**High-Level Regional Conference on "Water Sector Integrity in the Arab Region: Risk, Solutions, and Roles of Stakeholders" in Tunisia**

Tunis, Tunisia, 6/10/2024 - 6/11/2024

Organized by: UNDP, Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET), and the Ministry of Agriculture in Tunisia

Water affects all aspects of life and is indispensable to upholding human rights and humanitarian security across all levels, particularly concerning water, food, and energy security. It is fundamental for achieving sustainable development, as emphasized by Agenda 2030, specifically SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. Consequently, the water sector represents a critical regional priority in the Arab region, facing persistent and growing challenges. These challenges primarily include water scarcity amidst increasing demand, the impact of climate change, exacerbating conflicts, and the weak capacities in implementing integrated water resources management plans.

For that reason, governments, regional and international organizations, as well as non-governmental entities are making efforts to address these challenges and find appropriate solutions. However, these efforts have not yet adequately addressed the impact of corruption on this vital sector and the role of integrity in enhancing its capacity to tackle challenges and support its role in achieving sustainable development. Various factors increase corruption risks in the water sector, including scarcity and shortage, which intensify competition for this essential resource among individuals, groups, investors, and private sector entities. This is compounded by the intricate nature of the sector and the substantial financial resources required for its management, maintenance, and development, as well as governance loopholes within pertinent legal and institutional frameworks, procedural complexities, lack of transparency, digitalization and access to information.

In this context, and in the framework of its regional partnership with the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Fisheries of the Republic of Tunisia, is organizing a High-Level Regional Conference titled "Water Sector Integrity in the Arab Region: Risks, Solutions, and Roles of Stakeholders", scheduled to take place in Tunis on the 10th and 11th of June 2024.

The regional conference will be attended by ministers and representatives of water ministries, heads and representatives of anti-corruption agencies, financial and administrative oversight bodies from Arab and partner states, in addition to prominent experts from regional and international organizations, research centers, and specialized civil society organizations.

The conference provides participants with an opportunity to explore the concepts and practices of integrity in the water sector and its strategic significance in empowering this vital sector to fulfil its role in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region. Moreover, it offers a platform for exchange of experiences, deepening research on effective approaches to assess and mitigate corruption risks in the water sector and exploring potential areas of cooperation and funding between public and private sectors, society, international financial institutions, and development partners.

The conference is expected to produce a series of regional recommendations aimed at enhancing integrity within the water sector, formulated in consultation with participants based on an initial draft circulated prior to the conference. Follow-up on these recommendations will be carried out and built upon within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives with UNDP and other international financial institutions and development partners.

The conference will be conducted in Arabic and English with simultaneous interpretation available. For your inquiries and suggestions, please contact us via email at aciac@undp.org.