

## Tax Justice and Gender Equality in the Tax Systems in the Arab Region

### Regional Workshop

20 and 21 March, 2017 – Sparr Hotel – Amman, Jordan

### Concept Note and Agenda

---

Fair and transparent social and economic policies, in particular tax policies and regulations, constitute an important foundation for the achievement of justice and development. Therefore, it is essential to take into consideration the economic and social rights and the development goals, including the gender rights, when planning tax policies. However, the numbers and facts imply that tax policies in the Arab region are poor in terms of respecting human rights and the social conditions of the citizens. In Lebanon for instance, women working in the informal sector represent almost 57% of the total female labor force, as well as the female participation in the labor market ranges between 23% and 27% compared to the male participation estimated at 73% as most of women are engaged in unpaid work at their homes, which is one of the many reasons why women are more affected than men by the absence of tax justice. In Jordan for instance, the rates of the tax burden are too high and reach approximately 25% of the gross domestic product (GDP); in this frame, the tax evasion rates are still too high and the tax proceeds do not exceed 4% of the gross domestic product (GDP). The main problem, though, lies at the lack of awareness and knowledge of the implications of tax policies on our daily life in the region implying the urge to create a suitable space and environment for dialogue on tax options and their impacts on the society and the economy and particularly on gender equality as it seems to be ignored or neglected by our Arab societies.

This workshop is part of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) and Christian Aid's continuous efforts to produce knowledge and increase awareness on social justice and equality issues as well as to promote resource redistribution and expand the fiscal space for supporting social protection. This is mainly due to the importance of tax policies in achieving development and social justice while this role has been ignored at many points of time. This workshop is hosted by the Jordanian Women's League and the Phenix Center and is looking to achieve the following actions:

- To launch and discuss a final regional report on the gender analysis of tax justice in the Arab world and related national cases studies (for Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia), noting that they would constitute a major reference on the topic for regional CSOs;
- To deliberate four national reports for Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan which describe and analyze the situation of tax policies and their impacts on social justice in each of these countries in addition to addressing the decision makers by providing real, effective and evidence-based political recommendations;
- To agree on a strategy for future actions and activities in order to reach our aim, which would be organized and disciplined by the first regional coalition on tax justice

With the Support of

in the region that will also be launched during this workshop after agreeing on its structure, functions, goals and the division of roles among its members. This will facilitate the prospective cooperation with the interested entities from civil society organizations, governments and research centers in order to build the capacities, advocate and lobby for a more effective and inclusive social justice.

With the Support of

## Agenda

<b>Monday 20 March, 2017</b>	
<b>9:00 - 9:15 am</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>9:15 - 9:30</b>	<p><b>Welcoming speech</b></p> <p>Speech of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) – Ms. Amena Al-Zoabi Falah, Jordanian Women's Union</p>
<b>9:30 - 10:15</b>	<p><b>Overall context of the subject (Globally and Regionally)</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Ziad Abdel-Samad</i></p>
9:30 - 9:45	Taxes: an economic tool and a mean to achieve social justice – Oli Pearce, Oxfam
9:45 - 10:00	Taxes as a financing for development tool in the framework of the agenda 2030 – Stephan Ohme, WFP Regional and formerly the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
10:00 - 10:15	Global discourse on tax policies and the African experience – Dereje Alemayehu- Christian Aid, Global Tax Justice Alliance and African Alliance for Tax Justice
<b>10:15 - 10:30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>10:30 - 12:00</b>	<b>Continuation of the previous session</b>
10:30 - 10:45	The European experience – Bodo Ellmers, Eurodad
	<b>Invoking extraterritorial human rights obligations to challenge tax havens and re-write the rules of the international tax regime</b>
10:45 – 11:00	Niko Lusiani, Center for Economic and Social Rights and ETO Consortium on cross-border tax abuse (video stream)
11:00 – 12:00	Discussion and Q&A session
<b>12:00 - 12:10</b>	<b>Introduction to the projects</b>
	Farah Al Shami, programs officer - Arab NGO Network for Development
<b>12:10 - 1:30</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>1:30 - 3:15</b>	<b>Presentation and discussion of the four reports of the project on tax policies in the Arab region</b>
	<i>Moderator: Dr. Nasr Abdel Karim</i>

With the Support of

	<b>Discussant: Dr. Niranjan Sarangi, UN-ECSWA</b>
1:30 – 1:45	Nabil Abdo, independent researcher: Lebanon paper <b>Discussant for this paper: Mr. Walid El-Chaar, UNDP Lebanon-Ministry of Finance</b>
1:45 - 2:00	Firas Al Jaber, Al-Marsad: Palestine paper
2:00 - 2:15	Ahmad Awad, Phenix Center: Jordan paper
2:15 - 2:30	Norhan Sherif, Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights: Egypt paper
2:30 - 3:15	Open discussion
<b>3:15 - 3:30</b>	<b>Taxes and Informal Labor</b>  Dr. Samir Aita
<b>3:30 – 4:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>4:00 – 5:15</b>	<b>Gender equality in tax policies in the region</b>  <b>Moderator: Ms. Khawla Yassine</b> <b>Discussant: Dr. Samir Aita</b>  <b>Presentation of the national case studies</b>
4:00 – 4:10	Farah Kobaiassy, independent researcher: Lebanon Report
4:10 – 4:20	Norhan Sherif, Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights: Egypt report
4:20 – 4:30	Souad Triki, independent researcher: Tunisia Report (via Skype)
	<b>Launch and discussion of the final regional report</b>
4:30 – 4:45	Main Researcher Dr. Nasr Abdel Karim: Regional Report
4:45 – 5:15	Open discussion
<b>Tuesday 21 March, 2017</b>	
<b>9:15 - 10:00</b>	<b>Expertise in Networking for Tax Justice (Globally and Regionally)</b>  <b>Moderator: Mr. Ziad Abdel-Samad</b>
9:15 - 9:25	Oli Pearce, Oxfam
9:25 - 9:35	Bodo Ellmers, Eurodad
9:35 - 9:45	Dereje Alemayehu- Christian Aid, Global Tax Justice Alliance and

With the Support of

	African Alliance for Tax Justice
<b>10:00– 11:30</b>	<b>Discussion and launch of the first Regional Tax Justice Alliance (agreeing on the strategy and future activities)</b>  <i>Moderator: Firas Jaber, Al-Marsad</i>
10:00 – 10:15	Advocacy - Iyad El-Ryahi, Al-Marsad
10:15 – 10:45	Discussion
10:45 – 11:00	Capacity building (Tax Justice Manual, etc.) - Khaled Ali
11:00 – 11:30	Discussion
<b>11:30 – 11:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>11:45 – 1:15</b>	<b>Continuation of the previous session</b>
11:45 – 12:00	Processes / partners / networking / expansion of the alliance –
12:00 – 12:30	Ahmad Awad, Phoenix Center-Jordan
12:30 – 12:45	Identification of the research priorities and themes - Nasr Abdel Karim
12:45 – 1:15	Discussion
<b>1:15 – 2:30</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>2:30 – 3:45</b>	<b>Continuation of the previous session</b>
2:30 – 2:45	Institutional structure/ Organigram (structure, coordination, division of roles, etc.) - Zahra Bazzi, Arab NGO Network for Development
2:45 – 3:45	Open discussion
<b>3:45 – 4:00</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Arab NGO Network for Development
	Mr. Rob Wainwright, Christian Aid

With the Support of