

Mr. Taoufik BACCAR, Governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT), presided over on Tuesday 18 November 2009, the inauguration of four (4) bank branches in the governorates of Tunis and Ariana in the framework of the programme to improve the quality of banking services and bring them closer to the citizen. This includes two BNA (National Bank of Agriculture) branches in "Raoued" and "Les Berges du Lac", one BT (Tunisia Bank) branch in "El Ghazala" and one UIB (International Banking Union) branch in Tunis.

The Governor of the BCT underlined the need to go on this path to reach the target set in the presidential programme "Together we meet challenges" which calls for increasing the number of branches, to go from one branch for 8500 citizens currently to one branch for 7000 inhabitants by 2014. To this end, some 400 new branches are to be set up, corresponding to 80 branches a year.

In this context, Mr. BACCAR stressed the need to have this kind of representations that is similar to outlet system. To this end, the development of a computer system and human resources capable of adapting to the technological changes and boosting the links between the central administrations and the branches are also a necessity.

He added that the increase in the number of bank branches will also raise competition between banks on the market, referring in this respect to the set of banking measures decided at the national level and which helped the sector to markedly improve its indicators, notably, with respect to clean-up of bank portfolio and cut-down of the rate of non-performing loans and of the deadlines for examining the credit requests.

He called all the operating parties in the banking sector to intensify efforts to reach this target, noting that the Tunisian banking sector was and remains always in the service of the real economy and the national orientation of development through the achievement of the economic targets of the presidential programme. This involves mainly, financing to promoters, creation of businesses and jobs on the one hand, and bringing Tunisia up to the rank of financial service pole and regional financial centre on the other. This can only be achieved through better quality of services, developed and diversified banking activities and upgraded e-banking services.