

Regional Agenda

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FORUM

# World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa Overview

Dead Sea, Jordan 6-7 April 2019

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IMPROVING THE STATE  
OF THE WORLD

## Building New Platforms of Cooperation

As we enter a new phase of globalization – Globalization 4.0 – driven by the transformational impact of new technologies and data, the Middle East and North Africa seeks to create its own path for societal and economic advancement. In a hyperconnected world, partial and isolated responses are ill-adapted to reap the promised benefits that this transformation holds, or to address its attendant challenges. Consequently, to harness this wave, new systems of cooperation will have to be charted in the region, particularly related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, inclusive new social and economic models, and environmental stewardship.

In this context, the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa will convene over 1,000 key leaders from government, business and civil society at the Dead Sea, Jordan, to enable collaboration on the most pressing challenges facing the region. With the full support and presence of Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania Al Abdullah, the meeting will provide a collaborative platform for generating progress on the regional agenda for inclusive growth, social advancement and sustainable development. Leaders from Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the Levant and North Africa, as well as key international stakeholders from the United States, Europe, East Africa and other regions, will address the transformational imperatives facing the region.

As the consequences of environmental degradation and climate change increasingly affect the daily lives of the region's citizens – ranging from desertification to water crises

to soaring levels of pollution – the sustainability agenda is climbing the priority ladder of decision-makers.

The meeting will build on the World Economic Forum's expertise on the Fourth Industrial Revolution to unlock action-oriented dialogue related to the Future of Economic Progress and its impact at the regional and national levels. As the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation, the Forum is well placed to convene such a dialogue; harnessing the current technological waves can be achieved only by mobilizing all sectors of society towards a common vision, shunning protectionism and laissez-faire attitudes.

In this context and building on efforts to advance gender parity in the region, the Forum will extend its platform to some of the Arab world's most innovative women entrepreneurs. Likewise, additional communities with an important stake in the region's future will benefit from the Forum's platform to shape relevant dialogues, in particular young people, innovators and sustainability leaders.

# Meeting objective

The World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa brings together the foremost business, government and civil society leaders to advance public-private cooperation on critical issues for the future of the region. The programme will revolve around the following thematic pillars:

## The Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Arab world

As illustrated by the burgeoning start-up scene in the region, the Arab world is starting to embrace digital transformation and disruption. Innovation and entrepreneurship are driving change and greater regional collaboration. The ecosystem needed to enable this promise, however, has not yet been fully developed. Indeed, if properly harnessed, the Fourth Industrial Revolution will provide opportunities to enhance the delivery of services in the areas of energy, education, health, communication, financial services and mobility.

How can digitalization and the rise of collaborative platforms support entrepreneurship, job creation and good governance?

How can governments and the private sector work together to design the policy and regulatory frameworks required to leverage new technologies, while keeping the digital commons secure?

What can be done to ensure that technological progress, which tends to favour certain industries, does not reverse the momentum for gender justice achieved in the past few years?

## Shaping a New Economic Model

As the quest for competitive economic models endures, there is a growing risk that pivotal countries on the move may suffer from reform fatigue. Unemployment – especially for young people – still represents a sizeable challenge, which can only be remedied if the private sector is enabled to flourish. One-half of the region's population is under the age of 25; therefore, new opportunities must be created to deploy this growing pool of talent and keep this segment of the population engaged.

In a context where competitiveness is determined by how well top talent is attracted instead of how economies of scale are driving the economy, how can the region ensure it is not left behind in the global race for skills?

How can public-private collaboration design frameworks that enable the "New Economy" to flourish, while mitigating the attendant economic and societal risks?

What new approaches are required to help the region close its infrastructure gap and unlock new opportunities for trade?

## Stewardship for the Regional Commons

For the first time, the World Economic Forum's *Global Risks Report* indicates that environmental concerns constituted the top risk to doing business in several large countries, according to respondents. Climate change, previously perceived as a distant and theoretical problem, is starting to

impact the daily lives of citizens with striking consequences for social stability. A systematic regional approach will be required to provide a holistic response to this challenge.

What can be done at a regional level to address the water and waste crises that are plaguing several countries?

With global warming affecting the Mediterranean basin disproportionately, how can the region respond to preempt its impact on agriculture, energy systems, health and tourism?

How can ecological risks be mitigated, and environmental damage reversed, without endangering the economic growth that is indispensable to creating employment opportunities for the region's young population?

## Finding Common Ground in a Multiconceptual World

The rapidly changing and increasingly complex geopolitical landscape poses a challenge to the region's stability and prosperity. Tensions are magnified by global dynamics that augur a shift to a multipolar and multiconceptual world. That said, different actors should not be expected to converge on values, but there still is plenty of scope to rally around shared interests. This is a unique opportunity for the World Economic Forum multistakeholder community to support conflict resolution and humanitarian efforts through diplomatic dialogue and public-private collaboration.

What mechanisms are needed to ensure inclusive reconstruction, the safe and voluntary return of refugees, and the stabilization of fragile countries?

Which new approaches to security and economic collaboration are required to enhance the momentum for peace and reconciliation?

How can the region leverage its strategic position and resources in the fast-evolving global context?

How can public-private collaboration and industry innovation help address the humanitarian imperative?

## Future of Industry Dialogues

The meeting will also feature multistakeholder discussions on the most prominent trends occupying top industry leaders in the region and beyond, with an opportunity to shape policy-making in pivotal economic sectors. In this context, the Forum will offer its platform to unlock new opportunities for public-private cooperation with a focus on the following industries:

- Banking and Financial Services
- Consumer Industries
- Energy
- Infrastructure and Urban Development
- Travel & Tourism

# Programme at a glance

Friday 5 April	Saturday 6 April	Sunday 7 April
12.00 - 19.00 <b>Community Sessions</b>	08.30 - 19.00 <b>Official Sessions</b>	08.00 - 15.00 <b>Official Sessions</b>
19.30 - 20.30 <b>Welcome Reception</b>	20.00 - 22.00 <b>Cultural Soirée</b>	15.00 - 16.00 <b>Farewell Reception</b>

## Who is taking part?

**Institutional Members and Partners** – The most influential MENA region and international corporations

**Forum Members** – Innovative businesses harnessing technology to drive future growth

**Public Figures** – Ministers, public-sector leaders and policy-makers committed to improving the state of MENA region

**Technology Pioneers** – Companies developing life-changing technologies with the potential for long-term impact on business and society

**Young Global Leaders** – Leaders under the age of 40 providing insight into the priorities and expectations of future generations

**Civil Society Organizations** – Leaders driving social progress from non-governmental, labour and faith-based organizations

**Global Shapers** – Individuals under the age of 30 selected for their leadership potential

**Social Entrepreneurs** – Leaders driving social change with innovative business solutions and partnership models

**Young Scientists** – Exceptional researchers producing ground-breaking work across disciplines

**Faculty and Global Future Council Members** – Top experts generating insight through thought leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration

**Cultural Leaders** – Renowned artists challenging assumptions about technology, sharing visions of the future and building bridges on global issues

**Media Leaders** – Publishers and editors-in-chief, top economic columnists and editors of leading science publications



## Continue your meeting experience

After the meeting, continue the conversations from Jordan via TopLink and tap into the Transformation Maps, tying issues together through data visualization.

## Registration and information

Visit the Forum's online collaboration and interaction platform TopLink to register for the meeting, contribute to the agenda and receive updates on the programme and participants, and other meeting highlights.

## Frequently asked questions

### **Where will the meeting take place?**

King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre  
Dead Sea, Sweimeh, Jordan

### **What does registration include?**

Registration includes access to all sessions, including lunches and dinners.

### **What is the working language of the meeting?**

Sessions will be held in English. Simultaneous interpretation in Arabic and French will be available in some sessions.

### **Can my spouse participate in the meeting?**

Due to space limitations at the venue, we will welcome spouse participation at the welcome reception, cultural soirée and farewell reception. Please contact your Forum focal point for any questions.

### **By when do I need to register?**

The deadline for registration is 4 March 2019. We strongly recommend that you register as early as possible due to limited availability.

### **Where will I stay?**

PublicisLive, service provider of logistics and key support services to the World Economic Forum, will arrange accommodation for participants who request hotel booking assistance on TopLink. Please request hotel booking assistance when registering your delegation on TopLink.

### **Do I need a visa?**

The World Economic Forum cannot assist with visa provision. Please check with the Jordanian embassy or consulate nearest you for visa requirements. You can also find some visa information [here](#).

### **Where do I find additional information about the programme?**

When you register, you will receive access to TopLink, the Forum's online collaboration and interaction platform, where you can find the programme and other details.

### **Who do I contact for more information?**

Please send you enquiry to [MiddleEast@weforum.org](mailto:MiddleEast@weforum.org).