

TUNISIA

Press kit

November 2003

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IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARD OF LIVING

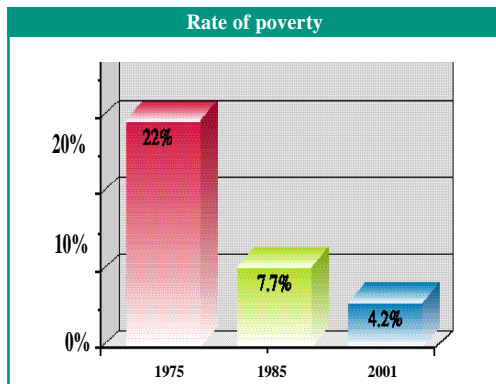
Tunisia stands out as a society where 80 percent of the population is considered middle-class and where all citizens benefit from improvements in living standards.

Qualitative changes in Tunisians' standard of living are reflected by the following indicators:

- More than 9 households out of 10 nationwide have access to drinking water and electricity.
- Nearly 4 households out of 5 in rural areas have access to drinking water and electricity against almost one out of 5 households in 1984.
- A rate of poverty limited to 4.2% of the population versus almost a third of Tunisians living below the poverty line in the 1960s.
- Increased ratio of the households owning their own homes to 80%, and a reduction of the percentage of sub-standard homes to only 1.2% compared to 44% in 1966.

| GNP per capita (Dinars) | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1966 | 1986 | 2001 |
| 117 | 918.2 | 2,847 |

| Rate of poverty | | |
|-----------------|------|------|
| 1975 | 1985 | 2001 |
| 22% | 7.7% | 4.2% |

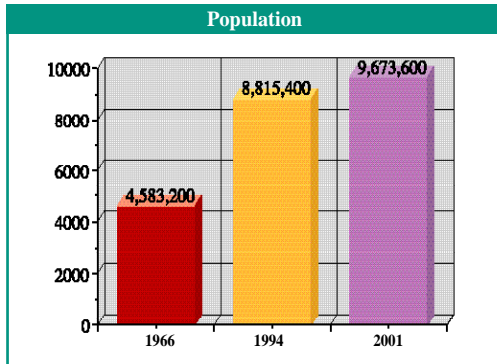


| Percentage of sub-standard housing | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1966 | 1994 | 2001 |
| 44% | 2.7% | 1.2% |

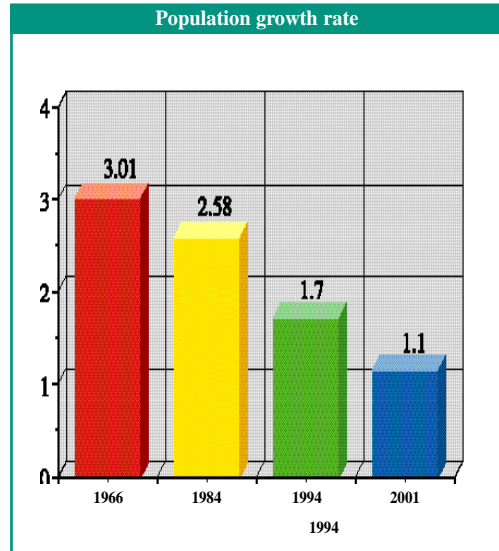
POPULATION POLICY

The universal schooling of girls, a larger presence of women in the job market, and the development of mother and child healthcare programs are among factors that have changed procreative trends and slowed down population growth. The population increase rate fell from 3% in 1966 to 1.1% in 2001.

| Population | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1966 | 1994 | 2001 |
| 4,583,200 | 8,815,400 | 9,673,600 |



| Population growth rate % | | | |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1966 | 1984 | 1994 | 2001 |
| 3.01 | 2.58 | 1.7 | 1.1 |

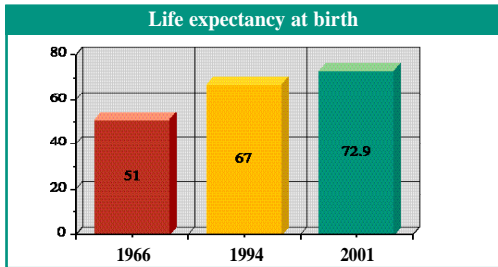


HEALTH INDICATORS

Universal social and human development programs and health services have made great advances in life expectancy and other crucial health indicators :

- Increased life expectancy at birth from 51 years in 1966 to 72.9 years in 2001.
- Decreased mortality rate per thousand inhabitants from 15 in 1966 to 5.5‰ in 2001.
- Reduction in infant mortality from 138‰ in 1966 to 22.8‰ in 2001.
- Increased rate of vaccination among children to more than 95% in 2001 against 70% in 1984.

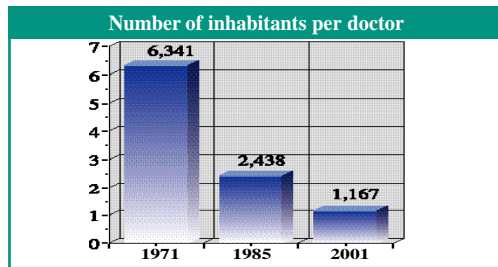
| Life expectancy at birth | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1966 | 1984 | 2001 |
| 51 years | 67 years | 72.9 years |



| Infant mortality per thousand inhabitants | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1966 | 1984 | 2001 |
| 138.6 | 51.4 | 22.8 |

| Mortality rate per thousand inhabitants | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1966 | 1984 | 2001 |
| 15 | 6.5 | 5.5 |

| Number of inhabitants per doctor | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1971 | 1985 | 2001 |
| 6,341 | 2,438 | 1,167 |



SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

Social services have played an important part in developing human resources and in striking a balance between promoting economic efficiency and ensuring basic social services for all.

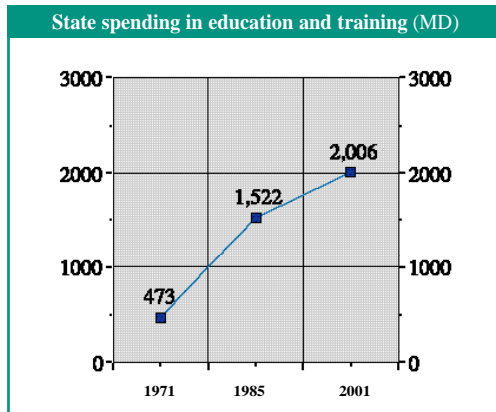
| Social welfare spending (million dinars - MD) | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1986 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 1,330 | 4,352 | 5,581 |

| Percentage of social spending in the national budget | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1986 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 44.1% | 50.1% | 51.6% |

| Social allocations per household and per month (Dinars) | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1986 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 81 | 194 | 221 |

| State healthcare spending (MD) | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1986 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 163 | 499 | 596 |

| State spending in education and training (MD) | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1986 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 473 | 1,522 | 2,006 |



| Percentage of citizens receiving social security benefits | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1987 | 1998 | 2001 |
| 54.6% | 82.6% | 84.3% |

WOMEN

Building on a progressive legacy, Tunisia has made the promotion of women in all walks of life, and their involvement in the development process, one of the cornerstones of its social policies.

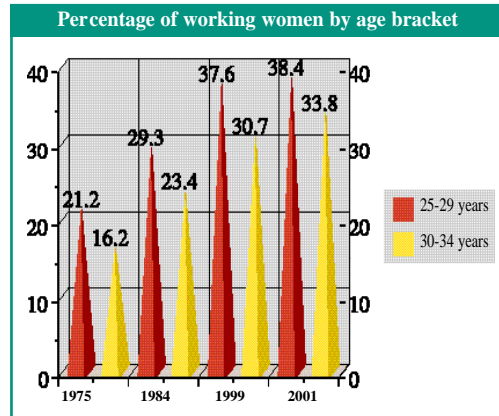
Women's increased presence in all fields and all sectors of society has substantially advanced the notion of gender equality.

Women today account for 53.9% of university students, 12% of senior business executives, 21% of civil service employees, 23% of magistrates, 24% of journalists, 35% of doctors, 50% of academics, 63% of pharmacists. There are over 5,000 female heads of businesses and 1,500 women farmers.

| Percentage of girls in rural elementary schools | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1981-1982 | 1986-1987 | 2000-2001 |
| 36.4% | 39.9% | 46.6% |

| Percentage of women students in higher education | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1974-1975 | 1992-1993 | 2001-2002 |
| 35% | 41.1% | 53.9% |

| Percentage of working women by age bracket | | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 25-29 years | 30-34 years |
| 1975 | 21.2% | 16.2% |
| 1984 | 29.3% | 23.4% |
| 1999 | 37.6% | 30.7% |
| 2001 | 38.4% | 33.8% |



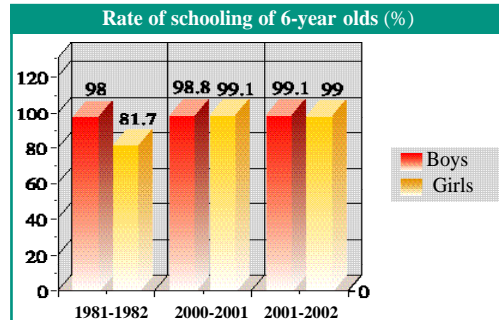
EDUCATION

AMONG EDUCATION INDICATORS :

- The increase in the percentage of 6-year old children in full-time education from 85% in 1975 to 99% in 2001.
- The increase in the number of higher education students, which reached 226,100 in 2001 from 10,000 in 1970, thus showing significant improvement in the percentage of young people in full-time university education, which stood at 22% in 2001 (up from 2.6% in 1966).
- An increase in the rate of female students in secondary and higher education, which rose respectively from 26.5% and 19.4% in 1965-1966 to 51.1% and 53.9% in 2001-2002.

| Number of pupils in elementary education | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1985-1986 | 2001-2002 |
| Boys | 713,942 | 668,672 |
| Girls | 571,941 | 626,164 |

| Rate of schooling of 6-year olds (%) | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Academic year | Boys | Girls |
| 1981-1982 | 98.0% | 81.7% |
| 2000-2001 | 98.8% | 99.1% |
| 2001-2002 | 99.1% | 99.0% |



| Rate of schooling of 6 to 12-year olds (%) | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1985 | 1999 | 2001 |
| 89.6% | 92% | 91.3% |

EDUCATION

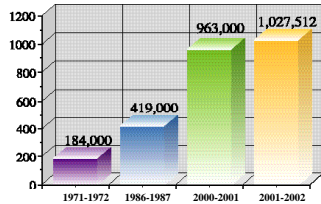
Ratio pupils/teacher in the elementary schools

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1970-1971 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 |
| 48.2 | 22.7 | 22.0 |

Number of students in secondary education

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1971-1972 | 1986-1987 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 |
| 184,000 | 419,000 | 963,000 | 1,027,512 |

Number of students in secondary education



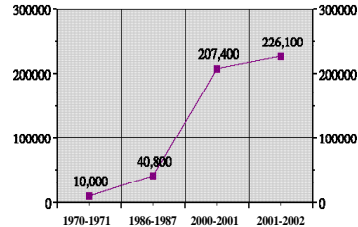
Percentage of pupils completing secondary education

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1980 | 1995 | 2001 |
| 32.2% | 56.1% | 71.0% |

Number of university students

| year | Number of students |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1970-1971 | 10,000 |
| 1986-1987 | 40,800 |
| 2000-2001 | 207,400 |
| 2001-2002 | 226,100 |

Number of university students



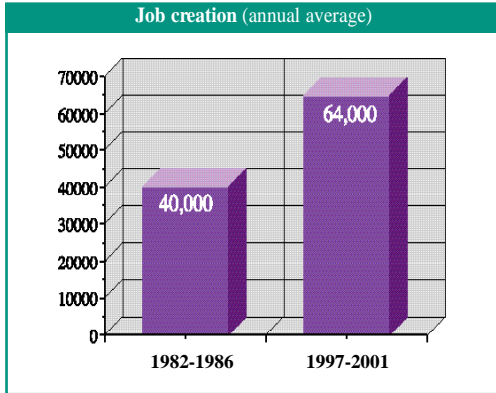
Literacy rate in 15 to 24-year old population (%)

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1966 | 1984 | 2001 |
| 44.3% | 74.2% | 91.5% |

EMPLOYMENT

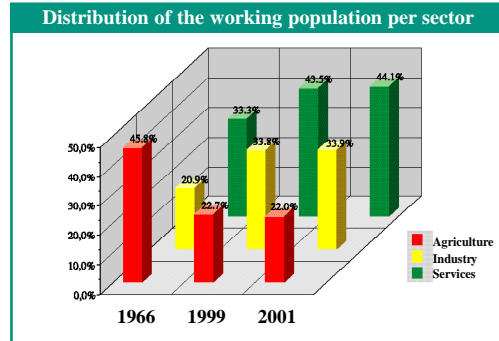
Employment is the top priority in Tunisia today. Policies and programs already implemented have increased the pace of job creation from an annual average of 40,000 during 1982-1986 to 64,000 jobs created in the 1997-2001 period.

| Job creation (annual average) | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1982-1986 | 1997-2001 |
| 40,000 | 64,000 |



Distribution of the working population per sector

| | Agriculture | Industry | Services |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1966 | 45.8% | 20.9% | 33.3% |
| 1999 | 22.7% | 33.8% | 43.5% |
| 2001 | 22.0% | 33.9% | 44.1% |



Job creation as a percentage of job demand

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1982-1986 | 1997-2001 |
| 61.7% | 92% |

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND MACROECONOMIC BALANCES

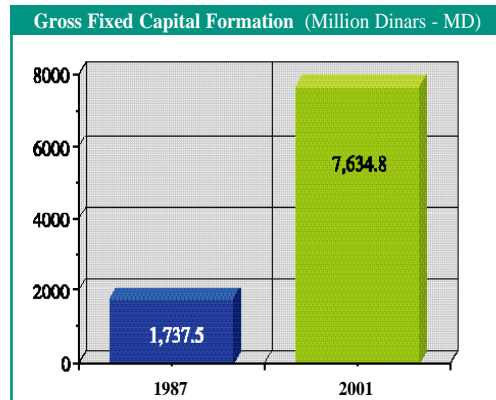
Economic reform pursued since 1987 has created a viable market dynamic and established sound macro-economic balances. Key indicators in this regard include:

- Maintaining a sustained level of economic growth of more than 4.6% a year at constant prices for the period 1987-2001, against 2.4% over the 1982-1986 period.
- Ensuring greater private sector participation in the development sphere, as shown by the increase in the private investment share, which stood at about 55% in 2001.
- Control of the budget deficit, current deficit and indebtedness ratios. The debt service was reduced to 13.3% in 2001, down from 26.3% in 1987.
- Reducing the inflation rate to 1.9% in 2001 from 14.1% in 1982.

| Gross Domestic Product (Million Dinars - MD) | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1986 | 2001 |
| 7,160 | 28,793.1 |

| Debt service (%) | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1987 | 2001 |
| 26.3% | 13.3% |

| Gross Fixed Capital Formation (Million Dinars - MD) | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1987 | 2001 |
| 1,737.5 | 7,634.8 |



| Debt ratio (%) | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1986 | 2001 |
| 57.9% | 52.1% |

BOOSTING PRODUCTION AND DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

During the past 15 years, accelerated growth marked the performance of various productive sectors. The added value of the agricultural, industrial and services sectors increased three-fold over that same period.

Reforms were instrumental in diversifying the economic base, consolidating the economy's adaptability to ongoing changes and reinforcing its capacity to integrate into the global economy.

Evolution of the productive sectors

Added value of agriculture at factor costs and 1990 constant prices (MD)

| 1988 | 2001 |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1,205.6 | 2,285.5 |

Added value of services (MD)

| 1987 | 2001 |
|----------------|----------------|
| 3,190.0 | 6,813.0 |

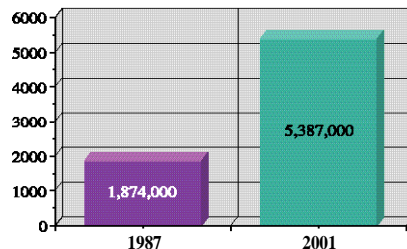
Added value of industry (MD)

| 1987 | 2001 |
|----------------|----------------|
| 2,881.1 | 5,367.6 |

Foreign tourist entries

| 1987 | 2001 |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1,874,000 | 5,387,000 |

Foreign tourist entries



Diversification of the economic base

GDP distribution by sector at factor costs and current prices

| | Agriculture | Industry | Trade & Services |
|------|-------------|----------|------------------|
| 1961 | 27% | 18% | 55% |
| 1999 | 15.0% | 32.5% | 52.5% |
| 2001 | 13.5% | 33.3% | 53.2% |

ESTABLISHING AN OPEN ECONOMY

Tunisia has opted for gradual integration into the global economy. Moving ahead on this track, Tunisia has been able to:

- Achieve a yearly average growth of over 6% in its exports at constant prices during the last 15 years, thereby improving its share of outside markets.
- Substantially open up its economy as illustrated by the increase in the exports share of the GDP, which rose from 21% in 1966 to 47.6% in 2001, and by an increase in the volume of foreign investments from 101 million dinars in 1987 to 700 MD in 2001.
- Improve the structure of its exports, as illustrated by the export growth of manufactured products, which accounted for 81.7% in 2001, versus 45% in 1980.

Exports of goods and services (Current prices, MD)

| 1988 | 2001 |
|---------|---------|
| 3,627.9 | 9,503.7 |

Part of exports in the GDP

| 1987 | 2001 |
|-------|-------|
| 34.7% | 47.6% |

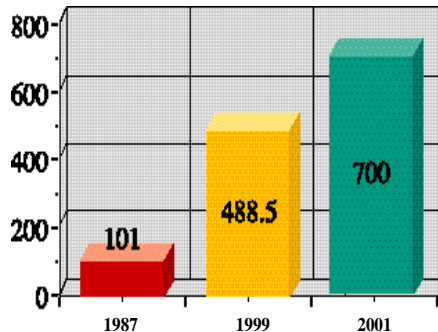
Ratio of manufactured products in overall exports

| 1986 | 2001 |
|------|-------|
| 62% | 81.7% |

Foreign investment (MD)

| 1987 | 1999 | 2001 |
|------|-------|------|
| 101 | 488.5 | 700 |

Foreign investment (MD)



*Tunisia's
democratic process*

Tunisia is a republic headed by a President who is elected every five years by direct universal suffrage. The system of government is built upon the principles of separation of powers, equality among citizens regardless of gender, accountability and rule of law, and people's sovereignty as the source of political legitimacy.

Eight political parties are active in Tunisia. These parties and their newspapers receive state support. Five opposition parties are represented in Parliament. Parliamentary hearings of government members are broadcast live on public TV. A law guarantees opposition parties at least 20% of seats in Parliament and municipal councils.

May 26, 2002 marked a decisive step in national political life. For the first time in their history, Tunisians went to referendum to decide on a constitutional reform concerning more than half of the constitution's articles. Adopted by a large majority, the amended constitution increased the legislative branch's powers of control over the government, created a second parliamentary chamber to ensure a wider representation of regions, established the system of two-round presidential election, and entrusted the settling of disputes related to presidential and legislative elections and also to referendums with the Constitutional Council whose independence has been reinforced. The amended constitution sets at 75 the maximum age for a candidate to the office of president. Based on a 2003 constitutional law, each political party represented in Parliament can present a candidate to presidential elections.

*Social
and economic
development*

Tunisia has set for itself the ambition of achieving a high level of economic growth while pursuing human and social development. Endowed with only limited natural resources, the country has relied on its human potential and sustained social action programs.

Based on a permanent search for a balance between the social and economic dimensions of development, this approach has made it possible for the country to achieve a sound economic performance and continued social progress.

The economy's liberalization, accelerated diversification and openness on the outside world have contributed to making of Tunisia an emerging country, aspiring to join the ranks of developed nations. With a regularly positive economic growth (an average of 5% during the past 15 years), far exceeding the demographic growth (1.1%), its dynamic and largely export-oriented industrial sector (the foreign commerce growth rate reached 15% in 2001, and exports account for 42% of GDP), a per capita income exceeding 3,000 Tunisian Dinars, and a modern infrastructure comparable to that of a number of European countries, Tunisia has all the requisite assets to translate its ambitions into concrete reality.

Those achievements were possible despite a difficult regional and international environment. They are, according to a recent IMF report, "the fruits of well-coordinated macro-economic, structural and social policies." Seeking to take advantage from globalization as an opportunity to further develop its economy and to reinforce its competitive capacity, Tunisia has launched a comprehensive program for the upgrading of its enterprises which, by the year 2010, will have to cope with the European enterprises' competition, as part of the EU-Tunisian free trade zone provided for in the Association Agreement signed in 1995. That year, the European Union, for the first time in its history, concluded an Association Agreement with a Southern Mediterranean country. The strength of the Tunisian economy, the positive growth prospects, the competitiveness of the industrial sector and the country's sound political and social governance, have convinced the European Union to make of Tunisia a close partner. More than 2500 European, American and Asian enterprises have been established in Tunisia, often in partnership with Tunisian businesses.

Despite the fall of the volume of direct foreign investments all over the world, Tunisia has continued to attract an increasing number of direct foreign investments (1.2 billion dinars in 2002, against 448 million dinars in 1999). This, in fact, bears testimony to Tunisia's attractive assets and to the trust placed in it by foreign business, as proven by the regularly positive appreciations made by international rating institutions.

One of the economic development characteristics in Tunisia lies in the fact that the growth achieved has been beneficial to enterprises and above all to citizens. Thanks to its vigorous policy of national solidarity and the state's substantial social transfers (expenses concerning the social dimension represent an average of more than 50% of the state budget), Tunisia has managed to significantly improve its population's living standard: the middle class has expanded, accounting for nearly 80% of the population; life

expectancy verges on 80 years; 80% of Tunisian families own their houses; practically all six-year-olds go to school (schooling being compulsory and free of charge); poverty, which affected 12% of the people in the 1980s, has been brought down to 4%, thanks to the continuous action of public authorities and of the people who have massively contributed to the National Solidarity Fund established in 1992 by President Ben Ali in order to promote disadvantaged areas and combat exclusion.

The success achieved by this pioneering experience of development was crowned, in December 2002, by the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a resolution to create a World Solidarity Fund to fight poverty, based on the experience of Tunisia's National Solidarity Fund.

Women's status

The special status enjoyed by Tunisian women is the result of a reformist tradition going far back as the 19th century. This tradition was consecrated, as early as 1956, with the adoption of the Code of Personal Status, a revolutionary legislation in the region. The code abolished polygamy and repudiation, and made divorce decisions the sole prerogative of the courts. Tunisian women were able to enjoy the benefits of a successful family planning program. They were also given the right to vote and be elected to public office, to education, to equal pay for equal work, etc...

These gains have been further consolidated by measures taken by President Ben Ali to further guarantee equality of rights among citizens of both genders, and to ensure balanced relations among members of each family.

Since 1993, the principle of partnership and co-responsibility of the couple within the family was introduced.

Today, Tunisian women enjoy equal rights with men in principle and in practice. Indicators show that the schooling rate of six-year-old girls is the same as that of boys (99%). In secondary schools, the percentage of girls (52%) exceeds that of boys. The same holds true in higher education institutions where young women represent 55% of the students.

In professional life, women stand out with their growing presence in all economic sectors. They represent more than one-fourth of the total active population, and half of the teaching, medical and paramedical professions. More than 10,000 small and medium-sized enterprises, in the industrial, commercial and service sectors, are managed by women.

Tunisian women also hold a distinguished place in political life. Five cabinet members are women, and 11.5% of the seats in parliament are held by women. Within the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD – Ruling party), women account for 22% of the members of executive bodies. In municipal councils, more than 20% of the members are women, in accordance with the amended electoral law which guarantees for women a minimum of 20% of the seats in municipal councils. The same percentage is expected to apply to Parliament after the 2004 elections.

This policy of women's promotion has benefited society as a whole. It has allowed Tunisia to bring under control its demographic growth, and to keep it much below its economic growth. Without the implemented family planning program, Tunisia's population, according to experts, would have topped the 15 million mark, instead of about 10 million today. Standing out in their work, women play a vital role in societal progress, and in offering children a better level of care and education.

*Educational
Reform*

Free, compulsory education has been a fundamental policy choice in Tunisia since independence.

Since 1987, reforms were introduced so as to promote the values of modernity, gender equality, openness to the world and civic duty, through education. Ten years later, reevaluation of this reform led to a new law being passed in July 2002, dealing with education and school orientation.

Tunisian schools encourage intercultural understanding through the comparative study of human civilizations and the compulsory teaching of foreign languages. Sciences and modern technologies are also a focus of school curricula.

Today, one Tunisian in four attends school. School attendance for six-year-old girls and boys is almost 100%. Over 30% of young people of between 20 and 24 are at university. There is an increasing demand for the scientific and technological branches. More than 8% of students take the communication technology courses and this choice has in fact grown at an average 21% a year .

Tunisia has massively invested in the necessary technical infrastructure for training in new communications and information technology. Ariana, in Tunis, is the country's main center of technology and ranks as one of the fifty best science centers in the world. The site has two higher institutes that train 1,500 engineers every year up to doctorate level.

*Media
and the Internet*

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the Tunisian constitution. Most of the opposition parties publish their own newspapers wherein they express their views, without any constraints.

There are more than 250 newspapers and magazines. They are mostly in Arabic or French. There are English and Italian language publications also. Most print media are privately owned and independently determine their editorial line. This can be felt in the critical and sometimes virulent tone of numerous press organs, particularly those in Arabic. Of all the dailies and weeklies, no more than four titles belong to the public sector or to the ruling party.

A decision to introduce private ownership of the audio-visual sector was announced in November 2003. An FM private station started broadcasting already. Other private stations are expected. Public TV and radio stations offer large time spaces for debates and for live broadcasting of parliamentary debates between deputies and government representatives.

The development and modernization of the media are strongly supported by public authorities which grant assistance to the press. Opposition newspapers benefit from public grants directly provided to their respective parties and from a mechanism allowing them to get back 60% of the expenses incurred for the purchase of paper. Moreover, the press benefits from numerous indirect forms of assistance, such as exemption from customs duties for all printing materials. The state also bears a considerable part of the costs of press distribution service to foreign countries. Besides, journalists enjoy free access to Internet.

Most of the major international newspapers and magazines are distributed in Tunisia where more than 700 Arab and western publications are sold. There are more than 70 permanently-based correspondents of the international press in Tunisia. Hundreds of foreign journalists visit Tunisia each year.

More than a quarter of the Tunisian families have satellite dishes and receive European, American and Arab TV broadcasts.

Public authorities have taken numerous measures to promote universal access to computers and to the Internet. Connection rates are constantly brought down in order to make them accessible to the largest number of people. Internet buses cross rural areas to connect people to the network; cyber-café's are available everywhere; and the communication infrastructures are regularly modernized to facilitate surfing, the production of internet content and the transmission of data. With 550,000 Internet users, Tunisia ranks among the top few best Internet-connected African and Arab nations. Tunisian law bans hate speech. Numerous measures were taken by the State to promote a culture of tolerance.

*The fight against
extremism*

Tunisia is a country of great cultural diversity, having welcomed to its soil many civilizations, which mutually enriched one another, thus giving birth to a society that is open and tolerant, one that overwhelmingly rejects fanaticism and extremism.

Tunisia's approach in fighting fundamentalist extremism has involved a comprehensive, coherent strategy that addresses both the causes and consequences of the scourge. This meant curtailing the problems of illiteracy, poverty and exclusion that usually provide a fertile ground for extremist movements.

Educational reform has been introduced to promote the values of modernity, rationalism and openness on the outside world. Tunisian schools today are places where scientific knowledge and democratic notions are taught.

Politically, the country has committed itself to a democratic process that makes it possible for everyone to take part in public life, by supporting the political party of his/her choice, without using religion to subvert the democratic process. The Law on Parties reaffirms the twin principles of the freedom to set up political parties, and the separation of politics and religion. The Tunisian Constitution makes it illegal to attempt to set up parties on a religious basis.

Since 1987, the Government has implemented a strategy aimed at fighting poverty and giving a stake to all citizens in the prosperity of their country. Thanks to the National Solidarity Fund and various other social programs, the poverty rate was reduced to a mere 4%. The middle class has grown to encompass three-quarters of the population.

Islam in Tunisia is practiced in a serene, progressive way, in line with the country's pure reformist tradition that gives prominence to enlightened interpretation (itjihad) of the holy text.

Tunisia has regularly, from the early 1990s, called for greater regional and international cooperation. Thus President Ben Ali has taken many regional and international initiatives on this matter such as calling for an international conference on terrorism and for the adoption of a code of conduct to counter extremism and terrorism.

Tunisia has led a successful international drive to set up a World Solidarity Fund to fight poverty and unequal development in the world. It also continues to support every initiative for the peaceful, just settlement of the Middle East conflicts, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the deterioration of which feeds fanaticism and extremism.

Foreign Policy

Tunisia has consistently pursued a policy of openness and moderation in its international relations, based on its adherence to the United Nations Charter and to international legality. It unwaveringly works to promote peace and cooperation in its own region and throughout the world.

Tunisia has played an active part in the Middle East peace process, which it has fully supported since the Madrid Conference. It has participated in all stages of multilateral negotiations and contributed to carrying out the agreements made between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Similarly, Tunisia has taken important initiatives in Africa and in the Arab world to prevent or resolve conflicts peacefully, and has consistently participated since the 1960s in peacekeeping missions throughout the world.

In recent years, Tunisia sent hundreds of peacekeeping soldiers to Cambodia, Namibia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo.

Tunisia continues to be firmly committed to the building of the Arab Maghreb Union, the regional North African grouping which includes Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania.

Tunisia attaches very special importance to economic integration and cooperation between the countries of the two shores of the Mediterranean.

President Ben Ali has consistently called for relations based on the establishment of ties of co-development and interdependence between the European Community and the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

On July 17, 1995, Tunisia was the first country of the southern Mediterranean to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union.

Tunisia has played an important part in mobilizing the international community against terrorism and extremism and for the promotion of tolerance as a global culture.

The city of Carthage hosted in 1995 a symposium on the “Teaching of Tolerance in the Mediterranean”, the outcome of which was the adoption by the participants of the “Carthage Charter on Tolerance in the Mediterranean”.

Tunisia has always advocated relations based on cooperation and solidarity between nations. In 1999, President Ben Ali called for the creation of a World Fund for Solidarity and the Eradication of Poverty. The initiative, which the Tunisian Head of State reiterated at the Millennium Summit (New York, September 2000), was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2002.

Tunisia is a member of several international and regional organizations including the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Islamic Conference Organization and the Arab Maghreb Union. Within all these bodies, Tunisia has advocated the peaceful settlement of conflicts, tolerance and dialogue.