

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND BRAINSTORMING WORKSHOP ON
SOCIAL PROTECTION IN TUNISIA**

January 20, 2021 – (Virtual Meeting)

17:00-19:00 Tunis time

CONTEXT

The decisions taken by governments to curb the COVID-19 pandemic have led countries to strengthen their social protection systems and extend the coverage of their social programs to previously uncovered categories operating within the informal economy.

Tunisia's social protection system is considered one of the most comprehensive in the MENA region with respect to the current levels of legal and effective coverage in addition to the wide geographic coverage of non-contributory programs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic helped expose the current limits of the social protection system in Tunisia. This led the government to deploy urgent measures aimed at addressing the socio-economic impacts of mitigation measures on the poor and vulnerable as well as informal workers.

Questions remain unanswered about the performance and the quality of targeting of non-contributory programs, especially cash transfers and access to healthcare for the most vulnerable populations.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop will be an opportunity for civil society and social protection experts to:

1. Discuss and reflect on the social protection system in Tunisia, the scope and the extent of social coverage in Tunisia, particularly for vulnerable populations;
2. Discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges for the social protection system in Tunisia;
3. Discuss the health insurance system and the inequalities in access to health care;
4. Agree on the priorities to be addressed for potential reforms.

AGENDA

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17:00 – 17:15 **Welcome Remarks, Organization of the Workshop, and Introduction of the Participants**

- Ragui Assaad; *University of Minnesota and ERF*: Introduction of the project
- Asma Ben Hassen; *Tunisia Inclusive Labor Institute (TILI)*: Introduction of the participants and the objectives of the workshop
- Nidhal Ben Cheikh; *Independent Consultant and University of Paris*: Introduction of the general context of social protection in Tunisia and the areas for reflection

17:15 – 17:45 **Session 1: The Contributory System in Tunisia: Private Sector/Public Sector**

Moderator: Asma Ben Hassen

This session will examine the contributory system in the public and private sectors, including for vulnerable categories working in the informal sector, to discuss the main difficulties of this system and to propose recommendations for reforms.

- The pension scheme
- Maternity and family allowance
- Social coverage for vulnerable categories (law 32-2002, ahmini...) operating in the informal sector
- Unemployment insurance
- The main challenges
 - Social fund deficit
 - Extensive informal employment
 - COVID-19
- Recommendations

17:45 – 18:15

Session 2: The Non-contributory System of Social Protection

Moderator: Nidhal Ben Cheikh

The second session will focus on the non-contributory system, its main programs, scope, impact, and ongoing reforms. The focus will also be on the response of the social protection system to the COVID-19 crisis and considering its effectiveness.

- Flagship programs for social protection in Tunisia
- State of play in terms of coverage, the precision of targeting the poor, and the impact on the poor and vulnerable categories
- The current reforms of assistance programs (Amen Social) and the Social Protection Floor Initiative
- The minimum wage
- Responses to COVID-19

18:15 – 18:45

Session 3: Medical Coverage

Moderator: Asma Ben Hassen

The last session will be devoted to medical coverage in Tunisia, the health insurance system, and the problems of unequal access to health care, especially in the deprived regions of the country.

- Health coverage in Tunisia
- The health insurance system in Tunisia
- Inequality of access to health care
- Public health in Tunisia and COVID-19
- Recommendations

18:45 – 19:00

Closing Remarks & Way Forward

Moderator: Nidhal Ben Cheikh