

CONCLUSIONS

STEERING GROUP MEETING OF THE MENA-OECD INITIATIVE ON GOVERNANCE AND INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

3 MAY 2010, PARIS, OECD HEADQUARTERS

Members of the MENA-OECD Steering Group convened to discuss the action plan of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development to implement the Marrakech Declaration issued on the occasion of the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in November 2009 in Marrakech.

1) ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Participants

1. Discussed the impact of the crisis on the MENA region following a presentation of the OECD Secretariat and noted differences in the timing, impact and variety of policy responses among countries;
2. Discussed key policy advice for economic recovery, including the need for structural reforms, investment in infrastructure, reduction of budget deficits, and greater and better distribution of economic growth;
3. Discussed public and private sector development policies to enhance institutional and administrative capacities to promote public service and core business values as a precondition for ensuring sustainable growth in MENA and OECD countries.

2) ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MARRAKESH DECLARATION

2.1 Regional initiatives

Participants

4. Noted the active role of the regional centres and initiatives supported by the MENA-OECD Initiative, and the need to strengthen the capacity of the centres to take on management functions;
5. Recognised the need to streamline the activities of the regional centres through the establishment of a research and knowledge-sharing mechanism;
6. Welcomed the progress achieved by the regional centres and activities supported by the MENA-OECD Initiative, such as the OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum, the Distance Learning for an Innovative Public Sector Initiative, the Competitiveness Centre, the Responsible Business Conduct Centre, the Regional Centre of Expertise on Regulatory Quality, the MENA Centre for Investment, the Public Finance and Tax Training Institute, the Regional Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, and the Hawkamah Centre on Corporate Governance.

2.2 Flagship reports

Participants

7. Welcomed the MENA-OECD Initiative's new Reports on "Progress in Public Management in the Middle East and North Africa", and on "Investment Reforms in the MENA Region: Country Progress 2006-2009";
8. Expressed their support to the Governance Indicators Project and to the MENA Policies for Competitiveness Project, both exercises gathering comparative data as a basis for policy advice;

2.3 Implementation phases and structure of the Initiative

Participants

9. Acknowledged the achievements of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development and underlined that phase II has consolidated the regional networks and strengthened country-specific work on public sector and investment climate reforms;
10. Supported the Governance and Investment Programmes of Work which provide a comprehensive roadmap for the Initiative's next steps;
11. Encouraged the MENA-OECD Governance and Investment Programmes to engage in a third phase (2011 to 2015) in order to implement the Marrakech Declaration, foreseeing periodical evaluations, and stressing the need for renewed financial support;
12. Agreed that the regional working groups and networks launched are producing results and act as peer-learning and review fora; Underlined that innovative tools and approaches made available by the Initiative, such as Joint learning Studies, the Business Climate Development Strategies (BCDS), peer reviews and exchanges, regional conferences and workshops, are useful improve the business climate, spread good governance and move forward reforms in the MENA region;
13. Underlined that the tailored national programmes, such as the Iraq Project, and the Initiative to Support the Palestinian National Plan are well-engaged processes and can be replicated in other countries.

2.4 Thematic issues highlighted

Participants

14. Stressed the importance of enhancing the rule of law and fostering transparency and integrity in the MENA region; and supported the organisation of a Ministerial Conference on Anti Corruption, Integrity and the Rule of Law in Morocco in March 2011 in cooperation with UNDP;
15. Took note of the new project on strengthening integrity in the private sector through public-private dialogue and collective actions which will be carried forward in collaboration with UNDP to strengthen the investment climate;
16. Suggested that the Initiative further engages in addressing the skills gap and the need for education systems directed towards the needs of a modern economy; and highlighted the need to address the role of the informal sector in the economy;
17. Highlighted the need to reinforce the dialogue between the public and private sectors and civil society enabling all stakeholders to engage in concerted actions to create better opportunities for business and citizens;
18. Welcomed the launch of the new Focus Group on Green Growth and Territorial Development as foreseen in the Marrakesh Declaration, which will address one of the major current challenges in the MENA region as well as in OECD countries, and suggested linking this Focus Group to the decentralised co-operation between regions, to urban governance and to local management;
19. Welcomed the launch of the MENA-OECD Responsible Business Conduct Forum's website, decided to enlarge its membership and to organise policy fora and training workshops in the next phase of the Investment Programme;
20. Welcomed the work of the OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum since its inception (2007) and lent their support to the 2009 Action Plan, including policy assessments and recommendations, training workshops and business coaching. The Forum will be co-chaired by the US Ambassador to the OECD, Ms. Karen Kornbluh, and a MENA country;
21. Welcomed the work of the MENA-OECD Governance programme on gender policies and governance, which is critical for the political, social and economic empowerment of women and the promotion of good governance. They welcomed the recently released OECD Study on Addressing Gender in Public Management, expressed support for the gender governance programme of work, and the activities carried out since May 2009 by the Gender Focus Group;
22. Supported further research and analysis on key issues mentioned in the Marrakech Declaration such as the regional investment frameworks and the newly created public-private Renewable Energy Task Force of the MENA-OECD Business Council.