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Republic of Tunisia**

Global Services Forum - Beijing Summit

High-Level Session 3:

Building supply and export capacities: the case for outsourcing services

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**Incentives, advantages and challenges faced by Tunisia in the path to promote
offshoring and outsourcing of IT and BPO services industries**

Mr Chairman, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to begin by expressing in my name and in the name of the Tunisian Government the Ministry of Trade of the People's Republic of China, the People's Republic of Beijing Municipality and the UNCTAD for providing this Forum to get acquainted, exchange expertise, network commercially and to think together about the future.

2. If the Business Community and the United Nations have spoken in the past about sustainable development somehow shyly, the Arab Spring - in which my country, Tunisia, was the main engine - has proved that development without a social dimension has no future; we can even say that it is a "Bad Deal". All the future is in sustainable economic and social, and of course environmental development. Before the Revolution, Tunisia had a huge human potential thanks to our free republican educational system, Tunisians are also open to different cultures, an open-mind that was shaped by our history, our geographic position, and also by tourism that has brought to our country different people travelling to know about us and to let us know about them. But since the Old System did not adopt honestly a comprehensive sustainable development approach, it disappeared notwithstanding the huge potential of the Country, and the Tunisians went out in the streets claiming Dignity, Employment, and Social Justice.

3. No wonder therefore that after the Revolution in Tunisia, Governments incorporate sustainable development goals including the investment policy in the National Development Strategy. In his Preface to the "World Investment Report 2012"

published by UNCTAD, Mister BAN Ki-Moon Secretary General of the United Nations points to this trend at the national level. Tunisia is today in harmony with the trends of the world community of economy and business.

4. After the Revolution, Tunisia has issued daring legislations to attract foreign investments, including financial and tax incentives, and has eased administrative formalities and procedures. To foreign investors and to global companies wishing to offshore and outsource with Tunisian companies, my Country offers world-class expertise and skills, in particular in the field of IT, Digitalization and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).

Tunisia has managed to preserve its position in the world's top 20 and the 2nd African of the offshoring destination.

5. Tunisian infrastructure and superstructure is attractive and competitive. Each year, more than 74000 students graduate from Tunisian universities and enter the employment market in specialized sectors. The fact that Tunisians speak foreign languages such as English, French, German and Italian is a quantum addition in multilingual content and system management. In almost every geographic district of the Republic, the State has provided technological landmark areas fully equipped with all requirements for digital work and production.

6. As it is known, offshoring and outsourcing of IT and BPO services industries include service in the medical, pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. In the MENA region, Tunisia is among the leaders of this sector, and many Arab and foreign students are registered in our universities. Building on our educational system in medical and paramedical universities, Tunisia features highly qualified people that may benefit to global medical and pharmaceutical services industries. In fact, many medical and pharmaceutical multinational companies entered Tunisia and have settled there. So, this is a call directed to other important corporations to study the huge human resources that Tunisia offers.

7. We have started in Tunisia a long time ago to build the Knowledge Society. It is well-known that before olive oil and phosphates, Tunisia exports quantum expertise and skills in the field of knowledge. We have a surplus of experts that may be seen in almost all the countries of the world from Europe and Gulf countries to the United States of America where Tunisians work with efficiency and competence in major public and private corporations. It is not surprising that we invite global companies that produce knowledge in all branches to turn to Tunisian market and offshore or outsource with our companies in this promising services sector.

8. We know that the competitive strategies and the concept of competitiveness have emerged as a new paradigm in economic development, our country has the ability to generate competitive advantages and to be competitive with other markets. But the strength and competitiveness of services industries in Tunisia should not lead us to forget challenges we face such as the modernization of infrastructure and the localization of university educational programs to the future requirements of the market of services industries. We are currently finishing the optic fibres connection all through the country from Tunis in the North to Gabes in the South. Simultaneously, Tunisian educational system is working on updating its programs to respond to the needs of the international employment market; this step occurs after the foundation some years ago of High Technological Institutes that are frequented by consistent numbers of students.

9. In the Report of the “World Economic Forum 2012” Tunisia is classified 41st over 142 countries for its “skills” and 18th for the quality of maths and sciences teaching. It is not enough for us and since 2012, our structural reforms have been focused on the following domains:

- Governance and anti-corruption;**
- Improvement of the business environment through the juridic frame reforms, mainly reviewing incentives of the Investment Laws;**
- Restructuration of our financial sector, reforms of the fiscal system and Government procurements, flexibility of administrative proceedings;**
- Strengthening of public/private partnerships in particular in infrastructure projects in the Hinterland.**

10. Finally, I would like to inform you that Tunisia that is living right now a healthy childbirth after the Revolution is walking on the right path to establish a knowledge society and an advanced economy relying much on services industries that constitute a stable trend in the twenty-first century. Welcome to Tunisia!

THANK YOU !