



# ARAB-DAC DIALOGUE ON DEVELOPMENT

14 January 2019, Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development,  
Kuwait

## CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

*Members of the Arab Coordination Group and the OECD Development Assistance Committee met to discuss how to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Dialogue was co-chaired by Mr. Abdlatif Al-Hamad, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Ms. Marit van Zomeren and Mr. Filippos Pierros, DAC vice-Chairs and DAC delegates of the Netherlands and the European Union, respectively. The OECD Delegation was led by Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate. The meeting was hosted by the Arab Fund in Kuwait City on 14 January 2019.*

*As on previous occasions, the 2019 Arab-DAC Dialogue brought together representatives from a range of bilateral and multilateral providers of development co-operation. The event focused on promoting women's economic empowerment, taking stock and collaborating through the ACG-DAC Task Force on Education, accelerating action on water and sanitation through the ACG-DAC Task Force on Water and Sanitation, and exploring the pivotal role of food security and agriculture across the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.*

### General progress in the partnership since the 2017 Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development

The ability of Arab countries and institutions and DAC members to collaborate and work together, as they are now doing through the Arab-DAC Dialogue, is crucial to overcome the main bottlenecks that hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The two communities continued collaborating taking an evidence-based approach since their last meeting in 2017, notably through the following steps:

- Arab providers and the OECD continued collaborating on improving the timeliness and quality of their development co-operation reports to the OECD, while invitations for the ACG being issued since 2018 to attend meetings of the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics.
- Interested ACG institutions and DAC members continued working in the joint ACG-DAC Task Force on Education and launched collaboration through a joint Task Force on Water and Sanitation.
- Several ACG institutions and Arab countries increased their participation in meetings of the DAC, for example on blended finance, resilience, results or gender equality; and featured in OECD reports; while the OECD participated in the meeting of the Arab Co-ordination Group in 2018.
- In 2018, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia became DAC Participants, in addition to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which became Participants in 2014 and 2016, respectively.

### Promoting women's economic empowerment

An economy in which women are empowered is more competitive and benefits all levels of society. Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals recognise that gender equality can drive sustainable development and calls for accelerating efforts to promote women's economic empowerment. Arab and DAC providers of development co-operation have a central role in supporting developing countries to eliminate the barriers that hinder women's economic empowerment. For example, these providers can promote specialised knowledge and skills for women, young women and girls; foster access business and financial services, inputs and technologies; help women transition from education into paid employment; and help overcome the constraints imposed by the uneven share of unpaid care and domestic work, as well as practices along legal frameworks that discriminate against women. Participants shared

experiences, good practices and information on partnerships on promoting women's economic empowerment in partner countries.

Going forward, participants agreed on:

- Exploring further collaboration in this area through a joint Task Force on Women's Economic Empowerment
- Inviting interested ACG institutions to participate in the DAC network on gender equality (GENDERNET) and the OECD-MENA Programme on Governance and Competitiveness.
- Promoting the use of the DAC 'gender' policy marker to understand how Arab providers work in the field of gender equality and women's economic empowerment.
- Intensifying overall efforts towards assisting partner countries to address obstacles preventing or hindering women's economic empowerment.

Sweden also proposed to invite Arab and DAC donors to participate in the Forum on Gender Equality, Tunis, April 2019.

## Taking stock and collaborating through the ACG-DAC Task Force on Education

Following the adoption of the Education Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) in 2015, Arab and DAC providers agreed, during the 2016 Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development, to explore setting up a joint task force on education in fragile and emergency settings. Since then, the Islamic Development Bank, Norway and the United Kingdom, with support from the OECD, have taken this idea forward with the aim of accelerating access to quality education in areas that are not being addressed through other initiatives or that have gaps in coverage. Task Force members updated participants on activities over 2017-18, namely the analysis of concessional finance flows in the education sector and the mapping of international education-related initiatives. The conclusions of these exercises point at substantial underfunding of the education sector, compared to the needs, notably in humanitarian education-related aid. Another conclusion is the limited participation of Arab countries and institutions in the international education landscape promoted by DAC members and, conversely, limited DAC participation in Arab-led education initiatives.

Going forward, participants agreed on:

- Increasing their support to the education sector, notably in emergency settings. These flows need to be monitored through the ACG-DAC Task Force to ensure international education-related commitments are reached.
- Continuing using the Task Force to promote joint work, after ACG institutions identify education focal points.
- Participating in each other's education-related activities, for example by enhancing all donors' participation in the Global Partnership for Education.
- Fostering participation of Arab countries and institutions in the OECD PISA and PISA for Development assessments.

Spain also proposed to invite all donors to the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Safe Schools, organised by Spain in Palma de Mallorca, May 2019.

## Accelerating action on water and sanitation

Water is essential to human survival and dignity. It is the basis for resilient, peaceful societies and a robust natural environment and has great potential for social, environmental and peaceful societal development. Unlike other natural resources, water has no substitute, yet is a cross-cutting issue that affects several Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve water security for all by 2030, as framed by the Sustainable Development Goal 6 on sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, providers of development co-operation need to deliver innovative partnership models and financing tools. To do so, six ACG institutions, led by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and Switzerland, with support from the OECD, set up a joint ACG-DAC Task Force on Water in 2018. The Task Force proposed a structured collaboration between ACG and DAC members to achieve impact, sustainability and effectiveness through harnessing the members' complementary strengths in the water and sanitation sectors and at country-level.

Going forward, participants agreed on:

- Increasing co-ordination in the water and sanitation sector through the Arab-DAC Task Force on Water and Sanitation, through which joint activities at the country-level will be promoted and that can serve as "model project" for replication and upscaling of water solutions, including in other contexts.

- Developing and test innovative funding mechanisms and partnership models, including with the private sector; and give greater attention to the qualitative aspects of water governance.
- Endorsing the Task Force's Terms of Reference, timeline and countries for intervention (Tunisia and Uganda).
- Seeking to broaden the membership of the Task Force to other DAC members, either through membership of the Task Force or through collaboration at country-level.
- Exploring participation of Arab countries and institutions in the OECD Roundtable on Water Financing.

## Exploring the pivotal role of food security and agriculture across the SDGs and their targets

Achieving sustainable development requires acknowledging that sustainable food and agriculture, as well as nutrition, can revitalise rural areas and deliver inclusive growth to countries. Sustainable food and agriculture embrace the 2030 Agenda vision, whereby people's livelihoods and the management of natural resources are addressed jointly and lead to a world where food is nutritious and accessible for everyone. Participants discussed the importance of exploring the pivotal role that food security and agriculture play across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including but also beyond the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), which addresses food security and agriculture.

In this session, participants discussed:

- The role of nutrition, beyond agriculture and food security, in their interventions.
- The need to continue increasing their agriculture-related aid to deliver SDG2, as well as to tackle poverty through agriculture interventions, address the energy-land-water nexus and mainstream gender into this sector.
- Explore innovative financing modes in the food security and agriculture sectors, notably regarding blended finance and aid for trade, in particular for small-scale farmers.

*In the concluding session, participants asked that the ACG and DAC secretariats keep track of action points agreed and to report back on progress at the Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development in 2020. In addition, the DAC invited the ACG to the DAC senior-level meeting on 22 February 2019. The European Union announced it would host the next Arab-DAC Dialogue in Brussels in 2020.*