



## AGENDA

### ADDRESSING GENDER IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Developing a Programme of Work  
for sharing experiences between  
Arab and OECD Countries

Kick-Off Meeting of  
the Gender Focus Group

18 May 2009 Cairo, Egypt



Ministry of State for  
Administrative Development



The OECD-MENA Governance Programme aims at modernising public governance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by strengthening the capacity of public officials in Arab countries to design, implement and monitor public governance reforms. The programme is part of an overall OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development in the Middle East and North Africa. The OECD-MENA Governance programme implements the Good Governance for Development (GfD) in Arab Countries Initiative, which is jointly carried out by the OECD and the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab region. Egypt chairs the Steering Group of the Good Governance for Development (GfD) in Arab Countries Initiative.

8.30	Meeting in the lobby of the Cairo Marriott Hotel, 16, Saray El Gezira Street, Zamalek, 11211 Cairo, Egypt. Transportation to the Ministry of State for Administrative Development
9.00-10.00	<b>Registration and welcome coffee:</b> Auditorium, Ministry of State for Administrative Development, 13 Salah Salem Street, Nasr City, Cairo.
10.00-12.30	<p><b>Sharing experiences and innovative approaches to promoting gender objectives in the public sector</b></p> <p>Chair: H.E. Dr. Ahmed Darwish, Minister of State for Administrative Development, Arab Republic of Egypt and Chair of the Steering Group of the Good Governance for Development (GfD) in Arab Countries Initiative</p>
<p><b>Objectives and structure:</b></p> <p>Keynote presentations will give a comparative overview on gender approaches to public management in Arab and OECD countries. The keynote speakers will draw on their experiences with national or regional strategies, action programmes and pilot projects for the promotion of gender equality in the public sector and present recent trends, key developments, lessons and challenges. Participants will address budgetary and regulatory instruments as well as organisational policies and procedures that can contribute to counteracting inequalities in the public sector. They will identify key factors which aid in overcoming obstacles to introducing gender initiatives in the public sector along with main institutional barriers encountered. The audience will be invited to interact with the speakers in a subsequent round of questions and answers.</p> <p><b>Opening statement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H.E. Dr. Ahmed Darwish, Minister of State for Administrative Development, Arab Republic of Egypt and Chair of the Good Governance for Development (GfD) in Arab Countries Initiative.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keynote speeches: Comparative overview on gender approaches to public management - lessons and challenges.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Yusef Hatira, Project Coordinator, Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), Tunisia, <i>Recent trends in Arab countries towards addressing gender in public management: Comparative overview on lessons and challenges</i></li> <li>Mrs. Carine Joly, Attachée, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium, <i>Gender mainstreaming: a new challenge for the federal government and the administrations</i></li> <li>Mrs. Kaoutar Alaoui Mdaghri, Head of Division, Observatory of Public Employment, Ministry of Public Sectors Modernisation, Morocco, <i>Experience of the Ministry of Public Sectors Modernisation with the institutionalisation of gender equality in the public sector</i></li> <li>Dr. Salwa Sharawi Gomaa, Professor of Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, Egypt</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions from the audience and discussion</b></p>	
12.30-14.30	<b>Lunch</b>

14.30-15.00	<b>Transportation to the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO)</b>
15.00-18.00	<b>First meeting of the Gender Focus Group</b> Chair: Professor Refat Abdelhalim Alfaouri, Director, Arab Administrative Development Organization, Egypt

**Objectives and structure:**

During the afternoon session, a restricted number of participants will come together in a focus group that will identify, based on position papers, thematic priorities for the regional policy dialogue between Arab and OECD countries on addressing gender in public management during the next two years. The discussion of the focus group is expected to result in concrete proposals on the formulation of regional activities to support Arab countries in their ongoing efforts to introduce the gender approach in public management. The OECD Secretariat will also submit a draft questionnaire to the Gender Focus Group for feedback and discussion.

**Welcoming statement:**

- Professor Refat Abdelhalim Alfaouri, Director, Arab Administrative Development Organization, Egypt

**Introductory remarks:**

- Dr. Jennifer Bremer, Professor for Public Policy and Management, American University of Cairo, Egypt

**Presentation of position papers: main issues, expected outcomes, key challenges and shortcomings of mainstreaming and institutionalising gender policies in the public sector**

- Mrs. Kaoutar Alaoui Mdaghri, Head of Division, Observatory of Public Employment, Ministry of Public Sectors Modernisation, Morocco, *Personnel policies: Addressing gender objectives in the management of human resources*
- Mr. Jeroen Decuyper, Attaché, Division on Gender Mainstreaming, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium, *Integrating the gender dimension in public budgets, public procurement contracts and subsidies*
- Dr. Jennifer Bremer, Professor for Public Policy and Management, American University of Cairo, Egypt, *Introducing gender analysis into regulatory frameworks*
- Dr. Salwa Sharawi Gomaa, Professor of Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, Egypt, *Institutional approaches to gender policies*

**Presentation of the draft questionnaire:**

- Ms. Melanie Fassbender, Administrator, OECD-MENA Governance Programme, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Identification of priorities for the work programme and discussion of the draft questionnaire.**

**Conclusions and next steps:**

- Dr. Jennifer Bremer, Professor for Public Policy and Management, American University of Cairo, Egypt
- Mr. Carlos Conde, Programme Co-ordinator, OECD-MENA Governance Programme, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Professor Refat Abdelhalim Alfaouri, Director, Arab Administrative Development Organization, Egypt

# NOTES

## **Background:**

Governments in Arab and OECD countries increasingly develop and introduce strategies, policies, and initiatives which pay attention to equality and equal opportunity objectives in the public sector. Public policies can promote gender equality and by this means have an impact on social and economic development.

The OECD-MENA Governance Programme seeks to take stock of the ongoing policy efforts in Arab countries and to identify current gender initiatives. To this end, the OECD-MENA Governance Programme will facilitate regional policy dialogue and transversally address gender questions within its thematic Working Groups, in accordance with the strategic directions and programme of work for 2008-10 as approved by Arab and OECD governments at the ministerial meeting in November 2007. First, a focus group will reflect on the concrete measures required to introduce the gender dimension in activities undertaken within the OECD-MENA Governance Programme. Representatives from Arab and OECD countries suggested establishing a Gender Focus Group at the regional meeting of the Working Group on Civil Service and Integrity on 4 April 2008 in Rabat. The creation of this group was then approved by the OECD-MENA Governance Programme Steering Group at its last meeting in July 2008.

Acting at this policy level and with institutional backing, the constitution and kick off meeting of the Gender Focus Group takes place on 18 May 2009 in Cairo, organised in co-operation with the Egyptian Ministry of State for Administrative Development, the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

## **Meeting Structure:**

This meeting will be structured in two sessions. During the morning session, experts from Arab and OECD countries will address the issues at stake when introducing gender strategies, closely involving an audience of public officials, media and representatives of civil society. During the afternoon session, a restricted number of participants will come together in a focus group that will identify, based on position papers, thematic priorities for the regional policy dialogue between Arab and OECD countries on addressing gender in public management during the next two years.

## **Objectives and intended outcomes of the focus group:**

The discussion of the focus group is expected to result in concrete proposals on the formulation of regional activities to support Arab countries in their ongoing efforts to introduce the gender approach in public management. The objective is to link OECD support to existing national and regional gender initiatives in order to enforce them. With this first meeting, the Gender Focus Group also intends to initiate a stocktaking process, the results of which could be shared progressively with a larger audience, notably at a meeting organised back to back with the next meeting of the OECD Working Party on Human Resource Management in Paris in September 2009. The outcomes of these discussions may result in the subsequent organisation of a high-level meeting at political level in spring 2010. Taking advantage of the expertise of the participants, the OECD Secretariat will also submit a draft questionnaire to the Gender Focus Group for feedback and discussion. This questionnaire seeks to compile information on gender equality policies in the public sector that are being developed or were recently implemented or evaluated by Arab countries. The questionnaire also seeks to gather information about anticipated trends and policy challenges. The

OECD Secretariat intends to synthesize the information provided by Arab countries in a summary document for comment and discussion. The revised document and OECD missions to the region will provide the basis for preparing a chapter on the gender approach in public management for the OECD Report on Modernising Public Management in Arab Countries.

To summarize, the meeting's objective and intended outcomes are twofold:

1. **Reinforcing regional policy dialogue: Sharing experiences and innovative approaches to promoting gender equality in the public sector.**
2. **Commitment and support of Arab and OECD countries to gender activities and stocktaking process:**
  - a. ***Agreement on the gender related programme of work for the next two year***
  - b. ***Distribution and discussion of a questionnaire with questions on the development, implementation and evaluation of gender equality policies in the public sector***

### **Themes:**

This concept note provides the Gender Focus Group with thematic issues and questions for consideration and discussion. The suggested themes have been identified in close consultation with stakeholders from Arab and OECD countries and the Gender Focus Group will be invited to formulate a gender strategy, by narrowing down the focus, identifying priorities to be addressed, and concrete activities to be undertaken.

#### **I. Incorporating gender objectives in public policies: ownership, implementation, enforcement**

- **Issues at stake:** As government is expected to be a role model in society, this implies that public policies pay adequate attention to gender objectives. Arab and OECD countries thus increasingly seek to develop comprehensive gender policies and action programmes. Most countries adopt at the same time complementary gender mainstreaming strategies and equal opportunities policies. Gender mainstreaming strategies seek to incorporate gender perspectives in all public policies at all levels and at all stages of policy making in order to prevent potential gender discrimination, while gender equal opportunity policies focus on eliminating existing inequalities or discrimination. A key component of most gender strategies in the public sector is the introduction of gender objectives in personnel policies as well as budget and legal frameworks. The objective of most personnel policies consists of ensuring the adequate representation of women in decision-making functions within the public sector, providing equal employment opportunities in terms of statutes and remuneration and offering specific capacity development and training courses. Recognising that a budget is not a gender-neutral policy instrument, Arab and OECD countries also endeavour to allocate specific amounts to gender policies and to integrate gender perspectives in the overall budgetary strategy as well as in the appraisal systems for the delivery of public services. To ensure the enforcement of gender objectives, governments in Arab and OECD countries also increasingly take legal measures and seek to introduce gender analysis into regulatory frameworks and regulatory impact analysis (RIA).
- **Questions for consideration and discussion:** How can the administrative and political apparatus of the public sector be committed to consider gender objectives and apply gender policies? How should commitments be translated into concrete action programmes, policies and regulations in order to increase gender equality in public policies and action? How can priorities be set and activities identified which target gender policy objectives? How can gender-oriented public policies and action programmes be developed? How can the gender mainstreaming process be implemented on a structural basis? More concretely, how should gender objectives be introduced in personnel policies? How can the gender compatibility of existing budgetary and legal frameworks be reviewed? How could the implementation and adequate funding of the agreed gender policies be guaranteed? How can the roles of stakeholders be clearly defined? How can a gender impact assessment be implemented in any selected policy field? What consequences should be envisaged if agreed gender objectives are not achieved?

## II. Incorporating gender objectives in public policies: Raising awareness, communicating and capacity building

**Issues at stake:** A comprehensive gender approach to public management implies bringing gender concerns to the attention of the public sector, raising awareness about existing gender inequalities and adequately communicating policy objectives to public sector staff, political leaders, citizens and the media. In order to build support for gender policies and action programmes within and outside the administration, governments also need to develop strategies and tools for raising awareness on persistent gender inequalities in the public sector and for communicating the expected benefits of the action programmes. Before communicating gender objectives, it's important to analyse the current situation, monitor and evaluate gender policies. This implies to carry out gender studies within the administration, develop gender expertise, collect gender indicators and statistics and make them available. Successfully implementing gender objectives in public policies also requires that administrations develop specific training programmes and/or guidelines for staff across levels of hierarchy in order to ensure the integration and respect of gender objectives in public actions, communications and relations in the work place.

- **Questions for consideration and discussion:** How can attention be directed to gender concerns in the public sector? How can commitment inside government be increased and how can gender strategies be clearly defined? How can awareness about gender equality issues be raised? How can gender objectives be communicated within the government? How can information on the gender approach be shared with the media? How can partnerships at national and global levels be built in order to promote the gender approach in the national public sector? How can capacities be improved and the gender approach be integrated in public management? How can special training and capacity building be developed for female officials? How can gender policies be monitored and evaluated?