

MENA-OECD Working Group on Regulatory Reform and the Rule of Law

28 March 2019

Lisbon, Portugal

OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING

The Working Group on Regulatory Reform and the Rule of Law of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme provides a forum to exchange on good practices in regulatory policy and discuss how to ensure effective access to justice services and strengthen the rule of law. The Working Group also contributes to the implementation of country commitments under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably to the Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.



Opening remarks by **Ms Anabela Pedroso**, State Secretary of Justice, Portugal; **Mr Zouheir Ben Tanfous**, Legal Counsel, Presidency of Government, Co-chair, Tunisia; and **Ms Tatyana Teplova**, Public Governance Directorate, OECD.

The 2019 annual meeting of the Working Group entitled “*Towards People-centred Justice & Legal Empowerment in MENA countries*” took place within the Global OECD Policy Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice on 28 March 2019, in Lisbon, Portugal and co-chaired by Tunisia and Portugal.

The meeting was opened by **Ms Anabela Pedroso**, State Secretary for Justice of Portugal; **Mr Zouheir Ben Tanfous**, Legal Adviser to the Presidency of the Government of Tunisia and Co-Chair of Working Group IV; and **Ms Tatyana Teplova**, Head of Gender, Justice and Inclusiveness at the OECD.

The discussions focused on the following priority topics:

- Better regulation and access to justice through plain language, access to information and legal empowerment;
- Access to justice for vulnerable groups in the MENA region, including women, youth and children;

- Digital justice – bringing justice closer to the people through the use of technology; and
- Legal empowerment and access to justice for business, including small and medium enterprises.



Delegates discussing the priorities of the 2019 annual meeting of the Working Group.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Delegates highlighted the need to provide people-centred justice pathways to meet people and businesses' legal needs.
- Delegates expressed the need to optimise the use of new technologies in the provision of justice services in order to provide greater transparency, accountability and efficiency.
- Delegates invited the Secretariat to collect data, indicators and thorough evidence on the delivery of digital justice services, including costs involved and capacities required.
- Delegates recognised marginalized and vulnerable groups in the MENA region, including women, youth and children, as a priority topic for the upcoming meetings of the MENA-OECD Working Group on Regulatory Reform and the Rule of Law.
- Delegates acknowledged the importance of regulatory governance and invited the OECD Secretariat to strengthen the evidence-base in this priority area to take account of the progress and reflect changing regulatory policy environment in the countries of the MENA region. In this context, delegates encouraged the Secretariat to update OECD Report (2013) on "Regulatory Reform in the Middle East and North Africa: Implementing Regulatory Policy Principles to Foster Inclusive Growth".
- Delegates welcomed the OECD's work on legislative drafting and using plain language as part of the OECD Recommendations on Regulatory Policy and Governance. Delegates encouraged the dissemination of good practices drawn from OECD Report on Legislation and Good Governance.