



annd

Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية



Statement

Ahead of the EU-League of Arab States summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

24-25/02/2019

The European Union (EU) and the Arab region share a long history. From Barcelona process, to the European Neighborhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean several cooperation tools, facility and mechanisms were developed; acknowledging the significance of working together to address common political, economic, social and security challenges. From bilateral to regional; relations at various levels also moved to institutions' level. Especially, since the Arab uprisings and structured by the Memorandum of Understanding (2015) the dialogue and cooperation between the League of Arab States (LAS) and the EU have also intensified.

This reinforced dialogue and cooperation between the LAS and the EU is of the utmost importance. Nevertheless developments at economic, social and political levels at both sides had their impacts on this relationship. Increasing divergence between EU member states on addressing the refugee and migration crisis, and between the LAS member states due to lack of unity and political tensions is evident. This diversion within each institution level but also from both the EU and the LAS to their counterparts' position is problematic so that the last ministerial summit (in February 2019) ended up with no agreement on a joint statement.

Ahead of the first-ever Euro-Arab summit that will take place in Sharm El Sheikh on 24-25 February 2019, this joint statement invites the Heads of States coming together to ensure that the LAS and the EU cooperation prioritizes achieving sustainable development and sustainable peace. Security, stability, and migration crisis remain a priority in the agenda, yet taking into consideration the major role played by both parties the statement calls the EU and LAS to:

With regard to the multilateralism, trade and investment, regional integration and the role of private sector:

Acknowledge that the global multilateral system suffers from structural economic and financial crises that have been exacerbated since 2008 and have led to major imbalances in international relations. Investment and trade trends promoted so far have revolved around economic growth that only benefits investors; inequalities between and among nations is widening and deepening. This situation has influenced the stability and the overall security situation, which has in turn led to the emergence of extreme political orientations calling for protectionist measures and for the promotion of the discourse of hatred and violence, far from the principles and values of human rights. In this regard;

Both the EU and the LAS should rethink the promotion of the current neo-liberal development models in order to address the long-witnessed failures, which includes: increasing poverty, inequality, unemployment, and violations of human rights & economic and social rights:

- Revise social and economic policies promoted within the cooperation towards a new rights-based, inclusive and sustainable development model in line with the universal commitments made under the Agenda 2030. This revision should aim at shifting from unproductive rentier economies to real productive economies that develop value-added sectors generating decent jobs and should be enhanced adopting redistribution policies to reverse inequalities, social polarization and marginalization and ensuring comprehensive and rights-based social-protection systems.

- Safeguard and promote regional integration enhancing regional value chains and markets, enabling greater local productivity and competitiveness.
- Promote adoption of effective measures to address the illicit financial flows both at the European and the Arab region levels, given that it is global problem and a hindrance against achieving sustainable development.
- Enhance collaborative and coordinated action from both the EU and the LAS member states to prioritize addressing corruption, money laundering enhancing transparency measures and work towards the adoption of a legally binding international instrument that strengthens private sector accountability and ends corporate impunity.
- Engage all relevant development actors in dialogues on trade and investment through transparent, inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogues and ensure that consultations move from tick-box exercise to consult on alternative models of developments based on the needs of the people.
- Urge the High Commissioner for Human Rights to publically release the UN Database on businesses involved in activities detailed in paragraph 96 of the UN Fact-Finding Mission report on unlawful Israeli settlements, and in line with Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 (2016).

The European Union with regard to its trade and investment policies to the region should:

- Respect policy coherence for development and consider trade as a development and redistributive tool that enhances the national production and regional integration and undertake an independent human rights-based and ecological impact assessment of the promoted Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements that envisages

liberalization of new sectors

- Together with the engagement of the EIB and EBRD in the region and for the implementation of the External Investment Plan; prioritize investments that serve development goals and undertake rights-based sustainability impact assessments prior to finalization of any projects including on infrastructure and energy sectors.

The League of Arab States should enhance the effective and regulatory role of its member states mainly and;

- Review the strategy of participation in the international trade system and enhance regional coordination among Arab countries as a tool to increase influence on these international tracks.
- Assess the Arab countries' readiness to negotiate at the multilateral level new rules related to electronic commerce and the digital economy, and assess the risks such rules might impose on the transition of the Arab economies towards more industrial policies in line with the fourth industrial revolution;

With regard to political dialogue and sustainable peace; migration and counter-terrorism

Acknowledge that political dialogue is key to achieve sustainable peace and security; and requires a strong political will for the dialogue to reach outcomes and for effective implementation. Decades-long conflicts and wars in the Arab region (Syria, Libya, Yemen) and the longest occupation in the history have detrimental de-development effects, lead to humanitarian crisis but as well dependence to humanitarian assistance that repress human potential. Furthermore, acknowledge that stability and security and refugee protection are interlinked, both the European countries and the Arab countries have full and shared responsibility towards refugees. In this respect:

Both the EU and the LAS should prioritize achieving sustainable peace and addressing the root causes of conflicts and wars shifting from militarized security approach towards achieving human security and;

- Ensure multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes with all development actors, protecting and promoting fundamental human rights including the freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression and an enabling environment for civil society enhancing access to funding and information
- Coordinate in order to ensure efficient and effective humanitarian assistance in the Arab region; and ensure localization of this assistance and establish direct linkages with long-term sustainable development needs of the recipient countries.
- With strong political will, take concrete steps to hold Israel, the occupying Power accountable for its culture of impunity, and force it to abide by the International Law.

- Palestinians have a right to self determination, including the establishment of recognized independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel must lift the 12 years blockade of the Gaza Strip and withdraw all the Israeli settlements from the occupied Palestinian territory including "Area C".




The European Union with regard to its migration and development policy towards the region should:

- Prioritize human rights discussions during regular political dialogue between the LAS and the EU yet avoid turning human rights discussions into conditionalities for one party; reaffirm mutual accountability in human rights violations taking place
- Support and promote programs building social cohesion; enhancing democratic institutions and civic participation in line with the national development plans of the Arab countries
- Take accountability in sustaining wars given that five EU countries feature among the top 10 arms exporters to the Arab region; and adopt effective measures to stop arms exports to the region
- Demonstrate political will to supporting Palestinians right to self-determination with continued assistance to Palestine refugees, including its support to UNRWA activities;
- Move from solely militarized security approach that enhances border security and delink development aid from the migration control, respect to development effectiveness principles in its external cooperation with third countries.
- Based on the EU's commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and shared responsibility for refugees, ensure more and better resettlement and provide resettled refugees with high quality

reception and integration support.

- vPrioritize addressing the root causes of the refugee crisis, including widespread and deepening inequalities and social exclusion and address radicalization through addressing social and economic marginalization.
- Promote halting all the austerity measures adopted in the Arab countries, implement economic and social policies that reduce the multi-dimensional gaps
- Promote adoption of comprehensive social protection system based on a human rights approach and social protection grounds and the increase of governments' expenditures into social spending
- Enhance protection measures for the refugees in the region; including residency, mobility, employment and livelihood
- Ensure coordination between various development actors, including international and local NGOs work with refugees in the Arab region that provide legal, humanitarian and social assistance to refugees
- Promote fulfillment of the rights to freedom of association, opinion and expression and peaceful assembly as well as access to information and resources towards enhancing civic participation and promote elimination of all discriminatory practices towards building social cohesion.
- Organize thematic and periodic policy dialogue with the independent civil society from the Arab countries to secure democratic, integrated and impartial ownership of the strategies and policies

www.annd.org
2030monitor.annd.org
civicspace.annd.org

 Arab NGO Network for Development
 @ArabNGONetwork
 Arab-NGO-Network-for-Development
 anndmedia