STUDIES ON GROWTH WITH EQUITY

TUNISIA

A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE GROWTH

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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LABOUR STUDIES

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FOREWORD

The need for a new era of social justice is highlighted by the recent events in the Arab world, where the demands for change are at a crescendo. This creates an opportunity – an opportunity to refrain from 'business as usual' and foster more efficient economic growth, as highlighted in the Report of the Director-General to the 100th Session of International Labour Conference in June 2011 entitled "A New Era for Social Justice".

Tunisia, the country at the forefront of the "Arab Spring", is a stark example of the fragility of an economic system based on an inefficient growth model. In spite of the country's strong growth and apparently stable macroeconomic environment, the benefits of growth were unevenly distributed. There was widespread inequality, high unemployment, rampant clientelism, and limited opportunities for decent work.

The events have opened a window of opportunity by creating space for a policy debate on building an inclusive model of development. This report aims to contribute to this debate. Similar to the message of the Director-General's Report, it emphasizes the limits of economic growth without social justice, quality job creation, and inclusiveness of all components of society. It also underlines the need for a new growth model that promotes stronger job creation for young people, more transparency and accountability, and improved social dialogue. This is the challenge for the country in the future in order to build a socially sustainable society.

The study has been prepared as part of a series of country studies, under the aegis of the International Institute for Labour Studies, in accordance with a plan of action set out by the 304th Session of the Governing Body to strengthen the ILO's knowledge base at the country level. This is in keeping with the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which outlines the processes for assisting Members in strengthening their research capacity and empirical knowledge, and understanding of how the strategic objectives of employment, social protection, social dialogue, and rights at work interact with each other and contribute to social progress, sustainable enterprises, sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty in the global economy.

The Report has been prepared by Marva Corley-Coulibaly, Sameer Khatiwada, Naren Prasad, and Pelin Sekerler Richiardi, of the International Institute for Labour Studies. The authors would like to acknowledge the strong support from the ILO's Regional Office for Africa in producing this report. The report has also benefitted greatly from substantial comments received by Dorothea Schmidt, Steven Tobin and Uma Rani, as well as the very capable research assistance of Eric Ballo, Jamie Boderck, and Chi Kyu Sim. The report has been coordinated by Marva Corley-Coulibaly under the supervision of Raymond Torres, the Director of the Institute.

Charles Dan
ILO Regional Director

for Africa

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