



Arab Employment Forum

A Jobs Pact for Recovery and Growth

Guidelines for Thematic Working Sessions, 20 October 2009

Panel 6 Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises for Job Creation and Retention

Time: 16:00-18:00

Organizational Guidelines: Each Panel will consist of a Chair, a Facilitator, and tripartite discussants representing the perspectives of governments, workers and employers. The Chair will designate one of the panelists to serve as Rapporteur, reporting back to Plenary on day 3 of the Forum. The Rapporteur will be assisted by a pre-assigned Forum note taker, who will provide the meeting minutes to the Rapporteur by end of session.

The duration of each panel is two hours. The second half of the session will be dedicated to open discussion, while the first part will be led by the panelists themselves as per the below running order of speakers:

- Chair (10 minutes): The Chair will preside over the meeting and moderate the Panel discussion. The Chair will take a few minutes to open the session and introduce panelists. The Chair will also summarize key interventions and provide a wrap-up statement at the end.
- Facilitator (10 minutes): The Facilitator (s) will present highlights of the respective background paper(s) prepared for each panel and key issues for debate. Where there are two facilitators, they will briefly address these same issues (5 minutes each).
- Tripartite constituents (10 minutes/constituent): A representative from each of the Tripartite constituents will highlight key issues of concern, bringing to the fore priorities and challenges from the perspectives of governments, workers and employers.
- Other discussants (10 minutes): Other discussants representing academia and civil society may present their own take on the issue, providing an overview of their own experiences and lessons learned.

The remaining time (approximately 1 hour) will be dedicated to an open exchange of views moderated by the Chair towards a set of Panel recommendations.

Thematic Focus: This Panel will investigate policies and strategies to generate decent and productive jobs through the promotion of micro, small and medium sized enterprises in the Arab region. It will address the challenges impeding private sector development in the Arab countries, while outlining specific policy responses and entry points for reform.

The panel will therefore look at the business environment including the legal and regulatory framework, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises, regional cooperation and integration with special emphasis on the trade sector. In addition, the Panel will examine the relationship between educational provision, including vocational education and training, and labour market demand, emphasizing the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial culture and making available SME support services particularly for women and youth in the Arab region.

Issues for Debate:

1. What are the best strategies for promoting entrepreneurship among women and youth?
2. Which are the binding constraints in the business environment in the region, especially from the perspective of small enterprises?
3. How can the tripartite constituents better engage in policy and practice in terms of responsible enterprise-level principles for sustainable enterprise development?
4. What are some of the measures governments should take to support and sustain SME development in the region in light of the financial crisis?