



Chair's Summary

The Third Forum for the Future

30 November-1 December 2006

Dead Sea, Jordan

1. The Third Forum for the Future convened at the Dead Sea, Jordan with participation of Foreign Ministers and representatives of the countries of the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA), G8 Countries, and other partners. The Forum was held at an important time: Despite the troubling violence and political challenges in the region, and despite ongoing economic and educational obstacles, governmental and civil society leaders from around the world came together to say, now, more than ever before, cooperation and reform are needed to bring greater peace and prosperity to the people of the Middle East.
2. The participants, over two days, reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the Sea Island Initiatives. They also renewed their determination to continue the close cooperation to achieve the goals and objectives of this important dialogue and partnership. The participants also recognized the outstanding efforts made by Morocco and Bahrain in hosting the previous two meetings of the Forum.
3. The participants underlined the importance to further enhance the momentum of home-grown reform, and agreed that while national governments have the primary responsibility to push forward with their reform agendas; this effort must be complemented and supported politically and economically by the international community. In this regard, it was emphasized that the pace and content of reform in any particular country or region would be greatly enhanced with the resolution of long-standing conflicts in the region.

4. In this regard, on the eve of the ministerial meeting, Foreign Ministers and heads of governmental delegations discussed the various issues in the region. They reaffirmed that their support for reform in the region will go hand in hand with their support for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli Conflict, based on the internationally agreed upon terms of reference of the Middle East Peace Process, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, in addition to the Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit. They reiterated their commitment to the Principles of quartet's Roadmap and to the goal of two states, a sovereign, independent viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestine, living side by side in Peace and Security with Israel, achieved through direct and expedited negotiations between the two sides.
5. Participants welcomed the cease-fire agreement reached recently by the Palestinian Authority and Israel and called on both sides to further demonstrate their commitment to Peace by taking other measures that would strengthen the cease-fire and pave the way for a meaningful, tangible and forward-looking direct political negotiations.
6. The Participants expressed their deepest concern at the increasingly alarming situation in Iraq and reiterated their firm commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. The Participants also voiced their strong support for the Iraqi government in its efforts to restore security and solidify national reconciliation and dialogue. They also expressed their support to the efforts of the international community in this regard.

7. In this respect, the Participants called for an inclusive political process that ensures the participation of all Iraqis irrespective of their ethnicity, religion or ideology or any other ground with the view to ensuring a sovereign, united, stable and prosperous Iraq.
8. The Participants expressed their full commitment to supporting all efforts that would contribute to enhancing Lebanon's sovereignty, security, stability, prosperity, independence and cohesion by advocating and enhancing national dialogue and consensus. They also expressed their condemnation of the spree of political assassinations that have targeted key Lebanese leaders and intellectuals and reiterated their full support to the Lebanese government and its efforts to bring those responsible for these heinous crimes to Justice. They also expressed their support to the full implementation UN Security Council Resolution 1701.
9. The Forum commended the work of the Italian, Turkish, and Yemeni governments and partner NGOs (No Peace without Justice, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, and Human Rights Information and Training Centre) in co-sponsoring the Democracy Assistance Dialogue and organizing activities on women's empowerment in public life, political pluralism and electoral processes, and freedom of expression within this framework. The Forum welcomed the work of the DAD program to promote the principle that dialogue and cooperation between Governments and civil society is an important component of the democratic reform processes.
10. Participants acknowledged that during the past two years many significant activities have been implemented by DAD government and non-government partners. The major outcome of these activities was reflected in the creation of a solid and sustainable framework for cooperation to accelerate reforms in the areas

of expanding political participation, and women's empowerment, encouraging free and fair elections, and securing free, independent and professional media. Accordingly, participants welcomed DAD recommendations to further promote democratic transformation in the region. Furthermore, participants commended the role of the Yemeni Government in hosting the intergovernmental conference on Democracy, reform and freedom of expression held in Sanaa in June, 2006.

11. Ministers expressed their commitment to ensuring increased citizen participation in the political decision making process across the BMENA region. In addition Ministers acknowledged the role that civil society plays in political development.
12. The Forum recognized the importance of an independent media that exercises the freedom of speech in a responsible manner. Furthermore, participants highlighted the need for improving press laws to ensure freedom of expression as well as equipping media with sufficient access to information and with training in order for it to be a key player in the democratization process.
13. Ministers and representatives from civil society jointly discussed how governments and civil society could work together to achieve a number of objectives that would strengthen regionally-led political, social and economic development. Ministers thanked the representative delegations of the Arab civil society as well as the Arab Center for the Rule of Law and Integrity, the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, the Lebanese Transparency Association and Adalah as well as the international NGOs that supported their efforts for their work on the themes of Independent Judiciary, Legal Environment and Civil Society, Transparency and Corruption, and Youth Engagement in Civil Society.

14. Participants recognized that the effective application of the rule of law is vital to protect democracy and human rights. The rule of law provides the conditions of decent living for citizens. Participants further acknowledged the role of judicial independence, equality and accountability before the law, observing integrity in applying the law, and the separation of powers in achieving political, social and economic development.
15. Participants reaffirmed the role of Civil Society, recognizing the importance of creating a more enabling environment for Civil Society Institutions, in accordance with national laws, to operate and actively contribute to the political, economic and social development of the BMENA region. Participants highlighted the progress made in implementing the Arab Dialogue Forum program which represents a platform for dialogue between government institutions and the civil society including parliaments, political parties and media, recognizing the contribution of HRITC in this regard.
16. Governments reiterated their commitment to increasing transparency, referring to the outcomes and recommendations made during the Civil Society Dialogue Meeting on the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption which was held in Amman in September 2006.
17. The Forum acknowledged the progress that has taken place in the area of women empowerment, recognizing however, that the situation of women in the BMENA region requires further attention. The Forum recognized that small steps in the right direction to consolidate gender equality, especially in the area of literacy, can make an enormously positive impact on the advancement of democracy and realization of the region's vast human potential. Furthermore, participants

commended the role of the Turkish Government in hosting the Intergovernmental Conference on “Empowering Women in Public Life” in Ankara in May 2006..

18. Participants took note of the final declaration and recommendations of the Civil Society Parallel Meeting held in Amman, Jordan on 27-28 November 2006.
19. Participants stressed the potential of education to boost the region’s development, not least by providing young people with the skills needed for a modern economy, reducing social exclusion and promoting tolerance and understanding. They pledged to provide a high quality, broadly based education for all children and young people, as well as to take action at the national level to develop and encourage the spirit of learning and critical thinking in all students, in their families, their schools and their communities and to encourage greater mutual knowledge across faiths and cultures. They also recognized the importance of strengthening links to the labor markets, hence seek greater involvement of the Private Sector.
20. G8 Ministers agreed to further strengthen support to BMENA educational reform by making more effective use of existing funds. Participants agreed on the need for greater commitment and involvement of all countries in further home grown reforms of the educational sector. They also agreed to strengthen efforts in the implementation of the recommendations and agreements of the Education Ministers, including:
 - training more teachers towards providing a high quality, qualification-and skill-based, education that encourages critical thinking ;
 - reducing the number of illiterates by the year 2015 and meeting the EFA goals on literacy;

- strengthening the participation of women in education and training with the goal of higher female participation in the economy;
- bringing in civil society and private sector into the efforts of educational reform to broaden the bases and developing sustainability; and
- reforming the education sector towards broad participation, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability and maximize employability of graduates.

21. Participants recognized the importance of establishing mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of youth in the decision-making process taking into consideration that youth comprises a high percentage of the BMENA population. Moreover, participants agreed on the role that civil society should play in engaging young people in the democratic process and in all relevant civil society activities. Participants also highlighted the role that youth should play in economic development of the BMENA region and the need for skills-based training to create jobs and address the underlying problems of youth unemployment. Moreover, participants commended the Jordanian government for hosting the Young Arab Leaders Forum on November 26 and 27 of this year.

22. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the progress made since the Framework of Action agreed during the Ministerial Education Meeting which took place in Jordan in May 2005. The participants highlighted the steps proposed by the Education Reform Task Force and the Literacy and TVET working groups. Participants further emphasized the importance of a stronger multilateral partnership between BMENA countries and G8 countries in this area, indicating that special focus should be given to quality and appropriate learning for a globalized world.

23. Ministers of BMENA region welcomed the recommendations made at the Ministers of Education meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, May 2006, to retain the education task force and current working groups, TVET co-chaired by Japan and Jordan, Literacy by Egypt and USA, and continue supporting the action plans taking into account appropriate mechanisms, resources and issues of accountability.
24. Participants pledged to pursue vigorously every avenue which will create new economic opportunities for the region in the global marketplace, to promote the private sector by encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship, reducing obstacles to trade and investment and using international economic cooperation to increase opportunities for all, while supporting efforts to reduce poverty and unemployment.
25. In the area of attracting investment to MENA countries, participants welcomed the recommendations made at the Ministerial Meeting of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme in Jordan February 2006. In particular, they welcomed the specific investment reform targets which were announced, and encouraged governments in the region to continue their efforts in identifying and implementing, in a coordinated manner, reform targets that can be achieved; also confirmed their support to the MENA-OECD Investment Programme and encouraged governments from outside the region to continue their support to the Programme and the reform objectives of governments within the region.
26. In addition, participants encouraged the constructive involvement of business representatives and other elements of civil society in discussions with Governments on the improvements that should be made to the investment

environment. Finally they called for more international and bilateral initiatives to support home-grown economic reform efforts within the region.

27. Participants also commended the efforts of Bahrain and Morocco in establishing the Centers for Entrepreneurial Excellence and highlighted the role these centers play in helping BMENA region leaders in improving their managerial and entrepreneurial leadership skills through training, professional networking and the alumni support systems. They also underlined the importance of G8 Partners' financial and technical support to these centers in order to respond to the region's needs for developing qualified business professionals.
28. Participants welcomed the good progress achieved by the IFC's Private Enterprise Partnership MENA, and encouraged new Partners to support this initiative.
29. Participants were briefed on the recent developments that have taken place on the Foundation for the Future including the announcement of a full board and headquarters to be established in Beirut, Lebanon. Representatives of Countries of the G8-BMENA and other Partners who are founding members of the Foundation expressed their encouragement by the Foundation's commitment to issuing its first grants this winter. They also welcomed the setting of a date for the second board meeting in early December, 2006 in Amman, Jordan.
30. Ministers expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of Jordan for organizing the Forum for the Future and for facilitating the attendance of the participants. Ministers also recognized the role of Russian Federation in co-chairing the Forum and organizing various G8-BMENA activities over the course of the year.

31. Participants committed themselves to isolate the tiny minority of extremists who sought to sow division and discord. They expressed their optimism that, by steadfastly promoting common values and shared vision of peace, security and prosperity, their governments and people would succeed in building a better future for themselves and their children.
32. They also expressed gratitude to those governments and civil society groups that hosted, supported and organized activities over the course of this year.
33. Participants noted the interest expressed by several Countries in the BMENA to host the 2007 Forum for the Future. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan being the host country of the current Forum Meeting will work in coordination with the G8-BMENA countries to reach an agreement on the next host for the 2007 Forum.
34. The Participants look forward to continuing their cooperation across the full range of the Plan of Support during Germany's upcoming Presidency of the G8 and its co-chairmanship of the 2007 Forum for the Future.