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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references.
Nota di contenuto	Acknowledgements -- Foreword -- Acronyms and abbreviations -- Executive summary -- Gender equality in MENA : the facts and the puzzle -- Impressive achievements in human development -- Little discrimination between girls and boys within the household -- Of the lowest rates of excess female mortality in the world -- Rapid declines in maternal mortality -- More girls in school than in much of the world -- Virtually no gender gaps in enrolment, and reverse gender gaps in university, and math performance -- MENA's performance in human development is largely explained by economic development and wealth -- Some challenges remain -- The puzzle in MENA : why do women participate in such few numbers outside the home? -- Women in the workforce -- Women in business -- Women in politics -- What explains the mena puzzle? -- Religion is too simplistic an explanation -- Oil endowments alone cannot explain the paradox either -- Social norms and the legal framework limit women's agency -- Social and cultural norms constrain women's roles outside the home -- Evolving norms and the invisible hand of marriage -- Equality under the law and its

enforcement is critical for women's agency -- Legal systems differ widely and derive from multiple sources -- Legal constraints to women's agency in MENA -- Economic incentives dampen participation in the workforce -- A social contract underpinned by a generous but costly welfare state -- Extensive public sector employment with generous compensation -- Generous subsidies encourage women to stay at home -- State regulation and intervention in the market -- Heavy investment in education, but not the kind that businesses want -- Unequal access to entrepreneurship opportunities -- The time for reform is now -- Aspirations are changing -- As education levels increase, female labor force participation will likely increase -- A demographic gift? -- The social contract is no longer sustainable -- Opening the door to women : policy directions -- A roadmap for reform -- Policies to address the region's challenges -- Closing the remaining gender gaps in human development -- Expanding economic opportunities for women -- Closing gender gaps in voice and agency -- Supporting evidence-based policy making -- References -- Technical annex -- Appendix 1.

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## Sommario/riassunto

In the last two decades, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has closed many critical gender gaps, especially in ensuring equal access for girls and boys to education and healthcare. Today, the region can be proud that its women are enrolling in far greater numbers in university than ever before, and indeed, in many countries, young women are more educated than young men. At the same time, MENA has also witnessed the largest decrease in maternal mortality in the world. These achievements are commendable, and the next step is expanding the role of MENA women in the work place and in

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