



[Information Note]

Launch Event:

Joint report on
Marital Relationship Assessment
in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World

Side-Event

In Preparations

for the

30th anniversary of the International Year of The Family Conference (IYF+30)

1-3 July 2024

St. Regis Hotel, Cairo.

Introduction

The Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs' decision, number (1014) during its regular session (43) in the Arab Republic of Egypt, ratified the final report of the exploratory report on the "Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World", as a guiding document for the member states.

Aligned with this decision, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS), Social Affairs Sector - Family and Childhood Administration, in partnership with the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, organizes **an event to launch the joint exploratory report on the "Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World"** from July 1st to 3rd, 2024, at St. Regis hotel, Cairo.

Background

Since 2017, the General Secretariat of the League of the Arab States (LAS), Social Affairs Sector - Family and Childhood Administration, in collaboration with the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, has adopted an initiative to produce a series of periodical publications on family condition in the Arab world, to enrich the knowledge pool on the Arab family, and advocate for family issues through enhancing and supporting evidence-based family policies within the Arab world.

The initiative to produce an integrated book, periodically, on one of the topics of the Arab family, represents a contribution to enriching the Arab knowledge base about the phenomena, issues and challenges that the Arab family faces, which requires concerted efforts, to present them scientifically, and to provide the evidence to the various stakeholders in the Arab world, and not only the research community.

Corresponding to this standpoint, this initiative aspires to help bridge the existing knowledge gap in this field of research, by addressing such a crucial family-related topic in the twenty-two Arab countries. Additionally, this publication stands as a role model and a valuable scientific resource that can guide future studies aiming to produce similar publications, and produce scientific evidence, for policymakers and professionals working within family affairs sectors, to support policy development and intervention efforts. As a culmination of these efforts, the Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) launched, in 2019, a book on “The State of Marriage in the Arab World”, as part of the proceedings of the Arab Family forum on marriage, which was organized by DIFI in Doha on December 2 and 3, 2019.

The forum provided an interactive platform for debating the findings, among a group of policymakers, researchers, experts, service providers, and representatives of civil society organizations and regional organizations.

The forum was greatly enriched by the high-level presence of Qatar Foundation, with Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, the CEO and Vice Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, attending the forum. As well as, by the League of Arab States (LAS), Her Excellency Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, the Head of the Social Affairs Sector at the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS), delivered the keynote speech, in which she emphasized that marriage-related issues are among the most significant challenges facing Arab countries now and in the future. The comprehensiveness of the first book stemmed from several sources, one of which was that the proposal dealt with framing all the contextual and macro factors impacting marriage, monitoring the various patterns of marriage, whether traditional or modern, in the Arab world, and detailing the dialectic of marriage and age and the related delays in the marriage age, singleness, marriage cost, early marriage and age differences between spouses, as well as an overview of marital relations and its many sub-topics related to marital and emotional satisfaction, and violence among spouses, problematizing the dilemma of work and marriage and the impact of women’s employment in both public and private sector, on their marital relations, and finally an analysis of two topics related to marriage in our contemporary Arab world: immigration and how it positively and negatively influenced the institution of marriage, and marriage in light of the wars and conflicts affecting parts of the arab region.

In addition to the diversity of approaches of the first book, and the multiplicity of its main and sub-topics, another tributary added an entry into its philosophy of comprehensiveness, which is its coverage of twenty-two Arab countries, as many regional reports dealing with various topics in the Arab world, which are launched by international organizations, research institutions, which includes selecting, or rather selecting, some models from Arab countries to be a subject of study.

What necessitated joint research endeavor is that the aforementioned book drew attention to the rising levels of divorce in the early years of marriage, which called for collective action to try to understand in a disciplined manner the nature of the early disintegration of marriage, during its formative phase.

Therefore, the second report, “Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World,” aimed not only to highlight the issues and factors leading to the early collapse of marriage in the Arab world during the initial years of marriage, but also to identify success factors and adaptation mechanisms and compatibility, which leads to the continuity and cohesion of marriage in its early years.

Hence, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

- 1-Identify the success factors that help couples enhance marital relations in the first five years.
- 2-Explore the challenges and problems that couples face in their marital relationships during the first five years.
- 3- Identify ways of support at the level of Arab countries and communities for the success and stability of marriage.
- 4-Provide scientific-based evidence for policymakers and designers of intervention programs to help them address potential problems in marital relations during the first five years.

Technical preparation phases

The first step: Involved developing a joint questionnaire to ensure the highest levels of credibility in producing policy-oriented knowledge evidence, directed to policies and programs. Additionally, quantitative research has the advantage of practical applicability when the study population is geographically diverse, which is difficult to cover using qualitative research

methods. It is worth noting that the questionnaire was based on theoretical frameworks and a review of relevant literature with intellectual innovation, to reach solid scientific evidence.

The second step: The questionnaire was distributed to a pilot sample and then to a representative sample from the Arab world, deploying the working mechanisms of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, to ensure the inclusion of the largest social segment at the Arab level. Hence, this publication is a comprehensive report demonstrating the results of the quantitative research on “Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World”. It, additionally, offers in-depth recommendations for developing relevant policies and programs related to supporting the institution of marriage in its early stages.

The third step: Analyze the results and write the report by the technical team at the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) and absorb all the comments received from the Arab delegations, through the work mechanisms of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States.

The fourth step: The report was circulated to relevant entities in the member states, through the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and presented at the proceedings of the 13th session of the Arab Family Childhood Committee held under the presidency of the Republic of Tunisia in 2023. Subsequently, the report was submitted to the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs No. (1014) during its 43rd regular session in the Arab Republic of Egypt, which stipulated: The adoption of the final report of the “Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World”, as a guidance document for the member states.

Launch Event Objectives

- 1- Examine the causes of the early disintegration of marriage in the Arab world.
- 2- Explore and identify mechanisms to support the durability of marriage from all stakeholders.
- 3- Develop an action plan to design premarital education programs in the Arab world.

Side event on the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30)

The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Social Affairs Sector - Family and Childhood Administration, in collaboration with the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) and the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Cairo, is organizing a side event on the sidelines of the launch event. The side event is part of the cooperation in the preparatory activities for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family conference (IYF+30), on “Family and

Contemporary Megatrends”, hosted by the State of Qatar, organized by the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), from October 29 to 31, 2024.

The side event will focus on the key preparations for the conference, covering both regional and international advancements in addressing the four megatrends identified by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA):

Family and Technological Change, Family, Migration, and Urbanization, Family and Demographic Change, and Family and Climate Change.

Program

- Day One: Official launch of the report and discussion panels to review the findings.
- Day Two: Executive workshops to review Arab and international experiences in premarital education programs and developing an action plan for guidance premarital education programs at the Arab and regional levels.
- Day Three: The side event on the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30) conference.

Logistical Information

Venue: St. Regis Hotel, Cairo.

Dates of the event: July 1-3, 2024.

Languages: Arabic and English (Translation available)

