Civil Society and Public Sector:

Analytical framework for NGO-Public Sector partnership for the establishment and development of public policies and services in the Arab countries

The aim of this analytical framework is to assess the relationship between non-governmental organizations[1] (NGO's) and the government as regards the establishment and the implementation of public sector policies and the delivery of public services in the Arab countries. First, the analytical framework seeks to explore the NGO's practical experience in the Arab countries in the light of prevailing laws. Furthermore, it focuses on the extent to which Arab countries refer to NGO's when formulating public sector policies. The last part of the analytical framework is related to the organization of NGO's work in the provision of public services.

I. NGO's practical experience in the Arab countries

- What are the most important sectors of the country in which civil society institutions operate (unions, workers' associations, professions, voluntary associations working for the public interest i.e. human rights, fight against corruption, consumers etc., and development and service associations, etc.)?

- Do NGO's form with each other alliances, networks, and forums?

- Which ministries or other public entities accompany civil society institutions' work in the public sector?

- Do NGO's face any obstacles preventing them from getting work permits? What are these obstacles and to what extent are NGO's able to overcome them? Do NGO's initiate legal proceedings in the event such permits are not granted?

- Does censorship exercised by the government conform to the prevailing rules and regulations? What kind of censorship is actually exercised on NGO's activities (cancellation of internal elections, interference in the nomination of members, imposition of prior censorship on expenses, compulsory merger of organizations, imposition of high fines for alleged mismanagement, dissolution of organizations by ministerial decision, prohibition of activities for alleged security purposes, seizure of organizations' properties after dissolution, etc.)?

- Do NGO's enjoy all rights determined by law? What are the rights they cannot exercise? What are the other privileges NGO's benefit from (right to bid for the contracts of the government and municipalities, right to have free access to the media, right to have access to information, etc.)?

- Does the government equally offer financial support to NGO's? What are the conditions and practical criteria behind the granting of aid by the government to NGO's, including direct financial support and tax exemption?

[1] "Non-governmental organizations" in the following questions are those organizations that are founded for the public benefit and that are involved in the reform of government, and public administrations and institutions.

- To what extent do female/ male citizens have recourse to civil society institutions in order to solve their problems with the government, to have their claims answered, and to raise their reform proposals?

II. Consultation with NGO's about legislation and the establishment of the public sector policies

- What are the most important frameworks and forms used by the government to consult with and listen to the forces and institutions of civil society and the private sector (second assemblies (House of Notables), Consultative Council, etc.), economic and social councils, and other advisory councils (national councils, sectoral councils, private councils, etc.))?

- How efficient are these councils at making civil society and private sector participate in suggesting, drafting or discussing public policies?

- Does the government form work groups that comprise governmental and non-governmental parties, including civil society institutions and experts, in order to deal with public service-related matters? (Give examples of such groups, if any).

- Does the government organize conferences, workshops and debates to survey the opinion of the civil society about government policies?

- Are there institutions and administrative units in charge of consulting with NGO's (Consultative Councils together with the government, NGO's and the private sector, public relations offices, etc.)?

- Are NGO's entitled to have access to draft laws and recommendations in Parliament? In ministries?

- Do NGO's give their opinion on draft laws in a detailed way?

- Are NGO's called on to participate in the discussions of parliamentary committees?

- Do ministries refer to NGO's in a well-structured way with regard to specific projects?

- Do NGO's submit studies to the parliament? To the ministries?

- Are annual reports being prepared on the extent of NGO's consultation about public sector policies? (Give examples thereof, if any).

III. Organization of the participation of NGO's in providing public services

- Do laws and administrative instructions provide for the participation of NGO's in providing public services?

- Are there a national plan and sectoral plans for the distribution of services-related tasks among governmental and non-governmental entities?

- Are there government websites dedicated to communication with NGO's (presentation of information and programs allowing non-governmental entities to participate)?

- Does the government offer financial support to NGO's that provide public services?

- Does the government provide for administrative facilities for service providers?

- Does the government organize training programs for NGO's that provide public services?

- Does the government encourage the formation of NGO networks that provide public services in the same sector?

- Are annual reports being prepared on the extent of NGO's participation in the provision of public services? (Give examples thereof, if any).

- Does the government promote the successful experiences of providing public services resulting from its partnership with civil society?