



Kingdom of the Netherlands

KING HUSSEIN FOUNDATION    
مركز المعلومات والبحوث  
INFORMATION AND RESEARCH CENTER

Policies paper

# Gender Mainstreaming

in the 18th House of Representatives

May 2017



## The problem:

The lack of integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into the agenda of the Jordanian parliament has resulted in the absence of legislative drafting of gender-sensitive texts without taking into account international law in accordance with ratified conventions and treaties, and without implementing appropriate procedures and practices and incorporating them into national legislation. Additionally, there is a lack of interest by the permanent committees related to the legislative process to ensure the creation and implementation of gender-sensitive legislations.

There were several factors that led to the lack of mechanisms to ensure the formulation and amendment of gender-sensitive legislation, the most important of which is the poor knowledge of the concept of gender among members of the House of Representatives (MPs). Furthermore, there are misconceptions regarding the concept of gender, and finally, there is poor representation of women MPs in the permanent committees related to the legislative process, where their representation remains limited to the Committee for Women and Family Affairs.

While the Jordanian constitution, as well as many national legislative texts, have guaranteed the achievement of justice in gender, and royal directives affirmed this approach through successive discussion papers, but the situation of Jordanian women has yet to reach the level aspired to, in terms of equality and equity compared to men.

In 2017, the participation rate of women in the labor force has not exceeded 14%, with a similar participation rate for women in politics in the National Assembly, in both the House of Representatives and the Senate at 15%. And although Jordanian law stipulates reserved seats for women through a quota system, Jordan's ranking in the gender gap index is 134 out of 144.

The issue of equal rights for both women and men has become a national and international commitment that requires us to refer to the local laws, legislation and policies and address them within the international frameworks stipulated in the ratified agreements, whilst focusing on the legislative and supervisory role of the 18th House of Representatives., in order to achieve equality and social justice in the enactment and amendment of gender-sensitive legislations.

A joint study conducted was conducted by the Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation, and the Center of Legislative Studies and Research in the Jordanian Parliament in order to understand the knowledge, attitudes and practices of MPs on gender and women's rights in the decision making process. The study shows that there is often a misunderstanding of the concept of gender, which is reflected in this concept not being taken into account continuously during the legislative process. The study also showed that there is a long way to go in implementing women's rights, despite the talk about women's rights being given priority in the House of Representatives.

In order to achieve more gender-sensitive legislation, and taking into account the rights-based approach to women's rights, the study concluded that it was important to raise awareness about the concept of gender in its holistic context. The study also recommended that women's rights should be expanded beyond basic rights, to include all the human rights.

## Jordan's position on international agreements:

Jordan has ratified a number of international agreements and conventions prohibiting discrimination and guaranteeing equality between men and women. This is considered a legal commitment on all state parties to enshrine the principal of equality in their constitutions and all their national legislations, with the aim of abolishing all existing legal texts that contain any form of discrimination on the grounds of gender. Additionally, state parties are required to commit to the practical application of the principal of gender equality in all areas, where the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) renounces any form of discrimination based on gender. The provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by Jordan obliges state parties to include gender equality, and pledge to make the practice of the rights provided for in both covenants free from any discrimination on the grounds of gender

## Knowledge of members of the Eighteenth House of Representatives on the concept of gender

Adopted and viewed for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979, date of application: 3 September 1981. Human Rights Library, University of Minnesota, <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/arab/b003.html>

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was published on 15 June, 2006 in issue No. 4764 of the official Gazette. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was published in 15 June, 2006 in issue No. 4764 of the official Gazette.

The Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation : <http://irckhf.org/> Center for Legislative Studies and Research – Jordanian House of Representatives: [www.representatives.jo/ar](http://www.representatives.jo/ar) A study entitled " Gender issues and their priorities at the 18th Jordanian House of Representatives 2016- 2017 The opinions and positions of the members of the House of Representatives differ in the enactment or amendment of legislation, and whether these legislations implement equality and integrate gender issues, where 27% of the female and male representatives in the sample stated that the laws and regulations do not treat males and females equally. 38.3% of the representatives stated that the budgets they set are gender-sensitive, and strive to achieve equality between males and females.

# 40%

Of the Eighteenth Council members have knowledge about gender concepts

# 27%

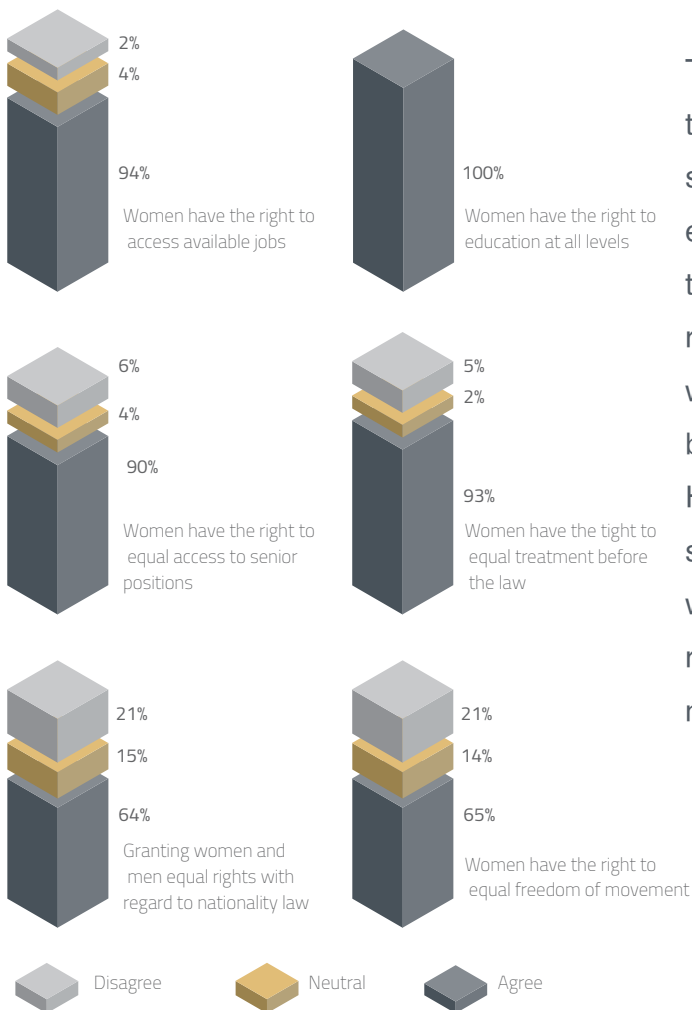
Believe that laws and regulations do not deal with gender equality.

# 38.3%

Believe that budget design is keen to achieve gender equality.



## Gender priorities for Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives in the 18th Parliament



The results of the above-mentioned study, addressed to the members of the House of Representatives in the sample, indicated that the priorities and issues of women's rights, which they consider to be of importance to them, are the public rights, with more than 90% of the representatives emphasizing that. Such rights include women's right to education, the right to work, equality before the law and women's right to senior positions. However, when discussing women's right in a more specific fashion, some MPs objected to them, such as women's right of movement and to grant women equal rights with men in obtaining citizenship for her non-Jordanian husband and children.

## The role of both permanent committees and parliamentary blocs in developing a gender-sensitive agenda

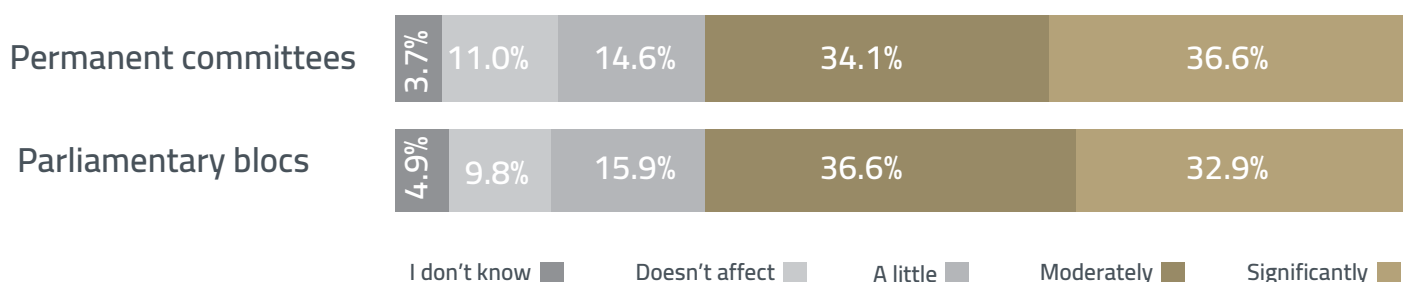
There are 20 permanent committees according to the bylaws of the House of Representatives, with each committee examining the laws on its agenda. The bylaws also give the committee members the right to form the parliamentary blocs with their own bylaws, which regulates their work, with the aim of creating unified positions during the decision-making and voting processes, as well as achieving common aims through these blocs Ibid.

The official website of the Jordanian Parliament:

<http://www.representatives.jo/ar>

When interviewing the MPs about the roles of the committees and blocs in the development of a gender-sensitive agenda, their views differed, and the members interviewed stated that the 18th House of Representatives, in its entirety, has an interest in gender issues, but it remains below the desired level. Moreover, many parliamentary committees do not take into account women's issues and are not on their agenda, in addition to the "male mentality that hinders the interest in women's issues".

It is becoming clear that female MPs are not represented in the permanent office, and have few opportunities to preside over various committees. Furthermore, female MPs are rarely represented as a committee decision-maker or as a head of a committee in the 20 committees of the House of Representatives. The exception is the Committee for Women and Family Affairs, where it is traditional for a woman to be the head of this committee. The research team asked the opinions of the 81 MPs about the contributions of the aforementioned organs of the House, and its mechanisms in developing a gender-sensitive agenda, with the percentages were as shown in the figure below:

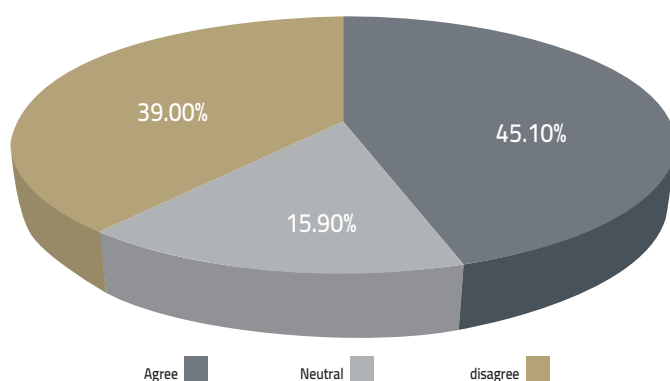


## Towards a gender responsive budget within the framework of the public budget expenditure

The allocation of financial resources within the state budget is considered gender-responsive with economic and social dimensions aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination, ensuring the provision of services and meeting the needs by all sectors and governmental institutions to achieve justice and equal opportunities between females and males in Jordanian society.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 12 of the Jordanian constitution, the National Assembly discusses the draft of the annual budget law, stemming from its right to oversee the work of the implementing authorities, the House of

Representatives has a pivotal role to determine the extent to which the budget meets the gender requirements. The results of the study showed that 39% of the MPs believe that the budget allocation is gender-sensitive, and achieves equality between men and women.



## Recommendations:

**First:** conduct induction sessions at the committee level about gender concepts and the importance of integrating them into legislation, laws and public budgets.

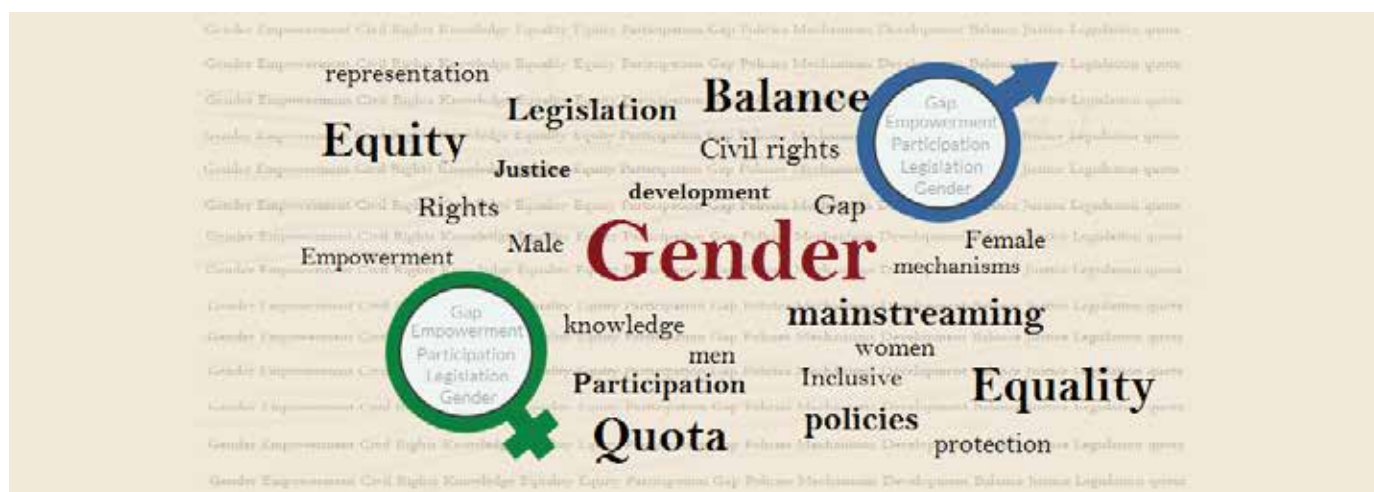
**Second:** the need for a qualified focal person in the integration of gender and gender-sensitive policies in each of the permanent committees.

**Third:** ensure the representation of female MPs in all of the permanent committees, and ensuring that they gain experience in all of them through a rotation system, while ensuring that they are not focused exclusively on a single committee.

**Fourth:** the legislative authority must adopt the need for a sectoral breakdown in the public budget that is responsive to gender within the framework of public expenditure ..

**Fifth:** to open up channels of communication for male and female MPs to learn about the experiences of other countries, especially those related to the policies of gender integration by the legislative authorities.

**Sixth:** holding conferences and press conferences presenting the achievements of the parliament on gender integration and the mechanisms used in the legislative and supervisory process, in cooperation with the information service at the council, and the Committee for Women and Family Affairs.



## Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation

The International and Research Center serves as a catalyst for socio-economic change through research, information and knowledge dissemination, and is considered as a leading institution in applied research in the fields of effective planning and social and economic decision-making in Jordan and the Middle East.

### About the project:

the Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation, in collaboration with the Center for Legislative Studies and Research in the Jordanian Parliament, and funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands, have conducted a project on gender integration at the Center for Legislative Studies and Research in the Jordanian Parliament. The overall objective of this project is as follows: to identify the extent of awareness of women's issues, and also to identify professional practices and ideas regarding gender integration in policies, programs and budgets, and understand the responsiveness to and conviction of gender issues, which contributes to the implementation of programs that enhance the role of women and prevent discrimination against them. Additionally, the project aims to provide policy and decision makers with the optimal methods by which to improve women's situation in Jordan, in order to achieve gender integration and women's empowerment.

### References:

1- The Global Gender Gap Report, 2016

[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF\\_Global\\_Gender\\_Gap\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf)

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4- تم نشر العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية بتاريخ 15/6/2006 في العدد رقم 4764 من الجريدة الرسمية.

5- مركز المعلومات والبحوث- مؤسسة الملك الحسين: <http://irckhf.org>

6- مركز الدراسات والبحوث التشريعية- مجلس النواب الأردني: <http://www.representatives.jo/ar>

7- دراسة بعنوان "قضايا النوع الاجتماعي وأولوياتها عند مجلس النواب الأردني الثامن عشر -2016-2017.

8- نفس المرجع السابق.


9- الموقع الرسمي لمجلس النواب الأردني: <http://www.representatives.jo/ar>

10- إجراء أربع مقابلات معمقة مع السيدات والسادة النواب في شهر أيار من عام 2017.

11- نفس المرجع السابق

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