**Expert group meeting “Measuring economic governance in the context of national development planning” on 12-13 June 2014**

**Le Commodore Hotel, Hamra Beirut, Lebanon**

***Beirut, Lebanon, 12-13 June 2014***

Within its regular work programme, the Economic Governance and Planning Section at UNESCWA/EDGD will undertake a series of activities on the topic of “Measuring Economic Governance in the context of National Development Planning” and the expert group meeting scheduled for 12 and 13 June 2014 in Beirut (see draft agenda below) was the kick-off.

International and regional experts in economic governance as well as senior-level experts in economic planning were brought together for a two-day brainstorming session to discuss and propose key policy actions for better measuring economic governance in the context of national development planning.

The objectives of the meeting included:

* Discussing key challenges in national development planning in the Arab region;
* Identifying necessary key measure of economic governance that are should be included in national development planning for countries in the region;
* Sharing experiences, international and regional best practice examples and lessons learned;
* Proposing key indicators that may help monitor economic governance trends in the region per subject area;
* Developing practical recommendations for next steps; and
* Supporting the finalization of a Framework of Recommendations.

Given the inter-linkages of these topics, this EGM was organized back-to-back with an EGM that focuseed on the upcoming Arab Governance Report that took place on 11 and 12 June 2014 also in Beirut and was organized by UNESCWA’s Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division (ECRI).

For a detailed summary, please refer to the [**final report of the meeting**](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\072014_EGM%20final%20report.pdf) and for additional information or questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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| **Day 1 – 12 June 2014:** | | | | |
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| 14:00 | - | 14:45 |  | **Opening Session of the EGM Economic Governance**  Mr. Abdallah Dardari,  Director, EDGD, UN-ESCWA |
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| 14:45 | - | 16:00 |  | **Session 1: Business Environment and Investment Climate – Challenges for regulating bodies**  Key discussions: Business environment and investment climate are critical to a country’s ability to attract, retain and increased investments. However, on average, MENA countries do not rank highly in Doing Business Rankings indicators such as starting a business, getting credit, and protecting investors. To this end, regulatory bodies with responsibility for oversight of the business and investment climate are tasked with devising and delivering programmes and initiatives through which to promote foreign and domestic investment and support the provision of accessible, standardized and developed services for investors in an environment well suited for business and supportive policies for investment.  *Presentations:*   * [Riccardo Mesiano, ESCWA](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%201_Regulating%20Bodies\Session%201_%20Introduction_Mesiano.pdf) * [Dr Hisham Khatib, Former President, Electricity Regulatory Commission, Jordan](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%201_Regulating%20Bodies\Session%201_Presentation_Khatib.pdf) * [Kristinn Mason, Head of Economic Sector, Regulation Supervision Bureau, UAE](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%201_Regulating%20Bodies\Session%201_Presentation_Mason.pdf) |
| 16:00 | - | 16:15 |  | **Coffee break** |
| 16:15 | - | 17:30 |  | **Session 2: Public Financial Management - Procurement**  Key discussions: Public procurement systems can affect up to half of the government budget. Hence, their governance structures can have a sizable impact on a government’s fiscal space and implementation capacity. This is particularly true in the region where procurement agencies often suffer from low capacity and weak implementation of their regulatory framework.  *Presentations:*   * [Jorge Claro, Procurement Specialist, UNOPS](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%202_PFM_Procurement\Session%202_Presentation_Claro.pdf) * [Yahya Kisby, Former Minister of Housing, Jordan](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%202_PFM_Procurement\Session%202_Presentation_Kisby.pdf) * [Yussef Saad, Office of the Ministry of State for Admin Reform, Lebanon](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%202_PFM_Procurement\Session%202_Presentation_Saad.pdf) |

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| **Day 2 – 13 June 2014:** | | | | |
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| 09:00 | - | 09:20 |  | **Keynote speech on Investment Climate**  H.E. Ibrahim Saif, Minister of Planning, Jordan |
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| 09:20 | - | 09:50 |  | **Session 3: Economic Governance Indicators: A Proposed Methodology** |
|  |  |  |  | [Fernando Cantu-Bazaldua and Seth Caldwell, ESCWA](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%203_Economic%20Governance%20Indicators\Session%203_Presentation_Cantu-Bazaldua.pdf) |
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| 09:50 | - | 11:15 |  | **Session 4: Public Financial Management – Tax Administration**  Key discussions: Mobilizing public resources for development, in particular taxes, is one of the main challenges facing developing countries in general and Arab countries in particular. In fact, fiscal revenues represent one of the main sources of government revenues for non-oil Arab exporting countries. However, the tax systems implemented in these countries need major reforms. This involves not only enhancing tax collection mechanisms and widening tax base, but also improving the management of these resources to ensure fiscal sustainability, modernizing tax administration and developing the regulatory framework governing tax matters.  *Presentations:*   * [Vito Intini and Souraya Zein, ESCWA](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%204_PFM_Tax%20Administration\Session%204_Presentation_Intini.pdf) * [Lamia El-Moubayed Bissat, Director, Institute des Finances Basil Fuleihan](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%204_PFM_Tax%20Administration\Session%204_Presentation_Moubayed.pdf) * [Charles Jenkins, METAC Revenue Administration Advisor](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%204_PFM_Tax%20Administration\Session%204_Presentation_Jenkins.pdf) |
| 11:15 | - | 11:30 |  | **Coffee Break** |
| 11:30 | - | 13:00 |  | **Session 5: Business Environment and Investment Climate –**  **Antitrust & Competition**  Key discussions: Market failures due to rent-seeking behavior and centralization of economic power within elite circles are among the triggers for the political upheaval in the MENA region, since they – for example - translated into rising levels of unemployment (especially among the youth), an unhealthy bias towards public service employment and a general lack of competitiveness of the private sector. Given that governments remain a strong force in the economic environment and with the expectation of serving towards fostering development and equitable, legal instruments and institutions tackling competition and antitrust issues become an important tool for policy makers. Recent developments towards the adoption of antitrust measures and competition legislation link to development, growth and trade, while at the same time influences employment, independence of the private sector and reduction of corrupt practices in the MENA region.  [*Background Note prepared by ESCWA*](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%205_Antitrust%20and%20Competition\Session%205_Background%20Note.pdf)  *Presentations:*   * [Denise Sumpf, ESCWA](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%205_Antitrust%20and%20Competition\Session%205_Introduction_Sumpf.pdf) * [Dina Waked, Professor in Global Economic and Comparative Law at Sciences Po](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%205_Antitrust%20and%20Competition\Session%205_Presentation_Waked.pdf) * [Khalifa Tounakti, Former Director of Competition, Ministry of Trade, Tunisia](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%205_Antitrust%20and%20Competition\Session%205_Presentation_Tounakti.pdf) |
| 13:00 | - | 14:00 |  | **Lunch** |
| 14:00 | - | 15:30 |  | **Session 6: The Way Forward – Challenges to Public Financial Management and to the Business Environment and Investment Climate – A Regional Agenda?**  Key discussions: PFM and investment climate reforms are usually treated as two separated fields with no inter-linkages. However, economic governance based reform agenda needs to tackle both aspects particularly during a transition process. This session will serve to highlight such interlinkages and discuss options to cross-fertilize reform agendas. Alternative options for regional platforms promoting key economic governance areas will also be discussed.    Discussion:   * Maen Nsour, Chairman, Governance, Risk & Compliance  (GRC) Advisory Solutions, Jordan * [Jacques Charaoui, METAC PFM Advisor](file:///M:\EGPS\EGM%20Economic%20Governance\Presentation%20EGM\Session%206_Challenges%20to%20PFM%20and%20Business_A%20Regional%20Agenda\Session%206_Presentation_Charaoui.pdf) * Reem Badran, Chairperson, Al Hurra for Management and Business Development, Jordan |
| 15:30 | - | 15:45 |  | **Coffee break** |
| 15:45 | - | 16:15 |  | **Summary and Closing**  Mr. Vito Intini,  Chief – Economic Governance and Planning Section,  EDGD, UN-ESCWA |
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