



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

Social Business

Learning from South-South Experiences
to Create Jobs in Africa

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President

Event: National Conference on Social Business in Tunisia

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This National Conference on Social Business in Tunisia is our opportunity to launch the Bank's new Programme of Holistic Social Business Movement for Africa. This conference is the first at the national level organized by the Bank to bring Professor Yunus's successful social business model to Africa.

The social business model has been very successful in Bangladesh, India, Haiti, Albania and other countries. We hope it will see similar success in reducing poverty in Africa by encouraging the poorest to participate in socially and environmentally sound businesses to generate income, develop entrepreneurship and create jobs.

The Programme of Holistic Social Business Movement for Africa will be piloted in Tunisia, Togo and Uganda. The Bank chose these three countries by assessing their youth unemployment situation. The Bank will organize two subsequent national conferences this year on May 16 in Togo and on June 20 in Uganda. If these pilot programs are successful, the Bank intends to extend the Holistic Social Business Movement to other African countries.

The Bank has been tackling the youth employment crisis since 2011 through a Joint Youth Employment Initiative. We are partnering with the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the International Labour Organization.

We have also been working closely with the Government of Tunisia, development partners and the private sector to address the youth employment crisis here. Since 2011 we have approved and disbursed two budget support programs totalling about one billion US dollars. They serve to reduce regional disparities, promote regional development, provide social services and enhance citizens' voice and accountability. They help to reform the microfinance law and reshape the labour law for an active labour market. In doing so, these two Bank programs helped consolidate labour market programs for highly-skilled youth to make them more employable long-term, as well as support short-term employment of low-skilled workers.

The Bank is looking forward to continuing to work with Tunisia through our inclusive and green growth agenda, as part of our Long Term Strategy for 2013-2022. Our strategy will focus on five key points: skills and technology, governance, private sector, infrastructure and regional integration. We have been experimenting with various programs to create jobs, stimulate innovation and promote entrepreneurship.

In 2012, we launched Souk At-Tanmia which brought together 20 development partners, mobilized one million euros in financial contributions and as much again in terms of in-kind contributions. We have identified 71 projects, mostly micro and small-scaled enterprises that can create more than 1,000 jobs. Each project will benefit from a grant of 30,000 Tunisian dinars. We provided grants which then attracted commercial banking credits. Among the 71 projects selected, 42 promoters have secured about two million additional euros in loans with commercial banks.

Getting the best out of social business in Tunisia calls for joint efforts from the government, donors, development partners, private sector, financial institutions, NGOs, local communities, youth and women. It is an innovative way to target youth employment and to improve livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable. The success of this programme will turn on participation from the social business investors, practitioners and other key stakeholders.

Let me end by thanking our partners who have made this program a reality. It would not have been possible without the expertise of Yunus Social Business and the support of IHEC, the Global Shapers and Orange. I would also like to thank the Government of Tunisia for their support in ensuring the success of this conference. Last but not least, I want to thank the Government of Japan for their generous contribution in financing this two-year pilot program.

On this note, I wish you all a very successful conference. We look forward to insightful presentations, fruitful discussions, exchange of opinions and knowledge sharing.

Thank you.