

Plenary Session 2. Whatever happened to inequality in the Arab region?



Maysoon Azzam

Maysoon Azzam is one of the most prominent media figures in the Arabic world. Working for the Dubai-based Alarabiya news channel as a news presenter, programme anchor, interviewer, and lecturer. She has interviewed prominent figures and decision makers. Her reputation as a highly professional media expert qualified her to work as an instructor at the American University in Dubai. She is focusing her work on humanitarian issues and on promoting many campaigns with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations. Azzam participated in many conferences as a moderator and wrote political and social articles published on Alarabiya.net. She has received several awards, including Best TV Presenter in Using Social Media for Social Affairs and Best Media Influencer on Humanitarian Issues. She was also selected as a media supporter for the “Josour” initiative, launched by ESCWA during the first Arab Forum for Equality in 2022.



Laila Ahmed Al Najjar

Laila bint Ahmed bin Awad Al Najjar is the Minister of Social Development of Oman. Prior to that, she was an Adviser to the Minister of Education for educational programmes and was assigned as Director General of the General Directorate for Scouts and Guides. She is the first Omani woman to serve as Director General of an educational governorate Oman and the first Omani woman to participate in the leadership training course of the National Defense College. She holds a doctorate in educational management from the University of Tunis.



Awatif Hayar

Aawatif Hayar is the Moroccan Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family since October 2021. She was President of Hassan II University Casablanca 2019-2021. Since 2016, she has served as the Scientific Advisor of Smart City Expo Casablanca, member of IEEE Core Smart Cities Initiative since 2015, she was General Co-Chair of IEEE international Smart Cities Conference in 2019. She was also selected by the African Innovation Foundation as one of the top ten innovative African women in 2015. She earned her PhD with honors from Institut National Polytechnique in Toulouse in 2001. She is active in many national and international programmes related to frugal social smart cities.





Ghassan Dibah

Ghassan Dibah holds a bachelor's degree in Physics and a PhD in Economics from the University of Texas at Austin, and Professor and former Chair of Economics at the Lebanese American University (LAU). His research and teaching interests include political economy and artificial intelligence and capitalism. His research appeared in various journals including *Physica A*, *Computational Economics*, *Review of Political Economy*, *Journal of International Development*, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *International Migration* and *International Journal of Manpower*. He was the editor of the *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance* journal from 2007 to 2022.



Hiba Ahmed

Hiba Ahmed was appointed in June 2022 as Director General for the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD), which is the poverty reduction arm of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). A Sudanese citizen, she graduated from the department of economics, the University of Khartoum with an honor degree. She then moved to the United States of America to complete her post graduate studies at the University of Michigan, from which she earned both her master's and PhD degrees with distinction. She also earned several post-graduate certificates in economics and sustainable development from Harvard University. She began her career as an economist in the Central Bank of Sudan. She worked for the World Bank, Saudi Aramco oil company, the United Nations Development Program, the United States Agency for International Development, and the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington D.C., focusing on economic development, policy, and poverty alleviation. She returned to the Sudan in 2019, where she held the position of Director General for the General Authority for Investment and Private Sector Development. In 2020, she was appointed as Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, which made her the first female Minister of Finance for the Sudan. As Minister of Finance, she led international cooperation efforts including the "Friends of Sudan" initiative comprising of more than 40 donors and was responsible for resource mobilization of up to \$2 billion for the Sudan in 2020. During her tenure, she also led the country's \$60 billion debt restructuring and was responsible for administering the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Staff Monitored Program for macroeconomic stabilization.



Barq Damor

Barq Dmour has been serving as the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Social Protection in Jordan since January 2020. He holds a PhD in Political Science. He has over 20 years of extensive experience in Social Protection, Youth and Democracy. Al-Dmour expertise includes but is not limited to strategic planning, programme development, policy analysis, social protection reform and youth development. He has played a vital role heading the Social Services Pillar within the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS). He served as the Acting Director for the National Aid Fund (NAF) from August 2021–October 2022 in addition to heading the Social Assistance Pillar within the NSPS.

