



State of Palestine
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
Multilateral Affairs Sector

Best Practices in the Contribution of Development to the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Government Strategies for Addressing Poverty and Inequality Amid COVID-19 Recovery

In addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our government adopted a comprehensive set of strategies and initiatives to tackle rising poverty and inequalities while advancing human rights, particularly the right to development.

One of the key strategies implemented was the establishment of emergency cash assistance programs targeting vulnerable populations, including families affected by the pandemic. For instance, the government provided cash assistance amounting to 700 shekels to 1,541 women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of the emergency social protection project funded by the World Bank. By directly supporting individuals and families facing economic hardships, this initiative helped alleviate immediate financial burdens and prevent a deeper descent into poverty.

Moreover, recognizing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women, especially those engaged in informal sectors or as heads of households, the government prioritized initiatives aimed at supporting women's economic empowerment. The One Million Seedlings Initiative stands out as a notable example, which provided support to women in the agricultural sector by distributing essential resources such as seedlings, honey extractors, and production requirements. By bolstering women's participation in agriculture and providing them with the necessary tools for sustainable livelihoods, this initiative not only contributed to food security but also promoted gender equality and economic resilience.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palestinian government implemented a series of critical measures to safeguard women's rights and well-being. These initiatives included allocating the number 114 to the Family Protection Unit of the Palestinian Police, ensuring swift responses to cases of domestic violence and abuse. Additionally, the assignment of a Sharia judge to courts helped oversee cases related to supervision and alimony, enhancing legal protections for women. Special procedures were also established to support abused women infected with COVID-19, providing them with safe shelter and necessary assistance. Measures by the Family Protection Prosecution ensured women's access to justice and law enforcement, while urging the private sector to provide a minimum of 50% salary to female workers during closures helped mitigate economic vulnerabilities. Flexible work



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arrangements, such as allowing working mothers with young children to work remotely, were implemented to support work-life balance. Furthermore, initiatives like adding female workers to day labor and kindergarten roles and re-operating reproductive health clinics underscored the government's commitment to addressing diverse needs. Psychological support services were provided to numerous cases, ensuring holistic care for affected women. Lastly, facilitating access to funding for non-profit companies' activities related to women's empowerment demonstrated proactive efforts to promote gender equality and empower women economically and socially.

In addition to direct assistance and sector-specific interventions, the government partnered with international donors to implement projects focused on capacity-building and institutional development. The SI-GEWE project, funded by the Italian government, aimed to integrate gender issues into policies, planning, and budgeting processes. By enhancing the capacity of ministries and higher authorities to address gender inequalities systematically, this initiative laid the groundwork for more inclusive and rights-based governance structures.

Furthermore, the OIL project, also funded by the Italian government, played a pivotal role in raising awareness of gender equality and human rights. By promoting dialogue and advocacy around these critical issues, the project fostered a culture of respect for human rights and social justice, essential components of sustainable development.

In conclusion, the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by a multifaceted approach encompassing targeted assistance, sector-specific interventions, capacity-building initiatives, and awareness-raising campaigns. By leveraging strategic partnerships and prioritizing inclusive policies, these initiatives not only mitigated the immediate impacts of the crisis but also laid the foundation for a more equitable and resilient society in the long term.

Effective Strategies for Protecting Disadvantaged Groups and Ensuring Inclusive Development

In Palestine, various segments of the population face unique challenges and vulnerabilities due to different factors such as disability, age, location, and socio-economic status. Disadvantaged groups, including women and girls living in remote and rural areas, indigenous women, those with disabilities, girls, teenagers, adult women, and individuals in humanitarian settings, face intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization. These groups often encounter barriers to accessing essential services, economic opportunities, and social support systems, exacerbating their exclusion from mainstream society. Recognizing the need to address these disparities, the Palestinian government has implemented targeted



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initiatives and strategies aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the well-being of disadvantaged groups, ensuring their inclusion and empowerment within the broader community. Legislative enhancements have been a cornerstone of this effort, with laws amended to increase penalties for crimes against vulnerable groups. For instance, stricter penalties have been imposed for offenses committed against women and girls with disabilities.

In addition, a national project for economic empowerment has been adopted to uplift women working in settlements. This initiative aims to integrate them into the Palestinian labor market, thereby removing them from the Israeli labor market. A national committee was formed, and an action plan was developed to target 6,000 female workers, with a budget of \$36 million allocated for this purpose.

To ensure equitable access to healthcare, the government provided free health insurance services to poor families, including those in remote, rural, and humanitarian settings. Approximately 40,000 health insurance cards were distributed to beneficiaries in the West Bank, eliminating financial barriers to essential healthcare services.

Furthermore, specialized support services have been established to cater to the unique needs of disadvantaged groups. The national referral system for abused women, for example, prioritizes providing services to women with disabilities. This includes facilitating arrangements and providing supportive mental health services tailored to their specific needs, ensuring equitable access to healthcare regardless of disability status.

Moreover, employment quotas have been introduced to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. Institutions are required to allocate a minimum of 5% of job positions to individuals with disabilities, as stipulated in the Palestinian Labor Law. Advertisements for jobs specifically targeting people with disabilities are posted on the General Personnel Council website to facilitate their employment.

Lastly, efforts have been made to strengthen and rehabilitate social care centers, including the establishment of convalescent homes for elderly women. These centers provide comprehensive care, including health, nutritional, social, and recreational support, for older women with special social conditions, accommodating approximately 30 elderly women.

These initiatives underscore the government's commitment to protecting the rights of disadvantaged groups and fostering inclusivity and equity within Palestinian society. Through legislative reforms, targeted programs, and specialized services, efforts are being made to prevent further marginalization and promote the well-being of all citizens.



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To achieve gender equality, the State of Palestine follows a national strategy and action plan that is prepared in broad consultations with civil society organizations, government institutions, and the private sector. The strategy usually covers a period of six years. The Ministry of Women's Affairs developed the national strategy in broad partnership with civil society organizations under the title of the National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Equality. Gender and Women's Empowerment" covers the period 2024-2029 and is ready in its final draft, but its work has been temporarily suspended to confront the war of genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The first strategic goal of the Palestinian government centers on promoting and safeguarding women's participation in the economy, technology, and the workforce. This encompasses several key outcomes: firstly, all operating institutions have adopted incentives and pioneering projects aimed at employing women across various sectors and locations. Secondly, labor and economic institutions have embraced the expansion and development of legislation, policies, and labor laws to enhance protection and social security for women, particularly in the informal sector. Thirdly, a commitment to decent work standards for women, especially those in informal employment, has been emphasized. These initiatives are closely aligned with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Additionally, Goal 17 underscores the importance of partnerships to facilitate the adoption of enabling technologies, such as information and communications technology (ICT), for the benefit of all. Furthermore, the eighth goal emphasizes the significance of decent work and economic growth, with efforts directed towards promoting productive activities, entrepreneurship, and innovation, as well as expanding access to financial services for all segments of society, including women. Through these strategic goals and partnerships, the Palestinian government aims to advance gender equality, empower women, and foster inclusive economic development in line with the 2030 Agenda.

The second strategic goal of the Palestinian government revolves around combating all forms of violence against women and girls. This encompasses several key outcomes: firstly, the establishment of a ready and effective legislative and political environment, along with practical procedures aligned with international standards, aimed at eliminating violence against women and all forms of discrimination. Secondly, efforts are focused on addressing cultural, social, and institutional patterns that perpetuate hostility towards women and girls, thereby fostering a society where they can enjoy freedom from violence. Thirdly, women who are victims and survivors of violence are ensured full access to services, particularly in areas such as justice, health, and education. These initiatives are closely tied to Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower



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all women and girls by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them. Additionally, Goal 16 underscores the importance of peace, justice, and strong institutions, with a specific focus on ending abuse, exploitation, human trafficking, and all forms of violence against women and girls. Through these strategic goals, the Palestinian government is committed to creating a society where women and girls are protected from violence and discrimination, and where their rights to justice, health, and education are upheld.

The third strategic goal of the Palestinian government focuses on increasing the activation of women's political participation in public life and decision-making positions. This objective has yielded several notable outcomes: firstly, there has been a discernible increase in women's participation in power and decision-making roles, particularly within trade unions, federations, and local bodies. Secondly, there has been a significant expansion in education regarding women's political rights, particularly among young individuals in Palestinian universities. Thirdly, efforts to highlight Palestinian women, their issues, and their political participation have intensified through effective collaboration with influential media, technological, and human rights networks and institutions at local, regional, and international levels. These endeavors align closely with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by ensuring their full and effective participation in leadership positions across various spheres of political, economic, and public life. Additionally, Goal 16 underscores the importance of peace, justice, and strong institutions by advocating for decisions to be made in a responsive and inclusive manner, thus reinforcing the significance of women's involvement in political processes and decision-making for the overall stability and prosperity of society. Through these strategic goals, the Palestinian government endeavors to create an environment where women have equal opportunities to contribute to governance and decision-making processes, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

The fourth strategic goal of the Palestinian government centers on strengthening the implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda, particularly in response to Israeli attacks and violations, in alignment with Resolution 1325. This objective has led to several significant outcomes: firstly, there has been a notable enhancement and expansion of protection services aimed at mitigating the effects of Israeli occupation violations on women and girls. Secondly, efforts to monitor and expose the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against women have intensified, with information being brought before various human rights organizations, United Nations bodies, and international agencies for scrutiny. Thirdly, women most affected by the harsh conditions of occupation have been provided with tools for resilience and rapid response plans, enabling them to better navigate and cope with challenging circumstances. These efforts resonate closely with Goal 16 of the



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Sustainable Development Goals, which underscores the importance of promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions and striving to reduce all forms of violence and related mortality rates worldwide. By prioritizing the protection and empowerment of women in conflict-affected areas, the Palestinian government seeks to contribute to the broader objective of fostering peace, stability, and security in the region, thereby advancing the collective goal of achieving sustainable development and ensuring the well-being of all individuals, regardless of gender or background.

The fifth strategic goal of the Palestinian government focuses on strengthening the institutionalization of gender equality and mainstreaming gender needs across all sectors. This objective has yielded several noteworthy outcomes: firstly, gender issues have been successfully integrated into the plans, policies, programs, projects, and budgets of key official institutions. This integration ensures that gender considerations are systematically addressed and prioritized in various facets of governance and development efforts. Secondly, efforts to enhance the responsiveness of the Palestinian media to gender issues have been intensified, empowering media outlets to effectively engage with and highlight gender-related concerns, thereby fostering greater awareness and discourse on gender equality. Thirdly, there has been a significant expansion and consolidation of coordination and networking among national mechanisms dedicated to supporting women's empowerment. This collaboration serves to amplify the advocacy and implementation efforts aimed at advancing gender equality and addressing the diverse needs of women and girls across Palestinian society. These initiatives align closely with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which underscores the imperative of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls through the adoption of robust policies, legislation, and mechanisms to promote gender equity and women's empowerment at all levels. By prioritizing the institutionalization of gender equality, the Palestinian government seeks to create an enabling environment where women and girls can fully participate, thrive, and contribute to the nation's development and prosperity.

Enhancing Economic and Social Rights through National Public Finance and Debt Management Frameworks: Best Practices and Legal Safeguards

Gender sensitive budgeting is the application of gender mainstreaming in the budget process. It includes conducting a gender assessment of budgets, integrating a gender perspective at all levels of the budget process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. In short, it is a strategy and process with a long-term goal to achieve gender equality goals.



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To follow up on implementing the gender-sensitive budget in the State of Palestine, the Palestinian government formed in the year 2022 a national committee under the name of the National Committee for Gender-Sensitive Budgets, headed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and membership of: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Local Government, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

The National Committee for Gender-Sensitive Budgets in Palestine has outlined clear objectives to guide its efforts in promoting gender equality and integrating gender perspectives into public finance management. Firstly, the committee aims to take a leadership role in overseeing the preparation of gender-sensitive budgets across official Palestinian institutions. By spearheading this process, the committee intends to ensure that budget allocations prioritize gender equality goals and address the specific needs of women and girls.

Secondly, the committee seeks to institutionalize the practice of gender-sensitive budgeting within government institutions, emphasizing the importance of sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in achieving national objectives related to women's economic, social, and political empowerment. Through this institutionalization, the committee aims to mainstream gender considerations into budgetary decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to resource allocation.

A third key objective of the committee is to reformulate evidence, procedures, and models of government budgets and national policies to promote gender justice. This involves critically assessing existing budgetary frameworks and policy structures to identify and address gender disparities and barriers to equality. By advocating for reforms that prioritize gender justice, the committee aims to create an enabling environment for advancing women's rights and opportunities.

Lastly, the committee emphasizes the importance of building the capabilities of planning and budgeting teams to effectively respond to the needs of both genders. Through capacity-building initiatives and training programs, the committee aims to equip government personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate gender perspectives into budgetary processes and ensure a more balanced and inclusive approach to policy formulation and implementation. Overall, these objectives underscore the committee's commitment to advancing gender-sensitive budgeting practices and promoting gender equality across all levels of government in Palestine.



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In addition to the efforts of the National Committee for Gender-Sensitive Budgets, the Palestinian government has established other mechanisms to ensure the effective allocation and utilization of funds towards gender-related initiatives. The Gender Working Group, operating under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office's Aid Coordination Committee (LACS), plays a crucial role in overseeing the expenditure of funds on gender issues, ensuring that resources are directed towards programs and projects that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Council of Ministers' Financial Aid Information Management System (AIMS) represents a significant step towards enhancing financial management and coordination in addressing national priorities, including gender-related concerns. By facilitating the identification of key priorities and the allocation of financial, human, and technical resources, AIMS contributes to a more systematic and coordinated approach to addressing gender disparities and advancing women's rights.

Moreover, specific financial resources are allocated to the Ministry of Women's Affairs to support its work programs aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. With an average budget of approximately 2 million dollars, constituting a significant portion of the total budget, the Ministry directs these resources towards various initiatives addressing key gender issues. These include the implementation of the Security Council Resolution No. 1325, which focuses on enhancing women's participation in peace and security processes, as well as initiatives targeting marginalized groups, young women's empowerment, economic empowerment, and the implementation of responsive budgets to address gender disparities left behind. Through targeted financial allocations and strategic programming, the Ministry of Women's Affairs plays a vital role in advancing gender equality and women's rights in Palestine.

Urgent Reforms for International Financial Architecture: Empowering Governments in Poverty Reduction, Inequality Mitigation, and Human Rights Realization

One urgent reform of the international financial architecture to support governments' efforts in reducing poverty, inequalities, and realizing human rights is the promotion of gender-responsive budgeting at the macro level. Gender-sensitive budgeting ensures that government expenditures and revenue-raising measures address the specific needs and priorities of women and men equitably. By integrating gender perspectives into budgetary processes, governments can allocate resources more effectively to address gender disparities and promote women's empowerment. This reform involves enhancing international



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cooperation and providing technical assistance to support countries in implementing gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms.

Another crucial reform is the enhancement of international aid effectiveness through greater alignment with national development priorities and strategies. International financial institutions and donor countries should prioritize providing flexible and predictable financial assistance to support governments' efforts in poverty reduction and sustainable development. This includes aligning aid with countries' human rights obligations, such as the right to education, healthcare, and social protection, and ensuring that aid programs are gender-sensitive and inclusive.

Furthermore, reforming the global tax system to combat tax evasion and illicit financial flows is essential for mobilizing domestic resources and addressing inequalities.

Moreover, debt relief and restructuring mechanisms need to be reformed to address the debt vulnerabilities of low-income countries and ensure debt sustainability. This includes promoting fair and transparent debt resolution processes, providing debt relief to countries facing unsustainable debt burdens, and establishing mechanisms for responsible borrowing and lending practices. By addressing debt-related challenges, countries can free up resources to invest in poverty reduction initiatives and realize human rights for all their citizens.

Overall, these reforms aim to strengthen the international financial architecture to better support governments' efforts in reducing poverty, inequalities, and realizing human rights. By promoting gender-responsive budgeting, enhancing aid effectiveness, reforming the global tax system, and addressing debt vulnerabilities, the international community can contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable world for all.