



## REGIONAL CONFERENCE

# Fostering Regional Integration on Investment

9-10 December 2014

Arab League Headquarters, Cairo, Egypt

## DRAFT AGENDA

Organised in partnership with the Swedish International  
Development Co-operation Agency (Sida)



## **CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

Regional economic integration is an important feature of today's economic landscape and has been on the agenda of Arab governments for several decades. It is generally seen as a driver for increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from inside and outside a region by building an integrated market and harmonising policy frameworks.

In the Arab region, encouraging economic integration should stimulate investment by boosting intraregional investment linkages, expanding markets, encouraging tougher competition, allocating resources more efficiently, and allowing for positive externalities to develop. The League of Arab States (LAS) has tried to encourage economic integration by adopting different tools and instruments. In the area of investment integration, in January 2013, the LAS adopted an amendment to its 1980 Investment Agreement reinforcing the protection and guarantees granted to Arab investors. In March 2014, during the Kuwait LAS political summit, LAS members discussed a project to establish an Arab Free Investment Area.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

The Regional Conference: Fostering Regional Integration on Investment is a follow up to the LAS-OECD Technical Workshop held in April 2014, which discussed the Investment Agreement amendment's key features and potential positive effects on investment.

After assessing investment flows and trends in the Arab region, the Regional Conference will focus on the relationship between regional integration and investment. It will also take stock and explore tools to promote investment and foster regional integration. The Regional Conference will allow policy makers to engage in dialogue and discuss other regions' experiences, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

## **AUDIENCE**

The Regional Conference will gather Arab countries' policy makers, representatives of OECD member countries, the LAS Economic and Social Council, and other regional relevant institutions (e.g. the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (AIECGC), the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA)), as well as experts from the LAS Secretariat and the OECD.

## **MEETING DOCUMENTATION**

- The amended Unified Agreement for the Investment of Arab Capital in the Arab States (Arabic/English)
- OECD Study on "The 2013 Amendment to the 1980 Arab League Investment Agreement: a step towards improving the region's attractiveness to investors"
- OECD Paper on "Strengthening regional investment integration in the MENA region: review of international and regional investment agreements"
- LAS Conceptual Study: "Potential impact of the regional integration on investment in Arab countries"

**Note:** Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic, English and French.

تصريف الاستشارة  
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Tuesday, 9 December 2014

Venue: LAS Headquarters, Cairo, Egypt

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09:00-10:00	<b>Registration</b>
10:00-10:30	<b>Opening session</b>
	<p>The opening session will present the context of the initiative and the rationale and purpose of the Regional Conference.</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Dr Mohammed Bn Ibrahim ATTawijirri</b>, Secretary General assistant, Economic Sector, LAS</li> <li>- <b>Mr Carlos Conde</b>, Head, MENA Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD</li> <li>- <b>Ms Margareta Davidson-Abdelli</b>, Counsellor, Swedish Embassy in Cairo</li> </ul> <p>Election of the Chair of the Regional Conference.</p>
10:30-11:45	<b>Introduction: Stimulating regional integration through investment</b>
	<p>This introductory session will address the relationship between regional integration and investment, and will focus on the benefits of regional integration on stimulating investment.</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Ms Anna Joubin-Bret</b>, International Investment Lawyer, Senior Advisor to the MENA-OECD Investment Programme</li> <li>- <b>Dr Mahmoud fathallah</b>, Economist on the Economic sector</li> </ul> <p>The session will then take stock of investment trends in LAS countries providing an overview of intraregional investments and foreign direct investments (FDI) trends and the new transition on the regional and international investment map for years 2013-2014</p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Mrs. May Serhal, director of economic research on the general union of chambers of commerce, industry &amp; agriculture for Arab countries.</p>
11:45-12:30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
12:30-15:00	<b>Session 1 – State of play of existing tools to promote investment in the region</b>
	<p>This session will take stock of and assess existing legal and economic tools to support investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the national level (investment laws) and international level (bilateral investment treaties (BITs)), free trade agreements (FTAs) including investment chapters...</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenters:</b> Ms Marie-Estelle Rey, Senior Advisor, MENA Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD and Ms Anna Joubin-Bret, International Investment Lawyer, Senior Advisor to the MENA-OECD Investment Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the regional level (presentation of LAS initiatives including the 2013 Amendment to the LAS Investment Agreement, the unified visa for Arab businessmen, existing investment-related regional institutions including the Arab Investment Court</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Dr Mohammed Al-Nsour, Director, Arab Economic Integration Department, LAS</p> <p>The session will also focus on the dispute settlement mechanisms available in the region, including the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA)</p> <p><b>Presenters:</b> Dr. Dalia Hussein and Dr Heba, CRCICA</p>
15:00	<b>Lunch, hosted by the OECD in LAS Headquarters</b>

Wednesday 10 December 2014

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10:00-12:30	<b>Session 2 – Towards establishing an Arab Free Investment Area</b>
	<p>The session will address other initiatives, experiences and good practices in regional investment integration, in particular the ASEAN experience.</p> <p><b>Presenter: Ms Anna Joubin-Bret</b>, International Investment Lawyer, Senior Advisor to the MENA-OECD Investment Programme</p> <p>The session will allow participants to discuss the LAS's experience and its proposal to establish a regional investment free area, presented at the last Summit in Kuwait, 2014.</p> <p><b>Presenter: Dr. Abdallah</b>, LAS</p>
12:30-13:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
13:00-14:30	<b>Session 3 – The way forward</b>
	<p>This brainstorming session will provide an opportunity to invite participants to present their views on the way forward. The LAS Secretariat will also address the next steps to move towards the implementation of the Arab League Investment Agreement and the establishment of an Arab Free Investment Area.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Dr Mohammed Al-Nsour</b>, Director, Arab Economic Integration Department, LAS</p>
14:30-15:00	<b>Concluding remarks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <b>Dr Mohammed Al-Nsour</b>, Director, Arab Economic Integration Department, LAS</li><li>– <b>Ms Nicola Ehlermann-Cache</b>, Head, MENA-OECD Investment Programme, MENA Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD</li><li>– <b>Ms Margareta Davidson-Abdelli</b>, Counsellor, Swedish Embassy in Cairo</li></ul>

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## Key Contacts

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