

# WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

## 19.1 INTRODUCTION

The attention given by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the social, economic and cultural development of women and the family is a priority embodied in the basic law of government and the strategic goals of the successive development plans. Significant progress has been made through implementation of relevant programmes and projects under these plans. Under the Eighth Development Plan in particular, the status of women in education, health and economic development was enhanced, and the standard of living of families improved steadily. There was also a vibrant dialogue in the media on the effective role of women and the family, emphasizing its developmental viability in this respect.

The Ninth Development Plan could prove to be a turning point in dealing with issues pertaining to women, the family and society, for it seeks to weave these issues into a comprehensive set of interlocking functions and roles. An educated woman can help reduce waste resulting from lack of knowledge. Hence, she is an essential element for developing the family and enhancing its performance, while having a positive impact outside the family by participating in social activities. Indeed, it is not possible to consider the impact of women on the community (for example, participation in economic activity) in isolation from their roles as wives and mothers. Likewise, it is not possible to view the family as an effective social entity, with the woman and the man constituting its cornerstones, without considering the impact of women on the sustainable development of this entity.

In addition to this integrated view of the issues of women, the family and society, the Ninth Development Plan not only seeks to consolidate the achievements made, but it also aspires to expand them and adopt mechanisms of coordination among the parties concerned to ensure effectiveness of the integrated framework, in securing social cohesion and simultaneously implementing the strategic objective of the Ninth

Plan of promoting human development and expanding options available to members of society to acquire knowledge, skills and expertise and benefit from them.

This chapter addresses the current conditions of the women and the family, reviews developments, and key issues and challenges that must be addressed under the Ninth Development Plan. It also presents forecasts of demand for services of women and the family, and highlights the future vision, objectives, policies and targets set by the Ninth Plan.

## **19.2 CURRENT CONDITIONS**

### **19.2.1 Main Features of Conditions of Women and the Family**

#### **□ *Marital status***

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Changes in marital status are a key indicator of social development pertaining to women and the family, for marriage is the first step in building the family, and the family performs important tasks in meeting the basic needs of society, helping to sustain social patterns through primary social upbringing and providing personal stability to its members. Although the institutions of marriage and the family were and will remain the focus of human life, they have undergone several stages of change on many levels.

Results of the 2007 Demographic Survey show that there is a difference between the singulate mean age at first marriage (SMAM) of males and females; 27.2 for males versus 24.6 for females, compared with 28.4 years for males 24.7 for females in 2000.

The results of the Demographic Survey also show that among Saudi women (15 years and over) 32.1% were unmarried, 60.2% married, 5.4% widowed, and 2.3% divorced, with the corresponding ratios for males being 40.1%, 58.7%, 0.4% and 0.8%, respectively. Notably, proportions of the divorced were small, but had increased, albeit

slightly, compared with 2004 when they were 1.6 % for females and 0.6% for males. In addition, the data of marital status by age group show that at 96%, the percentage of Saudi women in the 15–19 age group who had never married was high, which confirms a general trend towards later marriage.

Family support takes many forms and is largely associated with whether the family is nuclear or extended. With urbanization and economic development, the nuclear family predominates. The data indicate that over 2004-2007, the ratio of nuclear families to the total rose from 58.9% to 64.9% and the share of extended families declined from 41.1% to 35.1%. Notably, until 2007, the average sizes of the nuclear family and the extended family were 5.7 and 6.2 individuals, respectively, and families were overwhelmingly headed by males, with the proportion of households headed by women not exceeding 4.4% of the total.

While the increasing number of nuclear families points to a tendency towards economic and social independence, it is important to emphasize that existing family links are still strong and continue to provide moral (and whenever possible economic) support to family members even when they live independently. The results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs points to frequent family visits, with 37% paying one to two visits per week to the family of the husband and 23% to the family of the wife. These statistics emphasize the depth of family ties and their influence in enhancing the status of the family in the Saudi social structure.

#### □ *Housing and environmental conditions*

The results of the 2007 Demographic Survey show that main requirements for modern, environment-friendly housing were available for Saudi families, with 60% of housing units occupied by owners, which provides a great deal of family security.

To ensure environmental sustainability, electricity supply reaches 99% of the housing units occupied by Saudi families; safe drinking water is

provided to 95.6%, through water distribution networks and tankers; 99% are connected to sanitation networks or have septic tanks; 95% dispose of their waste into public containers, and this is done daily by 72.2% of households; and 95.3% use gas for cooking, while 3.8% use electricity. All these indicators confirm that the housing conditions of the Saudi family are environmentally safe.

Furthermore, results of the 2007 Demographic Survey show that Saudi families enjoy a good level of economic well-being, as expressed by ownership of durable goods and modern means of technology. As the data in Table 19.1 show, a high proportion of households own such goods and means, with the rate of ownership exceeding 72% for all items except three: computers, internet use, and home library.

**Table 19.1**  
**Household Possessions of Saudi Families in 2007**

	Households (%)
Mobile Telephone Line (one or more )	90.0
Fixed Telephone Line (one or more )	72.2
Internet Use	41.3
Computer (one or more )	46.4
Television (one or more )	94.2
Satellite receiver	79.7
Car (one or more )	86.0
Home Library	30.7

*Source: Central Department of Statistics and Information, Results of the 2007 Demographic Survey.*

### ❑ *Health conditions*

Development of family health, specifically the health of mother and child, is high on the priorities of health policies and programmes. The Kingdom is partaking of the global efforts to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the fourth of which stipulates “reducing child mortality”, and the fifth “improving reproductive health (maternal health)”. Associated with each goal is a set of specific targets and indicators for monitoring implementation and measuring progress, and goals are to be achieved by 2015. Saudi

Arabia has issued four reports on progress towards implementation of the MDGs. Table 19.2 shows progress achieved, measured by motherhood and childhood millennium indicators, which indicate that the Kingdom is moving towards achieving the specific childhood targets of reducing under-five mortality to one third and reducing maternal mortality at birth to one quarter before the target year.

**Table 19.2**  
**Progress Made in MDGs Maternal and Children Indicators**

<b>Maternal and Child Health Millennium Indicator</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Maternal mortality (per hundred thousand live births)	48	14.9	14.6	14.6	14.6
Proportion of births attended by skilled health professionals (%)	88	96	96	97	97
Proportion of pregnant women immunized against neonatal tetanus (%)	–	–	87.1	95.5	96.1
Mortality of children under five years of age (per thousand live births)	44.0	20.3	21.7	21.7	21.1
Infant mortality (per thousand live births)	34.0	18.5	18.6	18.6	17.4
Proportion of children immunized against measles during first year after birth (%)	88.2	96.5	95.2	95.7	97.4

*Source: Ministry of Economy and Planning, Millennium Development Goals, 2009.*

### **□ People with Special Needs**

When required, care for people with special needs is a complex challenge to the family in general, and women in particular, since they shoulder the largest share of home care. Such care has three interlinked

dimensions. The first is healthcare provided by health institutions; the second is social care provided by competent state institutions; and the third is sustainable care provided by family members. Success requires concerted efforts along all three dimensions.

Results of the 2007 Demographic Survey show that 0.77% of the total Saudi population, or 134,956 persons, have special needs; 65% of whom are males and 35% are females. Since population is concentrated in the three regions of Riyadh, Makkah, and the Eastern region, 58.8% of all persons with special needs reside in these regions. The 5–29 age group accounted for 59.1% of the total. The most widespread are physical disabilities, which accounted for 32.9% of the total, followed by mental disabilities at 21.9%, and multiple disabilities at 15.9%.

#### □ *Educational conditions*

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Through expansion at all stages of education, the Eighth Development Plan consolidated a positive trend in the educational structure of the population. This process can be viewed from two perspectives: distribution of population (15 years and older) according to educational certificate or degree, and enrolment volume in the various stages of education. The overall picture indicates that education attainment in the typical family in the Kingdom is steadily improving, with a general trend towards completion of university education by males and females alike.

Comparing the distribution of population (15 years and older) by educational attainment in 2007 to that in 2004 shows that the ratio of those who do not have a school certificate (illiterate / reads and writes with no education certificate) to total population declined from 15% to 13.6% for males and from 32.6% to 30.2% for females. However, the ratio for females is still high, especially in older age groups (i.e., women older than school age), which calls for intensification of efforts and programmes to eliminate illiteracy in these groups.

During the same period, the ratio of holders of second-level certificates (intermediate and secondary) increased from 37.8% to 40.9% for females and from 49.5% to 50.7% for males. These ratios are higher than those for all other levels (without certificate, first level --primary certificate, second level certificate, third level degree --Diploma / university / postgraduate). In other words, the base of the educational pyramid is transitioning towards advanced levels of education.

#### ❑ *Employment conditions*

Despite progress in their health and education, participation of women in economic activity is still limited, compared with the total number of women of working age or the total labour force. The ratio of working Saudi women of working age (15 years and older) to total Saudi women in 2008 did not exceed 8.4%, and their participation in the labour force did not exceed 11.5%. However, though their participation is limited, a number of features ought to be taken into consideration when considering female employment.

The main feature of female participation in the labour market in 2008 is the predominance of the educated women. The ratio of employed Saudi women (15 years and older) without a certificate to total working women was 2.8%, compared with 7.4% for males. Moreover, the ratio of working women holding third level certification (i.e., diploma, bachelor degree and higher education) to the total was 81.8%, compared with 29% for males. In addition, there is for this group of working women a close linkage between occupation and academic specialization.

Another notable feature of female participation in the labour market is the concentration of employment in the education sector, where 77.6% of total working women work, as do 84.8% of those holding a bachelor degree. Clearly, employment opportunities for educated females are in teaching. Hence, in recent years, Saudi women have made the rational choice of turning towards specialising in education, where job opportunities are concentrated. However, with the education sector

approaching sufficiency, graduates with degrees in education will face increasing difficulties in finding jobs that meet their aspirations.

Diversification of female employment and achieving broader sectoral participation of women require not only expansion of employment opportunities for females in economic sectors other than education, but also ensuring that female graduates of all educational stages have the competencies needed for competition; hence the need for changes in the disciplinary structure of outputs of higher education.

Traditionally, women's work was looked upon as an impediment to carrying out full family duties. However, availability of goods that facilitate housework and changes in social culture enabled many women to combine family duties with work outside the home. Labour force data for 2008 show that 67.6% of the total Saudi women workers in the age group 15 years and older are married, compared with 74.7% for males. This is an indication of change in social culture pertaining to married women's work.

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In spite of the great progress made in the contribution of the private sector to economic development, participation of women in the private sector is still limited. Data on employment in private-sector enterprises for 2008 show the ratio of women to total Saudi workers in these enterprises was only 6.2%, with more than half of women workers, 55.9%, working in "personal and community services". Of all women workers, 37.3% were holders of a bachelor degree, and 32.5% were high-school graduates. In contrast, 56.2% of males were concentrated in "building and construction" and "wholesale and retail trade", and 37% were high-school graduates, 17.9% were holders of an intermediate education certificate, and 17% can "read and write". Clearly, females were concentrated in the services sector, even though their numbers were less than those of males by a large margin. Indeed, female employment is concentrated in services, in both the public and private sectors. Another characteristic of female employment in the private sector is concentration in urban areas, where 90.4% of the total Saudi women workers are employed in Riyadh, Makkah and the Eastern



Region, which indicates that outside the big cities, women's work in the private sector is not favoured.

### ❑ *Social welfare services*

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for providing social-welfare services to individuals who need them. Table 19.3 shows the social-services institutions of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the number of beneficiaries.

**Table 19.3**  
**Beneficiaries of Governmental Social-Welfare**  
**and Social-Development Institutions**  
**2008**

Type of Institution	Number	Beneficiaries			
		Males	Females	Homes for the Disabled	Total
Social nursery	4	243	296	–	539
Social-education home for boys	9	692	–	–	692
Social-education home for girls	3	–	301	–	301
Social-guidance home	5	180	–	–	180
Social-observation home	14	15042	–	–	15042
Care institution for girls	4	–	1741	–	1741
Social-care home for the elderly	10	419	268	–	687
Child-care institution for the paralytic	2	110	106	–	216
Vocational rehabilitation centre and section for vocational rehabilitation in a comprehensive rehabilitation centres	12	166	89	–	255
Comprehensive rehabilitation centre for the severely disabled	29	4027	2509	1284	7820
Day-care centre for children with disabilities	One centre (78) Section	4078		–	4078
Social-development centres	28	806660			806660

*Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, Fourth Follow-up Report; and Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Planning and Administrative Development.*

Table 19.3 shows the volume of care and social development services offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs. These services can be

classified into four types that vary in terms of number of beneficiaries. The first comprises care services for those who are in need economically and socially, such as nurseries, educational institutions, and homes for the care of the elderly. The second comprises care services for delinquent children and young people, such as guidance and observation institutions and care institutions for girls. The third type comprises services for persons with special needs, such as comprehensive rehabilitation centres, vocational rehabilitation centres, centres for the care of paralytic children, and day care centres for children with disabilities. The fourth type comprises services having a direct developmental component, and is directed to communities in rural and urban areas.

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One of the main characteristics of the Kingdom's approach to provision of social care and social development services is the complementarity between the work of official bodies and that of civil society institutions. In 2008, charitable societies numbered 484 in total, 32 of which were women's associations. These societies, which are found in all regions, carry out a wide range of tasks, including: maternal and child care; care for orphans, the elderly and persons with special needs; literacy campaigns, qualifying women for selected professions and activities; and provisions of health services. Complementarity in the provision of services can be noted by reviewing the data on the Social Development centres of the Ministry of Social Affairs. In areas that are not served by existing centres, local committees are formed to achieve local social goals. In 2006, the number of such committees was 139. In 2007, they implemented 1,668 projects and programmes, with the total number of beneficiaries reaching 536,314.

### **19.2.2 Institutions Serving Women and Family**

One of the features of the services provided to the family and women is their horizontal spread, with several governmental and nongovernmental agencies involved. Some specialize in providing services to women, while others provide such services as part of their services to the entire population or to certain categories of population.

The Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education provide educational services to all members of the family, with private educational institutions contributing to this effort. The Ministry of Health cares for family health, particularly maternal and child health, with the private medical sector participating through its institutions. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides social welfare services in cooperation with civil-society organizations.

## 19.3 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

### 19.3.1 Domestic Violence

Development of community awareness of family practices guaranteeing the rights of all family members, and adoption of appropriate policies and mechanisms for social protection of the family are cornerstones of the effort envisaged by the Ninth Development Plan for reducing domestic violence.

Although cases of domestic violence are limited in number, the Kingdom has always been keen on addressing this problem, based on Islamic teachings and the principles that govern the developmental effort of the Kingdom, which cover supporting the family and maintaining the social fabric.

Reported cases of domestic violence are few. Yet, studies of families whose members were subjected to violence call for development of social guidance and family protection mechanisms, as well as for supporting both the government and the private agencies concerned (for example, the General Directorate of Social Protection of the Ministry of Social Affairs, police departments, the National Family Safety Programme, and civil society institutions). However, in order for these agencies to reduce domestic violence effectively, through monitoring or receiving cases, and providing guidance and social and psychological support to families, they themselves (whether governmental or private) must be provided with support, especially training professionals to enable them to carry out their tasks at a high level.

### **19.3.2 Divorce**

As an indicator of family breakdown, divorce has serious repercussions on family and society. Many negative social phenomena, such as juvenile delinquency and problem youth, have their causes in divorce and family breakdown. While divorce harms all family members, women and children are most affected; hence providing them with various forms of support is an immediate need.

Providing support requires information and data on divorce cases and trends. Between 2004 and 2007, a slight rise in the ratio of divorced people (male and female) to the total Saudi population (15 years and older) was noted. However, reaching conclusions about trends must take into account that social changes generally take hold over longer periods, hence the need to examine changes over relatively long time spans.

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Regardless of the number of cases of divorce or the extent of its spread, providing family counselling to thwart divorce and support to families when it occurs is a social responsibility. Three agencies are involved. The Ministry of Justice provides guidance prior to the divorce and during the course of proceedings, in order to delay or prevent it; the Ministry of Social Affairs provides guidance and family support; and civil society institutions provide material support to divorced women.

### **19.3.3 Unemployment**

Unemployment is one of the most prominent economic issues that have a social impact. The 2008 labour force data show the impact of unemployment on family conditions, especially on women and young people, for whom rates of unemployment are high. Despite a fall in the rate of unemployment among Saudis (15 years and older) from 11% of total national labour force in 2004 to about 10% in 2008, unemployment among women and youth remained high.

High unemployment among women acquires particular importance in view of the educational profile of the unemployed. 78.3% of

unemployed women have a bachelor degree, compared with 14.9% for males, which indicates a mismatch between current higher education for women and labour market needs.

Unemployment not only reduces family income, thereby increasing the financial burden on the family, but also frustrates the unemployed, with consequent social and psychological effects on them, as well as on other family members. Addressing unemployment among women and youth requires concerted efforts by various state actors and the private sector, not only to provide women and young people with employment opportunities that satisfy their aspirations to building a career and a family, but also to prepare them in disciplines and for professions that meet labour market needs and requirements. This, in some respects, means a comprehensive review of academic disciplines and training programmes to ensure compatibility with the economic and social needs. However, a top priority for expanding economic participation opportunities for women remains implementation of Council of Ministers Resolution No. 120 of 2004 and all its provisions.

### **19.3.4 Illiteracy**

Eradication of illiteracy is one of the main tasks on the agenda of development. As a result of the adopted educational policies and programmes, it was possible to reduce illiteracy, through raising rates of enrolment in education. In this way, the Kingdom has successfully reduced the number of illiterates at notable rates. In 2007, the ratio of illiterate males to total male Saudi population (15 years and older) was 8.6%, compared with 23.6% for females. While this is an achievement as compared to previous years, rates of illiteracy among females are still high, requiring efforts designed to eliminate them within a specified period of time.

Data on illiteracy in 2007 by age cohort show that it is concentrated in the older age groups. Out of the total Saudi women illiterates (15 years and older), women in the age group 15–24 accounted for 4.8%, while those in the 60 and over age group accounted for 30.1%. These numbers mean two things. First, efforts to avert the flow of new

illiterates have achieved success. Secondly, efforts need to be focused on eradication of illiteracy among the economically active population, where there are still pockets of illiteracy. It is important to emphasize, however, that enhancing and expanding literacy programmes requires concerted efforts from both relevant government agencies and civil society institutions.

### **19.3.5 People With Special Needs**

Even though the number of people with special needs is relatively small, continued support for them by government agencies and civil society institutions is essential. Equally important, this support needs to be reviewed constantly to ensure meeting emergent needs. Under the Ninth Development Plan, government agencies and civil society institutions should address issues highlighted by the 2007 Demographic Survey, which indicated the need for programmes not only for ensuring eradication of illiteracy among this segment of population, but also for facilitating enrolment of its members in formal education.

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Another issue highlighted by the 2007 demographic survey pertains to marital status. 64.2% of the total Saudi population with special needs (15 years and older) were unmarried, 26.4% were married, 3.0% were divorced, and 6.4% were widowed. These percentages indicate the need for effective programmes to provide psycho-social support, in addition to matrimonial counselling and education.

### **19.3.6 Social Care Services**

Determining the required scale of expansion of social care services to meet needs and ascertaining appropriateness of the services provided requires developing mechanisms for measurement and performance evaluation by the research institutes of the competent authorities.

However, ensuring the required qualitative shift in the development of social care services requires strengthening the participatory approach that seeks to coordinate the work of government authorities with that of

civil society institutions. Within this framework, it is necessary to develop mechanisms for monitoring performance quality and efficiency by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

While the experience of the Kingdom shows the important role of civil-society organizations in providing social care services, through adopting scientific criteria for measuring requirements and effectiveness of services, the Ninth Development Plan aims to make the Kingdom's experience a model in this field.

### **19.3.7 Social Safety Nets**

In its support for groups at economic and social risk, the Kingdom adopts a wide range of policies and mechanisms, aimed at addressing causes of risk and mitigating its effects on the family; mostly within the framework of the National Strategy for Social Development.

Through four follow-up reports on implementation of the MDGs, the Kingdom has monitored progress in the efforts to achieve the goal of addressing poverty in its broad sense. It is useful to note in this regard that the concept of poverty covers more than just material deprivation; it also covers lack of educational, health care and employment opportunities, as well as other elements of social and economic deprivation. It is within this broad framework that programmes to address cases of poverty in the Kingdom are placed. Success in health and education may be measured through reduction in mortality and illness rates, increase in life expectancy at birth, and higher enrolment rates of population of school age, in addition to sustainable environment indicators, which show significant expansion of drinking water networks and spread of sanitation networks and other services.

Through assistance and social security pensions, the state provides direct financial support to enhance incomes of poor families. The amounts paid have risen over the past years. The average annual growth rate of expenditure on social security pensions over 1993–2008 was 10.3%, reaching SR9,675 million in 2008, while expenditure on

temporary assistance grew over the same period by 20.8% annually, reaching SR3,988 million in 2008.

The National Strategy for Social Development includes a wide range of policies and programmes designed for addressing all aspects of poverty. These policies and programmes were classified under five themes: balanced economic growth, economic empowerment and employment of the poor, human-resource and social-capital development, expansion of social safety net and enhancement of institutional infrastructure and good management. Through this integrated approach, the strategy aims to eradicate extreme poverty and accelerate the reduction of absolute poverty, while adopting policies and programmes to ensure that other segments of society do not fall into the poverty trap.

## **19.4 DEMAND FORECASTS**

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Various chapters of the Ninth Development Plan estimated demand for various social services such as education, health, and employment. These estimates cover the needs of women, family members, and the family as a social unit. Here, the additional demand for the social care services provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs is estimated.

The most important criteria used in estimating the demand for social care services and centres under the Ninth Development Plan are: population increase; annual average growth in number of individuals eligible for social services; and balance in geographical distribution of services, taking into account the special circumstances of some beneficiary groups and their need to receive care in the areas where they and their families live and in their own social environment.

Table 19.4 shows estimates of the additional demand for care units and community centres affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs under the Ninth Development Plan. These estimates ensure balancing provision among regions.



**Table 19.4**  
**Additional Demand for Care Units and Community Centres**  
**Ninth Development Plan**

Region	Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres for The Disabled	Social Care Homes for the Elderly	Social Nurseries	Social Education Institutions for Girls	Social Education Institutions for Girls	Model Educational Institutions	Social Guidance Homes for Boys	Social Observation Homes for Boys	Social Care Institutions For Girls	Offices For Combatting Begging, and Social Follow-Up	Social Development Centres	Local Development Committees
Riyadh	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	3	20
Makkah	1	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	20
Madinah	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	20
Qasim	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	20
Eastern Region	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	20
Asir	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	20
Tabuk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	20
Hail	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	20
Northern Borders	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	20
Jazan	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	20
Najran	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	20
Baha	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	20
Jawf	1	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	2	1	-	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>260</b>

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs.

## 19.5 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 19.5.1 Future Vision

Building a cohesive, enlightened family, where efforts of man and woman are joined to advance economic, social and cultural conditions of the family, and develop the knowledge and skills of its members, imbuing them with a sense of community responsibility, and

promoting their initiative and their integration in the community, within the framework of values inspired by Arab and Islamic heritage.

### **19.5.2 Objectives**

- Strengthening family cohesion.
- Enabling Saudi women to participate in achieving development goals.
- Enhancing the status of women and their influence in family and society.
- Enabling the family to perform its functions efficiently and effectively.
- Developing social care programmes for the needy groups, and combating domestic violence.
- Strengthening and supporting community participation in development and social care.
- Promoting participation of women in economic activity, and providing the facilities required to increase their participation.
- Eradicating illiteracy among females.
- Consolidating and enhancing quantitative and qualitative progress in education of Saudi girls in all stages of education.
- Encouraging private sector input into development programmes and social care projects.
- Developing mechanisms for disbursing subsidies and social security assistance to beneficiaries to enable them to improve their incomes through their own efforts.
- Improving quality of services provided to beneficiaries of social-security services.
- Developing effectiveness and efficiency of government bodies and performance of civil-society institutions in development and social care.
- Supporting social research and development agencies in the Kingdom.

### 19.5.3 Policies

- Developing family support and counselling programmes.
- Supporting expansion of private activity in the provision of maternity and childhood services.
- Continuing to establish social outreach units in the regions.
- Issuing and enforcing the social protection regulations.
- Completing establishment of social protection units in the regions.
- Supporting persons rehabilitated by social guidance and observation institutions to prevent their relapse.
- Encouraging establishment of civil societies to develop programmes for the prevention of domestic violence and to provide shelters for battered women.
- Cooperating with media outlets in raising social awareness and offering social counselling.
- Providing the necessary resources to improve family environment for persons residing in social care institutions.
- Encouraging and supporting alternative and foster families to care for orphaned children and those with special circumstances.
- Expanding deployment of integrated social development services in urban and rural areas, in coordination with all relevant agencies, and increasing the number of community development committees.
- Supporting and developing programmes of the social development centres and their activities.
- Supporting productive family programmes for women and girls, through training, production and marketing programmes.
- Encouraging establishment of women's charities.

- Implementing social and guidance programmes to raise awareness of Saudi women and encourage them to participate in development and social care programmes.
- Conducting information campaigns by government agencies and civil societies to increase social acceptance of participation of women in economic activity.
- Adopting specific measures to address female unemployment, particularly unemployment among educated women.
- Encouraging women to work in economic and social activity and providing them with access to loans.
- Incentivizing women towards higher education disciplines consistent with labour market needs.
- Encouraging establishment of cooperative societies in areas that need them, and continuing to provide financial, technical and administrative support to cooperative societies.
- Supporting charities technically, administratively and financially, and encouraging establishment of new associations and charities.
- Promoting volunteerism and expanding involvement of women in voluntary work.
- Encouraging cooperative and civil charitable societies to carry out economic and social projects.
- Supporting assistance programmes for care of persons with disability within the family.
- Continuing to provide social security pensions and assistance to beneficiaries who are eligible to benefit from the social security system.
- Encouraging recipients of social security to undertake productive projects to enable them to move from being dependents to providers, while continuing to assess these projects.
- Simplifying payment procedures of social security pensions and benefits.

- Enacting legislation, regulations and resolutions to encourage private and community sectors to participate in managing social institutions supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs, along with providing material, moral and technical support to the two sectors.
- Conducting new social research and studies aimed at quantitative and qualitative advancement of development and care service activities.

#### 19.5.4 Targets

- Continuing to expend assistance to existing and future cases: families of persons with special needs, paralytic children, foster and alternative families, marriage of persons residing in social institutions, individual projects for the disabled, pensions and social security benefits.
- Assisting social security beneficiaries in the following areas: covering part of medical treatment and expenses; paying in part for basic consumer goods; paying a share of electricity and water bills; restoration, refurbishment and furnishing of homes; providing school bags and uniforms to all pupils of beneficiaries of social security each school year.
- Providing personal care to residents of residential homes who are unable to look after themselves, the disabled, paralytic children, the elderly and children in social nurseries.
- Expanding social care institutions in the regions: establishing 14 homes for social guidance, 12 institutions for the care of girls, 6 homes for social observation, 8 villages for orphaned children, 4 homes of social education for boys, 7 guest houses for girls, 5 homes for social welfare, 21 units for social protection, 10 centres for comprehensive rehabilitation, 15 offices for Social Security, and 6 new development centres.
- Continuing to provide and support local development subsidies to help maintain local development activities and programmes.

- Encouraging establishment of new cooperatives and supporting them.
- Encouraging establishment of new civil charity societies and supporting them.
- Supporting research and studies in social development and care.

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