



# MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme

## Activities Report 2017

### Meeting of the MENA-OECD Steering Group

19 March 2018, Paris

OECD



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## **Introduction**

This document provides an overview of the activities implemented by the **MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme** (the Programme) in 2017. These activities reflect the vision of the MENA-OECD Ministerial Declaration, adopted in Tunis in October 2016, which set the priorities of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development (the Initiative) for its fourth mandate (2016-2020). 2017 has been a critical year for the implementation of the Tunis Declaration. All the policy networks met to translate the Declaration into specific actions and detailed objectives. New networks have been set up, and innovative conceptual tools have been elaborated to respond to the complex challenges of the MENA region.

Enhancing competitiveness is necessary to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable economic growth in MENA countries. To this end, the Programme encompasses an in depth collaboration of specific policy areas (e.g. Investment and Trade; SME's and Entrepreneurship; and Corporate Governance), with special attention to horizontal policy dimensions (e.g. Women's Economic Empowerment; Business Integrity; Economic Resilience; and Public-Private Dialogue). These policy areas contribute to a more conducive economic environment in the MENA region supporting inclusive growth, better jobs and enhanced well-being.

In 2017, the Programme mobilised a large number of stake-holders, including high-level policy makers, private sector representatives, civil society representatives and independent experts to engage in policy dialogue and peer learning exercises. The Programme promoted country specific projects, high-level bilateral exchanges, capacity building and training courses. The policy discussions both at regional and national level were supported by analytical contributions, exchange of good practices and resulted in policy recommendations which emphasize the interconnected nature of the policy dimensions towards building a competitive economy. These efforts, which apply the mandate of the Ministerial Declaration, are ought to be surveyed and adjusted by the Initiative's **Advisory Board** and its **Steering Group**. Indeed, the governance structure of the Initiative emphasises the region's ownership of the Programme and ensures the policy cohesion across the two pillars of the Initiative. The following sections provide a detailed overview of the main activities and impact of the Programme's work in 2017.

## **The Tunisian Chairmanship**

**Tunisia** took responsibility of the Competitiveness Programme's chairmanship from Morocco's after the 2016 MENA-OECD Ministerial. During the first year of their mandate, Tunisia provided strong leadership and active support to the Programme's activities. The Tunisian chairmanship changed following a cabinet reshuffle that affected the Minister of Development, Investment and International Cooperation,

replacing Mr Fadhel Abdelkefi by Mr Zied Ladhari. In January 2018, Minister Ladhari attended the meeting of the Economic and Development Review Committee on the 2018 Economic Survey of Tunisia at the OECD



in Paris. Minister Ladhari met on that occasion with OECD Secretary-General and representatives from various OECD Directorates to discuss enhanced cooperation. Tunisia also actively participated in the organisation of the 2018 Advisory Board and contributed with their advice and feedback to shape the 2018 Programme of Work for the Competitiveness Programme. On 23 January 2018, a dedicated meeting with the Tunisian co-chair, represented by Ms Kalthoum Hamzaoui, Director General for Multilateral Cooperation, addressed the priorities for the Initiative and each of the Working Groups in 2018 and how the Secretariat and Tunisia could further enhance synergies with the OECD's wider work with the MENA region.

## **High-level Policy Dialogue and Multidisciplinary Cohesion**

The Tunis Declaration calls for the Programme of the **2030 agenda** to be incorporated, and therefore pays particular attention to the interconnected nature of policies and SDG goals, as well as the need to mobilize multiple stake-holders. Sound implementation and measurable impact is another constitutive feature of the programme, which is incorporated into daily practice. This section reports on the implementation of the strategic vision of the Programme from a holistic and multidimensional perspective, linking the different policy areas, and mobilising multiple stake-holders to get results.

### **High level policy dialogue and exchange of experiences for reform: building the political agenda**

Ensuring the impact of the Programme requires a combination of **policy advocacy**: to promote economic reform leading to higher competitiveness; and **technical collaboration**: to share good practices and adopt international standards. It is important to ensure a whole-of-government vision which contributes in a strategic manner to the programmes of economic and policy reform in the different countries. The MENA



Competitiveness Programme addresses all these levels, mobilising political leaders in an intense process of exchange and dialogue with rigorous technical actions to ensure the successful implementation of reforms. A good example of this is the launch of the Women Economic Empowerment Forum in Cairo in October 2017, hosted by H.E. Dr Sahar Nasr, Egypt's Minister of Investment and International Co-operation, which gathered numerous

high-level representatives, including four MENA ministers and more than 100 practitioners, civil society representatives and private sector leaders. The OECD recommendations to remove legal barriers to women's empowerment were endorsed, and this unprecedented mobilisation of relevant stake-holders paved the way to roadmaps for reform in several countries.

2017 was a year of **intense political engagement between the OECD and the MENA region**. Through high-level bilateral exchanges, the Programme promoted its activities and identified new challenges and the emerging needs of the region directly from the experiences of key actors across the 19 countries involved in the Initiative. Over 13 ministerial encounters took place during the year, including meetings with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia on several occasions, as well as with Libya, Iraq, the Palestinian

Authority and the United Arab Emirates. The commitment of the political leaders from the MENA region together with the strong support of the OECD Secretary-General, the OECD Chief of Staff, Deputy Secretary Generals and OECD Directors resulted in a large number of high level meetings (see list of high-level encounters in annex). These exchanges put at the centre of the discussions, the economic challenges of the region, the difficulties and opportunities of reform, and the best ways for the MENA region to play in the



global arena and transform its economic potential into opportunities for its people. Some notable encounters include the meeting of the OECD Secretary-General with the **President of Egypt**, Mr Abdel Fattah El-Sissi, which focused on Egypt's renewed engagement and on the ways and means to bring Egypt closer to the Organisation's work and international standards, in particular in the areas of inclusive growth and anti-corruption. The meeting focused on several priority areas, such as gender equality, transparency and anti-corruption, fiscal reform, social protection, energy subsidies, as well as OECD's support to the economic reform agenda of Egypt and specifically to the development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone. President El-Sissi committed to further work with the OECD with the goal of

improving the quality and impact of public policies in Egypt.



**Morocco** was represented in the 2017 Ministerial Council Meeting by Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of General Affairs and Governance, Mr Lahcen Daoudi. He underlined in his discussions the positive impact of the OECD on the national reforms through its extended collaboration, including the Morocco Country Programme, the projects under the Deauville Partnership, the MENA Initiative, and the Multi-Dimensional Review. In March 2017, the

Minister of National Economy of the **Palestinian Authority**, Ms Aber Odeh, visited the OECD and met with several OECD Directorates, including the Global Relations Secretariat (GRS), Public Governance (GOV), the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF), and the Development Centre (DEV), to discuss possibilities of support entrepreneurship, infrastructure and foreign direct investment. A technical mission to Ramallah followed in September 2017, and resulted in an assessment of SMEs and entrepreneurship which will be finalised for the EU/MENA ministerial meeting (Industry) in 2018. More examples of



ambitious high-level exchanges include meetings with **Jordan** to explore ways to support shouldering the economic consequences of the Syria Crisis or the discussions with several **Gulf countries**, which in 2017 voiced an interest to work with the OECD on education reform, innovation and technology and on investment promotion.

In addition to these the OECD Chief of Staff and OECD Deputy Secretary-Generals lead several missions to the region in 2017. For example, Ms Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa, opened the MENA OECD Women Economic Empowerment Forum in Cairo in October, and Deputy Secretary-General Douglas Frantz participated in the launch of the MENA Transition Fund Project: SME Policy Effectiveness in Jordan in

Amman in April. These events attracted significant attention from the local and international media, helping to disseminate the policy message to wider audiences in the region.

## **Enhancing the role of MENA countries in OECD instruments and tools**

Through these exchanges and the celebration of the different Networks and Working Groups, the Programme surveyed and **encouraged MENA countries to participate in OECD committees and their adherence to instruments**, by sensitising policy makers, providing information, and facilitating the adhesion processes. This can be seen in 2017 in Tunisia's adherence to the Project on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting or Morocco's adherence to two instruments (on effective public investment and on responsible supply chains, also adhered to by Egypt the same year). The Programme also enhanced the inclusion of MENA countries into OECD tools, allowing for better policy orientation and benchmark of MENA economies between themselves and with OECD countries. For example, the Trade Facilitation indicators encompass most MENA countries. The TiVA (Trade in Value Added) initiative now includes Morocco and Tunisia. A questionnaire was launched to include four MENA economies into the FDI Restrictiveness Index in addition to the four countries adherent to the OECD Declaration on International Investment.

## **Policy coherence and alignment**

The Programme actively seeks the involvement of and contributions from other OECD Directorates in the implementation of its activities, as their expertise in the diverse policy-scope are needed in the region. The Programme is closely linked to several OECD committees, which guide and overview its strategic objectives and implementation (External Relations Committee, Investment Committee, Corporate Governance Committee, Working Group on Bribery, Working Party on Small and Medium Enterprises, et al.) In 2017 the Programme accelerated efforts to further **interconnect its seven policy dimensions** in support of competitiveness. In particular, the Programme emphasised the horizontality of its gender economic empowerment dimension by integrating the topic in discussions, debates and the technical presentations of all its Working Groups and Networks. Other examples include the increased collaboration between the Working Group on SMEs and the Economic Resilience Task Force alongside the session on integrity and responsible investment during the Working Group on Investment and Trade.

Furthermore, the Programme increased the **collaboration** with the second pillar of the Initiative, the Governance Programme, by holding regular meetings to plan the common programme of work, exchange concerns and ideas and to identify potential areas of future cooperation. This resulted in a higher symbiosis between the two Programmes, which for example has produced a common monitoring tool for the Initiative (see below). Enhanced collaboration was also sought in the area of women's economic and political empowerment as well as joint efforts to fight corruption.

Given its **multidisciplinary dimension**, the Programme promoted its role as **horizontal coordinator** and maintained its efforts to mobilise expertise across the OECD. A notable example is the support being offered to Egypt in the context of the project "Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone". The project was launched in January 2017 to build stronger policy frameworks for the development

of a dynamic and sustainable economic zone across the Suez Canal. In this context the OECD has conducted an initial needs assessment and an action plan which provides the Suez Canal Zone Authority (SCZA) with recommendations for improving the management of the Zone. These recommendations are related to regulatory governance, public sector integrity, investment, and connectivity. Capacity building workshops were also held in May 2017.

The Programme has also contributed to developing synergies within the Morocco Country Programme, which was signed in 2015 by the former Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, and the OECD Secretary-General. The Country Programme consists of 17 strategic projects built around three key and strategic areas for Morocco: competitiveness, public governance and social inclusion. The Programme comprises of peer reviews, capacity-building activities, inclusion in the OECD's statistical tools, participation in 9 OECD Committees and adherence to 9 OECD legal instruments. Some of those strategic projects are strongly linked with the activities of the Initiative. For example the Competitiveness Programme works to support Morocco in joining the Trade in Value Added database or strengthen Foreign Direct Investment statistics. To co-ordinate the Programme, the OECD's Global Relations Secretariat develops and oversees the strategic orientation of this relationship, in close collaboration with the Head of Government services, and ensures that the dialogue remains focused and forward-looking. A monitoring mechanism was integrated into the Country Programme to ensure policy coherence, as well as the impact of the Programme on, and its alignment with, the Moroccan Government's strategic guidelines.

## **Collaboration of international organisations and financial institutions**

At an institutional level, in an effort to enhance its contribution to the region's development needs, the Programme further ensured the **alignment of its contributions with regional and international partners**, establishing new cooperation strategies and deepening collaboration with multilateral initiatives. The Programme facilitated the conclusion by the OECD of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with key organisations in the region: The United Nations (UN Women), the Union for the Mediterranean and the Arab Monetary Fund. The enhanced collaboration with UN Women provides the OECD with strong technical support on the SDGs implementation and monitoring in the region, in particular in the field of women's economic empowerment. The Union for the Mediterranean contributes to the Programme's work with its solid presence in the region and political support, promotes the co-ownership of the OECD's work and expands its expertise in specific areas such as transport and business development across MENA countries. Enhancing the collaboration with the Arab Monetary Fund, one of the main Arab financial institutions, will work towards a higher economic integration and economic development through enhanced collaboration in statistics, financial education, business integrity and improved business climate among other areas. The MoUs align the Programme's work with the areas reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the Programme's regional scope and its technical capacities, key aspects to guarantee the achievement of its core objectives. The Programme also continued to collaborate with other International Organisations, for example the World Bank, where a joint implementation on investment promotion projects is ongoing in several countries of the region. The Programme also collaborates closely with the G7 Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition, including with the International Financial Institutions' Co-ordination Platform of the MENA Transition Fund. The co-ordination

with the Transition fund contributes to the understanding of the regional priorities and enhances the coordination and alignment with other donors who appreciate OECD contributions.

## **Emerging policy issues and new areas of interest**

Through the implementation of its activities, the Programme identified a series of **emerging issues** that were partially addressed during the year and are planned to be fully integrated in the 2018 Programme of work. The Tunis Ministerial Declaration urges the Programme to identify and adapt itself to the demands, necessities and new pressing challenges of the region. The Programme received in 2017 direct requests from participant countries on potential policy areas that required special attention. This includes strengthening the economic policies on inclusive growth with a particular focus on youth. This is aligned with the Programme's support to enhanced social dialogue through the implementation of the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board, to be launched in 2018. The Programme is also working to better address policy reform in the field of infrastructures for enhanced competitiveness. Work in this area is already ongoing under the Suez Canal project. Working on better infrastructures also opens new opportunities for intervention in the field of investment. Another relevant policy issue is linked to the region's statistical capacity and the countries coverage in international and OECD statistical databases. The Programme is studying how to improve the MENA countries' data collection process and data-comparability with the support of relevant OECD Directorates. Finally, building on the success of the OECD 2018 Economic Survey of Tunisia, the Programme will increase its efforts to perform in collaboration with other OECD Directorates country-based economic analysis and policy assessment.

## **Dissemination of results and enhanced communication**

As part of the Ministerial mandate to **enhance the Programme's visibility through improved communication**, the Programme launched an assessment of its main communication tools and channels (e.g. Programme and project branding, website, social media, and brochures/flyers) and has undertaken a process to redesign and/or upgrade them that will be completed in 2018.

The Programme has developed cross-platform **communication campaigns** for major events to increase its reach and impact with stakeholders. An extensive campaign was, for example, developed for the launch of the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum in October 2017. This included the development of a specific visual identity that was used for the cover of the publication "Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries" and for all related communication materials. A 12-page brochure was developed to promote the report's key messages and conclusions and a flyer was also created to highlight the Programme's wider work on gender. The Programme's web page on gender was fully redesigned, which resulted in three times the amount of views to this page over the ten weeks during/after the event than over the whole year of 2016. The event received coverage in over 15 Egyptian and international media outlets, both in print and online. In terms of internal OECD communication, the event was promoted on the OECD.org calendar, home page and featured on the OECD Gender Portal and intranet.

The Programme has also developed **new lightweight flyer format to** facilitate the dissemination of the main conclusions and specific work done at the annual events of its Working Groups and Networks. The Programme has developed a new flyer template on its specific projects using an upgraded visual identity for the Programme. It has also enhanced its country fiches as a tool to more easily provide information to visitors on the specifics of the OECD's partnerships with specific countries, including an overview of country's adherence to OECD instruments and committees.

In 2017, the Programme published **two major corporate brochures** updates from the OECD's "Active with" series to highlight the breadth and depth of the Organisation's partnership with Africa.

The discussion of the re-configuration of the overall **MENA website** was initiated in the last quarter of 2017. The positive outcomes of this initial restructuring have already been positive: the MENA website attracted 32% more traffic in 2017 than 2016. This work will be finalised in 2018.

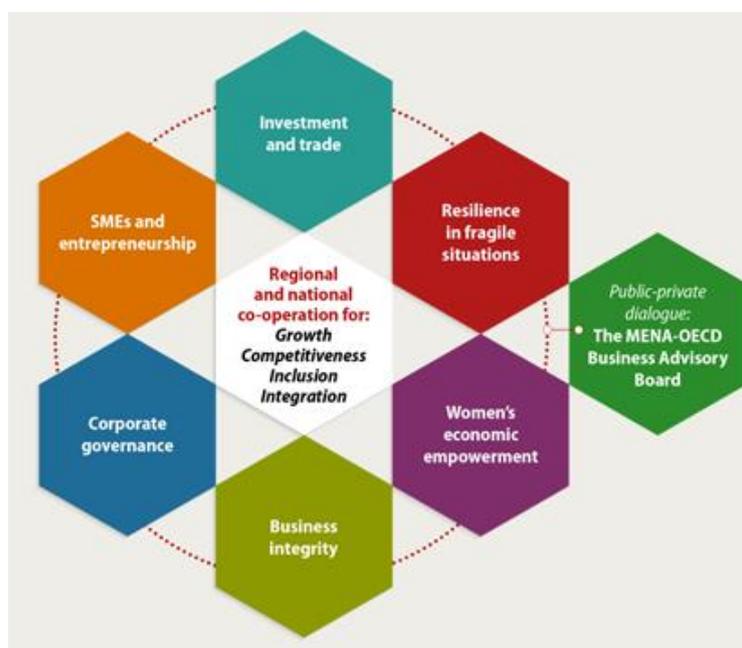
## **Improving monitoring and implementation**

2017 served also as a starting point for the Programme's **enhanced monitoring and reporting system**, to be presented at the 2018 MENA-OECD Steering Group. This enhanced monitoring system responds to the Initiative's mandate to further develop mechanisms to assess impact and measure progress in reform implementation at regional and national levels. Once approved, the new system will complement the already existing mechanisms of reporting that in 2017 included the creation of detailed activities and event calendars and summary and substantive reports of activities submitted and presented at the OECD's External Relations Committee celebrated in October 2017, as well as reports for the OECD's global strategy and specific reports addressed to the Programme's donors.

## Report of activities of the policy areas

The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme continued supporting reforms to mobilise investment, private sector development and entrepreneurship as driving forces for growth and employment in the MENA region. The Programme enhanced the work on gender by creating the Women Economic Empowerment Forum and expanded the work of the MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment to address the problematic on trade in the region, creating the MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment and Trade. A third network was created in 2017 with the launch of the Economic Resilience Task Force. To promote public-private dialogue among MENA participants, the Programme accelerated the preparations of the upcoming launch of the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board (BAB).

### **Policy areas of the MENA – OECD Competitiveness Programme**



This section reports on the main activities implemented by the Programme in 2017, including regional activities developed by the working groups and regional networks and national activities implemented under specific country projects. This section addressed 7 policy areas of work: Women's Economic Empowerment, Investment and Trade, SMEs and Entrepreneurship, Corporate Governance, Private Sector Mobilisation and Social Dialogue, Business Integrity, and Resilience in Fragile Situations.

## A. Women's economic empowerment

The Women's Economic Empowerment Forum (WEEF) was launched on 7-8 October 2017, under the aegis of H.E. Dr Sahar Nasr, Egypt's Minister of Investment and International Co-operation, and H.E. Marie-Claire Swärd Capra, Ambassador of Sweden to Algeria in the presence of Ms Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff, G20 Sherpa and Special counsellor to the Secretary-General.

More than 200 participants representing 22 countries including many delegations at Ministerial level took part in the two-day event, joined by representatives from international and regional organisations, civil society, the private sector and academia

The event opened with the release of the OECD publication 'Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries: The Impact of Legal Frameworks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia'.



The report notes that while women in the Middle East and North Africa are better educated and skilled than ever, the share of them in work is still amongst the lowest in the world. The report acknowledges that women do not share the same rights as men although there are major differences between countries. Bringing the legal frameworks, in particular family and labour laws, in line with gender goals enshrined in national constitutions should enable more women to enter employment and make MENA economies more competitive and inclusive.

WEEF Co-chairs H.E. Marie-Claire Swärd Capra and H.E. Dr Sahar Nasr and Ms Gabriela Ramos open the event

### **Key messages discussed:**

#### **Women's Economic Empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**



The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is universal and applies to all countries; all stakeholders need to be on board to achieve the SDGs. Panellists addressed the importance of working together to accelerate action. Regarding women's economic empowerment, OECD countries and the MENA region have made significant efforts in contributing to the SDGs. Yet, two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a regional

overview showing the impact of SDGs on women's economic empowerment is not available. While reporting and monitoring is done by different actors in different fora and at different levels, it is hardly possible for the wider public to gain an understanding on the region's progress.

## **Balancing Personal Responsibilities and Career Opportunities for Women and their involvement in Informality**

Persisting gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship result from the interplay of legal frameworks and social norms. Family law provisions regulate, although to various degrees depending on the country, women's obligations to care which impacts their job choices. The need, in some countries, to obtain the husband's authorisation to leave the home influences employers' preference to hire and promote men. Social norms and attitudes, informed by gender-based labour regulations including parental benefits, retirement provisions and income taxes, play an important role in labour market decisions.



There are hardly any part- or flex-time arrangements supporting both women and men to reconcile work and family life. Women's low economic participation and social expectations impact women's representation in decision-making positions and on corporate boards. Gender-disaggregated data is limited but it is admitted that women are more likely than men to work informally notably because they are hired un-officially, are predominantly in non-regulated sectors or are home-based or self-employed. This means that a large share of women have low wages, contribute little to the economy and have no access to pension systems.

### **Institutional Set-Up in Support of Gender Equality**

Institutions in different countries of the region have been reinforced significantly to deliver the gender agenda. This experience has taught us that there is a need for a comprehensive, 'whole-of-government' approach which does not only focus on the executive branch of government. Concerted policy dialogue and policy development involving the private sectors, civil society and academia, under the leadership of governments, and particularly of national gender equality institutions, is critical to realising greater women's agency and economic empowerment.



## Access to Finance and Financial Literacy for Women



Financial institutions tend to mainly focus on collateral, credit history, business experience and the business strategy of prospective borrowers - all elements which women may have more difficulties providing. To enhance women's entrepreneurship, solutions to women's demand and financial supply are required. Building women's confidence but also their capacity to access and manage financial products is crucial. Financial practices need to take full account of

women's realities and discrimination based on gender and marital status should be prohibited. Furthermore, credit registries and bureaus as well as guarantee mechanism may compensate for women's limited assets.

## Data Collection and Informed Policy Decisions

National statistics offices have made progress in collecting gender-disaggregated data, which are used by international agencies to develop internationally comparable data series and indicators. However, the overall availability of gender-disaggregated data in the MENA region is still limited and hence the difficulty to determine women's key economic characteristics. Yet, gender-disaggregated data is indispensable for governments to enact informed policies. Hence further actions are necessary for governments to produce more detailed and better data for policy making and monitoring progress, including against the SDGs.



## Working at the national level in the area of women empowerment

Key findings and policy recommendations of the OECD publication "Women's Economic Empowerment in selected MENA countries: the impact of legal frameworks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia" are being discussed during national consultations among representatives from government, business and civil society with a view to identify areas for further policy reform. The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme will be ready to following up country-specific support requests on the interrelation between legal frameworks and economic impact. This may involve deepening the analysis for countries included in the publication but also extending the analysis to other economies.

- **Jordan:** Dr Salma Nims, Secretary General, National Commission for Women (JNCW), led the meeting in Amman, 18 April 2017. About 30 representatives from the public and the private sector as well as international organisations attended. Participants noted a difficulty in making precise assessments on women's economic participation, due notably to insufficient gender data. They stressed the importance of furthering women's economic empowerment, including through regulatory reform and reported that deeply rooted social considerations had

prevented recently suggested legal amendments to go through. Participants stressed the need to raise the issue of women's economic empowerment to the highest political level in order to ensure policy maker's support.

- **Tunisia:** H.E. Neziha Labidi, Minister of Women's Affairs animated the meeting in Tunis, 21 June 2017. The multi-stakeholder audience acknowledged the quality of the assessment by the OECD and underlined the importance of the work already carried out in Tunisia. Going forward, they suggested the launch of a multi-stakeholder monitoring group which would seek to co-ordinate and to develop synergies between different policy actions with a view to engaging in real change. Future OECD support was requested.
- **Morocco:** H.E. Lahcen Daoudi, Minister of Governance and General Affairs opened the meeting in Rabat, 13 September 2017. The approximately 80 participants represented different Ministries, the private sector, academia and civil society. Participants praised the OECD for the quality and relevance of the report. A lively discussion was held about the publication's findings, recent actions taken by Morocco but also the need for further policy reforms. In particular, there is a need to better understand the interplay between the social context and the legal framework, in particular at sub-national level, highlighting differences between regions. Morocco could set up a committee to further discuss women's economic participation in society.
- **Libya:** The consultation took place in Tunis on 4 December 2017 in the context of a wider meeting on Validation of the Short Term Action Plan for SME Development in Libya. The meeting was attended by around 30 participants (of which 5 women) who represented the National Transitional Council, the private sector, and civil society. The consultation revealed that the audience was not yet familiar with the importance of gender equality and women's economic empowerment and that addressing this in the context of the wider reconstruction of the country is of the essence. There is a need for more in-depth exchanges and awareness raising on the subject matter and it is key that women will also be involved in the further follow up on the Short Term Action Plan.
- **Egypt** (Forthcoming): H.E. Dr Sahr Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Coordination, co-chair of the WEEF, will lead the meeting in Cairo, early 2018.
- **Algeria** (Forthcoming): the Algerian government has expressed interest in hosting a national consultation for which the timing has to be determined.

## **B. MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment and Trade**

The new MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment and Trade, co-chaired by Japan and Jordan, was launched on 28-29 September in Paris. Under the theme “Investment and trade policy reforms for inclusive growth in the MENA region”, the meeting gathered over 80 participants from MENA and OECD, regional and international organisations, including the European Union and the Union for the Mediterranean, and private sector and civil society representatives.



The meeting was opened by H.E. Ms. Sahar Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Co-operation, Egypt, H.E. Mr. Othmane El Ferdaous, Secretary of State in charge of Investment, Morocco, and Mr. Andreas Schaal, Director, Global Relations, OECD. The two co-

chairs of the Working Group were represented by H.E. Mr. Fareedon Hartouqa, Secretary General, Jordan Investment Commission, and Mr. Ryotaro Suzuki, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Delegation of Japan to the OECD.

The aim of the meeting was to assess the trade and investment interconnection and discuss ways to maximise benefits for MENA economies. Discussions took place within a regional setting with 14 MENA economies represented, benefitting from exchanges with 12 OECD countries. By discussing challenges and priority reforms, participants paved the way for more policy actions and capacity-building activities on trade and investment at regional and country levels.

### **Key messages discussed**

#### **Linkages between trade and investment and ways to enhance complementary effects**

To renew with economic growth in the MENA region, there is a need to pursue an interconnected approach to trade openness and facilitation while boosting investment. However, while interconnection is strengthened by the expansion of global value chains, the growing importance of services and the digitalisation of the economy, there are still a lack of understanding of trade and investment inter-dependencies, but also fragmented international and regional rules, and inconsistent national policies, as advocated by the G20 Working on Trade and Investment.<sup>1</sup>

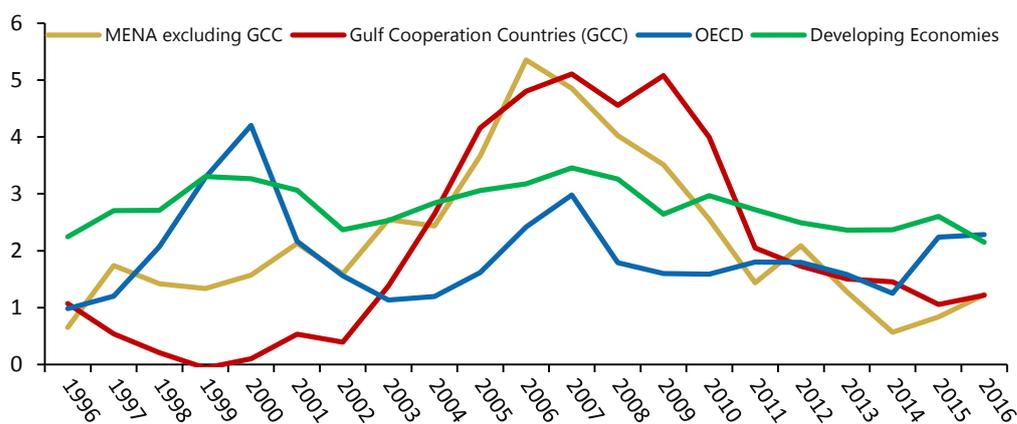
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<sup>1</sup> See the OECD draft policy paper on “Exploring the investment and trade nexus in the MENA region” prepared for the meeting.

### Latest investment trends and policy reforms undertaken by countries

To respond to the drop of FDI inflows in the region, MENA countries are engaging into significant reforms of their regulatory, institutional and administrative investment frameworks. Efforts should continue as it is recognised that investors respond positively once a critical mass of reforms have been implemented. Participants engaged in discussions on process and impact of their respective reforms and called for further exchange of experiences and lessons learnt. They also discussed restrictions to investment as reflected in the [OECD FDI Restrictiveness Index](#).

**FDI Inflows, % of GDP**

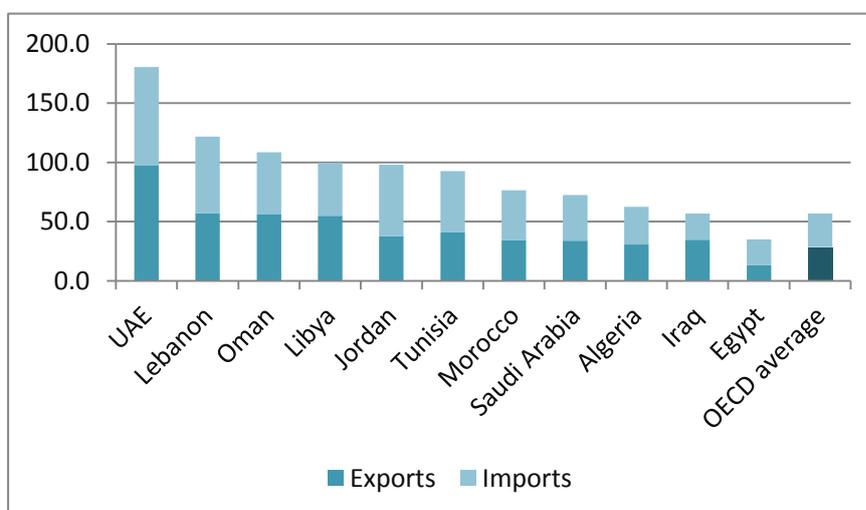


Source: UNCTAD latest data and OECD Staff calculations

### Potentialities and challenges of trade co-operation and facilitation at the intra-regional level

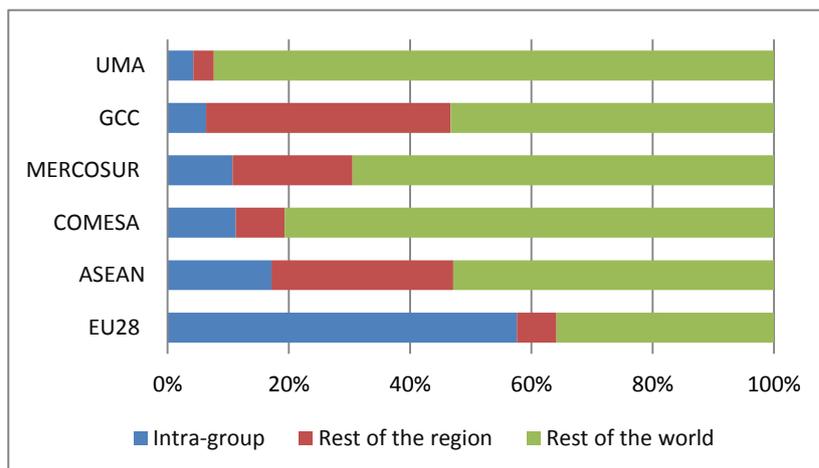
Trade specificities of the MENA region lies on the difference of trade weight across countries – mainly linked to the heavy role of hydrocarbons, the low share of service trade and the limited intra-regional trade as compared to other regions.

**Trade as a % of GDP, 2015 or latest**



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators

### Regional Trade across the World, 2015

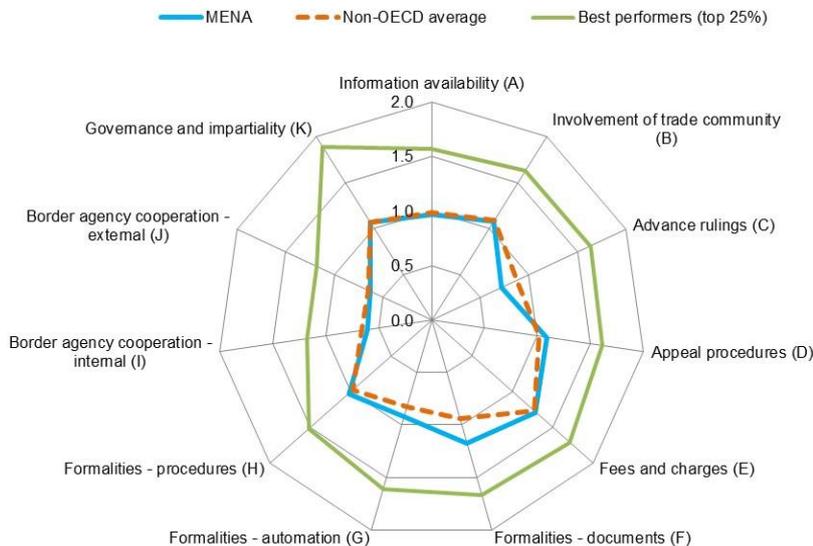


Source : UNCTAD Data Centre

More effective facilitation, integration and diversification efforts, accompanied by structural and labour market reforms, are needed to build more dynamic and inclusive economies. The OECD trade policy tools that were presented ([Trade Facilitation Indicators](#) and [Service Trade Restrictiveness Index](#)) show that MENA economies have ample room to further facilitate trade and that open services markets are a gateway to global value chains and would significantly help SMEs. Participants called for wider inclusion of their countries into these tools.

### OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators

(from 0 (worst performance) to 2 (best), 2015)



**Integration of MENA economies into global value chains:** MENA economies are unequally and insufficiently integrated into global value chains (GVCs) and suffer from incomplete trade statistics which hamper adequate policy making. Participants were introduced to the [OECD-WTO Trade in Value Added initiative](#) (TiVA) which evaluates the participation of country and firms into GVCs. They discussed what benefits integration into GVCs can bring and which policies are needed to expand their participation into GVCs.

**Promotion and measurement of quality and responsible investment:** MENA countries are increasingly concerned about attracting not just more, but also better and responsible investments for better growth and for fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Quality FDI not only depends on the type of FDI, but also on the policies, institutions and other framework conditions of the host economies and the contributions of multinational enterprises. Participants discussed how to develop FDI quality indicators and promote responsible business conduct – through the [OECD Guidelines for MNEs](#). Fighting corruption has also become a concern in the region with strong popular demands for higher transparency and integrity and the need for convergence of regulatory frameworks and businesses with internationally-recognised integrity norms, standards and best practices.

### **Take aways**

Throughout the various sessions, participants called for action and proposed to:

**Provide evidence on the trade and investment nexus in the MENA region**, based on OECD and G20 work by:

- Fostering **analysis** on trade and investment in the MENA region, identifying opportunities, challenges and barriers.
- Supporting collection and harmonisation of reliable and comparable **statistical data**.
- Focusing on **digitalisation, services and regional value chains**.
- Better analysing **balance** between national objectives and trade and investment openness.
- Discussing policy **recommendations** or guiding principles to improve trade and investment in the region.

**Support current trade and investment reforms by:**

- Sharing experiences between MENA and OECD countries, using **best practices and OECD tools**, leveraging on existing projects for better implementation.
- Measuring the **impact of reforms** with a view to better quantify the positive effects of trade and investment and the negative distributional impact at the socio-economic level, with a particular focus on territorial development, informality, job creation for youth, and women empowerment.
- Ensuring that **inclusion**, sustainable trade and investment, labour standards are duly taken into consideration and even are at the core of the reforms.
- Improving **policy coherence** between trade, investment and other policies (such as financial, environmental, social, SME, skills, innovation, sectoral, human capital policies) through better institutional coordination and governance frameworks.

**Strengthen regional trade and investment integration** while recognising the impediments inherent to the regional context, through:

- Policies fostering **diversification** of products, markets and partnerships.

- Support to **regional organisations** and initiatives, in particular the Agadir Agreement (enlargement and expansion).
- Impact analysis and implementation of **trade and investment agreements**.

**Improve the dialogue with the private sector by:**

- Exploring how the private sector can better **support governments** in facilitating economically sound, environmentally sustainable and socially just private investment that help create jobs.
- Better **connecting** business associations and private sector representatives to the policy dialogue and capacity-building activities.

**Working at the national level in the area of investment and trade**

**The MENA Transition Fund Project on Enhancing the Investment Climate in Egypt** seeks to support Egypt in implementing a comprehensive reform of the investment policy framework and streamlining regulations and procedures for potential investors, as well as build the capacities of institutions in charge of investment policy, promotion, and services. At the request of, and in collaboration with, the Egyptian Ministry of Investment, a high-level Conference on “Enhancing the Investment Climate for Competitiveness in Egypt” (with over 150 participants representing the public and private sectors), as well as a technical Workshop on “Investment dispute settlement and prevention” (with 35 representatives from the Ministries of Investment and Justice) was held in Cairo, March 2016, and marked the launch of the Project. In parallel, a report on FDI statistics in Egypt has been prepared in collaboration with the Egyptian authorities and has been presented in the Working Group on International Investment Statistics meeting (October 2017, Paris). The second investment policy review of Egypt was launched in November 2017 in Cairo at the request of the Egyptian Minister of Investment and International Co-operation. Further capacity-building activities will be conducted in 2018 (e. g. capacity building workshop on investment dispute prevention and settlement).

In **Jordan**, the Competitiveness and Investment Project, funded by the MENA Transition Fund, helped the Jordanian government in implementing policy reforms on investment, in particular the new investment law, and built capacities of institutions responsible for investment policy, promotion and services, including in a specific sector: renewable energy and energy efficiency. The last activities under this project included a three-day workshop on the Legal Framework for Investment in Jordan (May 2016), the launch of the OECD Clean Energy Investment Policy Review of Jordan in Amman in December 2016, and a two-day workshop to build capacities of Jordanian policy makers on investment dispute settlement and prevention. (Amman, December 2016). The OECD also prepared a series of analyses on the investment framework, including in 2016 a paper on Jordan’s international investment agreements and investor-State dispute settlement which identified policy options for improving the country’s policy, building on the previous analyses.

In the **framework of the EU-OECD regional Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean**, countries specific activities are conducted in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia in addition to regional dialogue to support ongoing investment reforms (e.g. new investment law recently-adopted in Egypt, institutional re-structuring affecting IPAs in Morocco). Activities in 2017

included : (i) a regional workshop on “Improving investment frameworks: A focus on regulatory reforms” (Tunis, Tunisia, 16-17 May 2017), ii) a regional workshop on “Making investment promotion work for sustainable development in the southern Mediterranean” (Paris, France, 16-17 October 2017) and (ii) a regional workshop and a national consultation for Egyptian policy-makers on “Sustainable investment and responsible business conduct in the Mediterranean” (Cairo, Egypt, 6-7 November 2017). Next activities will include a regional workshop focusing on institutional transformation of investment promotion agencies and a national consultation for the Moroccan Investment Promotion Agency (Rabat, 30-31 January 2018). All participants will also be progressively integrated into the OECD FDI Restrictiveness Index over the course of the Programme.

## C. MENA-OECD Working Group on SME & Entrepreneurship

The Working Group is a regional network of policymakers, private sector associations and other stakeholders working for a better business environment and more effective SME support measures across the MENA region. Its mission is to use international tools and good practices to strengthen policies and materialise the development potential of SMEs and entrepreneurs. The Working Group is one of the policy networks of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme and is co-chaired by Italy and Tunisia.

The ninth meeting of the Working Group was hosted by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development of Italy. The theme of the meeting was ***Boosting SMEs for Diversification and Inclusion in the MENA Region***.



This was the first meeting of the Working Group in the context of the **2016-2020 Programme of Work of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme** and following the mandate issued by the **MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference** in Tunis in October 2016. The event was attended by over 40 representatives from the public and private sector of 10 MENA economies, three OECD countries and a number of multilateral organisations, including the ILO, UN Women and the International Network of SMEs.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Massimo GAIANI (Director General for Global Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), who noted that the Working Group is an important initiative for the stability and development of the Southern Mediterranean region. He pointed out to the social and economic importance of SMEs for all countries and noted the special role that SMEs have in the Italian economy.

The Co-chairs of the Working Group, Mrs. Maria Ludovica AGRO (General Director, Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Italy) and Mr. Sadok BEJJA (General Director of SME promotion, Ministry Industry and Commerce, Tunisia) stressed the pertinence of the meeting's themes for both, OECD and MENA countries. They also highlighted the synergies that the Working Group can establish with relevant OECD bodies, for example the Investment Committee for the discussions on Responsible Business Conduct and the Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship.

The OECD Secretariat, Mr Carlos CONDE (Head of the Middle East and Africa Division) and Mrs Miriam KOREEN (Deputy Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development & Tourism) provided an update of the strategic priorities of the OECD on SME and entrepreneurship and on the overall co-operation with the Middle East and Africa. They called on the participants to continue and strengthen their engagement in the Working Group.

The meeting also benefited from the participation of the Chair of the OECD Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (WPSMEE), Mr Alejandro GONZALEZ FERNANDEZ, National Institute for Entrepreneurs, Mexico.

### **Key messages discussed**

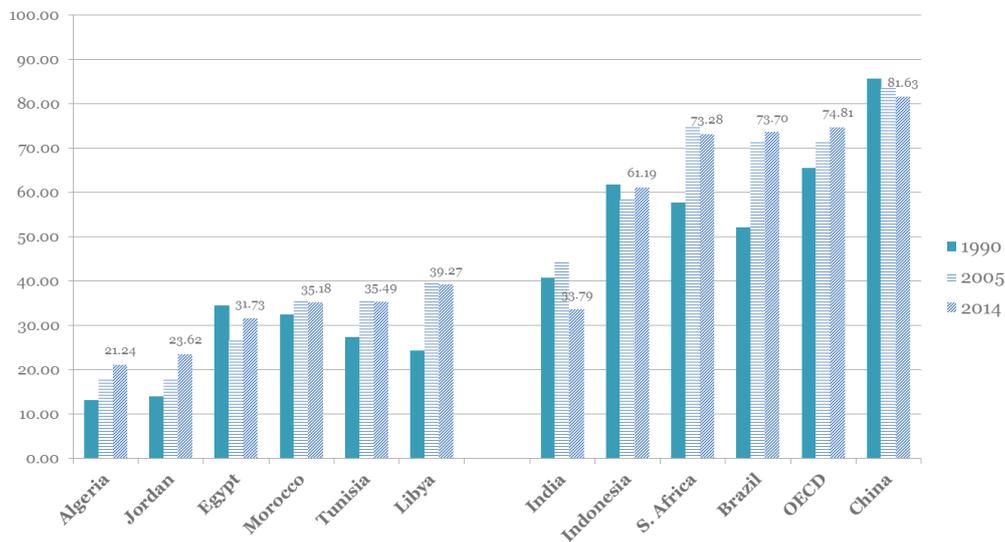
**Day 1:** The first day of the meeting focused on SME and entrepreneurship policy dimensions corresponding to the priorities of the Programme of Work of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme for 2016-2020. The second day was devoted to a discussion of the key reforms implemented by MENA economies since the publication of the ***SME Policy Index for the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa in 2014.***

### **Materialising the economic potential of women and youth through enterprise policy**

The session was framed by the OECD report on *Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries* (officially launched in Cairo in October 2017), which provides an insightful analysis of how conducive the legal frameworks of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia are towards women's economic empowerment, including through entrepreneurship.

Reforms in the context of recent constitutions provide a legal basis for greater gender equality. Nonetheless, the participation of women in the economy across the MENA region still lags significantly behind OECD and emerging countries. There is still plenty to do to foster greater economic empowerment of women. This includes addressing broad areas such as law enforcement and access to justice; but also very specific actions such as providing better transportation means so that women can safely go to work; better skills; access to finance and markets, among others.

### Ratio female to male labour force participation rate



### Improving SME policymaking through institutional coordination and public-private dialogue

The SME and entrepreneurship policy space is very complex, involving several ministries, government agencies, enterprise associations and many other stakeholders. Although the specific institutional circumstances differ from place to place, there are some experiences in MENA and OECD countries that are worth considering. The participants learned from the Italian, Palestinian and OECD experiences which pointed to the fundamental role of the private sector in the SME policymaking process.

### SMEs and entrepreneurship play a vital role for economic diversification by reducing the reliance on hydrocarbons and on the role of the state as producer, consumer and employer

The participants noted the structural nature of the reforms needed (e.g. privatisation, competition, development of financial markets, infrastructure, etc.) and listened to the transformative experiences being undertaken by Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Tunisia.

### Policies for SME participation in sustainable supply chains and responsible business conduct are important for a better insertion in the regional and global economy

The discussions were framed by the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNE Guidelines) which incorporate the expectation of supply chain due diligence by companies operating in adhering countries. The session included the presentation of the activities of the Italian and Moroccan National Contact Points for the OECD Guidelines, as well as the experience of a Tunisian company: *Groupe Christine Confection*.

**Day 2**, participants from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia provided an overview of the main reforms implemented since the publication of the SME Policy Index for the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa 2014 (Algeria and the Palestinian Authority were not present in the meeting but are also covered in the exercise). The information provided will feed into the interim assessment of the SME Policy Index / Implementation of the SBA being prepared by the OECD, the European Commission and the European Training Foundation and expected for publication by the end of the first half of 2018.

### **Working at the national level in the area of SMEs and entrepreneurship**

- In the area of SMEs, the Programme continues to help to improve Jordan's SME policy co-ordination, statistics and monitoring and evaluation through the Transition Fund project SME Policy Effectiveness in Jordan. The project supports the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO), donors, private sector associations and NGOs in improving the support to SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- As part of the implementation of this project the Programme organised a workshop in December 2016 to raise awareness among stakeholders on the project and how it helps Jordan in the implementation of its private sector development priorities, including the SME Strategy, Jordan Vision 2025 and others. Another workshop in April 2017 focused on the technical details of the project. An additional workshop is planned for November 2017 to operationalise the SME co-ordination mechanisms described in the SME Strategy.

## **D. MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance**

The MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance launched its new phase of work under the umbrella of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme, based on the mandate received from OECD and MENA Ministers in Tunis in October 2016. The aim of this first meeting was to assess the corporate governance framework of MENA countries and discuss its evolution and challenges in specific topics, finding critical areas where to implement policies that could maximise benefits for MENA economies.

The meeting attracted approximately 100 participants, including representatives from 18 countries (10 MENA and 8 OECD) as well as the World Bank Group, International Finance Corporation, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and regional organizations such as Hawkamah, the Institute for Corporate Governance and the Arab Federation of Stock Exchanges. Thirty local journalists were present. Participants included securities/bank/insurance regulators, stock exchanges, companies, institutes and associations, academia and other private sector experts.

The MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance is co-chaired by the Government of the United Arab Emirates, represented in the meeting by H.E. Obaid Al Zaabi, CEO of the Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA), and by Portugal, represented by Ms. Gabriela Figueiredo Dias, Chair of the Portuguese Securities Commission.



The event was opened by Mr. Lahcen Daoudi, Ministre Délégué auprès du Chef du Gouvernement Chargé des Affaires Générales et de la Gouvernance of Morocco. The Minister welcomed the initiative and all participants, remarking that Morocco needs to learn from best practices around the region and especially to better measure gaps in progress with other key markets. He stressed that this meeting of the MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance should be seen as an opportunity to share experiences and advance to better practices in line with international benchmarks. The Minister emphasised that the meeting should not be seen as a mere discussion about policies, but also as a way to advance in creating a change in the culture of implementing corporate governance practices and consolidating a sound corporate governance ecosystem.

### **Key messages discussed**

#### **The business case for corporate governance and the evolution of the concept in the MENA region**



The session opened with an OECD statement that corporate governance is not an end in itself, but a means to support some of the most important drivers of economic growth: efficient capital markets, investment and the dynamics of the business sector.

Experience was shared by the authorities from Portugal and Morocco. Representatives from the private sector and academia agreed that corporate governance standards should not be seen as a burden. However, companies are still not reaching international standards and the business environment remains a challenge, particularly due to the concentrated ownership structure of the region.

The Moroccan panellist highlighted that this event is a strong signal that Morocco cares about the topics and is committed to improve standards of transparency to boost competitiveness of the country and the region.

### **Recent corporate governance developments in Morocco**

This discussion reviewed the reform process that started 10 years ago, which resulted in a corporate governance code and its successive annexes. The Moroccan authorities evaluated their experience over the past decade, recognising that while there has been progress, there is still much to be done, especially in terms of implementation and enforcement. The code application had not been easy, because companies then to engage in a check-the-box exercise rather than truly improving corporate governance practices.



In preparing for this event, all the relevant Moroccan institutions met to coordinate and discuss their reform priorities, which was most useful. A key outcome is that they've agreed on the necessity to start revising the corporate governance code and its annexes, which should now be adapted to the revised G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance and OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State Owned Enterprises.

### **MENA equity markets and access to finance for growth companies**



This session featured a comprehensive presentation of the current status of the MENA capital equity markets highlighting that access to finance is a constraint for growth companies and that the market capitalisation of the region has not fully reached its potential.

As the main take-away, the panel agreed that growth companies are important to improving the competitiveness of the region and that much needs to be done to improve access to finance that allows the private sector to reach its full potential. It was agreed that countries' efforts are necessary, but also that there is a need for a regional approach in trying to improve access to finance for growth firms. It was also agreed that is very important to undertake further analysis on the ownership structures predominant in the region, to better align incentives and open the way for growth companies to raise capital through capital markets. Finally, participants also agreed that the region needs to develop more technology and work towards better ways to achieve liquidity in order to attract capital.

## Transparency and disclosure

Panellists discussed the importance of transparency and disclosure for listed companies in the region. The session started with a presentation of how disclosure practices have developed in the MENA and why the topic is so important from a capital market perspective. It was agreed that disclosure is a key to improve the business environment and attract capital to boost economic growth in the region, but that much needs to be done. International investors are discontent with disclosure practices. Saudi Arabia presented practices in the Saudi market, which aims to promote transparency and disclosure as one of the keystones their "Vision 2030" – to become The Leading Market in the Middle East and One of Top Ten Markets in the World. Egypt also presented their disclosure and transparency practices, focused on improving standards as a lesson from past mistakes. It was agreed that the region needs to advance in improving disclosure practices, but also needs to advance in the quality of the information that is being disseminated to the market. "We don't only need more information, but better quality information" is the final take-away, in the sense that information needs to be reliable and permit investors to evaluate opportunities, which will increase market liquidity and help the private sector to reach its full capacity.



## Improving gender balance in corporate leadership and enhancing board diversity



Panellists discussed ways to improve gender balance in corporate leadership and enhance board diversity. This session was especially productive, including examples from Norway and France as well as Jordan and Morocco, both from a company point of view (LafargeMaroc) and from a women's forum perspective (Club des Femmes Administrateurs, Morocco). The main take-away is that MENA countries need to be more active, providing

transparency on board composition and board nomination practices to promote gender balance in the corporate sector and especially in corporate leadership. It was agreed that there are several factors that have become a barrier for women in the region, particularly laws (family law and labour law) and social attitudes towards women's leadership roles. There was also consensus on the necessity of creating more networks for women that can be used as a platform to share experiences, to find mentorships and sponsorships opportunities and to find role-models that do not abound in the region. Also, male champions can play a critical role in making change happen.

## Improving corporate governance of state-owned enterprises

This topic is of utmost importance since SOEs are central for MENA economies as they operate in the most important and strategic sectors. A presentation of the SOE landscape in the region showed preliminary findings based on a questionnaire sent to MENA jurisdictions to map the institutional arrangements for state ownership, to gather quantitative information on national SOE portfolios and to collect information on recent and ongoing state ownership reforms in the MENA region. The main take-away was that there is very limited consolidated information available and much more information is needed to map the SOE situation in the MENA region. This is critical to inform better policies and develop a sound corporate governance framework for SOEs. This topic is relevant to several countries, which are interested in developing SOE corporate governance codes.



## The role of board directors in improving corporate governance



It was agreed that directors play a key role in driving corporate strategy and overseeing management, but more needs to be done. The role of directors in the region is influenced by the family controlled ownership structure, where roles are confused and the board might be just a check-the-box exercise. There was a general call for a change in the corporate governance culture in the region. Families need to understand that

a sound corporate governance framework is necessary, one that respects the different roles in the company, that uses the potential of independent directors and that respects minority shareholder's rights. This change of mentality does not only impact one specific company, but also the overall business environment of the country and the region. It was also highlighted that more disclosure and transparency is necessary.

## Concluding remarks



In the concluding session, it was agreed that the MENA-OECD Working Group is an excellent opportunity to advance corporate governance as a central issue to boost competitiveness of the MENA region. The Working Group is a platform to exchange experience based on international

standards and is an opportunity for countries to work together, exchange good practices and learn from each other.

It was also highlighted that in order to have a fruitful programme, the OECD needs to actively engage with key actors in the region also in between the events through a coalition of highlight motivated regional actors.

Beyond the need to develop further analysis and gather more data, there is a thirst for helping make change happen. In terms of introducing new policies, first it is necessary to reach an understanding of the international benchmarks and then raise the national standards accordingly, but taking into consideration the reality of each MENA jurisdiction and the region as a whole. Finally, it was agreed that creating a culture of good corporate governance and a corporate governance ecosystem to align incentives that support structural and legal reforms is key.

## E. Private Sector Mobilisation and Social Dialogue



Reform initiatives, in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond, often get bogged down because of a lack of institutionalised inter-ministerial coordination, open public-private dialogue, and efficient project management. To address this “implementation challenge”, public-private dialogue is increasingly used as a means to re-build trust between economic actors, and a catalyst for successful economic reforms.

This is particularly true in the Middle East and North Africa, where the effects of political and economic volatility have threatened the very foundations of social consensus. Partnering with the private sector in a structured, systematic and transparent way is key to support reform efforts aimed at improving the business environment and fostering job creation through private sector-led growth and development.

Yet creating effective “reform coalitions” requires building the right institutional frameworks in which the private sector and civil society effectively have a voice in policy-making, leading to mutual understanding, better ground-level insights and policy outcomes.

### **Launching the Business Advisory Board**

To address this issue, the Programme started in 2017 the works to create a regional platform for public-private dialogue, as endorsed by MENA and OECD ministers at the Tunis Ministerial, and to be implemented during the Programme’s mandate for the period 2016-2020. The configuration of the Business Advisory Board (BAB) and the scope of its activities were built on a process of consultation with key stakeholders.

#### **Key milestones for the BAB 2017-2019**



This new platform, composed of leading business organisations from across OECD and MENA participants, will serve a double goal:

1. Inform the policy dialogue and exchange of best practices conducted within the MENA-OECD Programme’s working groups and policy networks. It will do so by formulating high-level advice from leading business and industry, through position papers or “joint statements” on policy areas and reform priorities in MENA economies.

2. Strengthen public-private dialogue mechanisms in the MENA region. This objective will be pursued by taking stock of the status and progress of private sector representation and participation in policy-making in MENA countries and territories, as well as organising regional events and training activities to work directly with key private sector organisations.

### **Key Activities in 2017 on the preparation of the launch**

An informal preparatory meeting took place back-to-back to the Working Group on Investment and Trade (Paris, September 2017) to discuss the creation of the BAB with key stakeholders. The meeting gathered representatives from the CGEM (Morocco), IACE (Tunisia), the Federation of Palestinian Industries (Palestinian Authority), BusinessMed and BIAC, with a video message from the Spanish Confederation of Industries (CEOE). Discussions focused on how to configure the BAB in order to ensure its added value, given that other mechanisms exist to support public-private dialogue in MENA countries and territories, and participants agreed that there is need for a regional platform.



A mapping exercise on business associations and trade unions by country has been developed looking to ensure diverse representation in the Board and to include organisations that bring together larger and smaller businesses, representing different sectors, from larger, formal and well-structured entities to smaller business clubs, including youth and women business associations.

Following the conclusion of the mapping, the Programme has started a new round of consultations with private sector associations and experts in the field in order to prepare a scoping note that will address:

- Assess the current status of business associations and representation and dialogue mechanisms and compare models across the region.
- Discuss priority areas affecting private sector development and social inclusion in the MENA region and advance a structured, coherent reform agenda, in relation to the Programme's regional working groups.
- Identify good practices and successful examples of public-private dialogue from other regions.

The launch of the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board is expected to take place by Mid-2018.

## F. MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network: Raising the bar on integrity

Corruption is one of the main obstacles to sustainable economic, political and social development worldwide. It acts as impediment to growth and entails a misallocation of resources, while distorting decision-making and preventing the emergence of an open playing field for all competitors. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), corruption is perceived as one of the key obstacle to economic growth (World Bank, EBRD, 2017).

On 29 March 2017, the MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network (MOBIN) brought together over 100 stakeholders from MENA and OECD economies to discuss the role of Business Associations and the Fight against Corruption in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Stakeholders identified integrity as an important determinant of a resilient public sector and precondition for a competitive economy. They identified a number of good practices and tools to level the playing field, including collective actions. Also, fostering effective and transparent public-private dialogue is key to improve the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies. In particular, it appears crucial to build institutional frameworks in which the public sector can meet the private sector and other stakeholders. They also emphasised that creating a culture of integrity can take a long time, and needs financial resources, training, and awareness.

### **Key messages discussed**

#### **The role of business associations in combating corruption**



Building on a presentation on the French experience on dialogue and consultation mechanisms between the French public and private sectors to elaborate the new [Sapin II Law](#), business representatives focused on initiatives that have the potential to gradually transform the regional business environment, including collective action.

The [Integrity Network](#), was established by the Egyptian Junior Business Association (EJB) in cooperation with the UN Global Compact. Since 2014 it supports integrity by SMEs through raising awareness of the benefits of fighting corruption, developing ethics codes of conduct, building the business case for integrity and developing employees' skills.

In Lebanon expectations are high that the fight against corruption will gain traction in the future with the recent creation of a new Ministry of Anti-corruption Affairs (February 2017). In this context, business associations could offer a powerful platform for companies to collectively engage and lead the successful application of integrity and anti-corruption standards within the private sector.

The Palestinian Federation of Industries encourages collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as civil society through the organisation of an annual conference, which discusses anti-corruption measures, and offers a platform for mutual assistance and awareness-raising.

In Tunisia, the Confederation of Tunisian Citizen Enterprises (CONNECT) has engaged in moving beyond legal compliance and committed to ethical behaviour and social responsibility by adopting a "[Charter of the corporate citizen](#)", in which good corporate governance, including integrity, is of the four pillars.

In Iraq, the Baghdad Economic Forum has set up a mixed oversight body and a non-governmental advisory council, which brings together private sector and civil society associations and advises the Iraqi government on anti-corruption and transparency measures.

In Morocco, the [Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises \(CGEM\)](#) lobbies for more government attention to integrity. The CGEM has received an official mandate in the development and deployment of the [National strategy for the prevention and fight against corruption 2015-2025](#). The five pillars of the National strategy are based on good governance, prevention, and enforcement, as well as awareness-raising and education.

### **Promoting integrity – Government strategies to engage the private sector**

Companies complying with the OECD Anti-bribery Convention tend to be more cautious and risk-averse than others, and are less likely to invest in countries with high perceived levels of corruption. Strengthening integrity and reducing corruption hence become a necessity for governments facing the need to attract more foreign direct investment.

Participants noted that many countries of the region host a type of corruption which is closely linked to social norms and wide acceptance as well as an insufficient political determination or institutional independence.



Iraq's anti-corruption strategy aims, since 2010, at improving the business climate and at supporting economic development. Iraq's Integrity Commission experience shows that fighting corruption needs a strong legal framework but also a strong political will. The justice system needs to be characterised by professionalism and courage, the number of dispersed entities responsible for public bids should be reduced to minimise opportunities for corruption, and advanced payments to contractors should be avoided in order to change incentive structures in public contracts.

In Jordan, the Royal Committee for Integrity has been created in 2016 and is currently engaged in a wide consultation process with private actors and civil society to build a national consensus around a National Charter for Strengthening Integrity, which will serve as a road map for reforms.

Tunisia's "[Investor Support Cells](#)" (Unité Centrale d'Encadrement des Investisseurs) represented in different ministries have helped solving and facilitating more than 500 issues between investors and the public sector since their creation in 2014. This model suggests that in addition to enforcing anti-corruption measures it is important to reduce complex institutional procedures and support the private sector in adopting responsible business practices; it builds on the public –private dialogue which becomes effective in Tunisia.

To implement the OECD Anti-bribery Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption, countries should tailor tools to their legal and social environment, in particular public-private dialogue. This involves collecting information, identifying suitable partners, choosing a mode of cooperation (centralised or decentralised, spelt out in a strategy or a law, etc.), and prioritising the most vulnerable sectors. Dissemination, training and raising awareness can increase public acceptance of integrity measures. The OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises and the OECD Good Practice Guidance on Internal Controls, Ethics and Compliance provide integrity frameworks.

Some noted that more efforts are needed to cooperate with the banking sector and with OECD countries regarding financial transparency and tracking of diverted funds. In addition, OECD governments and multinationals could enhance corporate integrity of economic activities abroad.

### **Raising the Bar on Integrity - Opportunities for Public-Private Dialogue**

The joint session with the MENA-OECD Working Group on Civil Service and Public Integrity informed about the vital importance of open communication, transparency and collaboration within government, as well as between the public and private sectors.

In Morocco, the fight against corruption was included into the 2011 Constitution followed by the adoption in 2015 of the national anti-corruption strategy which build on consultations with the private sector. The Central Authority for Corruption Prevention (ICPC) has designed frameworks and maintains contracts with ministries and private sector entities, such as the Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM).

In Tunisia, the IACE, in collaboration with the government and the country's main labour organization UTICA, has initiated the "[National Business Agenda](#)" as public-private partnership forum. This particular dialogue has been set to identify areas for business climate improvement in Tunisia. This Forum follows a bottom up approach which allows all stakeholders to work on improving integrity and transparency as well as business climate. This initiative includes developing a hotline for enterprises "SOS IJRAAT" in order to fight administrative burdens and eventual bribes demand. Strong and dissuasive enforcement encourages companies to adopt strong compliance procedures. Legal incentives can help companies implement integrity measures.

The public and the private sector could learn from each other. For instance, a pilot project on performance governance score cards in the Philippines was inspired by the key performance indicators used in company management.

Finally, it appears as crucial to transform the prevailing image of the private sector as the main perpetrator of economic crimes. Legislation mainly criminalises the supply side of corruption, whereas the demand side of corruption, in the form of solicitations, often harms companies, especially SMEs in a more vulnerable financial situation. In this context, a **smart mix of sanctions, collaboration, and incentives** can encourage the private sector to adopt compliance mechanisms and supports the emergence of a level playing field for all competitors.

## **Take-aways**

### **Business associations in combating corruption**

- Simplify complex legislation and support the private sector in order to facilitate the adoption of anti-corruption measures at the company level;
- Establish public-private dialogue, building on adequate financial resources, in support of a concrete action plan adapting international toolkits to local business activities;
- Identify incentives for the private sector establish regular meetings, outreach and awareness to encourage companies to interact and adopt anti-bribery programmes;
- Engage and sustain a cultural change and raise awareness on integrity in the wider society;
- Stimulate cross-fertilisation through regional and international networks

### **For governments to engage with the private sector**

- Make anti-corruption a national priority by displaying a strong political will and amplified government engagement;
- Advance professionalism and focus especially on implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, including sound implementation strategies;
- Build trust between all players, including multinational enterprises, SMEs, civil society and the government, founded on a constructive public-private dialogue;
- Increase attention to problems and needs of private companies and provide efficient government services for investors and private companies to reduce risks of corruption.

## **Working at the national level in the area of business integrity**

Morocco has adopted a National Anti-corruption Strategy 2015-2025. Building on OECD consultations, the Strategy explicitly refers to the project "Enhancing Business Integrity in Morocco". The strategy was publically launched in May 2016 and throughout the reporting period the Competitiveness Programme engaged with both public officials but also private sector stakeholder in view of furthering the understanding of the need to engage the public and the private sector in the development and implementation of preventive integrity tools. During a mission organised to Morocco in November 2016, discussions were held with representatives and government experts of the Ministry of Equipment, Transport and Logistics, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Health to assess preventive integrity actions adopted for engaging with businesses. The findings of these exchanges will be reflected in a forthcoming publication

## G. The Economic Resilience Task Force: Promoting resilience in fragile situations

The MENA-OECD Economic Resilience Task Force was launched on July 28, 2017, in Beirut. The event was co-organised by the OECD and the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Lebanon, co-chair of the task force, with the participation of the other two co-chairs: Germany and the Islamic Development Bank. The launch was attended by over 60 participants including public and private sector representatives from Egypt, Germany, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Norway, the Palestinian Authority, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. International organisations present included the Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), the EU, ILO, the Islamic Development Bank, and UNESCWA.

The creation of the Economic Resilience Task Force was endorsed by MENA and OECD ministers at the [Ministerial Conference held in Tunis in October 2016](#), and falls under the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme's mandate for the period 2016-2020. The configuration of the task force and the scope of its activities build on a process of consultation with key stakeholders. The high level of participation at the launch confirmed the interest of governments and international partners to work together on policies that can contribute to private sector development in contexts of fragility.

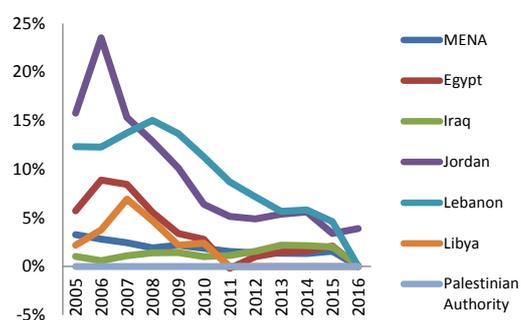


### Key messages discussed

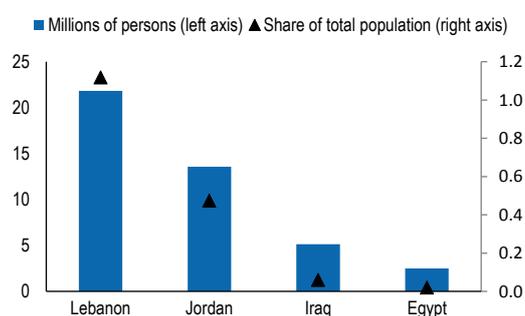
#### **Building resilient economies will require linking short term responses with structural reforms.**

Participants agreed that economic challenges in MENA countries affected by conflict and fragility are due both to ongoing political instability and insecurity, as well as to pre-existing structural economic challenges. Unequal distribution of wealth, high population growth, skills mismatch, and high unemployment, are some of these structural factors. An under-developed private sector, coupled with a dominating public sector that is unable to generate the necessary jobs and growth remains a critical issue in the region. It is therefore necessary to combine support to address immediate needs with reforms for long term development.

FDI trends (% GDP)



Stock of Syrian refugees, May 2016



**Attracting sustainable investment is essential to create economic opportunities but requires tailored policies.** FDI to Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and the Palestinian Authority is heavily concentrated in sectors that contribute less to long-term economic development and on few countries of origin. There are some exceptions: Jordan has managed to develop a strong renewables sector, Egypt's green field investments are more diversified, and both countries have recently established PPP frameworks. Governments can attract FDI by guaranteeing sound legal and institutional frameworks, developing tailored investment policies, and using risk mitigation mechanisms.

**SMEs can drive job creation, but they face bureaucratic administrations and many pre-existing obstacles.** Many reforms are needed, including the development of coherent national SME policies, administrative streamlining, increased access to finance, measures for formalisation, better data sharing for job matching among others. Putting women at the centre of the agenda remains critical, particularly when such large numbers of refugees are women and when the obstacles they face for economic livelihoods are so dire. Bringing more women into the public and private sector remains a general objective for societies and governments, while more specific measures tailored to female refugees are needed.

**The political economy of reforms is highly complex and requires strong commitment from governments.** Host governments raised questions as to whether they can provide refugees access to their labour markets, health care or housing when their nationals struggle. However, it is important to fight misconceptions with facts, and to move towards a narrative of opportunities. The Jordan Compact is a clear example in this regard, which seeks a paradigm shift trying to make an opportunity out of the crisis.

**Developing a resilience framework can support successful implementation.** Coordination mechanisms are essential to break the silos mentality and avoid duplication, but they need to be agile and action oriented. The OECD has developed a [Resilience Systems Analysis](#) to enable stakeholders develop a shared vision of what needs to be done. Public policies for reform need to involve all stakeholders at different levels: national, local, and individual. This includes not only governments and international organisations, but also business associations and civil society.

### **Working at the national level in the area of economic resilience**

In Libya, the OECD launched the second phase of the MENA Transition Fund project for Libya on SMEs (Tunis, December 2016). The report SMEs in Libya's reconstruction was launched during the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in Tunis, providing a comprehensive overview of private sector development and the existing ecosystem for SMEs in Libya. The Project's Steering Committee was convened to take the views from other organisations in order to restart activities in a context of uncertainty. A Short-Term Action Plan for SME policies was developed in collaboration with the main local counterpart, Libya Enterprise, and it was adopted in December 2017. The Project is also supporting Libya Enterprise in the elaboration of a draft SME Law.

## **ANNEX I: List of high-level events in 2017**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT TITLE</b>
15 December	Visit of the Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform of <b>Egypt</b> , H.E. Dr Hala El Saeed. Meetings with STD, GOV, GRS, SHPA, DAF/ACD.
13 December	Visit of the Minister of Investment and International Cooperation of <b>Egypt</b> , Dr Sahar Nasr. Meetings with DAF and GRS
3-5 November	Participation of DSG Kiviniemi to the World Policy Conference, Marrakech, <b>Morocco</b>
3 November	Visit of the Minister of Basic Education of <b>Libya</b> . Meeting with EDU and STI.
25 October	Visit of the President of <b>Egypt</b> , Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sissi. Meeting with the SG.
7 October	Visit of the Chief of Staff Gabriela Ramos to Cairo, <b>Egypt</b> , to launch the MENA-OECD Women Economic Empowerment Forum.
3-5 October	Visit of DSG Mari Kiviniemi to Rabat, <b>Morocco</b> to participate in the MENA Transition Fund Project “Youth Engagement in Public Life”.
28 September	Visit of Minister of Investment and International Cooperation of <b>Egypt</b> , Dr Sahar Nasr. Meetings with SG, GRS, GOV, SHP.
19 September	Visit of DSG Mari Kiviniemi to Dubai, <b>United Arab Emirates</b> . Meetings with the UAE Gender Balance Council.
7 September	Visit of the Ambassador of <b>Qatar</b> , Dr. Khalid Bin Rashid Al-Mansoori. Meetings with GRS.
26 July	Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of <b>Egypt</b> , Mr Sameh Choukry. Meeting with the SG.
28 June	Visit of the Minister delegated to the Head of Government of <b>Morocco</b> responsible for the reform of the Administration and the Civil Service, Mr. Mohamed Ben Abdelkader. Meeting with the SG.
19 June	Visit of an OECD Delegation led by GRS to <b>Egypt</b> and Meeting with Admiral Mohab Mamish, Chairman of the General Authority for the Suez Canal Economic Zone.
12 May	Visit of the Minister Delegate to the Head of Government of <b>Morocco</b> in charge of General Affairs and Governance, Mr Lahcen Daoudi. Meeting with the SG.
10 May	Visit of the Minister for Cabinet Affairs and the Future of the <b>United Arab Emirates</b> , Mr Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Gergawi. Meeting with the SG.
5 May	Visit of the Ambassador of <b>Kuwait</b> to France, Mr Sami Mohammad Alsulaiman. Meeting with DSG Kiviniemi and signature of the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters.
19-20 April	Visit of DSG Douglas Frantz to Amman, <b>Jordan</b> to participate in the launch of the MENA Transition Fund Project: SME Policy Effectiveness in Jordan.
28 March	Visit of Minister of National Economy of the <b>Palestinian Authority</b> , Ms. Abeer Odeh. Meetings with GRS Director Schaal, GOV, DAF and DEV.
8 March	Visit of the Ambassador of <b>Tunisia</b> to France, Mr. Abdelaziz Rassaa. Meeting with the SG.
28 February – 1 March	Visit of DSG Mari Kiviniemi to Amman, <b>Jordan</b> to present the OECD’s Strategic Assessment ‘Turning Jordan’s new Legal Framework for Decentralisation into Practice’ and the OECD project ‘Youth in Public Life’.
20 February	Visit of the Minister of Trade and Industry of <b>Egypt</b> , Mr Tarek Kabil. Meeting with the SG.

DATE	EVENT TITLE
17 February	Visit of the Ambassador of <b>Iraq</b> to France, Mr. Ismieal Shafiq Muhsin. Meeting with SG.
13-14 February	Visit of the high-level Delegation of the Anti-Corruption Agency of <b>Egypt</b> led by Major General Amr Adel Ali Hosni Ibrahim. Meetings with GOV and GRS.
25 January	Visit of the Minister of Finance of Tunisia, Ms Lamia Zribi. Meeting with the SG, GOV and GRS. In addition a “Friends of MENA” was organised, where Ms Zribi gave a keynote speech about the economic transition of Tunisia and the challenges the country is facing. The Meeting was chaired by the SPA and TUR Ambassadors as co-chairs of the OECD-MENA Initiative and included also a presentation by ECO Director Mr Alvaro Pereira.
24 January	Meeting between DSG Douglas Frantz the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan, Mr Imad N. Fakhoury, in Helsinki in the margins of the launch of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan 2017 (HRP) and the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 (3RP).
23 January	Visit of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply of <b>Jordan</b> , Mr. Yarub Qudah. Meeting with GRS Director.
23 January	Visit of the Minister of Higher Education of the <b>United Arab Emirates</b> , Dr Ahmad Belhoul Al-Falasi. Meeting with the SG.

## **ANNEX II: Main activities of 2017**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>EVENT TITLE</b>
3-5 January	Kuwait	OECD-IMF Training Course on "Strengthening Integrity and Anti-Corruption Capacities"
18 January	Milan	3 <sup>rd</sup> International Conference for a Euro-Med Community of International Arbitration, co-organised by UNCITRAL, OECD and ISPRAMED
18-19 January	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> . Preparatory mission
24 January	Helsinki	Contribution to the Conference on the Launch of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan 2017 (HRP) and the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 (3RP)
25 January	Paris	Friends of MENA: Special session with H.E. Mme Lamia ZRIBI, Minister of Finances of Tunisia
31 Jan. – 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb.	Tunis	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: scoping mission
31 Jan. – 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb.	Tunis	MENA Transition Fund project for Libya on SMEs: Participation in access to finance workshop organised by Expertise France
13-16 February	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> . Kick-off workshop and technical consultations
13-16 February	Cairo	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: scoping mission
13-16 February	Cairo	MENA Transition Fund project for Egypt on Investment: launch of the Investment Policy Review process and 2017 planning (TBC)
13-14 February	Paris	Workshop for Egyptian government officials on anti-corruption measures
24 February	Barcelona	Contribution to the International Conference on "The Mediterranean economies in a changing world. Lessons learned in economic and financial instability: what scenarios can we envisage?" organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean and Banco de España
27-28 February	London	2 <sup>nd</sup> MENA Financial Markets Investment Forum (Frontier Exchange): Presentation on "Making good corporate governance happen – international standards"
02 March	Rabat	Country-Programme Morocco: Coordination Committee
02 March	Brussels	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: Discussion on the inception report and joint meeting with DG Trade, Grow and ANIMA
03 March	Rabat	Country-Programme Morocco: Meeting with the Ambassadors of OECD member countries
6-10 March	Paris	Participation of MENA countries in the OECD Investment Committee, including:

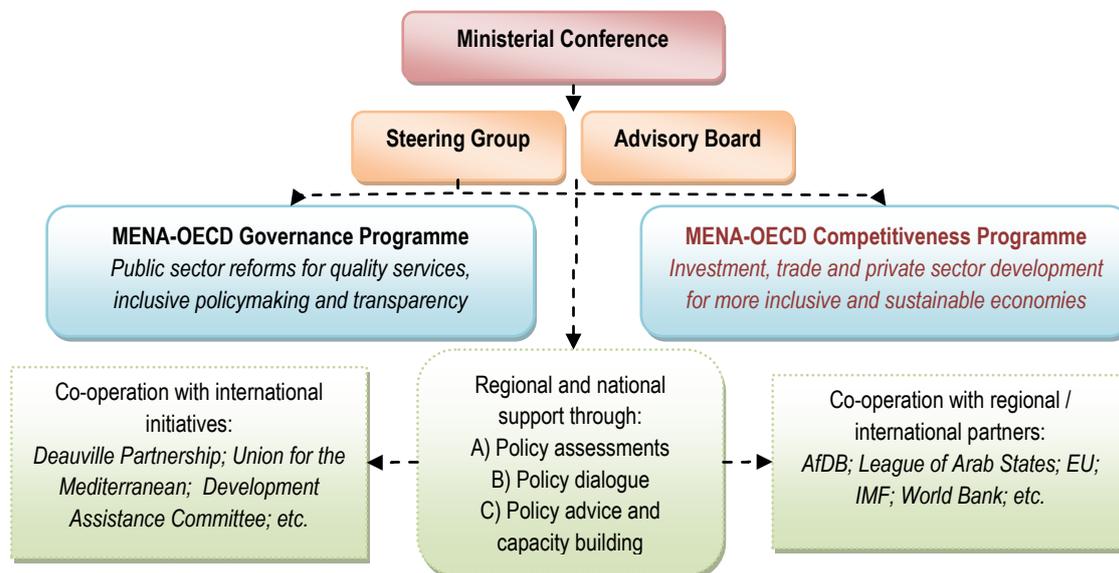
DATE	VENUE	EVENT TITLE
		- Global Forum on International Investment (GFII 2017) on "Fixing globalisation to save globalisation: Towards a society-centred investment policy agenda" (6 March) - Conference on International Investment agreements (7 March)
07 March	Paris	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: First Advisory Group meeting and validation of the inception report
07 March	Paris	Joint event on "Building economic resilience in MENA: Addressing displacement with job-creation policies" with DCD
08 March	Brussels	Participation in the Working Party on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Co-operation
8-9 March	Abu Dhabi	Contribution to the High-level Arab Regulators Conference: "Enhancing Corporate Governance in the Arab Region" organised by the Arab Monetary Fund in collaboration with the Union of Arab Securities Authorities, IFC and the GCC Board Directors Institute
15-17 March	Manchester	Security training
16 March	Rabat	Participation to the meeting of the Integrity Commission for the Anti-Corruption Strategy of Morocco
20 March	Dead Sea, Jordan	Contribution to the 23 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Economic Research Forum on "Regional Economic Cooperation, Peace and Development: Issues, Experiences and Lessons for MENA". Intervention on "Regional Cooperation in MENA: A Story of High Hopes, Stagnation and Setback"
27 March	Bern	Participation in the Arab-DAC Donor meeting
29 March	Paris	MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network: "Business associations and the fight against corruption in MENA"
30 March	Paris	Deauville Partnership Senior Officials' Meeting: presentation of the OECD work on country-level implementation of the Compact for Economic Governance in Egypt and Tunisia and strategic document on human capital development
5-7 April	Tunis	Contribution to the Tunisia Economic Forum
9-12 April	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> : Fact-finding mission and stakeholder consultations
10-13 April	Kuwait City	Training course: Improving Competitiveness in MENA Countries
18 April	Amman	Women's Economic Empowerment: Consultations on the impact of the legal framework of Jordan
19-20 April	Amman	MENA Transition Fund project SME Policy Effectiveness in Jordan: technical workshop and high-level session
25-26 April	Casablanca and Rabat	Business integrity in Morocco: Trainings on "collective actions" with private representatives from three sectors organised with CGEM, and consultations with government representatives
24-26 April	South Africa	Policy Mission for 2017 Economic Survey

DATE	VENUE	EVENT TITLE
3-4 May	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> . Workshop 1 on " <i>Getting infrastructure right in the SCZone: Infrastructure governance and financing</i> "
7-8 May	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> . Workshop 2 on " <i>Connectivity and maritime clusters</i> "
9-10 May	Tunis	MENA Transition Fund project for Libya on SMEs: Validation workshop for Short-Term Action Plan
13-16 May	Jeddah	Participation to the Islamic Development Bank 42 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting
16-17 May	Tunis	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: Regional workshop on "Improving investment frameworks: A focus on regulatory reforms"
21 May	Tunis	MENA Transition Fund project for Libya on SMEs: Participate in World Bank workshop to conduct private sector mapping exercise
21-23 May	Cairo	EU-OECD Project on <i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> . Workshop 3 on " <i>Creating a business-friendly regulatory environment in the SCZone</i> "
23-24 May	Dubai	Contribution to the 2nd Meeting of the Global Network on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises, followed by informal consultations with MENA representatives on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises
24 May	Dubai	OECD Workshop on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises in the Middle East and North Africa
22-23 May	Rome	Transition Fund meeting
6-8 June	Paris	OECD Week 2017: OECD Forum and annual Ministerial meeting
12-13 June	Paris	MENA investigator's participation in the Global Network of Law Enforcement Practitioners against Corruption
18 June	Cairo	Women's Economic Empowerment: Consultations on the impact of the legal framework of Egypt
21 June	Tunis	Women's Economic Empowerment: Consultations on the impact of the legal framework of Tunisia
19 June	Cairo	<i>Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Zone</i> : Discussions with donor and the new SCZ Chairman
28-30 June	Paris	Participation of MENA countries in the OECD Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct
28-29 June	Paris	UMA-OECD Dialogue on Regional Economic Integration
3-5 July	Rome	MENA-OECD Working Group on SMEs and Entrepreneurship
10 July	Tunis	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
12 July	Rabat	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
27-28 July	Beirut	Economic Resilience Task Force launch
07 August	Amman	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)

DATE	VENUE	EVENT TITLE
08 August	Beirut	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
11-12 September	Tel Aviv	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
13-14 September	Ramallah	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
13 September	Rabat	Women's Economic Empowerment: Consultations on the impact of the legal framework of Morocco
13-14 September	Rabat	Business Integrity Scan
28-29 September	Paris	MENA-OECD Working Group on Investment and Trade "Investment and trade policy reforms for inclusive growth in the MENA region"
04 October	Rabat, Morocco	Communication for Open Government Reforms: Open Government in Morocco, towards a more effective participation into public life
6-8 October	Cairo, Egypt	Women's Economic Empowerment Forum and launch of the OECD publication on "Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries: The Impact of the Legal Frameworks of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia"
11-Oct	Cairo, Egypt	Wrap up workshop to present the findings for the project "Supporting the Development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone"
16-17 October	Paris	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: "Making investment promotion policies work for sustainable development in the Mediterranean"
18 October	Paris	External Relations Committee: Discussion on the MENA-OECD Initiative for Governance and Competitiveness
26-27 October	Barcelona	Experts Technical Meeting on Industrial Co-operation of the Union for the Mediterranean
30 October-2 November	Kuwait	Training Course: Improving Policies and Access to Finance for SMEs in the MENA Region
1-3 November	Casablanca, Morocco	Business integrity in Morocco: Trainings on "collective actions" with private representatives from three sectors organised with CGEM
6-8 November	Egypt	EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean: Regional workshop on "Sustainable investment and Responsible Business Conduct in the Mediterranean", national consultations for Egypt, and EU Conference on the External Investment Plan
7-8 November	Amman, Jordan	MENA Transition Fund Project SME Policy Effectiveness in Jordan. Workshops with SME and entrepreneurship stakeholders on statistics, public-private dialogue and monitoring and evaluation.
18 November	Cairo, Egypt	Women's Economic Empowerment: Consultations on the impact of the legal framework of Egypt
19 November	Manama	Fourth International Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of International Arbitration
21 November	Rome	Deauville Partnership Senior Officials' Meeting

DATE	VENUE	EVENT TITLE
22 November	Paris	Meeting of the MENA-OECD Advisory Board
23 November	Cairo	SME consultation with local stakeholders (Update of key reforms identified by the MENA SME Policy Index of 2014)
28 November	Madrid, Spain	Participation in workshop at <i>Casa Árabe</i>
29 November	Rabat	Consultations with Moroccan authorities ahead of the MCP Coordination Committee
30 November	Rabat	Comité de coordination dans le cadre du Programme-pays Maroc
4-5 December	Tunis	Libya MENA TF project Workshop - Validation of the Short term Action Plan
5-7 December	Casablanca, Morocco	Business integrity in Morocco: Trainings on "collective actions" with private representatives from three sectors organised with CGEM
7-9 December	Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt	Conference: Africa 2017. Driving Investment for Inclusive Growth
11 December	London, UK	10th Young Arab Women Leaders Conference
12-13 December	Rabat, Morocco	MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance
13-14 December	Brussels	EBESM and EUROMED Invest Conferences

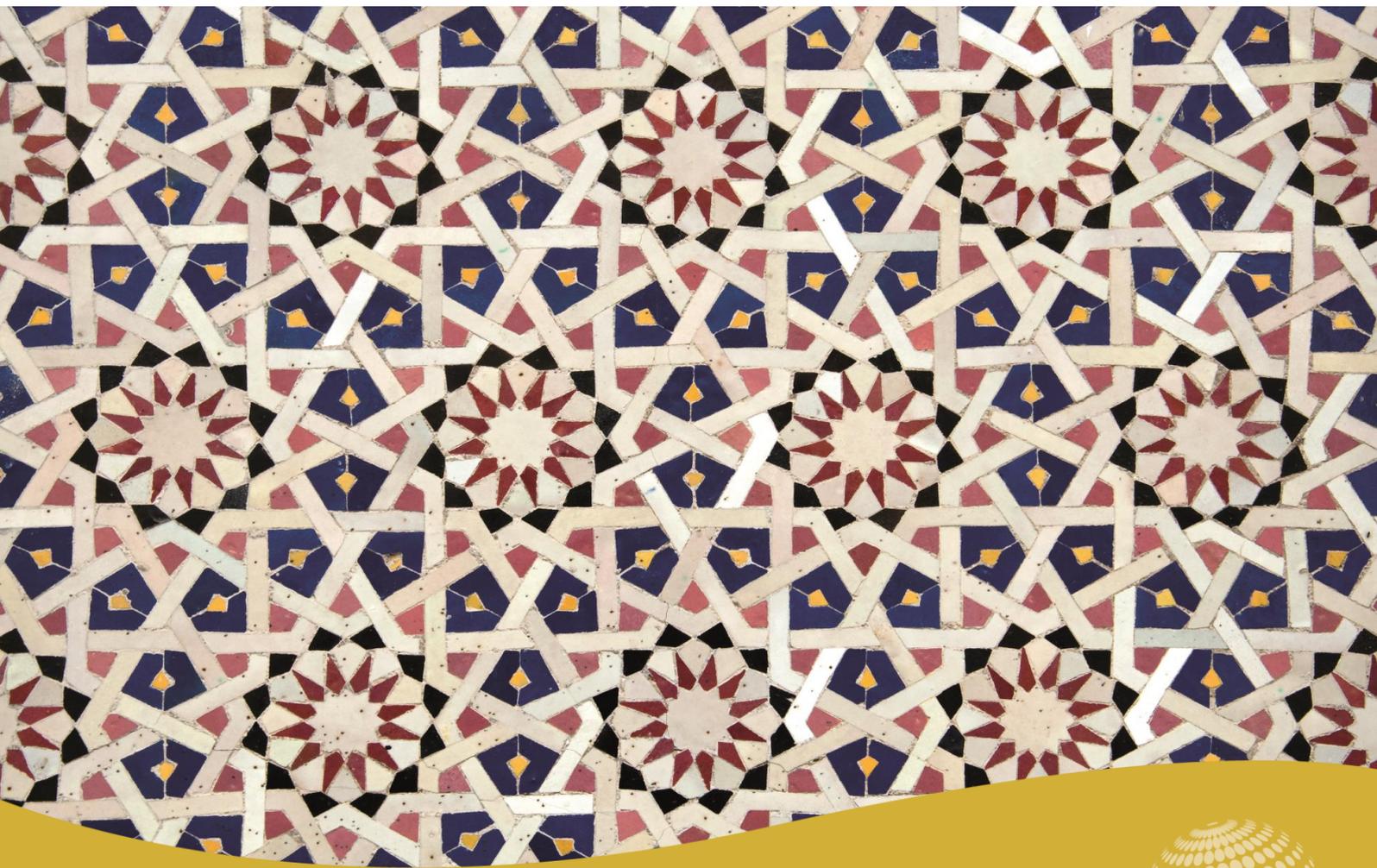
## The MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness



The MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness was launched in 2005. The Initiative serves as a strategic partnership between MENA and OECD countries to share knowledge, expertise and good practices with a view to support the development of inclusive, sustainable and competitive economies across the Middle East and North Africa. It fosters co-ordination between the different stakeholders committed to improving the living standards of MENA citizens: local and national governments, international and regional organisations, multilateral initiatives, civil society and the private sector representatives.



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