



Under the high patronage of His Excellency Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia

2nd International Forum on:
The New Cultural Roles of Civil Society in Promoting and Disseminating Good Governance Culture
" Together for the Promotion of Good Governance Culture "
Tunis, Republic of Tunisia: 23-24 March 2018

Tunis Declaration

On the

**Promotion and Dissemination
of Good Governance Culture**

We, the participants in the **Second International Forum on the New Cultural Roles of Civil Society in Promoting and Disseminating Good Governance Culture**, held in Tunis, on 23-24 March 2018, under the high patronage of H.E. Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Tunisian National Authority for Fight Against Corruption (INLUCC), the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FIUW), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA);

Affirming the importance of the civil society's new cultural roles in developing and assessing public policies, establishing participatory democracy and good governance, by linking responsibility to accountability, and promoting transparency culture within the framework of a multi-disciplinary and complimentary participatory approach;

Being engaged in the international efforts, orientations and references related to governance, human development and civil society issues outlined in the **Barcelona Declaration** (October 1995); **the United Nations Report on Governance and Human Development Report** (1997); **the Report on the Millennium Development Goals** (2002); the ESCWA's "**Arab Governance Report: Governance Challenges in Countries Undergoing Transition**" (2013-2014); and **the New Global Sustainable Development Goals 2030**;

Recalling the guidelines and contents of the Document on "**the Cultural Roles of Civil Society for the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace**", adopted by the 7th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Algiers, 2011); **the Action Plan for the Promotion of the Role of Cultural Mediation in the Islamic World**, adopted by the 9th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Muscat, 2015), which both called for the importance of re-contracting with the civil society and allowing it more opportunities for participation in public life to achieve social justice;

Recalling the guidelines of **the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Rights**, endorsed by the 8th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Al Madinah Al Munawarah, 2014), which burdened the civil society with the responsibility to contract with state institutions to activate the contents of this Declaration, *inter alia* the right of participation in laying the foundations for good management and governance of public affairs;

Welcoming the contents of the National Strategy for Governance and Counter-Corruption and its implementation plan, developed by the Tunisian National Authority for Fight Against Corruption;

Guided by the noble religious and shared human moral values that advocate for combating and penalizing corruption, in order to prevent its dire consequences on socioeconomic, political, cultural and spiritual stability of peoples and nations;

Supporting the international efforts related to the fight against corruption, outlined in **the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003); the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption of 2003 (Maputo); and the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention (2010);**

Being aware that the civil society's new cultural roles will certainly contribute to strengthening Member States' cultural policies and that contraction thereon with the civil society will likely ensure constant assessment of their orientations as part of good governance;

Cognizant of the importance of the individual and collective cultural roles in finding the appropriate environment for the achievement of sustainable development, promotion of human rights and peace, establishment of a constitutional state and safeguarding of the stability of countries and societies, in such a way as to contribute to achieving social justice and preventing conflicts;

Believing that the necessary conditions for the achievement of good governance in managing public affairs and fighting corruption necessitate concerted efforts by local authorities, the private sector, civil society bodies, the media, formal and non-formal education and training institutions, universities and scientific research institutions, and regional and international organizations, bodies and institutions to introduce their relevant leading experiences and best practices;

Declare as follows:

I. Asserting the role of governance in public affairs management and the fight against corruption, through:

1. Promoting participatory democracy and contributing to successful peaceful transition of power;
2. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve social justice and prevent conflicts;
3. Improving the performance of public administrations and institutions in ensuring citizens' access to public service and building mutual confidence;
4. Promoting the role of legislative institutions in enacting corruption-deterring laws, controlling government performance, ensuring judicial independence, the rule of the law and the importance of accountability;

5. Fostering transparent launch of public sector tenders and contraction thereon; and respecting their implementation requirements;
6. Fighting bribery, corruption and public fund embezzlement in the public and private sectors;
7. Reporting corruption, protecting its whistleblowers and prosecuting corruption crimes;
8. Monitoring political bodies and civil society associations' funding sources, mechanisms and methods, in such a way as to ensure transparency and integrity;
9. Accelerating the development of efficient measures likely to ensure the integrity and transparency of all forms of public elections;
10. Providing incentives for necessary coordination, cooperation and complementarity among all parties concerned with the promotion and dissemination of good governance culture, from among local authorities, MPs, the private sector, civil society organizations, education institutions, scientific research associations and institutions, media outlets, intellectuals and innovators, and regional and international organizations, bodies and institutions.

II. Stressing the importance of activating the role of civil society and the media in promoting good governance culture, through:

1. Honoring constitutional commitments and international conventions, signed mutually by Member States, which set out the rules for the exercise of the freedom of media, press, publishing and printing, including the audiovisual media and electronic press, in the field of expression, research, investigation, inquiry and exposition of corruption and manipulation of public fund;
2. Involving civil society in the development and assessment of public policies;
3. Applying the provisions of the constitutional references pertaining to the roles of the civil society;
4. Providing media spaces and channels and supporting state media for disseminating good governance culture; and launching communication platforms and discussion campaigns to further national dialogue on good governance culture among public institutions and all segments and orientations of civil society;
5. Assisting Member States lacking active civil society bodies, in providing the appropriate conditions for setting up these bodies in order to be involved in public affairs and sustainable development;
6. Calling for the creation of governance, mediation and prevention mechanisms and bodies in countries lacking them, such as the Ombudsman Institution, the Dignity, Equity and Reconciliation Commission, the National Anti-Corruption Authority,

administrative courts, the Supreme Court of Auditors, the Competitiveness Council, etc, as mechanisms for ensuring a successful and sound democratic transition;

7. Organizing anti-corruption awareness-raising campaigns and spreading a culture of good governance;
8. Stressing the importance of the social influence that should be exerted by active social stakeholders and highlighting the awareness-raising, educational, training and media dimensions that consolidate capacity-building and entrench citizenship and the rule of law in societies.

III. Highlighting the key role of educational institutions, universities and scientific and academic research institutes in spreading a culture of good governance, through:

1. Enhancing human and knowledge capacities of Member States' universities in the field of good governance; promoting cooperation between universities and scientific research institutions; and exchanging students and experiences in such a way as to promote good governance culture;
2. Encouraging research, studies and programmes in the field of disseminating good governance culture; and protecting literary and intellectual property;
3. Incorporating good governance and anti-corruption issues in school curricula, particularly in human and social sciences' subjects in order to raise generations that uphold the values of integrity, dedication and accountability;
4. Promoting the openness of universities and scientific research institutions to their socio-economic environment, both at the regional and international levels, to strengthen their mechanisms of good administrative and academic management;
5. Holding specialized national, regional and international seminars and forums to spread good governance and anti-corruption culture;
6. Creating specialized departments dedicated to good governance issues at the different higher education institutions concerned.

IV. Anchoring a culture of equality and social justice to promote good governance through:

1. Supporting cultural groups and enabling them to contribute to the development and assessment of public policies, in such a way as to promote their openness and solidarity;
2. Intensifying cultural programmes and projects that promote cultural investment, advance development and help to curb poverty and social vulnerability.
3. Ensuring access to and benefitting from cultural public services;

4. Promoting education on a culture of citizenship, equality, equity and good governance;
5. Adopting the cultural proximity policy that entrenches the principles of the right to culture likely to guarantee access to cultural structures and events;
6. Strengthening the political will to adopt and activate good governance in all work facilities, especially at the level of senior leadership positions;
7. Ensuring independence and activating coordination in the various relevant cultural structures.

V. Highlighting the important efforts of national, regional and international organizations and bodies to promote good governance through:

1. Highlighting the key role of international and regional organizations and bodies in promoting and anchoring a culture of good governance;
2. Providing technical expertise and counsel to competent parties to develop their national policies and legislations, in such a way as to entrench the shift to the good governance approach and link responsibility to accountability in public affairs management;
3. Providing reference documents that help raise awareness of good governance and anti-corruption culture and instill such culture in governmental officials, elected representatives, local authorities, children and the youth, and citizens at large;
4. Intensifying training programmes in the field of good governance and countering corruption through building the capacities of governmental officials and civil society leaders concerned, and promoting the exchange of successful experiences;
5. Organizing national, regional and international forums to further raise awareness to the dangers of administrative and financial corruption and imprudent management of public affairs, and their repercussions and dire consequences on hampering socio-economic development and undermining stability and security in societies.
6. Following up the implementation of the outcomes of Tunis Declaration on the Promotion and Dissemination of Good Governance Culture, through organizing a conference between all the organizers of this international forum, in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, in the second half of 2018, in order to develop a regional strategy and roadmap for the activation of the role of cultural, educational, scientific and media institutions in disseminating the culture of good governance in society.

In conclusion, we:

- Express our sincere appreciation of the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia to promote the cultural roles of the civil society and disseminate good governance culture, and its significant contribution to organizing this Forum and ensuring its success.

- Hail the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of good governance; thank it for its cooperation in holding this Forum; and invite it to sustain its efforts pertaining to anchoring good governance culture, especially among civil society bodies in such a way as to support governmental efforts to promote the performance of public institutions for the common good of the society.
- Thank the National Authority for the Fight against Corruption in the Republic of Tunisia for its sustained efforts and remarkable achievements with regard to anchoring the principles of good governance and countering corruption in the Republic of Tunisia, within the framework of a participatory approach that involves different stakeholders including the government, individuals, national organizations and civil society institutions and for its cooperation in organizing this Forum and providing the environment for its success;
- Commend the programmes of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural (ISESCO) and the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) aiming to promote good governance in the policies and programmes of Member States and Universities; thank ISESCO Director General, the FUIW Secretary General, for his commitment to implement these programmes; and invite him to provide more expertise and support regarding these programmes to the competent parties.
- Express sincere thanks and gratitude to H.E. Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for his high patronage of this Forum and sustained support to joint Islamic and international action.

We also extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the President, Government and people of Tunisia, on the 62nd Independence Day, commending the earnest political will of the Tunisian Government to entrench social justice and counter corruption.