

Under the patronage of His Excellency Amr Musa
General Secretary of the Arab League

International Conference

**Moral and Ethical Integrity of CSO's in the Arab World
&
the Right to Freedom of Association**

18-19 November 2008

Arrival 17 November, Departure 19 or 20 November

First Day

18/11/2007

Welcoming Speeches:

9:00 – 9:30

- HE Taher al-Masri: Commissioner, Civil Society commission, League of Arab States
- Dr. Ronald Meinardus: Regional Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty for the Middle East and Northern Africa
- Ambassador Salem Qawateen, president Civil Society Administration, Arab League
- EU Delegation in Cairo

9:30 – 9:45

Break

10:00 – 1:30

First Session

**Democracy, human rights and Stability:
Questions on priorities, prospects and lines of action**

(presentations 20 minutes every speaker, 50 minutes for discussion)

- **Arab reform efforts and the impact of internal and regional conflicts**
HE Hisham Youssef: Arab League spokesman
- **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and obstacles impeding effective implementation**
EU: Suggestions by Ms. Veronique Heckmann

Session moderated by: LAS to suggest name

Coffee break at 11:30 – 11:45

Continuation of first session

(presentations 15 minutes every speaker, one hour discussion)

- **Jordan: An Arab experience in the field of reforming laws**
Minister of Social Development
- **Impact of laws on civil society organizations**
Dr. Al-Tayeb al-Bakkoush: Chairman, Arab Institute for Human Rights

- **Enhancing democracy and human rights in the context of post Sep.11th global “war on terrorism”**
Canada’s experience in the field of legislations
Rights and Democracy (Mrs. Lara Arjan to suggest a name)

Session moderated by: LAS to suggest a name

Discussions on prospects and lines of action

The session will focus on the complex situation in the Middle East suffering internal and external threats and from the rise in fundamentalism. Governments react by drafting laws which they argue are aimed at protecting the unity and integrity of their countries but these laws impact on CSOs and limit their capacities to become active partners in development and also impede aspired reform and democratization. The international community is trapped between these two major questions: the priority of stability in the region or falling into chaos and terrorism? What are the prospects, and lines of action?

The session will discuss the view points of the different stakeholders; governments represented by the LAS, the international community from ENP perspective and the impact on civil society, democratization and human rights.

Two experiences will be discussed in the field of legislations: the Jordanian and the Canadian experience. Participants will elaborate on the future prospects and suggest lines of action where democracy and human rights are not compromised in the course of maintaining stability and fighting terrorism.

1:30 – 3:00

Lunch Break

3:00 – 6:00

Second Session

Arab-European cooperation in Human Rights and Democracy Achievements, Failures and lessons learned

(10 minutes every speaker, 30 minutes discussions)

- **European initiative for democracy and human rights (EIDHR)**
Objectives, achievements, future prospects
Veronique Heckmann: EuropeAid Direction A, Instrument européen pour la démocratie et les droits de l'homme, et autres programmes thématiques
- **The Arab European Project on Freedom of Association**
Ralf Erbel, Resident Representative, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Amman
- **Presentation of the book on Freedom of Association: Process and contents**
Dr. Issam Suleiman, Consultant ACRLI

Moderator: to be specified

4:00 – 4:30 Break

Second Session continued

(panel discussion 45 minutes, 45 minutes discussions)

▪ **Lessons Learned**

Achievements and failures assessed in light of three experiences the NCHR, the EOHR and Espace Associatif in amending laws

Dr. Ali Dabbas, Assistant Commissioner, NCHR
Hafez Abu Saada, Chairman, EOHR
Espace Associatif, Name to be specified
HE Taher al-Masri, Civil Society Commission

Session moderator: Arab Parliament

Discussion

The session will introduce the different projects implemented by EIDHR, the objectives of these projects, achievements made and challenges ahead.

It will introduce the FoA project implemented within this initiative and one of its major output of the project: the book on freedom of association which is meant to be a reference tool for legislators in the Arab world and also for CSOs.

In the panel discussion three experiences will be assessed in order measure successes achieved and lessons learnt throughout the 2-years implementation of the project.

Discussion shall focus on best means to benefit from the three experiences, suggestions for enhanced dialogue between the different stakeholders and the expected roles of the LAS, its Civil Society Commission and the different LAS institutions.

Second Day
19/11/2008

9:00 – 10:30

Third Session

Self regulation of CSOs: Prospects and challenges

- **Introducing the Code of Conduct for the NGO Sector**
Speaker: Allam Jarrar, Representative of network for Palestinian Non Governmental Organizations (PNGO)
- **Introducing the principles of democratic principles' charter**
Speaker: Jamal Barout, Writer, Political Analyst
- **Guiding principles for internal regulations of labour unions**
Speaker: to be specified

Discussion

11:00 – 1:00

Three parallel workshop

Discussions, adoption and plan of action

1. The code of conduct for the NGO sector attended by NGOs and NGOs network and related government departments
2. The principles of the charter of democratic practices attended by political parties, analysts and related government departments
3. The guidelines for labour unions' self regulations attended by labour unions, and related government departments

1:00 – 2:00

The second day aims at stressing the importance of self regulations of CSOs and means to institutionalizing self regulation in coordination with concerned government bodies. It also aims at introducing the different self regulations tools and to examine the extent to which they fill a gap much needed in the region and to build trust between CSOs and governments and constituencies.

2:00 – 4:00

Farwell Lunch

4:00

Departure