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## **IMF MENA** Research Conference

# **Rethinking MENA Integration in a Fast-Changing Global Environment**

June 29-30, 2026

Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Rabat, Morocco

# **AGENDA**



# CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Day 1

Monday, June 29th, 2026

08:30 - 09:00 : **Registration**

09:00 - 09:30 : **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- **Karim El Aynaoui**, Executive Vice-President and Dean (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)
- **Jihad Azour**, Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department (IMF)

09:30 - 11:00 : **Session 1 - Goeconomic Fragmentation and Economic Integration**

- **Chair:** Karim El Aynaoui (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)
- **The Remains of the Trade: The U.S.–China Trade War and its Aftermath**  
*Authors:* Pol Antràs (Harvard University) and **Andrea Presbitero (IMF)**
- **Connector economies in a fragmenting world**  
*Authors:* Chuan-Han Cheng (University of Cambridge) Oleg Konovalov (EBRD), and **Alexander Plekhanov (EBRD)**
- **Connectedness Without Complexity? Goeconomic Fragmentation and Structural Transformation in the MENA Region**  
*Authors:* Zein Alamah (Concordia University) and **Ali Fakh (Lebanese American University)**
- *Discussant:* **Francesco Grigoli (Georgetown University in Qatar)**

11:00 - 11:30 : **Coffee Break**

11:30 - 13:00 : **Session 2 - Artificial Intelligence**

- **Chair:** Ferid Belhaj (Policy Center for the New South and Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)
- **Technological Change, Occupations, and Labor Markets in MENA**  
*Authors:* Gustavo Leyva (Center for Latin American Monetary Studies) and **Carlos Urrutia (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, ITAM, Mexico City)**
- **AI in a Fragmenting World**  
*Authors:* **Barry Eichengreen (University of California, Berkeley)**, George Cui (IMF), Asmaa ElGanainy (IMF), Yevgeniya Korniyenko (IMF), Elyad Shojaei (IMF), Li Zeng (IMF), and Frank Zhang (IMF)
- **AI and Productivity in the MENA Region and Beyond: Opportunities and Challenges**  
*Authors:* **Filiz Unsal (OECD)** Francesco Filippucci (OECD), Peter Gal (OECD), Matthias Schief (OECD)
- *Discussant:* **Antonio Spilimbergo (Deputy Director, Research Department, IMF)**

13:00 - 14:30 : **Lunch**

\* The times listed in this agenda are shown in local time (Rabat, Morocco).

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## Day 1

Monday, June 29th, 2026

### 14:30 - 16:00 : Session 3 - Trade Policies

- **Chair:** Dorothée Boccanfuso (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)
- **What Do Market-Access Subsidies Do? Experimental Evidence from Tunisia**  
*Authors:* **Nadia Ali (Columbia University)**, Giacomo De Giorgi (University of Geneva), Aminur Rahman (Asian Development Bank), and Eric Verhoogen (Columbia University)
- **Conditional Trade Policy: Economic Effects of Qualifying Industrial Zones in the Middle East**  
*Author:* **Ayman Tibi (University of Mannheim)**
- **The Impact of Global Trade Policies on MCD countries and Regional Integration Prospects**  
**Authors:** **Koralai Kirabaeva (IMF)**, **Lorenzo Rotunno (IMF)**, and Michele Ruta (IMF)  
*Discussant:* **Mehdi Bartal (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)**

### 16:00 - 16:30 : Coffee Break

### 16:30 - 17:30 : Session 4 - Labor Market Policies

- **Chair:** Taline Koranchelian (Deputy Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF)
- **Job Amenities, Adverse Selection, and Women's Labor Supply in Jordan**  
*Author:* **Bailey Palmer (University of California, Berkeley)**
- **Do Employment Subsidies Affect Skill Intensity and Capital Formation? Evidence from Turkish Manufacturing Firms**  
*Authors:* **Güneş Aşık (Middle East Technical University, Ankara)** and Çağlar Yüncüler (TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara)  
*Discussant:* **Nisreen Salti (American University of Beirut)**

### 17:30 - 18:30 : Keynote Lecture: "Economic Principles for the 21st Century"

*Keynote Speaker:* **Andrés Velasco (Dean of the School of Public Policy, London School of Economics)**

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## Day 2

Tuesday, June 30th, 2026

**08:30 - 09:00 : Breakfast with Youth** (to be attended by Jihad Azour) | **Coffee for other participants**

**09:00 - 09:15: Best Graduate Student Paper Award and Acknowledgment of Graduate Students**

**Laudatio:** Jihad Azour (Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF)

**Winner:** Bailey Palmer (University of California, Berkeley)

**Special Mentions:** Nadia Ali (Columbia University) and Ayman Tibi (University of Mannheim)

**9:15 - 10 :15: Policy Panel - Rethinking MENA Integration in a Fast-Changing Global Environment**

- **Moderator:** Jihad Azour (Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF)
- **Panelists:**
  - Nadia Fettah Alaoui (Minister of Finance, Morocco)
  - Rania Al-Mashat (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNESCWA)
  - Hasan Alhasan (Senior Fellow for Middle East Policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies)
  - Andrés Velasco (Dean of the School of Public Policy, London School of Economics)

**10 :15 - 10 :45: Coffee Break**

**10 :45 - 12:15: Session 5 - Monetary and Fiscal Policies**

- **Chair:** Mohamed Taamouti (Bank Al-Maghrib)
- **Transmission of Global Monetary Shocks in MENA and CCA Economies**  
*Authors:* **Giancarlo Corsetti (European University Institute, Florence)**, Michele Castegini (European University Institute, Florence), Zeina Hasna (IMF), Simon Lloyd (Bank of England), and Nadine Yamout (American University of Beirut)
- **Does Inflation Targeting Matter in Achieving Long-term Price Stability? Evidence from Egypt and Georgia**  
*Authors:* **Nasser Badra (American University of Beirut)**; Salim Chahine (Central Bank of Lebanon); and Ugo Panizza (Geneva Graduate Institute)
- **Fiscal Rules at Risk: Debt Structure and Fiscal Adjustment in Times of Geopolitical and Economic Uncertainty**  
*Authors:* Sami Ben Naceur (IMF), Abdelhamid Moustabchir (Hasan II University, Casablanca), **Sara Loukili (Bank Al-Maghrib)**

*Discussant:* **Roberta Gatti (Chief Economist for the MENAP region, World Bank)**

**12:15 - 12:45: Closing Remarks**

- **Nadia Fettah Alaoui (Minister of Finance, Morocco)**
- **Jihad Azour (Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF)**

**12:45 - 13:45: Lunch**

