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**Topic 1: Access to Education for Women and Girls**

Tunisia has long been considered a leader in achieving gender equality through policy in both the Arab world and the African continent. In 2014, newly elected President Béji Caïd Essebsi credited the Tunisian post-Arab Spring success story and free election to a healthy, educated middle class resulting from gender equality in education.[[1]](#footnote-1) Article 21 of the Tunisian constitution states, "All male and female citizens have the same rights and duties. They are equal before the law without discrimination."[[2]](#footnote-2) Additionally, Tunisia boasts a youth (15-24 years) literacy rate of 96.1% for females, compared with 98.2% for males, as well as a secondary school participation net attendance ratio of 77% for females and 69% for males.[[3]](#footnote-3) These gains in enrolment were largely achieved in the 1960s and 1970s, following the introduction of many legal rights accorded to women regarding marriage and the personal status and labour codes of Tunisia.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Consistent with its internal policies related to the education of women, Tunisia has also been an active participant in international efforts although limited by historical national policies. In 1985, Tunisia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with certain reservations that were later removed in 2014.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the rights of women in Africa, which was meant to add extra provisions to CEDAW, has not yet been ratified by Tunisia.

The delegation of Tunisia recognizes that the education of women and girls is a generation process in which households led by educated men and women tend to educate their children at higher rates, it is essential that women be afforded the liberties to make their lives most compatible with higher education. Firstly, the World Fertility Survey found that there is a causal relationship between the increase in age of first marriage and an increase in education, indicating that other African countries should, like Tunisia, set a legal minimum age of marriage to 18 years old in order to keep teenage girls in the education system.[[6]](#footnote-6) Additionally, Member States should ensure that restrictions on labour specializations are removed so that women have access to all sectors of the employment force. It is also essential that governments in the African continent work with international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Children’s Fund to improve the collection of data relating to enrolment, labour participation and education in order to best understand trends in these sectors.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Topic 2: Foreign Direct Investment in Africa**

Tunisia relationship with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in recent years has been tumultuous at best. In 2006, FDI made up 9.42% of the nation’s GDP but by 2011, following a political revolution, FDI as a percentage of GDP had fallen to below one percent.[[8]](#footnote-8) Since transitioning to a democratically elected government in 2014, Tunisia has been actively working to become a more favourable climate for investment, highlighted by the Investment and Entrepreneurship Conference hosted in connection with the United States government, leading to an increase in investment from American investors.[[9]](#footnote-9) In order to increase investment in its most lucrative offshore sectors, namely scientific and technical specialized activities (37 percent), textile & clothing (12 percent), ICT (9 percent), and wholesale (9 percent), Tunisia must take steps towards improving infrastructure and labour capabilities.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Tunisia joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in March of 1995 and its trade policies are consistent with Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) standards.[[11]](#footnote-11) Additionally, Tunisia is a beneficiary country in the International Trade Centre’s 2015-2017 Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States, which aims to improve transparency and participation of the Arab group in international trade.[[12]](#footnote-12) Additionally, in 1995, Tunisia established a public institution called the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA-Tunisia) aimed at supporting and promoting international investment.[[13]](#footnote-13) This included creating ISO-certified offices in foreign countries in order to better cooperate with partners abroad.

In order to promote FDI and maintain national autonomy, member states of the African Union must become more attractive to foreign investors. To do so, it is essential to promote the security and transparency of asset transfers. Additionally, African governments should strive to maintain peace and security in the continent as political turmoil causes a decrease in FDI. African nations should also partner with industrialized countries or emerging investors, like China, to hold conferences and summits to showcase investment opportunities to foreign actors, as Tunisia did with the United States government. It is also essential that governments fund progress in infrastructure and labour specialization to become more attractive to FDI.

**Topic 3: Promoting Integrity and Transparency in Democratically Elected Governments**

Unfortunately, since the departure of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from office in 2011, Tunisia has fallen from 59th place (2010) to 76th place (2015) on the Corruptions Perceptions Index, with a 2016 survey published by Transparency International indicating that 64% of the Tunisian population believes corruption is increasing.[[14]](#footnote-14) In light of these figures, the Tunisian government recognizes that both a functional transformation and a transformation of public image must occur in the coming years. Especially as a newly established, authentic democracy, Tunisia must ensure that its people have faith in their public servants.

In January of 2013, Tunisia joined the African Peer Review Mechanism in order to promote transparent governance in the country and follow in the footsteps of neighbouring countries.[[15]](#footnote-15) However, as corruption in Tunisia has risen since joining this initiative, there is more to be done. The African Development Bank found that the APRM needed to be less complex administratively in order to improve the process.[[16]](#footnote-16)

To maintain the integrity and transparency of democratically elected governments, these policies must begin with the election itself by ensuring that elections are well-scrutineered and that the population receives rapid and reliable election data in order to give citizens the impression that they are actively participating in the political process. Once elected, governments with a literate, technologically active population should devote resources to making government policy and action available on official state websites, gradually moving towards publishing press releases, parliamentary votes, etc. African Union member states should also actively participate with international review boards to ensure that universal standards of transparency are maintained and the population has faith in its government. Finally, nations should establish or maintain clear legal mechanisms for punishing corrupt public workers including government officials, police officers, government contractors, etc. The Tunisian government established an online complaint system for instances of corruption, an initiative that should be implemented in other countries with the additional measure of entrenching the rights of corruption whistleblowers in each country’s legal system to make the public feel more protected in using these reporting mechanisms.[[17]](#footnote-17) Finally, it is essential that governments acknowledge and work with third-party or independent non-profit organizations that can promote and monitor corruption in public service.

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