

I N V I T A T I O N

As part of ITC's Open Doors for Arab States

You are cordially invited to a Panel Discussion on:

“The Arab Spring: Developmental and Economic Impacts and Implications for Technical Assistance”



Date

7 June 2011, 10:30 to 12:00

Location

Library, International Trade Centre
54-56, Rue Montbrillant
1202 Geneva

Organised by

The Office for Arab States, ITC

Background

The Arab States have witnessed unprecedented events over the past six months. The civil unrest which first started in Tunisia in December 2010 and then spread to nearly all other countries of the region represents a decisive and unique development in the modern history of the Arab States. Tunisia's former head of state fled the country while Egypt's former President resigned and is currently being held in police custody. Other countries have also seen wide-ranging changes in government and many rulers have announced far-reaching reforms. The situation in many countries has been characterized by the use of force by both demonstrators and security forces. Nevertheless, citizens continue to fill the streets and the aspirations for reforms are particularly high among the young who have been at the forefront of demonstrations.

ITC's Office for Arab States is organizing an "ITC Open Doors for Arab States" day which will be held on 7 June from 9.30 to 13.00 hours at the ITC library. The ITC Open Doors will enable ITC staff and other ITC stakeholders to obtain a better understanding and awareness of ITC's work in the Arab States and its vision for the future. The Open Doors will include a Panel Discussion entitled "The Arab Spring: Developmental and Economic Impacts and Implications for Technical Assistance". The panelists who are distinguished experts and knowledgeable about the region, will provide insights on the recent developments in the region and the developmental implications thereof on the economies of the region. The Open Doors will also include presentations on ITC's work in the region and an information stand where participants can interact with ITC staff to know more about ITC's current and future work program in the Arab States

The Arab States, as defined by ITC, comprise 21 countries, from Morocco to Oman, with a total population of approximately 308 million. There are extreme variations in terms of income levels and economic structures although a majority of citizens live in countries categorized as middle income. ITC has classified the Arab States into three sub-regions: Arab LDCs,¹ the Group of mainly oil/gas exporting countries,² and the Group of non-oil/gas exporting countries.³

The region is strategically important first for its geographical location stretching from the Mediterranean Sea, in North Africa to Western Asia at the cross roads of important international trade routes and second for its natural resources. The region holds 68 percent of the world's oil and 44 percent of the world's gas reserves. Furthermore, the region is of strategic importance, with the Suez Canal (through which about nine percent of total global trade, including oil, flows) in Egypt and with the Strait of Hormuz (and Strait of Gibraltar), through which about one-third of the global seaborne oil trade flows and more than 75 percent of all oil consumed in Asia transits). The Arab States also play a prominent role in the tourism, finance and logistics sectors.

In addition to the current political situation, the Arab States are facing serious economic challenges: Creating incomes for their overwhelmingly young people; diversifying the production base and exports while maintaining economic growth; integrating into the global economy and international value chains; establishing good governance; achieving their human development targets and MDGs; and combating desertification and environmental imbalances.

¹ Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen

² Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates

³ Egypt, Iraq (based on current export profile), Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia

Objectives of the Panel Discussion

The Panel Session will:

- Review the economic, political and social implications of the Arab Spring for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as well as for the international community;
- Discuss key lessons learned;
- Discuss possible economic and trade development scenarios in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and implications for development aid, and in particular trade-related technical assistance, to the MENA region.

Panel Discussion Participants and Format

The Panel Discussion will bring together ITC staff, representatives of Permanent Missions, UN agencies and donors based in Geneva and representatives from civil society specialised in trade and development issues in the MENA region to exchange views on the events in the Arab States.

The presentations of the guest speakers will be followed by a Q & A session.

The discussion can be continued informally and at an individual level with light refreshments being offered by the Office for Arab States, after the formal closure of the Panel Discussion.

Guest Speakers (Panelists)

Talaat Abdel-Malek

Dr. Abdel-Malek obtained his Ph.D. in international economics from The London School of Economics and Political Science and did post-doctoral studies at Stanford University. Dr. Abdel-Malek is the Senior Economic Adviser for the Minister of International Co-operation in Cairo, Egypt, and is Co-chair of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. He has been involved in international development issues for over 40 years as an academic, researcher, and consultant. He has also served in senior staff/consultancy positions with a number of UN agencies, in the field (Asia, Africa and Middle East) as well as at Headquarters.

Riccardo Bocco

Professor Bocco is a Faculty member of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, since 1986. His main geographical area of fieldwork for the last 30 years has been the Near East with a particular focus on Jordan and Palestine. In addition to his PhD, he has degrees in cultural anthropology, development studies and the Arabic language. He is former director of the Centre for Research on the Contemporary Middle East, based in Amman, and was Research Director at the Graduate Institute. He has led large-scale research projects focusing on international aid and the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees for the Swiss Development Agency and United Nations agencies.

Sherif El Diwany

Sherif El Diwany is a public policy expert with 17 years' experience as CEO and founder of one of the top management consultancy firms in Egypt (1984-2001). He has been Director, Head of Middle East and North Africa at the World Economic Forum before he became Special Adviser to the WEF's Chairman. Mr El Diwany is also public policy adviser to several Middle East governments and international organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP and USAID. Currently, he is a Member of the Board at Abu Dhabi Investment House, Geneva. His expertise includes public policy for trade and investment, privatization, local government and urban management; as well as project development and business planning. He previously held the position of Senior Vice-President and Director, Business Development Division, Cotecna Inspection, Geneva, Switzerland from 2001-2005. He has a MSc in Planning, University of Houston, Texas, USA in 1981, and a BSc in Architecture, Cairo University, Egypt in 1978.

Indicative Program: Open Doors for Arab States

Time	Speakers
9:00 -9.30	Arab coffee morning
9:30 – 10.15	<p>Presentation of ITC’s draft strategy for Arab States and ITC activities in the region</p> <p>Ashish Shah together with ITC colleagues</p>
10:15 – 10:30	Break to set up the Panel Discussion and welcome guests
<p>Panel Discussion: The Arab Spring: Developmental and Economic Impacts and Implications for Technical Assistance</p>	
10:30 – 10:40	<p>WELCOMING REMARKS</p> <p>Jean-Marie Paugam <i>Deputy Executive Director, ITC</i></p>
10:40 – 11:10	<p>PRESENTATIONS BY PANELISTS</p> <p>Talaat Abdel-Malek <i>Economic Adviser to the Minister of International Co-operation, Cairo and Co-Chair, OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, Paris</i></p> <p>Sherif El Diwany <i>Member of the Board, Abu Dhabi Investment House, Geneva</i></p> <p>Riccardo Bocco <i>Professor of Development Studies and of Political Sociology, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva</i></p>
11:10 – 11:55	Q&A session
11:55 – 12:00	<p>CONCLUDING REMARKS</p> <p>Jean-Marie Paugam <i>Deputy Executive Director, ITC</i></p>
12:00 – 13:00	Informal networking at Arab States Information Stand around culinary delights from the Arab Region

Registration and Contact Details

To register your attendance at the Open Doors for Arab States, please click on the following link and insert your name and e-mail address in the registration form:

<http://www.eventstorm.com/us/itc-panel-discussion-on-arab-spring-geneva-40638.html>

Please feel free to forward this invitation to interested colleagues.

In case you have any further queries or require further information about the event, please send an e-mail to oas@intracen.org.