



Status at 11 October 2011

## North Africa Programme

### Context

The popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 brought about an unexpectedly rapid change in the political situation in North Africa. In view of the deteriorating situation and the outbreak of violence in Libya, the international community decided to take military steps against the Gaddafi regime in order to protect the civilian population. Citizens in Algeria call for reforms, in Morocco they are underway. In other Arab countries, too, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the people are calling for reforms, while anti-government demonstrations are continuing in Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. The reasons behind the "Arab spring", i.e., lack of political and social freedom, strong centralisation, repression and corruption, coupled with high youth unemployment and a lack of economic prospects for the general population, were long concealed by apparent political stability and economic growth: With the exception of Libya, North African countries can draw on relatively effective state systems for the forthcoming transition. However, substantial social, political and economic change is essential in order to meet the popular demand for greater participation in political and economic life. Human rights such as religious freedom and freedom of opinion, equal opportunities for men and women and the protection of minorities and transit migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are particularly pressing.



### North Africa Programme

Switzerland responded rapidly to the changes in North Africa. In addition to providing humanitarian aid for the crisis in Libya, the Federal Council decided on 11 March 2011 to expand Switzerland's involvement substantially in the medium term:

Over the next few years, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Directorate of Political Affairs (PD), the Directorate of Public International Law (DPIL) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will

the FDFA, along with the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) will coordinate and jointly implement coherent, complementary programmes and projects.

### Focus by sector

Swiss support will be sustained, needs- and results-oriented, and based on partnerships. In all programmes and projects, gender equality will be taken into account. The engagement concentrates on three key areas:

#### Democratic Transition (PD, DV, SDC):

The aim is to establish transparent, participative and rule-of-law structures. Examples of concrete priorities are support for elections, protection of human rights, strengthening a pluralistic civil society, security sector reform, and support for the rapid restitution of frozen assets acquired illegally by politically exposed persons.

#### Economic Development (SECO, SDC):

Here the aim is to promote small and medium-sized enterprises and create employment, including jobs for young people in economically weak regions, and to improve the economic framework conditions. This priority also covers infrastructure projects for water supplies and efforts to conserve natural resources.

#### Migration and Protection (FOM, PD, SDC):

The aim is more sustainable migration management in order to ensure the return and reintegration of migrants, better integration of the Diaspora, and guarantee protection for particularly vulnerable groups.

### Geographical Focus

At present the focus is on Tunisia and Egypt, and on expanding the existing programmes in Morocco. Depending on developments, the possibility of programmes for Libya and Algeria will be examined.

### Funding 2011 / 2012

The following funds are available:

Humanitarian aid:	approx. CHF 6 mln/yr.
Democratic Transition:	approx. CHF 4 mln/yr.
Economic Development:	approx. CHF 47 mln/yr.
Migration and Protection:	approx. CHF 6 mln/yr.

### Further information

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