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Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center

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METAC concludes a workshop on “Gender Responsive Budgeting”

The workshop, held in Amman during February 12-14, 2019, was attended by delegations from 9 countries (Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza), representatives of the European Union, UNICEF, and civil society organizations. The workshop facilitated extensive peer-to-peer discussions of countries’ practices, challenges, and solutions to gender responsive budgeting. It also provided a venue to present the IMF analytical work on the issue, and more broadly on inclusive growth in the MENA region.

Discussions focused on how public financial management institutions and practices can support the operationalization of gender responsive fiscal policies, and inclusive and sustainable development. METAC presented the results of a survey that it conducted among its members, which highlighted the challenges and achievements in incorporating a gender sensitive lens in the budget process. In addition to cultural obstacles, the survey suggests that many countries face challenges in collecting relevant data to inform the design of a gender responsive budget. At the same time, countries shared tangible and inspiring achievements. For instance, Morocco explained how they pioneered gender budgeting to address disparities in access to public services, and Afghanistan described how improvements in budget allocations led to a drop in maternal mortality rates.

During the wrap-up session, participants discussed the need to go beyond the gender issues and make budget institutions more sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population, such as the children, so no one is left behind.

Mr. Mario Mansour, METAC Coordinator, concluded the workshop by stressing that building more inclusive budget institutions in the region is “a long and difficult process, which includes many stakeholders, but whose economic benefits are potentially significant”, and indicated that METAC stands ready to support its member countries’ initiatives to develop gender responsive budgets.