OECD Workshop on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises in the Middle East and North Africa

in combination with Hawkamah’s 11th Annual Conference

24 May, 2017

Armani Hotel
Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE
Background on the MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance

Established in 2005, the MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance aims to foster a policy dialogue around good corporate governance of listed and state-owned enterprises through sharing good practices and evaluating their implementation. The Working Group also aims to share relevant OECD tools with MENA countries to support policy evaluation. It is comprised of representatives of regional securities regulators, central banks, stock exchanges, ministries of Finance and Economy, Corporate Governance Centre as well as other public and private sector actors interested in further promoting corporate governance in the region. The Working Group on Corporate Governance has leveraged the OECD expertise and co-operation with regional partners through peer dialogue, research and sharing of good practices. The efforts in these areas have three main objectives:

- Driving private sector development,
- Promoting capital market development for private sector growth, and
- Improving the governance of state-owned enterprises.

Background on Hawkamah’s Annual Conference

Hawkamah, the institute for corporate governance, was established in 2006 by Dubai government in order to improve governance practices in the MENA region. It works with governments, regulators as well as companies. Every year, Hawkamah organizes an international conference that brings experts from different countries to share their experiences and thoughts regarding various governance issues. The 11th annual conference that is held in cooperation with the OECD, will focus on latest developments in SOEs, especially the organization of ownership function and boards of directors. The subject is of particular interest to governments of the region as SOEs are dominant in all strategic economic sectors and resources almost in all countries.

Objectives

This OECD Workshop on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises in the Middle East and North Africa is organised jointly with the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance, in Dubai, UAE on the occasion of the 2nd Meeting of the Global Network on Corporate Governance of state-owned enterprises.

Through the process of knowledge sharing, the workshop aims to support ongoing efforts by governments in the MENA region to identify priorities for SOE governance reform and implementation of the aspirational standards set out in the recently revised OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOE Guidelines). This meeting is part of efforts to take the MENA Corporate Governance Working Group (part of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme) into a new phase.

The first session will take stock of recent developments in SOE reform related to ownership practices, accountability measures and reporting practices in MENA SOEs relative to the SOE Guidelines. It will be followed by a second session that will focus on finding actionable ways in which governments can more effectively enhance SOE competitiveness while safeguarding a level playing field between private businesses. The topics will include levelling the playing field, competitive neutrality, fair competition and non-discriminatory policy framework.

The last session will be dedicated to an in-depth discussion on a new phase of the MENA Corporate Governance Working Group (part of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme). The aim is to develop a ‘road map’ with a particular focus on areas where the OECD could offer ‘value added’, given its experience monitoring and promoting implementation of the SOE Guidelines in the MENA region.

Format and Participation

This workshop will be reserved for representatives of relevant government ministries and agencies, state ownership entities and corporate practitioners in the MENA region. This year’s meeting also coincides with the Annual Conference of the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance, with a number of its members and associates from the region participating.

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided between Arabic and English.
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<tr>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>Wednesday, 24 May (afternoon)</th>
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<td>13:45-14:00</td>
<td>Welcoming remarks</td>
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| 14:00-15:00 | **Session 1: Accountability Challenges: Balancing commercial and non-commercial objectives of SOEs**  
Objectives of state-owned enterprises often go beyond profit maximization and include societal objectives. The existence of vague, complex or contradictory objectives may further complicate accountability for SOEs. As such, the *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOE Guidelines)* recommend setting transparent priorities and establishing an accountability framework to monitor the effectiveness of SOEs. This session is a round table session that will allow participants to engage in an in-depth discussion on recent developments on ownership policy, accountability measures and reporting practices in MENA SOEs.  
Key topics: Ownership policy, accountability, commercial and non-commercial objectives |
| 15:00-15:30 | Coffee Break |
| 15:30-16:30 | **Session 2: Enhancing SOE competitiveness while safeguarding a level playing field between private businesses**  
Consistent with the rationale for state ownership, the *SOE Guidelines* state that fair competition between SOEs and private enterprises in the marketplace should be ensured when SOEs undertake economic activities. Governments must keep that in mind while enhancing the competitiveness of SOEs. Participants are invited to identify the remaining gaps and actionable ways to establish a legal and regulatory framework for SOEs in the MENA region that can support a non-discriminatory environment for doing business.  
Key topics: Levelling the playing field, competitive neutrality, fair competition, non-discriminatory policy framework |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | **Session 3: The Road Ahead**  
This session will allow participants to discuss key challenges and priorities for reform that could feed into the new phase of the MENA Corporate Governance Working Group (part of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme). |