

2014 Spring Meetings

IMF Middle East and Central Asia Department Seminar

**Arab Economic Transformation amid Political Transitions**

Jack Morton Auditorium, George Washington University  
805 21<sup>st</sup> St., NW, Washington, DC 20052

**Saturday, April 12, 1:30-3:00 pm**

The political transitions in the Arab world have created an opportunity for economic transformation. In the Arab Countries in Transition (Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen), strong economic management and bold reform agendas are needed to devise new growth models that make for more dynamic and inclusive economies that generate jobs and provide equal access to economic opportunity to all segments of society. Policies should aim at strengthening the revival of private sector confidence and laying the foundations for higher potential growth. A key goal will be to engineer a transformation for the public sector from providing privileges, such as public employment, subsidies, economic rents, and tax exemptions, toward providing basic economic services, adequate social protection, better governance, a level playing field for all economic actors, and a competitive environment for the private sector. Important reform areas include trade integration, business regulation and governance, labor market and education reform, improved access to finance, and better social safety nets. This seminar will focus on the main elements of the policy agenda, based on a paper with the same title.

Moderator: **Masood Ahmed**, Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF

Panelists: **Nizar Baraka**, President of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council, Morocco

**Hakim Ben Hammouda**, Minister of Finance, Tunisia

**Erik Berglöf**, Chief Economist and Special Adviser to the President,  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**Hany Dimian**, Minister of Finance, Egypt

**Mahmood El-Gamal**, Professor for Economics at Rice University

**Homi Kharas**, Deputy Director for Global Economy and Development at Brookings