

## SPECIAL SESSION 2

# Social Expenditure Monitor: Toward making budgets more equitable, efficient and effective to achieve SDGs in Arab States

Tuesday, 15 March 2022, 14:45 – 16:15 Beirut time

This Special Session will be organized virtually and hosted through Zoom. Please register and join through [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_LfOnvSgiQVW34GjKHws3ng](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LfOnvSgiQVW34GjKHws3ng)

### Background and objective

Public social expenditure plays an essential role in enhancing the social welfare and economic potential of individuals, and as revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, in protecting the poor and vulnerable population and supporting small businesses and economies. However, targeting budgets equitably, efficiently and effectively has remained a major challenge for most governments of the region due to lack of quality monitoring, gaps in public finance management, and lack of an effective tool to support social expenditure and fiscal sustainability analysis. The upcoming flagship report on **“Social Expenditure Monitor for Arab States: Toward Making Public Budgets More Equitable, Efficient and Effective to Achieve the SDGs,”** jointly produced by ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, will shed light on these challenges and propose recommendations for improving fiscal policy and PFM reforms toward achieving the SDGs.

The objectives of the session are to highlight the challenges of enhancing equity and efficiency of social expenditure and overall public finance management and discuss the recommendations toward fostering the SDGs and the inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

### Questions to be addressed

- What are the major trends in public social expenditure across the region? What is the purpose? From an equity perspective, who benefits? Where are the gaps? What are the important trends and highlights regarding equity and adequacy of social spending?
- How has the pandemic affected social expenditure strategies across the region with the goal of fostering an inclusive recovery?
- What are the possible options for enhancing public social expenditure and fiscal sustainability?
- How do countries in the region compare with peers in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of public social spending? What are the factors affecting efficiency?
- How effectively can governments improve recovery and inclusive development through improving efficiency of public expenditure?
- What are the key fiscal policy and PFM reforms required to better target budgets to SDGs and to improve fiscal sustainability?

### Moderator

- **Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi**, Managing Director, Economic Research Forum

### Panelists

- **H.E. Dr. Nivine El-Kabbag**, Minister of Social Solidarity, Egypt
- **H.E. Dr. Sihem Nemsia**, Minister of Finance, Tunisia
- **Dr. Mahar Hammad Johan**, Deputy Minister of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Iraq
- **Dr. Abdelhakim Shibli**, Secretary General, Ministry of Finance, Jordan
- **Dr. Markus Loewe**, Head of Middle East and North Africa Research Team, German Development Institute
- **Dr. Ziad A. Samad**, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development

Those physically present at ESCWA can attend the session in Room MZ.