

New York, March 7th 2011

STATEMENT OF MR. ELYES LAKHAL, COUNSELLOR AT TUNISIA MISSION TO THE UN, DURING THE PREPCOM 2, ON THEMES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RIO +20 CONFERENCE.

Mr Co-Chair,

I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to exchange views on the objectives and themes of the Rio +20 Conference.

I'd like to associate my delegation to the statement made by Argentina on behalf of G77 and China.

I wanted through this statement to address mainly the question related to the emerging issues and challenges.

In this regard, we're of the view that youth unemployment and global social injustice could be seen as the most emerging issues and challenges that pose serious threat to sustainable development as well as to global peace and security.

The Revolution that took place in Tunisia on January 14th 2011 showed that it was not just the beginning of revolutions in North Africa and Middle East but it could also be the beginning of revolutions all over the World. The events are now resonating so widely because the core problems that Tunisia witnessed are common to number of countries in the World; a growing population of young people who are at once educated and ambitious, unemployed and frustrated.

Young women and men without jobs or livelihood don't care really if their economies grow at 3 or 10 percent per year, They don't care neither whether their governments are implementing green economy policies, if at the end such growth or policies leave them behind. Unlikely, Youth do care if their economies and governments promote policies to provide decent jobs and social justice.

Yet, ILO data show that unemployment figure is today at its highest level, with 200 million people that are unemployed, including some 80 million youth. North Africa and Middle East count the highest youth unemployment rate with an average of 24%.

Thus, the promotion of global justice and decent work should be the main objective of the Rio +20 conference. The Rio+20 Conference should take clear steps in this regard. The outcome document should make decent employment creation and global justice strategies and targets a central component of macroeconomic policy priority alongside sound sustainable development and poverty eradication policies.

Thank you.