

**GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO  
UNICEF MENARO and UNICEF MOROCCO**

**International Experts Conference on Measurement and Policy Approaches  
to Enhance Equity for the New Generations in the Middle East and North Africa**

**Rabat, Morocco 22-23 May 2012**

**Terms of Reference**

**Rationale and context**

The recent events in several countries of the Middle East and North Africa represent a unique opportunity to enhance social policy for children, adolescents, youth and the most vulnerable populations. One of the lessons that has been learned from the recent regional events is that growth is indeed a necessary condition for sustainable development, but it cannot be sufficient if not accompanied by adequate redistributive measures and targeted development strategies benefitting the most vulnerable populations. Social policies are also of paramount importance to tackle social and geographical marginalization and any form of discrimination.

During 2000-10, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Egypt all achieved respectable growth rates of real GDP, namely, 4-5 percent a year, but this growth did not trickle down nor was translated into equitable services and opportunities for all sectors of the population and more specifically for children, which are over-represented in vulnerable families and which suffer most directly from absence or weak social services or policies. While States have not remained passive towards poor and marginalized groups, the partial analysis and sub-optimal targeting of social policies or social initiatives have often resulted in aggravating inequalities.

There are indeed dimensions of inequalities that remain hidden behind aggregate national statistics, or not captured in routine data collection, such as spatial inequalities – referring to clustered marginalization in both urban slums or remote and under-served areas, or socially determined disparities (linked to discrimination, low social status, etc.). In addition, in many cases, these forms of disparities are not only hidden, but also intersecting and mutually reinforcing. This intrinsic and mutually reinforcing nature of inequalities also represents a resistance to traditional approaches for poverty eradication and requires additional and more innovative thinking. Inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, political exclusion, are often overlapping and entrenching into patterns of marginalization that are calling for integrated social policies.

The MENA Region offers some very positive examples of Government's engagement to improve the knowledge base and the policy response for the most vulnerable populations. A number of countries have developed multidimensional methodologies for poverty measurement and equity analysis as well as effective approaches to address the needs of the most vulnerable children through policies, systems and budgets. It is therefore important to share this wealth of work gathering all the

Countries of the region and learning from the best examples, including selected experiences from other regions.

This regional reflection will help define a path of analysis and policy responses from different national experiences, and provide elements to cross-fertilize validated best practices into new and more effective social policies. In addition, a pool of international experts from different International Institutions will share the excellence of their experience and professional knowledge, as well as contribute to the discussion on how to improve current approaches.

### **Objectives of the Conference**

The overall objective of the conference is to share successful approaches in measuring and addressing inequalities and recommend ways of adapting them to other countries in MENA.

In particular, the conference aims at:

- Compare key approaches on measuring socio-economic disparities in the context of the Middle East and North Africa and other regions.
- Understanding how to translate analyses of children's disparities into more effective public policies, programmes and budgets and ensure a sound evaluation.
- Encouraging dialogue and exchanges between countries, UN agencies and NGO/Civil Society partners on knowledge and best practices.
- Create a network of resources on equity, social policy and children for further south-south and inter country cooperation.

### **Structure of the conference**

#### **Day 1: Measuring Equity for Children: Approaches and challenges**

##### **Keynote speeches:**

- Enhancing Social Equity in MENA: policy priorities for the new generations
- Research priorities to ensure better equity for children

##### **Session 1: Multidimensional approach to child poverty and disparities:**

- Overview of approaches in MENA
  - Multidimensional child poverty measurement in Morocco
  - UNDP approach to measure equity for the new generations in MENA
  - Child equity Analysis in Iraq
  - Panel survey for poverty measurement in Morocco
  - Governorates equity profiles and urban child poverty measurement in Egypt
  - Econometric approaches to measure equity for children in MENA
- Views from the outside
  - The World Bank's approach to equity measurement
  - Multidimensional child poverty measurement in Mexico: the experience of CONEVAL

#### **Day 2: Policy approaches to enhance and evaluate equity for children in MENA**

##### **Session 3: Overviews of approaches in MENA**

- The Moroccan Tayssir Social Protection Programme
- Monitoring the use of national resources for children: Child Friendly Budgeting in Jordan
- Reforming subsidies in Egypt: policy alternatives for the most vulnerable children
- Analysis of consumption subsidies in MENA: policy options for fiscal rebalancing and impact on children

- Evaluating social policies for children: the experience of the Morocco's Evaluation Association

**Session 4: Views from the outside**

- The role of CONEVAL in evaluating social policy in Mexico
- Subsidies, children and policy alternatives: UNICEF's advice for Governments

**Conference duration and participation**

**Dates and Venue**

The conference is planned for the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2012 in Rabat, Morocco. A detailed administrative and logistics note will be shared in time.

**Participants**

Governmental delegations from all MENA Countries will be formally invited to this International Conference, accompanied by selected UNICEF Country Office staff. Governmental Officials from the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, as well as from Civil Society Organizations and other UN and International Agencies will also take part in this event.