the enhanced health system that QNV 2030, the National Development Strategy 2018-2022 and Qatar Population Policy 2017-2022 have called for its development and support, in order to serve the population of Qatar, citizens and residents alike, and to provide them with the best preventive and curative health services.



Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Permanent Population Committee celebrated Qatar Population Day 2020 (for the first time since the issuance of the Cabinet's Resolution to organize "Qatar Population Day" in the month of October every year) on social media. There, the PPC introduced itself and its achievements and shed light on Qatar Population Policy (2017-2022).

The Permanent Population Committee, as a national entity working to achieve harmonization between population requirements and sustainable development, was established pursuant to Cabinet Resolution No. (24) of 2004 that defined its responsibilities and the entities represented therein.

Pursuant to the aforementioned resolution, the PPC developed the first Population Policy (2009-2014) and the second one (2017-2022), with the aim of improving the life quality of Qatar population, both citizens and residents.



The second Qatar's Population Policy includes a set of plans and programs aimed at bringing about quantitative and qualitative changes in the population variables, in order to ensure a decent life for all of Qatar's population, raise their capabilities, expand their options, and elevate their levels of participation in the advancement of the Qatari society. The Population Policy Document (2017-2022) includes six axes:

1. Population and the Labour Force: It aims to control population growth rates during the period 2017-2022, in a way that leads to gradual reform of demographic imbalances.
2. Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment: It aims to develop and create urban centers away from Greater Doha, to provide a clean urban environment, and to ensure the sustainability of natural resources.
3. Education, Training and Youth: It aims to improve the quality of education and training and expand opportunities for youth participation of both sexes in society and public life.
4. Public Health and Reproductive Health: It aims to improve public health of the population, ameliorate reproductive health and provide its services in line with the increase in the population and its geographical distribution.
5. Women and Children: It aims to support the societal participation of women and provide the necessary conditions to increase their participation in the labour force while preserving family cohesion and ensuring a safe environment for children.
6. The Elderly and People with Disabilities: It aims to enhance the active participation of the elderly and people with disabilities in various community activities, enable them to integrate into society, and continuously improve their means of care.

The mission of the Permanent Population Committee is not limited to setting up the population policy, but also to follow up the implementation of that policy in cooperation with ministries and

government and non-government institutions concerned with the implementation of its action plan. Achieving the goals and targets of the Population Policy depends on the concerted efforts of and coordination among all ministries, institutions and agencies in the country.



Six working groups, supervised by the Permanent Population Committee, follow up the implementation of the Population Policy action plan, as each group follows up the implementation of one of the aforementioned axes, via questionnaires designed by experts in the PPC Technical Office to monitor the progress made by the authorities concerned with the implementation of the Population Policy and the obstacles preventing that.

As a result of the diligent annual follow-up of the Population Policy action plan, the PPC annually prepares its national report on Qatar Population Status, and present it to decision-makers to take appropriate decisions regarding the scientific materials contained therein concerning the population and development situation in the country.

In addition to all of the above, the Permanent Population Committee, since its establishment to present day, has made innumerable achievements, such as issuing 18 serial studies entitled "Population Studies", 47 issues of "Sukkan Magazine" and 6 reports on "Qatar Population Status", in addition to a set of other published and unpublished reports and studies.

In a related context, the PPC was able to organize many meetings (such as Qatar Population Day that is celebrated in October of each year), conferences (such as the Arab Conference on Population and Development held in Doha) and workshops (such as the workshop on the foundations of managing migrant workers: opportunities and challenges in the GCC countries).

Just as it succeeded at the national level, the PPC has been able to make remarkable achievements at the regional, Arab and international levels, as it has proved its presence in these arenas. In the field of regional cooperation, the PPC participates in the meetings of the Population Policy Committee in the GCC countries, where it actively

participated in discussing the general framework of the population strategy in the GCC countries, and designing a questionnaire for population data in the GCC countries.

The PPC also contributes to promoting joint Arab population work by participating in many events, especially the meetings of the Arab Population and Development Commission of the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States. At the level of international cooperation, the PPC works with the UN Population Fund on various issues related to population and development based on the cooperation agreement signed between the two parties.

The PPC has been actively contributing in the field of local, regional, Arab and international cooperation, and has been working to implement the media plan in support of the Population Policy through media support team comprised of employees of the PPC Technical Office.

In conclusion, the PPC is proud of the achievements it has made so far, thanks in the first place to the continuous support and constant care by the Council of Ministers and to the fruitful cooperation with government and non-government bodies and institutions. Thanks and appreciation are also extended to the great efforts made by the Technical Office experts, researchers, working groups and others who have facilitated, supported and highlighted the work of the PPC, which seeks to achieve a better life for everyone living on the soil of this good land of our beloved Qatar.

On this occasion, HE Dr. Saleh M. Al Nabit, Chairman of the Permanent Population Committee and President of the Planning and Statistics Authority, stressed the importance of the role of the Permanent Population Committee in following up the implementation of Qatar Population Policy in cooperation with all partners, as well as the implementation of sector policies related to Qatar's National Development Strategy 2018-2022.



On the occasion of Permanent Population Committee's celebration of Qatar Population Day, Mr. Abdul Hadi Al Shawi gave an interview to Qatar Radio in which he emphasized the peculiarity of this celebration, recalling the content of the Qatar Population Policy (2017-2022) and its most important axes and goals.

Q: The Permanent Population Committee celebrates Qatar Population Day every year at this time. Can you please tell us about the peculiarity of your celebration for this year in light of Covid-19 Pandemic?

Qatar Population Day for this year coincided with the ongoing outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, which has had major economic, social, psychological and health repercussions on all countries, including the State of Qatar. Thus, the Permanent Population Committee celebrated Qatar Population Day 2020 via social media (for the first time since the Council of Ministers issued a decision to organize “Qatar Population Day” in October every year) through which we tried to introduce the Permanent Population Committee and its achievements, on the one hand, and highlight Qatar Population Policy (2017-2022) on the other hand.

Q: On this occasion, we hope that you tell us about the principles and benchmarks of the Population Policy of the State of Qatar 2017-2022?

Qatar Population Policy is based on the consideration that the human being is the ultimate goal and instrument of development. The strategic positions expressed in the constitution and in the speeches and sayings of His Highness the Emir, and in the various laws, legislations and programs of the state agencies, underscore the goals of Sustainable Human Development so as to improve the quality of life of the population, enhance their capabilities, broaden their options and raise their level of participation for the advancement of Qatari society in economic, political, social, cultural fields, and so on. The population policy must take into consideration the distinctive characteristic of the Qatari society as a multinational and multi-ethnic society of diverse culture, values and patterns of behaviour. Moreover, since the population of the State of Qatar consists of citizens and expatriates of different nationalities, it is imperative to strike a balance between citizens and expatriates, to achieve the aspirations of citizens to fully reap the gains of their own country, and to achieve the aspirations of residents seeking a decent life that guarantees their rights and takes into account the characteristics of each group without prejudice to the general values of society or endangering its security and stability.

Qatar Population Policy is keen to guarantee the human rights of citizens and residents alike: everyone’s right to live in security and peace, everyone’s right to adequate housing and access to healthy food and clean water, everyone’s right to freedom of opinion and expression while respecting the views of others, and everyone’s right to exercise his religious rites and private life without interference or coercion.

Furthermore, Qatar Population Policy is also based on a set of principles derived from the provisions of the tolerant Islamic Sharia,

the values of the Qatari society, the Constitution of the State of Qatar, and the speeches and directives of His Highness the Emir related to population issues, and Qatar National Vision 2030, and is guided by the international and regional references ratified by the State of Qatar.

Q: What is main goal of the Population Policy?

The main goal of Qatar Population Policy remains «achieving balance between population growth and sustainable development requirements, so as to ensure a decent life for the inhabitants of Qatar, enhance their abilities, broaden their options and raise their participation for the progress and eminence of the Qatari society».

Q: How can the mentioned goal be achieved?

To this end, the new Population Policy 2017-2022 has identified six axes, each of which has a main goal and a number of sub-goals. These axes are:

1. Population and the Labour Force (main axis). Its goal is: “Control population growth rates during the period 2017-2022, in a way that leads to gradual reform of demographic imbalances.” Its sub-goals include: Increase the number of citizens, support knowledge economy policy, reduce the recruitment of foreign workers, get rid of redundant labour force, achieve a balanced distribution of workers by nationalities and professions, and reduce the concentration of certain nationalities in some professions.
2. Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment. Its goal is: “Create and develop urban centers away from Greater Doha, to provide clean urban environment and to ensure the sustainability of natural resources.” Its sub-goals include: Transform urban centers (existing and new) outside Doha into attractive areas for citizens and residents, solve the housing problem for citizens and residents, especially those with low-income, provide a clean urban environment and ensure sustainable natural resources, especially water and energy.
3. Education, Training and Youth. Its goal is: “Promote quality education and training and expand the participation opportunities of youth of both sexes in society and public life.” Its sub-goals include: Promote high-quality education and training opportunities, generalize and organize the academic advising in all educational institutions, prepare a specific agenda for Qatari scientific research, and ensure youth participation.
4. Public Health and Reproductive Health. Its goal is: “Improve public health of the population, ameliorate reproductive health and provide its services in line with the increase in the population and its geographical distribution.” Its sub-goals include: Reduce pressure on government health facilities and services and provide supporting programs to reduce the decline of fertility and childbearing rates among Qatari women.

5. Women and Children: Its goal is: "Support societal participation of women and provide the necessary conditions to increase their participation in labour force while preserving family cohesion and ensuring a safe environment for children". Its sub-goals include: Support women participation in society and ensure a healthy environment at different stages of child development.
6. The Elderly and People with Disabilities. Its goal is: "Promote effective participation of the elderly and people with disabilities in various community activities, enable them to integrate into society and continuously improve means of their care." Its sub-goals include: Enable the elderly and people with disabilities to participate effectively in community activities, and develop and improve care services provided to these two categories

Q: We know that one of the most important tasks of the Permanent Population Committee is to follow up the implementation of the Population Policy action plan. Can you tell us about the follow-up system in place?

The process of monitoring and following-up is an integral part of project management, as it completes the project implementation work and helps ensure that the project achieves its desired goals. Therefore, PPC has decided to form working groups representing all ministries and government and non-government institutions. Such groups work under the supervision of experts and researchers of the PPC Technical Office, as they monitor and follow up the implementation of every qualitative or quantitative procedure included in Qatar Population Policy Document 2017-2022, by agencies involved in the implementation of this or that procedure. Each year, these groups present the results of their monitoring and follow-up process for the implementation of the Population Policy's action plan to the PPC Technical Office, which in turn audits and reviews them, and then includes them in the annual national report entitled "Qatar Population Status Report". Then, it submits the report to the Council of Ministers to express its opinion before it is approved for publication.

Q: How do you evaluate the cooperation of government and non-government institutions involved in the implementation of the Population Policy with PPC-assigned working groups to follow up the implementation?

The current cooperation between the agencies involved in the implementation of the Population Policy action plan and the working groups tasked with following up on this program is characterized by seriousness and eagerness to facilitate the task of these groups by interacting with them to the maximum extent possible and providing them with the necessary support, given that such cooperation will achieve a national interest that will benefit everyone with no

exception. Each of the six groups in charge of following up the implementation of the Population Policy includes a number of members representing all ministries and agencies. Thus, PPC Technical Office obtains information on the extent to which each ministry or agency has implemented the procedures set by the population policy in order to achieve the aforementioned goals. Every year, the PPC Technical Office issues a detailed report on "Qatar Population Status" that includes the goals that have been implemented and what has not yet been implemented; and indicates future challenges and priorities for follow-up.

Q: The PPC has diligently documented the results of its annual follow-up of the Population Policy action plan in its "Qatar Population Status Report". Tell us about the importance of this report and its content.

The PPC Technical Office prepares a report on Qatar Population Status annually after accomplishing each follow-up phase of the Population Policy implementation. This national report aims to provide decision-makers with a comprehensive profile of the demographic reality at various levels, dimensions and developments, after one year of following up the implementation of Qatar Population Policy. The report relies, in its approaches and treatment of various population issues in Qatar, on a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators that are monitored by working groups tasked with following up the implementation of the population policy.

Along with the preface, introduction and conclusion, the report includes 6 chapters, each of which deals with one of the axes of the population policy and its various dimensions that introduce the goals, targets and procedures, which have been translated into a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators as methodological tools to monitor progress in implementing the population policy. Within this context, the various axes and dimensions of the population policy may be dealt with according to a unified analytical methodology that answers the following basic questions:

- What are the legislations, measures and practical procedures taken to achieve the goals and targets of the Population Policy in any of its dimensions?
- What does the current statistical profile look like for each dimension?
- Are there obstacles that prevent the achievement of the goals and targets of the Population Policy in any dimension? What is their nature, if any?
- What should be done in the future for a creative and more effective implementation of the Population Policy items related to each of the axes and dimensions of this policy?

Answering the previous questions helps evaluate each phase of the Population Policy implementation in terms of drawing a

comprehensive (qualitative and quantitative) picture about the status quo of the various population policy axes and its dimensions, highlighting the challenges they face, and defining the priorities of the next phase of implementation follow-up.

Q: In connection with previous question, can you talk about the reasons for preparing Qatar Population Status Report for this year, and whether or not it will include an assessment of the implications of Covid-19 on the population and development in Qatar?

The preparation of Qatar Population Status Report 2020 has coincided with the continued outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19), which forced all countries to apply home quarantine, travel ban, and cultural and social activities suspension, which created health, economic, social and psychological crises, as well as other crises that affected various groups of population, especially the most vulnerable segments, such as women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. According to the latest Sustainable Development Report 2020, issued by the United Nations bodies operating in the Arab region, led by the Social and Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the pandemic will reduce the likelihood of achieving SDGs, such as ending poverty and hunger, ensuring health and well-being, and providing decent work and economic growth. This will be of particular interest to some Arab countries that record the world's highest levels of income inequality, poor health care, poor education, high levels of unemployment and gender inequality. This makes it more difficult for many such countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Like other countries, the State of Qatar has been affected by the repercussions of the global closure due to this pandemic. Nevertheless, Qatar has largely succeeded in confronting this virus in an efficient manner based on three main pillars, namely: protecting citizens and residents in Qatar, ensuring the resilience of the healthcare system, ensuring that the impact on the economy and society is at the lowest level, ensuring commitment to international responsibilities, and standing with other countries that need help.

Due to the difficulty of accurately monitoring the repercussions of Covid-19 at the present time, as it is still too early to accurately estimate the impacts that the pandemic will have on the world, including the State of Qatar, an in-depth study can be conducted in the future after the end of this pandemic. The study will witness the participation of experts representing economic, demographic, health, education and other relevant sectors in the state, in order to enumerate the various aspects of these repercussions and to develop appropriate mechanisms to confront them in a way that guarantees correcting the relationship between population and development.

Q: You have mentioned that the State of Qatar has succeeded in confronting Covid-19 due to the resilience of its healthcare system. Since one of the axes of the population policy is related to health issues, kindly tell us about this sector in light of the outbreak of the pandemic.

Drawing upon the testimony of the World Health Organization as expressed by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, the State of Qatar has been able to deal effectively with Covid-19 pandemic, thanks to its strong health system. Qatar is one of the countries that have an advanced health system at the preventive and curative level and have clear plans to prepare and respond to health emergencies and pandemics through the use of highly trained health cadres and health institutions equipped with all the required supplies.

Since day one of recording the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Qatar on 27 February 2020, Qatar has taken all transparent and speedy procedures and measures to make appropriate and timely decisions based on the main pillars: conducting Covid-19 test, providing the necessary treatment free of charge for all, providing safe living conditions and work environment for all, and implementing awareness campaigns about preventive measures to combat the Coronavirus. This, in turn, has contributed to providing health safety for citizens and residents alike, bringing all conditions under control, and preventing the virus from threatening the society.

Nevertheless, the pandemic has taught us that cities will only become sustainable and resilient in the face of pandemics if they are designed from a health perspective. A healthy city is a city that always works to improve the environmental, social and economic aspects that affect health, because a person's health is a result of conditions prevailing at home, school, or the workplace, as much as it is a result of the quality of healthcare facilities. Accordingly, the challenge associated with healthy cities is the ability to establish an early warning system in such cities to predict epidemics and diseases by monitoring the sewage network and supporting healthy and sound urban behaviour for citizens, by developing engineering or urban designs that allow the residents of these cities to practice healthy behaviours within urban growth boundaries.

Q: Finally, would you please tell us about the next phase of the follow-up of implementing the Population Policy in terms of when it will be launched, its priorities and so on?

The next phase is the fourth phase of following-up the implementation of Qatar Population Policy, which starts in November 2020 and ends in October 2021, as the PPC Technical Office will begin preparing an action plan for this phase in early November.

Since the PPC Technical Office is keen to control and unify the workflow among the six working groups tasked with following

up the implementation of the new Population Policy, this action plan will include a timeline for each of the follow-up steps, and a follow-up questionnaire, which is a systematic tool for monitoring the population reality of the State of Qatar. The questionnaire will be designed in a way that allows working groups to electronically fill out and return to the PPC Technical Office easily, along with copies of the relevant documents attached.

In addition, the aforementioned action plan will include a simplified and extensive presentation of the work methodology at this phase, along with instructions for filling out the follow-up questionnaire that can make it easier for working groups to record quantitative and qualitative data with high accuracy and duly document its sources, as no information will be of value if documented incorrectly.

The PPC Technical Office experts and researchers assigned to supervise the six working groups will meet with the head and members of each of these groups to discuss the third phase's priorities for each of the six axes of the Population Policy. In this meeting, the Technical Office will present a table containing a summary of the results of the third phase of follow-up in each of the six axes of the Population Policy document. This will serve as a foundation for identifying the priorities of the fourth phase, which will focus on the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on population and development issues.

PPC Technical Office Participation in the 2nd Regular Session of the Arab Council for Population and Development (21 December 2020)

The Arab Council for Population and Development held its Second Regular Session meeting, in which the PPC participated via "Microsoft Teams" platform on 21 December 2020. Mr. Sultan Ali Al-Kuwari, Vice Chairman of the PPC at the Planning and Statistics Authority, and Mr. Abdul Al-Hadi Al-Shawi, Director of PPC Technical Office at the Planning and Statistics Authority took part in the meeting. Experts and officials from National Population Councils and Committees from 15 Arab countries also participated in this meeting, namely: the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Tunisia, the Algerian Republic, the Republic of Sudan, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait, the State of Libya, and Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Somalia, the Republic of Yemen and the Republic of Iraq.

The meeting discussed the following seven items:

First Item: The First Regular Session of the Arab Council for Population and Development

In this session, the report prepared by the Council's Technical Secretariat on the role of national population councils and committees in responding to the covid-19 pandemic was presented.

Second Item: Crystallizing the Arab Strategy for Population Planning

During the meeting, the initial version was approved and the implementation plan for the Arab Strategy for Population Planning was prepared. It was emphasized that the strategy is considered a population planning, not a population strategy or policy, and that it came to diagnose the demographic and social situation. The adopted analysis discussed several points, on top of which: the justifications for the strategy; the vision and values; the diagnosis of the demographic situation in the Arab countries and the demographic dynamics and the prospects for its development; the demographic dividend; some social and economic features of the Arab countries and the impact of the Covid-19 crisis; the population policies and planning in the Arab countries; and the challenges facing the Arab region in relation to population planning.

- The initial version will be sent to countries via delegates in late January 2021 to submit their views before it is circulated.

Third Item: Repercussions of the Covid-19 Pandemic

- A paper was prepared on the epidemiological situation and population in the Arab countries with the aim of providing data and statistics for analyzing the repercussions of Covid-19 pandemic on different population groups according to several demographic factors such as gender, age group and geographical distribution.
- Three sections were discussed as follows:
- Arab countries are failing to benefit from the demographic dividend due to the pandemic. It has been agreed to hold a meeting of experts through visual communication technology to study the effects of the pandemic on reaping the fruits of the demographic dividend, in addition to preparing a paper on the demographic dividend in Arab countries, especially during the pandemic, and circulating it to member states.
- The second section is about the countries' preparedness to face disasters and crises. It has been agreed to hold workshops to enhance the capacities of National Population Councils and Committees in this field.

Fourth Item: Exchange of experiences and review of best practices in the field of population and development

Technical experiences were compared, the best practices in the

application of population policies were reviewed, and ways to transfer knowledge and exchange experiences in the field of population and development were discussed (Sudan/Jordan experience).

Fifth Item: the 54th Session of the Commission on Population and Development

- The Arab stances were prepared and coordinated on the participation in the 54th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, the theme of which is: “Population, Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Development”.

Sixth item: Population Development Composite Index (PDCI)

- The Arab countries were introduced to the Population Development Composite Index (PDCI). They were also trained on how to obtain data related to this index, through holding a training workshop for members of the Arab Population and Development Councils aimed at strengthening capacities to deal with this data.

Seventh Item: Determining the points of contact in the Arab countries.

- The points of contact for the authority concerned with the population file were identified in each of the Arab countries to follow up on the file of the Arab Council for Population and Development.

During the meeting, the attendees also discussed the possible repercussions of Covid-19 pandemic on the future of the population in the Arab world, the challenges facing countries in containing the repercussions of the pandemic in the economic, social and health fields, as well as the population measures and policies that Arab countries can take to confront the consequences of the pandemic,

especially on the affected social categories and the most vulnerable groups. The meeting also discussed several scenarios related to the expected cases and deaths, which would help provide an idea about possible future of Covid-19 outbreak, and the use of such scenarios as a tool for planning future policies and strategies to contribute to mitigating the effects of the pandemic. Participants also discussed the role of national population councils and committees in strengthening national responses to limit the spread of the pandemic and its effects on the population and the most important challenges in this regard, as well as ways to benefit from Arab experiences and best practices in confronting the virus and limiting its spread.

A short documentary on “The impacts of Covid-19 pandemic and the economic, social, health and psychological damage it has caused on various population groups in the Arab world” was also shown. The film documents this phase that the whole world is witnessing and the population status in the Arab region during this crisis. It reviews the impact of the pandemic on population groups including: women and girls, the elderly, and youth and children, and how each of the groups deals with the consequences and repercussions of the pandemic, especially on the most vulnerable groups (the poor, refugees, irregular workers, immigrant workers and needy families, especially those headed by women). It also sheds light on the population issues that emerged during the crisis and emphasizes the need not to overlook any of them.

Strengthening the response of National Population Councils and Committees to face Covid-19 crisis, the Technical Secretariat of the Council has commissioned two experts to prepare a guide to strengthen capacities and support the institutional development of members of the Arab Council for Population and Development and enable them to contribute to achieving SDGs and the Action plan of the International Conference on Population, along with their inclusion in the strategic programs of the population councils and committees and its operational plans. Now, this guide is being printed in preparation for its publication and distribution to member states.

PPC Technical Office Participates in the Fourth Doha International Conference for the Blind Under the Theme: “Socialization of a Blind Child”

11-13 October 2020

The PPC Technical Office took part in the Fourth International Conference for the Blind, which is organized by the Arab Union for the Blind in its headquarters in Doha via videoconferencing, under the theme: “Socialization of a Blind Child” from 11-13 October 2020. With international, Arab and local participation, the 3-day conference discussed over four sessions, ten working papers submitted by seven countries.

In multiple dialogue sessions, the participants discussed a number of issues related to people with disabilities through many axes, mainly: the role of the family in the upbringing of a blind child, how to integrate a blind child into society, and developing his/her scientific and cultural skills.

Dr. Khaled Al-Nuaimi, President of the Arab Union of the Blind, stated that the Fourth Doha International Conference on Socialization of a Blind Child will formulate recommendations that address such issues, whether in civil society or through governmental society, in a bid to overcome the social and economic challenges in the Arab world. This can be achieved by strengthening national capacity-building for blind children and integrating them into society to be an effective component, by devoting a supportive developmental approach based on empowerment and rights, and reviewing Qatari efforts to promote human development within Qatar National Vision 2030.

Conference Objectives & Outcomes:

Socialization

Socialization is the formation of a child’s personality, ideas and beliefs from early years of childhood to the remarkable development phase. Consequently, the parents’ adoption of any upbringing method will play a pivotal role in influencing the child, either positively or negatively. Parents are the primary caregivers for the child who is naturally and emotionally attracted to those around him.

The importance of these early phases of the child’s life has been stressed, as they are reflected on his/her life and relationships, as well as the importance of the safe emotional bond between parents and children. The parents, to be able to provide support to a child with a disability, require a high level of awareness of the nature of the disability, and how to deal with and accept it, as well as the importance of understanding the child, his/her nature and what he/she needs to grow in a healthy way and live with and accept his/



her disability. However, this also requires many institutional and community resources that support these families and provide them with what they need.

Integration of a Blind Child into Society

This issue is related to several axes, the most important of which is the integration of a blind child into the family and the school culturally, athletically and socially. The integration process also engages researchers and those interested in the issues of disability and blind people in order to raise society awareness in general.

Research indicates that European societies depend entirely on the process of integrating the blind on a large scale. Al-Azhar University is one of the most prominent institutions that carried out the integration process at the Arab level.

Integration can be considered a tool that contributes to the education of children with special needs through the schooling process, since this process enables blind children to acquire new skills that contribute to the development and formation of their personality during various educational phases. The researchers emphasize that integration in the pre-school phase is of great importance because it enables the child to understand the basic concepts, as it is the phase of frankness between children.

The integration approach appeared in 1960s and 1970s, where developed countries adopted this idea in favour of children with visual impairment, placing them in a less restrictive environment and creating an educational system that is providing social justice and education for all. Unquestionably, the prevailing trend is towards

an effective school that can meet the needs of all students without exception. Therefore, the integration of people with visual impairment has become a fait accompli imposed by legislation in most countries due to the effectiveness of schools and institutions for the visually impaired people in the formation of the child's personality. Also, providing a realistic environment with diverse experiences for children with visual impairment enables them to form correct concepts of the world around them, which, in turn, has contributed to reconsidering the trends of society and criticizing the prevailing educational method in private institutions. Hence, the concept of integration, which included many aspects, has developed.

Difficulties and obstacles of integrating people with visual impairment

Upon the application of integration process, many difficulties and obstacles emerged, most notably:

1. Parents of normal children were afraid of the integration process.
2. There are negative trends towards the visually impaired persons in the school community in particular and the society in general.
3. Public education schools are not prepared in terms of human cadres, buildings, equipment, as well as large class size and lack of financial resources.
4. Evaluation methods used with children with visual impairment are inappropriate.

Conditions and requirements for the successful integration of people with visual impairment:

1. The implementation of the integration program requires distinguished planning and implementation to ensure its success so that it is prepared accurately. Therefore, many aspects must be taken into account to reach a successful integration through careful planning and integrated preparation, the provision of a special education teacher at least in every school where the integration process is implemented, and taking into account the percentage of children with visual impairment compared to their peers in the classroom.
2. Considering the developmental age of children with visual impairment rather than the chronological age.
3. Evaluating the performance of a child with visual impairment must depend on time rather than a comparison with the performance of his peers.
4. The effective participation of parents of children with visual impairments in the planning and implementation of the integration process.

Child's optimal use of poor eyesight

Sight is one of the greatest blessings; it is the key to knowledge and

is one of the most important perceptions that play the role of social interaction. It is a universal language of communication. The study indicates that 3 billion or more people suffer from some sort of vision impairment.

Causes of poor eyesight

This includes lack of oxygen during childbirth, nervous system diseases, Amblyopia in which the brain ignores images from the weaker eye, diabetic retinopathy, increased pressure inside the eye, strabismus that may result in a fracture of the deviated eye.

Challenges facing visually impaired children

1. Visually impaired children are no different to their normal peers in terms of ability and personality. However, visual impairment may lead to some aspects of emotional and social development, which shows some behaviors, which we summarize as follows:
2. Emotional support: visually impaired children who have problems with emotional support face negative impacts on their emotional and social development.
3. Repetitive stereotypic behavior: It is a behavior that the child needs and becomes part of his life. It is purposeless behavior such eye poking.

Introversion, daydreaming, depression, aggression.

Visually impaired child may face problems that hinder his education, which are summarized as follows:

1. Visually impaired children are not provided enough opportunity to interact and participate in the classroom.
2. Inefficiency of teaching aids used in the classroom.
3. Visually impaired students are not provided enough time be cared for due to limited class time.

Recommendations:

1. Share concepts of the rights of the blind child as per international charters and conventions in order to achieve socialization that builds the child personality and integrates them into society.
2. Combat discrimination on the basis of disability, considering that blindness is just another part of human diversity.
3. Educate society in general, and families of blind children in particular, about the aim of raising, educating and preparing them as active and productive members of society.
4. Coordinate with national and international bodies concerned with childhood affairs, to develop plans and prepare programs for raising and educating blind children.
5. Adapt modern technology to help the blind child to challenge difficulties and overcome disability.
6. Care for those of poor eyesight.

7. Develop the innate skills of the blind child and provide him with new skills that enable him to rely on himself in order to acquire experiences and knowledge.
8. The blind organizations in the Arab countries shall fulfill their mandate to educate the families of blind children to accept them, treat them without excessive care, integrate them with their brothers at home and their peers in society, create an appropriate environment for their movements and meet their needs.
9. Make use of the theater in raising and educating blind children, invite their private institutes to activate art education in their curricula, including theater, urge families to encourage their children to enter this field, and request the College of Fine Arts to accept the blind in the specialty of theater.
10. Call for implementing the Marrakesh Agreement and make use of its provisions in scientific research on the upbringing and education of the blind child.

SPOTLIGHT

UNDP - Human Development Report 2019: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century

People across the world, of all political persuasions, increasingly believe that income inequality in their country should be reduced. Inequalities in human development are more profound. Consider two children born in 2000, one in a very high human development country, the other in a low human development country. Today the first has a more than 50-50 chance of being enrolled in higher education: More than half of 20-year-olds in very high human development countries are in higher education. In contrast, the second is much less likely to be alive. Some 17 percent of children born in low human development countries in 2000 will have died before age 20, compared with just 1 percent of children born in very high human development countries. The second child is also unlikely to be in higher education: In low human development countries only 3 percent are. Circumstances almost entirely beyond their control have already set them on different and unequal—and likely irreversible—paths.¹ The inequalities are likewise high within countries—both developing and developed. In some developed countries the gaps in life expectancy at age 40 between the top 1 percent of the income distribution and the bottom 1 percent have been estimated to be as high as 15 years for men and 10 years for women.² Inequalities do not always reflect an unfair world. Some are probably inevitable, such as the inequalities from diffusing a new technology.³ But when these unequal paths have little to do with rewarding effort, talent or entrepreneurial risk-taking, they may offend people's sense of fairness and can be an affront to human dignity. Such inequalities in human development hurt societies, weakening social cohesion and people's trust in government, institutions and each other. Most hurt economies, wastefully preventing people from reaching their full potential at work and in life. They often make it harder for political decisions to reflect the aspirations of the whole of society and to protect the planet, as the few pulling ahead flex their power to shape decisions primarily in their interests today. In the extreme, people can take to the streets. These inequalities in human development are a roadblock to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They are not just about disparities in income and wealth. They cannot be accounted for simply by using summary measures of inequality that focus on a single dimension.⁵ And they will shape the prospects of people that may live to see the 22nd century. Exploring inequalities in human development thus has to go beyond income, beyond averages and beyond today, leading to five key messages.

- First, while many people are stepping above minimum floors of



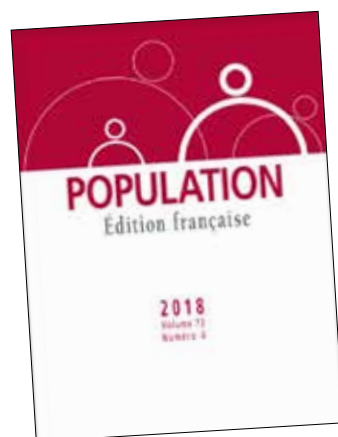
achievement in human development, widespread disparities remain. The first two decades of the 21st century have seen remarkable progress in reducing extreme deprivations, but gaps remain unacceptably wide for a range of capabilities—the freedoms for people to be and do desirable things such as go to school, get a job or have enough to eat. And progress is bypassing some of the most vulnerable even on the most extreme deprivations—so much so that the world is not on track to eradicate them by 2030, as called for in the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Second, a new generation of severe inequalities in human development is emerging, even if many of the unresolved inequalities of the 20th century are declining.
- Third, inequalities in human development can accumulate through life, frequently heightened by deep power imbalances.
- Fourth, assessing inequalities in human development demands a revolution in metrics.
- Fifth, redressing inequalities in human development in the 21st century is possible—if we act now, before imbalances in economic power translate into entrenched political dominance.

Good policies start with good measurement, and a new generation of inequalities requires a new generation of measurement. Clearer concepts tied to the challenges of current times, broader combinations of data sources, sharper analytical tools—all are needed. Ongoing innovative work suggests that income and wealth may be accumulating at the top in many countries much faster than one could grasp based on summary measures of inequality. Making these efforts more systematic and widespread can better inform public debates and policies. Metrics may not seem a priority, until one considers the continuing hold of such measures as gross domestic product since its creation in the first half of the 20th century.

Didier Breton Magali Barbieri, Hippolyte d'Albis, Magali Mazuy. - Recent Demographic Developments in France: Seasonal Patterns of Births, Deaths, Unions, and Migration, Paris, 2018

On January 1, 2018, France had a population of 66.9 million. Its growth has never been so low for 20 years, due to a natural balance which has reached a historic minimum for 40 years. Its age structure is among the youngest in European countries. The influx of

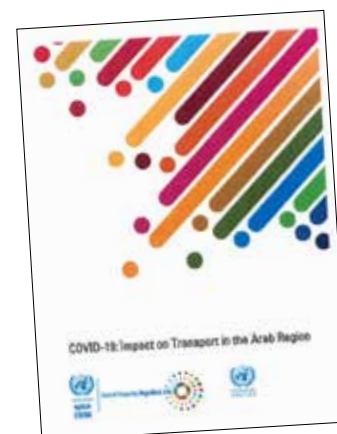


foreign nationals into France represented more than 300,000 people in 2016. This flow covers two distinct populations. On the one hand, foreign nationals subject to the obligation to hold a residence permit, assessed from the database, represented 218,354 people. This flow is mainly made up of families (49%) and students (26%). The flow of asylum seekers admitted staying in France has increased continuously since 2011 and reached 35,262 people in 2016. On the other hand, foreign nationals not subject to the obligation to hold a residence permit according to Eurostat, have represented 82,732 people. This flow has been declining since 2013. For the third consecutive year, the annual number of births registered in 2017 (769,500) is on decline, due to the decrease in the population of reproductive age and fertility. It is the fertility of young people (between 25 and 29 years of age in particular) that has fallen the most; it is concentrated in the 25-35 age group (for almost two thirds). The number of births fluctuated depending on the time of year: fewer births in late winter and spring, more births in summer and fall. The daily number of births in 2017 fluctuated between just under 1,700 and just over 2,300. Births are more numerous on weekdays, fewer on weekends and public holidays, no doubt because of the scheduling of deliveries. Births resulting from the use of medically assisted procreation represent 3% of the total (around 26,000 births). The number of abortions in 2017 increased very slightly: 216,700 were recorded during the year. The increase is observed mainly among women in their thirties. The number of abortions is lower in April as well as in July and August. Access to dedicated health services, more difficult during the summer period, has been pointed out and remains a problem. The years 2015 and 2016 put an end to 3 years of decrease (2012 to 2014) in the number of divorces and the propensity to

divorce, regardless of the duration of the marriage. In 2017, life expectancy at birth, estimated at 79.4 years for men and 85.2 years for women according to provisional figures from INSEE, i.e. an increase of 0.1 years for men and a decline of 0.1 year for women compared to the previous year. The life expectancy of French women is one of the highest in Europe, while that of men is average. Over the past ten years, three age groups have concentrated the most significant progress: around 20, 50 and 80. They were, however, slightly higher for men than for women, although excess male mortality, especially among young adults, remains high. All major groups of medical causes of death have contributed to the progression of lifespan, with the notable exception of mental disorders and diseases of the nervous system and, for women only, cancers. This unfavorable development in female cancer mortality is due to the rapid increase in the number of deaths from lung cancer, contrary to what is observed in men, and to the lack of progress in the fight against lung cancer. 'uterus. The divergence regarding lung cancer results from differentiated smoking behaviors, with men cutting back earlier than women. The recent decrease in female smoking, however, should lead to a decrease in cancer mortality in the future. Mortality is not uniform throughout the year. It is highest in winter, especially during the months of January and February, and minimum in summer, particularly in August, except for heatwave years (2003 in particular). The seasonality of deaths increases with age: almost negligible for children and young adults, it is particularly marked from the age of 75. The elderly is in fact subject to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases which are more severe in winter for both biological (bacteria are more resistant when temperatures are low) and behavioral reasons

United Nations ESCWA. COVID-19: Impact on Transport in the Arab Region, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a global health and economic crisis that has transformed the world. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development expects world gross domestic product to contract by 4.3 per cent in 2020, leaving a shortfall in global output by year's end of over \$6 trillion. Trade is expected to shrink by around one-fifth in 2020, while foreign direct investment and remittances are set to fall by up to 40 per cent and over \$100 billion, respectively. The



Arab region is not immune to the shock caused by the pandemic. In line with global trends, GDP in the Arab region is expected to decline at an annual rate of 5.7 per cent in 2020, with the entire economy for the region losing around \$900 billion in output between 2020 and 2022.2 In the worst-case scenario, the region is not expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels before 2023. The economic prospects of the region remain highly dependent on developments in the energy market, given that oil revenues accounted for nearly two thirds of the Arab region's nominal GDP in 2019. Meanwhile, foreign direct investment inflows are expected to fall by 45 per cent in 2020, and unemployment is set to reach unprecedented levels. The disruption caused by the pandemic directly affects global supply chains and their underlying transport networks. Border closures and the introduction of various safety restrictions and protocols limiting the movement of people and goods have directly impacted the transport and logistics sectors. Constrained transport activity means that the delivery of trade and essential goods required to fend against the pandemic (e.g. medical equipment, personal protection gear and medicine) is also delayed and hampered. In the Arab region, disruption to transport and trade has varied across countries and modes of transport, with air transport experiencing its worst year ever. Meanwhile, land transport is expected to suffer a relatively smaller shock, while maritime freight transport has shown some resilience despite the wide-ranging adjustments introduced by shipping companies and ports. At the global level, responses and coping strategies by the transport industry to ensure business continuity have varied across regions and have included the following: operational adjustments; financial and economic adjustments; sanitary protocols and processes; and adjustments to working practices and organizational aspects. In many cases, industry stakeholders have relied upon existing contingency plans, capacity to coordinate with national and/or local authorities, and tailored communication strategies and guidelines that document ways in which transport operations could be maintained while ensuring safety and security. In April 2020, UNCTAD outlined a ten-point action plan to help the shipping industry keep trade afloat during and in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Guidelines were also issued to adapt the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data to help assist customs and cross-border agencies in scaling-up necessary actions to better deal with the pandemic. Port level adjustments, for example, include prioritization of essential services; reorganization of operations and working conditions due to safety measures and sanitary protocols; and greater reliance on digitalization and communication strategies.

Like in other parts of the world, Arab countries reacted quickly by introducing restrictions on the movement of people and goods and closing borders. Data for 97 land border crossing points, 66 airports, 42 blue border crossing points (including sea, river and lake ports)

in the region indicate that between 4 and 11 June 2020, around 65 per cent of monitored international airports were fully closed and 30 per cent were partially operational. Almost 60 per cent of monitored land border crossing points were affected by total closures, and 37 per cent were only partially operational. Of 42 monitored blue border crossing points in the region, 60 per cent were fully closed and 33 per cent were partially operational. Meanwhile, only two blue border crossing points were fully operational for passengers. Since May 2020, there have been reports of Arab countries easing their lockdowns and relaxing restrictions.⁸ For example, in July 2020, Saudi Arabia re-opened part of its border with Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates after four months of closure.

The United Nations ESCWA: Mapping of government measures taken to protect people with disabilities from COVID-19, and efforts to provide accessible information and awareness materials 2020

People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups to get infected with the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19). They are at greater risk of contracting respiratory diseases and complications from diseases often associated with disability. Moreover, people with disabilities

may also encounter specific obstacles related to implementing basic hygiene, as they may have physical difficulty rubbing their hands together thoroughly while washing hands, for example when touching objects. Sometimes they may need support to obtain information, and sometimes they may have physical difficulties, exposing them to infection.

Also, people with disabilities may have difficulties in adhering to social distancing and self-isolation because of additional support needs. They are affected more than others by the pandemic, due to the sudden disruption of many of the services they rely on. They face significant barriers to accessing relevant health information and messages, making it difficult for them to decide on how to protect themselves and how to obtain essentials and services during the quarantine period.

Thus, efforts must be doubled to ensure that people with disability are not left behind in protection measures during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Furthermore, actions must be taken to ensure that people with disability have full access to information, healthcare services and the support they need to stay healthy and safe.

According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Catalina Devandas Aguilar, little has been done to provide disabled people with the support and guidance needed to protect them during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Ms. Aguilar stressed that containment measures, such as social distancing and self-isolation, may be impossible for those who rely on the support of others to eat, dress and bathe. She also emphasized the need to provide them with financial aid to reduce the risk of people with disabilities and their families falling into greater vulnerability or poverty, as they may not have enough money to stockpile food and medicine, nor afford the extra cost of home deliveries.

Ms. Aguilar recommended that information about how to prevent and contain the coronavirus must be made available to everyone in sign language and accessible means, modes and formats that ensure that information is presented in a way that is easy for people with disabilities to access and understand. Among the most important of such means are digital technology available, captioning, relay services, text messages, easy-to-read and plain language. It is imperative to take additional measures to overcome the barriers that people with disabilities encounter through the implementation of more government measures and the production of a large amount of appropriate educational and awareness materials.

United Nations Development Programme UNDP. – Human Development Report 2020. New York, 2020

We are at an unprecedented moment in the history of humankind and in the history of our planet. Warning lights—for our societies and the planet—are flashing red. They have been for some time, as we well know. The Covid-19 pandemic is the latest harrowing consequence of imbalances writ large.

Scientists have long warned that unfamiliar pathogens will emerge more frequently from interactions among humans, livestock and wildlife, interactions that have steadily increased in scale and intensity, ultimately squeezing local ecosystems so hard that deadly viruses spill out. The novel coronavirus may be the latest to do so, and unless we relax our

grip on nature, it will not be the last. New pathogens do not fall from the sky, nor do the epidemics they may cause. Covid-19 has spread quickly around an interconnected world, taking root wherever it has landed and thriving especially in the cracks in societies, exploiting and exacerbating myriad inequalities in human development. In too many cases those cracks have hamstrung efforts to control the virus.

While Covid-19 has absorbed the world's attention, pre-existing crises continue. Consider climate change. The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season either set new records or was on the verge of doing so, both in the number of storms and how many rapidly intensified. Within the past 12 months extraordinary fires scorched enormous swaths of Australia, the Brazilian Pantanal, eastern Siberia in the Russian Federation and the West Coast of the United States. The planet's biodiversity is plunging, with a quarter of species facing extinction, many within decades. Numerous experts believe we are living through, or on the cusp of, a mass species extinction event, the sixth in the history of the planet and the first to be caused by a single organism us.

When the Human Development Report first challenged the primacy of growth as the measure of progress in 1990, the Cold War still shaped geopolitics, the World Wide Web had just been invented and very few people had heard of climate change. In that moment UNDP offered a forward looking alternative to GDP, ranking all countries by whether people had the freedom and opportunity to live a life they valued. In so doing, we gave voice to a new conversation on the meaning of a good life and the ways we could achieve it. Thirty years on, much has changed, but hope and possibility have not. If people have the power to create an entirely new geological epoch, then people also have the power to choose to change. We are not the last generation of the Anthropocene; we are the first to recognize it. We are the explorers, the innovators who get to decide what this—the first generation of the Anthropocene—will be remembered for. Will we be remembered by the fossils we leave behind: swaths of species, long extinct, sunken and fossilized in the mud alongside plastic toothbrushes and bottle caps, a legacy of loss and waste? Or will we leave a much more valuable imprint: balance between people and planet, a future that is fair and just? The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene sets out this choice, offering a thought-provoking, necessary alternative to paralysis in the face of rising poverty and inequalities alongside alarming planetary change. With its new, experimental Planetary pressures—adjusted Human Development Index, we hope to open a new conversation on the path ahead for each country—a path yet unexplored. The way forward from Covid-19 will be the journey of a generation. We hope it is one that all people will choose to travel together



