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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

15-Sep-2011

English - Or. English

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Working Party of Senior Budget Officials

**4th ANNUAL MEETING OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS
(MENA-SBO)**

AGENDA

**Beirut, Lebanon
21-22 September 2011**

This meeting is hosted by the Lebanese Ministry of Finance.

Chair: H.E. Mr. Mohamad SAFADI, Minister of Finance, Lebanon

Co-Chair: Mr. Mårten BLIX, Director, Budget Department, Ministry of Finance, Sweden

For further information, please contact Lisa VON TRAPP at OECD Headquarters
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4th ANNUAL MEETING OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS (MENA-SBO)

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Tuesday 20 September 2011

from 19:00 *Welcome Reception*

Wednesday 21 September 2011

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration**

8:30 – 9:00 **Opening by the Chair and OECD Secretariat
Delegates' Introductions**

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome Address**

- **H.E. Mr. Mohamad SAFADI**, Minister of Finance, Lebanon

Family photo

9:30 – 10:30 **Country Presentations I: Budgeting in Lebanon**

The country presentations will allow for a more in-depth examination of the budgeting systems of Lebanon and Morocco, in particular budget – related reforms that are in the planning stage, or in the process of being implemented.

OECD's Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division regularly undertakes country reviews of budgeting systems. The objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the budget process in the country under examination, to evaluate national experiences in the light of international best practice and to provide specific policy recommendations, and to offer other countries an opportunity to comment on specific budgeting issues in the country under examination ("peer review"). While such a review has not yet been undertaken in the MENA region, these reviews often form the basis for discussion in the OECD Senior Budget Officials (SBO) network and other regional SBO network meetings.

Following a lead presentation by **Ms. Josiane SAAD**, Director of Budget, Ministry of Finance, Lebanon, the floor will be opened for questions and discussion.

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 12:30 **Public Private Partnerships**

Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements are an established practice in countries worldwide and are flourishing throughout the MENA region, for example in energy and water projects. This session will explore emerging principles for the institutional and procedural treatment of PPPs based on lessons learnt over the past decade, as well as opportunities for peer-to-peer learning in this area and a country case study.

Following lead presentations by **Mr. Ian HAWKESWORTH**, Policy Analyst, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, OECD (GOV), **Dr. Sateh EL ARNAOUT**, Senior Urban and Regional Development Specialist, World Bank, **Mr. Frédéric MARTY**, Fellow, French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), Research Group on Law, Economics and Management, and **Mr. Abdel AL-ROUMI**, President, Partnerships Technical Bureau, Kuwait, the floor will be opened for Delegates to discuss current debates and experiences in their own countries.

12:30 – 14:00 *Luncheon*

14:00 – 15:00 **Country Presentations II: Budgeting in Morocco**

Following a lead presentation by **Mr. Fouzi LEKJAA**, Budget Director, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco, the floor will be opened for questions and discussion.

15:00 – 16:00 **Restoring Public Finances in OECD Countries**

Public finances in many OECD countries were severely affected by the recent economic crisis. Deficits and debt ratios have soared to unsustainable levels, forcing governments to undertake credible consolidation plans. In 2010, the OECD's Senior Budget Officials (SBO) Network emphasized the need to establish a comprehensive overview of how OECD member countries are implementing consolidation plans to restore public finances. The resulting OECD SBO publication – *Restoring Public Finances* – contains an analysis of different consolidation plans and useful comparisons of key consolidation indicators. In addition, individual country notes provide detailed information on budget figures and consolidation measures.

Following a lead presentation by **Mr. Jón BLÖNDAL**, Head of Division, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, OECD (GOV), the floor will be opened for Delegates to discuss current debates and experiences in their own countries.

16:00 – 16:15 *Coffee Break*

from 16:15 **Departure for Byblos. Sightseeing tour followed by Gala Dinner.**

Thursday 22 September 2011

9:00 – 10:30 The Impact of Democratic Transitions on Budgeting and Public Expenditures

Countries across the MENA region have seen citizen's protests calling for increased democracy and political freedom, denouncing corruption, and lamenting the incapacity of the economic system to deliver jobs and social cohesion. As governments seek to meet citizens' demands, new pressures are being put on national budgets. The anxiety to respond to pressing social needs and to gain political legitimacy may easily lead to economic imbalances that could destabilize any nascent political regime. For example, many Latin American governments that emerged in the late 1980s did so in the context of social turmoil in the aftermath of the debt crisis and tried to gain legitimacy by distributing benefits to the population. In some cases, (e.g. Peru, Argentina and Brazil) this generated major fiscal imbalances and hyperinflation that amplified people's dissatisfaction and political instability. This session will explore challenges for budgeting and public expenditures following the "Arab Spring", as well as lessons from other regions which have gone through similar transitions.

Following lead presentations by **Mr. Angel MELGUIZO**, Economist, Americas Desk, OECD Development Centre, **Mr. Balázs ROMHANYI**, Director General, Fiscal Responsibility Institute, Hungary, and **Ms. Alaya Jelassi HABIBA**, Director General, National School of Finance, Tunisia, the floor will be opened for Delegates to discuss current debates and experiences in their own countries.

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 12:30 Transparency and Citizen Information

Efforts are underway worldwide to make government budgeting more transparent and participatory in order to identify and inform national priorities, reduce corruption, and more generally improve efficiency and effectiveness. Governments are investing in new tools such as citizen budgets or new information systems that ease citizen access. Nevertheless, the Open Budget Survey and other studies have found that while governments produce a considerable amount of information on their budgets and other policy activities, this information is often not publically available, or presented in a way that is too technical or complex for the average citizen. This session will explore specific country initiatives, as well as provide broader comparative data and examples from the MENA region and beyond.

Following lead presentations by **Mr. Yasser SOBHI**, Director, Fiscal Policy, Macro-Fiscal Policy Unit, Ministry of Finance, Egypt, **Ms. Lea HAKIM**, Economic Officer, UNDP Project-Office of the Minister, Ministry of Finance, Lebanon, and **Mr. Ibrahim SAIF**, Resident Scholar (Open Budget Index Researcher - Jordan), Carnegie Middle East Center, the floor will be opened for Delegates to discuss current debates and experiences in their own countries.

12:30 – 14:00 *Luncheon*

14:00 – 15:30 Building Capacities of Budget Officials in the MENA Region

This session will explore current training and capacity building opportunities in the region for budget officials at all levels. This includes for example, institutes at the country level, initiatives such as GIFT-MENA, and, most recently, the IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) which is hosted by the Kuwaiti authorities. Delegates are asked to identify in advance the capacity building needs that they believe are most useful and of highest priority.

Following lead presentations by **Ms. Lamia MOUBAYED BISSAT**, Director, Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan, Ministry of Finance, Lebanon, **Mr. Abdelhadi YOUSEF**, Director, IMF Middle East Centre for Economics and Finance (CEF), and **Mr. Carlos CONDE**, Senior Programme Coordinator, MENA-OECD Governance Programme, OECD, the floor will be opened to Delegates for discussion.

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 16:30 Report by the OECD Secretariat and Future Work Programme

This session is designed to update participants on current and future projects by the OECD in the field of budgeting and public expenditures. It is also an opportunity for participants to identify emerging priority areas for future work, the nature of their interest in the subject and their willingness to participate in particular studies.

16:30 Closing by Chairman and Secretariat.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Meeting Location

The meeting will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in the heart of Beirut.

Registration

All Delegates must complete the attached **Conference Registration Form** and return it to the OECD Secretariat (helene.leconte-lucas@oecd.org) **and** the Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan (contact@if.org.lb) **before 7 September 2011**.

Delegates may pick up their badges during the welcome cocktail starting at 19:00 on 20 September or on the morning of 21 September from 8:00-8:30.

Entry Visas

All foreigners must have a valid passport and entry visa to Lebanon. **Passports must be valid for at least six months**. Visas can be obtained in advance at Lebanese embassies and consulates around the world.

A free one month valid visa is granted upon arrival at the Rafic Hariri International airport (Beirut) and frontier offices to the citizens of many countries including: Saudi Arabia – Kuwait – United Arab Emirates – Bahrain – Qatar – Oman – Jordan – Denmark – France – United Kingdom – Hungary – Iceland –Sweden – Turkey – United States.

Citizens of Egypt – Tunisia – Morocco – Algeria – Libya – Yemen – Iraq are required to present the following documents to obtain a one month period valid visa at the airport:

1. A round trip ticket
2. A hotel reservation or a private residential address with a telephone number.
3. A cash amount equivalent to the sum of two thousand US Dollars or an authenticated check of the same value from a recognized bank.

For more information, kindly consult the following site: www.general-security.gov.lb

For specific visa application procedures and forms, please contact the Lebanese Embassy in your country. The Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan can send you a formal invitation letter to facilitate the visa procedure, if need be.

Simultaneous Translation

Simultaneous translation between Arabic and English will be available throughout the meeting.

Welcome Reception

All Delegates (and spouses) are invited to a Welcome Reception on the eve of the meeting, Tuesday, 20 September at 19:00 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Social Program - Sightseeing tour followed by Gala Dinner

Following the conclusion of the first day of the meeting, Wednesday, 21 September, all Delegates (and spouses) are invited to a sightseeing tour of the ancient city of Byblos followed by a Gala Dinner. Coaches will leave from the hotel at 16:15 sharp following the coffee break. After the dinner, transport back to the hotel will be organized.

Airport Transport

To facilitate Delegates stay in Beirut, the Organizers have arranged for airport pick-up for all Delegates. A taxi service will be waiting for Delegates at Rafic El Hariri International Airport with a sign with their name and will transfer Delegates to their hotel (a 10 to 15 minute trip to the Crowne Plaza).

Accommodations

The Lebanese Ministry of Finance has made arrangements with special rates (*prix de faveur*) of 125 USD + 10% VAT (137.50 USD) at the meeting venue:

Crowne Plaza Hotel Beirut

Hamra main Street, Beirut, Lebanon

Tel: +961 (0) 1 754755 • Dir: +961 (0) 1 734123 • Fax: +961 (0) 1 734141 • Email: info@cpbeirut.com

<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/beirut/beyle/hoteldetail>

To make reservations, kindly fill in the attached meeting registration form and return it to helene.leconte-lucas@oecd.org and contact@if.org.lb.

Rooms are limited and reservations should be made preferably by **7 September 2011** in order to guarantee the special rates.

**MEETINGS OF THE
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SENIOR BUDGET OFFICIALS**

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