



The Economic and Social Development Summit 2011

***The Arab Youth Forum for the Arab Development
Summit
Sharm El-Sheikh 2011***

Background Paper

Background & General Framework

Arab youth witnesses today an unprecedented demographic boom in number and percentage, compared to previous decades. The percentage of the group age 15-29 has reached 29% (100 million youth) as a regional average.

This means that the Arab region has a demographic opportunity or gift that could help support economic growth and Arab development, if youth were well prepared at the level of health, education, and capacity building and if their choices and opportunities for economic, social and political participation were expanded.

Development investment in Arab youth is guaranteed in terms of results and added value at the present and in the future.

Thanks to its development investment in youth, Asian tigers were able to achieve economic miracles with 25% to 45% of youth participation in economic development.

Arab countries, aware of the role of the youth sector in advancing development, have devoted through the Arab Summits, an important part of their agendas to discuss and handle youth issues.

For instance, the 2006 Khartoum Summit called for promoting youth participation in formalizing and implementing political, economic, social, and cultural policies, whereas Algeria and Tunis Summit called for reforming education in the Arab world, a subject of follow up in other summits.

On the other hand, the Council of Arab Ministers of Youths and Sports, during the 2009 Kuwait Summit, provided all means to reinforce national and Arab policies for youth empowerment. This entails providing better knowledge of the youth situation and its orientations and behaviors, as well as effective tools to develop visions and capacity building of young leaders and those working in the youth sector, and to expand partnerships and participation.

Aware of the importance of the Arab Development Summit and the opportunities it provides for reinforcing youth empowerment policies, the League of Arab States has organized the “Young Leaders’ Meeting” within the framework of the 2009

Kuwait Economic and Development Summit. The meeting resulted in adopting an Arab Youth Declaration, which included orientations, and visions related to youth issues. A summary of the declaration was presented by a young woman at the summit and was highly praised by participating Kings and presidents.

The Social department of the League of Arab States in cooperation with the Council of Arab Youths & Sports Ministers and other Arab and International partners, is organizing the “Arab Development Summit Youth Forum 2011” on Jan 18, 2011 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The event is organized on the occasion of the Jan 19 Arab Development Summit preparations’, given the importance of youth dimension in development issues. This “young Leaders’ Meeting” will allow Arab youth to participate and communicate with decision makers.

Forum Objectives:

- Provide the young leaders with opportunities for dialogue, exchange and to voice their opinion and proposals/suggestions to high-level Arab decision makers.
- Develop visions and pertinent proposals that could be implemented, which deals with youth issues of priority to the Arab World – reviewed at the Summit, which reinforced youth empowerment policies in the Arab World and their integration and communication with officials and decision makers.
- Maintain the tradition of organizing a regular youth meeting to contribute to the Social and Economic Arab Development Summit, due to the importance of youth in development issues.
- Reinforce the Development Summit with the participation of important sectors, acting to achieve development efforts, among which are the youth sector.

Major themes of the forum:

The forum includes several social and development actors who will offer their expertise related to major issues of the forum as well as group meetings to discuss specific issues to develop visions and proposals that could be implemented. It also includes a meeting between youth and officials as well as an exhibition to learn about successful experiences in the Arab World related to youth empowerment.

Considering that such issues like education, participation and employment were tackled at the Kuwait Summit, this year's forum will focus on issues such as formulating participative youth policies through ICT, given the importance of the expansion use of the new technologies among youth and the opportunity it provides them for reinforcing their participation, communication and integration.

Specific themes:

1- Youth and New Technologies of Information and Communication

The theme will discuss the importance of the expansion use of the new technologies of information and communication among youth at the Arab and International level, its new forms of participation, its positive opportunities and negative consequences.

It aims to study the phenomenon of the expansion of NTIC and its impact on youth consciousness, sense of belonging and participation, as well as the impact on the formulation of Arab youth public opinion. It also aims at developing the added-value and the positive perspective, challenges and risks of this behavior and proposes solutions.

2- Reinforce, formulate and implement national youth policies

The objective is to learn about successful experiences in the field of youth empowerment policies at the national and international level and propose solutions to reinforce national mechanisms responsible for formulating, implementing and coordinating these policies from political, intellectual, institutional and financial levels, allowing it to better perform its duties.

The meeting will also know the participation of several outstanding youth from the Arab World and pay tribute to some for their contributions in different fields. This will reinforce the youth's role and strengthen confidence in their capabilities and contributions, and discuss the creation of an Arab Intellectual Platform to offer solutions by young leaders to issues facing youth.

Forum participants:

2- Members of the youth technical committee for the Council of Arab Ministers of Youths & Sports

3- Arab young leaders (man and woman) nominated by Arab Ministries of Youths & Sports according to a specific criteria

4- A group of Arab young leaders active in civil society and those who have important initiatives and leadership roles.

5- Experts specialized in youth empowerment, especially in relation to the forum themes.

6- Representatives of Arab and international organizations working in the fields related to the forum themes.

7- Business people and private sector institutions supporting youth projects.

Time & location:

Congress center Safoui, Sharm El Sheikh Jan 19, 2011.