

Yemen Statement at the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in Marrakech

(November 23, 2009)

We would like first of all to thank the organizers, the host government and OECD for convening such an important event.

This meeting is timely and important to consider the way-forward of the MENA OECD good governance initiative and build on the successes and lessons learned.

The Government of Yemen strongly believes the initiative has provided a valuable forum for exchanging experiences and good governance practices among OECD and MENA countries. We all bring in shared commitments and enthusiasm for the initiative.

We thank the Republic of Egypt for its leadership of the initiative and congratulate the Kingdom of Morocco for carrying it forward.

Yemen has taken an active role in the good governance initiative since its inception. We have actively participated in regional policy dialogue in the different thematic groups. Most recently OECD concluded and is finalizing a Joint Learning Study on Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement similar to that of Morocco and Jordan. We have played an active role in the Arab Network on Integrity and Anti-corruption under this initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen: In Yemen, we have embarked on a rigorous national reform agenda that aims to create the necessary conditions and requirements for accelerating economic growth to attract local and foreign investments, improve living conditions, creation of new employment opportunities, improve good governance system to ensure wider social and political participation, ensure rights and freedoms, strengthen transparency and accountability, upgrade efficiency of state institutions and ensure wider participation of women.

Successes in reforms in Yemen are many. We have been working on enhancing judicial autonomy and commercial court system and placing focus on re-defining the role and function of the state and providing more room for the private sector. We have been successful in reforming the business enabling environment in Yemen. Revised policy and legislation frameworks are being introduced that include new legislation for investment, taxation and customs, GST. We are working on Public Financial Management reforms in order to improve fiscal sustainability and management of state resources and reduction of government spending.

We also take pride in Yemen in introducing important reforms in the field of transparency, integrity and anti-corruption in line with international best practices. We have a standing Anti-Corruption Agency. We are implementing an anti-corruption legislation and Financial Disclosure. We are overhauling the public procurement system,

where most of the leakage is coming from. We have a state of the art legislation, High Tender and Control Boards. OECD under this initiative has concluded an in-depth study on Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement in Yemen as part of sharing good practices.

And this year, the Government of Yemen introduced a prioritized list of 10 policy and action reform initiatives to address Yemen's most pressing political, economic and social challenges.

Emphasis over the next 18 months is placed on improving government administration, enhancing the business enabling environment, strengthening the rule of law and diversification of revenues and fiscal stability

Where do we go from here?

It is important that we maintain the momentum and carry forward the initiative. We all endorse the continuation of the initiative and broaden its scope. We need to promote regional policy dialogue on business-enabling environment and learn from good success stories.

We need to put emphasis on decentralization and enhancing local governance. Yemen like Morocco and other countries has experience to share on decentralized governance.

Thirdly, we would like to see the revised initiative provide a forum for promoting practices in democratic and political governance.

We also plea that the new phase of the initiative will place greater emphasis on stronger roles for women, civil society and the private sector in governance issues. We also encourage the continuation of more concrete policy reform initiatives in the fields of SMEs and Public Financial Management.

Again, my government remains committed to working with all of you to enhance our regional partnership and the partnership we have with OECD and its member countries.

Thank you for your attention.