

## Speech Arnaud Peral – RC Tunisia

### the Role of the UN Country Team in Tunisia in Mobilizing Finance for the SDGs

Excellencies, dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the role that the United Nations Country Team in Tunisia has played in supporting the government's efforts to mobilize finance for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Development Financing is clearly one of the main challenges for MICs countries like Tunisia. Partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms have become fundamental. Allow me to highlight a few lessons learned.

#### 1. UNCT fit for purpose to deliver collectively.

Thanks to the UN reform, we counted during the last 3 years with a stronger RC Office with 5 key functions, able to play a more substantive and systematic role in leading coordinated efforts with the Government to create a robust framework that helped attract and effectively utilizes financial resources for the SDGs.

The corner stone of this framework has been the elaboration of the national development plan 2023-25 and a Vision 2035 fully aligned with the SDGs.

#### 2. Pooled funds are great enablers.

The Funding Compact is a fundamental element of UN cohesion and coherence at country level as some of its instruments are fantastic facilitators of joint work and greater impact.

If we take the SDG Fund for instance, of which Tunisia has benefited, it has allowed us to provide key instruments to the Government that has helped unlock finances resources for the SDGs. With technical involvement of UNICEF, UNDP and the RCO were elaborated:

- A financing needs assessment for SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 13 as identified by the national partners that includes an overview of the current SDG spending and an SDG costing to reach the objective.
- A fiscal space assessment.
- A financing landscape assessment looking at global public and private financing trends, public financing in Tunisia, and private financing.
- Risks and mitigation assessment.
- An overview of the public systems for SDG Financing

- Budget analysis reporting the last ten years national budget allocations and expenditures for the SDGs, Gender Equality, and children well-being.

Another notable initiative was the establishment of a comprehensive SDG financing strategy. The UN Country Team with the technical lead of UNDP worked closely with Tunisian authorities to map out funding sources and gaps but also catalytic sectorial projects or “bankable projects” identified as SDGs accelerators. This strategy not only identified potential financial streams but also outlines how these funds can be allocated to maximize impact in 8 sectors : transport, energy, health, education, financial services, infrastructure agriculture and communication.

Again, thanks to the reform, UN efforts are more integrated, complementary, and efficient. All parts of the UN family are now actively seeking inputs and articulation with other initiatives. The ones mentioned before were taken into consideration for the elaboration with UNCTAD of the Tunisian e-commerce strategy and the upcoming Investment Policy review, also requested by the Tunisian Government.

### **3. Partnership with IFIs and the private sector**

A fit for purpose UNCT able to help unlock financing for the SDGs is one able to bring together IFIs, the government and the private sector. These partnerships are essential for pooling resources, sharing expertise, and ensuring that development initiatives are inclusive and impactful.

For example, at the request of the Tunisian Government, we have created last year a UN Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for Youth and Employment aligned with the national strategies for Youth and Employment and with the Global Strategy of Accelerating Jobs and Social Protection.

The Fund has already mobilized significant resources from the Netherlands and more donors are working to contribute. The first joint programme FAO-ILO has been approved but we are also innovating with the Islamic Development Bank who will contribute to the Trust Fund to cofinance a joint technical assistance programme by UNIDO and ITC which will then unlock USD 100M of financing, half from the IsDB and half from a Tunisian bank BTS.

We are exploring the possibility to use the same approach with the World Bank and the ADB but also through blended finance, to de-risk investments and attract private sector participation for the SDGs. We need to keep innovating and adapting our approaches to SDG finance and with your support, the UN System will be able to deliver.

Thank you.