

Statement By
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The 7th Forum for the Future

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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's Forum has dealt with a number of important and lively issues that directly affect our countries and societies, among which were conflict resolution, political reform, the social responsibility of the private sector, the role of women in society, in addition to the political and economic participation of youth.

Please allow me – briefly – to touch upon Egypt's achievements in these areas, which were at the core of this year's Forum.

Firstly, I would like to emphasize Egypt's past and current efforts in the area of conflict resolution by peaceful means, especially in the Arab and African spheres. Egypt also participates extensively in peacekeeping missions affiliated to both the United Nations and the African Union, and as a result we are currently ranked sixth in the world in terms of our participation in peacekeeping missions.

Cairo also hosts the Cairo Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA), which provides training for African diplomats and military personnel, in order to provide them with the necessary skills for conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations. The Center is also involved in capacity building of African peacekeeping forces in order to help them play a bigger role in dealing with conflicts on the African continent.

Egypt also plans to put forward a proposal at the next African Summit to set up an African Center for Reconstruction, whose activities will be focused on post-conflict countries and societies, and whose role will be to help prevent the recurrence of such conflicts, as well as to build an environment of stability, development and peace in the concerned countries.

Mr. Chairman,

History and contemporary practice have both proven that any reform process is by its nature evolutionary, cumulative and gradual, which are all essential prerequisites in order to guarantee its success and continuity,

along with the preservation of stability and social cohesion. It is also important to stress in this regard that any reform process should emanate from within the concerned societies, and that it should be the fruit of general social agreement.

As part of Egypt's comprehensive policies for development and modernization, Egypt has succeeded in implementing a number of core political reforms which bear witness to our commitment to continue on the path to democracy. These reforms guarantee the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, uphold respect for human rights, combat corruption and the abuse of power, and promote freedom of speech.

Mr. Chairman,

Economic reform policies around the world recognize the pivotal role of the private sector in development. The Egyptian government has implemented a number of policies which aim at providing a conducive environment for the private sector to fulfill this role. These policies include reform of relevant laws and regulations, reform of the banking and trade sectors, in addition to providing more tax incentives to promote sectors of the economy that have exhibited a potential for further growth, such as energy, industry, agriculture ... etc.

The Egyptian government has also accorded an immense importance to the social dimensions of development. To this end, we have encouraged the private sector to play a prominent social role and fulfill its responsibilities in this regard, which in turn will contribute to poverty alleviation and a balanced development that is conducive to all sectors of society.

Mr. Chairman,

Inequality between the sexes is one of the major obstacles to human development in any society, which in turn outlines the importance of the role women – which represent half of the economic potential of any society – can and should play in development. To this end, the Egyptian government has implemented policies that promote the political,

economic, and social empowerment of women, and which provide legal guarantees for the participation of women in all avenues of life, in addition to raising awareness of women's rights and obligations, and their role in society.

I would like to elaborate in this regard on an important development Egypt has made with regards to increasing women's political participation: by law, 64 seats in the Egyptian People's Assembly are reserved exclusively for female deputies. This "quota" does not in any way affect the right of women to run for elections in any of the other electoral districts. As a consequence of this development, women candidates in last November's parliamentary elections won a total of around 68 seats in the Assembly, which translates to 13% of the total seats.

I would also like to stress on the important role of the National Council for Women, which was set up in 2000, in furthering and promoting the role of women in Egypt, and organizing programs that aim at increasing women's awareness of their political, social, and economic rights, in addition to the role of the "Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement", which is headed by Her Excellency Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, and which is the first of its kind in the Middle East. The Movement helps women and youth develop the skills to initiate and spread understanding, respect, and peace in their communities and societies.

In this regard, I would also like to express our pleasure at the inclusion of issues related to women's empowerment in the Forum. We also welcome the Forum's decision to set up the BMENA Gender Institute project, and we wish it every success.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of this comprehensive view of development, the role of the youth must not be neglected, as they represent the future of all nations, and the effective ingredient in achieving sustainable development. The Egyptian government recognizes the importance of developing and unleashing the capabilities and talents of youth, and to this end has implemented policies that aim at including youth in the process of

- recognizing the most pertinent social problems and putting forward proposed solutions, as well as setting up training programs with the aim of preparing youth to join the work force.

It is important in this regard to also point to the important role of the National Council for Youth, which aims through its policies and programs, at instilling the values of citizenship and patriotism in youth, as well as expanding their participation in public life, and sponsoring the gifted.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me in conclusion to thank the joint chairmanship of Qatar and Canada for its efforts and proposals to promote and improve the Forum during the previous year, and to uphold the partnership between governments, civil society and the private sector from the region.

I would also like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the government and people of Qatar for their hospitality and excellent organization of this year's Ministerial meeting.

Egypt looks forward to continuing such efforts to improve the Forum, with the aim of further developing and cementing the partnership between governments, civil society, and the private sector, to realize the goals and aspirations of our countries and societies both now and in the future.

Thank you.