



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

Working paper

The 2016-2017 biennium was a period of significant change in the policy environment within which ESCWA operates. On the positive side, the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into force, with the SDG 16 on “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” marking a renewed commitment to the role of governance and peace building in ensuring just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Furthermore, the UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282, respectively) also emphasised Member States’ commitment to peace and development and tasked the UN system with ensuring that conflict prevention is effectively integrated into all its work. On the negative side, conflict, poor governance and violent extremism and their results in terms of destroyed livelihoods have continued to affect in societies, with severe consequences for Welfare of individuals and groups and long-term development opportunities.

Persistent shortfalls in governance and exclusion contribute to explaining why some countries, although having done well in social and economic indicators have spearheaded social unrest. They also underscore the importance of considering sub-national inequalities and differences as well as the weaknesses of state institutions. To building peaceful societies through the culture of good governance will help reduce the risk of conflict eruption or relapse. The unprecedented emphasis on good governance and effective institutions as development objectives made by the 2030 agenda, reflect the consideration of functioning States as entities with inclusive, accountable, and effective institutions that guarantee security to promote peaceful political and social order. Being these elements intrinsic to the development process and not a mere technical precondition for achieving economic, social and environmental progress.

Within this framework, conflict prevention cannot be achieved without good governance and accountable public institutions. Thus, the achievement of sustainable development in the Arab region calls for a transformational and innovative approach that promotes the culture of good governance. Such approach inevitability entails a transformation of government’s role,

institutional frameworks and decision-making processes through enhanced policy coordination and public service integration, as well as innovative public-private partnerships.

Despite the extensive debate over the concept of good governance, its definition remains vague. From the current literature, governance has at least five underpinning dimensions that help to narrow the definition of the concept: accountability, transparency, inclusiveness - including equality of participation and treatment-, effectiveness and contestability (ESCWA, 2014). These dimensions lead to eight major characteristics of what makes governance good: It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law (UNDP, 1997). In sum, good governance can be expressed as a manner to conduct public policy that assures that corruption is minimized, the views of most vulnerable are taken into account in decision-making while being responsive to the present and future needs of society.

This approach recognizes that good governance is not limited to governmental institutions and that societies and their values have a vital role in defining the structures of governance. As a result, the promotion of the values of good governance must be pursued in different ways according to the particularities of each society. Promoting good governance also requires integrated, long-term strategies built upon cooperation between government and citizens. While the rule of law, accountability, and transparency are technical and legal issues at some levels, they are not insusceptible to its interaction with society to produce ruling that is legitimate, effective, and widely supported. Equally, a civil society that is strong, open, and capable of playing a positive role in politics and government must uphold these values. This interaction requires a delicate balance between self-interest and cooperation: citizens and officials must see good governance not only as an ideal, but also as a mean for improving their own lives.

The role of public administrations as well as civil society organizations and citizen engagement in general, constitute diverse and complementary elements of a truly inclusive and representative State. Governments, with the effective participation of citizens, should have the capacity to identify problems, formulate and implement policies to respond to them. None of this is possible without capable public administration with the technical expertise and ethics to implement policy changes and to offer a host of services. When promoting the culture of good governance, the challenge is how to achieve cultural change, towards a good governance based culture where values such as equality, professionalism, ethics, merit and impartiality are the norm, and where citizens are the at the center of State policies. Education and cultural policies acquire a crucial role here, setting the firm foundations of a culture of good governance requires cultural and educational institutions -as well as effective citizen engagement-with the capacity and determination of promoting cultural change to disseminate the principles of good governance within the state institutions and in society at large.

In the light of this information, this forum will explore strategies to disseminate the culture of good governance and the role of educational and cultural institutions, universities, foundations and civil society. The ultimate goal of discussions is to explore and help devise strategies to create national owned governance frameworks that renew and create trust in state institutions.

Participants will discuss issues such as: what kind of public policy in the field of education and culture is needed? Which adequate resources, skills, and leadership, civic engagements are necessary to achieve a behavioural change across public service architecture? Or how a change in attitude by the public administration and society at large can be obtained based on the strengthening of equality, equity, and professional ethics of the public sector.

- **Themes :**
 - The role of governance in the management of public affairs and the fight against corruption.
 - The role of civil society in promoting a culture of good governance.
 - The role of universities and scientific research institutions in spreading the culture of good governance.
 - The efforts and notable experiences of international organizations in promoting good governance.

- **Date and venue:**

23-24 March 2018, Tunis –Republic of Tunisia

- **Working languages:**
 - Arabic;
 - French;
 - English.

- **Organizing parties:**
 - The National Anti-Corruption Authority in the Republic of Tunisia
 - The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
 - The Tunisian Ministry of Cultural Affairs
 - The Federation of Universities of the Islamic World
 - The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

- **Contact points:**

<p>The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</p> <p>Directorate of culture</p> <p>+ Phone: (212) 537 56 06 52 / 53 + Fax: (212) 537566012/13 + E-mail: culture@isesco.org.ma bchebbi@isesco.org.ma + web site www.isesco.org.ma</p>	<p>National Anti-Corruption Authority in the Republic of Tunisia</p> <p>+ Phone: +216 71 840 401 + Fax: .+216 71 840 390 + E-mail: chawkitabib@gmail.com koutheirbouallegue@gmail.com contact@inlucc.tn fatma.ajroud.pro@gmail.com</p>	<p>Ministry of Cultural Affairs</p> <p>Central Governance Cell</p> <p>+ Avenue de la République Carthage Hannibal 2016 Tunis, Republic of Tunisia +Mobile : 96871534 - 98200995 +Phone: +216 71720057 + Fax: +216 71720057 + E-mail: f.babay@mac.gov.tn a.ayadi@mac.gov.tn gouvernance.culture@mac.gov.tn</p>
--	---	--

