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IMF's Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center Concludes Workshop on Regional Workshop on Budget Preparation

The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center (METAC) held a Regional Workshop on budget preparation at the Dead Sea, Jordan from October 12-15, 2015. It was attended by senior representatives of Finance and Planning Ministries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In total, 23 delegates from Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia and the West Bank and Gaza attended the workshop.

The workshop focused on the techniques and processes required for successful preparation of annual and medium-term budgets in the context of governments' fiscal policies and financial constraints. It also served as a platform for sharing the participating countries' experience of improving public sector efficiency and effectiveness, and for discussion of potential alternatives to overcome fiscal pressures.

A highly participative approach was adopted, based on breakout group discussions and presentations in plenary sessions. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and ideas, with a view to establishing a basis for continued knowledge sharing throughout the region.

During the workshop, participants discussed the challenges their countries face in preparing medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts, formulating credible budgets, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending. Critical issues and risks—technical, institutional and political—that still need to be addressed were also discussed.