



Royaume du Maroc

Ministère de la Réforme de l'Administration et de la Fonction Publique



## INTERNATIONAL MORROCCO - OECD CONFERENCE: OPEN GOVERNMENT & ACCESS TO INFORMATION Rabat, 13 March 2019

Celebrating the coming into force of Morocco’s Access to Information Law, the OECD and the government of Morocco organised an international conference on 13 March 2019 bringing together more than 400 participants from 13 countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, France, Jordan, Germany, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Lebanon, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia and USA.

**Mr Mohammed Benabdelkader, Minister delegate to the Head of Government in charge of reform of the administration and civil service from Morocco** highlighted during his opening remarks that the Kingdom of Morocco has committed to open governance to citizens, visible in their participation in the Open Government Partnership. **Mr Marcos Bonturi, Director, Public Governance of the OECD** underlined that the OECD supports countries to find their specific responses to citizens’ demands. He identified two major demands of citizens: accessing government information that is comprehensible and receiving a guarantee that their participation has an impact. Achieving results takes some time, thus **Mr Sanjay Pradhan, CEO of the Open Government Partnership** explained what his vision for an Open Morocco 2021 includes.



A ministerial panel aimed to discuss how to move from open government reforms to actual impact on citizens’ lives. Thus, as highlighted by **Ms May Chidiac, Minister of State for Administrative Reform of Lebanon** her government is pioneering reforms to build a more trustful link with citizens. According to **Ms Safia Boly, Minister of Reform of the Administration and Transparency of Public Life of Mali** this also requires changing the behaviour of the administration and creating spaces for dialogue with citizens. **Ms Meritxell Batet, Minister for Territorial Policy and Public Function of Spain** underlined that democracies need to be renewed and that Spain took an important step in this direction with its access to information law of 2013 and an accompanying transparency portal. In fact, access to information plays an important role in achieving impact for citizens’ lives. As **Mr Mohamed Bachir Rachdi, President of the National Authority of Integrity, Prevention and the Fight against Corruption of Morocco** explained that there can be no fight against corruption without access to information. According to **Mr Omar Seghrouchni, President of the National Commission for the protection of private data and president of the National Commission for Access to Information of Morocco** to



ensure an effective implementation of this right, a joint vision of the interpretation of the law is needed as well as a culture of transparency. Access to information can also support the economy, enabling to better understand regional challenges.

### Thematic workshops and panels

As a key pillar of open government, **access to information** and its implementation was at the core of the conference. A high-level panel including representatives from Mexico's National Institute for Transparency,



Access to Information and Personal Data Protection, Tunisia's Access to Information Commission, Gherbal Initiative Lebanon and the government of Ivory Coast highlighted that access to information can help to guarantee rights to health and education, fight corruption and impunity and changes how the public administration works. A dedicated workshop further explored the mechanisms and changes needed within the administration to implement that right effectively.

A parallel panel including government representatives from Tunisia and Senegal, Dataactivist France and the OGP discussed how to **involve civil society** more effectively in policy-making. Better targeted communication and experimenting with new and innovative forms of participation such as hackathons were presented as key factors. The discussions were continued in a workshop which highlighted the need to support civil society's autonomy and create forums and platforms where they can meet to strengthen the inclusiveness of open government and participation mechanisms.



The **role of the media** has so far been neglected in the international open government movement. A specific workshop thus explored how it can play a more important role and how to better tailor communication for open government. Participants highlighted that public media has an important role to play, that the language needs to be adapted to the audience and that also innovative means of communication, such as theatre and film, could be considered. A professional and independent media can further help in strengthening access to information, by making strategic test cases, using their right and informing citizens about it.

Finally, the conference included a workshop on **open government data** investigating how to create an appropriate ecosystem and work effectively with users of data. The discussion focused on the value of open government data for transparency and to improve the relation of trust between citizens and the public sector. The participants in the meeting highlighted several examples in the MENA region where open government data policies are increasingly part of digital government efforts and commitments. But the session highlighted also the role of open government data for value co-creation, allowing collaborative approaches between the public administration, the private sector, academia and NGOs for instance on service design and delivery, with positive outcomes on social and economic development.