



## The OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international body that promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It is made up of 35 member countries, a secretariat in Paris, and a committee, drawn from experts from government and other fields, for each work area covered by the Organisation. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We collaborate with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment.

## The MENA-OECD Governance Programme

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is a strategic partnership between MENA and OECD countries to share knowledge and expertise, with a view of disseminating standards and principles of good governance that support the ongoing process of reform in the MENA region. The Programme strengthens collaboration with the most relevant multilateral initiatives currently underway in the region. In particular, the Programme supports the implementation of the G7 Deauville Partnership and assists governments in meeting the eligibility criteria to become a member of the Open Government Partnership. Through these initiatives, the Programme acts as a leading advocate of managing ongoing public governance reforms in the MENA region. The Programme provides a sustainable structure for regional policy dialogue as well as for country specific projects. These projects correspond to the commitment of MENA governments to implement public sector reforms in view of unlocking social and economic development and of meeting citizens' growing expectations in terms of quality services, inclusive policy making and transparency.

## The « Youth in Public Life » Project

The project "[Youth in Public Life: Towards Open and Inclusive Youth Engagement](#)", funded by the MENA Transition Fund of the G7 Deauville Partnership, supports the efforts made by Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia to foster active and inclusive youth engagement in public life and to establish public services that fully meet the needs of young people by:

- Supporting the design and implementation of national youth policies and strategies that are both cross-cutting and applicable to all levels of government;
- Strengthening the legislative and institutional framework at both the central and local levels for engaging youth in public life;
- Promoting innovative ways to strengthen dialogue between youth and public authorities.

The Project includes country-specific activities as well as opportunities for discussion of regional policies and for knowledge exchange between MENA and OECD countries.

## Conference Overview and Objectives

In cooperation with the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS), the OECD is organising a regional conference in Rabat on 3-4 October 2017 on the theme “Bringing Youth Closer to Public Life”. The event is part of the project “Youth in Public Life: Towards an Open and Inclusive Youth Engagement” currently implemented in Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia with funding from the G7 Deauville Partnership MENA Transition Fund.

The aim of this conference is to share good practices and key mechanisms that help ensure public policies and services address the needs and aspirations of the young men and women of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Hosted by the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports, this conference will bring together representatives from youth associations, senior officials from ministries of youth and other ministries working on youth issues as well as non-governmental organizations from the MENA region and OECD countries.

The objective is to consolidate the exchange of good practices between the three project partner countries - Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia - as well as other MENA and OECD countries on challenges and opportunities related to the development and implementation of national youth strategies, key institutional and legislative frameworks for youth engagement and mechanisms to strengthen dialogue between youth and public authorities.

## Day 1 – Tuesday, 3 October 2017

08:30 - 09:00

REGISTRATION & YOUTH FAIR

9:00-10:00  
Imperial Room

OPENING REMARKS

10:00 - 10:30

COCKTAIL OFFERED BY THE MOROCCAN MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

10:30 - 12:00  
Imperial Room

### SESSION 1. YOUTH FIRST: TOWARDS A JOINT VISION FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE MENA REGION

Project partners from Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia and other MENA countries will be invited to present the progress achieved in elaborating and implementing their countries' national youth strategies. Insights will be shared from the process of elaborating youth policy programmes in MENA and OECD countries, in particular how to establish effective mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination and communication, how young men and women can become engaged throughout all phases of the formulation and implementation process of these strategies and how capacities for monitoring and evaluation can be upgraded in a context of limited administrative resources.

12:00 - 13:30

LUNCH

13:30 - 15:00  
Imperial Room

### SESSION 2. GETTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND YOUTH ON BOARD

This session will discuss how to ensure that national youth strategies and policies can be implemented effectively in the form of programmes, activities and initiatives for young people at the subnational level. The session will present good practices to develop youth policies that respond to the different realities faced by youth at the local level, in particular through the collection and use of youth-disaggregated data. Finally, the session will analyse the opportunities and challenges for rolling out youth policies in the context of the ongoing decentralisation reforms in some MENA countries, in particular with a view to how the reform efforts can encourage young people's engagement in public life.

15:00 - 16:30

SESSION 3. YOUTH CIRCLES

**Parallel Circle A:**

**Imperial Room**

*Youth houses: A platform towards more open and participatory policy-making at local level*

The majority of countries in the MENA region dispose of a large network of youth centres/houses which provide a space for entertainment, trainings and workshops.

This Youth Circle will provide an occasion to present the results of a questionnaire that was sent to Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia prior to the conference and discuss possibilities to transform these spaces into genuine platforms for exchange, development and training and ultimately a key player in strengthening youth engagement in public life and open government at the local level.

**Parallel Circle B:**

**Jade Room**

*Let's vote and run: How to overcome existing obstacles for young men and women to participate in political life?*

In line with a global trend, young people in MENA countries are less likely to vote and face considerable challenges to present themselves as candidate in national and local elections (e.g. high minimum age, political culture, financial resources, low levels of trust in political parties and elected officials).

This Youth Circle will explore how young people can be encouraged to participate in elections – both as voters and as candidates – and share success stories from young candidates.

16:30-16:45

**COFFEE BREAK**

16:45 - 17:15  
**Imperial Room**

**Summary of the discussions**

17:15  
**Imperial Room**

**THE RABAT CONCLUSIONS**

## Day 2 – Wednesday 4 October 2017

### SESSION 4: NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS: WHAT COMPOSITION, MANDATE AND INFLUENCE?

#### Jade Room

Ensuring that the voice of young people is heard in the public sphere is an important issue in the formulation of public policies so that policy outcomes are responsive to their needs.

The creation of an institutional body (e.g. a council) can facilitate that their concerns are taken into account and can promote public policies fostering the economic, social and political inclusion of young people.

This session will review the different models of youth councils, as well as their composition, mandate and operating mechanisms.

### LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE PROJECT «GIVING CITIZEN VOICE IN MOROCCO » AND LAUNCH OF THE MOROCCAN OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

#### Imperial Room

9:00 - 11:00

11:00 - 11:30

COFFEE BREAK

### SESSION 5 (JOINT SESSION WITH THE MINISTRY OF REFORM OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SERVICE)

#### WHAT ROLE FOR THE MEDIA IN STRENGTHENING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LIFE?

To guarantee more effective institutional communication, mechanisms are needed to enable citizens to express their voices and demand accountability of government actions. Given their proximity with citizens, local media play a crucial role in this process. This session will focus on how local media can support youth to better engage in public life, and which conditions are necessary to achieve such an objective.

11:30 - 13:30

Imperial Room

13:30

LUNCH

## Context

With an annual population growth of almost 3% compared to a global average of 1%, nearly two-thirds of the population of the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region is under 30 years old. The demographic weight of youth in the region would be a considerable asset if young people were able to fully contribute to the economic and political activities of their country. However, the figures on their economic participation (30% unemployment among young people in the region, the highest in the world, compared to 13% for OECD countries for example) and political one remain below expectations.

Several national surveys highlight the challenges of public and political engagement of young people in the region. In Jordan, the participation rate of young people aged 17-30 in the 2016 legislative elections was of 35%. In Morocco, 36% of the youth participate regularly in elections. In Tunisia, young people are only 1% to be affiliated to a political party. This is a challenge shared by OECD countries, where only 11% of young people are involved in a political party. However, the transformations the region has seen since 2011 has underlined that while young people are disenchanted with traditional means of political engagement, this generation is increasingly comfortable with new means of engagement, including on social media.

In light of this, several governments in the MENA region have undertaken major reforms aimed at strengthening the involvement and inclusion of young people, with a view to enabling them to become both drivers and beneficiaries of inclusive growth. The new Constitution of Morocco has enshrined youth participation in the social, economic, cultural and political development of the country in its article 33. In Tunisia, articles 8 and 133 of the 2014 Constitution recognize youth as an active force in building the nation and seek to establish their full participation and representation in local councils. The Jordanian government has, for its part, placed youth empowerment at the top of its priorities, as outlined by HM King Abdullah II's 6th Working Paper (2016) and the key role endorsed by Jordan in the adoption of the United Nations resolution on Youth, Peace and Security of 9 December 2015.

Moreover, and given the cross-cutting nature of youth policies, countries have recognized the need to develop national integrated youth strategies to ensure coordination between all relevant national and local actors in order to develop more appropriate policies and services that fit the needs and aspirations of young people in the MENA region. In Morocco, the Integrated National Youth Strategy 2015-30 aims to guide, coordinate and improve the coherence of policy interventions for young people. Jordan is committed to formulating a long-term vision for youth through the National Youth Strategy 2017-25. Tunisia has launched a process of national societal consultation with young people and families on the challenges faced by Tunisian youth in order to develop an Integrated National Youth Strategy 2016-2030. In Lebanon, the Council of Ministers endorsed the "Youth Policy in Lebanon" formulated jointly by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Youth Forum for Youth Policy.

In addition, many countries in the region have set up or are working towards establishing institutional frameworks to strengthen the representation and involvement of young people in public life at the central level, such as the United Arab Emirate's Youth Council, the Consultative Council of Youth and Associative Action in Morocco (as provided for in Bill 89-15), or the Supreme Council of Youth under establishment in Tunisia. In addition, the process of regionalization or decentralization in which many MENA countries have committed themselves to also presents challenges in terms of local public governance, but also additional opportunities for engaging young people in public life, as demonstrated by the establishment of regional youth councils in Morocco for example.

Despite the existence of various institutional arrangements, bodies with a formal mandate for youth engagement, national youth policies and strategies, young people continue to face challenges in their access to public services and in their efforts to engage in public life, fuelling a low level of trust in government. It is within this framework that the OECD is committed to supporting the governments of the MENA region in order to implement, coordinate and increase the coherence of interventions for youth and strengthen their involvement and representation in public life.

# CONTACT

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