
MENA-OECD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME AND ANNA LINDH EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON

“VALUING DIVERSITY AND DIALOGUE: A NEW ALLIANCE BETWEEN CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENTS”

PARIS, 7 JULY 2011

Scope of the Workshop

Diversity has emerged as a fundamental asset for **social and economic sustainable development** at a global level. To fully reap the benefits of diversity in the MENA region means to go from the notion of diversity as mere difference, which principally evokes its problematic dimensions, to a new perspective based on the recognition of the intrinsically multifaceted nature of social realities and the active role that citizens can play as drivers of change in the region. It is in this renewed scenario that social and **intercultural dialogue**, as an exchange among individuals and stakeholders within society, become major instruments for human development, tools to integrate the principles of diversity in the definition of public policies within a multicultural environment.

To be fully exploited in its potential dimension, diversity needs to be promoted by a coherent vision, protected by ad hoc **institutional, legal and policy frameworks**, and safeguarded by an **active and vigilant civil society**. Promoting the principles of **inclusiveness, equal opportunities and non-discrimination requires citizens’ participation** in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies. Taking full consideration of socio-cultural diversity is particularly important in the context of local communities, where proximity services and mechanisms for citizen’s participation place individuals, civic organizations and public authorities much closer. Harnessing the benefits of interaction within **pluralistic societies**, in favor of shared goals of **social cohesion** and the improvement of the **quality of life** of citizens, is also becoming an urgent task in the MENA area in view of recent developments and ongoing processes of transition towards democracy.

Within this context, civil society organizations are advocating for **equality, participation**, and respect of **human, civil, economic, social and cultural rights** to be considered at the basis of **good governance**. They are also working to strengthen **social cohesion in pluralistic societies**, by ensuring networking and building **intercultural skills** to enhance the value of diversity in public life and in the management of public spaces.

To sum up, an **open and innovative** understanding of public governance requires the consideration of **citizens as partners for governments** and the stipulation of a **new alliance** based on **social and intercultural dialogue** and on the recognition of the benefits of socially and culturally diverse societies.

The Workshop ***“Valuing Diversity and Dialogue: A New Alliance between Citizens and Governments”***, organized by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation (ALF), will gather selected representatives of civil society and governments from MENA and OECD countries active in promoting diversity, social and intercultural dialogue to share experiences and disseminate good practices with as specific focus on the MENA Region.

The principles behind the concept of Diversity can be applied in two main realms:

- **Diversity as equal opportunities**, which mainly refers to preventing any form of discrimination hence guaranteeing that governments consider the specificities of their citizens as an asset to be valued.
- **Diversity as a resource**, which aims to appreciate the social and economic benefits that different backgrounds bring to the public sector in terms of cultural dynamism and innovation.

Through social and cultural dialogue Diversity comes to be intended as:

- **Diversity as inclusiveness**, which alludes to the possibility of governments and citizens to work in a strategic, long-term and joint manner to promote social dialogue and cohesion.
- **Dialogue as a transversal issue**, which is part of a system of governance based on civic engagement and participation and on the implementation of human, economic, social and cultural rights.

Objectives of the Workshop

This full day meeting will be based on the following:

- By sharing their own experience and expertise, participants will be confronted with a stimulating variety of ways to achieve the critical goal of harnessing the unexploited potential diversity can unlock. Representatives from governments, civil society and citizens will be invited to describe how diversity is considered, within their respective countries and own experience and will be asked to exemplify what actions, policies or reform projects are being implemented or promoted in this field. Challenges and major obstacles to take full advantage of diversity will receive particular attention.
- Several areas will be explored such as, for example: the role of public consultations in promoting full citizens representation, how CSOs foster cohesion based on socio-cultural dialogue, the importance of local authorities for inclusive and responsive policy making, and how diversity in the civil service drives the innovation, agility and excellence of the public sector, how diversity is tackled by emerging social movements in the phase of transition of societies, implementation of dialogue and participation strategies to value diversity by public institutions, etc.
- A variety of approaches to deal with cultural diversity at the local level will be presented and the potential of intercultural dialogue for the promotion of economic, social and cultural development of societies will be explored, with a particular focus on the MENA region.
- The reflections and proposals arising from the workshop will constitute the background on which the OECD and the ALF will build a common strategy to help the MENA region seal a new alliance between citizens and governments, inspired by the value of diversity and intercultural dialogue and aimed at a citizen-centered social and economic sustainable development.

Agenda of the Workshop
7th July 2011

OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris
Room CC9

08.30-09.00	Registration
09:00-09:30	<p>Welcome and introductory remarks</p> <p>Rolf Alter, Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD;</p> <p>Veronika Stabej, Ambassador of Slovenia to France and Chair of the Anna Lindh Foundation Board of Governors;</p> <p>Nassif Hitti, Ambassador of the Arab League to France</p>
09.30-11.00	<p>Diversity As an Asset for Social and Economic Development</p> <p>Diversity is a resource for governments in both MENA and OECD countries. By releasing the most active and creative forces of society, diversity can effectively boost economic and social development, trigger innovation and reinvigorate national social and cultural dialogue. Participants in this session will discuss how diversity is considered within their national contexts and what measures are in place to take full advantage of its developmental potentialities.</p> <p>Moderator: Anna Block Mazoyer, Minister Counsellor – Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs MENA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohamed Tozy, Professor of the University Hassan II in Casablanca and the University of Aix en Provence; • Clem McCartney, Project Manager of the “Shared Society Project”, Club de Madrid; • Rasha Abdulla, Chairperson of the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at the American University in Cairo , Egypt; • Robin MacGregor, Regional Manager (Gulf & Middle East), International Programme, Charity Commission for England and Wales, UK; • Oscar Huerta Melchor, Public Sector Reform Division, OECD Secretariat.
11.00-11.30	Coffee Break
11.30-13.00	<p>The Role of Central and Local Governments in Favouring Diversity and Representation</p> <p>Citizens’ demands to participate more in the political life of their countries have been at the core of the recent uprisings in the Arab world. Governments at the central and local levels have been asked to respond to them by proposing and implementing policies to increase citizens’ participation, representation and territorial cohesion. This session will be dedicated to illustrate examples of successful practices to favour diversity, cohesion and people’s engagement.</p> <p>Moderator: Azzeddine Diouri, Secretary General, the Ministry of Public Sector Modernisation, Morocco.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamou Bouakkaz, Deputy Mayor, in charge of Local Democracy and Community

	<p>Service, Municipality of Paris.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michiel Trippas, Policy Advisor for the Department of Work and Social Economy, Flemish Government. Belgium; • Driss Khrouz, Secretary General of the GERM (Groupement d'études et de recherches sur la Méditerranée (GERM), Morocco; • Alessandro Bellantoni, MENA-OECD Governance Programme, OECD Secretariat; • Abdelhamid Lagueche, Professor of Modern History, University of Tunis, Tunisia; • Amani Essawi, Minister's Assistant for International Relations, Ministry of State for Administrative Development, Egypt; • Adam Ostry, Regional Development Policy Division, OECD Secretariat.
13.00-14.30	Lunch Break
14.30-15.30	<p>Civil Society's Tools and Strategies to Promote Diversity and Social Cohesion</p> <p>The role played by Civil Society in promoting diversity and social cohesion is fundamental. Social, intercultural as well as institutional dialogue can only be meaningful if animated by a vast, representative and diverse array of peoples and organizations. This session will be dedicated to the presentation of projects contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of societies implemented by civil society organizations in MENA and OECD countries.</p> <p>Moderator: Richard Shotton, Head of the ALF UK National Network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleonora Insalaco and Claudia Marinaro, approach to cultural diversity and dialogue as a basis for development: principles and practices, ALF; • Selma Ouissi, Coordinator of the project LAAROUSSA, Tunisia; • Ahmad Naguib – Director of Advising and Exchange at Amideastc, Egypt ; • Miriam Allam, Regulatory Policy Division, OECD Secretariat.
15.30-16.30	<p>Roundtable Discussion: building on diversity, a new alliance for cohesion and participation between citizens and governments.</p> <p>The idea underlying this workshop is that only a new alliance between citizens and governments can really produce policies and practices that successfully promote diversity and dialogue for the benefit of the entire society. This roundtable will discuss this assumption from different perspectives to identify potential obstacles and relevant opportunities.</p>
16.30-17.00	<p>Conclusions and the Way Ahead</p> <p>Carlos Conde, Senior Coordinator, MENA-OECD Governance Programme, OECD;</p> <p>Andreu Claret, Director, Anna Lindh Foundation.</p>
17.00-18.00	Cocktail in the Galerie