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**IMF-METAC Regional Workshop:
Budget Institutions for Effective Climate Change Action and Gender Equality
in the Middle East and North Africa
June 9-12, 2024, Cairo, Egypt**

How well prepared are the budget institutions in MENA countries for implementing gender and climate reforms? How can the budget process be adjusted to effectively incorporate gender and climate policy priorities? And what strategies can the IMF and METAC employ to assist member countries in enhancing their gender and climate budgeting initiatives? These were some of the questions that a regional workshop on *Budget Institutions for Effective Climate Change Action and Gender Equality in the Middle East and North Africa* jointly organized by the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center (METAC) and the Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD) tried to answer, with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Participants included more than 40 public financial management (PFM) officials from Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Tunisia.

In his opening remarks, *Vice Minister of Finance of Egypt*, **Mr. Ahmed Kouchouk**, highlighted the fruitful partnership between SECO, the IMF and Egypt and stressed the urgent need to better incorporate climate and gender priorities in constrained budgets. *Deputy Head of Cooperation at the Embassy of Switzerland in Egypt*, **Ms. Michal Harari** emphasized the pivotal role Ministries of Finance play in advancing gender and climate goals in the region. *IMF PFM I Division Chief*, **Ms. Carolina Renteria**, explained how the IMF assists countries to adapt existing PFM practices to support priorities such as climate change and gender equality. *METAC Director*, **Mr. Holger Floerkemeier**, thanked SECO and METAC's development partners for their support and collaboration, recognizing that capacity building is a long-term endeavor that involves multiple stakeholders and requires strong political commitment and ownership. He also emphasized the importance of building peer networks and sharing experiences between authorities in the MENA region, and how METAC regional workshops contribute to this effort.



Ms. Carolina Renteria provides opening remarks alongside Mr. Ahmed Kouchouk, Ms. Michal Harari and Mr. Holger Floerkemeier.

The workshop included country presentations and group exercises, which evoked lively discussions among the participants. Participants evaluated their countries' budget institutions' readiness to implement gender equality and climate budgeting reforms. Budget tagging exercises helped participants to identify, measure, and monitor budget components that are related to the achievement of climate objectives. Additionally, a practical exercise on gender impact assessments was conducted, further enhancing participants' understanding and skills in this critical area.

Peer exchanges played a crucial role in enhancing understanding and sharing experiences and knowledge. Participants showcased their countries' approaches in incorporating gender considerations into their national budget processes, shared success stories, and discussed lessons learned. For instance, participants from **Morocco** emphasized the crucial role of establishing and empowering their Gender Department as a Center of Excellence and institutionalizing the Gender Report. **Tunisian** representatives described how their national budget supports gender reform actions by reflecting strategic goals and translating them into actionable commitments.



Peers share their experiences, challenges, and ideas.

Participant discussions and hands-on exercises shed light on diverse country experiences and revealed implementation challenges, such as the need for better coordination between different institutions and ministries. Participants detailed how their institutions have successfully advanced gender and climate priorities by raising awareness about the significance of these issues. Although individual countries' PFM systems face different and unique challenges in integrating climate and gender considerations into their budgets, there was a unanimous affirmation of strong governmental support for these initiatives.



Participant intervention from Morocco.



Country presentation from Jordan.



Participant intervention from Egypt.

