

The participants reached a set of general recommendations and practical proposals aimed to activate the role of civil society to contribute with the governments to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the preparation for democratic transition, stated in the following:

**Theme I: The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict Resolution and Democracy Promotion**

1. To enhance the involvement in the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to promote capacity-building and expertise in areas of conflict resolution and democratic transition.
2. To stimulate research and study centers and university research departments to identify the causes of tension and conflicts to contain them.
3. To call on governments to remove all restrictions on the work of civil society organizations and Human Rights activists, especially in the field of peaceful resolution of conflicts and democratic transition, and to adopt the 2008 Forum for the Future Partnership Document principles.
4. To activate what is stipulated in the Partnership Document between civil society and governments, and to urge them to coordinate their efforts, cooperate and build mutual trust between them.
5. To Call on the United Nations organizations, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Arab League of States, and the Gulf Cooperation Council to make room for civil society organizations to participate in conflict resolution.
6. To consider activating the principle of preventive diplomacy adopted by the United Nations in the 1990s in the regions disposed to witness conflicts before they happen.

7. To call on States, institutions and private companies to allocate funds in their budgets to support the work of civil society organizations.
8. To enhance the independence of civil society organizations from political parties and sectarianism.
9. To build alliances among civil society organizations and with the media, and to reinforce their partnership in the resolution of conflicts and the culture of peace.
10. To benefit from the expertise and experiences of civil society organizations in the field of conflict resolution.
11. To support the work of the Palestinian civil society organizations in facing violations by the Israeli occupation.
12. To assert and strengthen the culture of “citizenship” and combat all forms of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion.

### **Theme II: Local and Regional Mechanisms for the Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts**

1. To make use of the local traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution whenever possible, effective, and productive, and not incompatible with the rule of law and Human Rights, with the introduction of new mechanisms.
2. To establish a regional center for research, capacity building, premature warning, conflict resolution and democratic transition, and accelerate the elaboration of a feasibility study for this project.
3. To urge States to establish truth and equity commissions, to adhere to international Human Rights standards, to

- compensate the victims, and to develop mechanisms for the prevention of violations.
4. To conduct a survey of national legislation in the Middle East and North Africa, to monitor legislative gaps, and analyze developing legislation to allow for enhancement of conflict resolution.
  5. To invite and encourage governments to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Second Treaty annexed to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 in relation to the non-international armed conflicts.
  6. To support national Human Rights institutions in the Middle East and North Africa so as to contribute to the monitoring, prevention and resolution of conflicts.
  7. To urge civil society to develop the principles, foundations, and initiatives to build models of dialogue between conflicting parties.
  9. To promote the Human Rights, Democracy, Civil Peace and Tolerance culture in the educational curricula.
  10. To invite the relevant various bodies, national and regional organizations, international and United Nations organizations to support civil society organizations working on the resolution of conflicts through capacity building and knowledge accumulation with regards to the applicability of international humanitarian law, and develop the skills of civil society activists in networking, trust building between conflicting parties, mediation, negotiation and follow-up.
  10. To invite the worker's community to be an active partner with civil society and conflicting parties towards peaceful

resolution of conflicts, and the support and reconstruction of areas affected by these conflicts .

### **Theme III: Building Capacities in Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts and Democratic Transition**

1. To develop programs in the Humanities schools and departments in the areas of conflict, peace and mediation.
2. To develop research programs to survey all various forms of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and map the open and potential conflicts.
3. To establish national organizations and institutions specialized in training on the peaceful resolution of conflicts, mediation, and negotiation.
4. To involve and make visible women in solving conflicts by peaceful means.
5. To build the capacities of media professionals in the field of conflict resolution and the promotion of the culture of civil peace.
6. To encourage the establishment of publications' and cultural networks and develop specialized programs for schools and NGOs.
7. To develop a culture of peaceful resolution of conflicts amongst the various sectors of civil society, and to emphasize the role of the clergy and religious preaching, by guiding it so as to promote reconciliation and attention to the other parties' opinions.
8. To focus on disseminating the culture of peaceful resolution of conflicts through electronic media.

## **Theme IV: Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation and Democratic Transition Processes: Concrete Applications in the Context of the Arab Region**

1. To encourage States to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and all related Human Rights international conventions.
2. To reinforce the role of civil society in exerting pressure for exposing Human Rights violations, so as to promote transitional justice.
3. To strengthen the judiciary institutions and their role in accountability and justice, particularly with regards to Human Rights violations that occurred in the past, and participate in the transitional justice and democratization processes.
4. To benefit from the experiences of other countries in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe with regards to transitional justice.
5. To call upon governments to take serious political steps to start the process of democratic openness.

Finally, participants thanked the State of Qatar for hosting and supporting the workshop, as well as for their warm reception and hospitality. They also thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada and both of the Qatar National Human Rights Committee and the Arab Democracy Foundation, as well as the International Development and Research Center in Canada, for their initiative to organize this workshop .

## **G8-Broader Middle East and North Africa (G8-BMENA) Forum for the Future VII**

### **Conference on the Private Sector's Role in the Area of Social Responsibility**

**October 9-10, 2010 - Istanbul**

#### **Final Communiqué**

The international conference The Private Sector's Role in the Area of Social Responsibility was held in Istanbul on October 9th and 10th 2010. The conference was organized by the Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) under the coordination of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the National Human Rights Committee and the Arab Democracy Foundation and in cooperation with the Governments of Canada and Qatar, co-chairs of the Seventh Forum for the Future.

The conference brought together civil society and government representatives from the countries of the Broader Middle East and North Africa region, the countries of the G8 and Turkey. In the spirit of government-civil society dialogue and cooperation as envisaged by the Forum for the Future process, participants discussed the prospects for corporate social responsibility in the region and the effect it could have on participation and civil society.

#### **Participants' deliberations took place in four thematic workshops. These were:**

- Civil Society and Business: where participants discussed the complexities of the relationship between civil society and the private sector in the region, but acknowledged that they have

common objectives that they should work together towards, in order to ensure a more just and sustainable society;

- **Women's Economic Participation:** where participants assessed the barriers to women's economic participation in the region and discussed how these barriers might be overcome. The most pertinent barriers were identified as the rigid perception of a woman's role that is prevalent in the region, the portrayal of women in the media and a private sector that does not facilitate women's employment;
- **The Next Generation:** where participants agreed that youth unemployment and disenchantment are major problems in the region, which have to be overcome through education and training as well as the creation of opportunities for young people;
- **Capacity Building:** where participants debated how the private sector can assist civil society in developing its capacity to achieve common objectives. Participants developed recommendations for governments from the region and G8, the private sector and civil society, which are designed to instill a culture of corporate social responsibility in the region. These are :

### **To the Governments of the Region and G8 :**

- Express their commitment to corporate social responsibility as a means to tackle many of the social problems that affect the region;
- Adopt favorable fiscal frameworks and legislative landscapes that incentivize corporate social responsibility where appropriate;

- Acknowledge the absolute necessity to fully incorporate less advantaged members of society (including the region's women and youth) in related programs;
- Work with civil society and the private sector in developing education and training programs designed to reduce youth and female unemployment;
- Reiterate their commitment to a proposed Gender Institute and expand its remit to include programs related to women's economic empowerment;
- Ensure that multinational private sector organizations based in the countries of the G8 follow the same corporate social responsibility rules that apply within their national territories to their operations in foreign countries;
- Further engage the private sector as a partner for change in the Forum for the Future process.

**To the Private Sector:**

- Acknowledge the multiple benefits of corporate social responsibility (not just limited to good public relations);
- Recognize that civil society is a legitimate partner that can contribute to the delivery of a better, more equitable, society and that women and youth represent highly capable members of the workforce and thus should be encouraged to participate;
- Establish a work environment that is more supportive of women who chose to work, including the introduction of, for example, crèche services and flexible working hours;
- Work to better develop civil society's capacity, be it through management training programs, technical assistance (for example in the field of communications), financial planning,

the development of secondment programs, or encouraging their employees to donate some of their time or income to civil society.

**To Civil Society:**

- Look towards the private sector to instigate greater levels of professionalism in the region's civil society organizations;
- Conduct a study of corporate social responsibility in the region, detailing willing interlocutors, highlighting best practices and mapping private sector-civil society cooperation in the region;
- Recognize that the private sector has legitimate objectives and that civil society has a responsibility to understand them if it wants to work effectively with the private sector in solving social problems;
- Establish a “watchdog” tribunal made up of legal professionals to monitor the media's treatment of women, and when appropriate bring cases to the tribunal to draw attention to the media's social responsibility regarding women.

**Forum for the Future VII**  
**CSO preparatory committee**  
**Regional Preparatory Workshop on Youth**  
**Participation**

**Beirut, Lebanon**

**18-20 October 2010**

**Final Report**

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), in cooperation with the Civil Society Preparatory Committee for the Forum for the Future process, a regional workshop on youth participation on October 18-19-20, 2010. The workshop is in the context of preparations for the annual Forum for the Future that will be held in January 2011 in Doha, Qatar under the auspices of the co-presidency formed by Canada and Qatar. It comes after two other preparatory workshops that were held in Qatar and Turkey, on the topics of human security and the private sector, respectively.

The Workshop included over 100 participants from the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region. Representatives of public authorities and diplomatic missions were also attending.

**Outcomes :**

The discussions revolved around the participation of youth in different sectors. As the participants shared national experiences, defined the challenges and obstacles facing the integration of

youth in these sectors, they delved into the frameworks that would allow youth to participate in solving the problems facing countries in the region.

On the issue of the political participation of youth, there was a focus on the importance of the electoral process, the value of transparent and accountable governance and the consecration of the role of civil society as monitor and partner in these processes. Specifically, transparent and effective electoral laws were emphasized as well as reducing the minimum voting age to 18 years. The participants pleaded for an improvement in the participation of youth in political parties by reducing the rigidity of party structures and combating political corruption, both of which reduce the interest of youth in political participation. They also discussed the effects of corruption on social systems and the ways for youth to intervene on that front by working with civil society organizations and lobbying their governments to monitor and ensure the transparency of administrative practices. The participants also expanded on the negative effects of the deterioration of spaces for participation in the context of the many authoritarian regimes in the region, in addition to foreign intervention in the internal affairs of countries in the region. The participants demanded a reform of national educational curricula to consecrate the concept of citizenship. They also emphasized the importance of electronic government and the development of accessible databases for all ministries to improve transparency in policies.

With regards to the social integration of youth, the participants emphasized the effects of the persistence of traditional structures, of tribalism and of sectarianism on the general state of politics, economics and society in the region. They agreed that laws regulating organization and assembly participate in depriving youth of participatory spaces, especially as they favour a securitarian approach. They also pointed out to the role of the private sector in financing civil society projects, as an alternative to foreign funding. They pleaded for more cooperation and networking between civil society actors in the region to benefit from national dynamics on a regional level. The participants emphasized the importance of consecrating a culture of integration especially with regards to the more marginalized categories such as girls and women, people with disabilities, the poor and isolated geographical areas.

Concerning the economic reality, the participants concentrated on the role of youth in economic development, emphasizing the importance of continuing reforms of the educational system and developing it to best fit the needs and necessities of development and the labour market. The participants demanded an easing of travel conditions between Arab states for students and interns as well as increased support for vocational training in the region. In light of the critical situation of unemployment in the region, the participants insisted on the importance of fostering productive sectors in the region within framework of regional complementarity and cooperation among Arab countries, in

addition to creating social security systems for unemployed and informal workers. It was also demanded that dialogue on the issues of labor and economic migration between Arab countries. The central importance of effectively using national resources through mechanisms of just distribution of wealth was discussed, with a reference to the role of sovereign funds and the importance of channelling them towards regional developmental challenges, and to the importance of fostering participative processes for national budgeting and the monitoring of public finance. Additionally, the role of the private sector and small and medium enterprises was underlined. The need for a broader vision on the issue of migration, expanding beyond the securitarian approach to include its human, developmental, economic and rights-based dimensions was emphasized, as well as the need for reversing migration flows. Corruption and its detrimental effects on economic development were discussed by the participants who emphasized its institutional basis in the region. In all the aforementioned areas of intervention, the developmental and economic role of women in the region was emphasized, which demands a revision of laws and regulations and cleansing them of all forms of discrimination against women as well as facing stereotypical roles for women born out of cultural customs and social practices.

In the context of discussing the issue of cultural enrichment, there was an emphasis that culture is a central tenet of public life in the societies of the region and that cultural richness and

cultural, religious and ethnic diversity are unique in the Arab region, and that the coexistence of religions and sects is a civilized message to the rest of the world. However, there are vast cultural challenges in the region, especially with the recent spread of a culture of intolerance. The primacy of freedom of speech, publishing and access to information was emphasized, in different media including the internet, and that education is a central tenet in forming a strong and open culture in individuals.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Respect of public liberties**

1. Respect public liberties including freedom of association, extending it to youth, and ensuring their right to participate in democratic and fair elections.
2. Respect the independence of political, social and economic frameworks including student councils, trade unions, political parties and civil society organizations.
3. Ratify legislation in every country of the region consecrating the primacy of freedom of the press, with restrictions to it being exceptions that can only be enforced based on a justified, transparent and public court orders. This applies to measures cutting satellite broadcast of television channels.
4. Eliminate censorship of cultural, political and youth oriented websites, with exceptions only enforced by public court order, while upholding the principle of freedom of publication and access to information

5. Stop arresting journalists, bloggers and internet activists and respect their individual privacy.

### **Development of purposeful education**

6. Modernize educational curricula so as to contribute to the empowerment of youth in the face of the different challenges of globalization in its political, economic, social and cultural aspects.
7. Create a joint committee in cooperation with G8 countries to revise educational curricula in a comprehensive way based on international and regional expertise, in a manner coherent with technological innovation, the principles of human rights and with an emphasis on citizenship, combating corruption and enshrining tolerance, while adopting the principle of educational integration, including all social categories especially those most marginalized, such as persons with disabilities and learning difficulties.
8. Include social service in school curricula and develop an enabling, participative school environment with a rights-based approach in decisions affecting it.
9. Increase training programs for teachers, and improve their living conditions while developing clear standards for their selection.

### **Reform of systems and institutional frameworks**

10. Activate the League of Arab States' Youth Council to best serve youth related causes.

11. Adopt strategies, programs and national policies to deal with the challenges of poverty, unemployment and social marginalization in a manner empowering youth participation and limiting the causes of emigration.
12. Reform electoral systems and ensure the regulation of elections by independent bodies, while fostering the participation of marginalized groups (youth, women, persons with special needs...)
13. Foster democratic processes in political parties by activating internal elections then enhance and encourage youth participation by reducing the rigidity of party structures and combating political corruption which alienate younger generations.
14. Implement existing laws related to youth policies and facilitate the inclusion of youth and their social integration, while expanding the scope of social work and youth participation initiatives towards rural areas and encouraging local authorities to adopt youth policies and allow for greater social participation of youth.
15. Work on new technological means to improve connections among youth by working on legislation related to access to information, electronic government and the development of accessible electronic databases for all ministries.
16. Prepare and present reports on civil society organizations to international organizations including the United Nations in order to get technical assistance from experts.

17. Implement ratified international conventions, including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and foster the role of civil society and organizations working against corruption through legislation allowing to complement their role.
18. Approach governments and political parties based in political programs, and attempt to include in these the priorities of social groups, especially youth, with the definition of public policies targeting them.
19. Reevaluate economic legislation, regulations and policies in the countries of the region so that they are coherent with economic progress.

### **Modernize restrictive traditional social norms**

20. Organize awareness campaigns dealing with cultural impediments (traditions and customs, the culture of tribalism and sectarianism) that exclude the participation of youth so as to increase the confidence of youth in civil society and the effectiveness of social work.
21. Develop government mandated deontological covenants for clerics to reduce incitement against different sects and groups in places of worship.
22. Monitor and document instances of sectarian incitement in the media and religious pulpits.

### **Foster partnership with the private sector**

23. The private sector should contribute in the financing of

social projects developed by civil society and partner in the dynamics of social development.

24. Incentivize banks in the region to invest in productive sectors as well as small and medium enterprises.

### **Activate regional and international cooperation**

25. Reduce restraints on the movement of persons between countries in the region and the G8 through a reduction of administrative procedures restricting the movement of young civil society activists, and facilitate movement and residence of students, interns and young professionals across the countries of the region and the G8.
26. Develop a regional network of universities allowing exchange programs then linking it to regional networks and universities such as those in the Erasmus system.
27. Create youth exchange programs for Arab youth to foster cultural enrichment with the support of Arab governments as partners, possibly benefitting from the experience of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Program.
28. Create an interactive database to share experiences, projects and ideas between civil society organizations in the Arab region as well as with international civil society organizations and donors and create a website to network between organizations in the region and publicize harmful practices visited upon civil society activists by governments in the region.

29. Coordinate between the countries of the region to evaluate and redirect international treaties, including the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and accession to the World Trade Organization to ensure their implementation on an equitable basis.
30. Develop regional frameworks in cooperation with the G8 to deal with the public debt problem in the region and ensure its restructuring towards sustainable economic development.

**Follow-up:**

The participants unanimously issued a plea to follow-up the recommendations of the workshop and work on their implementation, through an effective framework allowing them to connect and combine their efforts.

والمنظمات الدولية والممولين. وضع موقع الكتروني للتشبيك بين الجمعيات بالمنطقة و التعريف بالخروقات التي يتعرض لها النشطاء الشباب من طرف دول المنطقة.

٢٩ - التنسيق بين دول المنطقة والعمل على توجيه وإعادة تقييم الاتفاقات الدولية من الشراكة الاورومتوسطية منظمة التجارة الدولية لضمان تطبيقها على أساس عادل يراعي مصالح جميع الدول.

٣٠ - بلورة آطر إقليمية بالشراكة مع مجموعة الثماني لمعالجة مشكلة للدين العام في دول المنطقة، وضمان إعادة توجيهها نحو تنمية إقتصادية مستدامة.

### المتابعة:

صدر تمني جماعي من المشاركين بمتابعة توصيات الورشة والعمل على تحقيقها، وذلك من خلال الية فاعلة، تسمح لهم بالتواصل وتشبيك جهود منظماتهم لتفعيل اعمالها.