Thank you very much, I am here representing the World Bank Group, and it is a great honor to be here with the Secretary General of the United Nations. We are here to reaffirm our support for Tunisia as it pursues critical economic reforms amid many challenges.

It was a great honor to meet the leaders, especially President Essebsi who has been a witness to the history of the entire nation of Tunisia, and who worked to lay the foundation of the democracy, gender equality and tolerance that mark Tunisia in this region.

We had a very productive meeting on the progress made thus far, where we are very much encouraged by the commitments to the reforms that we know are critical for the growth and job creation that will be so important, especially for young people in this country.

Over the last five years Tunisia has overcome many obstacles to maintain its political transition. Later this afternoon, I'll meet with Tunisia’s National Dialogue Quartet, whose moral authority and peaceful dialogue led the country away from civil war and toward a constitutional system that secures basic human rights for all members of society.
I’ll also be meeting with a group of civil society organizations and we want to encourage the continued involvement of civil society in the critical discussions that will support and sustain democracy and economic growth in Tunisia.

We commend the spirit of compromise that helped make the Tunisian experience an example for the entire Middle East and North Africa.

Now that we’ve seen great progress on the political front, I’m confident that Tunisia will maintain its very high aspirations for its economic transition. We will soon launch a new five-year plan to support ongoing reforms in Tunisia – with intentions of investing up to $1 billion dollars in the country every year.

It’s important, and President Essebsi and the leaders understand this very well, for the government to partner with all the stakeholders to complete reforms that support job creation and economic opportunities.

Lastly, we applaud Tunisia’s efforts to redouble security measures that monitors the eastern frontier. Combating terrorism, maintaining stability, and restoring confidence are essential for Tunisia’s economic recovery.

This is my second visit to Tunisia, and the reason I am here again, with the leadership of the Secretary General, is that we know exactly what’s at stake in this region. The success of Tunisia is critical for the success not only of this region, this continent, but for the entire world.

We know that our twin goals, ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, will never happen unless the democratic transition in Tunisia is supported with the kind of finance that will allow it to grow and create the jobs that we know will give young people in this country hope and optimism for the future.

We are very grateful for the hospitality of the entire country of Tunisia and we look forward to the rest of our stay here. Thank you very much.