



# Peacebuilding

Sustaining Peace



Youth,  
Peace &  
Security



منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة



الاتحاد الأوروبي



## The Libyan Youth Today: Opportunities and Challenges



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## PREFACE

Libya has witnessed unprecedented youth momentum in terms of size and proportion, which presents a unique opportunity to invest in peace and development efforts. This is all the more true that the profiles of the new generation in terms of education, health, vitality and other characteristics are outstanding, both for males and females, and far superior to those of the previous ones. The interest expressed by the new generation for community issues, their home country, and public and political affairs, and its readiness to participate in promoting dialogue and peace, and in strengthening state institutions, democracy and the transitional process in general appears to be strong, as reflected in the findings of recent field consultations carried out with the youth.

However, young people today face complex challenges that seem to have had an intense negative impact on their physical, social and psychological conditions, which confronted them with difficult choices and feelings swinging between despair and hope. Youngsters are the most educated and skilled, yet they are the most vulnerable to unemployment and economic exclusion. They have actively contributed to change towards building a society of freedom and social and economic justice but have ended up as the least represented at the decision-making level. Despite being the most dynamic and capable to give and to innovate, their participation in civic and political institutions is still at its lowest. Nor should we overlook the fact that modern Libyan girls are highly educated and knowledgeable compared to many neighbouring countries and even to the young males in Libya, still they face values that strongly hinder their emancipation and participation.

Among the most important challenges that impede the participation and mobility of young people today and which, from a youth perspective, requires urgent policies and procedures interventions primarily concerned with protecting youth and their spaces from violence and abuse. Such policies and procedures are essential to enable the youth to carry out their daily educational, professional, social and community activities safely. It is also urgent to undertake immediate action to integrate the most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, thus protecting them from falling prey to violence and armed action. Another no less important priority for young people is giving them a role in disseminating a culture of dialogue and peace and allowing them to take part in the various peace building mechanisms. Culture, as a tool to face extremism, intellectual torpor, and patriarchal values against equity and to enhance the participation of young girls and boys has also ranked high on the list of youth priorities.

Against this background, a multidisciplinary working group of Libyan academics has been set up, with the support of the UNFPA Libya office, UNESCO and PBSO, to carry out background studies, each of which has diagnosed the situation of the Libyan youth at the level of each sector. This endeavour aims to consolidate youth gains and achievements in line with the main thrusts of the draft constitution of Libya which calls for empowering young people and giving effect to their participation in public life. Indeed, article 33 stipulates that "the State shall prepare the

appropriate environment to develop adolescents and youth, provide ways to increase their capacities, and support their effectiveness in national life. The State shall open up opportunities for them to work, participate in development, and benefit from various sciences and human cultures as well as enable them to participate in political, social, and economic life with a spirit of citizenship and responsibility". The studies seek also to take stock of the current situation of young people in Libya in terms of demographic, social and economic characteristics, the opportunities for peace and development that go along with them and the challenges that Libyan youngsters face. This diagnosis helps towards developing priorities for the formulation of an alternative vision and policies for youth empowerment and giving effect to their participation. In light of the results of this work, the present document has been prepared to provide the most prominent indicators on the situation of young people today in Libya and to highlight the priorities for alternative policies.

# Chapter I: The youth bulge is a unique opportunity for development

## **Demographic dividend is a unique opportunity**

The demographic opportunity lies in the economic return that can be generated when society reaches an advanced stage of demographic transition and more accurately a shift in the age structure of the population, ie, when the youth segment and the active population in general reach their highest proportion and their growth rate exceeds that of the dependent population (under 15 and 65 or higher). This shift represents an opportunity because a declining dependency ratio, which also means a shrinking household size, will reduce the related costs and enable households to raise levels of savings and investment and thereby create factors that foster growth, wealth and well-being.

However, achieving such a return and a qualitative shift in economic growth necessitates an important investment in human capital, primarily young people, particularly in the areas of public and reproductive health and in education, both in quantitative and qualitative terms with a view to building the capacities of the labour force and enhancing their skills. It also requires wider participation of young people in economic activity and a larger scale participation of girls and women in the labour force. This should be necessarily go hand in hand with providing jobs and reducing unemployment to a minimum.

The advantage of this demographic dividend lies in the fact that once it is there, it usually continues for several decades in a row, which enables the good and cumulative employment of a workforce at its height in terms of intensity, youth and cost effectiveness. As such, this workforce remains the best positioned to ensure the highest levels of productivity, savings and investment.

For example, over several consecutive decades the countries of Eastern Asia (South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and Thailand) have been able to achieve an annual per capita GDP growth rate of 5% to 6.6%, which enabled them to make a quantum leap in their economies. As this achievement continued, these countries have been able to maintain their distinguished economic capabilities<sup>1</sup>.

The other characteristic of the youth bulge and the opening of the demographic opportunity stage is that it is usually of a double-edged nature. It could be put to good use, thus maximizing its benefits, or, in case no facilitating and supportive factors are present, the opportunity may turn into a threat. This could translate into a state of turmoil and instability as a result of the high numbers of young people, and, in consequence, the strong demand and pressure on the labour markets. In addition, negative consequences may arise out of the lack of good employment of this opportunity in the medium term and towards the end of the period of this

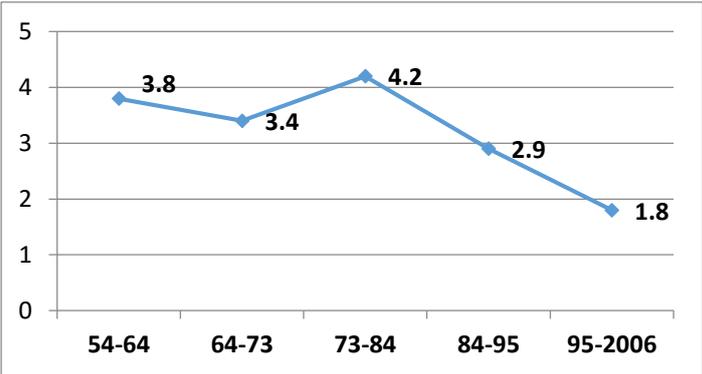
opportunity which will be associated once again with a high proportion of dependents, especially among the elderly.

In this regard, many researchers have come to the conclusion that the growingly high numbers of young people, coupled with high unemployment and exclusion among them, leads to instability, violence and conflict. One researcher has concluded that 80% of the civil strife in the period 1970-2000 occurred in countries with high youth numbers<sup>ii</sup>.

**Shift in population structure: Youth has become a prominent demographic force**

Despite the significant increase in the Libyan population during the last decades from 5.670 million in 2006 (2006 census) to about 6.4 million in 2014 (World Population Review), the population growth rates have undergone significant changes during these periods. The overall tendency has been towards decline. This rate has thus fell from about 4.2% during the period 1973-1984 to 1.8% during 1995-2006. However, this rate appears to have risen slightly in recent years (Figure 1)

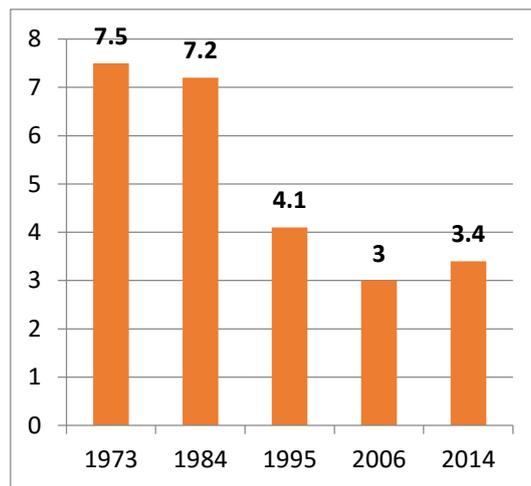
*Figure 1: Evolution of the population growth rate in Libya*



Studies and Population Policies Office-Libya, based on census results

This decline in growth rates is due to the low levels of fertility among women during the same period. The fertility rate of women in Libya has declined since the mid-1970s and more remarkably since the mid-1980s. The average number of children per woman declined from 7.2 in 1984 to 4.1 1995 and then continued to decline till the last decade where slightly higher rates has been witnessed (Figure 2).

*Figure 2. Evolution of fertility rates*

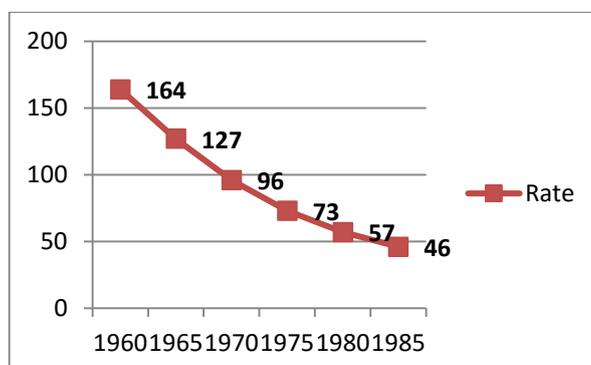


### General Population Censuses (1973-2006), and Family Health Survey 2014

(2014, Dr. Ali El-Sharif, background paper)

These transformations have been linked mainly to improvements in health services on the one hand and to the higher level of education on the other, which are the main factors in determining the course of fertility and population growth. The infant mortality rate, for example, declined rapidly and in high rates during the 1960s and 1970s, falling from 164 deaths per 1000 births in 1960 to 57/1000 in 1980 and has continued to decline during later periods at lower rates (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Evolution of child mortality rates per 1000 children



Perspective Monde: <http://perspective.usherbrooke.ca>

The illiteracy rate among Libyan society has also fallen from 40% in 1984 to only 15% in 2004.

TABLE 1 EVOLUTION OF ILLITERACY RATES

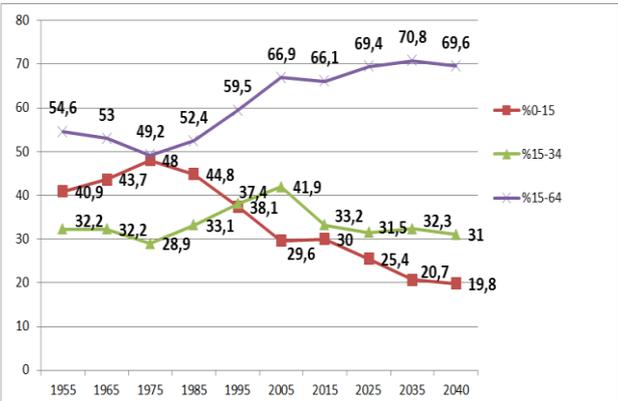
Years	Illiteracy rate
1984	32.4
1994	18.7
2004	11.5

<b>2013</b>	5.0
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**(Dr. Ali El-Sharif, background paper 2017)**

All these changes in turn led to a qualitative shift in the composition of the population, mainly in terms of the significant youth bulge, which reached peaks. At the same time, the proportion of children continued to decline. Thus, since the mid-1970s, the proportion of children under 15 declined from 48% in 1975 to 29.6% in 2005. Meanwhile, the numbers and percentages of young people in the 15-34 age group rose from 758 and 29% of the total population, respectively, to 2416, the equivalent of 41.9% of the total population in 2005, registering the highest numbers and proportions at the same time. Although the proportion of youth has declined during the last decade due to a recovering fertility, it still maintains the same size and represents one-third of the society. Projections indicate that this group will maintain the same proportion over the next several decades (Figures 4 and 5).

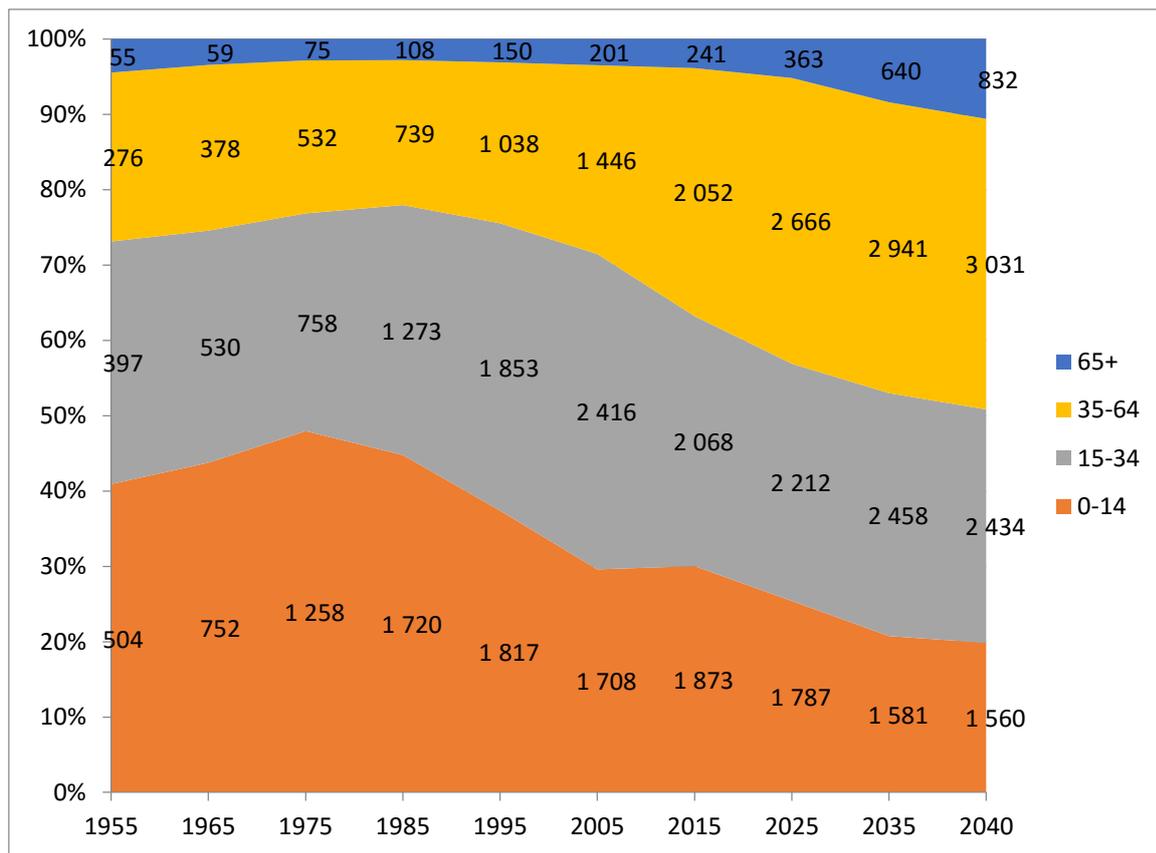
*Figure 4. Evolution of the proportion of youth, children and population in the labour force*



*United Nations Population Division DESA, (2015).*

*World Population Prospects*

*Figure 5. Evolution of population size per thousand by age group 1955-2050*



United Nations Population Division, DESA (2015).

World Population Prospects

### **The youth: good potential and capabilities**

Among the assets of the Libyan youth, which today represents half of the active population and 43% of the labor force, is that it is the social segment with the most capabilities and developmental potential. They are the most educated and most responsive to factors of modernity. They are the most vital and active and the most innovative. Compared to past generations, they are the least burdened in terms of household expenditure and therefore less demanding in terms of the dependency burden if they could have a job. In consequence, they are best positioned to offer a productive economic contribution.

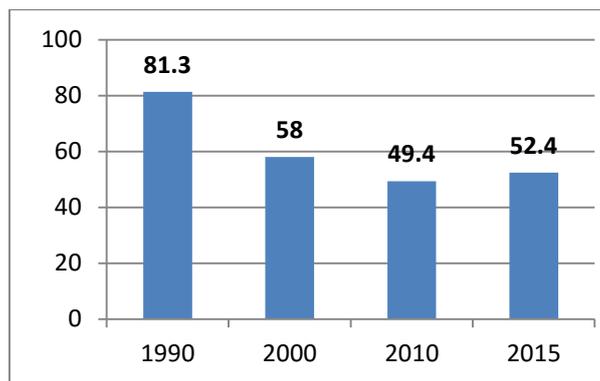
The proportion of young people aged 25-29 who had no degree was 12.7%. Those who have a high school diploma represent 77.3%, while for the 55-59 age group, these proportions amount to 56.6% and 29.4% respectively. The average size of the family was 5 persons in 2016, down from 6 persons before about 9 years<sup>iii</sup>.

On the other hand, the proportion of young people who use the Internet daily is 55.3% compared to only 16.5% for the generation aged 50 or more. 76.5% of young people use computers compared to 31.6% for the older generation.

Although harnessing this huge human potential for the purposes of development and the well-being of the population, including young people, has not been successful in the past decades when this opportunity was available for the first time, the opportunity is nonetheless potentially still there. In addition to the assets of young people, some of which we have highlighted above, it should also be noted that the labour force, the largest part of which is composed of young people, is still dense and at its highest. At the same time, the dependency ratio is still at its lowest levels.

It is estimated that the proportion of the population in the labour force (15-64) out of the total population is about 66% in 2015, being therefore at its highest level compared to the previous period. It is also expected to continue at this same level and may rise to a higher level during the coming decades according to UN projections (Figure 4). In addition, the dependency ratio is estimated at 52.4% in 2015, down from 81.3% in 1990. This is also expected to continue at a similar low level in the coming decades (Figure 6).

*Figure 6. Dependency ratio in Libya*



<https://esa.un.org/DataQuery>

#### **Action needed:**

Therefore, Libya today, despite adversity, has a human wealth that represents a potentially promising developmental opportunity. This wealth is embodied in the huge number of young people whose assets and capabilities are outstanding. However, investing in these human resources requires, by necessity, an integrated and participatory policy aimed primarily at achieving the following goals under this section:

- Adopting an economic package to reduce youth unemployment and enhance youth purchasing power, while combating any discrimination against women and girls in employment, income and professional responsibility.

- Launching a broad initiative to review the education, training and rehabilitation system, both quantitatively and qualitatively, thus enhancing the quality of education and determining the relationship between its outputs and the needs of labour markets.
- Strengthening the health system so that young people can benefit from both basic and reproductive health services



## Chapter II: Reforming education and curbing unemployment: Priorities of youth empowerment policies:

### **Introduction:**

Education, training and capacity building are the road map to providing employment opportunities for young people, to the youth protecting themselves from unemployment and falling prey to violence, undocumented migration and risky behaviour, to building the concept of citizenship in the modern democratic state and to contributing to the development of the Libyan society socially, economically and politically.

Education in Libya has developed significantly over several decades and the rates of illiteracy have declined. The number of university graduates and those with high levels of education has reached high proportions, including males and females alike. This is deemed to be a remarkable milestone over a short period of time compared to other countries. However, this quantitative expansion was not matched by a similar development in the quality of education in terms of curriculum, knowledge and skills. This development would be in line with the tremendous development of knowledge worldwide and would represent an adequate response to the needs of the national labour markets that can contribute to enhancing Libya's economic capacities.

As a consequence of this and of the predominantly rentier and non-productive economic choices that have been adopted, there was a significant increase in unemployment, especially among young people, and a deterioration in their purchasing power, exacerbated by the expansion of the economic crisis which has firmly taken hold in the context of the events and conflicts over recent years. The following is a brief overview of the education system in Libya in terms of the milestones achieved, the shortcomings and challenges it is currently facing, ending with the proposed policy directions for the reform of the education system, training and to reducing unemployment among young people.

### **Education: important achievements**

Over the past decades, the policies aimed at promoting education have led to many milestones being achieved, mainly thanks to the implementation of compulsory and free education policies for all social segments since the 1960s, and through national choices to provide education to all groups throughout the entire country in accordance with the principle of education for all. The following are the most important milestones, mainly in light of the data provided by the Bureau of Statistics and census of Libya:

- Access to all levels and fields of education is free of charge, and quasi-free of charge at universities. Financial rewards are even proposed to students enrolled in technical and vocational education.
- The necessary infrastructure and facilities for all stages of education is available. The entire range of educational disciplines is also available throughout Libya.
- Postgraduate studies for specialized degrees, master's and doctoral degrees well as reskilling programs are offered at home and abroad

Thanks to this:

- The illiteracy rate dropped from about 95% in 1951 to 14.6% in 2004 and 9.7% in 2013, to reach only 1.4% among young people aged 15-29 in 2016.
- The enrolment rate in basic education increased to 84% of the total number of children aged 6-14 in 1990-1991 to reach 98% in 2015-2016, with a higher rate among girls compared to boys, namely 98.5% and 97.5% respectively.
- Net enrolment in secondary education reached 81.5% in 2015. Male and female enrolment is balanced and sometimes the percentage of females is slightly higher by 1%. This secondary education is spread throughout Libya, whether in rural or urban areas.
- There are now 14 public universities in Libya offering education to more than 380,000 students and 91 high technical institutes similar to university colleges with more than 61,000 students and more than 10,000 full-time and part-time university professors.

This has resulted in:

- Manpower with higher levels of scientific, vocational and technical knowledge in the public and private sectors of the Libyan economy
- The development of social and cultural awareness of all youth segments, which heightened their awareness of the concepts of state, citizen, citizenship, rights, duties, freedom and democracy. This has shown in many areas of social behaviour, including the demographic behaviour of women, especially regarding abstaining from early marriage and increased health awareness, particularly in terms of reproductive health, child health and women's more significant contribution to economic activity as well as other behavioural trends which are due mainly to the higher levels of education.

**Today, however, the education system faces several challenges, perhaps most notably:**

- The low quality of the educational process and low professional and technical capabilities of the outputs of the process and their inadequacy with regard to the needs of the labour market. This seems to be the main reason why foreign companies and many national companies prefer to hire foreign workers instead of Libyan workers.
- Weak interaction of the entire educational system with modern systems and curricula in developed countries, which is an obstacle to benefiting from their strengths and perhaps to the use of joint educational programs or the signing of twinning agreements between Libyan and foreign universities and scientific research institutions.
- Poor professional and technical skills and the noticeable lack of programs to prepare and upskill teachers, especially for basic and secondary education. The methods of teaching are still traditional. They use recitation, memorization and rote learning instead of fostering critical thinking and problem solving skills necessary needed for today's world citizens.
- Lack of use of information and communication technology not only in secondary education, but across almost all levels of education, except for technical institutes and some university colleges. Libraries, databases, audio-visual networks and the related curricula, teaching methods and scientific and cultural environment are still lacking in Libyan secondary schools whose situation has not evolved much compared to the past.
- Low demand for secondary technical and vocational education (intermediate vocational institutes) and a stronger, culture-bound, demand for secondary and university academic education. In fact, Libyans in general tend to follow educational paths that facilitate access to jobs in the public sector.
- Many buildings used as educational institutions have been damaged as a result of events in recent years. Some have become unusable and others have been used as shelters for displaced families seeking refuge from armed conflicts in their original areas of residence.

### **Policies proposed to develop education and promote professional youth skills:**

There is clearly an urgent need to adopt a national education reform strategy that addresses the shortcomings of the system as a whole and also the training and reskilling aspects in particular. The strategy should be formulated within the framework of a broad and multidisciplinary partnership and with the participation of young people at all stages. It should aim at the following priorities:

- A comprehensive and ongoing review of school curricula and teaching methods to enhance the scientific and knowledge dimensions so that they be in line with developments in terms of technology and knowledge at the international level.

Education should foster critical thinking in youth and should reduce reliance on memorization and rote learning as teaching methods.

- Take advantage of the experiences of other countries and the modern educational systems implemented in various parts of the world, to enhance quality and serve the current needs of today's Libya and its future aspirations.
- Ensure coordination and complementarity between the curricula and training programs and the quality and nature of the disciplines and skills needed by different sectors in the Libyan labour market today and in the foreseeable future, and ensure youngsters are well-equipped before they seek access to the labour market.
- Adopt an ongoing program for the reskilling/upskilling of teachers in the fields of teaching methods and in using modern educational techniques in their teaching and ensure that they can use modern teaching methods such as project-based education, interactive education, virtual education and problem solving education.
- Ensure wide dissemination of non-formal education and distance education in a way that promotes the values and principles of human rights, the culture of citizenship, civic culture and the values of dialogue and peace, and reduces violence and extremism.
- Focus on the teaching of languages, including Arabic, and strengthen the learning of other languages, especially English, so that new generations can access, benefit and interact with the latest scientific and knowledge developments in the world.

### **Unemployment is one of the key challenges facing young people today:**

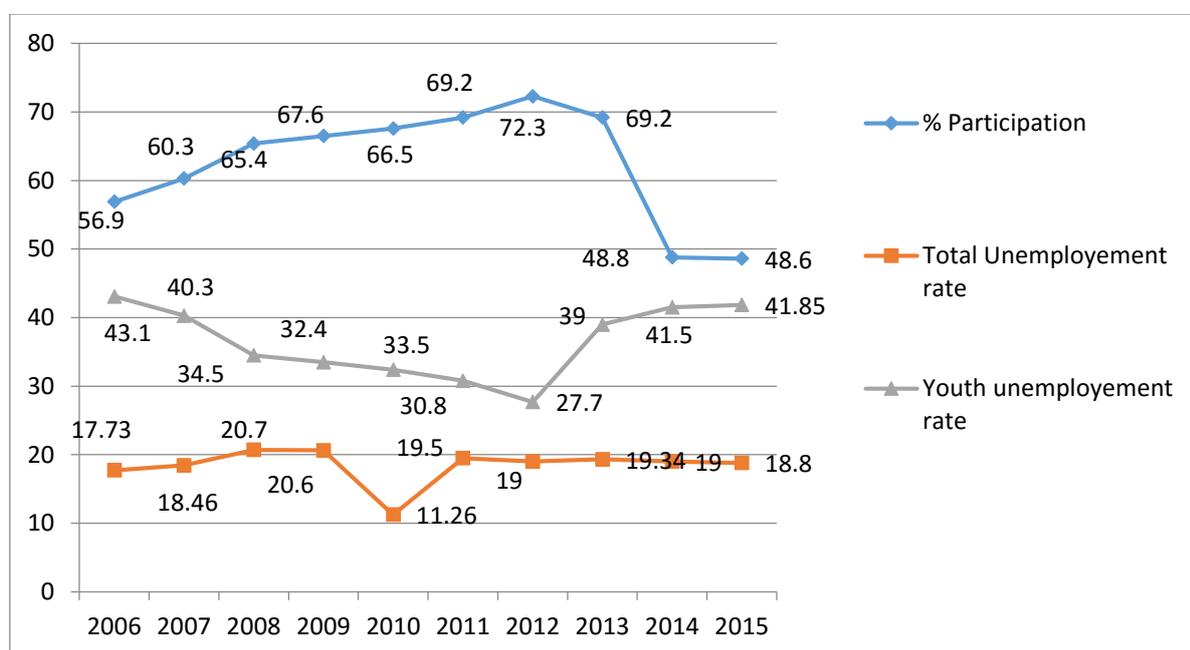
Young people represent a huge potential and an immense human resource that can effectively contribute to production and to making a significant shift in economic growth and development in Libya. As already pointed out, young people aged 15-34 represent about half of the workforce. They are the ones who are the best educated and who have the best potential to deal with modern technologies and innovation. As such, they represent a high productive capacity if they are well employed.

However, the situation of young people today does not reflect this picture. The available data indicate that the potential of the youth labour force is being squandered in terms of high unemployment and under employment, low income among them. Moreover, a high proportion of youth employees have no social security coverage, especially in the private sector. It should also be noted that unemployment rates among graduates and young people with advanced qualification are high, which leads to tension among this social segment which is the most likely to feel exclusion and to be able to express itself and protest. This may exacerbate the deterioration of the security situation and lead to more violence

## Unemployment has worsened in recent years:

In recent years, Libya has seen a decline in its economic situation, which has had a negative impact on the domestic labour markets in terms of employment and unemployment. The various employment indicators among the population as a whole and young people in particular have quickly deteriorated and in some respects, have entered the red zone. The rate of youth participation in economic activity declined from 72.3% in 2012 to 48.6% in 2015, according to the General Information Authority. This stand in contradiction to the trend prevailing since at least 2006, as shown in Figure 7.

*Figure 7. Development of the youth participation rate in the economic activity and the population and youth unemployment rates*



### **Bureau of Statistics and census, 2016 statistics**

In addition to the decline in the rates and even in the numbers of workers compared to the previous period, the data indicate that the unemployment rate among young people has risen in an appalling manner. It is estimated at 47.8% in 2015, compared to only 12.7% worldwide<sup>iv</sup>. It is also more than twice as high compared to the unemployment rate among the population as a whole, which itself is very high in comparison to international indicators. It is estimated at 18.8% in 2015, compared to only 5.7% worldwide and 11.4% in the Arab region level as a whole<sup>v</sup>. Gender distribution shows that unemployment is prevalent mainly among girls with a rate of 67.9% compared to 40.9% among males in the 15-24 age group. This rate has reached 32.8% and 23.8% respectively for the 25-34 age group<sup>vi</sup>.

However, the number of females accessing the labour market (the economically active) compared to males is rather weak and stands at only 28.8% compared to 57% for males. The

percentage of the economically active female workers out of the total number of the economically active is only 32%. This is mostly due to the fact that females spend a longer time at school and are not strongly encouraged to have jobs. At the end of the day, this amounts to wasting energy, especially that the educational level of girls is relatively high, and even their proportion in universities is higher than that of males.

### **Determinants of the youth unemployment crisis:**

There is no doubt that one of the fundamental determinants of the economic crisis and the scourge of unemployment is the security challenge. The spread of conflicts and citizens' sense of insecurity limit their movement and mobility, including travelling to work and this greatly reduces investment opportunities and the development of projects<sup>vii</sup>. The challenge of weak state institutions undoubtedly has an important negative impact on the overall management of the economy. However, several other factors also represent obstacles that must be addressed, most notably the structural challenge of the rentier economy, which is almost entirely dependent on oil revenues and the associated policies, values and behaviour. This shows in a more marked manner in the productive sectors and the concentration of employment in the public sector, which leads to higher payroll expenses and state subsidies. This system also leads to shunning manual occupations and a general tendency towards white collar occupations instead.

Despite the country's intensive efforts to diversify the sources of income for the Libyan economy, oil still accounts for about 73% of GDP, 95% of export earnings and about 93% of public revenues. As a result of the increase in the percentage of workers in the public sector, which reached about 88% of the total number of employed labour force, with rates among females reaching 97.5% for females, state subsidies to cover payroll expenditure amounted to 17% of GDP<sup>viii</sup>.

Another factor contributing to unemployment is the weakness of the private sector and its limited capacity to provide jobs and incentives for young people and to enhance its own attractiveness. While all employees in the public sector enjoy social security, only 46% of private sector workers benefit from this coverage. For the youth aged 15-34, only 37% have access to social security compared to more than 90% of the public sector workers. This explains also why new generations prefer to work in the public sector.

Another reason for unemployment is often that the youth graduating at different stages of the educational system lack the skills and competencies that are needed to have access to the labour market. Behind this state of affairs lie the very characteristics of the educational system. This has led 30% of entrepreneurs to complain about the weak skills of young Libyans.

### **Giving priority to the fight against youth unemployment:**

As mentioned above, youth unemployment has reached an all-time high and has become a danger and a challenge that requires urgent and serious action. In the seven cities where consultations were conducted, young people have expressed uneasiness about unemployment, the lack of income and the high cost of living amid widespread tension, particularly among young university graduates whom are the most conscious and who can deliver more than others, think critically and express themselves. Against the same background, many, particularly girls, have turned attention to the fact that this situation seems to have prompted some to join armed groups for money (National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security- 2017). This requires expediting the adoption of an integrated two-level national plan to meet this challenge. The first level concerns urgent measures affecting mainly the most vulnerable young people and young graduates while the second level is aimed at the structural reform of the economic, educational and reskilling/upskilling system as a whole.

We note in particular:

- The need for prompt and decisive measures to protect civilians, roads and institutions to ensure journeys to work are safe and economic activities are normally carried out, to encourage investment and promote employment.
- Encourage small and medium businesses and provide support the private sector to enable them to provide jobs and attractive incentives for young people.
- Identify the most vulnerable youth, such as the poorest, the most marginalized and those who are exposed to risky behaviours, in addition to designing an urgent program to reintegrate the demobilized from armed action.
- Design a training and reskilling plan for the benefit of the unemployed youth. These programs should be broad and multi-disciplinary and should take into account the actual needs of labour markets.
- Carry out information and awareness campaigns to direct attention on the value of work in all its aspects among young people, including blue-collar jobs, and integrate subjects in school curricula related to education on productive work and the role of work in building the spirit of citizenship and values of self-reliance and community participation.
- Prepare an integrated national plan for reform aimed at diversifying economic activity by supporting productive sectors such as industry and agriculture.



## Chapter III: Enhancing participation opportunities to reduce youth exclusion and strengthen peace and security opportunities

### **Youth participation is a right and an added value:**

Experiences throughout the world as well as the relevant literature show that youth participation is of utmost importance and has a wide and multidimensional impact on both the individual and the society as a whole. This is all the more true since the participation of young people in public and political affairs will empower them, facilitate the process of building their own personalities, help them and the society as a whole grow mature, and give them incentives to become responsible actors in their communities. At the community level, giving effect to the participation of young people will enable society as a whole to better understand the needs and attitudes of new generations and thus promote community cohesion and harmony.

There is no doubt that participation in political affairs and in decision-making represents the most important form of participation, the one which can contribute towards achieving the desired objectives from participation. Indeed, it is more effective than other processes of participation when it comes to giving a voice to young people in the public and political affairs of the country and is the most capable of promoting the values of citizenship and responsibility. Moreover, ensuring young people are represented in the legislative and executive branches and in decision-making processes, both nationally and locally, will strongly promote intergenerational communication, community consensus and unity and support and guarantee the success of policies of dialogue, peace and security.

In this context, the available data indicate that the Libyan youth, despite their strong interest in public and political affairs and their strong will to participate as expressed on many occasions, and despite the emergence of promising initiatives to promote civil action, their participation in civil society organizations, parties and political life remains weak and hesitant. This participation is now facing several challenges, some of them being real stumbling blocks to the development of this participation.

The following diagnosis takes stock of Libyan youth participation today in the light of relevant data. This includes the views and attitudes of youth about participation, indicators about their civic organizations and their actual participation in public and civil affairs as well as political life in this transitional period.

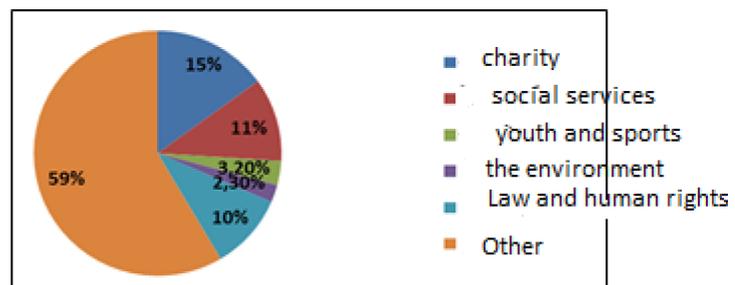
### **Participation in public and political affairs, embryonic and stumbling:**

Libya, like the other Arab Spring countries, has witnessed strong public enthusiasm and mobilization, particularly in the case of young people, to participate in and consolidate democratic processes and procedures, including through legislation, electoral processes, the establishment of political parties and civil society organizations in a massive way and the institutionalization of political and social freedoms. In Libya, since late 2011, civil and political life has witnessed a momentum that the country had not known for many decades, including the organization of many legislative, local and other elections. Hundreds of political parties have seen the light of day in a country where parties had long been prohibited. The number of civil society organizations has grown from less than 100, most of which serving the interests of the former regime, to about 1900 organizations registered in 2012. This was matched with the development of legislation in support of this process, notably the process of preparing the Libyan draft constitution.

Youth presence in most of these processes was strongly marked, particularly in sparking off the process of change and in the heavy sacrifice made to ensure the process bears its fruits. The youth participated in their own way in the different stages of this momentum, particularly in its beginnings. Despite the huge obstacles faced by the youth and across the entire process of transition, the most important of which will be highlighted later, youngsters are still showing high interest in public and political affairs in Libya. For example, 54% of young people aged 15-29 expressed their interest or keen interest in politics, according to the 2015 World Values Survey<sup>ix</sup>.

Despite these achievements for the Libyan people and youth, the participation of young people is still weak and fragile in many respects. Evidence to this is, for example, the weak number of youth organizations or of the organizations dealing with youth issues. Their number has reached about 128 organizations, i. e. only 3.20% of the total number of organizations registered with the Civil Society Commission. Most of them seem to have unfocused interests or ones that do not fall under a specific category. One quarter of these organizations are interested in philanthropic and social activities as shown in the figure on the distribution of these organizations.

Figure 8. Distribution of youth organizations by key interests (2016)



Source: Civil Society Commission Libya, 2016

The results of the World Values Survey indicate that an overwhelming majority of Libyans are not involved in volunteering or civic organizations. In fact, only about 4% of Libyans are involved in volunteering organizations and associations, and only 3% are members of political parties.

The Arab Human Development Report 2016 notes that civil participation among young people in the 15-29 age group is higher compared to other groups and rises with the rise in the level of education. This participation also appears to be concentrated among young people in spontaneous contributions rather than in relation to organizations or parties or even to participation in elections. Indeed, the proportion of those who participated from this group in peaceful protests was 42%<sup>x</sup>.

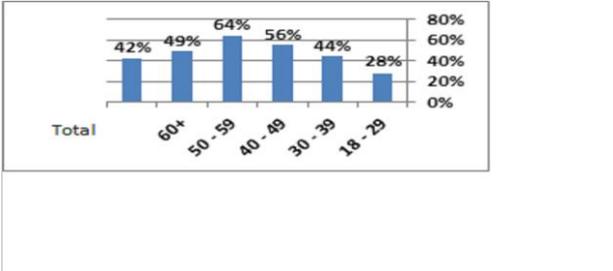
The participation of young people in formal and institutional political processes is relatively lower than that of older citizens. Data point out the low turnout of young voters compared to older citizens. The data also show youth low membership in political parties and in

parliamentary and local councils and low access to leadership positions in government and weak participation in the social momentum for peace-building (reconciliation committees) and for spreading awareness of the culture of peace and tolerance. However, young people are more likely to participate in informal political processes such as lobbying, protests and campaigns. The youth are in fact often a driving force for reformist movements.

Youth participation in key political activities, such as voting, joining political parties or lobbies, campaigning and running for elections, as well as expressing opinions, also appears to be weak and to follow an irregular pattern. This participation is sometimes classified as among the lowest in the world<sup>xi</sup>. For example, a large majority of Libyans (about 90%) expressed say that they are not willing to sign petitions, and only 27% said that they participated in peaceful demonstrations<sup>xii</sup>.

Only about 28% of the entire number of the youth aged 18-29 and who are entitled to vote registered for participation in the 2014 legislative elections (the legal voting age for both sexes is 18 according to the Election Law). Among the 50-59 age group, 64% cast their ballots compared to 42% for the total population (Figure 9).

*Figure 9. Percentage of voter registration by age out of total eligible voters (2014)*



**Source: High Electoral Commission Tripoli - Libya**

This downward tendency does not seem to differ much from the tendency of the Libyan society as a whole where the turnout was 62% in the 2012 National Congress elections and only 40% in the elections of the House of Representatives in 2014. In the same period, the number of the registered Libyans who are entitled to vote fell by about half (Table 2).

*Table 2. Rate of registration and voting in multiple elections for all age groups*

%	Number of votes	females	Males	Number of registered voters	Election
62	1768605	#	#	2865937	General National Congress 2012
47	507612	#	#	1078676	CDA
40	611303	603808	905438	1509246	House of representatives 2014

**Source: High Electoral Commission**

The participation of young people aged 18-34 in running for Parliament or for the Constitution Drafting Assembly appears also to be generally weak and at its lowest for girls. For males, participation rates ranged between about 11% in 2012 and 14% in other elections. In the 2012 election, this rate was 2.2% then fell to less than 2% in 2014 for girls.

*Table 3 Number and rates of candidates aged 18-34 by type of election*

<b>General National Congress</b>			<b>Total number of candidates</b>
<b>Males</b>	<b>%10.93</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>3708</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>%2.18</b>	<b>81</b>	
<b>CDA</b>			<b>Total number of candidates</b>
<b>Males</b>	<b>%14.06</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>697</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>%0.32</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>Assembly of Representatives</b>			<b>Total number of candidates</b>
<b>Males</b>	<b>%14.48</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>1713</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>%1.81</b>	<b>31</b>	

**Source: High Electoral Commission Tripoli - Libya**

**Complex challenges face young people who aspire to enhance their participation:**

Several factors explain why the civil and political participation of young people in Libya is weak. Among these factors, we note the lack of any democratic traditions in Libya over several

decades. In fact, it takes time to get used to the values of freedom and political and civil democracy, particularly that experience shows that learning to be democratic is one of the most challenging tests in life today. In addition, Libya, like most countries in the region, has been facing the challenge of terrorism, which has compounded the difficulties of the transition and hampered many efforts to establish and institutionalize democracy.

In relation to all this and to hampering the establishment and consolidation of the foundations of the transition to democracy, including delays in the completion and adoption of the Constitution, the legal, organizational and social aspects which have not been revisited play an important role in obstructing the participation of Libyan youth in political and civil life.

There is no doubt that the decline in the confidence of young people in others in general and in the political landscape, institutions and representatives in particular, is often the result of the disappointment of people in general and young people more specifically, whose needs and aspirations have not been met. This decline is also a function of the prevailing conflicts and divisions and the multiplicity of local and national players, which together represent a main reason behind the declining participation of young people in elections and in political life in general.

Some 51% of the people surveyed in the 2015 World Values Survey stated they would not vote for any party if the elections were held tomorrow. A small minority of 13.5% said they would vote for the Justice and Construction Party and a similar minority of 13.9% said they would vote for the National Alliance Party, Libya's two largest parties. However, only 15% expressed confidence in political parties. Rates of youth confidence in other state institutions reached about 55% in institutions such as police and banks while less than 50% expressed trust in religious institutions and companies and organizations.

Despite youth rising confidence in their immediate milieu, especially in the family, which may be a function of their need to feel secure, young people's confidence has shown a declining trend (up to 90%) with regard to those who are different from them in terms of religion and nationality<sup>xiii</sup> and has led youngsters to question the goals, objectives and credibility of any message, including messages delivered by clerics or any other public figures or officials and not just politicians (national consultation on youth, peace and security). This apprehension and caution displayed by youngsters do not contribute to strengthening civic participation and the cohesion of the state. They may hamper communication and weaken the level of tolerance among young people. They may also hinder collective and community action as well as disrupt knowledge and access to information.

The gap between generations has also played a key role in this low level of confidence. The spread of Internet skills and the acquisition of foreign languages by a growing number of young people have strengthened youth awareness of the world and of the opportunities and ideas available outside their traditional environments which are governed by older people who have stuck to social models based on a hierarchy of powers.

### **Alternative paths to give effect to youth participation:**

In light of the proposals expressed by young people on many occasions, especially within the framework of the "National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security", and in view of the importance of youth participation to ensure the success of the peace and security process, promote the opportunities for sustainable development and meet the challenges that impede the integration of young people and give effect to their participation, we propose some key guidelines to frame an integrated national policy to strengthen participation in political and public affairs for young people:

- Provide security protection in all youth spaces such as schools, universities, sports facilities, youth clubs, cultural centres, etc., which would enable young people to carry out their daily tasks and participate in community activities in safe conditions.
- Provide for the promotion of youth participation in public and political affairs and in decision-making, and review and develop laws and legislation to ensure broad participation of all male and female youth in all aspects of civil and political life and in promoting security and peace.
- Provide material, moral and legislative support to youth and youth-oriented civil society organizations to enable them to carry out major and effective projects in the area of youth empowerment and to consolidate their knowledge, skills and participation in the peace process and in the efforts for development and the economic and social integration of young people.
- Give priority in providing support to the civil society organizations working at the local municipal and regional level with a view to enabling the youth from the various parts of the country to participate and to limiting the concentration of services and civic work in major cities. Support should also be geared mainly towards organizations operating in major youth spaces such as schools, universities and youth clubs and houses to maximize interest and reduce costs.
- Support coordination, exchange and networking among civil society organizations concerned with youth, in order to maximize benefits and enable major projects to reach the largest number of young people.

- Provide training and skills to enable young people to participate effectively and to develop innovative projects to enhance peace opportunities and contribute to various development efforts.
- Establish mechanisms and websites to give substance to the dialogue between youth and among youth, to listen to the voice of young people and to disseminate knowledge about their participation and experiences in different fields.
- Provide for the empowerment of young people and for giving effect to their roles and participation in public and political affairs and in decision-making under the constitution and adopt initiatives that ensure the participation of at least a minimum number of young leaders in various decision-making and decision implementing institutions at the national and local levels.



## Chapter IV: Gender discrimination and the exclusion of Libyan young girls from participating in community development

The characteristics and roles of girls and women in general in Libya have witnessed positive developments in recent decades, including their educational and professional characteristics and their community participation. Recent years have also seen gains in the enrichment of their rights in the constitution and in the expansion of their political participation. However, Libyan women still face complex, discriminatory, and masculine patriarchal challenges that pertain to various spaces such as family, school, workplaces and the street. Their civic and political participation remains limited despite their significant capacities. Perhaps among the most important challenges facing girls in Libya today are those which are related to some predominant conservative and authoritarian masculine and patriarchal values which seem to have been fuelled by the recent events and conflicts. These challenges also take the shape of weak civic and political participation of women as well as of weak civil society organizations working in the field of empowerment of girls and women and gender equality. Women and girls, like all other social groups, also face the challenges of violence and conflict on the one hand and those of the deepening economic crisis on the other.

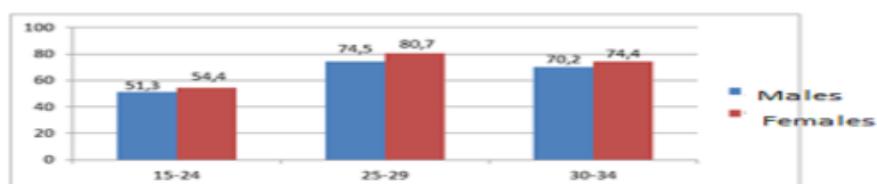
The following is an overview of the most important opportunities and challenges faced by girls in the light of the available data. The aim is to identify the priorities of the policies and programs required to promote the rights of girls and women and enhance their civil, political and community participation in general.

### **Opportunities and achievements that need to be consolidated:**

Among the achievements enjoyed by women and girls in Libya, we can cite:

- Their educational characteristics have significantly and rapidly been enhanced over recent decades at a rate higher than among males. As a result, their level of education is much higher than that of their male counterparts in many educational levels. During 1990-1991 and 2015-2016, net enrolment rates for basic education for children aged 6-14 increased from 85.2% to 97.5% for males and 78.2% to 98.5% for females. This entails higher enrolment rates and better school results for girls. This is also true of net enrolment in secondary education, which reached 81.5% for males and 82.5% for females in 2015. The difference in favour of girls is significant for students with secondary and university degrees. This rate was 74.5% for males aged 25-29 compared with 80.7% for females in the same age group. This difference applies also in favour of girls across other youth groups (Figure 10)

Figure 10. Rate of high school and above graduates



#### Family Health Survey 2014

- There is a relative rise in the economic activity of women in general, which reached 28.4% of the total working-age women. This rate among girls rises to 50.3% for the 30-34 age group<sup>xiv</sup>. In general, the participation rate of women in economic activity is high compared to neighbouring countries, thus reaching 34% of the total active population in Libya compared to 27% in Tunisia, for example<sup>xv</sup>.
- In relation to the increasingly higher levels of girls' education, their significant access to universities and to other factors also, the average age of first marriage has risen to 30 years for girls. Early marriage has declined and is almost extinct. Indeed, only 0.1% of the girls belonging to the new generation (15-19) married before the age of 15. The rate of girls who married before the age of 18 was only 3.2% for the 20-24 age group and 2.4% for the 25-34 age group.
- It is noteworthy that the draft Libyan Constitution (2011) provides for equality between men and women, prohibits discrimination against women and guarantees all their rights. Article 57 on the promotion of women's rights stipulates that « *Women are sisters of men. The State shall be committed to supporting and caring for women, enacting laws that ensure their protection, promoting their status in society, eliminating the negative culture and social customs that detract from their dignity, as well as prohibiting discrimination against them, and ensuring their right in public elections and enabling*

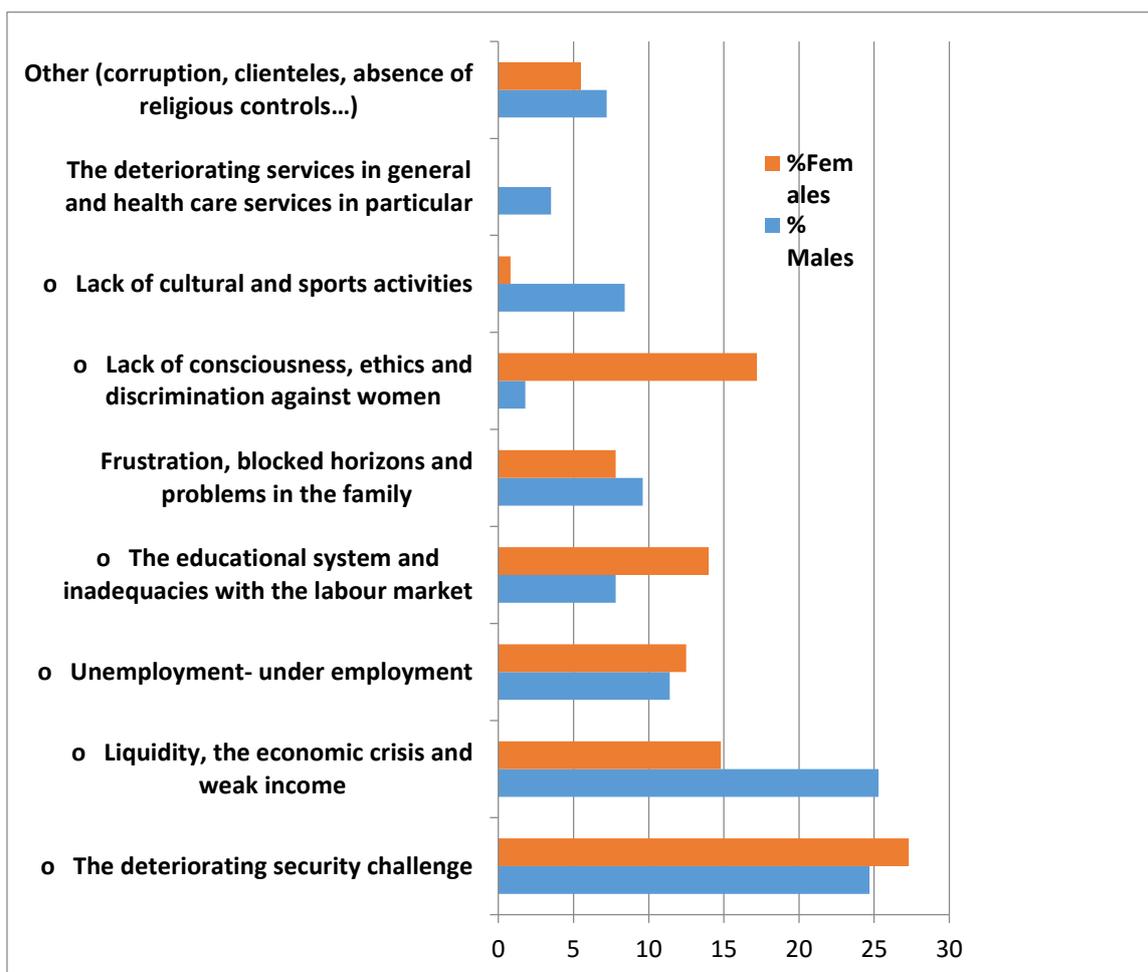
*them [to have access] to opportunities in all areas; it shall also take the necessary measures to support their acquired rights ».* This would make it possible to strengthen the legislation supporting women's empowerment and equality and the role of civil society institutions and organizations concerned with the issues and rights of girls and women.

- Reference should also be made of the political participation of girls and women in the political momentum in Libya in the aftermath of the February 17 revolution. They even took the leadership in participating in this revolution, especially through the social media which played an important role among the educated in particular. Women and girls then started to participate in the activities of civil society institutions. The results of the 2013 Libyan Women's Status Survey showed that women and young women in Libya have a high level of interest in politics and governance, with more than 71% of women emphasizing their interest in these issues. In the same context, Libyan women voted in large numbers in the elections of the National Congress in July 2012. In this regard, 66% of the women surveyed said that they participated in these elections<sup>xvi</sup>.

### **Complex challenges fuelled by values that inhibit the effective participation of girls and women:**

- One of the most important challenges facing girls and women in their daily lives and threatening the achievements that have been made to their advantage is the challenge of conflicts, violence and instability. Many girls who participated in the "National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security"<sup>xvii</sup> expressed their resentment at the deteriorating security situation and the expansion of abusive behaviours of which girls are victims as well as at the discriminatory behaviours between males and females. The Libyan girls participating in this study considered that discrimination against girls is the most important challenge faced by them in Libya in recent years. They consider it to be very similar in its importance to the challenge of security and peace for participating girls from some major cities. This is the second most important challenge for all participating girls as shown in the following figure.

Figure 11. Major challenges facing young people in their daily lives



**National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security, UNFPA 2017**

- It is clear that this situation has adversely affected new generations and may have led to setbacks with regard to some achievements. For example, the rate of girls who did not receive any diploma was 14.8% for the 15-24 age group, while only 11.8% of the preceding category of girls aged 25-29 did not get diplomas. On the other hand, we note a higher difference in age in marriages in the new generations compared to the previous generations. In fact, the percentage of women who are younger than their husbands by 10 years or more reached 56.2% of all wives in the 15-19 age group years and 47.9% for the 20-24 age group, while this percentage was at 24.2% for the 30-34 group<sup>xviii</sup>.

There is also a slight increase among the younger generation of girls in accepting to marry polygamous husbands and to marry before the age of 18. What should also be noted is the higher rate of abuse endured by girls in this age group compared to other age groups (Table 4).

*Table 4 Some negative aspects of the marital behavior of new generations of girls*

Age group	% of women married to husbands who are 10 years older	% married to polygamous husbands	% married before they are 18	% of abused married women
19-15	56.2	2.2	-	9.4
20-24	47.9	1.8	3.2	9.4
25-29	34.0	1.8	2.4	8.2
30-34	34.2	2.3	2.4	8.8

- Gender discrimination is a fundamental pillar of the patriarchal system and is often overlooked in the political, labour and family spheres. The patriarchal system is a fundamental pillar of the social fabric in Libya, and the basis for the promotion of equality between males and females is still fairly low in the country. This state of affairs is corporate by the findings of the 2015 World Values Survey, which indicates that the proportion of Libyans who hold traditional societal values and take a conservative stance towards women is on the rise. About 80% of men consider themselves to be better than women in terms of political and business leadership. In addition, at least 65% of Libyans believe that in the case of scarcity of jobs, priority should be given to males at the expense of females. About 55% of the total sample of this survey believes that paid work for mothers causes suffering for their children. About 25% also believe that university education is more important for males than for females<sup>xix</sup>.
- Young Libyan women are subjected to various forms of sexual harassment and abuse in public places. The findings of the 2013 Libyan Women's Status Survey indicate that 11% of girls aged 18-25 are subject to harassment and abuse while in public places. This harassment restricts young women's freedom of movement and mobility in the public sphere. In addition, 57% of young women feel that their mobility outside home, including leaving home without family consent, is restricted. One out of every five girls said that their movement is somewhat or completely restricted and that 24% feel fear or pressure during their presence in the public sphere<sup>xx</sup>.
- Although the majority of women and men in Libya express their support for women and young women's participation in different political roles, this participation in the case of young women is in general not high. The 2013 Libyan Women's Status Survey indicates that very few women and girls participate in any kind of civic activity to express their

views on political and social issues. Only 20% of women and girls in the survey said they were participating in such activities<sup>xxi</sup>. The findings of the "Report on the Participation of Women in the Electoral Process - The Libyan Case"<sup>xxii</sup> show that the participation of women in the first electoral experiment, namely the election of the National General Congress, reached about 45%. The candidacy rate among them was about 19% of the total number of candidates with very clear differences between urban and rural environments. In Tripoli, this rate was 25% compared to only about 2% in Gharyan. A similar situation was observed during the election of the House of Representatives where the rate of participation of women in the process of election and candidacy declined to reach 40% in registration and only 9% in candidacies to the House of Representatives.

### **Strategy to fight gender discrimination:**

Gender discrimination is a social issue that is rooted in historical circumstances and in the hegemony and the renewal of masculine values that impede the emancipation of women and equality. Despite the adoption of some laws and legislations that treat men and women on an equal footing, this equality remained ink on paper because this issue is shaped by long established historical and cultural factors. This discrimination is sometimes practiced in the name of religion, and this is not accurate. Basically, Allah equates men and women in terms of rights and duties as evidenced in the Qur'an: *"And for them similar to what is due from them with kindness"* and *"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another."* Many laws still discriminate against women in favour of men.

Empowering girls and women and giving effect to their societal roles and contributions will enhance the chances of security and peace and support all aspects of development since women and girls, who represent half of the society, have high and varied abilities and skills. In light of this data-based diagnosis of the situation of young girls in Libya, we present hereinafter a number of guidelines that are related to the most important policy priorities required to empower Libyan young girls, with particular focus on promoting equality on the level of values, awareness and legislation:

- Provide more updated knowledge about the characteristics and roles of girls and women. It should be noted that data on the views and trends of girls and their knowledge and about their roles and relationships within and outside the family is scarcely available. To this end, it is of utmost importance at this stage to establish a **specialized academic centre in the field of studies and research and a database on Libyan young girls and women** to serve as an academic umbrella in light of a large institutional vacuum. The centre shall deal with the issues of young girls and women at an important point in the transition towards building the state of citizenship and institutions. The Centre's

main focus will be on scientific research, publishing, consultancy and the establishment of specialized databases in the field of gender issues and the empowerment of girls and women.

- Strengthen laws and legislation that aim to empower young girls and support their right to education, work, civic and political participation, decision-making and protection from all forms of violence.
- Strengthen school curricula and cultural awareness activities within all educational institutions to build new generations empowered by the culture of equality and awareness of the rights of girls and women and of human rights in general. Ensure that school curricula across all stages of the educational process are regularly renewed. Extracurricular activities within schools to promote equality should also be offered.
- Ensure broad dissemination of the values and culture of equality, the rights of girls and women and the adoption of programs and awareness-raising activities at the municipal level focusing mainly on mechanisms for integrating young women into local development projects and how to change society's perception of the importance of education, employment and participation of young women. Adopt specific and clear mechanisms that help girls and women gain access to decision-making positions at all levels.
- Support women's civil society organizations and organizations aimed at enhancing the roles of and empowering girls and women.
- Integrate gender issues and empower girls and women across all national strategies and sectoral policies and enact laws to protect women from exploitation, especially sexual harassment in the workplace, to promote the participation of girls and women in economic activity.
- Adopt a broad training program aimed primarily at girls to strengthen their knowledge, improve their skills, and strengthen awareness of their rights and of the importance of participation in public and political affairs.



## Chapter V: Supporting youth health and combating risky behaviours

### **Introduction:**

The health of young people and adolescents is one of the most important challenges facing this population segment and the one with the strongest impact on their behaviour and participation at this stage of life and in the future. The health dimensions of young people embody several complications due to the transitional nature of this population segment. These complications are reflected physiologically in the bodies of these young people and in their behaviour and they have wide and complex implications on their mental state. The health of young people is of paramount importance as youth represent the basic pillars of the labour force, now and in the future. The better the health services enjoyed by youngsters, the better their capacities and their aptitudes will be and the higher the quality and quantity of their contribution to development and the society.

Among the most important youth health dimensions are those that concern their basic health satisfaction, including nutrition, and more specifically their psychological state and reproductive health, in terms of their awareness and practices, and the extent to which they enjoy services related to marriage, pregnancy and reproduction. Equally important are the health dimensions related to dangerous behaviours such as smoking, drugs and careless driving, all of which are strongly present among youngsters.

According to the report by the WHO, the organization which has been collaborating with the authorities in the reform of the health system, one of the most important challenges facing this sector in Libya today is the significant shortage in basic health centres such as hospitals and local dispensaries. Indeed, there are 1754 health centres of which 768 are basic health units<sup>xxiii</sup> that provide services for about 6.5 million people. Another fact to be taken into account is the repercussions of the current events on a number of centres and hospitals, some of which having been obliged to shut down<sup>xxiv</sup>.

### **Youth basic and psychological health:**

Despite the repercussions of ongoing events in recent years, the available data on the health conditions of young people generally reflect a normal state of their basic and psychological health in a way that does not depart radically from the pre-conflict situation.

The rate of youth aged 15-34 who suffer from depression or a serious psychological condition is 1.8% in 2016, slightly higher among males (2.0%) compared to females (1.7%). This rate also rises with age, reaching 1.4% for the 15-24 age group compared with 2.4% for the following 25-34 age category. Compared to 2014<sup>xxv</sup>, the incidence of depression among young people is 1.5% for the 15-24 age group and 1.0% for the following 25-34 age category.

It is noteworthy that depression among young people in some regions, such as Jazour, has been high, thus reaching 14.3% among the youth aged 15-34. This rate rises to 25.6% among young men in the 25-34 age group. Jazour is the only region to experience this phenomenon intensively. Similarly, this rate rises among males in the 25-34 age group, albeit at levels which are lower than that of Jazour. However, some other regions have witnessed rates that go up to twice the general average of Jazour. This is especially true of Baten Al-Jabel with 4.3%, Abu-Salim with 4.2% and Ajdabiya 3.7%<sup>xxvi</sup>. Indeed, these areas have seen more acute episodes of violence in recent years (Table 5).

*Table 5 Rates of young people suffering from depression*

Youth age category	Males	Females	Total
24 - 15	1.7	1.2	1.4
34 - 25	2.0	2.3	2.4
<b>Total</b>	2.0	1.7	1.8

**2016 Multi-sectoral Survey (Ministry of Planing-Unfpa)**

On the other hand, the proportion of young people suffering from chronic diseases was 3.6% for the 20-29 age category, and rises to double this rate (6.8%) for the 30-39 age category. The rate of acute or moderate disability was 2.5% for the 20-29 age group in 2014, and the events do not seem to have a significant impact here as the percentage of disabilities among children aged 5-9 years was also 2.3%<sup>xxvii</sup>. There has been no change also in this dimension in recent times as the results of the **2016 multi-sectoral survey** indicate that this rate has been only 2.0% for the 15-34 age group.

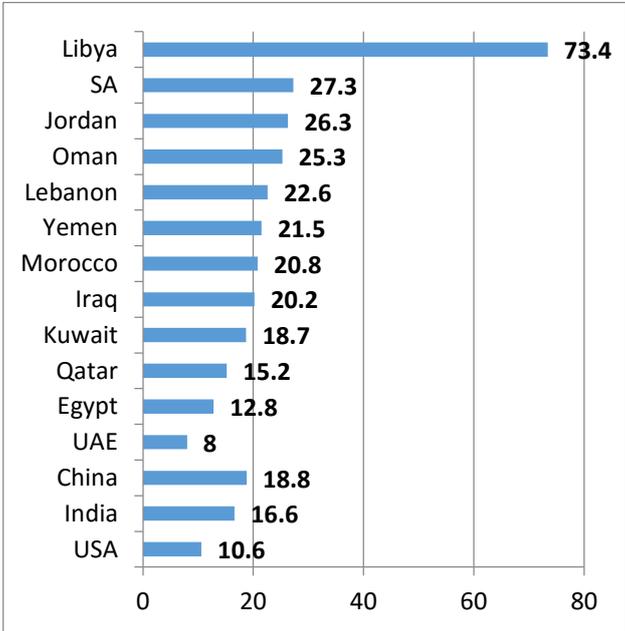
**Unhealthy and risky behaviours:**

Young people are the most vulnerable to dangerous and adventurous behaviours. This is due to several considerations, the most important of which are the broad changes undergone by

adolescents and young people, which include physiological, psychological, sexual and identity aspects. This is a phase of their lives which is characterized by renewal and discovery and the high desire for independence, which leads this population segment to engage in behaviours that are often adventurous and dangerous. Among the most prominent behaviours observed in adolescents and young people are smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, and other noticeable phenomena in the region, particularly fast driving, as well as violent verbal or physical behaviours.

Fast and unsafe driving is one of the most important challenges in relation to the dangerous behaviours witnessed in Libya today. The number of traffic fatalities in Libya reached 2616 in 2015<sup>xxviii</sup>. Libya ranked first in the Arab world in terms of mortality rates due to road accidents in the same year. The death toll in Libya was 73.4% per 100,000 people, far ahead of Saudi Arabia with which has recorded a rate of 27.3% per 100,000 people. At this very high rate, Libya tops the list of countries with regard to this particular phenomenon way ahead of such countries as the USA and China with 10.6% and 16.6% respectively. The international report notes that the majority of these deaths affect young people, and that these accidents cost countries an average of 3% of their GDP (Figure 12).

*Figure 12. The mortality rate for every 100.000 inhabitants due to fast driving in some countries*



Smoking and drug abuse represent challenges that appear to be particularly growing among young people. The proportion of young smokers is 3.9% in the 15-19 age group and rises sharply in the following group to reach 11% in youngsters aged 20-29 age in 2014<sup>xxix</sup>. Generally, this rate is 12.8% in the Libyan society and peaks at 28% among males.

Although no data is available on drug abuse among young people, government statistics indicate that this phenomenon is increasing at the community level. The number of cases registered by the Ministry of Justice and put to trial has increased from 28 in 2010 to 36 in 2012 for drug trafficking networks. The number of drug users registered with the Ministry of Justice in the same period rose from 148 to 254, an increase of 72% in only two years. At the same time, alcohol consumption declined by more than 60% during the same period<sup>xxx</sup>. This increase in drug use calls for an urgent research effort to study this phenomenon and its dimensions and implications, especially among young people and adolescents.

On the other hand, we note that suicidal behaviour in Libya is rather insignificant, despite rising trends in some neighbouring countries. This is a healthy phenomenon and may be related to the psychological state of youth, which, as we have noted, does not seem to have been much affected by the ongoing events. The rate of suicides in Libya was only 0.75 per 100,000 inhabitants, one of the lowest in comparison to Arab countries. For example, in Sudan this rate stands at 17.2 while it has reached 5.3 100,000 inhabitants in Saudi Arabia<sup>xxxi</sup>.

### **Youth reproductive health:**

The marital behaviours of young people and the reproductive health dimensions of married girls are generally positive and do not appear to have been significantly affected by the ongoing events in terms of early marriage, health awareness and access to specialized services for pregnant girls. However, there are some old, emerging or re-emerging challenges, including difficult and late marriages, particularly in the case of some categories, the weak use of contraceptive methods to ensure birth spacing and preserve neonatal and mother health, consanguineous marriages which may lead to unhealthy babies, and the significant differences in age between spouses, which negatively affects family harmony.

In spite of the events and their repercussions on the country's general situation and infrastructure, including their negative repercussions on the health system as a whole and the state of health institutions and services in particular, maternal, pre-natal and post-natal health care is still at good levels as is indicated by the 2014 Family Health Survey. The rate of young women aged 15-29 who received health care by health staff before, during and after delivery was 99% or more. It should also be noted that this rate is slightly higher than that of the first generation (Table 6).

**Table 6: Maternal health care before, during and after delivery**

	Care during pregnancy		Women who have delivered in a health institution	% of births attended by a qualified medical staff
	Doctor	Qualified nurse		
<b>19-15</b>	96.0	2.2	96.6	100.0
<b>24-20</b>	95.0	4.5	98.9	99.2
<b>29-25</b>	96.6	2.5	98.6	99.4
<b>34-30</b>	96.1	3.4	97.3	90.1
<b>49-45</b>	93.6	1.5	96.8	98.4
<b>Total</b>	95.4	3.0	97.4	98.9

Papfam 2014

The high rate of girls and women in Libya who receive health care services in hospitals and by specialized staff in general reflects the overall health awareness of Libyan women and girls. Another indicator of this awareness is the high rate of women who have expressed their knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), a rate that stands at 86% among young women aged 15-29 and 85% among women as a whole. This rate, it should be noted, exceeds 90% in the case of HIV / AIDS<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

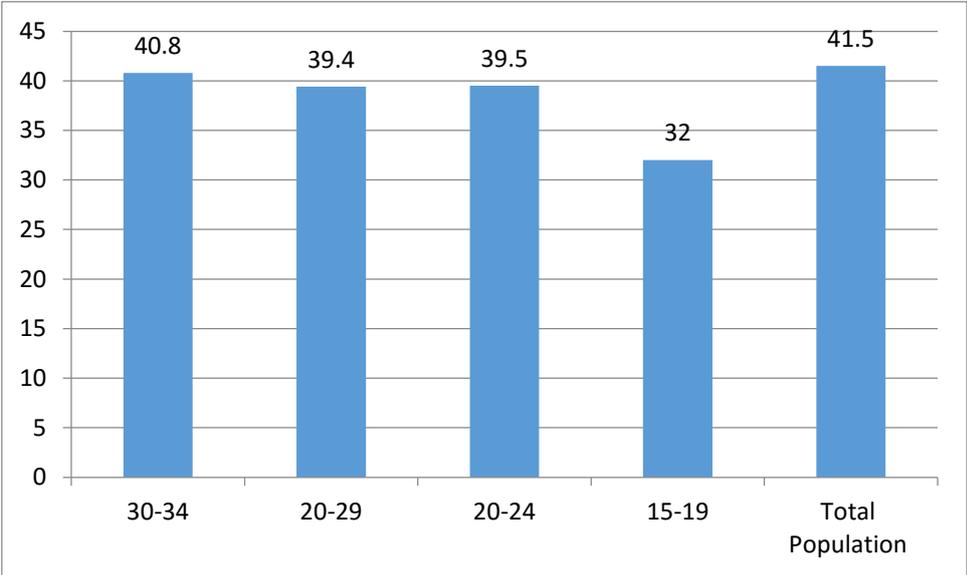
The data available indicates that the age at first marriage, estimated at 34.4 years for males and 30.1 years for females, continues to be high, and is even higher in some locations. In Murzak, for example, this rate for females stands at 34.5, 32.6 in Sirte and 32 in Sabha and in Wadi Al Hayat.

This late marriage phenomenon could be explained on several grounds, including high marriage costs in a context of an ongoing and worsening economic crisis and the fact that today people in general, and girls in particular, pursue their education for longer periods of time. This state of affairs requires that appropriate policies be designed.

Two important challenges are posed by marital behaviour in Libya, including among young people. These challenges, which, in many respects, are detrimental to the family and the newborn, are twofold: consanguinious marriages, which increase the likelihood that the child

will suffer from deformities and health deficiencies, and the important age differences in a category of couples, which could affect harmony in the family and between spouses. The consanguineous marriage ratio, including marriages between cousins, stands at 41.5% among the total married population. This rate is even higher in some locations, including, for example, in Wadi Al Hayat where it stands at 67.5%, and in Nalut and Tarhouna with 57.2% and 50.6%, respectively. Although this ratio has been declining over time, it is still high and concerns one-third of the newer generation marriages (Figure 13).

*Figure 13. Rate of women affected by consanguinuous marriages by age group*

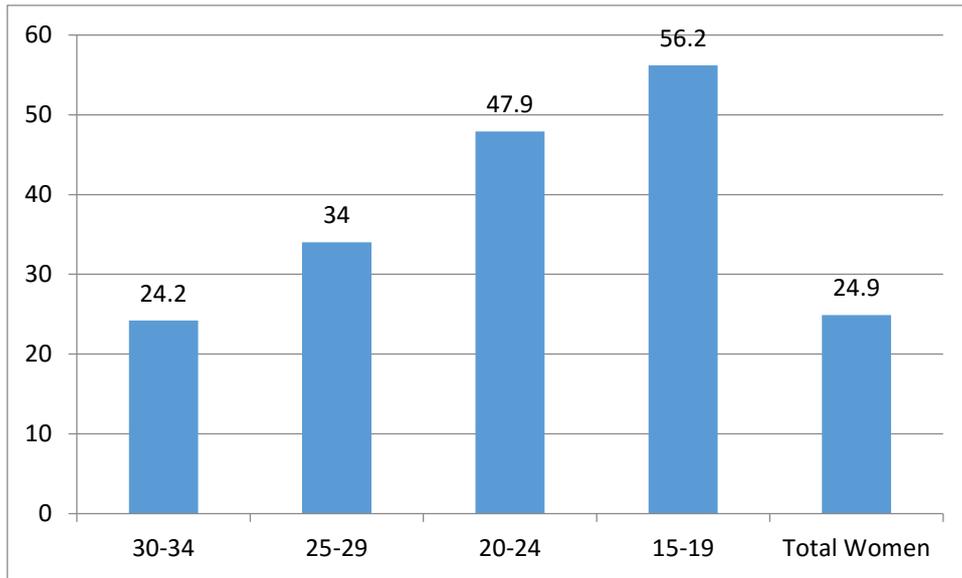


**Family Health Survey 2014**

Increasingly, girls marry men who are much older than them. The proportion of women aged 15-19 years, i.e. the newest generation, who are married to men who are older than them by more than 10 years is 56.2% of the total number of girls married in this age group, while this proportion was only 24.2% for married women in the 30-34 age group. On average, the age difference between spouses increased from 6.8% in the 30-34 age group to 11% for the 15-19 age group.

This phenomenon is worthy of serious consideration and could be explained with reference to the events occurring in the country, poor security, a sense of unease or fear among girls because of the growing violence and because they feel that this violence is directed against them (Figure 14).

*Figure 14. Rate of women whose husbands are older by more than 10 years*



**Family Health Survey 2014**



## Chapter 6: Building peace and security in Libya- the youth as key partners

### **Introduction**

For years, Libya has been going through a state of political turmoil, security instability, violence and armed conflicts. This situation had a profound impact on the daily lives of young people as evidenced by the reduction of their economic and educational activities and their social interaction with peers and family. This state of affairs has exacerbated their physical and psychological conditions and worsened their relationship with the family environment. It has also established an environment conducive to unhealthy, dangerous and anti-development behaviours. Meanwhile, Libya is still struggling to end the cycle of violence and to move towards reconciliation and lasting peace.

In this chapter, we overview the available indicators on the impact of the events in the country on youth activities, their daily lives and their mental state, based on the data available and on the results of a field study conducted for this purpose on a sample of young Libyans from all over the country. The “National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security” sought to get insights into Libyan youth perceptions of the course that the events have taken and to identify youth recommendations to face violence and to give effect to their participation in building peace<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

### **The serious repercussions of violence on young people:**

**Arms proliferation and the participation of young people in carrying weapons:** arms proliferation is a very complex issue that raises concerns among the actors of the Libyan scene. The continued possession by civilians of weapons may disrupt the development process, restrict investment opportunities and contributions to development projects. Libya may thus be hit by a crisis that will disrupt all future projects and make it difficult to achieve the desired construction process.

The results of the 2015 World Values Survey<sup>xxxiv</sup> indicate that a high percentage of young people (20.7%) carry arms because they do not feel safe, which makes of Libya the number one country with regard to arms proliferation among individuals<sup>xxxv</sup>. Many have come to believe that carrying arms in Libya today is a necessity for people who want to defend themselves against the prevailing state of insecurity. Despite issuing Law No (2) of 2014 on the prohibition of weapons, ammunitions and explosives, and the imposition of sanctions on arms carriers, the proliferation problem still exists in Libya and poses a complex threat to youth and the whole population. This requires careful and timely action, including the collection of weapons, which must necessarily go hand in hand with integrated and effective alternatives that would ultimately lead to the reintegration of ex-youth combatants.

### **The escalation of population displacement and the increase in cases of victims, missing persons and disability:**

The instability, violence and conflicts in Libya have had negative and often serious consequences for the population, including the high number of missing persons, of people with disabilities (particularly mobility) and of displaced populations.

In recent years, the ongoing conflicts have led to the displacement of a large number of families and of the population in general. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates the number of the internally displaced at 434,000 persons in Libya as at July 2015. In addition, about 453,540 returnees from among those who had been displaced as a result of the conflict in 2014, have been registered throughout the country, according to the same source. There is no doubt that the displacement process will lead to large scale disintegration of families, family networks and the social fabric in general. It will also lead to further isolation because of living away from families, with all that it entails in terms of negative impacts on the economic, social, residential and psychological situation of youth and families in general. This leads to less educational and employment opportunities for youngsters who will in consequence be more prone to dangerous behaviours. The United Nations estimates the number of displaced people in need of urgent assistance at about 241,000 people<sup>xxxvi</sup>.

On the other hand, UNSMIL's report <sup>xxxvii</sup> indicates that violence in Libya has led to the death of hundreds of people and to exacerbating the phenomenon of displacement as the humanitarian crisis continues in many areas. Refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants are increasingly subjected to ill-treatment.

According to some sources<sup>xxxviii</sup>, in 2015 war and conflict were the second leading cause of death and the main cause of disability in Libya. Libya Body Count<sup>xxxix</sup> has reported that between January and November 2014, the number of victims of the conflict, without distinction between combatants and civilians, amounted to 2825 deaths. The website has also identified about 1519 and 1523 cases of killings during 2015 and 2016, respectively.

The main report of the Libyan 2014 National Family Health Survey shows that motor disability is the most prevalent among total disabilities, with 43.9% of the total types of disabilities. The report also indicates that the motor disability rate for the 20-29 age group was 38.2% of all disabilities in this age group.

### **Youth violence:**

Results of the focused discussions group (FDG's) conducted in the framework of the "National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security" indicate that violence and extremism in Libya, particularly in the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi, are considered to be the most important challenges to Libyan youth mobility, their social interaction as well as their psychological and social life. (See figure 11).

Many young people described their situation as a “vicious circle” because of insecurity and widespread violence. This situation has hampered youth activities and their mobility and has led to feelings of frustration and to worsening the psychological state of many young men and women. Young people, particularly those who live in major cities, have given testimonies that tell a lot about the repercussions of violence and conflicts on their daily lives and psychological conditions. Many of them said that the rampant insecurity and the spread of violent episodes, especially those reported in the media, have led many young people and their families to avoid traveling outside their homes particularly at night or over long distances for fear of exposure to any unexpected or intentional violence. As a result, family visits and visits to friends, especially outside cities, have been significantly reduced. Furthermore, the working hours in the private sector and for entrepreneurs in particular have shrunk and students sometimes find it difficult to attend their schools and colleges.

Many participants, especially males, stressed the broadening negative repercussions of the decline in employment opportunities and income resources among young people, which precludes the achievement of their aspirations and goals. They have pointed out the difficulties they face in achieving their independence, getting married and in establishing their families. Some have suggested that this factor may be one of the reasons behind the adoption of violent behaviour and of unhealthy and unsafe behaviours in general.

On the other hand, the results of the consultation show that the lack of trust in others, whether on the level of discourse, people, parties or institutions, has been spreading and that this represents one of the most important challenges facing and hampering efforts to establish peace and security. The youth also stressed the challenge of "digital terrorism", referring to the widespread use of the Internet and social networks to promote radical speech targeting young people in general and children in particular. The youth also stressed the importance and necessity of taking part in decision-making and peace-building processes, of shunning violence and terrorism and of making specific and implementable recommendations, including those of an urgent nature, to ensure an adequate response to the security challenges that hinder their daily lives. They also stressed the need for proactive recommendations to empower the youth and give effect to their participation in peace-building, renunciation to violence and in development efforts in general.

**A guiding framework to protect youth from violence and give effect to their participation in building peace:**

Addressing violence and terrorism requires all social actors to join hands, including government agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, in a concerted effort that should also take the youth on board through their representatives in the process of dialogue for peace and security and under the umbrella of the relevant institutions. Involving young people in the peace and renunciation to violence and terrorism processes is paramount because today's youth, as we have pointed out, represents a very significant population size which is also the most educated

and the most innovative and productive in terms of ideas and effective proposals. The youth are the best positioned to deliver messages of peace and of renunciation to violence to their young peers. They are also the most targeted by terrorist networks and the ones who pay the highest price for violence. Despite being self-critical with regard to their own situation, often expressing this with pain and discomfort during the field interviews, most young people displayed positive morale and a willingness to work to meet challenges and enhance the chances of security and peace building.

Against this background, and in view of the opinions, suggestions and recommendations of the youth who participated in the National Consultation, we present a number of policy orientations that emphasize the idea that young people are key partners in renouncing violence and enhancing security opportunities. The proposed orientations aim to adopt, on the one hand, urgent measures to protect youth from violence, and on the other hand, proactive measures in order to meet youth main needs and give effect to their integration and participation.

- Call upon the state to compel all parties to the conflict not to attack youth and unarmed people, including through all forms of abuse and violence, and to take urgent measures to ensure the permanent protection of youth spaces, such as schools, universities, clubs, etc....
- Put an end to the proliferation of weapons so as to enhance security, enable young people and the population in general to enjoy unrestricted movement, reduce fear and enhance security. In parallel, alternatives for the economic reintegration of demobilized young people should be offered and young schoolchildren and students should be stopped from engaging in armed action.
- Adopt effective measures to jobs for the most needy and marginalized youth groups and to offer communication, social and psychological care to youth groups most affected by violence such as the displaced youth, etc.....
- Provide material, technical and political support to civil society organizations working to spread the culture of dialogue and peace among the youth and their parents and to foster a culture of peace.
- Step up research and studies to provide better knowledge of the various dimensions of violence and extremism, and involve young people in the formulation and implementation of these research endeavours.
- Integrate materials aimed at spreading the culture of dialogue, peace, conflict resolution and social cohesion in the school curricula, and allocate enough time to teach them and to prepare students to practice them.
- Use posters carrying awareness messages in youth and public spaces such as universities, schools, sports and cultural spaces, transport, etc..... to motivate the youth to adopt the values and culture of dialogue and peace and to renounce violence and extremism.
- Create a specialized channel that focuses on disseminating a culture of peace and security, renouncing violence and extremism, equal treatment of men and women and respect for the rights and privacy of women and girls. The channel should be

independent and politically impartial in order to gain the confidence of young people and enable them to participate effectively in the peace process.

- Provide training for young and civil society leaders, imams and clerics to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to educate youth about dialogue values and prepare the appropriate media and guides needed for the achievement of this goal.



## Appendix: List of the experts and contributors to this document

### TO BE TRANSLATED

- فريق ليبيا :

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- <sup>i</sup> Realizing the Demographic Dividend – ESCWA 2016
- <sup>ii</sup> Lionel Beehner 2007, The effects of youth bulges on civil conflicts <http://www.cfr.org/world/effects-youth-bulge-civil-conflicts/p13093>
- <sup>iii</sup> Family Health Survey-Papfam 2007
- <sup>iv</sup> iloatdatabase2016
- <sup>v</sup> iloatdatabase2016
- <sup>vi</sup> Employment and unemployment survey 2012/BSC Libya
- <sup>vii</sup> See chapter on security challenge
- <sup>viii</sup> Labor Market Dynamics in Libya – World bank 2016
- <sup>ix</sup> World Values Survey 2015 <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>
- <sup>x</sup> Arab Human Development Report 2016 [Http://www.arab-hdr.org/arabic](http://www.arab-hdr.org/arabic)
- <sup>xi</sup> World Values Survey, previous source.
- <sup>xii</sup> Study of the situation of Maghreb youth, General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union, 2013. <http://www.maghrebarabe.org/>
- <sup>xiii</sup> World Values Survey 2015 - previous reference
- <sup>xiv</sup> World Values Survey 2015 - previous reference
- <sup>xv</sup> Family Health Survey Papfam 2014
- <sup>xvi</sup> Labor Market Dynamics in Libya - World Bank 2016
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- <sup>xviii</sup> UNFPA- 2017
- <sup>xix</sup> Papfam, 2014
- <sup>xx</sup> WVS, 2015
- <sup>xxi</sup> IFES, 2013
- <sup>xxii</sup> IFES, 2013
- <sup>xxiii</sup> High Electoral Commission, Tripoli, Libya. 2015
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Health Information and Documentation Center 2016
- <sup>xxv</sup> WHO : « Reconstruire le système de santé en Lybie après la révolution » Fev 2012
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Multisectoral Survey- 2016
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Papfam, 2014
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Report of the Department of Traffic and Licensing - Ministry of the Interior 2015
- <sup>xxix</sup> 2014 Family Health Survey
- <sup>xxx</sup> Annual Report on Crime, Libya 2012
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Preventing suicide is a global necessity - WHO report 2015
- <sup>xxxii</sup> 2014 Family Health Survey
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> "National Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security": Under UN resolution 2250 and the international research program aimed at providing better knowledge of the views of youth and their proposals to translate international trends to promote peace into policies, programs and projects, UNFPA, together with the United Nations system operating in the region, and in cooperation with a number of Libyan civil society organizations, have conducted a research program based on focus group interviews. The aim has been to get better insights into youth visions and proposals as to how to give effect to their roles and participation in facing challenges, particularly violence and extremism, and what they can do to spread the culture of dialogue and promote peace and security. The quantitative study included 45 focus group discussions conducted with 329 young men and women from various segments, including students, civil society actors and young economically active males and females (191 and 138, respectively) and from 7 cities and 8 municipalities from all Libyan regions (UNFPA publications - Libya 2017)
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> The 2015 World Values Survey sample included a high percentage of young people, 43% of whom were under the age of 29 years
- <sup>xxxv</sup> WVS, 2015
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> National Response Plan, 2017
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> United Nations Support in Libya, United Nations Support in Libya, UNSLIM, 2016
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation - <http://www.healthdata.org/libya>
- <sup>xxxix</sup> <http://www.libyabodycount.org/location>