Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

Report of the Seminar
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The term “country” as used in the text of this publication also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas.

The term “dollar” normally refers to the United States dollar ($).

The views expressed are those of the individual authors and do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the United Nations.
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This is the report of the seminar on "Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions" held in Rabat, Morocco, on 20-21 of October 2011 that was prepared under the overall responsibility of Haiyan Qian, Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Among other objectives, this report reflects the conclusions of the seminar that was organized under the leadership of Ms. Haiyan Qian and direct supervision of Mr. Roberto Villarreal, Chief, Development Management Branch, DPADM (DMBB/DPADM), counting on the technical support of Ms. Valentina Resta, Governance and Public Administration Officer.

The report — including the annexed preliminary guidelines for establishing or enhancing Economic and Social Councils and similar participatory governance institutions in North Africa — was drafted by Mr. Zuhair A. Al Kayed, working as a consultant under the guidance of Mr. Roberto Villarreal and the direct supervision of Ms. Valentina Resta. As a consultant, Mr. Al Kayed provided valuable substantive inputs to these proceedings, particularly in preparing the background paper for the seminar, which helped frame the meeting discussions and deliberations.

Mr. Roberto Villarreal and Ms. Valentina Resta, DPADM, prepared the agenda and aide-memoire of the seminar and provided final substantive editing of this report.

DPADM/UNDESA is particularly grateful to all sixty-eight participants and experts —representing ten countries mostly from the region— who attended and delivered invaluable contributions to the above seminar. While we cannot single out by name all those who delivered significant contributions, either throughout the deliberations in the sessions or through e-mail, their names and institutions are listed as an Annex.

Great appreciation goes to Ms. Najat Zarrouk and Ms. Hyam Nashash, CEPA members, for their contributions to the seminar.

Deep gratitude is expressed to the Kingdom of Morocco, especially to both Ministries of the Interior and Public Sector Modernization for their great hospitality and facilitation that had an added value to the results of the seminar.

Special thanks go to Ms. Shatha Dweik, Mr. Syed Mustajab Abbas, and Mr. Varun Vig interns with UNDESA, who provided invaluable support respectively in finalizing this report, transcribing the recordings of the seminar and assisting in compiling participants’ feedback and suggestions. Many thanks also go to the interpreters who ensured smooth communication in Arabic, English, and French, as their inputs and contributions were fundamental to the success of this event. Their names and affiliation are listed as an Annex to this report.
Executive Summary

This report aims to disseminate information assisting governments, civil society, and the private sector to further reflect on effective and viable participatory approaches and institutions that may contribute to further foster development in North African countries.

The Development Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) aims to strengthen governance and public administration capacity towards the achievement of International Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the millennium development goals (MDGs), through the promotion of partnerships between State and non-State actors and civic engagement.

Moreover, DMB has been implementing a development account project aimed at strengthening the capacities of economic and social councils (ESCs) and similar institutions in African countries, to support the participatory process and the quality of public policymaking, implementation and monitoring, with the ultimate objective of enhancing national capacities for the achievement of the MDGs. Within the agenda of this project, UNDESA considers that it is important to devote necessary attention to participatory governance institutions, such as ESCs and other similar ones that may assist to enhance public governance for development in North African countries. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) during its 10th session (held in New York on 4-8 April 2011) drew attention on this topic in the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Councils (ECOSOC).

In line with CEPA recommendations, a seminar on “Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and Their Organizations in Public Administration Affairs through Adequate Institutions” was organized by DMB in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Sector Modernization of the Kingdom of Morocco. It took place in Rabat, Morocco, on 20-21 October 2011.

This seminar was conducted as part of a series of meetings aiming to be of value added to the new practices and innovative initiatives of citizen engagement for public development. The series included the expert group meeting on engaging citizens to enhance public sector held at the United Nations (UN) premises in Vienna, Austria on 7-8 July 2011; a first capacity-building workshop on engaging citizens to enhance public service delivery and strengthen accountability held in Vienna on 11-13 July 2011; and a second capacity building workshop on the same theme which took place in Marrakesh, Morocco on 26-27 October 2011.

The seminar brought together experts and practitioners from government and non-government institutions, mostly from North Africa, and others with a rich experience on the themes covered in the seminar agenda. The seminar started with the
presentation and discussion of a background paper on challenges and opportunities of participatory governance in North Africa, with a focus on the conceptual framework, practices and their implications.

The experts and practitioners spent two days discussing participatory governance and its challenges and opportunities in North Africa as well as the roles of ESCs and similar institutions and the limitations and potential for more citizen engagement in public policy development. Participants discussed and presented cases on participatory approaches, tools, and strategies of public administration in their respective countries, which showed the dire need for support in terms of capacity building in different areas in order to empower citizens and their institutions to be able to take their roles and responsibilities in the public development arena.

Governance is concerned with the process of focusing on the distribution of public responsibility across multiple stakeholders. Participation, on the other hand, offers important tools such as gaining insights into the dynamics of participatory governance; a type of road-map for identifying and assessing the component parts of participatory governance; and an insight into alternative relationships between citizens and their public institutions (1).

In addition, participatory governance institutions, based on citizens’ involvement, have been progressing from traditional forms of public participation —public meetings, consultations documents, committee co-option— to customer-oriented ones such as complaints-suggestion schemes and satisfaction surveys. Innovative methods, including focus groups, citizens’ panels and referenda adopted are designed to consult citizens on issues or, alternatively, encourage citizen deliberation over issues such as, citizens’ juries, community needs assessments and plans, and visioning studies (2).

Nowadays participatory governance institutions are shifting to a more powerful role than ever, due to the fact that the prerequisite of citizens’ engagement is highly needed for both government and citizens to maintain a democratic mechanism that enhances govern-governed trust relationships. The new development of citizen engagement through participatory governance institutions has shifted the participatory focus from the user’s based (as depicted in 1998 in the UK An introductory guide: how to council your users and from the USA 1993 Government Performance and Results Act), where the focus is for citizens, to a new trend of participatory governance institutions where the focus is shared by the citizen on public policy and interest issues.

However, this seminar was held in a timely manner within the Arab Spring stage to focus on the challenges and opportunities of participatory governance in North African countries, where reflections of the outcome of the uprisings were clearly apparent in the presentations, discussions on the interventions during the seminar sessions. Such reflections helped highlight the issues related to the improvement and strengthening of participatory governance. This was achieved through sharing experiences of different countries and presenting actions and measures aimed at overcoming the challenges of governance. The seminar agreed on comprehensive recommendations that focus on major issues such as participatory governance, rules,
institutions and practices; the role of leaders and civil societies and dialogue; the constitutionalization of evaluation of actions of the state and the role and contributions of the UN system, the international organizations and donor countries.

**Background**

The North Africa region recently witnessed a spark of mass upheaval that, starting in Tunisia and Egypt, spread to Libya, following suite in Algeria and Morocco, and extended to other countries in the Middle East.

The recent North African uprisings appear to have been triggered largely by socio-economic concerns, which led large population groups to question the political aptitude of their governments. Their challenges "lie at the crossroads of governance and development—and so do the opportunities"\(^\text{(3)}\). Triggers to protest include human rights violations, government corruption, social inequality, concentration of wealth in the hands of rulers detached for decades from the citizens and their needs, economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, unpromising opportunities for younger and more educated generations, and a number of socio-demographic structural factors, such as urbanization, education, and access to international references and global information. Increasing food prices and global famine rates have also been precipitating factors.

As for the actors most visible in the recent social upheaval in the region, urban populations and, especially the youth occupy a prominent place, and the participation of women has been noteworthy. Northern African men and women are now asking for greater transparency of public information, accountability of their governments, and a say over public services and in policymaking processes. The demands for change are thus led by citizens, in contrast to similar phenomena observed, for example, two decades ago in Eastern Europe and Latin America, or more recently in South East Asia, where claims for political reform have come mainly from specific socio-economic classes or sectors, such as workers, students, or indigenous peoples. In North Africa, it is citizens in a broader sense who demand to be more engaged in public development affairs.

Civic engagement in public governance is a complex process and consists of identifying stakeholders, establishing legal and administrative systems that allow for their engagement by public officials, and, in general, developing a wide range of participatory mechanisms and institutions, or reforming some existing ones. In this respect, several fundamental questions come to mind which merit careful thought, in the case of North Africa, to advance public governance:

- What are the risks and opportunities faced by North African countries about pursuing more participatory approaches to public governance?
- How can social and political demands of the people be effectively addressed, for development sake, through innovative public strategies and policies for more open and systematic participation?
- To what extent can on-going demands for change be met through conventional political institutions and to what degree may institutional innovations be needed?
for adequate participation and engagement of citizens in different aspects of development management?

- How would public institutions designed to address these aims look like? How can conventional representative democratic institutions be complemented by innovative participatory ones to enhance development management?
- Which actions should be assessed by governments and society and eventually included in an institutional transformation agenda for enhancing public governance and harnessing development over the next years: legal reforms, capacity building within civil society, training of public officers on transparent and participatory processes and instruments?
- For instance, national ESCs and other similar institutions provide in many countries a framework for multi-stakeholder dialogue and analysis on development challenges at the national level and contribute to policymaking by governments in a flexible and an informed and participatory manner (4).
- ESCs complement other institutions such as Parliaments, which, in turn, have specific functions in law making, political affairs, monitoring and controlling the work of the executive authorities. ESCs contribute in countries around the world with a more direct dialogue among diverse development stakeholders. Some ESCs include only organizations of workers and employers and focus narrowly on labour issues within a traditional social dialogue framework, yet others have a wider membership, encompassing different economic and social groups, and promote a broader dialogue on public and private development matters. Moreover, similar participatory multi-stakeholders institutions have different features and scope, depending on the respective context and development challenges they address, for example: civic councils, urban development observatories, sustainable development or poverty reduction observatories, different types of ombudsman institutions involving citizens’ engagement in some form in the overseeing of public services, and so on.

With this as a general background, additional questions are:

- How can institutions of these different kinds serve countries in North Africa to enhance public governance for development?
- Which of these, or other new ones, can help governments, citizens, the private sector and civil society, to better articulate their views and establish adequate roles to jointly promote dynamic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development?
- How do Parliaments, ESCs and other similar participatory governance institutions complement each other and could work together to foster an inclusive national development agenda?
- Which institutional, technical and human capacities are needed for ESCs and similar institutions to effectively contribute to development management in ways that articulate diverse needs and priorities of the population?

Since January 2009, UNDESA, through DPADM, and in particular the Development Management Branch (DMB), has been implementing a project funded by the UN General Assembly through the UN Development Account, aimed at strengthening the capacities of ESCs and similar institutions in African countries, to support the participatory process in —and the quality of— public policymaking, implementation
and monitoring, with the ultimate objective of enhancing national capacities for the achievement of the MDGs.

Within the framework of this project, it seems important, under the conditions observed in North African countries in 2011, to devote necessary attention to enhancing institutions for participatory governance in the region in order to improve the capacity of governments for effective development management. This requires analysis on how diverse stakeholders can better come together to improve governance through participatory methods and how public administration can incorporate, through adequate institutional development, the changes that may be appropriate to make development more dynamic, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable in North Africa in the years to come. The value of institutions like the ESCs and other similar ones is to be acknowledged, while the opportunities and challenges for creating, reforming, and enhancing participatory governance institutions in general is to be assessed.

For this purpose, DMB/DPADM organized, in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Sector Modernization of the Kingdom of Morocco, a seminar on “Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and Their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions”. The seminar took place at the Hotel La Tour Hassan, 26 rue Chellah, in Rabat, Morocco, on 20-21 October 2011.

This activity was not only timely in the wake of recent developments in the region. It was also included among the requests made to the Secretariat by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration during its 10th session (held in New York on 4 - 8 April 2011) as part of the draft resolution recommended for adoption by UNDESA.

**Seminar Objectives**

The seminar provided a forum for discussion on the challenges and opportunities currently faced in the region for the engagement of citizens and their organizations—in the private sector and in civil society—to enhance public governance, improve public accountability and foster the achievement of the MDGs. It encouraged experts to review and assess existing institutions for participatory governance in the region, as well as in other parts of the world, which offer untapped possibilities for enhancing public governance in North African countries and would assist to foster in the coming years a dynamic, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable process of development.

The seminar was aimed at analyzing and consolidating information on viable institutional frameworks (such as ESCs or other similar institutions), instruments, and mechanisms for citizen engagement in North African countries in relation to policy-making processes, budgeting and auditing, and the social oversight of public service delivery to enhance the responsiveness, transparency, and accountability of the public sector.

The seminar was also expected to help identify future opportunities for capacity building activities in North Africa including new capacity building actions that could
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be pursued by UNDESA in collaboration with other organizations within the UN system.

**Seminar Results and Organization**

The seminar brought together sixty-eight experts on matters related to public governance in North Africa—coming mostly from the region including some representatives from the Middle East\(^5\). Through this exchange of knowledge, information, experiences, and good practices, UNDESA produced this analytical report based on the deliberations and conclusions of experts, referring to their overall views and recommendations.

The seminar format and dynamics were similar to that of a United Nations Expert Group Meeting. It consisted of six thematic topics each organized in a separate session in addition to the opening ceremony, followed by a presentation of the seminar background paper by Dr. Zuhair A. Al Kayed \(^6\), plenary debates, and a closing session. Each session, chaired by an expert, started with initial interventions by discussants followed by interactive debate among the participants who shared their experience and information on participatory governance in North Africa.

Briefly, the sessions conducted were as follow:

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**Closing Session: Closing remarks**
Seminar Proceedings

The Opening Ceremony

The seminar began with an opening ceremony moderated by Mr. Roberto Villarreal (UNDESA, New York). Remarks were delivered by H.E. Mohamed S. El-Alami, Minister of Public Sector Modernization in the Kingdom of Morocco Delegate to the Prime Minister; Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, UNECA/sub-regional Office of North Africa (SRO-NA); and Mr. Vito Intini, First Economic Affairs Officer of the Division for Emerging and Conflict Related Issues, UNESCWA.

The moderator stated that the seminar intended to explore how the United Nations could assist North African countries to achieve their development agenda in the future. He expressed gratitude to UNECA, and its sub-regional Office for North Africa in Rabat for co-organizing this event as well as the other United Nations entities that shared resources and knowledge providing advice on substantive matters. The moderator made a brief introduction on procedural matters and expressed appreciation and thanks to the Kingdom of Morocco, partner and host of the seminar, as a nation that is showing that a number of changes can be attained through vision, leadership, dialogue, negotiation, and ambitious views of the future. He stated that more than sixty people attended the seminar (instead of twenty originally expected), coming from a large number of governments, private sector, civil societies, and academia, in the region and outside the region in addition to representatives of the United Nations family with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Morocco. Then the moderator described the main objectives of the seminar that came as a reflection on the changes taking place and social and political disruptions experienced by some countries in the region in the past eleven months.

These changes were generated by structural and long term problems and lack of opportunities for the development of the large population groups. With regards to public administration, there are some disconnections between governments and citizens, in addition to increasing demands and wider popular awareness of this chronic problem facilitated by the use of information and communications technology (ICT).

Intended to assist governments in achieving the MDGs, the United Nations sought to receive advice from experts and participants attending the seminar on concrete capacity building and technical assistance initiatives that can be developed in the region in the coming years.

Minister El-Alami, focused on the importance of shared accountability – resulting from the fast development and change happened lately in North Africa – and its relevance to anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability efforts taking place in Morocco with the new constitution adopted in July 2011. This constitution, he added, encompasses many new rules expected to enhance democracy to the level of democratic societies around the globe. One chapter (chapter 12) is devoted to good governance that stimulates more interactions at all levels in the society and is expected to satisfy the public demands in terms of justice, equality, and democracy.

The choice of the subject, Ms. Ben Soltane stated, derived from the centrality of governance particularly because not all human development indicators in the last ten years reached the desired level in the region. There are preconditions for a stable and sustainable development including the creation of a state that is centred on the rule of law whose institutions operate based on transparency and where progress and wealth benefit all citizens without discrimination. Citizens should enjoy equal opportunities and access to basic services, the right to free expression, and accountability by elected officials. Also, all stakeholders should have the right to participate with the government in the political debate. Why today? The Arab uprising highlights the need for better governance, as participatory governance is a mean for a successful transition. However, it needs certain important requirements that must be addressed in North African countries where some initiatives are taking place in Tunisia and Morocco. Why the United Nations? Because participatory governance is a priority concern for the United Nations. It is therefore natural that UNDESA, UNECA, and ESCWA came together to join efforts to support countries in transition.

Mr. Vito Intini raised the question: Why is participatory governance important? He stated that it is an important instrument to achieve other ends such as growth, microeconomic stability, and social equity. In addition it is a public good that is needed by all citizens where government must provide it for citizens equally. The speaker identified several criticisms to governance: its relationship with growth is poorly understood; it is a normative notion; it is based on a deliberate political model used in the western countries; and there is no proof that in participatory governance there is a link between democracy and development.

Another view in the Arab region looks towards Islam for a notion of participatory governance based on the pillars of Islamic perspective on social and political organization, namely shura (consultative participatory process), justice, equality, and human dignity as the bases of participatory governance. He identified two universal criteria characterizing the latter: namely inclusiveness and accountability. However, participatory governance needs to be based on a shared political vision. The performance of countries in the region in terms of governance quality is lower than expected compared to their income levels. This is because the political power is highly concentrated in the executive with close control on the judiciary and legislative powers as well as the national media. Also governments are very selective in dealing with CSOs in service provision but reluctant to involve them in institutional legal reforms. CSOs suffer from many challenges including politicization, personalization, dependency, and patronage.

In this region, governance responsibility towards the society gets diluted in a myriad of loyalties, rivalry, and personal interest. Hence, civil strife conflicts are more likely to happen when accompanied by negative income shocks and in the context of weak institutions.
Background Paper Presentation

**Moderator:** Ms. Valentina Resta (DESA/ DPADM)  
**Presenter:** Mr. Zuhair Al Kayed (Consultant, Jordan)

**Summary of Presentation and Discussion**

The presentation started by providing some definitions of relevant terminology and showing the effect of poor governance on poor service delivery, corruption, citizen alienation, and rule of thumb instead of rule of law (factors common in the region that is going through a transition stage). It also focused on poor human development indicators in most countries in the region where authoritarian regimes are dominant. These, which are very relevant to the lack of participatory governance, represented triggers of the Arab uprising. It argued that as long as the authoritarian regimes exist in the region, reforms and positive change are highly unlikely to occur; instead, peaceful protests may turn into violent ones. Challenges in the region were pinpointed, as well as opportunities for the transition stage including more democracy, public sector reforms, empowerment of CSOs and NGOs, powerful independent social media, and broader role of ICT in citizens’ engagement. Institutions that may enhance participatory governance were identified with more focus on ESCs. The presenter reflected upon the enabling environment to foster citizens’ engagement – including capacity building for citizen engagement, enabling free social media, and use of ICT – and the obstacles created by some authoritarian regimes.

Discussions focused on the special characteristics of the region (cultural differences and extreme poverty and illiteracy in politics among other dilemmas that need mitigation); the needs for clear strategic vision on participation, research, education, and risk assessment; and the impact of globalized factors and the ICT revolution – considering that young women and men represent the majority of the population in the region and are the actors of change. In addition, speakers mentioned that government officials in the region tend to be accountable upwards to the regimes instead of downwards to the citizens. Such trend is relevant to the kind of social contract between the regime and the citizen that is an adhesion by the latter to the regime. Such social contract has its reflection in most political, economic, and social aspects damaging any endeavour to enhance participatory governance. It was mentioned that the region could draw from other best practices around the globe while keeping cultural values intact. The relevance of better education to enhance citizens’ knowledge and skills was emphasized. The issue of anticorruption was also raised highlighting the role citizens can play in exposing corruption practices (to prevent negative impacts on economic, social, and political systems) throughout independent and free media and ICT.

**Session I: Desirability and Rationale of Participatory Governance in North Africa**

**Moderator:** Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, UNECA/SRO-NA.
Discussants:
Mr. Djoudi Bouras, CNES (Algeria)
Dr. Ahmed El-Naggar Elnaggar, Al-Ahram Center (Egypt)
Mr. Abdellamoz Saddouk, CGEM (Morocco)
Mr. Omar Benida, ESC (Morocco)
Ms. Fatna Khayel, Rural Community (Morocco)
Mr. Bruno Pouezat, United Nations, (Morocco)

The first session was aimed at analyzing the desirability and rationale of participatory governance in North Africa in light of the recommendations of the seminar – organized by ECA the day before also in Rabat – on the Governance Crisis in North Africa: Assessing the Role of Government, Social Movements, and Civil Society. Interventions by discussants were followed by a debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion were:

- Which are some of the most important and effective participatory governance institutions in the region?
- Where do ESCs exist, and what are their roles and accomplishments regarding participatory governance?
- Which other similar institutions exist and which are/have been their contributions?
- Can innovative participatory institutions be introduced in addition to conventional representative democratic ones?
- Would they facilitate the mutually reinforcing nexus between governance and development and ultimately enhance an equitably and inclusive socio-economic and political development in North Africa?
- Are there any examples of existing innovative participatory mechanisms and institutions in the region that have a greater potential of replication?

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

An institution of participatory governance beneficial for the citizen is an institution that respects and listens permanently to all citizens and acts as their interlocutor; responds to their needs with their contribution; organizes and structures them; and strengthens their capacity through adequate information and technical support. In short, it is an institution that functions as a crosscutting entity that takes responsibilities of participatory governance, acts and sees itself as a partner. Furthermore, participatory governance is a long term learning process that requires a sustained commitment for all the stakeholders. For participatory governance to contribute to civic engagement, the participatory approach should ensure that those who are involved (experts, facilitators, and communities) do not corrupt the process of participation by taking advantage of it, thus destroying the spirit of cooperative efforts and ensuing social capital.

Among the participatory governance institutions existing in North Africa, ESCs are consultative and not deliberative organs that aspire to be representative of civil society. However, they face criticisms from both government and citizens. Speakers
referred to the need for ESCs to metabolize change processes and integrate them into a more general perspective that is coherent in terms of public policy. CNES in Algeria provides an example of good practice where it organized a consultation called the "general status of CSOs" which was attended by 1,400 associations; some of them officially recognized in Algeria and others not. Similar participatory governance institutions mentioned, in addition to ESC in Algeria, include the centre for population studies, the observatories of employment and fight against corruption, and the communities for rural engagement. The latter provide support to local development actors in project formulation as part of integrated rural development projects (6,000 projects since 2008). These are expected to bring about extensive results, although there is a lack of capacity and weak civil society involvement in these activities.

Regarding the Moroccan experience, the need to strengthen interaction among actors was highlighted. The country has certain participatory governance institutions including the recently established ESC, a central body to fight corruption as a tripartite structure (government, CSO, and private sector), and a national commission on good governance. However, the results of these institutions are not in line with expectations, and the executive authority usually does not consider their recommendations. A municipal council in Morocco was presented as an example of innovative participatory institution and the mechanism of the municipal development plan which allows all stakeholders and actors working jointly with the support of national institutions and the United Nations system (through capacity building for the local authority, CSOs, and other partners).

In general, it was underlined that accountability requires democracy which unfortunately does not exist in most Arab countries. The latter do not allow CSOs to be involved in many issues in addition to fighting corruption, and they accuse most CSOs of lack of loyalty to the state, especially when they have external funds. All control or accountability institutions in most Arab countries suffer from lack of independence, excessive interference from the executive authorities, and lack of CSO involvement in the accountability of institutions deliberations while such institutions do not share their reports with the public. This deprives the CSOs from participating in policy making and holding the responsibility of shared or social accountability. As a result the poor and marginalized suffering will continue in the absence of democracy, justice, integrity, equality, and better service delivery in the region. Participants also emphasized the need to disseminate the concepts and teach lessons about accountability and participatory governance in North Africa.

Discussions raised a question regarding the lack of free media in North Africa and that most positive changes occurred due to the youth revolt. Questions were also raised regarding the real roles of participatory institutions in general and ESCs in North Africa in terms of effectiveness and civil society or citizens’ inclusiveness. It was also mentioned that their roles are limited in consultation, and they tend to be reactive to government’s needs. As for the issue of legitimacy of representative institutions, participants said that this should be solved with the proximity to concerned society groups. It was also mentioned that institutions in North Africa are in need for highly skilled human and technical resources to carry out their missions,
especially women and youth since they have the potential to bring about major change politically and socially.

In sum, both the high rationale and desirability for participatory governance in North Africa were underscored. Some ESCs and other relevant institutions exist; however, they are not effective in comparison to those operating in developed countries due to the fact that they lack empowerment in several areas, including skilled human and technical resources, proper membership, powerful roles that allow more inputs in relevant public policy issues, and more involvement in pre-laws formulation. Hence, it is expected that new changes in the region will allow enhancement in the institutions that facilitate more effective citizens’ engagement. To this end, technical and professional support is highly needed where UNDESA and other United Nations agencies can play a significant role. Meanwhile the provisional guidelines for the establishment of ESCs and relevant institutions, annexed to this report, are expected to be of great help in this regard.

Session II: Operability of Participatory Governance in North Africa - Strategies/Policies Addressing its Challenges and Risks and Maximizing its Opportunities and Advantages

Moderator: Mr. Vito Intini, ECRI, UNESCWA
Discussants:
Mr. El Hadi Makboul, CENEAP (Algeria)
Mr. Chakib Guessous (Morocco)
Mr. Ahmed Shebani (Libya)

Session II deliberations started with initial interventions from the above discussants followed by a general debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion were:

- What are governments and other development stakeholders in civil society and private sector pursuing in regard to participation and inclusiveness in development management?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in designing and implementing strategies and policies for institutionalized participation in North African countries—both at the national and local level?
- What are the motivations, advantages, and risks associated with government initiatives compared to those that people foster in terms of their legitimacy, sustainability, effectiveness, etc.?
- Can governments allow participants to have concrete influence in shaping development according to their needs and bring about social change and greater accountability?
- What would be the roles, advantages, and possibilities to open up for citizen engagement in development management at the national or local levels?

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

The policy of openness implemented in Morocco is very supportive of participatory governance, and it increased awareness of citizens and allowed having local
associations in all localities including the poor and isolated areas. The existence of such policy, if well directed, will facilitate the emergence of powerful agents of participatory governance. Another example from the same country on strengthening education—relevant to the MDGs and participatory governance—described multi-stakeholders organisms in education including the Supreme Council of teaching (prided for by the constitution) and the Council of School Management (regulated in each school). However, it was mentioned that participation in these structures presents challenges while the Ministry of Education also faces participatory governance challenges.

The rural integrated approach in Algeria was presented as a participatory model that started with the identification of all the local interlocutors who then identified integrated rural development projects (currently 6,000 initiatives), and rural animation committees were set up to support each project, followed by capacity-building for local stakeholders. This participatory approach has stabilized the population in the country addressing the strong urbanization trends.

However, challenges to participatory governance in North Africa may include adoption of an approach based on the rule of law in policy formulation to circumvent malfunctioning; redefining the relationship between governor-governed; and capacity building of all stakeholders. Meanwhile, opportunities for North African countries include that these countries ratified all international conventions. If they work for their implementation, they will converge naturally to participatory governance. Thus measures for participatory governance must be based on international commitments. In addition, new constitutions in North African countries may give the supremacy of international law over national ones. This could offer greater opportunities for the progress of the rule of law and accelerating governance reforms.

An intervention by Mr. Roberto Villarreal (UNDESA) framed discussion in the context of the conclusions of Member States at the United Nations Global Summit on the MDGs which took place in New York in September 2010\(^9\). The centrality of participation of all segments of society, including the poor and the disadvantaged, in decision-making processes is clearly visible in these conclusions representing a preliminary assessment in terms of expectations on the MDGs.

The case of Libya and its suffering from the last regime was presented including the expectations for representative and participatory democracy through the help of NGOs and international organizations, especially the United Nations.

The discussion referred then to lessons from social and youth movements that have an impact not only on the leadership but also on all domains of a society. A critical analysis and self-criticism of what has happened is needed in order to learn from these movements in the region. Youth movements must be represented in the new changes and policy development, and education is a very important means in creating the basis for participatory governance—although it takes a long time to bear fruits, it could solve many problems in the region.

Focus was given to the importance of participation and local governance based on the principle of subsidiarity (local governments may have more dynamism when the
central level does not work effectively). Several initiatives that involve citizens and CSOs at the local level, e.g. in Algeria and Morocco, could be scaled up at the national and the regional levels. However, there is a need for complementary, coordination and coherence among all available participatory mechanisms and interventions including partnership between people and the public powers, the technical advisor bodies, etc.

Some constraints to participatory governance in the region were discussed including the lack of participation in project design in the Arab world. Challenges mentioned in terms of governance tools, e.g. participatory budgeting, included the lack of parliament capacity for monitoring projects, the constraint to auditing action of the state, (such audits do not evaluate public policies but only the regularity of allocation of funds without an evaluation of the socio-economic performance), the limited time for budget examination by parliament, and the legal aspects which do not allow official to declare information about public plans.

Another challenge is that civil society lacks the knowledge to monitor budgets and their impact on the population and conduct strategic analysis to identify omissions or misallocations. Without this knowledge, civil society is unable to demand information on the budgets at the national and local levels, access to data, advocate for a rule of law-based approach, a gender approach, among others, advocate for the participation in the development of performance and results-based indicators, organize petitions, etc. Also, it needs to partner with the state rather than try to replace it. Participatory governance strategies will not be successful in the presence of these limitations.

Firstly, there is a need to conceptualize terms and define the actors of participatory governance. These, in line with a World Bank\(^{10}\) grouping, can be divided into five categories:

- Central government executive (including cross-cutting control agencies responsible for public finance and human resources management and frontline regulatory and services provision agencies);
- Formal oversight institutions outside the executive, including the judiciary, parliament, and other independent oversight institutions;
- Sub-national governments and local communities with their own local arrangements for control and accountability;
- Civil society and the private sector, both in their role as watch-dogs (including the independent media and the recipients of services and regulations representing a potential source of pressure for better performance);
- Political actors and institutions as the apex, setting broad goals and direction of the system as a whole.

Secondly, actors’ responsibilities need to be defined and means and modalities of dialogue spearheaded by governments. In particular, participants emphasized the need to identify and strengthened the roles of CSOs and local government institutions. In parallel they also referred to the role of political parties, NGOs, trade unions, etc., to sustain the public pressure on the government and have balanced policies.
Finally, discussions on operationalizing participatory governance focused on key aspects that must be taken into account including strategic and action plans based on the main priorities, values, performance indicators, and measures to be identified at the local as well as the national levels in North Africa. High consideration was also paid to public system reforms that allow for openness and inclusiveness of all stakeholders, equal opportunities for women and youth, human capacity-building for all relevant institutions, adoption of the rule of law, and reconsideration of the kind of relationship between citizens and the official authorities based on mutual respect and trust.

Session III: Prerequisites for Participatory Governance in North Africa

Moderator: Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, ECA (Addis Ababa)
Discussants:
   Ms. Hyam Nashash, member of the CEPA (Jordan).
   Ms. Nora Borsali (Tunisia)
   Mr. Moncif Al Haderi, Ministry of the Interior (Morocco)

The session examined the prerequisites for participatory governance in North Africa by identifying its enabling conditions. Key issues proposed for discussion were:

- Can participatory processes be stimulated through an enabling environment?
- What would be the relative importance of the following and other related conditions?
  - Constitutional and legislation amendment;
  - Facilitation of the activities of associations and organizations of civil society;
  - Access to public information;
  - Transparency and proactive public reporting;
  - e-service delivery;
  - e-participation particularly for the poorest sectors of the population, grassroots organizations, youth, and women.

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

Presentations focused on three issues: first, the involvement of all actors including the poor and marginalized groups for effective participatory governance. Second, the main challenge facing countries that attempt to undertake good governance is not the what, but why problems persist and how to overcome them. Third, the need for effective networking in order to reach a common ground in the region. Prerequisites for participatory governance in North Africa include the need for civil society to receive coaching to better understand the new opportunities provided by new and emended constitutions and to be equipped with information and technical assistance to fully play its role. Hence, the international organizations role is critical to upgrade the civil society at the same level as that of international civil society. In addition, a CSO needs to know how to monitor its programme budget and its impact on the population for advocacy and strategic analysis.
Another important prerequisite to be considered is the financial support to CSOs that needs to be independent from their managerial capacity needs. Moreover, countries in North Africa have not yet started — and do not really know how — to benefit from the transformative potential of open government and move towards a more participatory inclusion in terms of service delivery and democratic process. An example of participatory governance was offered in Tunisia by the national council of the reform (the "Haute Instance"), a multi-actor structure whose first meeting was held within the framework of the ESC. This initiative associated CSOs in the exercise of democracy with three commissions: on the abuse of human rights, on corruption, and on political reforms.

Participants agreed that change cannot happen only through constitutional reforms. There is a need for implementation of legal provisions for access to information; open government allowing dissemination of needed public information to a wide range of actors. Discussions therefore highlighted the need for public administration in North Africa to inform citizens both electronically and through documents, involve them in dialogue and consultation, and recognize the role of civil society and citizens. Moreover, initiatives need to be supported and enhanced in the region including redefining the relationship between government and citizens; and capacity-building for government institutions and all other stakeholders preceded by education and sensitization; and firm commitment by leaders and government officials to be accountable for their decisions and actions that have impact on the public interest.

Furthermore, ICT tools are a way of organizing the emergence of a truly opened government via a universal access rather than limited communication and information tools; universal participation rather than restricted to specific groups and informal institutions and officials; and a collaborative production of cultural, economic, or other types of content rather than a centralized one are prerequisites for open government that allows a range of activities including dissemination of more information for accountability, improved participatory governance, and coproduction of public services.

All these, among other aspects, will be a prerequisite for participatory governance in North Africa. Needless to note that North African countries are involved and have ratified all international conventions; however that does not automatically translate in their implementation. Hence, the evaluation of participatory governance institutions' outcomes must be based on relevant international conventions. The United Nations can play an effective role in supporting this evaluation. Meanwhile, governance initiatives that are based on real participation and mutual respect between governments' officials and other stakeholders —with transparent information allowing citizens to be fully engaged in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of relevant public policies and projects—will motivate citizens to be more involved and reduce the risk for failure. However, effective participation in the region requires specific education of citizens relevant to the actual participation's stage (the International Association of Public Participation (IAPP)\(^{(1)}\) conceptualizes participation in five stages:
Discussions clearly showed that citizens in the region are barely informed about public issues (which is only the first stage on participation) keeping in mind that most citizens ignore their rights or are illiterate. Indeed, activation of the role of ESCs and relevant institutions may open more opportunities for citizens’ engagement in all stages.

**Session IV: Interaction between Participatory Governance and Enhanced Transparency and Accountability**

**Moderator:** Ms. Valentina Resta, UNDESA (New York)

**Discussants:**
- Mohamed Abdellahi Bellil, 3CM (Mauritania)
- Prof. Mohamed Harakat, REMA (Morocco)
- Ms. Fatim-Zahra Benharbet, CGEM (Morocco)

This session analyzed the ways in which enhanced transparency and accountability interact with participatory governance. The deliberations were kick–started by some initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion were:

- How can participatory governance institutions enhance accountability, prevent corruption, and increase the effectiveness of public service delivery?
- What specifically is needed for participatory governance institutions to promote social justice in the context of development by holding state and non-state actors accountable for addressing the needs of the poor (youth and women particularly)?
- How can participatory governance institutions help citizens reach equal opportunities, reach adequate levels of human dignity and development, realize substantive freedoms, and access better public services?
- What are ESCs and similar institutions in countries of the region doing in this regard?

**Summary of Presentations and Discussions**

The moderator highlighted the importance of horizontal accountability, in addition to the traditional vertical accountability, where officials should be accountable to citizens and where the citizens should be engaged in monitoring and evaluating governments’ actions, especially with the aim of enhancing public service delivery.
She also noted that new trends of participatory auditing could increase the clout of supreme audit institutions in curbing corruption beyond the traditional forms of auditing. She underscored the close interaction between transparency, accountability, and information, where according to the agreement on “The Critical Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (signed in Barcelona, Spain on 23 June 2010, within the framework of the United Nations Public Service Day Awards Ceremony and Forum), governments were called to lift any barriers hindering the access to public information. She agreed with the view that legislation, although necessary, is not enough without adequate implementation and a sustained awareness on how public secrecy affects people’s daily lives. She concluded that recent development showed the impact of ICT and the social media on politics, culture, and people’s life; hence government should be aware of the great potential of ICT and should find the means for enhancing its availability and accessibility by citizens.

Presentations shed light on examples of good practices of citizen engagement in some countries around the world including Brazil, Germany, Canada, and India; the support of transparency initiatives; the need for monitoring national resources to ensure that expenses go to basic services i.e. education, health, etc. — countries in North Africa are wealthy but have wide poverty and are poor in well-being (requiring reinforced control of financial revenues and of the budget); and the importance of oversight by civil society and the media.

The institutional control model in the region with its shortcomings was examined together with the correlation between democracy and public monitoring; the urgent needs for effective accountability including modernization of the state; and a closer rapport between audit and institutions. Several actions and institutions were needed including public control, the role of ESCs and the media; auditing processes at the internal level; strategic vision towards auditing; strong parliament that collaborates with other parliaments in the region; strengthened teaching of public finance; supranational audit structures (Audit Court); promoting a culture of performance; engaging the private sector; corporate governance code; access to information and rules of transparency; annual auditing; inclusion of diversity; capacity and knowledge-building for civil society; measuring the impact of the public policies; and decentralization and good governance.

Participants also underscored the importance of reactivating the Arab Regional Civic Engagement Network (ARCEN) — an initiative aimed at advancing capacity building in civic and community engagement launched during the workshop on the Opportunities and Challenges of Civic Engagement in Socio-economic Policies in the Arab Region organized by DESA/DPADM in Amman Jordan in 2007 (12).

Presenters emphasized as enhancement of participatory governance the importance of coordination bodies among government institutions, civil society, and private sector as mechanisms of good governance; the creation of new regulatory bodies and development of integrated sector strategies; the establishment of a forum for dialogue with civil society; and the association of civil society interested in public affairs contributing to the development, implementation, and evaluation of projects and decisions of elected institutions and governments.
Discussions focused on limitations to participatory governance institutions in North Africa, especially the audit and oversight ones. These were described as unable to enhance accountability or maintain transparency, not to mention to allow proper participation and citizens’ engagement throughout shared accountability, prevention of corruption, and increased effectiveness of public service delivery. Hence, it is the effective participation that facilitates and enhances vertical and the horizontal social and shared accountability\(^{(13)}\), as well as transparency. Consideration must be given to the principles of effective accountability\(^{(14)}\) that include:

- clear roles and responsibilities;
- clear performance expectations;
- balanced expectations and capacities;
- credible reporting;
- reasonable review and adjustment;
- shared risk management.

Participatory governance institutions need to uphold these principles to obtain effective outcomes in terms of preventing corruption, enhancing public service delivery, social justice, equal opportunities for citizens, and adequate level of human dignity and development among others. ESCs in North Africa can play a great role in enhancing accountability and transparency throughout their deliberations once they are empowered politically, technically, in terms of knowledgeable and skilled human resources, by diversity of membership (representation of all stakeholders regardless of their diverse opinions), and by expanded roles (being proactive rather than reactive).

Session V: Towards Public Policy and Strategy Recommendations Concerning Participatory Governance Institutions, Including Multi-Stakeholder Organizations such as ESCs and similar institutions

Moderator: Mr. Djoudi Bouras, CNES (Algeria).
Discussants:
- Prof. Mansour Omar El-Kikhia, University of Texas (Libya/USA).
- Ms. Rahmani Messaouda (Algeria).
- Mr. Ahmed Bencheikh, Association of the Evaluation of Public Policies (Morocco).

This session allowed experts to make recommendations on public policy and strategies concerning participatory governance institutions, including multi-stakeholder organizations such as ESCs and similar institutions. The deliberations were kick-started by the above initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion were:

- What type of forums, public institutions, and instruments can be established so that all actors can express their opinion around reform issues affecting them, engage in a meaningful dialogue with government, and address mutual tensions and differences through systematic negotiation?
- Are ESCs or similar institutions conducive for this purpose?
• How can the issue of fair and impartial representation be ensured promoting at the same time particularly the engagement of youth and women as forces of positive social transformation?
• What are the operational requirements of these institutions in terms of funding, human resources capacity, reporting requirements, etc?
• How can the capacities of civil society be strengthened to promote engagement with the state, analysis of socio-economic, and political development and participation in policy-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, etc?
• Is the establishment of agencies responsible for training civil society leaders – particularly for associations targeting youth and women needs – conducive to this end?

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

The roles of ESCs around the world, their mission, and current endeavours to achieve consensus on wider objectives concerning civil society and assistance in the process of collective public opinion making were discussed. The need to trace multi–party strategies and engagement in social dialogue was highlighted. Presenters focused on the active role of the civil society but warned that it is impossible to attain participatory governance without gender equality and that there is a need to enforce equality laws as a critical priority in the region. Dialogue spaces to engage civil society need to be opened, and accompanied by capacity development, targeting particularly women and youth, as well as enhanced transparency and anticorruption actions. Also new regulatory bodies need to be created to develop integrated strategies, map sector strategies, and synchronize them with peoples’ needs in North Africa. ESCs could be oriented in this direction but must have more power and a highly skilled staff. Other strategies recommended include support for the acceleration of reforms, human resources capacity building for all stakeholders, and establishment of information systems to enhance the quality of services.

Discussions showed that the region is moving towards a new era with high expectations as a result of the Arab uprising. The general attitudes and trends in all North African countries are of an “imposed change” on the regimes that allowed or opened more chances for citizens’ engagement that may lead to more democratic environment in the near future. This is reflected in the unprecedented high population’s involvement in the parliamentary elections conducted lately in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt. However, there are many limitations that need to be taken into account urgently. This is aimed at accelerating the transition and shortening the time needed for regimes to achieve public demands for dignity, respect, justice, equity in distribution of resources, prevention of corruption, and poverty alleviation among others. Therefore, the development of a comprehensive strategic plan that incorporates all governance institutions and actors in the society is critical both at the regional and country levels. The involvement of participatory governance institutions and stakeholders/actors including the poor and the marginalized must be ensured throughout the whole processes, including conceptualization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Access to pertinent information and education about issues before hand, as well as communication and ICT infrastructure/tools must be
provided for all communities, urban and rural alike. The establishment of an appropriate council for each sector in the government structure, composed of all stakeholders including private sector, NGOs, ESCs, parliamentarians, trade unions, business associations, and consumer protection society can play a significant role in priority identification, policy making, and implementation. However, capacity building for relevant government institutions, NGOs, CSOs, ESCs, and other similar institutions must take place in terms of human, technical, structural, and managerial skill development. Technical expertise and support by international organizations would be of a great help to accelerate the reform process. The latter should uphold participatory governance and incorporate aspects of transparency, social and shared accountability, and integrity called for both by international organizations and national leaders.

Session VI: Seminar Conclusions and Proposals for Guidelines for the Establishment/Functioning of ESCs and Similar Participatory Governance Institutions in North Africa

Moderator: Prof. Mostafa Rhomori, Expert in Public Governance (Morocco).
Discussants:
  - Prof. Mohammed Tozy, University of Aix-en-Provence (Morocco/France).
  - Prof. Karima Korayem, Al Azhar University (Egypt).
  - Dr. Najat Zarrouk, member of the CEPA (Morocco).

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

The moderator enumerated several tools around which discussion should focus during the session including institutional mechanism tools; organizational tools that allow participatory governance to function; tools that support and accompany participatory governance; evaluation tools; and strategic and capacity development operational tools.

Interventions examined what emerged from experiences in Tunisia and Morocco, especially the social movements in Tunisia that allowed the emergence of actors of new technology. They identified challenges to participatory governance including tensions between representatives and competition between elected and association’s officials in the rural development; the fact that general interest is not the sum of particular interests; the assumption that citizens know what they want and it is sufficient to listen to them; the chronic inequality among actors; the costs (including technical cost of participation resulting in lower technical quality of infrastructure because engineering has not developed norms to be applied for participation) time needed for participatory processes; and the fact that opacity can sometimes be involuntarily encouraged by participatory methods. Hence, the need to define participatory modalities and timelines; support civil society to play its role as counter–power to governments; promote training of human resources; and enhance actors’ capacity to access certified information in the domain of new technology. It was proposed that one of the roles for the United Nations could be that to launch processes of certification of information targeting civil society as well as to support capacity building targeting women and youth.
Discussions highlighted the importance of human capital in government and in good governance, as a factor of performance, excellence, and success. Moreover, officials must be well prepared in terms of ability to adapt to change, awareness of innovation, aptitude to strive for excellence, as well as ability to negotiate and network with different stakeholders. The establishment by Morocco of a National Institute for Local Government Training and the African Academy of Local Governance, as mechanisms for participatory governance can play a significant role in the development of a training strategy for human resources and elected officials development in North Africa.

Closing Session

The seminar ended with closing remarks by:

**Dr. Najat Zarrouk** (Morocco), who expressed sincere thanks to the initiators and organizers of this meeting for choosing Morocco, and to all the guests and participants and hope that the event would produce concrete guidance on discussed themes based on priorities.

**Mr. Vito Intini** (UNESCWA), who expressed hope that the current event be the first of a series of meetings on participatory governance in North Africa.

**Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif** (UNECA, Addis Ababa), who mentioned that the United Nations is ready to support the transitional process in the region. He referred to the programme and materials produced by ECA to assist civil society in post conflict processes and promised to organize further meetings in North Africa.

**Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane** (UNECA, Rabat), who highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and mentioned some priorities identified by the United Nations system in the region including youth, employment, governance, environment, and food security. She concluded by reassuring participants that the United Nations family tries to bring coherence in its approaches through the cooperation among all United Nations entities to better serve the region as evidenced in this seminar.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The seminar allowed experts from North Africa to assess the state of participatory governance in the region and through the expectations of development actors and stakeholders, review strategies and policies to strengthen participatory governance. This remains a complex process that requires identifying and strengthening systems fostering citizens’ engagement as well as the reform of institutions and mechanisms for participation.

Participants recalled commonalities of some of the causes of social upheaval in North African countries while underlining the differences existing among them. These
included the chronic lack of opportunities for human, social, and economic development for vast groups of the population, compounded with major abuses against human rights, dearth of respect for the dignity of persons, frequent political repression nullifying fundamental liberties of expression and public participation, and rampant corruption by many officers at all levels of government.

As a result of social upheaval, political transitions took place in the different countries. These developments in North Africa, which set noticeable references for the peoples in the broader Arab region, are causing also diverse political changes, especially in countries in the Middle East and the Arab peninsula, where political and social conditions are more or less similar to those registered in North Africa.

Socio–political movements in these countries have a distinctive feature. They cannot be traced or associated to individual leaders, particular social organizations, or determined political parties, but rather reflect shared motivations and aspirations of very large numbers of people who experienced over considerable time common limitations for their human, social, and economic development.

The current transition period brings about uncertainties stemming out from several sources including the risks presented by the participation in the transition governments of some persons that were close to the deposed dictators, the entrenchment in these countries of networks of corruption —cleptocracies— and vested interests associated with the previous regimes, the wide difference in opinions among the population groups regarding laicism or Islam as a determinant of the State, and the memories and sentiments left by lasting organized oppression.

Based on these observations, the seminar agreed on the recommendations, listed below, which are addressed to Member States and the United Nations. These are listed separately only to enhance the clarity of information and messages conveyed. However, it is important to note that all recommendations are interconnected and will need to be addressed in an integrated manner.

**Recommendations for Member States**

Participants agreed on the following recommendations addressed to United Nations Member States:

*Stakeholders’ participation:*

Innovations are needed to reach and implement political agreements regarding development management, strategies, and policies to ensure equal participation of different stakeholders including different political parties, syndicates, citizens, and their organizations in civil society, especially the poor and the marginalized, medias, and in the private sector.

*Convergence with United Nations resolutions:*
The need for participatory, community-led strategies aligned with national development priorities and strategies in the context of transparent and accountable systems of governance is in line with the resolution A/RES/65/1 of the United Nations General Assembly to further promote progress towards the MDGs.

**Upholding participatory governance:**

Participatory governance needs to be a key concept with specific and high value for the citizens and States of the North African region. It is not a technical concept; it is substantive and meaningful and rich in social and political content.

Progress towards participatory governance requires, but it is not limited to, constitutional reforms that expand the rights of citizens to participate effectively in collective decision making for development. Improvements in participatory governance need to be generated also through changes in public administration, orientation, and knowledge sharing at the leadership level.

**Access to information and transparency:**

Free and efficient access to public information should be warranted by law, possibly conditioned on formal requests that could be formulated by any citizen without discrimination of any kind, or even better through systematic transparency. This should allow any citizen to directly access, in an efficient and costless fashion, any information from the public sector in the terms prescribed by the corresponding legislation. There is a need to assess if it is viable to open access to information at once in all areas of the public administration, or if a gradual and selective strategy would work better in terms of facilitating the accumulation of capacities in particular areas.

**Capacity building for enhancing access to information:**

Demand by civil society to access information from the public sector needs to be accompanied by actions aimed at building institutional, human, and technological capacity among citizens, civil society, and private sector organizations. Citizens need to be aware of their right to access public information, referred in general to the applicable legislation on transparency or information access, or citizens’ charters. Adequate capacity is also needed to enable civil society and private sector organizations to effectively access and utilize public information.

**Interactive processes of public administration to enhance participatory democracy:**

Effective participatory governance also requires that citizens and CSOs not only obtain information from the public sector but also interact with different public entities. Types of interaction include knowledge sharing as well as participation and deliberation over development matters through ad hoc institutions, such as ESCs or other similar institutions, i.e. private sector or universities and civil society research centres or think tanks. Legislation may help determine those development matters or
public management activities or processes about which the public sector must consult citizens and CSOs.

**Institutionalization of social accountability**

Entities from the public sector must report systematically, on an annual or periodical basis, the information on the use of public resources, performance, qualitative and quantitative outputs/impacts/outcomes to citizens and their organizations or representatives.

**Fight against corruption:**

Public institutions (supreme auditing entities, anticorruption commissions, etc.) can be far more effective in their functions to counter corruption if they engage citizens, ESCs, CSOs and the private sector, combining and supporting their efforts. Complying with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), governments, civil society, and private sector organizations must also engage in international cooperation as large-scale corruption often implies trans-border activities.

**Effective institutions and effective participation:**

Effective institutions, such as auditing institutions, evaluation commissions, anticorruption agencies, etc. need to be independent both from government and from vested interest groups or networks outside government. Citizens, ESCs, CSOs, and the private sector need to participate in the oversight action of these institutions.

**Capacity building about interactive processes to strengthen participatory governance:**

Capacity building for government and citizens is necessary to establish the modalities in which consultation, deliberation, and public accountability are to be secured through training of citizens and public officers, for deliberation, reporting, analysis, and evaluation, as well as in the functioning of the UNCAC, gender equality, institutional/organizational development, and on ICT to encourage e-participation.

**Recommendations for the United Nations**

Participants directed the following recommendations to the United Nations recognizing the organization role to support and accompany transition and its effective implementation:

- Cooperate closely to generate synergies in pursuing the actions recommended in the preceding paragraphs.
• Carry out a series of technical assistance and capacity building activities specifically devoted to enhance participatory governance in Member States of the United Nations.

• Support the implementation of participatory governance reforms including undertaking a benchmarking review of regulatory frameworks and civic engagement institutions in each country, strengthening decentralization and local governance, and enhancing cooperation in the fight against corruption.

• Support the reformulation of laws, directives, and regulations, as well as training of human resources within effective organizations to enhance the contributions from civil society and the private sector to participatory governance and development management.

• Promote the mainstreaming of the effective use of ICT applications in public sector management both at the national and the local levels of government.

• Assist the public administration in the implementation of information systems reporting on the results of their activities on citizens at national and local levels.

• Assist to improve the quality and the performance of public services through greater accountability, including effective auditing functions within the public administration and a variety of social accountability institutions, instruments, processes, and practices.

• Support the development of training programmes to enhance human and institutional development capacity of institutions engaged in participatory governance (such as ESCs, civic or social observatories and forums, research centres and think tanks including in universities, etc.).

• Capacity building and technical assistance for the reconstruction of the public administration in post conflict situations, including training for leadership and trust building among citizens and civil society organization, and tools to facilitate public access to information needed for reconciliation.

• Assist in brokering cross-country experiences, collaboration, cooperation, partnership, and networking among CSOs in North Africa to advance participatory governance, transparency, and anti-corruption.
• Work together with specialized United Nations entities and other international organizations (possibly the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to enhance democracy and electoral processes in the North African countries.

• Emphasize the need for monitoring and systematic evaluation of effects on citizens of all projects involving the United Nations entities and other international organizations at national and local levels.
References:


3. UNDP; Strategy of Response to Transformation Change Championed by Youth in the Arab Region (2011).

4. Presently there are ESCs in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco; Egypt has expressed interest in establishing an ESC.


7. Ibid.

8. Guidelines for the establishment of ESCs and similar institutions, annex (2) of this report.

9. United Nations, The UN Global Summit on MDGs, N.Y., U.S.A, September 2010 and ensuing resolution A/RES/65/1 of the UN General Assembly to further promote progress towards the MDGs.


11. United Nations, World Public Sector Report 2008, the International Association of Public Participation (LAPP), N.Y., USA.


Annex 1: Seminar Agenda

United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

In partnership with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Sector Modernization of the Kingdom of Morocco

SEMINAR
Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries:
Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

Hotel La Tour Hassan, 26 rue Chellah, Rabat, Morocco, 20-21 October 2011

Annotated Agenda
(Last updated: 21 October 2011)

Thursday, 20 October 2011  DAY ONE
Conference room: Salle Panoramique

9:00 – 09:30  Registration of participating experts will take place outside the meeting room.

9:30– 10:15  Opening Ceremony: Welcoming Remarks and Introduction to the Seminar

Welcoming remarks by:

H.E. Mohamed Saâd El-Alami, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Public Sector Modernization in the Kingdom of Morocco

Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, UNECA/SRO-NA

Mr. Vito Intini, First Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Emerging and Conflict Related Issues, UNESCWA
10:15–10:40 Overview of the programme of the Seminar
Mr. Roberto Villarreal, Chief and Ms. Valentina Resta, Governance and Public Administration Officer, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

10:40–11:10 Coffee break.

11:10–12:10 Presentation of the Background Paper for the Seminar by M. Zuhair Abed Al-Kareem Al-Kayed, followed by debate

12:10–13:30 Session 1: Desirability and Rationale of Participatory Governance in North Africa

The first round of discussions will be devoted to analyzing the desirability and rationale of participatory governance in North Africa. The session will recall the major recommendations of the ECA Seminar: “Examining Governance Crisis in North Africa: assessing the role of governments, social movements, and civil society” held in Rabat on 19 October. Interventions by discussants will be followed by a debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion:

- Which are some of the most important and effective participatory governance institutions in the countries in the region?
- Where do economic and social councils (ESCs) exist and what are their roles and accomplishments regarding participatory governance?
- Which other similar institutions exist and which are/have been their contributions?
- Can innovative participatory institutions be introduced, in addition to conventional representative democratic ones?
- Would they facilitate the mutually reinforcing nexus between governance and development and ultimately enhance an equitable and inclusive socio-economic and political development in North Africa?
- Are there any examples of existing innovative participatory mechanisms and institutions in the region that have a greater potential of replication?

Moderator: Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, UNECA/SRO-NA
**Initial discussants:**
- Good practice from Economic and Social Councils: Algeria  
  - Mr. Djoudi Bouras, Chief of the Division of Economic Studies of CNES; Morocco - M. Omar Benaida, Expert of CES,
- M. Ahmed Elsayed Elnaggar, Editor-in-Chief, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Egypt
- The Moroccan experience: Ms. Fatna Khayel, President of the Municipality of Arbaoua – Kénitra Province; Mr. Abdellamoz Saddouk, President Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM)
- Mr. Bruno Pouezat, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Morocco

**13:00-14:30 Lunch break.**
Experts are free to make their own arrangements.

**14:30-16:00 Session 2: Operability of Participatory Governance in North Africa - Strategies/Policies Addressing its Challenges and Risks and Maximizing its Opportunities and Advantages**

This session will discuss the operability of participatory governance in North Africa by identifying the strategies/policies that have a greatest potential of addressing its challenges and risks while, at the same time, maximizing its opportunities and advantages. The deliberations will be kick-started by some initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. **Key issues proposed for discussion:**

- What are **government** and other development stakeholders in civil society and **private sector** **pursuing** in regard to participation and inclusiveness in development management?
- What are the **challenges and opportunities** in designing and implementing **strategies and policies** for institutionalized participation in North African countries- both at the national and local levels?
- What are the motivations, advantages and risks associated with **government initiatives** compared to those that people foster in terms of their legitimacy, sustainability, effectiveness, etc.?
Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries:
Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

- Can governments allow **participants to have concrete influence** in shaping development according to their needs and bring about social change and greater accountability?
- What would be the roles, advantages and possibilities to open up for **citizen engagement** in development management at the local or national levels?

Moderator: Mr. Vito Intini, First Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Emerging and Conflict Related Issues, GPAD, UNESCWA

Initial discussants:
- Mr. Ahmed Shebani, founder of the Democratic Party of Libya
- Mr. El Hadi Makboul, Director General, *Centre national d’études et d’analyses pour la population et le développement (CENEAP)*, Algeria
- Mr. Chakib Guessous, Socio-anthropologist, Morocco

16:00-16:30 Coffee break and screening of the video on the Network of African Elected Women Local Leaders

16:30-18:00 Session 3: Prerequisites for Participatory Governance in North Africa

This session will examine the prerequisites for participatory governance in North Africa by identifying its enabling conditions. The deliberations will be kick-started by some initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. **Key issues proposed for discussion:**

- Can participatory processes be stimulated through an **enabling environment**?
- What would be the relative importance of the following and other related conditions?
  - Constitutional and legislation amendment
  - Facilitation of the activities of associations and organizations of civil society
  - Access to public information
  - Transparency and proactive public reporting
  - e-service delivery
  - e-participation particularly for the poorest sectors of the population, grassroots organizations, youth and women
Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

Moderator: Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, Chief of Section on Civil Society and Post Conflict, Governance and Public Administration Division, UNECA

Initial discussants:
- Ms. Hyam Nashash, Assistant Professor of Educational Administration, Jordan
- Ms. Noura Borsali, Independent Member of Haute instance pour la réalisation des objectifs de la révolution, de la réforme politique et de la transition démocratique
- Mr. Moncef Al Haderi, Chief of Section, Bulletin Officiel des Collectivités Locales, Direction des Affaires Juridiques, des Etudes, de la Documentation et de la Coopération, Ministère de l’Intérieur, Morocco

Friday, 21 October 2011

9:30-11:00

Session 4: Interaction between Participatory Governance and Enhanced Transparency and Accountability

This session will analyze the ways in which enhanced transparency and accountability interact with participatory governance. The deliberations will be kick-started by some initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion:

- How can participatory governance institutions enhance accountability, prevent corruption and increase the effectiveness of public service delivery?
- What specifically is needed for participatory governance institutions to promote social justice in the context of development by holding state and non-state actors accountable for addressing the needs of the poor (youth and women in particular)?
- How can participatory governance institutions help citizens reach equal opportunities, adequate levels of human dignity and development, realize substantive freedoms and access better public services?
- What are ESCs and similar institutions in countries of the region doing in this regard?
Moderator: Ms. Valentina Resta, Governance and Public Administration Officer, Development Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Initial discussants:
- Mohamed Ould Mohamed En Fall, Professor, University of Nouakchott, Mauritania
- Prof. Mohamed Harakat, Head of Centre des Etudes Stratégiques et de la Gouvernance and founder of the Revue marocaine d’audit et de développement (REMA), Morocco.
- Ms. Fatima Zahra Benharbit, Secretary General, CGEM, Morocco

11:00-11:30 Coffee break and video on the Municipal Development Plan as a Participatory Governance Tool in Morocco with the testimonial of Mr. Jamal Massoudi, local elected member of the municipality of Taza

11:30-13:00 Session 5: Towards Public Policy and Strategy Recommendations Concerning Participatory Governance Institutions, Including Multi-stakeholder Organizations such as ESCs and Similar Institutions

This session will allow experts to make recommendations on public policy and strategies concerning participatory governance institutions, including multi-stakeholder organizations such as ESCs and similar institutions. The deliberations will be kick-started by some initial discussants and followed by a general debate in plenary. Key issues proposed for discussion:

- What type of forums, public institutions and instruments can be established so that all actors can express their opinion around reform issues affecting them, engage in a meaningful dialogue with government, and address mutual tensions and differences through systematic negotiation?
- Are ESCs or similar institutions conducive for this purpose?
- How can the issue of fair and impartial representation be ensured promoting at the same time particularly the
engagement of youth and women as forces of positive social transformation?

- What are the operational requirements of these institutions in terms of funding, human resource capacity, reporting requirements, etc.?

- How can the capacities of citizens and civil society be strengthened to promote engagement with the state, analysis of socio-economic and political development and participation in policy-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, etc.?

- Is the establishment of agencies responsible for training civil society leaders - particularly for associations targeting youth and women’s needs - conducive to this end?

Moderator: Mr. Djoudi Bouras, Chief of the Division of Economic Studies of the Conseil national économique et social (CNES) of Algeria

Initial discussants:
- Professor Mansour Omar El-Kikhia, Libya, Professor at University of Texas, USA
- Ms Messauda Rahmani, Civil Society, Algeria
- Prof. Ahmed Bencheikh, President from the Moroccan Association of the Evaluation of Public Policies

13:00-14:30    Lunch break

Experts are free to make their own arrangements.

14:30-16:00    Session 6: Seminar Conclusions and Proposals on Guidelines for the Establishment/Functioning of ESCs and Similar Participatory Governance Institutions in North Africa

During this session, the Chairperson of the meeting will highlight the most important issues discussed along the two days of deliberation, and outline the main conclusions and recommendations from the meeting. Drawing on the above, this session will provide an opportunity to build consensus around a set of guidelines proposed for the establishment and functioning of ESCs and similar participatory governance institutions in North Africa or enhancing the effectiveness of existing ones. Participants will be invited to highlight concrete aspects in which international cooperation could be useful to assist countries in the North Africa region to enhance capacities
for participatory governance, in government, civil society and the private sector, including human resource development, creation or modernization of institutions, use of information and communication technologies (ICT), knowledge sharing, and so on.

**Moderator: Mr. Mostapha Rhomari, University Professor Expert in Public Governance, Morocco**

**Initial discussants:**
- Prof. Mohammed Tozy, “Laboratoire Méditerranéen de Sociologie”, University of Aix-en-Provence, France
- Prof. Ahmed Malik Abu Sin, Partners and Development Services, Sudan
- Dr. Karima Korayem, Professor, Al Azhar University
- Dr. Najat Zarrouk, Governor, Director Formation des Cadres Administratifs et Techniques au Ministère de l’Intérieur, Morocco, Member of the Committee of Expert on Public Administration (CEPA/UN)

16:00-16:30  Coffee break

16:30-17:30  Closing Session

The Seminar will conclude with the adoption of the Guidelines for the Establishment/Functioning of ESCs and Similar Participatory Governance Institutions in North Africa. Experts will also comment on issues that may need further analysis and suggest ways to advance after the meeting in the exchange of relevant knowledge and collaboration.

**Closing remarks by:**
- Dr. Najat Zarrouk, Governor, Director Formation des Cadres Administratifs et Techniques au Ministère de l’Intérieur, Morocco, Member of the Committee of Expert on Public Administration (CEPA/UN)
- Mr. Vito Intini, First Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Emerging and Conflict Related Issues, UNESCWA
- Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, Chief of Section on Civil Society and Post Conflict, Governance and Public Administration Division, UNECA
- Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, UNECA/SRO-NA

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Annex 2: Aide-Memoire

United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Seminar
"Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and Their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions"

Concept note for participants
29 September 2011

Background
The North Africa region recently witnessed a spark of mass upheaval that, starting in Tunisia and Egypt, spread to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and following suite in Algeria and Morocco and extending to other countries in the Middle East. The recent North African uprisings appear to have been triggered largely by socio-economic concerns, which led large population groups to question the political aptitude of their governments. Their challenges “lie at the crossroads of governance and development—and so do the opportunities”. Triggers to protest include human rights violations, government corruption, social inequality, concentration of wealth in the hands of rulers detached from the citizens and their needs for decades, economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, unpromising opportunities for younger and more educated generations, and a number of socio-demographic structural factors, such as urbanization, education and access to international references and global information. Increasing food prices and global famine rates have also been precipitating factors.

As for the actors most visible in recent social upheaval in the region, urban populations and specially the youth occupy a prominent place, and the participation of women has been also noteworthy. Northern African men and women are now asking for greater transparency of public information, accountability of their governments, and a say over public services and in policymaking processes. The demands for change are thus led by citizens, in contrast to similar phenomena observed, for example, two decades ago in Eastern Europe and Latin America, or more recently in South East Asia, where claims for political reform have come mainly from specific socio-economic classes or sectors, such as workers, students, or indigenous peoples. In North Africa, it is citizens in a broader sense who demand to be more engaged in public development affairs.

Civic engagement in public governance is a complex process and consists of identifying stakeholders, establishing legal and administrative systems that allow for their engagement by public officials, and, in general, developing a wide range of

1UNDP: Strategy of Response to Transformative Change Championed by Youth in the Arab Region (2011).
participatory mechanisms and institutions or reforming some existing ones. In this respect, several fundamental questions come to mind, and merit careful thought, in the case of North Africa, to advance public governance:

- What are the risks and opportunities faced by North African countries about pursuing more participatory approaches to public governance?

- How can social and political demands of the people be effectively addressed, for development sake, through innovative public strategies and policies for more open and systematic participation?

- To what extent can on-going demands for change be met through conventional political institutions, more or less democratic, and to what degree may institutional innovations be needed for adequate participation and engagement of citizens in different aspects of development management?

- How would public institutions designed to these aims look like? How can conventional representative democratic institutions be complemented by innovative participatory ones to enhance development management?

- Which actions should be assessed by governments and society and eventually included in an institutional transformation agenda for enhancing public governance and harnessing development over the next years: legal reforms, capacity building within civil society, training of public officers on participatory processes and instruments?

For instance, national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and other similar institutions provide in many countries a framework for multi-stakeholder dialogue and analysis on development challenges at the national level and contribute to policymaking by governments in an informed and participatory manner. ESCs complement other institutions such as Parliaments, which, in turn, have specific functions in law making and political affairs. ESCs contribute in countries around the world with a more direct dialogue among diverse development stakeholders. Some ESCs include only organizations of workers and employers and focus narrowly on labour issues within a traditional social dialogue framework, yet others have a wider membership, encompassing different economic and social groups, and promote a broader dialogue on public development matters. Moreover, similar participatory multi-stakeholders institutions have different features and scope, depending on the respective context and development challenges they address, for example: civic councils, urban development observatories, sustainable development or poverty reduction observatories, different types of ombudsmen institutions involving citizens’ engagement in some form in the overseeing of public services, and so on. With this as a general background, additional questions are:

- How can institutions of these different kinds serve countries in North Africa to enhance public governance for development?

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2Presently there are ESCs in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia; Egypt has expressed interest in establishing an ESC.
Which of these, or other new ones, can help governments, citizens, the private sector and civil society, to better articulate their views and establish adequate roles to jointly promote dynamic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development?

How do Parliaments, ESCs and other similar participatory governance institutions complement each other and could work together to foster an inclusive national development agenda?

Which institutional, technical and human capacities are needed for ESCs and similar institutions to effectively contribute to development management in ways that articulate diverse needs and priorities of the population?

Since January 2009, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), and in particular the Development Management Branch (DMB), has been implementing a project funded by the UN General Assembly through the UN Development Account, aimed at strengthening the capacities of ESCs and similar institutions in African countries, to support the participatory process in and the quality of public policymaking, implementation and monitoring, with the ultimate objective of enhancing national capacities for the achievement of the MDGs. Within the framework of this project, it seems important under the conditions observed in North African countries along 2011, to devote necessary attention to enhancing institutions for participatory governance in the region in order to improve the capacity of governments for effective development management. This requires analysis on how diverse stakeholders can better come together to improve governance through participatory methods and how public administration can incorporate, through adequate institutional development, the changes that may be appropriate to make development more dynamic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable in North Africa in the years to come. The value of institutions like the ESCs and other similar ones is to be acknowledged, while the opportunities and challenges for creating, reforming and enhancing participatory governance institutions in general is to be assessed.

For this purpose, DMB/DPADM is organizing, in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), and the Kingdom of Morocco, a seminar on “Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions”. The seminar will take place at the Hotel La Tour Hassan, 26 rue Chellah, in Rabat, Morocco, on 20-21 October 2011.

This activity is not only timely in the wake of recent developments in the region. It was also included among the requests made to the Secretariat by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration during its 10th session (held in New York on 4 to 8 April 2011) as part of the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Objectives
The seminar will bring together approximately 20-25 experts on matters related to public governance in North African countries—coming from the region or other parts
of the world, particularly the Middle East- to deliberate and answer questions like those posed in the preceding section. Its format and dynamics will be similar to a UN Expert Group Meeting.

The seminar will provide an opportunity to debate over challenges and opportunities currently faced in the region for the engagement of citizens and their organizations -in the private sector and in civil society- to enhance public governance, improve public accountability and foster the achievement of the MDGs. It will allow experts to review and assess existing institutions for participatory governance in the region, as well as in other parts of the world, which offer untapped possibilities for enhancing public governance in North African countries and would serve them to foster in the following years a dynamic, equitable, inclusive and sustainable process of development.

The seminar will also help to analyse and consolidate information on viable institutional frameworks (such as ESCs, or other similar institutions), instruments and mechanisms for citizen engagement in countries of North Africa, in relation to policymaking processes, budgeting and auditing, and the social oversight of public service delivery to enhance the responsiveness, transparency and accountability of the public sector.

Through this exchange of knowledge, information, experiences and good practices, UNDESA will produce an analytical report based on the deliberations and conclusions of the experts, referring to their overall views and recommendations and not to their particular or personal perspectives. The report will aim to disseminate information useful for governments, civil society and the private sector to further reflect on effective and viable participatory approaches and institutions that may contribute to further foster development in countries of North Africa.

Last, but not least, the seminar will help to identify future opportunities for capacity building activities in North Africa, including new capacity building projects which may be pursued by UNDESA, other organizations within the UN system (such as the UN regional commissions), and other international agencies and organizations active in the fields of development, participation and social accountability.

These contributions from the UN in the field of institution building for participatory governance and citizens’ engagement in development management, would complement other important investment and financing strategies for development in the region that have been announced by several multilateral financial organizations along this year and which were articulated in September 2011 as a coordinated international financing mechanism known as the Deauville Initiative.

Venue, dates and working languages
The seminar will take place in Rabat, Morocco, for two days, from 20 to 21 October 2011. To facilitate inclusive participation of experts from different institutional sectors of all North African countries, and possibly the participation of other experts on the region coming from different parts of the world, the meeting sessions will be conducted in Arabic, French and English, with simultaneous interpretation.

Participants and deliberations
Attendance to the Seminar will be per invitation only. UNDESA and the co-organizers look forward to have a selected group of approximately 20-25 top international and national experts on North African countries, including government
Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

Officials, both at the national and local levels, representatives from ESCs, officials from international and civil society organizations, research institutions, youth and women organizations and other development partners that have significant direct experience or deep knowledge on the engagement of citizens in the region.

A background paper commissioned to a consultant from the region by UNDESA will be distributed as background reading material to all participants. This paper will be the sole formal presentation to be made during the two-day seminar. The programme of the seminar envisages that participants will engage in a free and open multi-disciplinary dialogue along a series of substantive sessions, where deliberations will seek to find answers to concrete specific questions listed in the seminar annotated agenda. Each session will have a moderator and two initial discussants to kick-start the conversation to be followed by dynamic and spontaneous interventions from all participants in a round-table format.

Thus, the format of the seminar aims to prioritize deliberation and interaction among all experts to generate collective knowledge. Lecture type presentations will not take place along the seminar so as to make the meeting more agile and dynamic. Participating experts, who may find it useful, can provide the organizers of the seminar, before or after the meeting, with case studies, short notes, sample legislations, institutional brochures, articles, books or presentations, to be uploaded on the seminar website for easy access to all other participants.

Programme at a glance
The seminar will follow an ordered programme over the two days as depicted in the following table. A draft annotated agenda is included in the Appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Wednesday 19 October</th>
<th>Thursday 20 October</th>
<th>Friday 21 October</th>
<th>Saturday 22 October</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 11:00</td>
<td>Opening Ceremony</td>
<td>Session 4</td>
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<td>Participants leave from Rabat</td>
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<td>11:00 – 11:30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>11:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Session 5</td>
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<td>13:00-14:30</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<td>Participants arrive in Rabat</td>
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<td>14:30-16:00</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Session 6 – Conclusions &amp; proposed guidelines</td>
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<td>16:00-16:30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>16:30-18:00</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Closing Session</td>
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Additional information
Participants who may need additional information, can contact Ms. Valentina Resta, Governance and Public Administration Officer, at the United Nations by email (restav@un.org).
**Annex 3: List of participants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Int. Org.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Agency/Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government, academia &amp; civil society</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Mr. Djoudi Bouras</td>
<td>Chef de la division des études économiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Mrs. Fatma Karadja</td>
<td>Directrice de Centre d’accueil d’enfants prives de Famille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Mr. El Hadi Makboul</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Mrs. Rahmani Messaouda</td>
<td>Presidente de la Commission des Femmes Travailleuses de la Wilaya d’Alger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Mr. Ali Elmi Ahmed</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Dr. Karima Korayem</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Dr. Ahmed Elsayed Elaggar</td>
<td>Head of Economic Unit Dept. Editor-inChief, Strategic economic Directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Dr. Hyam Nashash</td>
<td>Assistant Professor of Educational Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Dr. Zuhair Al Kayed</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Libya/UK</td>
<td>Mr. Ahmed Shebani</td>
<td>Founder of the Libya Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Mr. Mohamed Ould El Abed</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Mrs. Mint Hedeid</td>
<td>MP, Chair of Finance Comitte</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Mohamed Abdellahi Bellil</td>
<td>Journalist/researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Mr. El Houcine Aghanim</td>
<td>Chef de Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Dr. Lalla Fatna Admaiai</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Mr. Abdellatif Assini</td>
<td>Sécrétaire Général</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Mrs. Malika Ben Mahi</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Mr. Mahmoud Bchini</td>
<td>Conseiller sénior gouvernance jeunes</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Ms. Samira Bikarden</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Pr. Bouchaib Bounabat</td>
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Annex 4: Preliminary Guidelines for Establishing or Enhancing Economic and Social Councils and Similar Participatory Governance Institutions in North Africa

January 2012

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1. Background

Countries around the globe worked hard, through the last two to three decades, to introduce the methods and values of good governance in the public sector (public governance) and the private sector (corporate governance) in order to achieve transparency, accountability and integrity throughout the participation of all stakeholders in public policy and private investments alike.

Changes in the external environment, including globalization, privatization, the impact of the 9/11 terrorism act, the international financial crisis, among others, had their drastic impact on North Africa. These, adding to endogenous imbalances have produced a high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth and women, extreme poverty, high rate of corruption particularly at top official levels and lack of justice and dignity among other challenges. The consequences of these miseries triggered the youth revolt in North Africa and the region, called the Arab Uprising or the Arab Spring, in order to express the sense of frustration and repression that this segment of the population experienced for decades. This generated a demand for more freedom and shared responsibilities through a greater involvement of citizens in
public development affairs in order to attain better economic growth, social justice, integrity, rule of law, human rights, and effective public service delivery in education, health, and social services, especially for the poor and marginalized.

International organizations including the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) among others, consider that the engagement of more stakeholders, especially citizens, in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of public development strategies is highly significant. This is not only aimed at attaining a better quality of public service delivery but also the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Hence, to enhance citizens’ engagement and participatory governance, the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has launched a programme that includes a comprehensive analysis, promotion, and advocacy on the concept of citizen-government dialoguing for pro-poor policies. In addition, the Development Management Branch (DMB) of DPADM has embarked on several initiatives that aim to examine the relevance of citizens and government dialoguing mainly in three areas i.e. policy-development, service delivery, and public accountability. It has also conducted several public administration experts’ meeting in Vienna (June 2011), a seminar in Rabat, and a workshop in Marrakesh (October 2011) on participatory governance and citizens’ engagement in public development affairs to eradicate corruption in service delivery for achieving the MDGs.

Economic and Social Councils (ESCs) and other relevant institutions can be significant mechanisms for stakeholder and citizens’ engagement in participatory governance for policy development and implementation. However, only three countries have ESCs in North Africa, namely Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Based on the review of existing institutions, DPADM/DESA developed these preliminary guidelines to encourage the establishment of ESCs and other relevant institutions in the region.

2. Objectives

These guidelines aim to (1) identify the important role that ESCs and similar institutions play in enhancing participatory governance in North Africa; (2) provide information used for drawing proposals for action that must be pursued to this end; (3) specify recommendations on other actions by government and civil society for enhancing participatory governance and harnessing development over the next years: i.e. legal, reforms, capacity building within civil society, training of public officers on participatory processes and the application of relevant instruments.

3. **History and Rationale of ESCs and Similar Institutions - What and Why?**

In this section of the guidelines the focus will be on what the ESCs are and why they were established in the first place.

ESCs are consultative or advisory institutions, including organizations that represent the social partners and other stakeholders of civil society and the private sector. They are essential components of participatory governance in modern societies. Civil society is defined as the "sphere of action independent of the state, within the realm of private sector and civil organization". This definition encompasses non-governmental organizations as well as other interest groups commonly part of ESCs such as trade unions and employers’ organizations.

There are currently about 70 ESCs around the world and their number is increasing continuously. The establishment of an ESC is influenced by a particular moment in the political, social, or economic history of a country. In fact, ESCs were often established during periods of national economic or political crisis. The first ESC in the globe was established in Western Europe in 1948, i.e. in Belgium, after the Second World War in order to provide a structured way of discussion for private sector employers, trade unions, and the government to re-build the country’s economy. In Asia, Thailand, and Korea established their deliberative councils after the Asian financial crisis. Most recently, ESCs were established in countries like Brazil at the beginning of the new socialist regime in 2003 and in several post-communist countries including Romania and Bulgaria at the time of accession to the European Union (EU). In Jordan the ESC, as initiative, started in 2007 and the launch was in 2009 after the international financial crisis. As for North Africa, ESCs were established in Morocco, in February 2011 after the Arab uprising, Tunisia in 1959, and Algeria in 1982.

4. **Founding of ESCs, Their Characteristics, and Memberships:**

4/1 **Provisions for Establishing ESCs:**

- Constitutions, examples: Tunisia, Morocco, Italy and France.
- Legislation, examples: Netherlands, Malta and Belgium.
- Royal Decree: Jordan.
- Presidential Decree: Korea, Brazil and Algeria.
- Executive Decree.

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5 International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (ALCESIS) website can be seen on: http://www.aicesis.org/spip.php,12/3/11.


7 De Vera et al, Ibid
8 Ibid.
9 Al Kayed, Zuhair, Ibid.
ESCs that were established according to constitutions and legislation are more secure in terms of their sustainability whereas others are subject to changes or instability.

4/2 ESCs Characteristics:
- Forum for inter-sectoral dialogue for economic and social policies: Belgium.
- Forum for social dialogue for development: Brazil.
- Advisory body on economic and social policy: France, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.
- Advisory body for national and regional legislation on social and economic issues: Italy.
- Presidential advisory body for economic and social development: Korea.
- Advisory body for the government on economic and social development issues - Malta and Jordan.
- Advisory and consultative body of entrepreneurs, employees and independent experts: Netherlands.

4/3 ESCs Membership Selection:
- Appointment (crown members in the Netherlands; public interest in Malta and Korea; expert members in Italy; four years term in Belgium) or designated representative of organizations.
- Appointment (five years term) or direct representation of their organizations: France.
- Appointment by the President for a two-year term: Brazil.

The number of the ESCs members vary from as few as 9 (Aruba) to as many as 203 (France). ESC members can be selected based on pre-existing legislation, appointment by the government, or by the presiding officer of the council. In some cases members are selected to represent a broad range of the society; in others they are chosen based on the number of constituents they represent\(^\text{10}\). Hence, the composition of council membership depends on the context in which the ESC was established and its specific objectives, needless to note that members are supposed to be selected according to their knowledge, skills and, non-biased reputation in addition to their representation of certain institutions.

5. ESCs Models, Roles, and Responsibilities:

5/1 There are three models of ESCs that have emerged throughout their history:

\(^\text{10}\) De Vera et al, Ibid.
(1) **Traditional model**

The majority of the ESCs began with a traditional model based on a tripartite corporation form. The three-way tripartite division of membership includes government, the private sector, and trade unions. In fact, traditionally, the composition of ESCs was, and in some cases still is, based on workers (trade unions), employers (industries and trade) and the government with the purpose of solving conflicts that occur between employees and employers.

(2) **Hybrid model**

A broader representation emerged when ESCs moved from the traditional tripartite model to a more representative one. This includes other stakeholders in the society i.e. NGOs, CSOs, academia, the poor and marginalized among other interested groups in economic and social development policies plans. Consequently, decisions go beyond employee-employer relationships. Belgium (which as we have seen established the first ESC in 1948) represents a hybrid model among many others nowadays. This model covers a broader participation and a larger one in terms of number of members and strata represented in each society. This, in turn, also affects the inter-relationship with the government in terms of expanding the ESC role to some extent. Governments are required to consult the ESC on particular issues but may choose not to consult on others. ESCs may choose to publicly publish the recommendations they provide to the government. In Italy and France, for instance, ESCs publish their recommendations in order to gain greater public support and put pressure on the government to accept their advice\(^{11}\).

(3) **Democratic model**

This model poses challenges to ESCs contribution due to the changing external, and even internal environment, and to the demands from citizens for more engagement in participatory governance for public policy including economic and social development affairs. ESCs and similar institutions can include citizens through broad civil society organizations that have a national-central, regional, local, and community level representation in economic and social issues through an active social dialogue. ESCs can encourage governments to be responsive to their advice and recommendations through a more cooperative and partnership-based modality. Broad participation can be seen as having an instrumental value as it creates a space for debate in which society can agree on economic issues and plant the seeds of a just and fair

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
some critics have argued that representation in most councils is based on functional interests. They are also accused of not being truly democratic since only the organizations recognized by the state are considered legitimate actors in shaping policy. Arguably, some ESCs reflect a more democratic process of representation than others. For instance, in the Dutch ESC, members are accorded seats based on the number of constituents they represent, so the largest trade unions receive the highest number of seats. The appointments are made every two years based on a new assessment of membership representation. This democratic structure ensures that power is allocated based on proportional representation. When power is shared in this way, the ESC enables participatory democracy. This model therefore can better empower citizens to have an ongoing influence on government decision-making.

Another example of the model can be seen in the Irish ESC that now has representatives from the community, philanthropy and voluntary sector, farmers, and the civil service, in addition to business and labour organizations. Its processes are described as "deliberation, involving a search for consensus in addressing trade-offs both between and within different interest groups in addressing joint problems."

5/2 ESC common roles

There are common roles for ESCs around the world among them the following:

- Generate national agreements on key economic and social objectives;
- Mainstream multi-stakeholder views into public policies;
- Provide greater legitimacy to and wider acceptance of public policies;
- Increase citizens' trust in government;
- Provide a platform for their social partners and thereby the development of an agenda on major socioeconomic concerns.

However, the roles and responsibilities vary from an institution to another depending on the respective objective and mandate. These are more traditional in the MENA region. In more mature democratic settings, for instance in the Netherlands, the ESC carries out the following responsibilities:

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14 De Vera et al, Ibid.
15 Kelly, P. (2001), The Irish Social Partnership System, Address to the Partnership in the Modern Public Service, Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister).
16 Al Kayed, Z., Ibid.
a. Advising government and parliament on social and economic issues, with the aim of promoting balanced economic growth and sustainable development as well as the highest possible level of employment and a fair distribution of income.

b. Supervising commodity and industrial boards where the ESC is the highest authority of the statutory organization.

c. Enforcing laws. The council is sometimes asked to help enforce certain acts that are important for trade and industry and helps to enforce the Work Councils Act in each large organization; it also imposes levies for the training and education of council members.

d. Protecting the interests of shareholders and employees in the event of a public takeover bid or merger based on the council merger code adopted in 1971. However, this action has no legal foundation, and it depends entirely on the willingness of Dutch enterprises to comply voluntarily with ESC rules.

e. Promoting business-consumer self-regulation where the council encourages business and consumer organizations to consult each other about mutual satisfactory general terms and conditions\textsuperscript{17}.

Another example of ESC broader roles and responsibilities is that of the Irish National Economic and Social Council (NESC). This council makes recommendations in five areas:

● Stabilizing the banking system;
● Retrenchment in public spending;
● Restoring Ireland's economic competitiveness;
● Practical measures helping people at risk of losing their job, income, saving and pension; and
● Restoring Ireland's reputation\textsuperscript{18}.

ESCs in North Africa are consultative and not deliberative bodies. The executive authority is not obliged to consider their recommendations. Hence they face criticisms from both government and citizens. They are criticized also for being reactive to government’s needs rather than effective in responding to civil society as their citizens’ inclusiveness is questioned. Finally, they are considered to be in dire need of highly skilled human and technical resources to carry out their missions, especially youth and women since they have the potential to bring about major change.

\textsuperscript{17} The SER’s responsibilities can be seen on: http://www.ser.nl/en/about_the_ser/responsibilities.aspx

\textsuperscript{18} O’Donnell, Rory, Tough times for the Celtic Tiger, can be seen on: http://www.ser.nl/sitecore/content/internet/en/About_the_SER/SER_countries/ireland.aspx
6. Other Participatory Governance Institutions in North Africa

Goverance is concerned with processes focusing on the distribution of public responsibility across multiple stakeholders. Participation, on the other hand, offers important tools for democratic governance, such as gaining insights into the dynamics of participatory governance; a type of road-map for identifying and assessing the component parts of participatory governance; and insight into alternative relationships between citizens and their public institutions.\(^\text{19}\)

In addition, participatory governance institutions, based on citizens’ involvement, have progressed from a traditional type of public participation, such as public meetings, consultation documents, committee co-options, to customer oriented ones. These include complaints/suggestions schemes and satisfaction surveys. Some innovative methods are designed to consult citizens on issues such as focus groups, citizen panels and referenda or alternatively, to encourage citizen deliberation over issues such as citizens’ juries; community needs assessment and plans; and visioning studies.\(^\text{20}\)

However, nowadays, participatory governance institutions are shifting to a more powerful role than ever. This is due to the fact that the prerequisite of citizen’s engagement became highly needed for both government and citizens to maintain democratic mechanisms that enhance govern-governed trust inter-relationship. This new development of citizens’ engagement in participatory institutions has shifted the participatory focus from a user-based approach, where the focus is “for the citizen” \(^\text{21}\), to a new trend of participatory governance institutions where the focus is on “shared with the citizen” based on public policy and public interest issues. This approach must be broadened in the North African countries through ESCs and similar participatory institutions.

In addition to ESCs, other participatory governance institutions exist as multi-stakeholders platforms that have different features and scope, depending on the respective context and development challenges they address e.g. civic councils, urban development observatories, sustainable development or poverty reduction observatories, different types of ombudsmen institutions, anti-corruption commissions involving citizens in the overseeing of public services, and so on.

In North Africa, ESCs and other participatory governance institutions include the committees for development, centres for population studies, the observatories of employment and fight against corruption, and the committees of “rural engagement”, the social development agencies, the Northern, Eastern, and Southern development agencies in Morocco, and the National Institute for Human Development among others. However, actions by these institutions are constrained by their lack of

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\(^{20}\) Liach S. and Wingfield, m. (1999), public participation and democratic renewal agenda: prioritization or marginalization?, local governance studies, vol.25, no.4, pp.46-59.

\(^{21}\) This is depicted in the United Kingdom an introductory guide: how to council your users (1998), and also in the United States governance performance and results acts (1993).
empowerment in several areas, including skilled human and technical resources, proper membership, powerful roles that allow more inputs in relevant public policy issues, and more involvement in pre-laws formulation.

7. Recommendations for Enhancing Participatory Governance in North Africa

Based on the observations made in the previous sections, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing participatory governance in the region at the national and local levels.

7/1 Recommendations for governments:

1. As a prerequisite, participatory governance needs to be a key concept with specific and high value for the citizens and governments alike in North Africa. It is a meaningful and rich concept in social, economic, and political content that needs to be carried out through ESCs and similar participatory governance institutions to complement governments and parliaments.

2. As emerged from a seminar on participatory governance in North Africa held in 2011, innovations are needed to reach and implement national agreements regarding development strategies to ensure equal participation of different stakeholders. ESCs and similar participatory governance institutions can play a valuable role and assist in this direction so long as they encompass representation from various segments in the society.

3. ESCs and similar institutions need access to information from the public sector. Governments need to legitimize the right for ESCs and similar participatory institutions to obtain the needed information in an accurate and a timely manner, utilizing e-government and ICT tools. Open government would further enhance access to information.

4. Governments must allow effective communication channels through continuous positive interactions between public sector entities and ESCs and similar institutions on relevant social, economic and political issues where national agreements regarding such issues can be maintained.

5. Governments should submit draft laws to ESCs and similar institutions, even before their submission to parliament. Receiving advice from institutions that represent various segments in the society can lead to a national agreement as well as greater trust in government's policies.

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22 Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions held in Rabat, Morocco on 20-21 October 2011.
6. Government entities must conduct annual reports of their performance, outputs and impact on citizens while ESCs and similar institutions can analyze and provide their remarks and advice including on the optimal use of resources towards more efficient and effective results.

7. Public oversight institutions can benefit from the involvement and contributions of ESCs and similar institutions in their actions to produce more efficient and effective outputs and outcomes in fighting corruption and assist in maintaining an integrity system.

8. Government institutions must be open to constructive ideas generated by participatory institutions, including ESCs and similar institutions, and promote mutual respect and trust. To this end, they need to build their capacity and train public officials on communicating, interacting, respecting and valuing the contributions of ESCs and similar institutions. This may include:

- Provide officers/officials with routine training on up-to-date participatory methods including e-participation;
- Conduct performance assessment as part of career and competency development on participatory approaches;
- Introduce incentives to encourage participatory aptitudes of public officials.

9. Governments need to impartially allocate enough and sustainable funds for ESCs and similar institutions to carry out their mandate effectively without any threat of disruption.

7/2 Recommendations for ESCs and similar institutions:

1. The selection of ESC membership needs to be based on fairness of representation regardless of the member's ideology, opinion or attitudes towards governments' systems and officials. Therefore ESCs and similar participatory institutions (SPIs) need to broaden their representation to include various segments of society, particularly women, youth and minority groups. This would allow them to carry out more proactive agendas aimed at enhancing equal opportunities, economic, social and human development of the above groups.

2. ESCs and SPIs need to uphold accountability standards (participatory approach should, in fact, ensure that those that are involved do not corrupt the system by taking advantage of it). In particular they:

   - along with citizens, should combine efforts with public institutions to counter corruption
   - should be able to show citizens that their voices are heard and have produced significant outcomes.

3. ESCs and SPIs both at the national and local levels require amendments in legislation to expand their role to cover i) policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, ii) budget formulation and monitoring of public expenditures as well
as public revenues and respective allocation as means for effective accountability and mutual respect and trust.

4. ESCs and SPIs need to open more communication channels through legitimate interaction with government institutions to follow up on the advice, recommendations and suggestions provided.

5. ESCs and SPIs need to attain more press coverage and dissemination of information on their action to demonstrate that they have the critical function to provide a forum for policy input from civil society and represent a channel of communication between citizens and governments.

6. ESCs and SPIs need to interact with government in order to expand their mandate to cover certain important issues such as i) discussion and analysis of draft laws before submission to legislation in order to introduce their suggestions for enhancing their formulation ii) to be more independent in terms of setting their agendas for discussion beyond what is presented from governments, iii) gain more autonomous status by securing an independent budget and sustainable revenues that can be generated from non-governmental funds, iv) maintain knowledgeable, skilled and devoted human resources with wide cooperation and coordination of technical expertise from academic and research institutions, v) conduct more frequent and regular meetings with a wide representation from citizen groups, when needed, on emerging issues, to ensure ownership of solutions and vi) because the public sector is considered the main vehicle for effective and efficient economics, social and political development, ESCs and SPIs need to expand their roles to cover, in their discussion, public sector management, performance, development and reform.
Annex 5: Seminar Evaluation

Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

Suggestions for improving the substantive and participatory aspects of this meeting focused around participants’ perceived need for a broader, more extended and in-depth debate. Time flexibility is crucial to allow full stakeholder participation by NGOs - including women and youth organizations -, media and the private sector. More time (3 instead of 2 days) is also required for quality debates, senior level discussions and social analyses at sub-systemic level. Hence, a briefing prior to actual meetings could allow organizers to record participants’ expectations, while informing them on the specific topics for discussion, and ensure greater focus of deliberations.

Suggestions on the operational aspects of the meeting include clear direction for moderators and speakers on keeping the focus on the selected themes, avoiding repetition and improving time management. Time for group work (in addition to plenary sessions) should be added to the agenda. Finally, the report should immediately be made available to participants after the meeting to receive their feedback prior to its formal publication.

![Graph showing the evaluation of the seminar on participatory governance in North African countries. The graph plots ratings against question numbers, with categories ranging from 1 to 13. The legend indicates the rating scale and the number of respondents for each category.]
Seminar on Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African Countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions

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