

Facilitating growth

By **TARAK CHERIF**

PRESIDENT, CONECT



TARAK CHERIF

has an LL.M. from the University of Sceaux, Paris XI. He has since been General Manager of El Mansour Hotels, and has extensive business experience in the manufacturing industry. He is also President of the Tunisia Tennis Federation and is a Knight of the Legion of Honour in France. He was appointed President of CONECT in September 2011.

With the profound changes experienced by Tunisia politically, socially and economically since the revolution of 14 January 2011, the Tunisian economy is going through a decisive transition period.

The major challenge is that of changing from a development model based essentially on relationships – which caused a great imbalance between regions and social categories – to a productive and responsible economic model based on transparency, good governance, engagement, dialogue and fairness.

It is a difficult and delicate transition period, especially as expectations and demands are numerous and pressing. Even if it has been at the origin of the slowdown of economic activity and investment, this post-revolution context is quite normal and always accompanies the major changes which countries undergo.

Countries that have experienced such transitions have often encountered rapid and sustained growth thereafter. To shorten this transition period, suitable measures need to be taken and the appropriate strategies need to be implemented to ensure the good visibility required concerning the country's economic guidelines and the financial, fiscal, credit and investment promotion policies.

It is true that the Tunisian transitional government was obliged to tackle problems of a rather political nature as a priority; but what we are finding now is that countless and important economic dossiers are open, like the new investment code, the incentives and benefits granted, the simplification of administrative procedures, employment, regional development and others.

It is within this framework that CONECT has presented to the Government and to all parties concerned, proposals and roadmaps relating to these very different aspects. It has also initiated countless actions aimed at identifying and promoting new niches for the development of enterprise, investment and partnership, particularly in the regions of the country's interior and in promising markets of neighbouring countries in particular.

Acceleration of the rate of introduction of these measures and strategies would undoubtedly allow

the endless opportunities which are available to the country to be seized, especially as Tunisia has major assets that must be allocated in service of and the economic and social development of the country.

CONECT

Conect is a new employers' organisation in Tunisia, born after the revolution, with the vision of being the reference entrepreneurial partner for a responsible and equitable social and economic development.

In its DNA, CONECT has embedded several values around citizenship, engagement, solidarity, transparency and responsibility. This has shown in many of the numerous events that CONECT has conducted since it was born. Responsibility and solidarity in organising very pragmatic gatherings in the remote and unfavoured regions of the country from which the revolution has sparked, transparency in the events held on financing at the Tunis Stock Exchange, engagement and citizenship in the hosting in Tunisia of a pan-African conference on social and environmental responsibility of the enterprise.

CONECT is an agile organization that managed very rapidly to capture a lot of attention from the Tunisian authorities, simply by being very pragmatic, listening to the entrepreneurs and conveying their messages, promoting all forms of networking, either inside Tunisia, bridging the gap between various regions and activity sectors, or outside the country by partnering with sister organizations in various countries.

CONECT has elaborated its charter along four axes: economic: risk management, processes and resources optimisation and value creation; social: social progress, meritocracy, equity and talents reward; ecological: preserving resources and the environment, use of recyclable materials and renewable energies, spoilage avoidance; and governance: deontology and ethical rules.

The organisation has been made simple and lean, in order to be as proactive and entrepreneurial as possible, which is one other translation of CONECT's DNA. Today CONECT is proud to have more than 700 member corporations, all very much aware of their role in the society and willing to play by the rules. **F**