

## **DRAFT AGENDA**

4 May 2010 ♦ Paris, France

A large, light grey stylized 'K' logo, which is a larger version of the graphic element used in the OECD logo.

# **CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS**

*MENA-OECD Initiative on  
Governance and Investment  
for Development*

**CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS**  
**4 May 2010, Paris, France**

<b>9.00</b>	<b><i>Registration and Welcome Coffee</i></b>
	<b>Venue: OECD Conference Center, 2 rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris</b>
<b>9.30-10.15</b>	<b>Opening session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Mohammed Saâd El Alami</b>, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Public Sector Modernisation, Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Nizar Baraka</b>, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Economic and General Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Ms. Karen Kornbluh</b>, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of the United States to the OECD</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Carolyn Ervin</b>, Director, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, OECD</li> </ul>
<b>10.15-11.45</b>	<b>Session 1: Attracting Talent to the Public and Private Sectors</b> <b>Moderator: Ms. Helena Samaha</b> , General Counsel- EMEA, Alix Partners, Representative of the Arab International Women's Forum
	<p><b><i>Purpose of the session:</i></b></p> <p>Participants will explore strategies for increasing gender diversity in the workplace – in both the public and private sectors – and will discuss their impact on innovation, competitiveness, efficiency, and quality of service delivery. They will report on enabling factors, challenges and possible impacts of their strategies.</p> <p>Because women represent half of the world's human capital, facilitating their participation in the labour force is a means of capitalising on the available talent pool, thereby increasing countries' competitiveness.</p> <p><b><i>Keynote speakers:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Salma Suleymann</b>, Palestinian Businesswomen's Association, Palestinian National Authority</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Brigitte Grésy</b>, General Inspector of Social Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, France</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui</b>, Executive Manager, Centre for Arab Women Training and Research, Tunisia</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Serena Romano</b>, Manager of Public Affairs, Telecom Italia, Vice President, Taskforce on Middle East and North Africa, Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Questions and Answers</i></b></p>
<b>11.45-12.00</b>	<b><i>Coffee Break</i></b>

12.00-13.30	<p><b>Session 2: The Pros and Cons of Quotas</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> H.E. Ms. Laurence Argimon-Pistre, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of the European Commission to the OECD</p>
	<p><b><i>Purpose of the session:</i></b></p> <p>Participants will discuss the use of quotas as a measure to achieve greater gender diversity in the workplace, in particular in decision-making bodies in the public and private sectors. They will discuss the theoretical expectations of different programmes, showcase experiences in implementing and enforcing different types of quotas and discuss their impacts on gender equality. They will also reflect on the applicability of such a policy tool in countries with low female labour force participation rates.</p> <p>Women’s representation in decision-making positions – managerial positions, corporate boards, and political positions – is low in both MENA and OECD countries. Affirmative action measures, such as quotas, have been taken to remediate existing gender imbalances. Governments and businesses have experimented with different types of voluntary or legally binding quotas, such as: reserved seats in parliament, minimum thresholds for electoral slates, quotas for political parties, and quotas or targets in public and private sector employment. Their use has generated intense controversy in MENA and OECD countries related to justice, democracy and equality considerations.</p> <p><b><i>Keynote speakers:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Capitolina Diaz Martinez</b>, Director General for Equal Employment, Ministry of Gender Equality, Spain</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Soraya Badraoui</b>, President, Association des Femmes Chefs d’Entreprises du Maroc, Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Aude Zieseniss de Thuin</b>, President, The Women’s Forum for the Economy and Society, France</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Questions and Answers</i></b></p>
13.30-15.30	<p><b><i>Buffet Lunch Hosted by the OECD</i></b></p>
15.30–17.00	<p><b>Session 3: Women’s Access to Government Services and Business Services</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> H.E. Ms. Dina Kawar, Jordanian Ambassador to France, Embassy of Jordan</p>
	<p><b><i>Purpose of the session:</i></b></p> <p>Equal access to government and business services is a precondition for women’s empowerment. In practice, however, institutional, cultural, or practical obstacles may constrain women’s access to services.</p> <p>Participants will examine structures, institutions, policies and processes, which either advance or impede women’s access to services. Participants will explore gender-specific biases in service delivery and provide examples of good practices for adapting service design and delivery mechanisms to women’s specific needs and constraints. Discussions will cover several themes such as women’s access to public services, to justice, to finance, and to business support services.</p>

	<p><b>Keynote speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Video message of Ms. Haiyan Qian</b>, Director, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Public Administration Network, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Sahar Nasr</b>, Lead Financial Economist, World Bank, Egypt</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun</b>, Regional Programme Director for North Africa, United Nations Development Fund for Women, Kingdom of Morocco</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Antonin Pujos</b>, Vice President, Fédération Pionnières, France</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Françoise Goffinet</b>, Attaché, Division on Gender Mainstreaming, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Dina Kaddouh</b>, Director, Secretary General’s Office, Union of Arab Banks, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions and Answers</b></p>
17.00-18.00	Closing Session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Chris Hoornaert</b>, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the OECD</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Ms. Christina Narbona Ruiz</b>, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OECD</li> </ul>

## Background Information

### About the Conference on Gender Equality in Government and Business

#### ***Objectives, structure and intended outcomes***

The Conference on Gender Equality in Government and Business provides an excellent opportunity to present the findings of recent international research on gender issues. Drawing on concrete examples of successful gender strategies, participants will identify best practices and collectively determine future avenues for action. The discussions are expected to result in proposals for regional activities to support MENA countries in their ongoing efforts to promote gender equality in public management and business. The outcomes of these discussions may also contribute to subsequent OECD high-level meetings, notably the 2011 OECD Forum.

In the three sessions, presentations will give a comparative overview of gender approaches in the public and private sectors in MENA and OECD countries. The speakers will draw on their experiences with national strategies, action programmes and pilot projects for the promotion of gender equality and present recent trends, key developments, lessons and challenges. They will report on main barriers encountered and identify enabling factors which aid in overcoming obstacles to gender equality. The audience will be invited to interact with the speakers in subsequent rounds of questions and answers.

#### ***Session 1: Attracting Talent to the Public and Private Sectors***

In OECD countries, despite important improvements in women's employment outcomes, gender gaps still persist. On average, across OECD countries, the proportion of women in paid work is high (62%). But women earn 18% less than men on average, only about one-third of managerial posts are held by a woman, and 25% of women work in part-time jobs compared to only 6% of men. Female participation in the central government workforce reached an average of 46% in 2005, but varies significantly across OECD countries, from 70% in Poland to 10% in Turkey. Women are less represented at more senior levels in the public sector (OECD average of 24% in 2005), but over-represented in administrative positions (OECD average of 56% in 2005).

In MENA countries, despite great gains in educational equality, only 26% of working age women joined the formal labour force in 2007, compared to the worldwide average of 53% (2007). Similarly, an estimated 20% of firms in the MENA region have female participation in ownership, compared to 32% in OECD countries. The public sector remains the largest employer for both men and women in the MENA region (on average 48% of total employment in 2005, compared to an average of 14% in OECD countries in 2005). Few women hold senior positions in the public sector in MENA countries (on average 6.6% in 2005), although this varies considerably across countries. For example, the proportion of ministerial positions held by women in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, and Oman, is comparable to the average for other regions.

#### ***Session 2: The Pros and Cons of Quotas***

In MENA and OECD countries, quotas have had a decisive impact on women's access to decision-making power and representation in parliament. Several MENA countries (Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia) have implemented some form of quotas for women in national parliaments and local bodies. As a result, women's representation in these bodies reached 30% in Tunisia (2009), 25% in Iraq with the 2005 elections, and 11% in Morocco in 2003 (compared to 1% in 1995). Beginning in the 1980s, most OECD countries have introduced 30-50% gender quotas for electoral lists of political parties. In the public sector, several OECD countries use (relative) quotas or annual targets to increase the number of women in top positions. While several MENA countries have implemented quotas for elected officials, little is known about the introduction of quotas in public sector employment.

Regulations applying to women managers in the private sector are rare. Only a very limited number of countries have passed or are contemplating legislation decreeing that all publicly-listed corporations must have a certain percentage of women on their boards. Policies to enhance women's participation in decision-making positions are

frequently part of company strategies relating to corporate responsible conduct. A survey of corporate best practice in Europe found that 27% of leading companies set targets for the number of women in senior executive roles [London Business School (2007), *Inspiring Women: Corporate Best Practice in Europe*]. Some believe that companies that are favouring the employment of women in leading positions also are generally more open to innovation and better equipped to cope with economic change. The introduction of targets relating to women's involvement into business is not widespread, and its applicability to the MENA region will be subject to debate.

### **Session 3: Women's Access to Government Services and Business Services**

Equal access to government and business services is a precondition for women's empowerment. Most countries have adopted legal provisions which ensure equal treatment of their citizens with regard to the delivery of government and business services. In practice, however, institutional, cultural, or practical obstacles often constrain women's access to these services. In many cases, women do not benefit from government or business services, or these services fail to meet women's particular needs.

Justice must be equitable and accessible for all citizens. In many MENA countries, however, women's equal access to justice and judicial institutions is hampered by social, economic, cultural, and educational conditions. Despite recent attention to this issue and increasing efforts to promote women's rights, women's access to and participation in the justice system remains limited: family, penal, and personal status laws in some MENA countries still undermine women's equal participation in society and even if these laws have been reviewed, informal customary practice may put women at a disadvantage. In some Middle Eastern countries women are not authorised to act as judges or public prosecutors and male judges may have arbitrary power in applying and interpreting laws.

In many MENA countries, governments increasingly seek to minimise barriers that constrain women from accessing public services. In recent years, several MENA countries have developed administrative simplification mechanisms and ICT strategies to promote equal access to public services, to improve public service delivery and enhance women's participation in the policy and decision-making processes of government (e.g. through e-consultation or public opinion polling).

While women may officially have equal legal rights to own property and run a business, they may meet *de facto* barriers to entrepreneurship. Lack of access to financing, to information, and to business networks may significantly impact women's capacity to create or grow their enterprises. Policy-makers and practitioners in MENA countries have begun to address these obstacles in several ways. In some countries, to increase women's access to finance, specialised lending programmes and microfinance initiatives have been created. In Egypt, commercial banks have begun to provide financial management and business skills training to their female customers, in order to increase interaction with this growing market and also to reduce credit risk. To improve women's access to information and to business support services, some countries have put in place dedicated women's departments in chambers of commerce, or created business incubators adapted to the needs of women entrepreneurs. Women's networking capacities have also grown with the creation of women's business associations in most countries of the MENA region.

### **About the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development**

The MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development, launched in 2005, is a regional effort, initiated and led by countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It promotes broad reforms to enhance the investment climate, modernise public governance structures and operations, strengthen regional and international partnerships, and promote sustainable economic growth and social development throughout the MENA region. The Initiative strengthens countries' capacity to design and implement policy reforms. It facilitates policy dialogue and the sharing of experience on public governance and investment policies among policy-makers from MENA countries and their OECD counterparts. The Initiative consists of two pillars: The Governance Programme, aimed at modernising public governance structures and processes and the Investment Programme, aimed at improving the investment climate and policies.

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is currently co-chaired by:

- H.E. Mr. Mohammed Saâd El Alami, *Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Public Sector Modernisation, Morocco and chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme*
- H.E. Mr. Chris Hoornaert, *Ambassador, Delegation of Belgium to the OECD, and Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme*

The MENA-OECD Investment Programme is currently co-chaired by:

- H.E. Mr. Nizar Baraka, *Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Economic and General Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco and chair of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme*
- H.E. Ms. Cristina Narbona Ruiz, *Ambassador, Delegation of Spain to the OECD and Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme*

### **About the MENA-OECD Initiative's Work on Gender**

The MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment supports MENA countries in promoting gender equality and expanding the role of women in the economy and public sphere. The MENA-OECD Governance Programme takes stock of MENA countries' gender initiatives in public management. The programme explores the extent to which Arab women participate in government decision-making, whether reforms have fostered a more gender-balanced environment in public management and whether programmes are considering women's specific needs as beneficiaries of public services and policies. It examines governmental strategies, action programmes and projects to promote gender equality in the public sector, including how they are implemented and financed. The programme also launched in May 2009 a Gender Focus Group, which has met to address the issue in public management through a number of its activities, including the publication of a study on Addressing Gender in Public Management. Included in the Progress Report on Public Governance Reform in MENA countries, this study was submitted at the 2009 MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in Marrakesh. The study reports on the integration of gender objectives in public policies in Morocco, gender budgeting in Egypt, and the introduction of gender equality in legal frameworks in Tunisia.

The MENA-OECD Investment Programme, which works to enhance economic growth and sustainable development in the MENA region by accelerating business climate reform and capacity building, seeks to support women's entrepreneurship and employment. In the 2007 Ministerial Declaration on Fostering Women's Entrepreneurship in the MENA region, elaborated during the 2007 Women Business Leaders Forum, Ministers committed to adopt a "targeted and integrated support approach to accelerate the rate at which women are starting new businesses, growing their enterprises, creating employment and participating fully in economic development activity". Ministers also mandated the Programme to launch the MENA-OECD Women's Business Network (MENA-OECD WBN) to further the economic empowerment of women in the MENA region and to provide MENA governments with concrete recommendations for policy reform and targeted action to support women's employment and entrepreneurship in the region. Subsequent to the 2009 Women Business Leaders Summit, the 2009 Ministerial Conference endorsed the Action Plan on Fostering Entrepreneurship in the MENA region which calls for stakeholders to: (i) encourage women's entrepreneurship and employment by creating a business enabling environment; (ii) facilitate business registration and growth through enhanced access to finance, in particular for women-owned businesses; (iii) improve economic policy through better gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators. The Programme also incorporates gender as a key theme in the MENA-OECD Business Council which was formally launched at the Business Day preceding the 2009 Ministerial Conference. The Business Council is a joint initiative with the private sector creating a high-level platform for business leaders and policy makers to interact. A task force on women's entrepreneurship has been established within the Business Council. Given its proximity to the private sector, the Business Council is an ideal launch pad to deepen the Programme's activities on gender.

## Key Contacts

### MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development

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