



# DECLARATION ON PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS CONDUCT IN THE MENA REGION

*November 2009*



**MENA-OECD  
INVESTMENT  
PROGRAMME**



**Responsible Business Conduct Forum**  
An Initiative of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme

# Declaration on Promoting Responsible Business Conduct in the MENA Region

*Presented on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the MENA-OECD Initiative for Governance and Investment for Development on 23 November 2009, Marrakech, Morocco*

## Participants in the MENA Responsible Business Conduct Forum

### RECALL:

The launch of the MENA Responsible Business Conduct Forum in October 2008 by the MENA-OECD Investment Programme in co-operation with other international and non-government organisations in response to the 2007 MENA-OECD Ministerial Declaration which, inter alia, “called for a regional dialogue on responsible business conduct, under the auspices of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme”.

The regional Forum’s objective to promote responsible business practices in the MENA region to maximise the contributions of investments to sustainable economic and social development.

### RECOGNISE that:

**Governments** which establish an environment allowing investors to act responsibly are more likely to attract sustainable investments;

**Investors** who conduct their business in a responsible way are more likely to be successful and more likely to contribute to delivering sustainable benefits to the wider community;

**Civil society** organisations have a key role to play through their contacts and knowledge of local communities, their understanding of business impacts on those communities, and their ability to mobilise efforts thanks to their expertise in specific areas;

**Constructive partnerships** between governments, business and civil society help attract and maintain quality investments which also provide quality employment opportunities and better living standards for all.

**EXPRESS:**

Determination to continue to work together to:

- promote individual and collective actions and partnerships to raise awareness and responsible business conduct;
- provide a framework for sharing best practices and facilitating the availability and development of tools and guidelines, relevant to the MENA region;
- assist and provide guidance to governments, businesses and civil society on how to measure the impact of policies aimed at supporting responsible business practices;
- promote greater awareness of responsible business conduct among the media.

**INVITE:****Governments of MENA countries to:**

- Seek to provide an optimum policy and regulatory environment to support responsible business practices based on regular dialogue with business;
- Commit to promoting responsible business conduct and to supporting the goals of the Forum;
- Nominate a representative to participate in the Forum's activities;
- Help spread the benefits of this regional initiative by promoting collective action within their own countries.

**OECD and member Governments as well as other international organisations to:**

- Offer to the Forum the benefit of their own knowledge and experience in these areas so that this can be more widely shared in the MENA region.

**Business representative organisations and national and multinational companies to:**

- Commit to following responsible business conduct practices;
- Contribute their knowledge and experience to the work of the Forum to ensure that collective action fully addresses the needs of businesses seeking to ensure that their activities contribute to sustainable economic and social development in the region.

**Civil society organisations to:**

- Engage constructively in collective efforts to achieve the goals of the Forum;
- Contribute their knowledge and experience in support of more effective outcomes.

**COMMIT the MENA Responsible Business Conduct Forum to give priority to the following activities in the course of 2010:**

- Engage in multi-stakeholder discussions on experience with corporate strategies and practices for responsible business conduct, including corporate social responsibility, to promote and support action on the ground;
- Develop a platform for the identification and sharing of best practices, tools and guidelines that are relevant to the region; raise awareness and understanding of the issues among MENA

governments to assist them in providing an optimum climate for responsible business, drawing on guidelines such as those produced by the OECD and the World Bank Institute;

- Elaborate indicators for measuring the effectiveness of responsible business conduct policies by participating governments;
- Promote collective action initiatives for higher transparency, accountability and for fighting corruption;
- Promote private sector efforts, in co-operation with governments and civil society, to meet the challenges in the field of climate change, water scarcity and land degradation, through environmentally-friendly technologies, sustainable energy consumption and responsible investment, drawing lessons from case study experience;
- Identify ways in which the Forum can add value to efforts already under way in the region to address the challenge of skills development, especially vocational training, entrepreneurship and practical skills for business.

*They further recommend that this Declaration be presented to the Ministers on 23 November 2009.*