



press release



## UNFPA and the Government of Tunisia convene the Second Edition of the Youth Forum in the Arab region

**Tunis, 20 August 2019** – Under the patronage of His Excellency, the Head of the Government of Tunisia, Mr. Youssef Chahed, the Second Edition of the Youth Forum in the Arab Region convened today at the Movenpick Hotel (Les Berges du Lac) in Tunis with the presence of Her Excellency Dr. Sonia Ben Cheikh, Tunisian Minister of Youth and Sports and Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab Region. The opening was attended by more than 250 participants representing youth, influencers, policy and decision makers, civil society, academia, United Nations and other international partners, private sector and other actors engaged in youth issues.

Founded in 2018 in Morocco, the forum provides an impartial space for dialogue with the aim of setting and advancing the youth agenda in the Arab region.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Her Excellency Dr. Ben Cheikh called upon the institutionalization of the Forum and announced the readiness of the Government of Tunisia to host the envisaged Regional Center of Excellence on Youth that will contribute to achieving the youth agenda. ***“Our country puts special emphasis on the role of youth and I am using this platform to express our eagerness to embrace this much needed youth space in the Arab region,”*** she stated.

Dr. Luay Shabaneh applauded the active collaboration of all partners, including the Government of Tunisia, the League of Arab States, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP) and others in promoting youth empowerment and rights. ***“The youth forum should be a regular annual meeting. We are now beyond the brainstorming stage; we will have four practical flagship youth projects out of the workshops of the forum. These projects will also have implementation and evaluation mechanisms, all set by youth themselves.”*** Dr. Shabaneh said. He added that UNFPA stresses the importance of youth as decision makers engaged in making meaningful and substantive choices that affect themselves and their communities.

“Knowledge at the service of Youth in the Arab States” is the theme of this year’s forum. Throughout the three-day event, more than 200 youth from 20 Arab countries are participating in workshops to discuss their needs and priorities in terms of knowledge.

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UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, delivers a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.



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For more information, please contact:

Muzna Shihabi: Tel: +201068484879, email: [shihabi@unfpa.org](mailto:shihabi@unfpa.org)

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#YouthForumAr  
#KnowledgeIsChoice

#LaConnaissanceC'estLeChoix