MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX 2016
2 June 2016

HIGHLIGHTS ~ ARAB STATES

All data will be live on www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/ on Wednesday 2 June.

At present, the Global MPI has national estimates for a total of 12 Arab States, 112 subnational regions, and 268 Million people, which is nearly 75% of the population of the Arab States. Of these, over 54 million are MPI poor. The Arab states are striking because of the difference between income and MPI rates of poverty. On average, 20.1% of the population in the Arab States covered are MPI poor, but only 2.6% are poor according to the $1.90/day poverty measure, making this the region in which the mis-match between levels of MPI and income poverty are among the highest.

In 2016, we provide new MPI estimations for Palestine (MICS 2014) and Yemen (DHS 2013). Both countries are disaggregated data by rural-urban areas and Yemen is disaggregated by 21 subnational regions. A key difference between $1.90/day and MPI estimations is the tremendous internal disparity that the subnational disaggregation of MPI reveal. For example, one of the updated countries in 2016 is Yemen, which is disaggregated for the first time into 21 subnational regions. Yemen’s MPI shows it to be slightly poorer than Pakistan, and just less poor than Cameroon or Haiti, with 47% of people living in poverty. The subnational picture brings this to life. Now we see that the sparsely populated Eastern regions are radically less poor than the West, with the exception of the capital Sana’a.

In Sana’a city, only 14% of the population are poor. In Hajjah, it’s 76%, making it poorer than Central African Republic or Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹

Diversity in the Incidence of Poverty (H) within the Region: As a region, the Arab States are highly diverse in terms of Multidimensional Poverty levels. In six Arab States less than 5% of the populations are MPI poor; in Iraq and Morocco, poverty rates are 12% and 15%, and in Djibouti, 29%. However, in Yemen and Sudan the rates are much higher at 53% and 58% respectively, and in Somalia, 80% of the population are multidimensionally poor.

Intensity of Poverty (A): The average intensity of poverty for each MPI poor person in the Arab states is also disproportionately high at 52.2%.² This is the same average intensity as South Asia and lower only than Sub-Saharan Africa.

Similar diversity is seen in intensity. In six Arab states, the average poor person experiences deprivations in less than 38% of weighted indicators – less than one indicator per dimension. In Yemen and Sudan, poor

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¹ The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by OPHI or the University of Oxford. This map is intended for illustrative purposes only.

² All population aggregates use 2012 population data using the 2012 Revision of World Population Prospects (UNDESA 2012)

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people are on average deprived in well over half of the indicators, and in Somalia average intensity is as high as 63% of dimensions.

In some Arab States, as in Latin America and Europe and Central Asia, the Global MPI rates are very low, so the Global MPI – which measures acute multidimensional poverty – should be complemented by a measure of moderate multidimensional poverty, whose indicators and cutoffs better reflect the aspirations and standards of poverty in this region. Furthermore, due in part to data limitations, the current Global MPI does not capture some pertinent deprivations such as un- and under-employment, insecurity, and overcrowding to name but a few.

**Data:** The 2016 Global MPI estimations for the Arab States are taken from surveys fielded 2006-2014. Three are Demographic and Health Surveys (Jordan, Egypt, Yemen), three are PAPFAM surveys (Libya, Syria, Morocco), and the remaining six are Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. The most recent data are for Egypt (2014) and Palestine (2014), followed by Yemen (2013) Jordan (2012), Tunisia (2011/12) and Iraq (2011). The data for the Djibouti and Somalia are the oldest, being from 2006, and Libya is from 2007. Otherwise with the exception of Syria (2009) all date from 2010-2014.

We also have disaggregated data for 112 **subnational regions** in **eight Arab states**: Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. These regions range from an MPI poverty rate of less than 5% in 36 subnational regions, to poverty rates of 71% to 86% in 10 regions. We lack subnational decompositions other than rural-urban areas for Somalia, which has a national MPI poverty rate of 81%, making it by far the poorest Arab State. The **poorest subnational regions in the Arab States** outside of Somalia is **West Dafur** in Sudan. West Dafur has the same MPI as Somalia, 0.514. Otherwise, the 15 poorest subnational regions are found in Sudan and Yemen.

**Intensity** varies greatly subnationally as well – in 55 subnational regions, poor people on average experience deprivations in less than 40% of the weighted indicators of the global MPI. But in 21 subnational regions (Sudan and Yemen), the average intensity is 50% or greater – half of the MPI dimensions. The Blue Nile region of Sudan plus the country of Somalia, experience intensity levels over 60%.

For the first time, we now have destitution for all Arab States and subnational regions, including for the first time, destitution figures for Djibouti, Yemen, and Somalia. Our **measure of destitution** identifies a subset of poor people as destitute if they experience a number of extreme deprivations like severe malnutrition, losing two children, having all primary-aged school children out of school, and practicing open defecation. It is shocking to note that 68% of the population in Somalia lives in destitution – only Niger and South Sudan have higher rates in all the countries covered. Between 0% and 53% of the populations living in subnational regions of the other covered countries are destitute.

However, here is the rather large surprise: on average, across the Arab States covered, a total of 26.5 million people are destitute, which is 9.9% of the total population. This figure, like that of MPI, is polarized but with some differences: in Libya, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Iraq the proportion of MPI poor who are destitute is low: 4% to 12%. In Tunisia, a low MPI country, it is 22%, suggesting pockets of poverty. In Egypt it is 20%, and in Morocco and Sudan, over 50% of MPI poor people are destitute.

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