SPECIAL MEETING

NETWORK OF INNOVATORS IN GOVERNANCE
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Opening Remarks by

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), I wish to welcome you to the Special Meeting of the Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean Region and to thank you for your active participation in all the activities of the InnovMed programme. I would also like to welcome and congratulate once more the winners of the United Nations Public Service Awards of this year, that is to say Morocco, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates.

As all of you remember the Network was established in June of last year and most of you were present during that event. Based on the recommendations of the members, a Constitutive Document of the Network was established and sent to all of you for comments. It was also discussed during our First Steering Committee which took place in Rabat in March of this year.

We feel especially excited since the idea of launching the Network goes back to 2003 when the InnovMed Programme was launched. Most of you took part in our first meetings in Beirut and then in Naples where we produced Sub-regional Action Plans on Priorities for Innovating Public Administration. We are also particularly happy that the hard work that all of you have contributed to the programme, combined with our efforts at UNDESA, has matured into 3 remarkable publications. The first, which most of you already have, is entitled: Innovations in Governance and Public Administration: Replicating What Works. This publication has been translated into Arabic by Dr. Hyam Al-Nashash who has done an incredible job. You will find the CD-Rom of this book in front of you. We will be sending you shortly the hard copy of this publication. The
second major publication is: *Innovations in Governance in the Middle East, North Africa and Western Balkans: Making Governments Work Better in the Mediterranean Region* which features 2 out of 3 of winners (the case from Lebanon and the one from Dubai). This book contains the papers that many of you had prepared on innovations in your respective countries. Finally, the third publication is entitled: Governance in the Middle East, North African, and the Western Balkans: Challenges and Priorities in Reforming Public Administration in the Mediterranean Region. This publication is a major accomplishment which could have not been produced without the inputs of all of you. It is a unique publication which provides for each country of the region an overview of the historical, institutional, and economic context, as well as the challenges and the priorities in reforming public administration. Over 60 policy papers have been integrated into this publication for over 600 pages which were then summarized and harmonized into about 400 pages. I would like to thank Fatma Sayed who produced a first summary of papers, as well as our partner Formez for having produced fact sheets for each country on the historical part.

Following our Meeting in Rabat, we have also produced promotional material for the InnovMed programme and for the Network of Innovators, including Fact Sheets on: What is InnovMed? What is the Network of Innovators? Advocacy and policy forums; Pilot Projects and information about our Knowledge Products. We will be glad to send at your address as many of these fact sheets and publications. Please write it down on the evaluation form of the Meeting before the meeting ends.
I wish to draw your attention now to the **purpose of this Meeting**. As mentioned, in March we organized the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Network in Rabat and I wish to thank once more Mr. Naciri and Prof. Ben Osmane for their extraordinary effort in supporting the organization of the meeting and for their warm hospitality, as well as Ms. Zeidguy. During the Steering Committee an **Action Plan for the Network** was discussed. Based on the discussions, a Final Report prepared by Carlos Conde was sent to all of you and is on-line together with all the material of the Rabat Meeting. Prof. Conde and I will be illustrating the various points for the benefit of all. As you can see from the fact sheets produced and our past activities, the programme with your help has achieved great accomplishments over the past few years.

**Phase 1:** **Assessment of the state of the art of public administration and governance in the Euro-Mediterranean region through meetings and publications.** This aims at assisting interested governments in identifying challenges and needs concerning the reform process of governance and public administration. We have done so through meetings and publications. It is of course an on-going process and the members of the Network of Innovators will assist in this for the specific purpose of the pilot projects.

**Phase 2:** Identification of national, regional and sub-regional priorities in public administration reform. We have done so through meetings, action plans available on the innovmed website; and publications.

**Phase 3:** Sharing of best practices in public administration at the national, sub-regional and regional levels through meetings, the programme’s portal, and the establishment of a network of innovators.

**Phase 4:** Identification of strategies and criteria to implement best practices. We are finalizing guidelines for the transfer of innovation processes which we will publish in September 2007. Our book on Innovations: Replicating What Works provides conceptual tools on the issues of transfer and adaptation.

**Phase 5:** Identification of best practices in the region with potential of transferability and of pilot countries. We have identified 8 countries in the region who are interested in replicating innovations.

The next step is to identify the relevant innovations to be adapted. This will be done
by the national team of replicators (part of the Network), as well as though thematic workshops to be organized over the next year.

**Phase 6:** Evaluation and dissemination of the results of the project and rewarding innovation in public administration through the conferment of the Innovation in Public Administration Awards.

The activity that should be given priority in the next few months is the adaptation of innovations in governance through pilot projects and training. All major activities should be geared towards this objective which is very concrete and action-oriented. As we will mention later on, a number of countries are interested in adapting innovations in governance in specific fields and the primary role of the Network will be to facilitate at the national level the transfer of successful practices by facilitating the identification of innovations of interest to the respective national government; by taking part to study tours and other significant activities. The government official and expert from each country of the Mediterranean region should form a “replicating team” for the pilot projects phase.

Having provided a background for the future activities of the Network, I wish to share with you a few details regarding the purpose and structure of the Meeting. The purpose is to take note of the Action Plan and to discuss in what ways each one of you can contribute to the success of the activities of the Network. The Meeting is structured into 4 sessions, each one of them devoted to a specific activity, i.e.

- Planning policy analysis and publications of the network;
- Additional Forums and Meetings on Innovations;
- Training and capacity-building on Innovations;
• Adaptation of Innovations in Governance through Pilot projects; and

• Communication strategy and techniques.

A moderator will set the context for each item and should not speak for more than a few minutes to allow for maximum discussion. A rapporteur will take notes at the flip chart so that Members’ inputs can be systematized into a final Action Plan of the whole Network. During discussion, I urge all of you to be very concrete and to provide your own input on what you can contribute to the activities of the Network.

Finally, I wish to mention that I am very pleased that you will be attending the United Nations Public Service Awards Ceremony which will take place tomorrow morning and as mentioned there are 3 winners from the region. Moreover, we are very happy that you will take part in the Workshop on Innovations that will take place on 28 and 29 June since many interesting cases will be presented and this meeting should foster interaction among innovators from various parts of the world.

I believe that this Network of Innovators is indeed unique in terms of collaboration, enthusiasm and continuity in support of all of its members. As I said, we have started this path together almost 4 years ago and now we have the opportunity to truly make a difference in the region by facilitating the transfer of innovations and concrete measure to promote innovation in governance across the region so as to foster greater prosperity and well-being for all its citizens.

Thank you.
which is one of the activities of the InnovMed Programme, has been conceived as an idea in June 2003, when the Programme was established. After three years of close ties and hard work among very dynamic and creative government officials and national experts, the Network of Innovators was formally launched during the Meeting organized by UNDESA in Marseille in June 2006. The Rabat Meeting in March of this year has set the context for the Action Plan of the Network and this meeting, I hope, represents another positive step towards the institutionalization of this vibrant Network of Innovators.

Your commitment and dedication to promoting good governance in the Mediterranean region by sharing knowledge on key solutions to critical problems of public concern, by promoting a culture of innovation in the public sector, and by facilitating the adaptation of innovations in government, has turned this Network into a milestone for the region as a whole since it is the first time that innovators in governance from the Arab world and the Western Balkans are resolved to work together to promote innovations for better governance and ultimately for a better life for all. This means that each and every member of the Network has the great responsibility to support, at the national level and across the region, activities which promote a public administration that is more innovative, efficient and service-oriented.
Encompassing Northern Africa, parts of Western Asia and Southern Europe--including the Balkans--the Mediterranean Region is a diverse region containing countries with many similarities yet each having its own unique social, political, and economic systems. The very diversity of this region provides excellent opportunities for the countries to exchange experiences and learn from each other about how government can work better for the benefit of all citizens. Furthermore, because the countries in the Mediterranean Region are so close geographically to one another, they all share a common interest in the continued development and prosperity of the region. That prosperity, in large part, depends upon each country’s ability to make the public sector more efficient and responsive to a changing world.

As you all know, all countries around the world are facing similar challenges in terms of ensuring that their governments are able to respond efficiently and effectively to growing and increasingly complex demands and

The quest for innovations in the public sector has been on-going for quite sometime, but with the need for the world to achieve the commitments made by its leaders in the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit and many other global and regional conferences, it has attained a level of urgency. This urgency was echoed during last year’s celebrations of the United Nations Public Service Day around the world and the United Nations Public Service Awards at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It has dawned on most people concerned with the improvement of performance in the Public sector that although innovations in government are circumscribed in scope, they
have the potential to trigger a bigger process of transformation of the State and produce
general positive benefits to citizens through improved service delivery.

The global consensus on the urgency of innovations in the Public sector is not only
manifested in the research efforts that are focusing on new pathways to improving the
performance of governance and public administration institutions. It is also seen in the
way innovators are readily coming together to share information and knowledge about
their innovations and how they can be exchanged to minimize wastage of resources and
time in re-inventing the wheel. The United Nations Public Service Awards was launched
in 2002 with the aim to search for innovations in the Public Sector as well as to reward
and motivate public servants to achieve excellence in government. This network has been
established for purposes of sharing and adapting successful practices in innovation.

I am very pleased to mention that thanks to the work done by UNDESA, within the
framework of InnovMed, and this Network there is a growing acknowledgement among
government officials of the region that change is necessary in order to improve
governance, and that improving government performance through innovative
mechanisms is a critical component. Some governments have even incorporated
innovation in public administration as top priority in their strategic policy agendas.

Moreover, as the winners of this edition of the UNPSA have shown, as well as the many
innovations in governance that are flourishing in many countries of the Mediterranean
region, there is a growing movement towards innovation in governance. All the
innovations taking place in the region -- whether the innovation is large or small, in one
government institution or across the board, a successful transformation or merely a small
first step on the way to reform -- indicate the countries’ willingness to change – to be tolerant of and open to new ways of thinking and acting and running the government. And it is that spirit of openness to change that is the key not only to survival but to future prosperity, for all of us, in the Mediterranean region and around the globe.

You as members of the Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean Region are called to play a critical role in the region by continuing to be champions of innovation; by keeping the flame of innovation in government alive and by encouraging a continuous process of change in the public sector of your countries so as to ensure that governments meet the demands and aspirations of all its citizens. I believe that together, through this Network, we can make a difference in the path towards a more prosperous, citizen-oriented and dynamic Mediterranean region.

Thank you.