**DRAFT AGENDA**

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE ARAB TRANSITIONS**

[dates and venue]

*v 14 Mar 14*

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| **Day 1 : Inauguration and Setting the Contextual Policy and Regional Environment** | |
| **08:30 – 09:00** | **Registration** |
| **09:00 – 09:45**  5-10 minutes speeches | **Official Opening of the Conference**  Opening speeches   1. UNDP 2. Regional Partner, e.g. LAS 3. Host country high-level representative 4. Host country RC/RR 5. Funding partner (e.g. Ambassador) |
| **09:45 – 10:15** | **Key Note Address**  Why is Public Administration Reform (PAR) crucial in the context of transition? How can opportunities for PAR in transition contexts be leveraged for transformative and sustainable development? Mikheil SAAKASHVILI, Former President of Georgia and Senior Statement at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (TBC) |
| **10:15 – 10:45**  10:15 – 10:20  10:20 – 10:45 | ***Coffee/tea break, including group photo and press conference***  *Group Photo*  *Press conference with high-level participants* |
| **10:45 – 12:45**  10:45 – 11:45  11:45 – 12:45 | **PLENARY SESSION 1**  **PAR in the Arab transitions at national and local level – towards a common understanding of particular features, opportunities and challenges**  *The aspirations and expectations of citizens for reform and development, poignantly articulated through the Arab Spring as a call for a new social contract between State and society, ultimately rest on the capacity of national public administration systems to translate the promise of resilient and inclusive governance institutions into jobs, security, service delivery and sustainable development. This session will consider the findings of a commissioned paper that examines the challenges and opportunities for transformative change across the Arab region. Participants will address but are not limited to the following questions:*   * *What are the institutional hurdles that must be dismantled to achieve transformative change in public administration systems, and how to effectively dismantle them?* * *Are there specific or system-wide priorities and sequencing considerations in reforming public administration structures, systems, processes and values?* * *How will strategies and measures to strengthen public administration systems vary between national and local levels of government?* * *[Note: questions are indicative and may be revised to build in findings from the background paper and national consultations on a Declaration on Public Administration Reform in Arab Transitions]*   *Chair: RC/RR from the host country*  *Panel Speakers:*   1. Regional Expert - author of study of the Arab States; 2. Political Leader from one of the Arab transition countries; 3. Local decision-maker from the region (urban setting) 4. Local decision-make from the region (non-urban setting)   *Q&A/discussion (approx. 45-60 minutes)* |
| **12:45 – 13:45** | ***Lunch Break*** |
| **13:45 – 15:30**  13:45 – 14:45  14:45 – 15:30 | **PLENARY SESSION 2**  **Implementation of PA reforms during processes of transformational change: lessons from (1) Central and Eastern European countries and (2) South Africa**  *The session will examine how international experience, lessons and practices on public administration reform after political transitions relate to and can inform policy choices for restoring or reforming state capacity in the countries of the Arab region experiencing or following political transitions. Particular attention will be given to contextual factors that underpin the wide diversity of success and failure observed in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and South Africa. This session will address but is not limited to the following questions:*   * *What are the concrete and practical lessons and applications that the experience of other countries and regions reveal about reform priorities, sequencing and/or pitfalls to avoid?* * *What type of reform priorities are apt for scalability and replication in Arab transitions through South-South and Triangular cooperation exchanges?* * *What can proceed with immediate implementation vs. reforms that require wide and inclusive consultations and inputs from both government and society?*   *Chair: UNDP BDP/DGG*  *Panel Speakers:*   1. Author of Post-Soviet study 2. UNDP/BCPR 3. Commentator from Arab states 4. Expert to illustrate benefits of South-South/Triangular Cooperation   *Q&A/discussion* |
| **15:30 – 15:45** | ***Tea / Coffee Break*** |
| **15:45 – 17:15**  15:45 – 16:30  16:30 – 17:15 | **PLENARY SESSION 3**  **Rule of Law Principles in Public Administration – launch of Global UNDP Guide on how to measure public administration performance from a human rights perspective**  *The rule of law and public administration—both fundamental enablers of development—have been traditionally addressed and studied in isolation of each other. Now after three years of research and piloting with national actors, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and UNDP have produced a User’s Guide and a Guidance Note for Self-Assessment of Respect for Rule of Law Principles in Public Administration. This session marks the regional launch of the User’s Guide, intended to serve national and local governments to gain a better understanding of their capacities to deliver services grounded on the respect for the rule of law and human rights principles.*  *Chair: Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)*  *Panel Speakers:*   1. FBA and/or UNDP – Presentation of User Guide and Guidance Note 2. Presenter from one of the three pilots (Philippines, Sierra Leone or Ukraine) 3. Commentator from the Arab States   *Q&A/discussion* |
| **17:15 – 17:30** | **Wrap-up and closing for the day**  *Note: For planning purposes, participants will receive handouts to indicate breakout sessions that they plan to attend during Days 2.* |

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| **Day 2: Challenges and Priorities of Public Administration Reform in Transition Environments** | | | |
| **09:00 – 09:15** | **Recap of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2** | | |
| **09:15 – 10:45**  09:15 – 09:50  09:50 – 10:45 | **PLENARY SESSION 4**  **Core Public Administration Functions and Reform in Post-Conflict and Transition Environments**  *The capacity and role of public administration in transition and fragile environments—at all levels of government and in both urban and non-urban settings—is of critical importance to sustaining peace and building resilient, inclusive and stable societies. However, this is a recent recognition in both research and support provided by the international community. The UN Secretary-General’s Report on Civilian Capacities in the Aftermath of Conflict identifies five core government functions for well-targeted support in post-conflict (defined as the first two years after main conflict has ended): policy formulation and public financial management, managing the centre of government, civil service management, local governance, and aid coordination. The United Nations distinguishes between “core” or “basic” public administration functions—the “plumbing” and “wiring” aspects of government”—which are precursors to policy implementation and service delivery functions.*   * *What should drive public administration reform in Arab transitions: targeted approach on core government functions or a more comprehensive and government-wide strategy?* * *Means to consolidate shift from subordinated and centralized bureaucracies to public administration reforms based on organizational effectiveness for transparent and accountable service delivery and citizen-focused policy implementation?*   *Chair: UNDP*  *Presenters:*   1. UNDP – Presentation of Lessons Learned Review on CPAF in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict 2. Case study from region (maybe Libya or Yemen?)   *Q&A/discussion* | | |
| **10:45 – 11:00** | ***Tea / Coffee Break*** | | |
| **11:00 – 12:30** | **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**  [Note: Each breakout session will be facilitated and will start with a 5 minute presentation from a subject-matter expert/practitioner as an “ice-breaker” to frame key issues and kickoff discussion] | | |
| **Local governance and decentralization**  Facilitator:  *Author of UNDP/Yale Study* | **Strategies to overcome corruption in transition and post-conflict environments**  Facilitator:  *Regional Institution* | **Engaging private sector, youth and other marginalized groups: sustaining dynamic relationships and inclusive dialogue between state and society**  Facilitator:  *UNDP* |
| **12:30 – 13:30** | ***LUNCH*** | | |
| **13:30 – 15:00**  13:30 – 14:15  14:15 – 15:00 | **PLENARY SESSION 5**  **Civil Service Reform: Challenges of Inclusiveness and Balancing Functional Politicization with Neutral/Merit-Based Systems**  *The capacity of governments to provide public goods and services that meet citizen demands and expectations rests firmly on a skilled and efficient civil service. How this workforce is constructed and institutionalized is both the art and science of civil service reform. Political leaders must weigh critical political and technical design factors—ranging from the rightsizing, lustration, and the fiscal sustainability of the public sector workforce to considerations of staff development, employee motivation, and performance evaluations—that determine the quality and capacity of government to fulfill its policy making and service delivery functions with openness, responsiveness, accountability and integrity. In transition environments, the parameters of compressed time horizons, unrealistic expectations, bureaucratic uncertainty and the need for social cohesion are but a few of other special considerations that impact the speed and sequencing of civil service reforms, both in terms of short-term priorities and long-term sustainability objectives.*   * *What is the appropriate balance for civil service reform between meritocracy provisions and inclusion quotas for underrepresented and marginalized groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, youth, etc.)?* * *Are the goals of civil service capacity, efficiency and sustainability better served by continuity of workforce or lustration laws/ measures (de jure or de facto);* * *How can the human resource management of the civil service be modernized, including through performance management provisions, while generating trust that personnel policies are fair, and what incentives or measures can be put in place to rapidly develop capacity and change behavior of existing employees to reflect a new reality?*   *Chair: UNDP RC Cairo & LAS or other regional organizing partner*  *Presenters:*   1. Vivek SRIVASTAVA, Cluster Leader, Public Management and Employment, Governance and Public Sector Management Group, World Bank (TBC) 2. Case study from Arab States—including coverage of ethnic minorities   *Q&A* | | |
| **15:00 – 16:30** | **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**  [Note: Each breakout session will be facilitated and will start with a 5 minute presentation from a subject-matter expert/practitioner as an “ice-breaker” to frame key issues and kickoff discussion] | | |
| **Gender equality in public administration and as decision-makers**  Facilitator:  *GEPA and UN-Women* | **Information and communication technologies (ICT) as a driver of PAR and State-society dialogue**  Facilitator:  *Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA)* | **Public administration and service delivery in the context of urbanization**  Facilitator:  *UN-Habitat or UNDP Singapore Center or maybe Arab Towns Organization* |
| **16:30 – 17:00** | ***Tea / Coffee Break*** | | |
| **17:00 – 18:15**  17:00 – 17:45  17:45 – 18:15 | **PLENARY SESSION 6**  ***Presentation and Discussion of Findings and Recommendations from Breakout Sessions***  *Chair: Academic Institutional Partner (e.g., AUC or AUB)*  *Presenters:*   1. Session on social contracts 2. Session on fighting corruption 3. Session on decentralization 4. Session on gender equality 5. Session on Information and Communication Technologies 6. Session on urbanization   *Q&A / Discussion* | | |
| **18:15 – 18:30** | **Wrap-up and closing for the day.** | | |

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| **Day 3: Declaration on Public Administration Reform and Local Government in Arab Transitions and Closing Ceremony** | |
| **09:00 – 9:15** | **Recap of Day 2 and Introduction to Day 3** |
| **09:15 – 11:00**  09:15 – 09:35  09:35 – 09:45  09:45 – 11:00 | **PLENARY SESSION 7 & WORKING GROUPS**  **Introduction of Declaration on Public Administration Reform and Local Government in Arab Transitions (PAR Declaration)**  *The draft text of the PAR Declaration will be introduced in plenary, providing an overview of the pre-conference consultative and preparatory process with national and local-level stakeholders, together with the findings that are now reflected in the draft text. Following a short Q&A in plenary, participants will break into working groups to discuss and refine the PAR Declaration.*  **Presentation of draft PAR Declaration**  Outline of the content with a focus on tangible, time-bound goals, targets and indicators, including the establishment of a regional support center; the set-up of PAR task forces at national and local levels; the development of Action Plans with corresponding budget indications; creation of a regional PA network; formation of South-South and triangular cooperation arrangements; etc.  *Presenter: regional partner engaged in pre-conference consultations*  *Co-Facilitators: LAS and UNDP)*  **Short Q&A Session**—focused on clarifications prior to start of working groups’ deliberations  **Working Groups**—Plenary breakout into three working groups to maximize inputs and deliberations among participants |
| **11:00 – 11:15** | ***Tea / Coffee Break*** |
| **11:15 – 13:00**  11:15 – 12:15  12:15 – 13:00 | **PLENARY SESSION 8**  **Consideration of Proposed PAR Declaration Revisions and Adoption of Final Text**  **Presentation and discussion of proposed changes from working groups**  *Chair: Regional partner engaged in pre-conference consultations*  **Endorsement of final text and adoption of PAR Declaration by plenary**  *Chair: Regional partner engaged in pre-conference consultations* |
| **13:00 – 14:00** | ***LUNCH*** |
| **14:00 – 15:00** | **CLOSING CEREMONY**  **Outcomes of the Arab Conference on PAR and LG in the Arab Transitions**   1. (a) Summary of conference proceedings 2. – *presented by local partner* 3. (b) Summary of conference outputs (including regional network, regional support center, South-South and triangular cooperation initiative) 4. – *presented by UNDP* 5. (c) The significance of the *Declaration on the role of Public Administration in Transitions in the Arab States.* 6. *– presented by a host city/country representative* |
| **14:30** | **Departure of Non-UNDP Participants** |
| **14:30 – 16:30** | **INTERNAL UNDP SESSION**  UNDP will convene staff and representatives from other UN agencies and regional organizations in a closed forum to discuss next steps in taking forward the recommendations from the conference proceedings and the Declaration on Public Administration (PAR Declaration). The session will review ongoing and planned initiatives at the regional and local level that can align with the priorities of the PAR Declaration and advance the South-South and triangular cooperation agenda. |