



unicef 
for every child

UNICEF MENARO

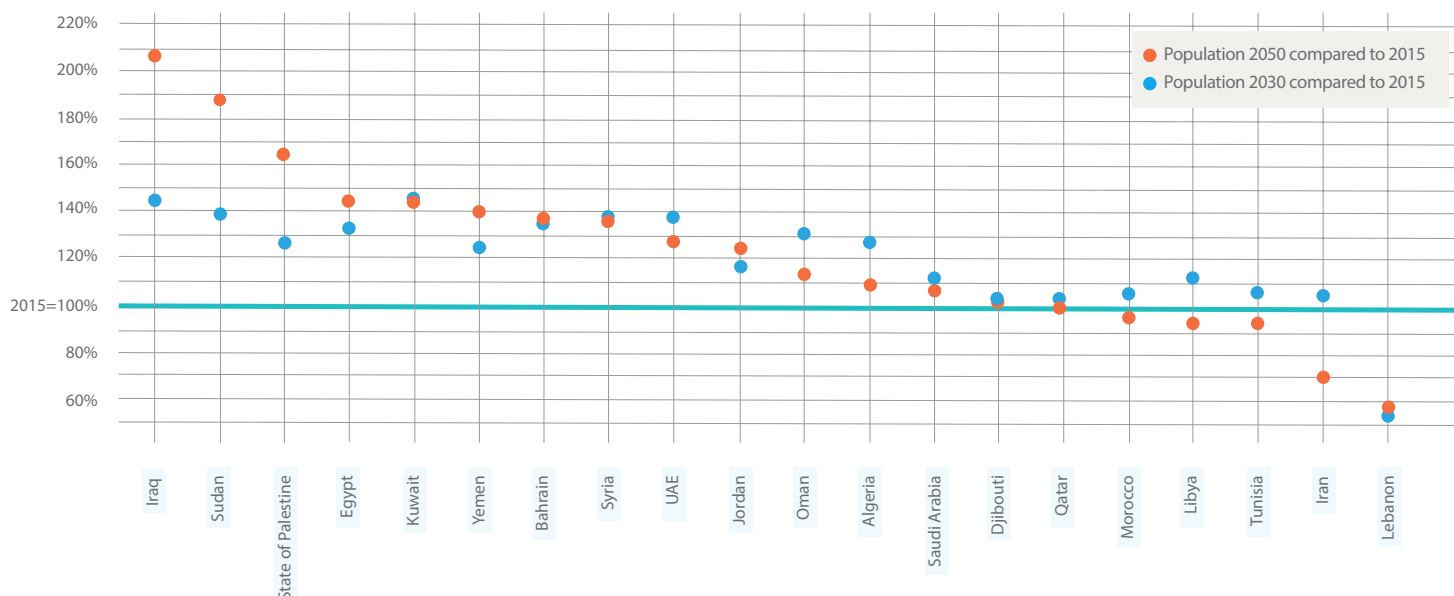
MENA GENERATION 2030 – AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT NOW

UNICEF MENA has just launched the **MENA Generation 2030** report providing an in-depth analysis of demographic projections for children, adolescents and youth in the countries of the MENA region.

The population in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is expected to more than **double in size during the first half of the 21st century** and an unprecedentedly **large proportion of the population will be in their most productive years, opening up the potential for a demographic dividend** – economic growth due to demographic changes.

This presents a **historic opportunity to invest in human capital** by improving access to health, protection, education, and meaningful engagement – enhancing the prospects for productive employment, and increased income per capita and thus stimulated growth and wealth generation. But without **urgent investments in healthcare, education, employment and opportunities for meaningful engagement**, the region risks adding 5 million more children to the 15 million already out of school and an 11 per cent rise in youth unemployment by 2030.

Changes in youth population (15-24 years) from 2015 to 2030 and 2050



Source: UNICEF analysis based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision (UN WPP), United Nations, New York, 2017.

Note: Countries are ranked from highest to lowest relative change between 2015 and 2030.

Situation of adolescents and youth in MENA:

Population Growth

- 338 million in 2000 → 724 million in 2050
- Population to double in size during the first half of the 21st century

A young population:

- Children and youth (0-24 yrs) are 47 per cent of total population (2018)
- Children and youth population will grow by 41 million between 2018 and 2050

Impact by 2030

- 25 million more students to accommodate in school
- 39 million more youth to absorb in the workforce

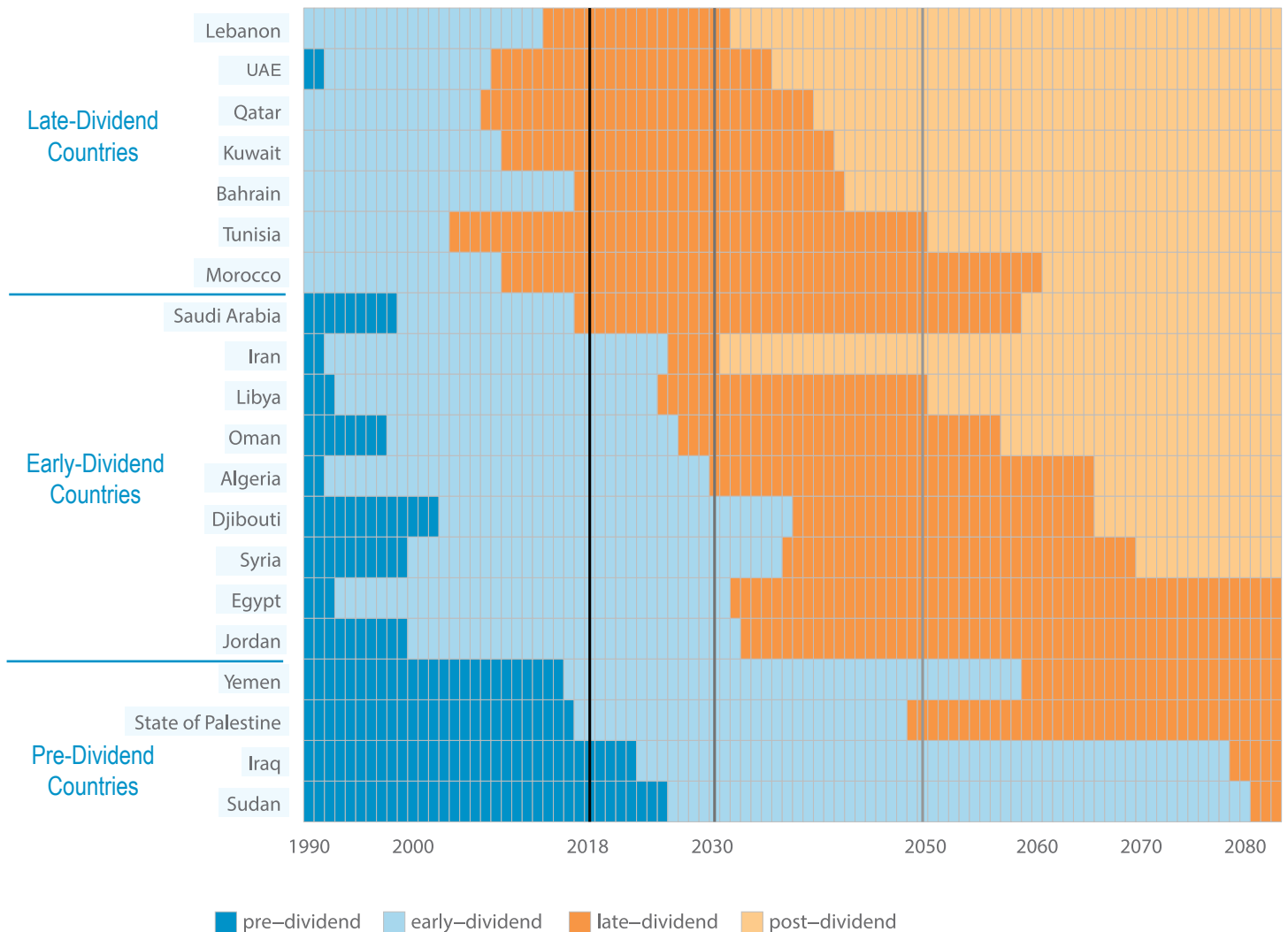
Without urgent investments for children and youth:

- 5 million more children out of school
- 11 per cent increase in youth unemployment

MENA countries by demographic phases:

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa by demographic type (1990-2085)

Countries sorted from top to bottom by type (from post- to pre-dividend) and Total Fertility Rate (increasing) in 2018



Barriers to reaping the demographic dividend in MENA:

Extreme Survival Measures

Nearly half of the 118 million under-18-year-olds, experience moderate poverty, while one in four (29.3 million) even experience acute poverty.

- One in five girls in the region married before the age of 18
- The poorest children are 5 times less likely to complete primary school
- One-third of school-aged Syrian refugees in host countries are still out-of-school.

Conflict and Displacement

More than one-third (37 per cent) of youth in MENA live in fragile and conflict affected countries.

MENA is home to 6 per cent of world's adolescents, but home to 70 per cent of adolescents who died from collective violence.

MENA is home to 58 per cent of the world's refugees and 48 per cent of the world's internally displaced populations.

Education

MENA has high numbers of children out-of-school: 15 million children, many because of conflict.

Of the 23.5 million children of lower secondary school age in the region, at least 3.5 million are out of school, and an additional 2.9 million are at risk of dropping out of school.

Employment

MENA has the world's highest youth unemployment rates: 29.4% in North Africa and 24.7% in the Arab States.

Female youth unemployment is even higher: 39.4% in North Africa and 41% in the Arab States.

Unemployment is also particularly high among Syrian refugees in host countries, for example 61 per cent in Jordan.

Disillusionment

Disillusionment among young people are caused by:

- Limited space and scope for voice and accountability
- Unemployment, conflict, crises and violence
- Discriminatory roles and social norms

Therefore:

- Young people feel that life in MENA has deteriorated over the last decade
- Only 50per cent of young people have confidence in their government in dealing with unemployment – with only up to 19 per cent in Lebanon and 24 per cent in Iraq
- Very low levels of civic engagement among young people.

Priority actions for reaping the demographic dividend in MENA:

Pre-dividend countries – *window of opportunity is yet to open*

- Increased investment in **early childhood development**, as proven to be the smartest investment,
- Investment in **relevant and quality education**, prioritizing skills for a fast-changing world, combined with policies **facilitating the school-to-work transition**, and
- Strong **engagement of adolescents and youth**, especially girls, to reap the peace and the gender dividend.

Early-dividend countries – *window of opportunity is wide open*

- Increased investment in **secondary education**, where the highest increase of school-age population is expected,
- Investment in policies focusing on **skills development** through multiple pathways and **vocational training, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship** and **job placements**,
- For the most vulnerable adolescents and youth, **transformative social protection measures** that can facilitate their eventual transition to employment, breaking the cycle of generational poverty, and
- **Strong engagement of adolescents and youth**, to reap the peace and the gender dividend.

Late-dividend countries – *window of opportunity is slowly closing*

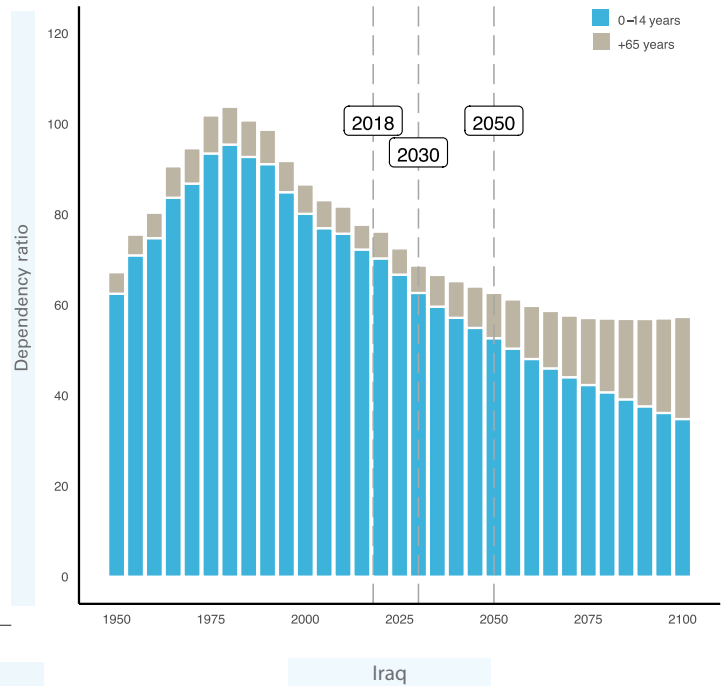
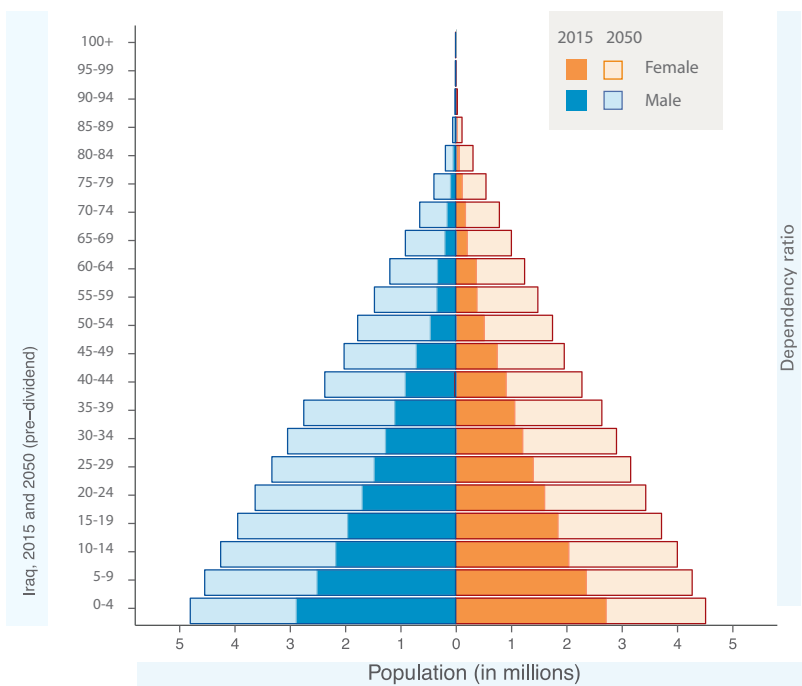
- Crucial to act now and invest in **skills development** through multiple pathways and **vocational training, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship** and **job placements**,
- Increased investment policies to address **labour force participation**, especially female labor force participation, **employment generation, business environment**, and productivity gains through **enhancing human capital** in the existing labour force,
- Strong **engagement of adolescents and youth**, especially girls, to reap the peace and gender dividend.

MENA countries by demographic phases – examples:

Iraq – A pre-dividend country: The country with the **fastest growing population** in the region – similar to Bahrain and Palestine, Iraq's population will grow by almost 50 per cent within only 15 years.

Current population 2018: 39,3 million
 Population change between:
 2018-2030: +35 per cent (+14 million)
 2018-2050: +107 per cent (+42 million)

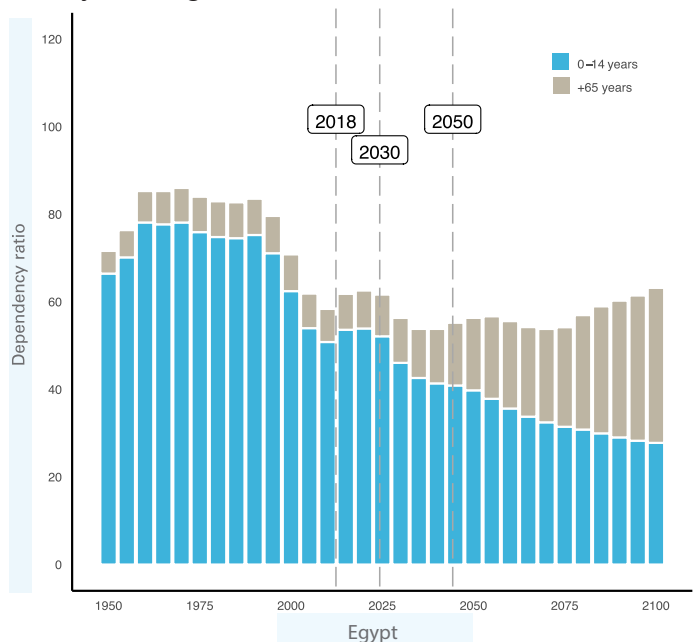
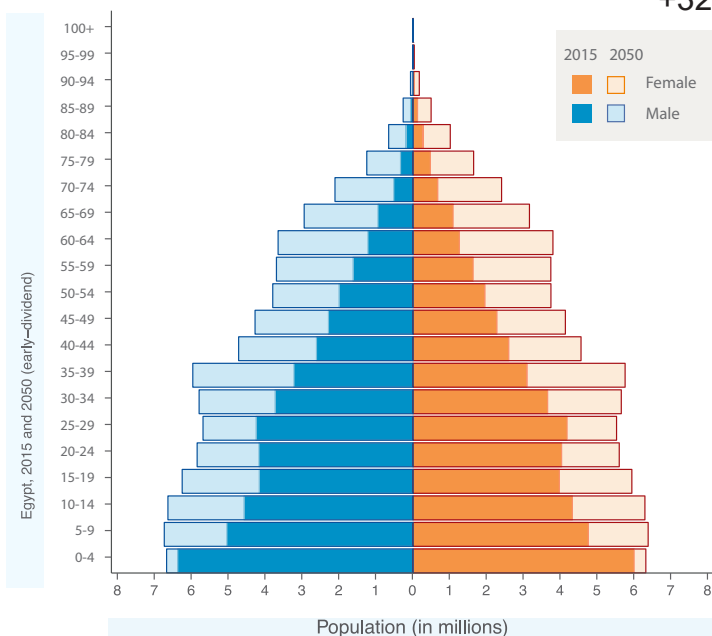
High increase in children population between 2018-2030:
 +20 per cent aged 0-4
 +30 per cent school-aged 5-17
 +35 per cent adolescents aged 10-19
 +35 per cent youth aged 15-24



Egypt – An early-dividend country: The country with the **largest population growth** in the region – along with Sudan and Iraq, Egypt will contribute to almost 50 per cent of the total population growth in the MENA region.

Current population 2018: 99,4 million
 Population change between:
 2018-2030: +20 per cent (+20 million)
 2018-2050: +54 per cent (+54 million)

High increase in children population between 2018-2030:
 -7 per cent aged 0-4
 +21 per cent school-aged 5-17
 +36 per cent adolescents aged 10-19
 +32 per cent youth aged 15-24



Lebanon – A late-dividend country: The only country in the region experiencing a **shrinking population**, with a severe decrease of children and youth population as share of the total population.

Current population 2018: 6 million
 Population change between:
 2018-2030: -8 per cent (-0.48 million)
 2018-2050: no substantial change

Decrease in children population between 2018-2030:
 -27 per cent aged 0-4
 -29 per cent school-aged 5-17
 -37 per cent adolescents aged 10-19
 -45 per cent youth aged 15-24

