

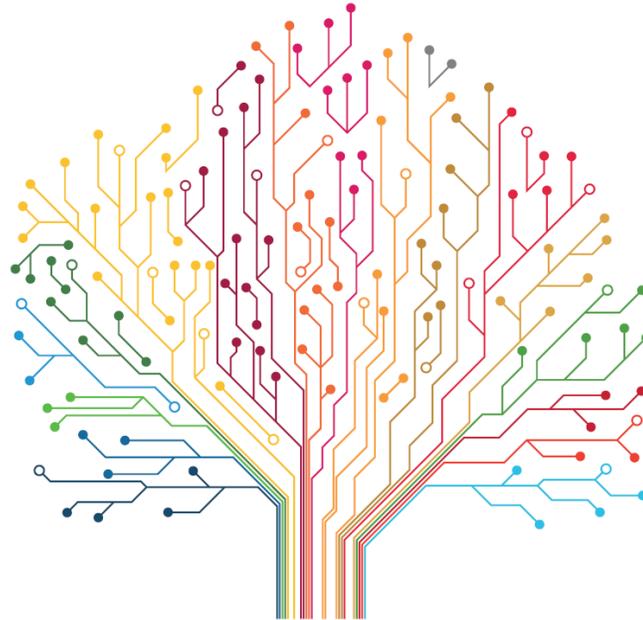
Regional conference on case management systems in the justice sector

19-20 June, Dead Sea/Jordan

Report



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Kingdom of the Netherlands



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Executive Summary



Opening of the Regional Conference on Case Management Systems

In a concerted effort to promote achievements relating to case management systems and to foster **south-south cooperation** on this front, the High Judicial Council of the State of Palestine - with the support of the *Sawasya II* Joint Programme (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)) - organized a regional conference on **case management systems in the justice sector**, which brought together **122 representatives from 16 MENA countries (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Somalia,**

Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen – the State of Palestine).

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to have exchanges on comparative experiences pertaining to case management systems in regular courts, family courts as well as on customization in relation to juvenile and gender justice needs, particularly on the treatment of administrative data for cases relating to children and violence against women.

Further to this, Palestinian representatives offered an overview of the e-Justice platform being currently developed by the State of Palestine, with close support from *Sawasya II*, within the broader e-Government initiative that closely aligns with the country’s National Policy Agenda (2017-2022) and its sectoral strategic priorities.

In addition to contributions from Palestinian justice representatives, Jordanian, Egyptian and Turkish delegations had the opportunity to provide an outline of their respective systems’ particularities and to exchange views on challenges and opportunities that could be further explored in south-south collaboration modalities. These dedicated workshops helped inform recommendations formulated at the end of the conference, which foresee:

- 1. Signing of MoUs** with a view to exchanging and enhancing cooperation among participating counties;
- 2. Establishment of a working group**, at the level of the heads of delegations, to facilitate communication among participating countries;
- 3. Holding of regional conferences** on case management systems in the justice sector on an annual basis, open to new participating countries;
- 4. Dissemination of success stories** within the working group to support the improvement of automated processes in the justice sector (notification and e-signature could constitute a starting point);
- 5. Committing to SDG 5** in developing automated judicial systems.

Upon the conference’s closing, H.E. Saleem Sa’ad, Chief Justice of the State of Palestine, thanked the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting the Regional Conference as well as *Sawasya* for its continuous engagement and **reiterated the State of Palestine’s support to countries in the region in developing their case management systems**, through IT-resource sharing and capacity building of judicial staff. The conference concluded with an award-distribution ceremony led by the Chief Justice.

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Setting the Stage: Opening Addresses



Mr. Ali Muhana

Legal Advisor to H.E. President of the State of Palestine

In his opening address, Legal Advisor to H.E. the President of the State of Palestine expressed his appreciation of *Mizan 2*'s pioneering experience and stressed the importance for the judicial sector to “**get on the bandwagon of technology in light of the current challenges**”. Mr. Muhana also stressed the importance of fostering the use of technology through enhanced collaboration and knowledge sharing with neighboring countries with the view of improving justice delivery in Arab countries.



H.E. Judge Mohammed Alghazo

Chief Justice of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

H.E. Mohammad Alghazo, Chief Justice of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan recalled that “**two decades have passed since the beginning of automation processes**” in the justice sector. The witnessed achievements on this front, he indicated, are the result of dedicated governmental efforts that aimed at accelerating and completing the justice sector’s transition from a pencil-based to an automated system. “**We look forward to the launch of *Mizan 3* within the next few years**”, he pursued, anticipating to translate the system upgrade into a “free-of-paper environment” and to provide justice actors with access to online legislation, in an effort to enhance judicial decision making processes.



Mr. D. Christopher Decker

Joint Programme Manager, Sawasya II

Joint Programme Manager of the *Sawasya II* Programme, Mr. D. Christopher Decker, praised the “**thorough collaboration initiated by chief justices, attorney generals, ministers of justice and supreme judges who assumed office over the years**” and “**their robust commitment to improving justice delivery**” as well as the development partner community’s engagement that helped secure important gains on the justice delivery front. He also stressed the centrality of case management systems to foster child and gender justice, adding that e-Services “significantly reduced financial and administrative barriers” to access to justice. In the lead-up to the High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, Mr. Decker highlighted the opportunity it represented to “showcase how case management generated data channeled through adapted structures come in support of SDG 16+ implementation strategies”.



H.E. Emad Saleem Sa'ad

Chief Justice of the State of Palestine

The *Mizan 2* case management system represents today “**an integral part of the justice sector from recording of a case until a judicial decision is reached**” recalled **H.E. Chief Justice, Emad Saleem Sa'ad**. “Seeking to totally depend on technology in order to create a suitable litigation environment”, H.E. indicated his readiness “**to cooperate with all judicial institutions in the region**” to turn the Palestinian case management experience into tangible judicial improvements for other Arab countries. Referring to south-south cooperation in the region, he added that he hopes this initiative will be “**a cornerstone for cooperation in helping achieving our goals**”.

Session 1: Case Management Systems: the Palestinian Experience

Moderator: Mr. Mejdi Abou Chareb,
High Judicial Council (State of Palestine), Head of Chief Justice's Office

Introduction about the case management systems

Mr. Murad Rumman,
E-Justice and Case Management Systems Specialist,
Sawasya II

As recalled by **Mr. Murad Rumman, Sawasya II's e-Justice and Case Management Systems Specialist**, over the last 18 years, the *State of Palestine's* dedicated efforts have led to the automation of judicial processes supported by the development of two case management systems: *Mizan* for regular courts and *Adalah* for family courts.

Mizan 1's development: Following the High Judicial Council's (HJC) decision to automate judicial processes in regular courts in 2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided its support to the development of the *State of Palestine's* first case management system: *Mizan 1*. Although *Mizan 1* represented an important first step toward the formalization of e-Justice, initially the program only supported limited connectivity. In view of this, UNDP partnered with the HJC in 2006 with the specific aim of expanding *Mizan 1* in order to connect regular courts to the public prosecution. In pursue of this objective, UNDP invested efforts in building the institutional capacity of the HJC through staff training and the provision of IT equipment.

From Mizan 1 to Mizan 2: Taking forward the rollout of the HJC's automation strategy, a new version of the case management system – thereafter referred as *Mizan 2* - was developed in 2009 and implemented thenceforth. The upgraded system

connects regular courts to prosecution offices as well as to various Ministries, including the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Finance and Planning. These achievements were the result of concerted efforts by the development partner community, and in particular in the framework of *Sawasya I*¹ (2014-2018), which respectively contributed to the development of *Mizan 2*, to its continuous upgrading and to the development of centralized services.

Mizan 2 applications: The transition from *Mizan 1* to *Mizan 2* allowed for the development of various connected services that greatly supported the improvement of justice delivery, such as the electronic allocation of cases to judges with corresponding timelines, which contributed to decreasing the important backlog witnessed hitherto in the judiciary. These services also allowed for the establishment of self-service kiosks available outside of courthouses where the general public, as well as lawyers, are able to lodge enforcement requests 24/7, freeing up critical time for front-line staff at court level. About **130,000** individuals utilize *Mizan 2* on a regular basis, including **4,200** lawyers, whose daily work is contingent upon the program². Enhanced connectivity has also contributed to improving quality delivery across the justice chain. To illustrate, women can now access the status of their maintenance payments online and receive a notification on their mobile whenever these are

¹ Thereafter referred as *Sawasya I*

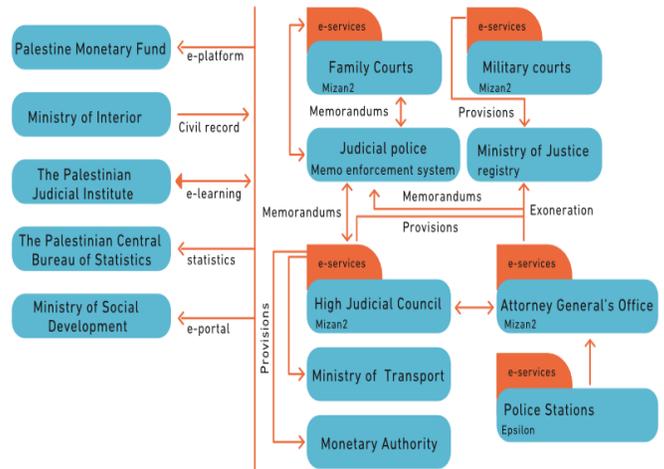
² Smartphone applications developed through *Mizan 2* allow judges, lawyers and the general public to receive alerts/notifications on hearing time/availability of

judicial decisions. It also enables clerks/notaries to electronically register the time of notifications' submission.

available, saving them from unnecessary commute to the courthouses.

E-Justice project: Starting from 2018, *Mizan 2* entered its 5th phase with the launch of the e-Justice project. Under this umbrella, citizens will be able, through the creation of a digital profile, to access online justice services – which allow for the submission of information, financial or administrative requests pertaining to their case - using a unique online platform.

Adalah family court case management: *Adalah* is an electronic case management system through which family courts manage and store proceeding-related documentation. Similar to the *Mizan 2* case management system, *Adalah* is a follow-up tool that supports judicial work. The case management system was initiated in 2014 and established in 2016 with the support of USAID and further expanded under *Sawasya I*.



Graph: e-Justice provisional diagram

Lessons learned from the Palestinian experience: Why did it work in Palestine?

Mr. Filippo Di Carpegna,
Chief Technical Specialist,
Sawasya II

As highlighted by **Mr. Filippo Di Carpegna, *Sawasya II*'s Chief Technical Specialist**, a number of key factors led to the successful implementation of an efficient and sustainable case management system: national ownership, political will, progressive participatory approach, complementarity between technical and development partners.

National ownership was characterized by:

- Development of a locally owned software;
- Strong IT capacity within the justice institutions;
- Availability of a consistent budget for the maintenance and replacement of equipment

Decision makers' strong **political will** allowed for the system to be implemented despite internal resistance to change.

The **progressive participatory approach** translated into:

- Progressive approach (pilot phase, *Mizan 1*, *Mizan 2*, e-Justice) relating to the implementation of the system;
- Revision of the judicial procedures to ensure its efficiency before developing the IT solutions;
- Participatory approach to ensure that the system matches the needs of the justice actors.

Finally, the **joint and complementarity support between technical and development partners**

during more than 15 years enabled the system to be incrementally and steadily expanded.

Overview of the contribution of technology on judicial work from a judicial perspective

Judge Mahmoud Jamous,
Head of Courts Administration Unit
High Judicial Council, State of Palestine

Judge Abdallah Harb,
Head of Family Courts Inspection Department
Supreme Judge Department, State of Palestine

Ms. Nesreen Reishmawi,
Chief Prosecution, Head of Cybercrime Department
Attorney General's Office, State of Palestine

In 2001, the **High Judicial Council** began to initiate the development of *Mizan 1* in order to articulate the *State of Palestine's* e-Government vision and to expedite litigation. With *Mizan 2* being incrementally expanded, governmental entities began to systematically rely on the system for their daily transactions, thereby improving justice delivery. As highlighted by **Judge Mahmoud Jamous, Head of Courts Administration Unit**, the development of *Mizan 2* facilitated judicial work as it allowed citizens to remotely access information on their case through e-Services and provided judges with a valuable working tool that enable them to secure information and enhance confidentiality and to promptly identify the lawyer(s) involved in the case. However, as underlined by Judge Jamous, the judicial system must keep abreast of the latest IT developments on a continuous basis in order to ensure that the justice sector utilizes the best available tools.

As highlighted by **Ms. Nesreen Reishmawi, Chief Prosecution - Head of Cybercrime Department**, before the operationalization of *Mizan 2*, the prosecution was commonly perceived by the general public and judicial actors as not dependable as, in the absence of automation, grave procedural errors were regularly made leading to frequent human rights' violations (e.g. detention period exceeding 15 days, false investigations, missing files and evidence). In view of this, improving the

situation required the implementation of an automated system. The rollout of *AGO Mizan 2* resulted in increased accuracy and transparency, decreased human errors and improved trust among citizens. The first step toward the implementation of the e-system started in 2003 when the public prosecution electronically inventoried its files, and proceeded to their centralization at the level of public prosecution offices in 2008, with the support of the USAID-supported *DPK* project. In 2011, in the framework of the Dutch-government supported initiative *Mateen*, *AGO Mizan 2* was initiated, allowing for the online registration of cases from initiation until the decision's notification. Through *Mateen*, employees across the prosecution chain were supported with capacity development. Further to this, in 2014, the US State Department provided technical support to the expansion of *AGO Mizan 2*, which was completed under *Sawasya*. These interventions specifically aimed at connecting judicial entities together and providing more e-Services to the public, lawyers as well as to civil society. The automation of judicial work provided for more accuracy & transparency as well as improved confidentiality of cases and overall quality of services. However, in taking forward the implementation of *AGO Mizan 2*, a number of challenges were identified, among which, the lack of in-house capacity (i.e. storage, up-to-date IT equipment, expertise, learning opportunities) as well as the lack of generated data on employees' workload in light of the system's expansion.

As indicated by **Judge Abdallah Harb, Head of Family Courts Inspection Department**, processes' automation within family courts began to be gradually implemented in 1994, hereby translating into practicality the political will to streamline court processes through IT systems. These efforts culminated in 2016 with the development of *Adalah*, the case management system for family courts and were accompanied by the establishment, within the Supreme Judge Department (SJD), of the family prosecution, the department of counselling, the alimony fund as well as the specialized IT department, in close collaboration with Chief Justices, the Ministry of Finance and a number of key actors in the justice sector. In view of this, *Sawasya* provided essential support to ensure that the specialized IT department's employees develop the needed skills to independently manage *Adalah*.

Discussions

How the different judicial institutions ensure data safety & security, particularly protection from external interferences?

When designing/developing the different case management systems, data protection has been thoroughly taken into account, especially owing to the fact that automated systems are an integral part of the governmental network. In practical terms, the case management systems differentiate between individuals and institutions. Within institutions, a staff member is granted access according to his/her accreditation, which is contingent upon his functions and specialization (e.g. juvenile prosecution).

Does the system allow for the monitoring of detention periods?

Detention periods are determined following a judicial decision within the limits set by the law. If the detention period exceeds what is legally applicable, the system automatically generates an alert.

Adalah is connected with the SJD and supports family judges' work, particularly with regard to case schedule management, allowing lawyers and litigants to obtain information on hearings' time and freeing up critical time for frontline office staff. *Adalah* also allowed for the development of forms that can be filled in/modified online for cases relating to divorce and child custody, thereby substantially decreasing hardcopy archiving. However, taking forward the rollout of *Adalah*, challenges were identified, among which, the need to enhance the system capacity through dedicated equipment (i.e. power generator) and training/awareness raising of staff.

Where is Mizan-2 generated information stored?

Mizan 2's information is stored in a server located at the High Judicial Council as well as in a second external backup server.

Are generated data analyzed to improve and support responsive services for women and GBV survivors?

Gender mainstreaming was an integral part of the systems' development process. As a result, the systems provide for gender-responsive data and statistics.

Workshop 1: Case Management Systems in Regular Courts

Moderator: Mr. Ahmad Shehadeh,
High Judicial Council (State of Palestine), Director of IT Department

Judge Ali al-Dhubaibi,
Deputy Head of Court of Appeal,
Kuwait

Automation of judicial processes in Kuwait: For **Judge Ali Al-Dhubaibi, Deputy Head of Court of Appeal,** the development of e-Services is key to improving the justice sector's performance. In consideration of this, the country's Legislative

As a result of *Kuwait's* commitment to improving justice delivery, an e-payment system was established operating through the public prosecution. Moving forward, the delegation stressed the importance of developing a centralized online platform that would enable the general

Committee was mandated to improve judicial processes. This translated into the development of an electronic case management system that automated processes and provided pivotal support to anti-corruption and democratization efforts.

public as well as law professionals to remotely access justice services. In view of this, the delegation stressed the importance of fostering capacity building efforts, highlighting current technical gaps in automation, such as the lack of data storage capacity.

Presentation of the Palestinian AGO and HJC case management systems: AGO and HJC *Mizan 2*

Mr. Thaer Karajah,
Head of Technical Department
High Judicial Council, State of Palestine

HJC *Mizan 2* is an integrated electronic program that supports the work of Palestinian regular courts, managing civil and criminal proceedings and following up on cases from their registration until they are disposed.

How does it work? (live demonstration) Once a case is opened and after entering the case's allocated number³, the court employee is able to access information and import data in accordance with his/her level of accreditation. The system allows, *inter alia*, for the internal referral of cases among judges. In addition to the referral

Mr. Rami Salama,
Head of IT Department
Attorney General's Office, State of Palestine

mechanism, *Mizan 2* is designed to monitor the number of cases allocated to judges at any given time as well as to store minutes of proceedings and judicial decisions⁴. With regard to the latter, the judge is compelled to document any enforcement delay in the system and to allocate it a corresponding new timeline, which will be automatically reflected in the judge's schedule. In view of these automatically-generated changes, the court's schedule is regularly updated and transferred to inspection services in order to collect data on delivery performance at court level. On the

³ In addition to accessing information using one's case number, the accredited employee can retrieve information using the

court's name, the case holder's ID number as well as the case's status.

⁴ The system foresees automatic saving of inserted data.

enforcement front, *Mizan 2* allows for final judicial decisions and warrants to be automatically notified to the judicial police, which once delivered, upload relevant documents to the system. Further to this, *Mizan 2* also enables lawyers to use self-service kiosks, saving citizens from unnecessary commute to the courts and freeing up critical time for front-line staff at court level.

AGO Mizan 2 is an integrated electronic program that manages the prosecution of criminal cases and follows up on all cases from their registration by the public prosecution until the case is electronically referred to the competent court.

How does it work? (live demonstration) Once the case is opened and an allocated clerk is designated by the system, the prosecution can enter minutes of interrogation sessions. As designed, the system allows for the insertion of a detailed account of relevant facts – including comments; the session is automatically registered online at its exact time/date and minutes, thereby limiting risks of interferences.

Presentation of the Jordanian case management systems: Mizan 2, Mizan 3 and Qistas

Judge Nawal Aljwhari,
Head of Irbid First Instance Court
High Judicial Council, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Dr. Salah Albasher,
Former Minister of Justice,
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Before the automation of its case management system, *Jordan*'s justice sector primarily relied upon paper-based processes, thereby hindering justice delivery in a multiple of ways:

- cases were not readily accessible;
- hand-written files could not systematically be handed over;
- case monitoring and follow-up were not systematized;
- wrongdoing/interferences could go unnoticed;
- statistics were not easily generated;
- case distribution among judges was arbitrary.

In view of this, **Judge Nawal Aljwhari** highlighted that the automation of judicial processes has had a noticeably positive impact on justice delivery, from its initiation phase – where each court still relied on separate case management systems – until their unification in 2017⁵.

Among these salient improvements, the case management system allowed for the **securing of**

data and better access to information. Today, about **3,500** employees have access to the system in accordance with their level of accreditation contingent upon their functions⁶. A number of **applications** were developed as a result of *Mizan 2*'s enhanced connectivity cutting across the justice chain. To illustrate, the system links together Ministries with rights holders/duty bearers on issues as varied as traffic offences or land & property matters. Further to this, through the *Mizan 2* case management system, information can be cross-referenced by types of offence and location, thereby facilitating the identification of instances of recidivism. It also allows for the systematic allocation of cases among judges based on fair and verifiable criteria as well as for access to cases' status at any given time. Additionally, *Mizan 2* enables clerks to oversee and manage the notification system more efficiently. Any delay in or failure to notify is duly recorded in the system; conversely when a notification reaches a client/lawyer, the system archives it automatically and notifies the concerned judge. In view of the

⁵⁵ In order to secure data, a back-up setup was established outside of the courts.

⁶ Access to the system, by an accredited employee, is duly registered.

latter, the IT system is equipped with a GPS device enabling to reflect in judicial processes the exact time/location of the notification.

Jordan will continue to develop *Mizan 2* and anticipates to upgrade it to its 3rd phase. This will translate into the development of a Ministry of

Adding to the above, **Dr. Salah Albasher, Former Minister of Justice – Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**, underscored the important progress made since 2003 to secure the transition from an IT-free environment toward automated judicial processes. Before courts were equipped with computers (2003), notification processes were particularly time consuming. In view of this, Dr. Albasher praised the Palestinian case management experience that greatly benefited to Jordan. As a result of this support, he stated Jordanian courts are currently able to increase the speed and transparency of processes, to better manage information and to automatically monitor court work.

Justice-based online portal as well as further connected applications, potentially including the possibility of holding remote trials. Once upgraded, the system is anticipated to improve archiving and electronic services available to lawyers and to the general public.

However, *Mizan 2* could be further customized to support an application that helps verify the legality of judicial decisions. Further to this, continuous improvement of information management and the development of e-Services are key to the strengthening of justice delivery, particularly in helping remove geographical barriers between citizens and the courts. These changes must be accompanied by reinforced efforts to raise legal awareness among citizens. In view of this, Dr. Albasher indicated that discussions are taking place for the inclusion of all Palestinian judicial decisions in *Qistas*, the regional legal database and search engine.

Presentation of the Turkish case management system

Judge Mehmet Pakiç,
Responsible of IT Unit
High Judicial Council, Turkey

From 2003 onwards, Turkey initiated the upgrading of its case management system – known as *UYAP* – to cover all courts across the country. Completed in 2005, the transition led to the computerization of all judicial documents generated across the justice and security sector (e.g. rehabilitation centers).

UYAP 2 applications: The system allows for sms notifications to be directly received by lawyers through devices linked to their email accounts. As a result of *UYAP 2*'s expansion, applications have been developed for the archiving of administrative files. Through the system, the *Tameez* online portal

was developed and made accessible to the general public and to law professionals, in accordance with their level of accreditation. The system is also linked to various private (e.g. banks) and public entities (e.g. public prosecution, prisons, forensic centers) in support of e-Services. Further to this, *UYAP 2*'s expansion allowed for the development of the *SEGBIS*' system, which facilitates the safe and secured reception and recording of testimonies/statements. Through *UYAP 2*, e-notification and e-litigation systems were developed, thereby improving judicial follow-up and access for lawyers to electronic documentation.

Discussions

Was it possible to upload all archived rulings to the UYAP case management system, even those issued prior to 2001?

Choice was made to upload only rulings of importance/relevance to the system, hence many pre-2001 judicial decisions continued to be archived in hardcopy. Similarly, rulings dating back from the Ottoman period have not been systematically transliterated into the Turkish language.

With increased access to information and data, how is confidentiality of cases ensured?

Since 2003 and the rollout of Jordan's *Mizan 2*, lawyers' failure to appear before court has become

more apparent. As a result, some judges prefer to use written statement from witnesses rather than convening formal hearings, which has contributed to enhance case confidentiality.

How to ensure that the many applications developed as a result of the continuous expansion of case management systems do not jeopardize the independence of the judiciary?

Case management systems do not aim at interfering with judges' work or time management but should rather be regarded as a valuable tool to enhance transparency of judicial processes. With regard to organizational modalities, judges must comply with their institution's applicable code of conduct.

Key takeaways

- ❖ *Kuwait's* delegation presented the country's case management system and the services provided through its unified online platform. *Kuwait* intends to **further foster cooperation** in order to **bridge current technical gaps**.
- ❖ *Jordan's* delegation presented its case management system, which it regards as Palestinian *Mizan 2's* "twin", as both systems have followed parallel development tracks. It offers services covering the entire litigation process, including court support services. Moving forward, *Jordan* is currently investing efforts in developing the concept of **remote trials**, building on previous automation work. The group discussed how the justice system could further utilize advanced technologies to further promote efficiency in judicial processes, i.e. the use of artificial intelligence and big data.
- ❖ *Turkey's* delegation shared its experience of developing the *UYAP* electronic case management system and database, which contains about **4 million** judicial decisions.
- ❖ The *State of Palestine's* delegation presented a live demonstration of the *Mizan 2* case management system, which covers **all litigation phases** and provides **e-Services cutting across the justice chain**.

Following the presentations, the group discussed the importance of using automated services as a way of facilitating **access to justice** and **interactions between clients and judges**. Moving forward, the participating countries expressed their will to make the public an integral part of the judicial system.

Workshop 2: Case Management System in Family Courts

Moderator: Judge Abdallah Harb

Supreme Judge Department (State of Palestine), Head of Inspection Department

Presentation of the Palestinian family court case management system: *Adalah*

Mr. Sohیب Sarhan,

Head of IT Department

Supreme Judge Department, State of Palestine

The *State of Palestine* has 25 operating family courts, with about 70% of them using the *Adalah* case management system. Through the information technology and documentation system, archiving is completed online. The case management system is accessible to judges, lawyers and the general public. Similar to *Mizan 2*, *Adalah* is used for various justice transactions and allows for the provision of online services to law professionals as well as the general public. External users log in on

the online platform using provided IDs/passwords. With regard to internal users, their access to the system is granted in accordance with their level of accreditation. Through *Adalah*, the *E-Ma'thoun* system was developed allowing for marriage proceedings to be automated. Concretely, the marriage officer can review and upload information after receiving the approval of both parties, thereby efficiently preventing frauds.

Presentation of the Egyptian family court case management system

Judge Khaled Hijazi

Supervisor at the Egyptian Judicial Information Center

Egypt

In *Egypt*, family courts are integrated into the regular judiciary, whose cases are managed by a unique automated system. As a result, cases can migrate from family to regular courts, using the same file number. The Ministry of Justice, with the support of UN Agencies, established Legal Aid Offices toward which, individuals are directed during the conciliation period initiated by the Family Dispute Settlement Office⁷ or after, in the event of unsuccessful conciliation efforts. If the conciliation process bears fruit, the reconciliation agreement is directly recorded at court level by the Family Dispute Settlement Office. The document is first prepared by the litigant with the support of the

Legal Aid Office, and is then transferred to the Family Dispute Settlement Office. Additionally, legal, social and psychological workers at the Family Dispute Settlement Office upload an enquiry report to the system that is endorsed by the Head of Office. If the conciliation procedure is unsuccessful, cases are transferred to the family court. Similar to *Mizan 2*, the system is equipped with a search engine that enables user to look up cases using the file number as well as parties' or lawyers' statements. The system has recently been expanded as to enable litigants to access information online.

⁷ Following Egyptian legal proceedings, all conciliation cases are first presented to the Family Dispute Settlement Office as per Law No. 10 of 2004. The Offices are composed of law

professionals as well as psychosocial workers. The conciliation period can last up to 30 days for cases related to divorce, alimony or custody.

Presentation of the Jordanian Family court case management system

Judge/Sheikh Mansour Tawlba

Head of Family Courts Training Institute,
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

In *Jordan*, family courts rule over family-law related matters, *diya*⁸ as well as crimes, including traffic-related offences. They are equipped with a computerized case management system, which was launched in 2010 to automate judicial processes - from registration until disposition - and to optimize resources. It is composed of 15 sub-systems administering over inheritance-related issues in close cooperation with the banking sector, enforcement, archiving as well as human resources⁹.

As a result of this, over 160 e-Services were developed, among which, an application allowing rights holders to utilize an electronic card to collect dues. The National Information Technology Center stores data generated by the case management system and is located in the Office of the Chief Justice. Judges' decisions are systematically analyzed through the system to evaluate performance and identify training needs.

Discussions

Is there any networking capacity between Arab legal systems?

There is no networking capacity between the region's different case management systems in the justice sector. However, the different judiciaries have formalized correspondence.

Is it possible for rights holders to use the banking system to access alimony payments?

Jordan's judiciary partnered with the banking sector with a view to enabling rights holders to directly withdraw their payments at the bank.

Key takeaways

- ❖ *Jordan, Egypt* and the *State of Palestine* presented their experiences regarding case management aspects in relation to family courts. As highlighted, automation can play an important role in strengthening access to justice, through ensuring that citizens access online services, while freeing the judiciary from resource-consuming paper-based processes.
- ❖ *Egypt's* intervention focused on the use of online systems in family dispute settlements and legal aid/information services available at the family courts. For

eligible cases, Family Dispute Settlement Offices provide space for conciliation with the support of the Legal Aid Offices. When conciliation is not applicable, cases are transferred to the litigation.

- ❖ The *State of Palestine* aims at securing the provision of legal aid to indigent individuals before family courts and is interested in further exploring *Egypt's* approach to integrate these services within family courts' structure.
- ❖ *Jordan's* case management system is particularly advanced as it enables, *inter*

⁸ In Islamic law, *Diya* is a financial compensation paid to a victim or its heirs in cases of murder, bodily harm or property damage as an alternative to 'equal retaliation' known as *qisas*.

⁹ For this purpose, data are archived outside of the National Information Technology Center, using private storage capacity.

alia, rights holders in inheritance cases to, upon final judicial decision, collect their dues at the bank. Although, *Jordan's Mizan 2* supports a number of connected applications, including SMS services, a unique system covering both family and regular courts remain to be developed. The need to provide e-Services through a single platform has been stressed by the various countries presenting their case management systems.

❖ In the *State of Palestine*, *Adalah* was initiated in 2014 and is currently being rolled out to cover and connect all family courts. By the end of the year, all family courts should be equipped with the system, which will significantly decrease paper-based processes. Participants to the workshop made the following recommendations/conclusions:

❖ There is a need to **revise the current legislative framework**

that governs the work of family courts, as the same personal status laws have been in place for over 40 years, while continuing to accompany technological advancement.

❖ There is a need to raise awareness among the general public on **data safety & security**, especially with regard to storage and confidentiality aspects.

Delegations expressed their wish to continue **learning from the Palestinian and Jordanian experiences**, which albeit different, share a number of common features.

Workshop 3: Customization of Case Management Systems in relation to Juvenile and Gender Justice Needs

Presentation of the Palestinian case management system for juvenile cases

Judge Hala Mansour,
Judge of the Ramallah Juvenile Court
High Judicial Council, State of Palestine

Following the adoption of the Juvenile Protection Law (JPL) in 2016, which sets out a comprehensive legal framework for children in contact with the law and closely aligns with international standards¹⁰, a specialized judiciary & prosecution were established and new provisions were introduced to, *inter alia*, encourage the use of mediation in juvenile offender cases. To further promote specialization, the High Judicial Council, in

¹⁰ In particular, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (known as "The Beijing Rules")

Mr. Jaad Tomalaih,
Juvenile Prosecutor,
Attorney's General Office, State of Palestine

collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, established a juvenile court in the Dar Al-Amal rehabilitation center¹¹ and systematized, in regular courts, juvenile hearings to provide for timely and child-friendly justice delivery. The latter is supported by a number of JPL-introduced procedural changes, such as the fact that the court cannot convene in the absence of the child protection counsellor and the specialized

¹¹ An additional juvenile court is anticipated to be established in the West Bank.

prosecutor¹² or that a child cannot be tried in the absence of his/her guardian, of the child protection counsellor and of his/her lawyer¹³. As recalled by **Judge Hala Mansour of the Ramallah Juvenile Court**, the hearing is confidential and judicial-decision making is supported by the child protection officer's mandatory social enquiry report.

In order to further streamline processes, a technical committee comprised of institutional and civil society actors¹⁴ has been working on the implementation of the law and particularly on strengthening the capacity of the justice sector to absorb these changes through the training of judicial actors and the development of prosecution/adjudication guidelines.

In addition to the Dar Al-Amal juvenile court's connection to *Mizan 2*, the system was further customized to be reflective of JPL's provisions. More specifically, electronic templates were developed allowing for the uploading by the child protection counsellor of the social enquiry report¹⁵ and for the child's guardian to access information on the case. During the pre-trial phase, *Mizan 2* applications enable the child protection counselor to be informed of the juvenile's arrest, the length of detention or any other relevant information. *Mizan 2* also supports the juvenile judge's work by, for instance, automatically notifying him/her when a child turns 18 while serving a sentence. With regard to alternatives to detention as envisaged in the law, the system has been expanded to reflect the type of alternative measure considered by the judge, thereby allowing for automated follow-up. Moving

forward, the system should provide for notifications to be automatically delivered to the juvenile judge to inform him/her on enforcement status of judicial decisions. On the monitoring front, Judge Mansour indicated that customization could be taken forward by, for example, reflecting categories of children at risk of delinquency.

With particular regard to the prosecution of juvenile cases, **Mr. Jaad Tomalaih, Juvenile Prosecutor** indicated that the customization of *Mizan 2* to reflect changes introduced by the JPL has proven to be "the backbone of prosecution work", as it has been particularly effective in accompanying the rollout of diversion measures allowing for outcome-based reporting and guaranteeing the confidentiality of cases. Through *Mizan 2*, child-friendly procedures were also further aligned with the development of unified forms¹⁶ automatically generated according to the type of case, the measure selected by the prosecution or identified needs for protection. It also supported the prosecution in systemizing data collection and in producing statistics able to support the *State of Palestine* in reporting against national and international obligations.

However, as stressed by Mr. Tomalaih, improvements remain to be made to ensure child protection in juvenile offender cases, particularly with regard to the juvenile police which remains to be equipped with separate units to enforce judicial decisions. Although, Mr. Tomalaih commended the customization of *Mizan 2*, he considers that further improvements can be made to ensure the provision of responsive services to juvenile cases

¹² Article 25 of the Juvenile Protection Law

¹³ Article 1/30 of the Juvenile Protection Law

¹⁴ The technical committee is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Social Development, the High Judicial Council, the Attorney General's Office as well as Defense for Children International (Palestine).

¹⁵ As per the law, a social inquiry report must be uploaded every 3 months; if the CPC does not upload the report, the judge is notified.

¹⁶ In order for the unified forms to be more child friendly, the word 'defendant' was replaced by 'juvenile'.

Presentation of the Palestinian case management system for Violence Against Women (VAW) cases

Judge Raed Asfour,
Ramallah Appeal Judge
High Judicial Council,
State of Palestine

As highlighted by **Judge Raed Asfour**, although the *State of Palestine*'s Basic Law guarantees equality between women and men¹⁷, efforts must be intensified on the legislative front in order to efficiently protect women from violence and discrimination¹⁸. In view of this, the State of Palestine is still under the process of reviewing its Family Protection Bill, without clear timeframe for adoption. The absence of a comprehensive legal framework, which factors in all forms of violence, hinders progress on gender equality and limits the potentialities of *Mizan 2*, as the system is contingent upon criminal laws that remain to be aligned with international standards, particularly with regard to early marriages. However, the customization of *Mizan 2* contributed to substantially improving the work of judges and of the High Judicial Council's Gender Unit as automated processes enable for the systematic collection of data on VAW cases and for enhanced access to information for lawyers and justice clients.

Ms. Tahrer Ata,
Planning Unit
Attorney General's Office,
State of Palestine

As stressed by **Ms. Tahrer Ata, Planning Unit – Attorney's General Office**, the public prosecution's work on VAW has been supported by the political buy-in of decision makers within the institution, providing for the customization of *Mizan 2*. It contributed to enhancing case confidentiality, victim protection & women's access to justice as well as to generating gender-responsive statistics. The use of electronic templates by prosecutors also contributed to streamlining processes, to strengthen internal referral mechanisms to the specialized prosecution as well as to ensure better monitoring of cases. However, in order to maintain and expand gender-responsive services, Ms. Ata recommends to:

- Further support IT capacity building maintenance of equipment (i.e. server);
- Conduct continuous evaluation of *Mizan 2*;
- Conduct training for staff, including joint training for prosecutors and judges

Presentation on the treatment of administrative data on justice for children

Mr. Dayaeddin Bazadough,
UNICEF Child Protection Officer,
Jordan Country Office

In *Jordan*, UNICEF's efforts are geared toward ensuring the operability of data generated by *Mizan 2*. In view of this, UNICEF aims to ensure the complementarity of data between the different

institutions involved in the case's proceedings. It recommended to enhance mutual work in an integrated manner and to further the unification of databases and of quality control assurance

¹⁷ Article 9 of the Basic Law

¹⁸ Including through, positive discrimination measures.

Presentation on the Egyptian experience in case management of juvenile and VAW cases: coordination and data management

Judge Khaled Al-Abraq, Appeal Judge, Member of Human Rights, Juvenile and Women Sector Ministry of Justice, State of Palestine	Mr. Ahmed Abdelgawad, Senior Public Prosecutor Prosecutor General's Office, Egypt
Ms. Amal Tawfiq, Head of the Complaints' Office of the National Council for Women Cairo, Egypt	Ms. Cherine Aly, Programme Analyst, UN Women Egypt Country Office Cairo, Egypt

As indicated by **Judge Khaled Al-Abraq, Appeal Judge and Member of Human Rights, Juvenile and Women Sector**, specialized departments for cases involving children and women have been established within 24 courts in *Egypt* since 2008¹⁹ as well as a specialized court mandated with the adjudication of juvenile offender cases²⁰. During hearings, two social counselors sit in the panel, with at least one of them being female. Additionally, 7 specialized offices were established and provide women with psychosocial support and legal aid services. With regard to the customization of the Egyptian case management system, UNODC supported the High Judicial Council with the provision of IT equipment, including the development of specialized templates adapted to the sensitivity of cases involving women. The automation of processes helped ensure confidentiality & consistency in the treatment of VAW cases. It also supported the provision of specialized services, by ensuring that key information is managed by and channeled only to the relevant actors.

As recalled by **Mr. Ahmed Abdelgawad, Senior Public Prosecutor**, the establishment of a specialized prosecution for VAW cases was accompanied by the automation of processes. Electronic templates have been developed over the last two years, supporting the systematization and organization of specialized prosecutors' work. It

also enabled the prosecution to better protect the confidentiality of cases as well as to generate statistics on violence against women, and hence to inform localized policy-making efforts. To illustrate, only the specialized prosecutor is authorized to insert information into the system during the investigation phase²¹. In view of the above achievements, the public prosecution anticipates to expand its data management network and to connect it with other stakeholders, particularly the police, the judiciary and forensic medicine services²².

The Women's National Council (WNC) is a governmental body placed under the auspices of the President's Office. The WNC established a Complaints Department, headed by **Ms. Amal Tawfiq**, comprised of a lawyer and a social counselor. Most of the cases dealt with by the Complaints Department – on average 7,525/year - concern family-related matters. The WNC uses a computerized case management system that collects and generates customized data reflective of indicators related to women's access to justice. Customized data is also indicative of their geographic location and of the nature of their case (s).

Above improvements have been achieved in the framework of the 2030 National Strategy on the Empowerment of Arab women, as recalled by **Ms.**

¹⁹ After Egypt accessed international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 8 of the 24 courts, a directorate for judicial child protection was established.

²⁰ The court known as 'juvenile court' was recently renamed 'child court'.

²¹ Prior to the automation of processes, administrative officers were in charge of manual data entry.

²² Including the establishment of a specialized laboratory to investigate cases involving children.

Cherine Aly, UN Women’s Programme Analyst.

The Strategy focuses on the protection and empowerment of women through the “Essential Service Package”. In support of this, *Egypt* adopted its Family Protection Bill and a new personal status law. Further to this, a National Observatory was established to conduct policy-oriented research on

communities affected by VAW in marginalized areas. The National Observatory’s close collaboration with CSOs led to the establishment of units and remote services in vulnerable areas, including a case management unit that operates a data management system in adherence to privacy and confidentiality principles.

Key takeaways

- ❖ The different delegations presented the *Egyptian*, *Palestinian* and *Jordanian* experiences on the customization of case management systems to address the specific needs related to juvenile and gender justice.
- ❖ Customization of *Mizan 2 (State of Palestine)* has enabled judges to better monitor cases of children in contact with the law (e.g. age, assignment of social worker). It is an essential tool to strengthen the implementation of alternatives to detention measures.
- ❖ With regard to the tracking of GBV cases, the *State of Palestine’s* delegation emphasized the importance of safeguarding privacy and confidentiality standards. It also highlighted the centrality of *Mizan 2* in generating statistics on VAW cases’ trends in view of identifying areas of improvement for the provision of gender-responsive services. There are many factors hampering access to justice for women, such as discriminatory legal frameworks as well as the lack of preventive and rehabilitative mechanisms in place. A system like *Mizan 2* can highlight such limitations, while working to make the system respond better to the justice needs of women and girls. The *State of Palestine’s* delegation also presented how *Mizan 2* supports the work of the specialized prosecution on family violence. It was noted that there is an ongoing need for development (including training and assessment) of the system to respond to VAW/family violence cases.
- ❖ In *Jordan*, UNICEF provides support on ensuring the operability of data generated by the case management system and data’s complementarity between the different institutions involved in a case’s proceedings (the Bar Association, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Interior). It recommended to enhance mutual work in an integrated manner and to further the unification of databases and quality control assurance mechanisms.
- ❖ *Egypt* highlighted the role of the Women’s National Council, which houses a complaint department, dealing on average with **7,525** cases. The cases are registered in a dedicated database customized to reflect gender-sensitive indicators.
- ❖ During the group discussion, UNDP also shared experiences on a justice project in *Algeria*, whereby an electronic case management system had been adapted to facilitate the reintegration of ex-detainees, and to support M&E processes.
- ❖ Further to this, a number of recommendations were formulated:
 - *Mizan 2* needs ongoing development in relation to tracking family violence cases;
 - Case management systems require ongoing support, to further customize services to tailor to the needs of specific groups;
 - Efforts should be geared toward continuously updating technologies and ensuring connectivity between social

services and justice services in order to enable holistic service

delivery for children in contact with the law and GBV survivors.

Wrap-up Session: Plenary Discussions

Kuwait's delegation shared the country's experience with counselling, mediation and dispute resolution in family-law related matters, including custody and divorce. Through its state-managed alimony fund maintenance fees are secured and women can directly withdraw their payments from their husband's account. Additionally, *Kuwait* appointed specialized enforcement judges for family-related matters and established a center dedicated to the protection of children and women victims of violence. With regard to its case management system, the Ministry of Justice ensures the protection of data under its cybercrime legislation. The strong witnessed cooperation between IT service providers and the judiciary has allowed for online public access to legislation and procedures and for the remote filing of lawsuits. In view of the important progress made by *Kuwait* on the automation front, it expressed its willingness to further share information on its system and to provide support to other countries in the region.

In *Egypt*, family courts are integrated into the regular judiciary. The Ministry of Justice, with the support of UN Agencies, established Legal Aid Offices toward which, women are directed during

the conciliation period initiated by the Family Dispute Settlement Office. Cases involving family violence are transferred to the criminal justice system and the justice client is advised on divorce proceedings and accesses a range of services, including forensic medicine. On the child protection front, *Egypt*, in close collaboration with UNICEF²³, worked toward establishing child-friendly courts and institutionalized child protection officers at court level. Moving forward, *Egypt* is exploring options of offering videoconferencing as part of litigation processes, to allow for remote testimony from a safe environment and to prevent further trauma from facing the perpetrator in court.

Yemen's praised the level of advancement of the Palestinian case management systems and indicated that the country is interested in actively learning and benefiting from the *State of Palestine's* experience. In view of this, *Yemen* solicited support from Palestinian counterparts and from the development partner community for the development of an analogous case management system.

Q&A

What are the necessary legislative adjustments for the establishment of remote trials?

In *Jordan*, video testimony is allowed by the legislation and used in specialized courts, such as in relation to sexual violence cases.

In States equipped with alimony payment systems, what are the mechanisms in place to prevent fraud?

Fraud in the system is sometimes detected; if fraud is confirmed, the necessary legal proceedings are initiated and strict rules are applied.

How do other countries deal with mediation in juvenile justice processes?

In the *State of Palestine*, diversion measures are envisaged in the law for misdemeanors involving juveniles, with the specialized prosecutor having

²³ Within the framework of an EU-supported project.

the capacity to offer mediation as to avoid traumatic judicial proceedings. Additionally, mediation can be offered by the specialized prosecutor before initiating criminal action, for misdemeanors and violations.

Is it possible to expand *Mizan 2* in order not only to improve judicial management but also the quality of judicial work?

We have discussed different types of automated case management functions in this conference. Among them is *Mizan 2*'s connection to *Al-Muqtafi*, the *State of Palestine*'s online legislative database. The database contains provisions covering the whole legislative history of the country. This enhanced connectivity also allowed for the development of user-friendly mobile applications for judges with a view to supporting judicial work.

In view of the case management systems' expansion, how to ensure the independence of the judiciary?

Remarks

Mauritania described *Jordan* and the *State of Palestine* as "pioneers", with comprehensive and unique systems in place able to meet sectorial objectives. **Mauritania** noted the need to ensure that adequate legislation is updated to keep abreast of latest technological developments and to accompany the rollout the e-Justice project.

The family courts' inspection department monitors all functions of the courts, while ensuring that their independence is respected. In this context, the inspection is authorized to monitor, for example, the timeline of case processing. If there is a significant delay, the inspection reports to the Chief Justice for follow-up.

How to fully ensure data safety & security of the various case management systems?

In response to this, **Algeria** noted that an internal fiber-optic based network helps improve data security - albeit at a high cost, adding that cloud or Internet-based storage remains vulnerable. The *State of Palestine* also indicated that the e-Government network forms a private entity and that the government is currently linking the various systems to the network. Data security remains an ongoing concern, especially given the system's Internet-based connectivity.

Further to this, the *State of Palestine*'s High Judicial Council confirmed its willingness provide any participating country with experience & knowledge.

Way Forward: Presentation of the Palestinian e-Justice Platform

Introduction about the Palestinian e-Justice platform

Ms. Hanan Yaghi,
General Director of IT Unit,
Ministry Of Justice, State of Palestine

Mr. Murad Rumman,
E-Justice and Case Management
Systems Specialist,
Sawasya II

Ms. Hanan Yaghi – General Director of the IT Unit at the Ministry of Justice recalled that the *State of Palestine* was able, in a particularly challenging context, to develop robust automated systems for the justice sector, streamlining processes and facilitating access to services for Palestinians, inside and outside the country. Among these systems, we count *Mizan 2* – the case management system, *Al-Muqtafi* – the online legislation database and the *Notary Public Registry* – that generates legal clearances.

In order to maintain and expand gains (i.e. increased transparency & competitiveness, less dependency on external service providers, resource optimization), the different systems need to be unified under the umbrella of a unique client-oriented service platform. By **putting citizens first**, the e-Justice portal would allow for centralized and fast access to information and services, including through online payments and e-signature, in partnership with main justice and security actors.

Rolling out a comprehensive e-Justice platform requires alignment of regulations²⁴ among the different participating institutions as well as new policies for the regulation of e-payment services and for data safety & security. In view of this, the Ministry of Justice initiated the alignment process of institutional systems and procedures.

Where do we stand? The Justice Sector Strategy (2017-22) represents the framework within which the e-Justice project is articulated. Taking forward implementation, a **justice services matrix** is being developed and needs – including training – are

being assessed. The matrix serves as reference point for the e-Justice project's implementation and includes estimates of costs by service, hence highlighting cross-cutting needs for support. To support the e-Justice strategy's rollout, a steering committee was established – in close cooperation with *Sawasya II* - and was mandated to define the steps ahead. It included the development of a road map and MoUs with external partners, the identification of funding opportunities (i.e. governmental special budget or development partner community), networking and the preparation of reports and other related documentation.

As stressed by **Ms. Hanan Yaghi**, technical capacity is available in the *State of Palestine*, although the current environment needs to be further improved. In view of this, the different involved institutions agreed to provide unified training and to further promote the platform and its tools.

As emphasized by **Mr. Murad Rumman, Sawasya II's e-Justice and Case Management Systems Specialist**, not all systems need to be taken to the next level. Instead, the success of e-Justice is contingent upon the development of a strategic vision able to benefit the case management systems and the justice sector as a whole. In pursue of this objective, knowledge levels need to be equalized among institutions and efforts need to be geared toward the end recipient: citizens.

In view of this, important efforts have been dedicated to – and continue to be so – harmonizing

²⁴ Several Palestinian laws regulate online activities with a view to protecting the right of consumers and to preventing cybercrimes.

regulations. *Sawasya II* focuses on a horizontal approach to service provisions, with every institution being able to deliver on this front,

according to the needs-based justice services matrix.

Q&A

How do we ensure that data generated by the e-Justice system are safe & secured and that all legal safeguards are in place, particularly with regard to e-signature?

The Palestinian legislation is contained in the *Al Muqtafi* database, which will be accessible through the e-Justice portal, thereby facilitating access to laws and regulations. With regard to data safety & security, many surveys have been conducted, including a second assessment that reviews all provided services. Improving the security and safety of data is a constant concern, but safeguards are already in place: codes, system testing, development of adapted legislation. Some security-related challenges can also be overcome through innovative initiatives, for example using the self-service kiosks for e-signature. As stressed by Mr. Rumman, we cannot remain behind but we can use innovative legal means until adequate legislation is in place.

How is SDG5 implemented in the automation of justice when the legislation reflects deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes?

When referring to SDG5 and automation, we are speaking about access to justice. Automation

must help remove barriers that stand in a woman's way to access justice. For instance, with such processes, women can access justice services in a safe and confidential manner. Women also face geographical barriers with, on average, less access to mobility. In light of this, automated processes and e-Services can provide for alternatives, by, for instance, making accessible payments online or the registration of an infant.

How to ensure that main policy makers/law professionals are aware of issues at stake? How are operational costs covered for in a sustainable manner?

Law professionals were trained on the use of IT in judicial work, as automation work rely on support from both technical and legal experts within the e-Justice committee. Operational costs are being delineated through the justice services matrix and the needs assessments that are currently conducted; needs are anticipated to be covered using state and external funding. With regard to *Mizan 2*, a budget for operational costs has already been allocated and will mainly be covered by the Government of Palestine.

Closing session & Final Recommendations

His Excellency (H.E). **Chief Justice Emad Saleem Sa'ad** expressed his gratitude to H.E. the President of the *State of Palestine* and extended his thanks to the *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, particularly to His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein and to his government for hosting this conference. H.E also extended his appreciation to all participants and delegations for sharing their rich experiences and for serving as role models for other countries in the region. H.E. particularly thanked the *Sawasya II* programme and its team for their support as well as other the other involved judicial institutions.

H.E. reasserted his will to “**unify our efforts and achieve our outcomes**” and his willingness to continue holding these conferences on a regular basis. As H.E. highlighted, there is an interest across the board in further investing in e-Justice, as the wheels of increasingly connected services are already in motion. In view of this, H.E. reaffirmed his willingness to share experiences, systems and expertise with other countries in the region and extended his greetings from the *State of Palestine* to all Arab nations.

Final recommendations on the automation of the justice sector

1. **Signing of MoUs** with a view to exchanging and enhancing cooperation among participating counties;
2. **Establishment of a working group**, at the level of the heads of delegations, to facilitate communication among participating countries;
3. **Holding of regional conferences** on case management systems in the justice sector on an annual basis, open to new participating countries;
4. **Dissemination of success stories** within the working group to support the improvement of automated processes in the justice sector (notification and e-signature could constitute a starting point);
5. **Committing to SDG 5** in developing automated judicial systems.