



CEF Newsletter No. 5

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Message from the Director

Dear friends of the CEF,

It is my pleasure to present to you the CEF's fifth issue of the newsletter. The annual newsletter aims to convey snapshots of the center's diverse activities and an overview of selected events. In 2019, several events at the CEF have focused on discussing policy options to accelerate inclusive development in the Arab world while strengthening governance and raising public sector transparency and accountability, drawing on lessons from other regions' experiences and applying them to Arab countries' specific conditions.

The CEF will continue to enrich its agenda, including on the over-arching theme of inclusive development with good governance, through an interdisciplinary perspective that benefits from the expertise of our partner organizations. Joint courses with the World Bank, OECD and WTO, such as those related to health, education and technological innovation, will complement the IMF's training in the macroeconomic, monetary, fiscal and statistics areas. That approach will continue to be incorporated not only in the face-to-face courses, but also in innovative modes of training, including online courses and peer-to-peer learning workshops. It will also increasingly cover emerging topics such as those related to Fintech, curbing corruption, boosting women's employment, and addressing climate change. The CEF's



launching of online learning in recent years has been particularly well received by public sector officials, which bodes well for the opening to the wider public in early 2020 of the online course on Energy Subsidy Reform in Arabic.

The emerging themes noted above will also be core topics in the high-level symposiums that the center will lead jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, as well as in our broader engagement with the Kuwaiti community and civil society. These events are attended by a highly diverse audience including representatives from the government, civil society, academic and business communities, and aim at addressing the key concerns of the region's citizens. The scope of the discussions will continue to broaden to include economic policy options in the face of the region's evolving challenges, including precarious global economic conditions and rising conflict and turmoil in several countries.

We look forward to your visit and participation in our events, and to your comments on the CEF's work to better serve the region. I would also welcome your thoughts through our website at www.cef.imf.org in English and Arabic, which includes our newsletters and updates on our events, and through Instagram @imfcef or by email at cefmgmt@imf.org.

Oussama Kanaan,
Director, IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance

CEF High-Level Symposia

Debating Governance, Transparency and Public Sector Reforms



The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), held two high-level symposia to address issues that are of high priority for the region: governance, transparency and public sector reforms in the Arab world.

The first symposium, on “*Good Governance and Transparency in the Arab World*” was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2019. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. It included Dr. Louis Marc Ducharme, Chief Statistician and Data Officer, and Director of the IMF’s Statistics Department, as the keynote speaker; Dr. Salam Fayyad, Distinguished Scholar and Lecturer at Princeton University and former Prime Minister of Palestine; and Dr. Ziad Bahaa-Eldin, Founder and Managing Partner at Thebes Consultancy and former Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt.

His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-Ebraheem indicated that the symposium aimed at stimulating an open debate on the evolving economic challenges faced by policymakers in Kuwait and the wider Arab community. He stressed the importance of good economic governance and transparency for evidence-based policy making and overviewed key policies that are needed in the Arab world for closer economic cooperation, and highlighted the steps required to strengthen public sector institutions especially in conflict-affected countries.

Dr. Ducharme’s keynote address focused on the importance of transparent, high-quality, and timely economic data and statistics for good governance. Dr. Ducharme highlighted that high-quality data is essential for effective policy making and good economic governance. He noted that the IMF’s capacity development work and dialogue with the authorities has supported notable improvement in statistical quality in the region, with real time beneficial impact on policy making. On the institutional front, the IMF has supported the creation of the Arab-Stat and the GCC-Stat initiatives in order to support the above objectives in the region. Finally, Dr. Ducharme suggested that the ongoing data revolution (e.g., SDMX machine-to-machine data exchange protocol and cloud-based dissemination techniques) would make economic data immediately available to all third parties and creates opportunities for policy-makers to reap further benefits from transparency. Dr. Ducharme reiterated the IMF’s intention to provide strong support to regional players in this endeavor.

Following Dr. Ducharme’s presentation, Dr. Salam Fayyad and Dr. Ziad Bahaa-Eldin presented a complementary analysis of the reforms needed to achieve good governance in Arab countries, bringing to the fore lessons from several countries and regions, including an assessment of Egyptian, Palestinian, as well as global experiences.



The second symposium on “*Public Sector Reforms for Better Governance*” was held on Monday, November 18, 2019. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. It included as speakers Mr. Vitor Gaspar, Director of the IMF’s Fiscal Affairs Department and Ms. Ghada Khalaf, Project Manager of the Government of Kuwait’s Restructuring Project.

His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-Ebraheem discussed the importance of public sector reforms for better governance in the Arab world and overviewed the core measures needed to strengthen fiscal institutions, especially those that are conducive to public sector efficiency, transparency and accountability.

In his presentation, Dr. Gaspar discussed public sector reforms to strengthen governance based on global country experiences. Drawing on the Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s Allegory of Good and Bad Government, Dr. Gaspar illustrated that good government goes together with institutional constraints and controls by active and engaged civil society.¹ He stressed that weak control of corruption is one of the symptoms of bad governance. Corruption undermine the effectiveness of public policies and most importantly trust in government. The IMF’s recent analysis finds evidence that fiscal institutions, by enhancing fiscal transparency and strengthening accountability, play an important role in curbing corruption. Dr. Gaspar highlighted that the transparency in public finances is central to ensuring that public finances are responsive to citizens and deliver full accountability.



He added that the use of public sector balance sheets improves transparency and accountability. That is why the IMF has started advocating for public sector balance sheets and double-entry accounting. Finally, Dr. Gaspar emphasized that building tax capacity is central to building state capacity, which is a key prerequisite for economic growth and development. He also suggested that reform of taxation offers a great opportunity to improve equity and perceptions of fairness and to establish a link between governments and citizens. This would lead to higher government accountability, improve its trustworthiness, and enhance inter-generational equity.

Following Dr. Gaspar’s presentation, Ms. Ghada Khalaf focused on government reforms to help achieve Kuwait’s Vision 2035. She started by highlighting His Highness the Amir’s desire to reform Kuwait’s government administration as envisaged in the New Kuwait Vision 2035. She indicated that, based on His Highness’s vision, the Supreme Council for Planning and Development commissioned a study on “Redesigning the Structure of the Government of Kuwait”. The study aims to reform the Government of Kuwait’s administrative and bureaucratic practices and strengthen its integrity, transparency and accountability, as well as improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Ms. Khalaf then discussed the project’s expected contributions to achieving the latter goals, both in the short-term and over the coming decades in the fulfillment of New Kuwait Vision 2035.

The floor was then opened for a discussion with the audience, including participants from the public sector, the banking and business community, academia, as well as representatives from international organizations and civil society.



¹ The paintings depicted the ruler of Siena who dominates the central painting and whose hand is tied by a cord that is connected, through the citizens, to the scales of justice.

Novel Approaches

How to Improve Public Sector's Role in Detecting and Reporting Corruption in MENA Countries?

In the spirit of fighting corruption and creating greater awareness of the many challenges that were discussed in our symposia, the course on “How to Improve Public Sector's Role in Detecting and Reporting Corruption?”, delivered jointly by the CEF and OECD, targets government officials as well as public entities charged with policies and projects to fight corruption. Officials with relevant experience in managing anti-corruption programs and initiatives to promote the detection and reporting of corruption are encouraged to apply.

The course aims to deepen participants' understanding and knowledge of the potential role that can be played by the public sector in curbing corruption. The course objectives also include enhancing the public/private dialogue in the fight against corruption, developing skills in managing projects that involve public and private stakeholders in the fight against corruption, and providing multiple concrete examples on how to maximize success.



The course uses both theory and case studies based on the experience of OECD and MENA countries. Instructors, from both the public and private sectors, have a rich knowledge of the topic at hand and the atmosphere is generally informal to encourage participation in candid discussions. Participants are also encouraged to share their own national experiences. Another benefit of the course is the potential expansion of the professional network of experts in the governance area.

Online Course on Energy Subsidy Reform in Arabic

In 2019, the CEF launched an online course on Energy Subsidy Reform (ESR.x) in Arabic for government officials. The course was well received in the region. The CEF has been able to reach six times the number of participants of a typical face-to-face class size of 30. This is an indication that online training in Arabic is in high demand and is particularly useful in reaching audiences for which travel to another country for face-to-face courses is more challenging as a result of conflict conditions.



The following comment gives a good feel for several participants' feedback: *“The lectures were great on all levels; the lecturers excelled in conveying the content in a simplified and easy manner. Furthermore, making the presentations in Arabic really facilitated the comprehension of the topics. It was a distinguished experience, one that should be repeated more in Arabic.”*

The CEF is launching the course a second time in 2020, expanding our reach to the general public through edX.² The course runs from February 5, 2020 to April 1, 2020. The deadline for signing up is January 29, 2020. This course is self-paced, with an expected workload of four to six hours per week. Interested government officials are encouraged to apply online through the following link <https://www-ins.imf.org>. Non-government officials are encouraged to sign up directly on EdX through the following link: www.edx.org/school/imfx.

² edX is a platform that provides a wide range of training courses online from the world's leading institutions. ESR.x Arabic will be launched as a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) via the IMF's online learning program (IMFx).

CEF Activities during January-December 2020

Sr.	Sponsoring Agency	Course Title	Course ID	Course No.	Course Date	Lang	Duration	Application
1	OECD	How to Improve Public Sector's Role in Detecting and Reporting Corruption in MENA Countries?	PS-CORP	CE20.101	Jan 6-9	E/A	0.8	Invitation
2	METAC	National Accounts Compilation Issues: Supply, Use, and Input-Output Tables	NACI	CE20.114	Jan 12-16	E/A	1	ONS
3	IMF (ICD)-AMF	Financial Sector Policies*	FSP	CE20.01	Jan 12-23	E	2	Invitation
4	WBG	Applying Behavioral Science to Public Policy – A Guide for Practitioners	BSPP	CE20.102	Jan 20-23	E/A	0.8	Invitation
5	IMF (FAD)	Tax Policy and Administration: Theory and Practice	TPAT	CE20.02	Jan 26-30	E/A	1	OAS
6	IMF (ICD)-AMF	Fiscal Frameworks*	FF	CE20.03	Jan 26-Feb 6	E/A	2	Invitation
7	IMF (MCM)	Debt Management, Debt Reporting and Investor Relations	DMIR	CE20.04	Feb 2-6	E/A	1	OAS
8	WBG	Accelerating Human Capital Formation in MENA	HC-MENA	CE20.103	Feb 3-6	E/A	0.8	Invitation
9	IMF (ICD)	Financial Programming and Policies	FPP	CE20.06	Feb 9-20	A	2	OAS
10	IMF (STA)-AMF	Public Sector Debt Statistics*	PDS	CE20.07	Feb 9-20	A	2	Invitation
11	IMF (MCM)	Selected Issues in the Regulation of Fintech	SIFR	CE20.05	Feb 10-13	E/A	1	Invitation
12	WBG	National Financial Inclusion Strategy	NFIS	CE20.104	Feb 16-19	E/A	0.8	Invitation
13	IMF (STA)-AMF	National Accounts Statistics*	NAS	CE20.08	Feb 16-27	E/A	2	Invitation
14	METAC	Islamic Finance and Banking	ISB	CE20.115	Mar 8-12	E/A	1	ONS
15	IMF (ICD)-AMF	Macroeconomic Diagnostics*	MDS	CE20.09	Mar 8-19	E	2	Invitation
16	IMF (ICD)-BAM	Financial Development and Financial Inclusion**	FDFI	CE20.10	Mar 9-20	E	2	OAS

Sr.	Sponsoring Agency	Course Title	Course ID	Course No.	Course Date	Lang	Duration	Application
17	IMF (ICD)-AMF	Fiscal Policy Analysis*	FPA	CE20.11	Mar 22-Apr 2	A	2	Invitation
18	IMF (ICD)	Macroeconomic Management in Resource-Rich Countries	MRC	CE20.12	Mar 29-Apr 9	E/A	2	OAS
19	IMF (STA)-AMF	Monetary and Financial Statistics - Advanced*	MFS-A	CE20.13	Apr 5-16	E/A	2	Invitation
20	CEF	Directors of Training Seminar	DOT	CE20.50	Apr 7	E/A	0.2	Invitation
21	WBG	Digital Capabilities for a Digital Economy – A Guide for MENA Practitioners	DE-MENA	CE20.105	Apr 12-16	E/A	1	Invitation
22	OECD	Improving Productivity, Diversification and Competitiveness in MENA	COMP	CE20.106	Apr 20-23	E/A	0.8	Invitation
23	METAC	Customs Modernization Strategies for Improved Revenue Mobilization	RA	CE20.116	Apr 21-23	E/A	0.6	ONS
24	IMF (FAD)	Reforming Fuel Subsidies	RFS	CE20.15	May 31-June 4	E/A	1	OAS
25	WBG	Value Chain and Industry Analysis for Policy Design - Bootcamp	VC	CE20.107	June 22-25	E/A	0.8	Invitation
26	METAC	PFM Methods and Tools for Budgeting	PFM-BUD	CE20.117	June 29-July 2	E/A	1	ONS
27	WBG	GovTech: Driving Innovation, from Potential to Reality	GT	CE20.108	Sept 6-10	E/A	1	Invitation
28	IMF (ICD)	Fiscal Policy Analysis	FPA	CE20.16	Sept 6-17	A	2	OAS
29	IMF (MCM)	Bank Restructuring and Resolution	BR	CE20.17	Sept 13-17	E/A	1	OAS
30	IMF (LEG)	Implementing the International AML-CFT Standards	AMLS	CE20.18	Sept 20-24	E/A	1	OAS
31	IMF (ICD)	Monetary Policy	MP	CE20.19	Sept 20-Oct 1	E	2	OAS
32	WBG	Delivering Social Protection in an Age of Technological Disruption: Policy Framework, Design, and Implementation	SP	CE20.109	Sept 27- Oct 1	E/A	1	Invitation
33	WTO	Trade Policy	TP1	CE20.110	Oct 4-8	E/A	1	Invitation

Sr.	Sponsoring Agency	Course Title	Course ID	Course No.	Course Date	Lang	Duration	Application
34	IMF (MCM)	Macro-Stress Testing	MST	CE20.20	Oct 4-8	E	1	OAS
35	IMF (ICD)	Macroeconometric Forecasting and Analysis	MFA	CE20.21	Oct 11- 22	E	2	OAS
36	OECD	Public Procurement in MENA and GCC Countries	PPM	CE20.111	Oct 12-15	E/A	0.8	Invitation
37	IMF(FAD)	Strengthening Budget Institutions	SBI	CE20.22	Oct 18-22	E/A	1	OAS
38	OECD	Policies for SMEs and Access to Finance in the MENA Region	SME	CE20.112	Nov 2-5	E/A	0.8	Invitation
39	IMF (FIN)	Safeguards Assessments of Central Banks	SAC	CE20.23	Nov 8-12	E/A	1	OAS
40	IMF (MCM)	Current Issues in Banking Supervision and Regulation	BRS	CE20.24	Nov 15-19	E/A	1	OAS
41	IMF (ICD)	Fiscal Sustainability	FS	CE20.25	Nov 15-26	E/A	2	OAS
42	IMF (ICD)	Inclusive Growth	IG	CE20.26	Nov 29 - Dec 10	E/A	2	OAS
43	IMF (ICD) - BAM	Vulnerability Diagnostics**	VDS	CE20.27	Nov 30- Dec 11	E	2	OAS
44	IMF (STA) - AMF	Cross Border Position Statistics*	CBPS	CE20.28	Dec 6-17	E/A	2	Invitation
45	IMF (ICD)	Macroeconomic Diagnostics	MDS	CE20.29	Dec 6-17	E	2	OAS
46	WTO	Trade Policy	TP2	CE20.113	Dec 13-17	E/A	1	Invitation

<p>OAS: Online Application System ONS: Online Nomination System AMF: Arab Monetary Fund BAM: Bank Al-Maghrib IMF: International Monetary Fund</p>	<p>IMF Departments Abbreviations: Fiscal Affairs (FAD); Institute for Capacity Development (ICD); Legal (LEG); Monetary and Capital Markets (MCM); Statistics (STA) METAC: Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development WBG: World Bank Group WTO: World Trade Organization</p>
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* The course will be conducted at the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

** The course will be conducted at Bank Al Maghrib (BAM) in Rabat, Morocco.

Note: Course dates are subject to change. Please visit our website regularly: www.cef.imf.org for the latest updates.