Working Party of Senior Budget Officials

AGENDA

7th ANNUAL MEETING OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS (MENA-SBO)

Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
10-11 December 2014

The meeting is hosted by the Department of Finance, Abu-Dhabi.

Chairs: Mårten Blix, Ministry of Finance, Sweden and Salah Al Waswasi, Department of Finance, Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

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7th ANNUAL MEETING OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS (MENA-SBO)

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
December 10-11, 2014

Chairs: Mårten Blix, Sweden / Salah Al Waswasi, UAE

AGENDA

**Tuesday 9 December 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 18:00</td>
<td>Welcome Reception – St Regis Hotel <em>(Nations Tower, Corniche, Abu Dhabi)</em></td>
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**Wednesday 10 December 2014**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Opening by the Chair and OECD Secretariat and Delegates introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mårten BLIX, Director, Ministry of Finance, Sweden.</td>
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<td>• Salah AL WASWASI, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.</td>
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<td>• Jón BLÖNDAL, Head, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD Secretariat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Welcome Address</td>
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<td>• H.E. Hamad Al Hurr AL SUWAIDI, Chairman, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:30</td>
<td>Session 1 – Update on Budgeting in MENA</td>
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<td>One delegate from each country will be asked to give a 10 minute update regarding the current state of play for budgeting and public finance management in their countries. Delegates should not give a complete overview of their PFM system, but target the latest and ongoing reform efforts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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Wednesday 10 December 2014 (Cont’d …/…)

12:00 – 13:00  **Session 2 – Country Presentation: Budgeting in Abu Dhabi**

The country presentation will provide an overview of two important developments in Abu Dhabi’s Public Financial Management System. These developments include a pilot project on Performance Budgeting and rolling out an Enterprise Resource Planning system across the government of Abu Dhabi.

**Speakers:**
- **Abdulaziz AL YOUSEF**, Budget Director, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – ‘Introduction’.
- **Mohamed Musallam AL MAZROUEI**, Division Manager, Security and Government Administration, Budget Department, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – ‘Performance Budgeting’.
- **Hazem EL KHATIB**, IT Director, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates – ‘Abu Dhabi Government Resource Planning Shared Service’.

**Discussion**

13:00 – 14:30  **Luncheon and Family Photo**

14:30 – 16:00  **Session 3 – The Public Governance of Infrastructure Projects**

The planning, assessment, selection, procurement, and management of infrastructure projects represent a challenge for countries worldwide. This session will discuss the ways in which governments plan, assess, select, budget, procure, implement, monitor and evaluate infrastructure projects. The objective will be to harvest the lessons learnt as to what is good infrastructure governance that delivers the most important projects, on time, representing value for money and long term fiscal sustainability.

**Speakers:**
- **Ian HAWKESWORTH**, Head of PPPs and Capital Budgeting, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, OECD Secretariat.
- **Fernando FERNHOLZ**, Professor, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, United States.

**Discussion**

16:00 – 16:30  **Coffee Break**
16:30 – 18:00  **Session 4 – Integrating the Medium-term Perspective into the Ordinary Budget Process**

Many MENA countries are gradually introducing a medium term element to the annual budget process. This session will explore the key concept and processes that will enable countries to more fully harness the benefits of the medium term perspective. The session will discuss experiences of moving from an aggregate medium term perspective towards a sectoral medium term framework. It will also discuss the links between the medium term framework and top down budgeting, fiscal rules and performance budgeting. Results from the OECD Budgeting Practices and Procedures database will set the scene for the discussion.

**Speakers:**
- **Ronnie DOWNES**, Deputy Head, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD Secretariat.
- **Peter THURLOW**, Fiscal Policy Advisor, Department of Finance, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- **Adnène GALLAS**, Director General, Unit of Performance-based Budgeting, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Tunisia.

**From 19:00**  **Gala Dinner**
Thursday 11 December 2014

9:00 – 10:30  **Session 5 – The Organization of Public Financial Management Architecture**

While all countries strive towards a well-functioning budgeting and public financial management system, they do it in different organisational ways. This session discusses the relationships within the finance and budget functions and between the latter and other key entities such as the line ministries, the SOEs, the Supreme Audit Institutions, and the Parliament. Issues that will be addressed include: how are these institutions budgeted for; who are they accountable to; how are knowledge and skills promoted within these institutions; what reforms have been tried and what lessons can be learned.

**Speakers:**
- **Karl BERGSTRAND**, Deputy Director, Budget Department, Ministry of Finance, Sweden.
- **Maya BSAIBES**, Program Coordinator for Public Financial Management, Institut des Finances Basil Fuleiha, Ministry of Finance, Lebanon.
- **Amal LARHLID**, Director Governance and Policy, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), United Kingdom.

**Discussion**

10:30 – 10:45  **Coffee Break**

10:45 – 12:00  **Session 6 – Transparency and Openness in Public Financial Management**

Budget transparency is a key aspect of the proper functioning of a public finance management system and an effective way to help restore the trust of citizens and business in public institutions. The objective of budget transparency is to provide relevant information to the public debate on fiscal policy options in order to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of the decision making process. Moreover, citizens’ participation in the preparation of national and local budgets (open budget) increases the chances to optimise the allocation of resources to meet national economic and social objectives; enhances the operational efficiency of the public administration; and allows to better tailor public services to the real needs of citizens and of the private sector, hence improving countries’ business environment. On the contrary, the consequences of the lack of transparency include insufficient overall budgetary control, ineffective or inappropriate use of public funds, corruption and other procedural abuses.

Accordingly, this session will focus on how open government policies can support sound public financial management by presenting the results of the Open Government Reviews of Morocco and Tunisia and discussing them within the context of the OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency and the New Principles of Budgetary Governance.
Speakers:
• Roula SYLLA, Policy Research and Advice, MENA-Governance Programme, Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD Secretariat.
• Abdessalam BENABBOU, Deputy Budget Director for the Coordination of Sectoral Structures and Synthesis, Budget Directorate, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco.
• Amal FEKIH, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Tunisia.

Discussion

12:00 – 13:00 Luncheon

13:00 – 14:30 Session 7 – Subsidy Reforms
Many MENA countries, as well as countries outside the region, provide a number of subsidies that are both popular and very expensive. According to the IMF (2014) MENA countries spend on average more on subsidies than other regions, and have increasing difficulty financing them. Total pre-tax energy subsidies in 2011 cost $237 billion—equivalent to 48 percent of world subsidies, 8.6% of regional GDP, or 22% of government revenue. This has created the need for reform but often such reform produces political opposition on a very large scale. How have countries in MENA and in the OECD successfully implemented reforms that aim to curb these subsidies? What are the alternatives for the government and citizens? This session will examine recent reform attempts and discuss what lessons can be learnt, both from a MENA and international perspectives.

Speakers:
• Petar VUJANOVIĆ, Senior Economist, Indonesia Country Studies, Economics Department, OECD Secretariat.
• Omneya RAMADAN, Senior Economist, Macro-Fiscal Policy Unit, Minister’s Technical Office, Ministry of Finance Egypt.
• Giorgia ALBERTIN, IMF Resident Representative for Tunisia, International Monetary Fund.

14:30 – 15:00 Coffee

15:00 – 16:00 Session 8 – Wrap-up session and Future Work
• Jón BLÖNDAL, Head, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD

17:00 – 19:00 Visit to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque
PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS

6th Annual Meeting
25-26 November 2013
Doha, Qatar

5th Annual Meeting
15-16 November 2012
Tunis, Tunisia

4th Annual Meeting
21-22 September 2011
Beirut, Lebanon

3rd Annual Meeting
31 October – 1 November 2010
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

2nd Annual Meeting
4-5 November 2009
Doha, Qatar

1st Annual Meeting
24-25 November 2008
Cairo, Egypt

Launch Meeting
20 May 2007
Istanbul, Turkey
PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Meeting venue and Accommodation – St Regis Hotel:
The meeting will be held at the St Regis, Nations Tower, Corniche, Abu Dhabi
(http://www.stregisabudhabi.com/)

Simultaneous Translation:
Simultaneous translation between Arabic, French, and English will be available throughout the
meeting.

Welcome Reception, Gala Dinner and Cultural Visit:
All delegates (and spouses) are invited to a Welcome Reception on the eve of the meeting, Tuesday,
9 December, at 18:00 in the St Regis hotel.

Following the conclusion of the first day of the meeting, on Wednesday 10 December, all Delegates
(and spouses) are invited to a Gala Dinner at the St Regis hotel.

Visit to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque will be organised on Thursday 11 December (17:00 – 19:00)
and a Desert Safari will be organised on Friday 12 December (14:00 – 22:00). Announcements will
be made during the meeting regarding the practical details.

Practical details will be provided on a separate sheet distributed at the meeting.

Two hotel staff will be available to assist and respond to all practical questions that meeting
participants may have.