

**9th Public-Private Dialogue
Global Workshop in Tunis
9 May, 2017**

**Welcome Address by Ms. Eileen Murray,
Tunisia Country Manager, The World Bank Group**

Your Excellency Mr Prime Minister, ministers, dear friends and guests,

Thank you for this opportunity and a very warm welcome to this beautiful country Tunisia that I now consider as my home after having been here for so many years. Thank you for such an amazing hospitality. On behalf of my institution, it is an honor for us to co-host this event with UTICA and the Confederation of Danish Industries.

I would like to welcome you to the 9th Annual Public-Private Dialogue Global Workshop. And I would like to recognize and celebrate the leaders from government and the private sector from 26 countries who have come from all parts of the world for this workshop. You are the champions and custodians of the PPD process in your countries – which we view as the cutting edge of development policy and a key accelerator in our shared fight to end poverty and boost shared prosperity.

Building on many years of knowledge transfer and lessons learned in Public-Private Dialogue, this 9th Global Workshop is an effort to bring all of you together to identify the most effective means to support the full participation of young people, women and migrants in the economy and society as whole.

We hope to get your insights on the best way forward for promoting inclusive growth through dialogue here in Tunisia, but also in the 25 other countries which are represented here today.

Today's 1.8 billion young people around the world face enormous and complex challenges in their transition to adulthood. The decisions they make concerning their education, employment, migration, voice, health, and other issues have serious and lasting consequences for all of us that can persist for generations and can affect themselves as well as the global community.

These young people will determine whether we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, broad-based economic growth, social cohesion, gender equality, climate sustainability and more importantly – our collective survival.

Young people make up 25 percent of the working age population worldwide, but nearly half of the unemployed. Between today and 2030, nearly a billion people will enter the labor market; five million new jobs will be needed each month to absorb them, globally.

Today in the world, over half a billion young people live on less than \$2 per day. It is estimated that there are nearly 126 million young people who are illiterate.

Our region is not foreign to these issues. 50% of MENA population is under the age of 25. Unemployment in MENA is 10% among older workers but 23% among younger workers. In Tunisia, the unemployment rate amongst the youth population is about a third higher for young women as compared to young men. This is a challenge for all, including enterprises. In spite of high education, 40% of MENA firm managers cite “inadequately skilled workers” as a constraint.

In Tunisia, this created a situation where the unemployment rate for those who got a tertiary education degree is 37%. This situation is still prevalent, even after the Arab Spring and the Jasmine Revolution. It can create disillusion, and fear in the future for the young generations. And remember: Although few young people are actively engaged in conflict, young people predominate in conflict, but can also be powerful advocates and actors for peace. So, let's see the glass as half full and not than half empty.

As you can see the challenge is enormous. But so are the rewards if we get this right. Ensuring the successful transition of today's youth to productive and thriving adulthood will yield global benefits in at least three ways: finding employment, ensuring peace, and minimizing disruptive large-scale migration of people.

In a globalized and interdependent world these challenges rarely remain within the borders of a nation. Youth and women predominate also in migration: they move to seek better opportunities or a more peaceful environment, and we must harness these aspirations to ensure continued global stability. Think about it, in the context of this very region: The Syrian war alone has displaced 11M people, 6.3 million people are internally

displaced and 4.8M forced to seek safety in neighboring countries. Not to mention the Libyan situation, next door.

This is exactly why we need to provide space for disparate constituencies to come together for collaborative action. The Public-Private Dialogue initiatives you work on are exactly such kind of institutional mechanism for collaborative development. They can help deal with economic reform management, but also serve as crisis alleviation mechanism, by making sure all the energies are directed towards development, reconstruction, peacebuilding and inclusion.

Such collaborative policy-making platforms have become widely recognized as a fundamental component of economic development and a driver of growth. And this is because they function as a two-way street. They are not only a way for providing private sector input to government policies. It is also for the government to help focus private sector investment where it is most needed.

This is especially true in Tunisia, where the importance of tri-partite Dialogue was recognized by the Nobel Prize, and I want to emphasize here the positive role that UTICA had and continues to have in advancing the reform process.

We also, at the World Bank, have applied this lesson for our programming in Tunisia. For instance, we work with the government on a competitiveness program which will unleash private sector growth and fulfill the country's pressing need for more jobs, especially for the youth. We are doing it through PPD in four segments: Electronic components, Pharmaceuticals, Garments, and IT service. You will hear about one such dialogue process later on today. I would also like to give credit to the Prime Minister and the government of Tunisia, because they are putting the fundamental for this PPD process. It takes long time, but the train has left the station and it is good.

The diagnostics and PPDs helped prioritize binding constraints and propose policy recommendations based on a technically informed participatory process.

I look forward to hearing your insights and guidance on how we can synergistically address the pressing issue of enterprise development for youth and inclusion. I am confident that can learn from each other's, exchange ideas, so that we collectively become more effective.

If we do so, we will support one of the key frontiers of development today – collaboration between the public and private sectors – that can be a key accelerator to help us achieve our ambitious goals for eradicating poverty.

I hope you will also take time to enjoy this beautiful country.

Thank you.