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Ministry of International  
Cooperation



**EGYPT-ICF**  
INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION FORUM 2021  
ENGAGING FOR IMPACT

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# PROCEEDINGS







PROCEEDINGS





DAY 01

DAY — 01

# OPENING CEREMONY













# PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: TOWARDS A GREEN GLOBAL RECOVERY

**H.E. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt**, called upon the international community, international financial institutions and the private sector to join efforts to spark a “green recovery” to bolster the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

H.E. highlighted that COVID-19 and its aftermath, coupled with the implications of climate change, have imposed a new reality that requires innovative solutions and concerted efforts to achieve sustainable and green economic development to fulfill development aspirations across the globe.

He stated that supporting a green recovery is on top of the governments’ development agendas, however, the discrepancy in socio-economic conditions of emerging and developing economies might hinder their green transition. Accordingly, harnessing the support of the international community, international financial institutions and the private sector is deemed pivotal to achieve the coveted goals and mobilize innovative financing mechanisms, including blended finance. In that context, enhancing private sector engagement in development, leveraging their expertise to drive digital transformation to achieve economic and social development is imperative.

The President reaffirmed Egypt’s commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Africa 2063 Agenda, and the Paris agreement, which are consistent with the national priorities outlined in the “Egypt Vision 2030”, with the environment at its core. He shared Egypt’s development efforts over the years, which have been lauded in numerous international reports. These endeavors are manifested in mega infrastructure projects, social protection programs, investments in human capital, and the adoption of proactive measures for a successful transition to a green economy to improve the livelihoods of Egyptian citizens. Moreover, he underscored the importance of the AfCFTA in achieving African integration, as envisioned in the AU’s 2063 Agenda, for the continent to meet its sustainable development ambitions and assume a key role in the future of the global economy.

Finally, President Al Sisi wished for the success of the forum and expressed his confidence in the ability of the discussions to put forth recommendations aimed at reinforcing multilateral cooperation, financing for development through international institutions and the provision of technical support to achieve collective development aspirations towards a better future.



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# OPENING REMARKS

*“It would not have been possible for all of these stakeholders to gather today, whether physically or virtually, if they did not have the genuine conviction that the world, despite all the differences, is one coherent sphere that shares the same goal, that is, overcoming the pandemic and moving towards development and green recovery.”*

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation in Egypt,**

welcomed the Egyptian Prime Minister and high-level participants to the Forum. She introduced the Egypt-ICF, organized by the Ministry of International Cooperation in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank Group (WBG), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the United Nations (UN).

She outlined the concept of the Forum and the main topics for discussion in subsequent plenary sessions, explaining the timely nature of the event and the opportunity it presents for all stakeholders to concert

efforts towards advancing a post-pandemic green, inclusive and sustainable recovery.

The Minister elaborated that the COVID-19 pandemic posed serious socio-economic challenges, beyond health risks, that require global action to deliver on the blueprint outlined by the UN to achieve sustainability and prosperity for all. She added that the Egypt-ICF is designed to engage national and international policymakers, development partners, private sector, and civil society, in constructive exchanges to identify the parameters of sustainable recovery and find innovative, joint solutions to the most pressing global challenges.

**H.E. set the scene for the discussion to follow, and touched upon 6 core themes:**

**1. Multilateralism** with emphasis on country ownership for “building back better”.

**2. Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement and Triangular Cooperation** to boost sustainable development at the regional level, as well as advance the Africa Agenda 2063.

**3. Innovative financing for development** by employing international financial mechanisms and instruments, such as blended finance, to mobilize new forms of capital to tackle the SDG financing gap. Mobilizing USD 379 trillion, accounting for just 1% of global assets, as per the OECD, can bridge the persistent gap.

**4. Private sector as a catalyst for sustainable development.**

**5. Transition to a green economy** through promoting the integration of climate action into countries’ recovery strategies, whilst addressing the opportunities and challenges facing developing economies to achieve their economic potential.

**6. Investment in human capital** with a focus on the Egyptian endeavors in improving the livelihoods of its citizens through the presidential initiative “Decent Life” among other national development interventions, whilst highlighting the effective role of international cooperation and development financing.

In her concluding remarks, Al-Mashat emphasized the Ministry of International Cooperation’s commitment to push the frontiers of multilateral cooperation through the principles of economic diplomacy to bolster national development objectives that are consistent with the UN goals for sustainable development. To that end, the Ministry, together with its partners, will conclude with the Communiqué, which is set to identify priorities and provide realistic global solutions that reflect the world’s most critical challenges in order to guide policymakers and governments through the post-pandemic recovery.



## KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

**UN Deputy Secretary-General - “The SDGs are our best hope to emerge from the pandemic and accelerate our transition to an equitable, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future with human rights and human dignity for all.”**

**Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group,** underscored the importance of accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs through strong and effective international cooperation and multilateralism. She explained that the 2030 Agenda remains the globally agreed upon blueprint for action amidst crisis and gives impetus to collective development aspirations. Ms. Mohammed exemplified her point with the widespread production of COVID-19 vaccines, which resulted from effective collaborations among the global community, supported by innovative financing. This is proof that

international cooperation and multilateralism can deliver timely solutions to the most pressing challenges. Therefore, more emphasis should be given to knowledge sharing and exchange of expertise across borders to achieve the SDGs. In her concluding remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General reaffirmed the UN's commitment to support and engage with relevant stakeholders in addressing development challenges and sharing catalytic solutions, especially in the African context, and that the Egypt-ICF serves as an important platform that facilitates such exchanges.





**UN Under-Secretary-General – “The conversation around the price for carbon is an important conversation for many African countries, that are today, spending over 11% of their GDP, trying to respond to climate change.”**

**Vera Songwe, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary for the Economic Commission for Africa,** focused her remarks on three main areas for international cooperation:

- 1) COVID crisis response
- 2) Access of emerging and African economies to affordable financing through on-lending of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights
- 3) Climate action

With regards to COVID response, Dr. Songwe highlighted that the pandemic exposed the divide in vaccine roll out between advanced economies and African and developing nations, where the vaccination rate in Africa stands at 4.6% of a population of 1.3 billion people, as opposed to 60% in G7 economies. She recognized the pivotal, but still limited, role of the COVAX facility initiative in ensuring the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, as it had planned to provide emerging economies with 30% of needed vaccines and pledged to mobilize USD 8.5 billion to finance the production and manufacturing of those vaccines.

Dr. Songwe shed light on the impact of the pandemic on trade, disrupting supply chains around the world, which in turn hindered small and medium-sized enterprises, development, and job creation. This was mainly due to imposed border closures and export restrictions by developed economies, especially on medical products. She called on the international community to create a more conducive environment for trade to emerge stronger from the economic crisis. She also emphasized the importance of trade infrastructure for growth. Equally important is the scaling up of licensing and manufacturing capacity in emerging and developing economies. Egypt, for example, has recently been able to secure a contract to manufacture COVID vaccines - an opportunity Dr. Vera thinks the world needs to witness more often.

As for facilitating access to affordable finance, Dr. Vera pointed to the debt service suspension initiative launched by the G20 economies that provides low-income countries with the fiscal space - releasing USD 10 billion worth of additional resources for Africa - to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another important step taken to facilitate access to finance was the mobilization of a whopping USD 650 billion in Special Drawing Rights to boost liquidity. This is deemed the largest injection of new capital, of which Africa's share amounted to USD 33.6 billion.

Dr. Songwe posed a valid question about the role of international cooperation and how it can support countries' macroeconomic reforms by enabling access to affordable financing, especially in times of crisis. She explained that Egypt's efforts to revive its economy were set back by the pandemic and could further deteriorate due to divergence in terms of access to finance.

In light of the upcoming COP 26, where the international community will convene in Glasgow to discuss the way forward to net zero by 2050, the Under-Secretary General stressed upon exploring frameworks that facilitate a just green transition in Africa, whilst ensuring economic prosperity and creating job opportunities.

In efforts to build back better and promote a green, sustainable recovery, Dr. Songwe highlighted two main points for discussion: natural gas as a bridge fuel to renewable energy, and carbon pricing. She further explained that natural gas constitutes the main energy source for many African countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya and Cameroon, and hence can be touted as an interim fuel in the transition to renewables. Following the same rationale, Egypt currently has one of the largest solar power plants in the world. She also underlined how African countries are spending over 11% of their GDP to respond to climate change, hence the importance of carbon pricing. Dr. Vera concluded her remarks by looking forward to the views and insights during the Forum into the aforementioned themes, as well as technology, to ensure we meet agendas 2030 and 2063 through strengthened multilateral frameworks.



**OECD Deputy Secretary-General –  
“We need to recognize that each country can find its own path towards sustainable development. This is not a one size, one approach for all.”**

**Jeffrey Schlagenhauf (OECD)** started off his speech by commending the well-established partnership between Egypt and the OECD, which dates back to 2005, when the MENA-OECD initiative on governance and competitiveness for development was launched. Egypt played a critical role in the creation of the said initiative, which as described by Jeffrey, “has grown into a high-impact delivery mechanism for reform and is poised to support the region in its recovery from the pandemic.” Mr. Schlagenhauf announced the upcoming launch of the OECD’s Egypt Country Program which aims to support the new structural reform agenda and improve the livelihoods of Egyptian citizens.

Mr. Jeffrey highlighted three main themes: **the role of multilateralism for sustainable recovery, financing for development, and focus on results.** He stated that a reinvigorated multilateralism is the only means to an inclusive, strong and sustainable recovery from COVID, and to restore progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Despite the economic and health impacts triggered by the pandemic, according to OECD data, Official Development Assistance (ODA) rose to an all-time high in 2020, reaching USD 161.2 billion, representing a %3.5 increase from the previous year. This reflects developed economies’ continued commitment to supporting partner countries.

With regards to the SDG financing gap, Mr. Schlagenhauf stated that the amount of ODA that Africa received in 2019-2018 was estimated at 41.4 billion - the largest amount of any continent – is deemed insufficient to bridge the persistent gap. He therefore emphasized the importance of mobilizing other sources of financing, including private capital, and exploring innovative approaches such as blended finance and triangular cooperation.

The Deputy Secretary-General stressed on involving different stakeholders, while ensuring transparency and mutual accountability

to deliver concrete development results. He also pointed out that each country can follow a different path towards sustainable development, whilst adhering to the internationally agreed upon effectiveness principles to advance the 2030 and 2063 agendas. These would guide the design and planning of development interventions in new and inclusive ways, to how results are measured and shared. In that context, Mr. Jeffrey commended Egypt for its active participation in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in its efforts to use monitoring results to deliver long-lasting, people-driven results.

He acknowledged Africa's important role in the global economy, beyond being a recipient of ODA, and expressed the OECD's readiness

to support, through its standards and tools, an African-driven economic transformation and integration to help the continent achieve its own reform agenda. These tools can enable African countries to embrace enhanced structural reforms, strengthen private sector development and ultimately promote sustainable and inclusive growth, job creation and well-being.

In his final remarks, Mr. Jeffrey looked forward to the exchange of views during the Egypt-ICF with regards to building back better to a greener and more inclusive world. He reaffirmed the OECD's commitment to the 2030 and 2063 Agendas and emphasized the importance of leveraging the power of development cooperation to make it a reality.



**EU Commissioner  
for International  
Partnerships – “If the SDGs  
offer the blueprint for a  
greener, safer and more  
equitable world, then  
multilateralism is the ink.”**

**Jutta Urpilainen (EU)** started her speech by commending the Egyptian Ministry of International Cooperation for convening this first edition of the Egypt-ICF, and thanked Egypt for the broad and deep cooperation with the European Commission. She shared an eye-opening statistic about how the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed almost 4.5 million lives around the globe. Similar to an x-ray, it has exposed countries' strengths and weaknesses, highlighting socio-economic inequalities and environmental and biodiversity crises. In light of the changing global landscape, the EU is convinced that global rule-based multilateral cooperation, with the UN at its core, is the route to building back better to a greener, safer and more equitable world.

The Commissioner called for collective action to boost digital transformation and green transition, promote sustainable growth and education for women and youth, and foster international governance and peace. Ms. Jutta stated that capitalizing on the shared enthusiasm can support the success of the AU-EU Summit that will take place in early 2022, propelling the partnership towards achieving common goals. She concluded her remarks with a statement on the way forward: “Together, we can transform our challenges into opportunities for historic advancement and growth.”



**DAY — 01**

# **PANEL 01**

**MULTILATERALISM  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION POST  
COVID-19**







Day — 01



# PANEL 01

The session was moderated by **Mr. Manus Cranny**, Anchor, Bloomberg LP and featured 6 prominent speakers, namely **H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat**, Minister of International Cooperation, Arab Republic of Egypt; **Hon. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister, Ministry of International Relations, Namibia; **H.E. Mr. Alamine Ousmane Mey**, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Republic of Cameroon; **Mr. Børge Brende**, President, World Economic Forum; **Ms. Keiko Miwa**, Regional Director for Human Development, WBG; and **Mr. Solomon Quaynor**, Vice President, African Development Bank.



## KEYNOTE ADDRESS MULTILATERALISM TO BOLSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*“We are meeting at a moment that demands so much more cooperation if we want to advance shared priorities of equity, resilience and sustainability.”*

**Børge Brende (World Economic Forum)** outlined the three main priorities needed for strengthening multilateral cooperation in the post-COVID era.

Mr. Brende started his speech by thanking H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat for organizing this important dialogue, and the Ministry of International Cooperation for their close work with the World Economic Forum (WEF) on critical topics since 2019. He highlighted the launch of the Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator in Egypt and the initiative's success in bringing together multiple stakeholders to increase women's participation in the labour force and improve their livelihoods, an achievement which should not be taken for granted. The President of WEF also praised Egypt for being one of the few emerging economies to experience growth over the past year, which according to the IMF, is due to joint efforts between the government, businesses and international institutions in advancing reforms and increasing investment.

Mr. Brende shared his appreciation for this timely meeting at a moment that demands increased cooperation and the advancement of shared priorities of equity, resilience and sustainability. As he highlighted the criticality of strengthened cooperation, Mr. Brende outlined three main priority areas.

**First**, he stressed that cooperation must be multi-stakeholder to bear the complexity and interconnectedness of the challenges posed. Mr. Brende explained how the Middle East Regional Action Group, co-chaired by Dr. Al-Mashat and bringing

together 30 business and government leaders, demonstrates a successful example of multilateral cooperation in its release of a set of principles for building coalitions for positive impact across sectors, as well as more inclusive and sustainable social and economic systems in the region.

**Second**, Mr. Brende emphasized the need to prioritize collaborative innovation. He stated that Artificial Intelligence alone, if deployed appropriately, could add 15 trillion USD of value to the global economy. He explained that unlocking this potential rests on collaboration rather than competition between the different stakeholders. The WEF's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolutions Network around the world develops collaborative governance models that pave the way for these breakthrough innovations and technologies.

**Third**, he underscored the necessity of advancing collaboration for climate change. Given that the last decade was the warmest in the history of our planet, he urged the leaders of the international community, across industries, to address the most pressing challenges posed by climate change in the upcoming COP 26, in Glasgow.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Brende exclaimed his confidence that ongoing dialogues, like the ones held during the Egypt-ICF, carry valuable promises and actionable ideas to advance greater cooperation and shape a stronger future.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

Following Mr. Børge Brende's keynote speech, a lively panel discussion took place highlighting the general prospects of multilateralism in the coming future through a discussion that encompassed the fitness of multilateral organizations for the challenges posed; the significance of regional cooperation during recovery; and how reforms are necessary to create the needed synergies between development partners to effectively advance the SDGs.

## PROSPECTS OF MULTILATERALISM IN THE POST-COVID WORLD

**Mr. Manus Cranny** started off by asking the panelists about their views on the effect of the pandemic on multilateralism. **Ms. Keiko Miwa** felt that COVID-19 truly highlighted the criticality of multilateralism, given that no country was spared from the virus and how this revealed the international community's interdependence when it comes to building back better. She explained how this was exemplified in the preparation of the vaccine, where the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and governments jointly carried out a vaccine readiness assessment to reveal the next steps in each respective sector. **H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat** agreed and reiterated that the governance structure of COVAX demonstrates how several stakeholders can successfully come together internationally to provide a critical system. H.E. emphasized on stakeholder capitalism and the engagement of different stakeholders to create inclusive and green economies by capitalizing on each's own role, whether it is international organizations, the private sector, governments or civil society. Dr. Al-Mashat also highlighted that collective work is essential, particularly on the financing side, when it comes to the implementation of the SDGs.



**Hon. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** elaborated on the challenges COVID-19 posed to advancing the SDGs and how multilateralism is the key to progressing the UN 2030 Agenda as well as Agenda 2063. H.E. stated that the Egypt - ICF exemplifies a timely multilateral approach where African countries can voice their specific concerns and needs, and that a critical analysis of the Africa Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is necessary to realize the roles of the government, the private sector and civil society. H.E. **Mr. Alamine Ousmane Mey** noted that multilateralism and international cooperation has largely facilitated countries in dealing with the pandemic, and that there are plenty of lessons to draw on from this experience. His excellency explains that COVID-19 has triggered three levels of responses across the globe; national, bilateral and multilateral, and that regardless of the progress made in the two initial levels, we will only be able to build back better upon advancing our multilateral cooperation.





## ARE MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS CREATING THE NECESSARY SYNERGIES FOR PROSPEROUS RECOVERY?

Drawing on the above, **Mr. Cranny** proceeded to ask **Mr. Brende** about his thoughts on whether multilateral organizations are fit for the challenges posed, and the output this age demands of them from various stakeholders. **Mr. Brende** asserted the efficacy of multilateral organizations, but pointed out that harmonizing the international community is continuously

hampered by the notion of polarization. He believes that for multilateralism to work, it requires international organizations to be more relevant for the novel challenges and hence expand member states' willingness to collaborate. **Mr. Cranny** posed the question of whether the west were listening to the concerns of the region, to which **Ms. Netumbo** expressed her concern for the inequality in access to vaccination, and the vulnerability experienced by women and youth in particular, further exacerbated by the pandemic. H.E. also highlighted that the international community needs to recognize the different levels and hence different responsibilities of countries when it comes to multilateral cooperation, reminding us how the implementation of the Paris Agreement for instance would require shared but differentiated responsibilities. **Ms. Keiko** added to the Deputy Prime Minister's remark on youth and shed light on their experience by stating that at one point during the past year, 94% of the world's school-age youth were not attending school, and are estimated to lose about one year equivalent of schooling due to the pandemic.

## ALL HANDS ON DECK: HOW REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS CAN GARNER INNOVATIVE FINANCING AND INCREASE PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the panel discussion, there was a general consensus on the significance of regional cooperation. **Mr. Solomon Quaynor** stressed the importance of Africa to Africa investments, and how assessing this unique regional risk profile to cut cost factors of production and improve the macro environment will allow regional actors to properly utilize the AfCFTA for Africa's collective recovery, as the private sector will only take calculated risks. **Dr. Al-Mashat** also elaborated by adding that private sector engagement prospers with better predictability of policy and proper infrastructure; some of which, like the Cape Town - Cairo road, can aid regional integration within Africa, and it is from these projects that we should generate blueprints and lessons learned for the future. H.E. draws back on **Mr. Solomon's** reference to unique risk profiles, and mentions the importance of innovation and adjustment in financing to create meaningful opportunities from these successful experiences.

## THE SDGs: A COMMON DENOMINATOR TO GUIDE COLLECTIVE WORK

Towards the end of the discussion, the panelists reiterated the main take-aways in regards to the outlook of multilateralism post-COVID. **Dr. Al-Mashat** highlighted that the SDGs are the common denominator that the international community needs to draw upon in its recovery through strengthened, innovative cooperation between governments and the

private sector, which can be largely catalyzed through; clearer policies, investment in human capital, digital infrastructure and knowledge sharing, to create complementarities and synergies between development partners and across countries. **Mr. Quaynor** agreed that strong and sound macro and micro economic reforms are necessary for the predictable and competitive environment the private sector seeks, and that investment in regional and digital infrastructure is key. **Mr. Alamine** noted that multilateralism needs to focus on prevention ahead of cure, and that countries should revisit their economic development processes through structural reforms that focus on diversification, integration and industrialization, to lead to greater investment in the growth and development of the region.

DAY — 01

# PANEL 02

THE ROLE OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION IN  
ACCELERATING  
PROGRESS TOWARDS  
THE 2030 AGENDA







# PANEL 02

The session was moderated by **Ms. Eleni Giokos**, **Anchor** and Correspondent, CNN and brought together 7 prominent speakers, namely **Ms. Anita Bhatia**, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women; **Dr. Khalida Bouzar**, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States; **Dr. Khaled Sherif**, Vice President, African Development Bank; **Mr. Thomas Östros**, Vice President, European Investment Bank; **Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva**, Director, OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD); **Mr. Hany Sonbol**, CEO, International Islamic Trade Finance Cooperation (ITFC); and **Dr. Abdulhakim Elwaer**, Assistant Director General, FAO



# KEYNOTE ADDRESS

## THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN

*“Countries must not forget that there is a group of disadvantaged parts of the population who are never going to recover from the blows of the pandemic, unless we make specific policy decisions. These include policies that impact women’s income, women’s health, and women’s security, as we have seen a huge drop in female labor participation, access to maternal services, and huge rises in violence against women.”*



**Ms. Anita Bhatia (UN Women)** highlighted in her speech the impact of the pandemic on women, whom she characterized as the disadvantaged groups of the population that require tailor-made policies to promote an inclusive recovery. Women, following the pandemic, were adversely impacted in several areas, reflected in reduced incomes, and their economic status deteriorated as there was a huge drop in female labor force participation. Estimates suggest that 47 million more women are to be pushed back into poverty. This is mainly due to women’s domination of the services sector, making them the ones mostly affected by the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

The health conditions of women deteriorated, as their access to maternal health services following the pandemic was

reduced. In addition, their security was compromised during the pandemic due to considerable upsurge of violence against women.

In light of these conditions, Ms. Anita stressed on the dire need to consider women’s challenges when thinking about new policies, as an international development community, to be able effectively address these challenges. She also stated that grant money isn’t the answer to all problems, clarifying that at this stage, it’s crucial to mobilize also private sector funding, as part of the development funding, through leveraging the interest of those investors that are committed and interested to not only doing well financially but also contributing to the development agenda through bringing private resources into development projects.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### THE RESOURCES TO ADDRESS COVID-19 INDUCED CHALLENGES

**Ms. Eleni Giokos**, the moderator of the session, started the conversation by stating the fact that during 2020, the world witnessed a 3% increase in ODA, up from 2019. Yet, these funds remain insufficient to address the unmatched challenges imposed by the pandemic. **Dr. Khalida Bouzar (UN)** commented that the world has the wealth needed, but we need effective tools to overcome the pandemic. She also emphasized on the importance of prioritizing the relevant industries to invest in, given the consequences. She voiced the Lebanon example stating that lack of fuels in the country paved the way for an increased demand on investment in the renewable energy sector. The challenges COVID-19 brought to the table, could be turned into opportunity if we worked together and effectively.

In light of the 3% increase in ODA, **Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva (OECD)** explained the centrality of ODA, yet, it can not address alone the magnitude of the needs that rose from \$2.5 trillion to \$3.7 trillion in just one year. Therefore, it is pivotal to rely on the catalytic role of ODA to mobilize additional resources to address development challenges.

Given the fact that OECD countries have currently \$379 trillion of available financial resources, and that the deployment of only 1% of this amount could solve SDG problems, **Mr. Da Silva** emphasized the potential of financing for development, yet, clarifying that the effectiveness of this financing, with the resources available, can not be achieved without being addressed in a holistic manner. The complexity of the process relies on the accurate measurement of the financing, as you can not manage and incentivize what you can not measure. Consequently, the OECD developed the Total Official Support for System Development (TOSSD), which is an international standard newly developed to measure all the cross-borders resources flowing to support the 2030 Agenda. It monitors the Official resources and the private sector funds flowing into the developing countries, as well as the contribution of public goods, to be able to align all finances with SDGs. It is equally important to mobilize resources, but also to ensure the effective impact of these finances on the development agenda.



## THE FISCAL VULNERABILITY OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH REGARD TO FOOD SECURITY

The fiscal sustainability and developmental issues of the African countries are a real challenge, especially after the unprecedented adverse impacts the region witnessed after the pandemic. The African economies' dependence on the exports of a small number of raw unprocessed commodities immensely compromises their resilience to shocks.

**Dr. Khaled Sherif (AfDB)** explained in his intervention that 18 out of 54 African countries did not have the resilience to withstand economic exogenous shocks. Countries largely dependent on fuel revenues, by up to 70%, and primary commodities export, witnessed a fiscal distress following the commodities negative shock in 2019 and the pandemic in 2020, and did not recover until now. He emphasized the fact that, to implement the SDGs in these countries, value addition to the commodities exported is key. For example, these countries could lose up to 2000% of the value added generated from their

exported raw coffee beans. This profit goes to the countries where it is processed. Therefore, he highlighted that it's important to move from primary value addition to secondary value addition phase. Selling processed raw materials would provide the African countries with a larger export base which benefits their wealth and labor, making the country more resilient to shocks.

Regarding the new policies and strategies in light of the new reality brought on by the pandemic, **Mr. Thomas Östros (European Investment Bank)**, highlighted the adverse consequences of COVID-19 on gender equality, and the urgency to get back on track regarding equal opportunities for men and women as it is crucial for any development agenda. He also stressed that the most important future investments should be climate related, to avoid seeing the negative consequences hitting the most vulnerable countries. The EIB, as the green bank of the EU targeting to have %50 of their investment climate related in a couple of years, has big renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Africa and the MENA region where there are enormous opportunities.

In light of the lockdowns during the pandemic, the information technology sector has proven to be indispensable for the continuation of any activities. The lack of the necessary facilitating infrastructure puts the vulnerable population at high risk during the times of crisis, which makes investment in this sector one of the top priorities on the development agenda.

## IS THERE A NEED FOR THE WORLD TO REPRIORITIZE THE SDGs, GIVEN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PANDEMIC?

Given the lively interactive setting of the panel, the audience contributed to the discussion with valid questions and insights. The first issue raised from the audience tackled whether the international community should reprioritize the SDGs given the current circumstances of COVID-19, asking whether SDGs such as SDG3 on health, SDG13 on climate action and SDG17

on partnerships, shall come to the forefront after the hit of the pandemic.

The esteemed panelists agreed that there is no actual need for reprioritization of the SDGs on the global level for varied reasons. For example, **Dr. Abdulhakim Elwaer (FAO)**, explained that the SDGs are not a fixed menu, emphasizing that each country shall tailor their needs and their priority SDGs according to their national needs and priorities. Therefore, SDGs shall be looked at as a holistic menu rather than a specific way. In that sense, **Ms. Bhatia** explained that COVID-19 showed the interconnectedness between all SDGs, proving that a single SDG cannot be dealt within isolation. The COVID-19 started as a health crisis, and escalated into an economic and humanitarian crisis, demonstrating that solving just one aspect of a problem will not be sufficient to achieve the 2030 Agenda globally.

Finally, **Mr. Hany Sonbol (ITFC)** stressed on building on what we achieved together prior to COVID-19 to bring all countries back on track towards the achievement of the SDGs.

## THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR: A CRUCIAL SECTOR FOR A RESILIENT AFRICAN CONTINENT, IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The second valuable intervention from the audience was by Hon. **Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations of Namibia, as H.E. raised a vital issue, explaining that one of the main lessons learnt from the pandemic is to be self-sufficient with regards to food, which has been clear in times of lockdowns, especially in African economies. Given that the agriculture sector rose to the forefront as a very critical and important sector, responsible for achieving a moderate level of food security and a higher resilience to shocks for the African economies, H.E. asked whether financial institutions are willing to give higher attention to support and finance the priority sectors identified,

as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

From the International Financial Institution's perspective, **Dr. Sherif** agreed with H.E. on the urgency for countries to solve their food security issues, for higher resilience in facing any upcoming crisis. He also added that the African Development Bank focuses currently on promoting the agricultural productivity of the African economies through focusing on sustainable food production systems and enhancing resilient agricultural practices.

Moreover, **Mr. Sonbol** emphasized the importance of the agricultural sector. It has been a priority for ITFC, as 40% of their work is in the agriculture sector due to the dependence of the member countries on agriculture. Furthermore, **Dr. Elwaer**, Assistant Director General for FAO, focused during his intervention on the World Stances regarding the food security issue reflected in SDG2 Zero Hunger. He explained that the gap, already existing, deepened considerably post COVID-19 as

people with no access or limited access to food rose from 2 billion to 3.7 billion after the pandemic. In addition to working on countries' self sufficiency of food, **Dr. Elwaer** stressed on the importance of international cooperation to move across borders, as COVID-19 has proven that the whole world is fragile, as the pandemic has hampered access to food markets and food production, especially for vulnerable populations. He also underscored that 70% of the workforce in Africa is in the agricultural sector, hence, addressing that sector would have a multidimensional benefit on the economy as it addresses the issue of food security and malnutrition, provides jobs to men and women and also responds to the development challenges of the rural areas.

## THE DIFFERENT MONITORING FRAMEWORKS

**Ms. Giokos**, raised an important point regarding the quantifiable and monitoring modules, and the policy frameworks we should be working towards. Commenting on the moderator's question, **Mr. Da Silva** explained the recent framework developed between the UNDP and the OECD that works on aligning finance with the SDGs. This framework beholds a great value as it sets new standards for alignment adopted by the DAC countries, and addresses issues such as transparency, accountability and clearance. **Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat**, Minister of International Cooperation of Egypt, explained the practical mapping exercise the ministry undertook between its portfolio and the SDGs, one by one, and benefiting from the methodologies of the OECD and UNDP. This mapping exercise quantified the interrelations between the SDGs, showing for instance that SDG5 on Gender Equality is affected when we invest in education and infrastructure. Aligning with **Mr. Da Silva's** intervention regarding transparency and accountability, **Dr. Al-Mashat** underscored that this mapping exercise was availed with an interactive map on the ministry's website for the public to see how the SDGs have been mapped on Egypt's governorates, to make sure that civil society and private sector follow where each dollar received from an IFI through grants or loans is spent and mapped to SDGs. This exercise is a unique learning experience as it outlines the knowledge Egypt needs to reprioritize and create complementarities with our international partners, to be able to leverage additional financing to serve the development agenda.

The SDG mapping exercise was commended by **Dr. Bouzar**, as well as **Mr. Sonbol** who elaborated with the ITFC's monitoring framework called "the effectiveness framework". This framework applies to each operation financed by the ITFC, with specific KPIs to measure the impact of the operation on the member country and how it serves the SDGs.

With regards to the policies in the upcoming period, panelists emphasized on several points to be taken into account when

shaping new policies going forward. **Mr. Sonbol** explained that following the disruptions in the supply chains and trade during the pandemic, there is a dire need to focus now more than ever on localization and regionalization of production in our policy frameworks. In addition, the world needs to focus not only on mobilizing resources but to provide systems in the area of capacity building and advisory services. **Mr. Da Silva** explained that it is important to create an enabling environment and conduct reforms implemented at the country level to ensure that the money available in the economy is efficiently invested for the development purposes. As for **Mr. Elwaer**, he highlighted the importance of sharing experiences of policies at the global level, yet, setting up the orientation of the policies shall be domesticated at the national level taking into account the national priorities, for it to be effective. Among the successful initiatives conducted by the FAO in the policymaking arena was working with parliamentarians on developing policies towards achieving SDG2: zero hunger, where they succeeded in some original parliament in Latin America, the Arab League and Africa. Recognizing the interconnectedness between the SDGs, and the different development priorities, **Mr. Östros** and **Ms. Bhatia** emphasized on the importance of having a gender and climate awareness lens when shaping new policy priorities going forward, to accommodate the interlinkage between these vital SDGs.

***"The Lesson Learned from 2019 and 2020 is without resilience of these african economies, without developing your export base and without developing supply chains and value chains, these countries are not going to be able to achieve the two key targets of the SDGs of no poverty or Zero Hunger, because simply they don't have the Internal Revenue Streams to Allow that to Happen."***

**Dr. Khaled Sherif**  
Vice President of the African Development Bank



A stylized background graphic on the right side of the page. It features a plant with several leaves at the top and a large gear or cogwheel below it, both rendered in a light green color against the teal background.

**DAY — 01**

**PANEL 03**

**PRIVATE SECTOR  
ENGAGEMENT IN  
DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH  
INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION**







# PANEL 03

The session was moderated by **Mr. Manus Cranny**, Anchor at Bloomberg LP, and brought together 8 prominent speakers, namely **Mr. Jay Collins**, Vice Chairman at Citi; **H.E. Dr. Mohamed Maait**, Egypt's Minister of Finance; **H.E. Mr. Amadou Hott**, Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation, Senegal; **Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong**, Head of Delegation representing the African Union Development Agency, NEPAD; **Ms. Stephanie von Friedeburg**, Senior Vice President, Operations, International Finance Corporation; **Mr. Haje Schutte**, Senior Counsellor and Head, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate; **Mr. Tidjane Thiam**, CEO, Freedom Acquisition Corp. 1; **Mr. Alain Pilloux**, Vice President, Banking, EBRD, in addition to a recorded message by **Mr. Bader M. Al-Saad**, Director General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.





## KEYNOTE SPEECH

*In his keynote speech opening the third panel of the Egypt – ICF, Mr. Jay Collins, Vice Chairman at Citi, shed light on the importance of crowding in the private sector in the journey to finance the SDGs, by providing an overview of the main reasons leading to a significant shortfall of capital in emerging markets, the key techniques that are adopted in these markets and a set of recommendations for ensuring the mobilization of funded capital in emerging markets.*

Mr. Jay Collins Vice Chairman at (Citi), commenced his speech by stating the main issue facing the funding of SDGs: the \$2.5 trillion per year funding gap that remains missing today, alongside \$1.5 trillion that is being funded thanks to the development community around the world. He reaffirmed that the funding gap has not yet been adjusted to the implications and challenges of COVID-19 on the funding process, and the risk of prolonging this process in terms of time and funds. Mr. Collins argued that it remains difficult to fill this financing gap through ODA alone, which finances US \$150 billion a year, without crowding in the private sector and embarking it onto the process of funding the SDGs.

When examining the private sector and the role it plays, it may be perceived that, today, large amounts of ESG funds are dedicated to sustainability. However, according to Mr. Collins, these funds are rarely appointed to the deepest of emerging markets or developing countries around the world due to their weak ratings standing at a single B. Weak rating represents a risk to private debt and to equities from the developed world, bearing in mind that equity represents approximately 12% of the aggregate of development finance. Even when it comes to the development bank community, who are in turn assessed by rating agencies, we end up with less than 10% of development bank financing going to local currency financing. Hence, Mr. Collins concluded his argument by stressing on the necessity and urgency of crowding the private sector in the

funding process in order to be able to reach the \$2.5 trillion gap, using the adequate mechanisms to do so.

Mr. Collins laid out several mechanisms that were implemented around the world, with a special emphasis on the Mobilization Targets mechanism which entails measuring Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) by how much they crowd the private sector, through targeting the amount mobilized not the amount lent and therefore measuring how much the private sector is crowded in. This technique could only be implemented through capital markets.

Moreover, Mr. Collins referred to the bonds market which could potentially play a massive role in financing the \$2.5 trillion gap and even more, through the implementation of the adequate, progressive mechanisms such as blended finance. According to Mr. Collins, blended finance refers to combining private sector bank or bonds markets with concessional lending of the development bank community. Since Addis Ababa, blending has been on the table using the resources of ODA and grant funds, and structuring them into investments, allowing the private sector to be crowded in. However, unfortunately, less than 2% of ODA is in fact crowding in the private sector, and approximately 1% of that is actually through a blended structure.

**Given the above-mentioned facts, Mr. Collins then moves forward to provide a set of action points in order to encourage blended structures and enhance the process of financing the persistent SDG funding gap. These points go as follows:**

1. Setting a target for grant organizations to blend (ex: 5% or 7%)
2. Nurturing the culture between grant organizations and the private sector in order to agree on the appropriate private sector returns as well as the additionality that is necessary
3. Placing the development bank community as an intermediary since blended structures require concessional funding, but also because development banks are used to dealing with the private sector, and they speak a common developmental language with the grant organization
4. Sizing up blended finance structures, which are currently estimated at \$70 million, and scale up the mechanisms
5. Encouraging partnerships on the ground between local private equities and boutiques that understand the local market



## PANEL DISCUSSION

After Mr. Collins set the stage for the discussion on private sector engagement in development, Mr. Manus Cranny moved on to ask H.E Dr. Mohamed Maait, Egypt's Minister of Finance for his valuable insights on the incentives and the structural changes the Ministry has endorsed to bring private finance to Egypt, in light of H.E. President Abdel Fattah El Sisi's speech earlier stressing on the role of the private sector in the country.

H.E Dr. Mohamed Maait stressed on the necessity of relying on the private sector in order to finance Egypt's "ambitious, gross economic growth" and create jobs. He emphasized that the Ministry has presented many economic structural reforms in order to allow the private sector to lead the Egyptian economy. Even though the role of the state was pivotal post-2011 to restore the infrastructure, restoring investors' confidence and creating a healthy environment for doing business in Egypt remained the State's key priority. Reaffirming this statement was Mr. Tidjane Thiam, CEO of Freedom Acquisition, whom from his part, pointing out that there has never been more capital available in the world, especially following the COVID stimulus, but the issue remains on finding the way to drive this capital to the ground level. He brought in the indispensable role of SMEs to the discussion, stating that a vibrant set of SMEs would translate the chain that processes the trillions into existing equity investments, and would ultimately create jobs for the local communities. Moreover, Mr. Thiam called for the development of those private equities, venture capitalists, angel investors, who will be close to the ground, aware of the right opportunities, and will be able to translate over funds available in the capital markets into effective investment on ground.

From the grant givers and donors' front, Mr. Haje Schütte, Senior Counsellor and Head at the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, reiterated the necessity of a massive shift in the donor community, in the development finance community with the MDBs, from the private sector and the policymakers as well. He explained that the mindset within these communities has always been revolving around lending, and the total values.


The shift is drastic to move from the lender to the mobilizer, stating that even the OECD, as part of the development finance community and as a policy institution has remained relatively

focused on the value of money lent, and what we need moving forward is risk capital, allowing institutional investors to come in. Drawing from Mr. Schütte's speech on the dire need of a change in mindset, Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, Head of Delegation representing the African Union Development Agency, advocated for a mindset change that is policy-oriented, but also within the business models, emphasizing that development is not about the money, but rather the people and changing their lives. According to Ms. Fotabong, a shift from short-term relationships to long-term partnerships is the necessary business approach that should be endorsed in order to be able to cooperate with the government. That being said, she reiterated Mr. Thiam's point on SMEs being the drive for job creation and growth in African countries.

Emphasizing the necessary government-side mindset change was H.E Mr. Amadou Hott, Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation of Senegal, who has stressed on two key points: business-friendly reforms, and tax reforms. Creating a business-friendly environment stimulates business investments across different sectors, and hence creates jobs and increases savings rate in the country, which ultimately leads to the creation of local capital markets that are able to finance in local currency. Once a business-friendly environment is established, tax reforms should be on the government's agenda; widening the tax base and in many cases decreasing the tax rate, while mobilizing resources at scale. These reforms would lead to a drastic improvement of the government rating, according to Mr. Hott, given that Senegal is planned to be among the top 50 countries in the World Bank ratings in the upcoming 4 years. This mechanism can allow developing countries' governments to eventually be able to mobilize funds directly from the capital market instead of developed countries raising these funds at 0.1% and 1% and transferring them to emerging markets at concessional terms. Moreover, His Excellency quoted Mr. Collins on blended finance, stating that it is very significant in order to generate the needed funds, stressing on the sense of urgency in the situation and the need to act fast in order to achieve the development goals.

**Drawing from Mr. Hott's speech, Mr. Cranny gave the floor to Ms. Stephanie von Friedeburg, Senior Vice President, Operations, at the International Finance Corporation, asking her about the reforms she perceives as a positive turning point for a country, from her vantage point as a lender to the private sector. Ms. Friedeburg touched upon the different themes tapped into by the previous panelists by providing a structure consisting of 4 areas of focus:**

- (1) Creating the right policy and regulations and strong institutions, where the conversation needs to start.
- (2) Creating bankable projects for the private sector to participate in.
- (3) Focusing on underdeveloped local capital markets and how we can support them.
- (4) The political will of the government to endorse all the necessary changes, providing the example of Egypt, where the government has taken the bold move of removing fuel subsidies and endorsing reforms which has led the government to eventually be able to establish a large size project such as Benban, the largest solar park in the world.



Another focal point **Ms. Stephanie** shed light on was crowding in private equities and venture capitals as **Mr. Thiam** stated earlier. Once again, a mindset change is necessary from the donors' part on how to use blended finance and how to use grant money to create first loss positions in investment vehicles to improve portfolio ratings through donor funding. When asked by the moderator about where we stand today in terms of these innovative solutions, **Ms. Friedeburg** indicated that we remain at the starting line. Many platforms have been created, like the Best Fund that is currently being developed by the IFC, which is going to go after sustainability linked bonds as we come out of the crisis through an asset allocator using first loss positions to attract money from, for example, a dentist who is willing to figure out how to invest in the emerging markets.

Building on the statements of the other panelists, **Mr. Allain Pilloux**, Vice President of Banking at EBRD, first reiterated on the indispensable role of the government in order to provide the private sector with a healthy, secure, stable, predictable and clear environment under the rule of law, with fair competition. He then moved to discuss the role of the multilaterals the national development institutions, stressing on :

- (1) The need for prioritizing private sector mobilization.
- (2) The need for pushing for private-sector-led solutions and encouraging PPP, such as the successful model of Egypt's 6th of October Dry Port project with significant involvement of private sector infrastructure.
- (3) The capacity to use instruments to de-risk private sector investments, through guarantees, funds, blended finance or first loss positions. There is a dire need for innovation and creativity.

**Mr. Pilloux** concluded his remarks by emphasizing the importance of good project preparation as previously capitalized by **Ms. Stephanie**, and highlighting EBRD's commitment to dedicate 75% of its resources to the private sector.

And building on the significance of project preparations, Mr. Cranny addressed H.E Dr Maait inquiring about any bigger scale projects in the pipeline for Egypt, and whether there is an acceleration to these projects. From his part Dr. Maait reassured that large-scale projects are the pillars of short and medium term economic growth across all sectors that all heavily include the private sector. The government's priority is to prepare these projects for the private sector to finance them away from our debt, giving the example of Belban, being 1 project out of 10 others to be fully provided to the private sector.

Towards the end of the panel discussion, the moderator introduced a quick round of Q&A, in which he addressed the issue of whether multilateral agencies are prepared to take more risks and do more. H.E Dr. Maait believed they needed to do more, to take more risks in order to get the returns. They need to create better, more efficient tools to assist developing countries to achieve the SDGs. Ms. Estherine, from her part, believed they are doing a lot, but still need to do more, identifying 3 areas in which we need to see more action:

- (1) Developing tools, mechanisms, non-financial mechanisms such as platforms for knowledge sharing.
- (2) Knowledge management and sharing best practices.
- (3) A framework for monitoring and evaluation for the private sector to track the resources injected into development.

**Mr. Thiam** agreed on the dire need for mechanisms to drive funding down to the ground, given the abundance of entrepreneurs in Africa that need these mechanisms. As for **Mr. Jay Collins**, he advocated for the need of a new structure that allows for weaker credit ratings, a vehicle type that has been proposed by **Mr. Collins** and others, since many multilateral agencies could be targeting top ratings and hence are more protective of their risk. He further suggested being more tactical at the project level, by deploying the amount of risk taken to only target the necessary risk. **H.E Mr. Hott** agreed with **Mr. Collins**, and added that multilateral agencies need to invest more alongside governments in the informal sector, since as previously stated by **Mr. Thiam**, all large companies started as SMEs, and in the informal sector and therefore there is a pressing need to address their financing needs. **Ms. Stephanie** strongly agreed on the previous statements, adding the technology element to the conversation alongside the need for blended finance, for much more efficient and inclusive results.

In answering **Mr. Cranny's** question, **Mr. Schütte** raised a unique point that has not been discussed during the panel which is the pressing need for data. He argued that the OECD needs more data from MDBs in order to better understand their actions and build adequate policies and build trust with the public, hence supporting a private-sector-led development approach, and for the private sector to clearly understand the risks of developing and investing in emerging markets in developing countries. **Mr. Schütte** believes that the OECD has a gap between the real risks which are lower than the perceived risks, resulting in policies being designed around this reality and hence making it harder for the private sector to channel finance funding into the emerging markets. Finally, providing the concluding remarks for the panel discussion was **Mr. Allain Pilloux** who summarized the recommendations discussed into the following points: "stability, predictability, investment climate, rule of law, in order to have a private sector-led growth". He also quoted **Mr. Collins** about the importance of "thinking big", and emphasized on the use of de-risking instruments and the necessary creativity needed to develop new tools alongside project preparation and infrastructure.

In light of this lively and fruitful panel discussion, **Mr. Badr Al Saad**, Director General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) provided a recorded message that encompassed the topics discussed under the overarching theme of the indispensable role of the international community as a whole during these unprecedented times, stressing on the efforts that were exerted to ending hunger, ignorance and diseases using sustainable resources through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the efforts that are yet to be exerted especially amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

He shed light on the Fund's commitment to the development agenda, stating that it has provided approximately \$36.5 billion which have contributed to the financing of 596 projects across 17 countries. However, there still remains a dire need for inclusive sustainable solutions, emphasizing the need for effective private sector engagement whose contribution to development projects is no longer a luxury but rather an urgent need given what the private sector brings from efficiency in management to boosting productivity, in addition to governance systems that help streamline the implementation of projects and eliminate bureaucracy. Mr. Al Saad called for greater economic openness and better legislation to provide the private sector with the necessary reassurance, and concluded his remarks by capitalizing on the importance of laying solid foundations for cooperation and building sustainable, resilient partnerships.



**DAY — 01**

# **PANEL 04**

**CLIMATE ACTION  
IN A POST COVID-19  
CONTEXT: A TWOFOLD  
CHALLENGE**









Day — 01

# PANEL 04



## KEYNOTE SPEECH GREEN RECOVERY FOR POST COVID-19 WORLD

*“Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis represents a once in a generation opportunity for us to [...] meet this 1.5 degree call of the Paris Agreement.”*

**Selwin Charles Hart**, Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Climate Action and Assistant Secretary General for the Climate Action Team at the United Nations, presented a keynote speech on the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating the climate crisis.

**Mr. Hart** explained that the world is now on a climate cliff as climate change imposes an existential crisis for humanity. Referring to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report, he underscored the urgency of meeting the Paris Agreement condition of limiting the increase in average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius and he described the COVID-19 as an opportunity to abide by that goal, as he stated: “the COVID-19 crisis and recovery from the

COVID-19 crisis represents a once in a generation opportunity for us to do precisely that, ensuring that the recovery from the COVID crisis allows us to meet this 1.5 degree call of the Paris Agreement”. He also underlined that the potential impacts of an average global temperature of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius will be translated into major environmental events, such as higher sea levels and water scarcity. Furthermore, Mr. Hart highlighted that the poorest and most vulnerable communities are the ones that will be worst impacted by the crisis. Consequently, he called African countries to defend their views in the next COP26 in Glasgow as he said: “We are looking to strong leadership from Egypt, [...] from African countries and other developing countries to push the major emitters in a direction that would keep this 1.5 degree goal alive”.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

The moderator, **Ms. Eleni Giokos**, CNN anchor and correspondent, welcomed the audience and panelists and introduced the topic while inquiring about how Middle Eastern and African countries can adopt **recovery plans** that take a **sustainable transition to a low-carbon economy** into consideration. Then, to kick off the session, a recorded message by **Mr. Ferid Belhaj**, Vice President of Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank Group, was played. Mr. Belhaj shared the same view of **Mr. Hart**, that climate change is an existential crisis but it is an immense business bonanza since investment in green sectors generates economic growth and creates jobs. He also said that **300 million jobs** need to be created by 2050 in Middle Eastern and North African countries, hence they can harness this opportunity to be able to absorb new entrants on the labor market. He reaffirmed the World Bank's commitment to allocate a share of 35% of its financing towards climate change.

Ms. Giokos referred to President Al-Sisi's speech at the Egypt – ICF opening ceremony when His Excellency underscored that climate change is a **top priority** on the Egyptian government agenda, to start the discussion with **H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad**, Minister of Environment. H.E. highlighted the fact that climate change is not an environmental challenge but rather a developmental challenge, as its impacts do not differentiate between rich and poor communities. **Dr. Fouad** stressed on the importance of bringing land degradation, climate change and biodiversity together in the national agenda, stating: "As they were born". She underlined the local efforts exerted in Egypt to achieve this, such as the establishment of the **Climate Change Council**. **Hon. Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed**, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, agreed with Dr. Fouad that climate change affects different strata of population but she capitalized on the nexus between gender and climate change, adding that women and children are the most affected by the crisis. Furthermore, Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen, US Ambassador to Egypt, said that the climate crisis is everybody's crisis and that the United States of America is aiming to mobilize the global community towards climate action, highlighting his country's promise to double climate support for developing countries by 2024 and to triple its adaptation finance. Ambassador Cohen also added that the US government is working on engaging the global finance sector in climate action. On mobilizing necessary resources to investment in green infrastructure, he stated: "The US intends to mobilize our full range of development finance tools, including the development Finance Corporation, USAID, the EXIM Bank, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the US Trade and Development Agency, and together with the private sector, other stakeholders and our G7 Partners, we think that in partnership, we can **capitalize hundreds of billions of dollars** for infrastructure investment in this space".

Dr. Ahmed underscored that although Africa is the **lowest emitter** and the least contributor to climate change and did not benefit from the use of fossil fuel, like the developed countries did, it still has to **phase out fossil fuel**. Dr. Ahmed also declared that: "We [African countries] won't be able to transit towards zero emissions at the same rate as the European and the developed countries. And we're asking the world to consider that the transition that we all aspire to must be an equitable one, we are not equally resourced". Dr. Fouad reaffirmed that Africa's contribution to the global emissions does not exceed 4% and that African countries need to work collectively in their battle against climate change. Mr. Ian Bremmer, President and Founder of Eurasia Group and GZERO media, joined the conversation by comparing the COVID-19 response in the African continent

and the climate change crisis, he stated that the continent has been the last and least well served by the resources necessary for the energy transition and for sustainable development. Mr. Bremmer also highlighted that 3.5 °C is the degree we are currently heading to and not 1.5 °C, consequently, he capitalized on the importance of promoting global competition in "**new post carbon technologies**" markets, in order to decrease the cost of a green transition and to enable the usage of sustainable energy at scale.

Regarding policy reforms, **Mr. Harry-Boyd Carpenter**, Managing Director for Green Economy and Climate Action at EBRD, recognized three types of reforms. The first is setting a **net zero target** in the long term, stressing that: "Although 2050, 2060 sends a long time away, that is actually just one investment cycle for a lot of capital intensive industries". The second is to **act immediately and start catalyzing investment** in sectors such as renewable energy, adding that African countries have a great opportunity to invest in solar energy projects. The third policy reform is carbon pricing, because when businesses understand that carbon has a price, they start reflecting this on their decisions and investment plans. Dr. Fouad encouraged the adoption of mitigation and adaptation policies that can be measured and tested, to give a space for further enhancement upon application. The role of the private sector in the acceleration towards the green transition was acknowledged by Dr. Ahmed, Mr. Hart and Mr. Carpenter. The latter stated that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) invest approximately one billion euros a year in Egypt, about half of this amount will be directed to climate-related and green sectors, including private finance.

Finally, Dr. Fouad mentioned the walls that are being built at the shore of Alexandria and Rashid as an example of protecting fishermen and improving their livelihoods, adding that when tackling climate change, governments must take into consideration the **economic perspective and not only the environmental perspective** that is related to emissions. In addition, Ambassador Cohen shed light on USAID efforts to curb climate change effects on local communities in Egypt, he mentioned that **USD 3.5 billion** in water projects, ranging from technical assistance programs with Egyptian farmers to help them improve their irrigation techniques, increase their yield and hence increase their profits. Regarding national efforts in Nigeria, Dr. Ahmed clarified that the Central Bank of Nigeria deploys special funds for young people who wish to use solar systems in their homes located in isolated villages, as the country targets **500 million homes**, which is equivalent to 25 million people. Consequently, panelists agreed on the importance of pursuing a **bottom-up approach and integrating the local communities in the action plans in order to foster resilience**.

***"We're raising ambition for collective efforts, although we are at different speeds, we need to raise ambition on the means of implementation, the finance, the technology transfer and the capacity development."***

**Dr. Yasmine Fouad**  
Minister of Environment, Egypt



**DAY — 01**

# **DIALOGUE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS**









# EGYPT-ICF

INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION FORUM | 2021  
ENGAGING FOR IMPACT





## DIALOGUE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The panel was moderated by **Ms. Lubna Bouza**, Editor in Chief-Business News at Sky News Arabia, who began the session by acknowledging Egypt's support for the private sector and its ongoing efforts to engage private sector companies in developmental projects in different sectors, such as transport, electricity, infrastructure and renewable energy. She then gave the floor to **Mr. Osama Anwar Beshay**, CEO and Managing Director, Orascom Construction Ltd, who highlighted the role of the financial sector in supporting Engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) and the increase in credibility over the past seven years, which enabled the company to invest in infrastructure projects. He also added that the cost of funding, which is the interest rate, is a crucial factor when taking an investment decision and it is even difficult for governments to find the adequate cost of funding when talking about mega infrastructure projects. From his part, **Dr. Walid Labadi**, Country Manager of Egypt, Yemen and Libya at the IFC, reaffirmed the key role investment in infrastructure play to guarantee the Egypt integration in the global economy, especially investment in the communication and information technology sector and trade-related areas. Furthermore, **Dr. Sherif El-Gabaly**, Chairman of House of Representatives Committee on African Affairs, underscored the role of the financial sector in supporting industries and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by lowering interest rates to 8% and 5%, respectively. In addition, he urged governments to set a roadmap for SMEs, especially those who produce high-end products. **Eng. Ahmed Elsewedy**, President and CEO at Elsewedy Electric, also praised the economic progress and political stability that Egypt was able to achieve during the last seven years, for instance the transformation of the electricity sector from shortage to abundance of production and building over 24 universities.

Eng. **Hassan Allam**, Group CEO at Hassan Allam Holding, praised the IFC for their support to his company for the years in **raising capital** and transforming his family business to a holding company, noting the company has grown by about **700% since 1936** and has diversified its business to comprise not only engineering and contracting services, but also infrastructure and logistics investments. He also acknowledged the cooperation with Development Financial Institution (DFIs), such as the IFC and EBRD, in supporting the company's investment in renewable energy projects. In addition, he recommended a more solid opportunity base, as he stated: "it's the pipeline of opportunities that needs to grow, so the appetite is there from the DFIs and from the private sector, but we need a bigger pipeline, [...] let's say, valid pipeline, because some of these projects are out. We bid for them, we pursue them, but they're not happening. And I think if I were to give advice, we need a much more solid opportunity base". Furthermore, Eng. Elsewedy referred to his cooperation with EBRD on the Benban solar farm as a successful example of DFI financing. Ms. Pakinam Kafafi, CEO at TAQA Arabia, also commented on the importance of the role of DFIs in the Benban project and to TAQA Arabia, as she confirmed that TAQA was the only 100% Egyptian company that was given funding from a DFI, which was the IFC, that is worth USD 52 million, out of the other 32 companies operating in the project.

In fact, EBRD is planning to invest USD 1 billion in Egypt this year, Ms. Heike Harmgart, Managing Director for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region at EBRD, said that Egypt is a land full of investment opportunities, with both the public and the private sectors. She highlighted the importance of **public-private partnerships (PPP)** in projects such as renewable energy, desalination and dry ports, stating: "**Green is the name of the game in Egypt**".

On the role of the private sector in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, **Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf**, Deputy Secretary-General at OECD, stated: "If you look at everybody in a room, the solution to a crisis is not going to come from the leaders around the table with the fancy titles, the solution is going to come from an innovative, relatively obscure employee, five or six layers down the organizational chart". Mr. Schlagenhauf used this example to showcase the importance of **empowering the youth** as they are able to come up with innovative **solutions**. Dr. Labadi also shed light on IFC's investment in the healthcare sector, for instance in the Saudi German Hospital, following the COVID-19 outbreak. Regarding policy recommendations, Dr. El-Gabaly encouraged the investment in the **Egyptian agricultural sector**, he illustrated that a strong economy must have strong industries and that Egypt needs to increase the share of industry in total GDP to 25%. He mentioned two mega projects in agriculture, the New Delta project and the 1.5 million acre project, as examples of modernizing the sector, using new irrigation modules and fertilization techniques. He capitalized on the importance of using smart irrigation and agricultural techniques to conserve water resources and he called development partners to invest in these sectors. Ms. Pakinam and Ms. Harmgart shared the same point of view on the role of governments to set the **right regulatory framework** to encourage private sector engagement in development.

Finally, **Mr. Solomon Quaynor**, Vice President for the Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization Complex at the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), gave solutions regarding the **infrastructure gap in Africa**. He pointed: "we [AfDB] have looked at the African sovereign wealth funds, African pension, and the African life insurance, investable across Africa. And that comes up to be about **USD 2 trillion**. Just imagine if we can use our risk mitigation instruments to bring in **10%** of that into the infrastructure space". He stressed on Dr. El-Gabaly's argument on investment in agribusiness, he also capitalized on the importance of industrial parks and special economic zones in agro-processing operations and in creating a value-added to agri-products.

**"The government needs to take a very serious position with respect to their role as regulator [...], allowing the private sector and international investors to take a significant part in investing, developing, building and operating critical infrastructure."**

**Eng. Hassan Allam**  
Group CEO at Hassan Allam Holding





PROCEEDINGS



# DAY 02



**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 01**

**MAPPING ODA TO SDGS:  
A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE  
POLICY MAKING**







# WORKSHOP 01



## MAPPING ODA TO SDGS: A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY MAKING

The importance of mapping the ODA projects against the SDGs was the main topic of this dynamic workshop, which witnessed lively discussions between the key speakers and the audience about the ODA financing of the SDGs.

## PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF MAPPING ODA AGAINST THE SDGS

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat - Minister of International Cooperation**, mentioned in her presentation that there are three pillars for Egypt's economic diplomacy (Multi stakeholder platforms, ODA SDG mapping and global partnerships narrative). H.E. indicated that it was very important to put this context because there was an impression and a perception in the market, that MOIC is just a ministry that takes loans. But that is not the case, MOIC is a ministry that engages with the world to put together strategic plans and to think about interventions. Therefore, MOIC's role is beyond financing, as it has an economic vision that is being implemented through these three principles.



She also added that there has always been a question raised among the public about where do these loans and grants go? And whether they reach the beneficiaries? Hence mapping the ODA against their contribution in achieving the SDGs was a vital responsibility for MOIC, since this mapping is a tool for the public to see which governorates and which type of projects receives the funds in order to determine which SDG is being met, which eventually reflects on promoting transparency and good governance.

Al-Mashat indicated that while mapping the ODA against the SDGs, MOIC had four main drives and objectives, the first was accountability, where we analyze the contribution of our partners to common goals and results, second was the direction which means providing information for decision making while avoiding perverse incentives. The third drive was communication because we are monitoring real change for best results and evidence to the policymakers. And the fourth drive was learning by doing and providing and using evidence for capacity building and behavioral change.

***“When we’re talking about multilateralism, it’s because we want to make people’s life better, if we’re talking about the climate change it is because the livelihoods of the next generations matters, and if we are talking about private sector it is because we want to create jobs for the people.”***

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat**  
Minister of International Cooperation

## MAPPING PROCESS IS VITAL FOR MEASURING ODA EFFECTIVENESS

When asked about the importance of Mapping ODA against SDGs, **Ms. Marina Wes, Country Director, Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti, Middle East and North Africa, World Bank Group**, highlighted that mapping the SDGs is a huge job and it's very important for decision making. She added that for the World Bank, SDGs are the critical framework for the bank's assistance, where the SDGs are closely linked to the twin goals at the bank (eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity).

She also indicated that the Bank is interested in finding ways to combine knowledge, analytical work, financing and to bring partners and stakeholders together. She pointed out that benban solar energy plant in Egypt is among the unique examples regionally and globally, where the Egyptian government brought several partners and stakeholders and managed to attract private investors to implement this project.

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat** has also affirmed the importance of mapping ODA against SDGs in Egypt, where this mapping plays a significant role in maximizing social returns from ODA, and it also ensures the alignment of development interventions with national objectives in line with global goals which eventually will reflect positively in enhancing the management of development cooperation and projects in Egypt.

Moreover, **Mr. Alfredo Abad, Head of Regional Representation of the European Investment Bank in Egypt**, illustrated that mapping the ODA to SDGs is an effective tool for governments to formulate policies, since it helps the governments to realize where they stand and prioritize the areas that needs more fund, and hence engage in a dialogue with different development partners to obtain and allocate the necessary funds.



***“It’s incredibly important for future decision-making prioritization. It’s really path breaking to see the leadership taking on this. I want to emphasize the timeliness of this exercise, as many of us prepare new strategies to recover from the pandemic.”***

**Marina Wes**  
Country Director, Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti, Middle East and North Africa, WBG



## INCLUSIVE METHODOLOGY OF MAPPING ODA AGAINST SDGS

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat** emphasized in her presentation that sustainable development is only attained through collective integrated efforts of both national and international stakeholders where the Egyptian ministries work very closely in an integrated way with the development partners to make sure that the national programs are translated into country strategies that are implementable in projects.

She also affirmed that there were two main methodologies that MOIC depended on in the mapping process, the first was sectoral SDG mapping which provided us with an outcome that across all the SDGs there are more than **377 projects implemented in Egypt with a total amount of \$25.6 billion**. H.E. pointed out that even though this methodology provides good guidance for the contributions and needs of each sector, it falls short of providing sufficient evidence on non-sectoral interventions.

Meanwhile the second methodology was project SDG mapping with its two approaches (single and multiple project mapping). H.E. elaborated that by implementing the single project mapping for Egypt, we find that the SDG, that took the most finance was SDG 7: Clean and Affordable Energy with 34 projects implemented with an amount of \$5.9 billion, followed by SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure with \$5.7 billion, and SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation with \$4.9 billion. Dr. Rania Al-Mashat added that this approach gives us a bigger picture enabling us to track the finance of different SDGs, but it also has a limitation since it doesn't capture the contributions to cross-cutting themes.

The second approach which is the multiple project mapping provides us with multidimensional linkages of projects to various SDGs, while its main limitation is that it's difficult to track financial allocations. And this graph indicates that if we for example try to map SDG 1: No Poverty as the ultimate goal for all ODA funds, we will find that project interventions that target the upgrade in infrastructure, providing services or promoting sustainability address one or more of the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Al-Mashat demonstrated the difference between the single and multiple project mapping, by mapping SDG 5 through the two approaches, where according to the single project mapping, we find that we only have 13 projects financed with \$82 million through three partners of development. Meanwhile if we mapped the same SDG with the multiple project mapping, we see that there were 99 projects financed with \$6.7 billion and the number of partners have increased because in the multiple mapping you can see projects on housing education, social protection, health and so forth.

Last but not least, Al-Mashat indicated that the mapping process included the finance of the private sector, she elaborated that this mapping was done with IFC where their portfolio in Egypt, between 2016 and 2020 to the private sector was around \$2 billion. And the results of this mapping showed that 44% goes to SDG 8, and 38% goes to SDG 7.

In this context, **Ms. Randa Hamza, Assistant to the Minister**, referred to the extensive meetings with our development



partners to discuss and agree upon the methodology of the mapping process in order to be able to measure the effectiveness of development financing.

She indicated that the main objective was to see the interconnection in the results, and to see which investments that go to specific SDGs have multiplier effects in affecting other sectors and the SDGs as well.

**In addition, Mr. Alfredo Abad, Head of Regional Representation of the European Investment Bank in Egypt** has complemented the methodology used by MOIC in the mapping process, describing it as an integrating process that included all parties in the discussions through public consultations.

During the discussions about the methodology of mapping, **Christine Arab, UN Women Country Representative in Egypt**, asked a question about the methodology that MOIC depended on while looking at Cross cutting issues like gender, especially that the finance of gender projects through ODA is distressfully low.

**Ms. Randa Hamza**, responded that there is no doubt that gender is a crosscutting theme that we can't see or spot until we see the details of the budget of the projects. And she elaborated that most of the development partners who provide credit lines for micro enterprises specify that a percentage of (40% or 50%) would go to women beneficiaries, however this is not counted, because when we map it to a single SDG we will map it as a contribution to SDG8 Another example Ms. Randa explained is that even though takafol and karama initiative contributes to SDG 1: No Poverty poverty alleviation, but 80% of the beneficiaries from this initiative are women. Therefore, Ms. Randa stressed on the importance of finding a way to weave this into our process at looking to the contributions of SDG 5 related to gender.

***"This is a very important tool to engage in dialogues with our partners. The challenge is to get accurate data and there are different ways of looking at the same things. But the approach of the Ministry of International Cooperation and the team is commendable. Integrating, including everybody, definitely this is the way."***

**Mr. Alfredo Abad**  
Head of Regional Representation of the  
European Investment Bank (EIB) in Egypt

## ROLE OF ODA IN ACHIEVING HIV- RELATED SDGS

**Mr. Walid Kamal**, Country Manager, UNAIDS, said that the work of the UNAIDS to end HIV as a public health threat as part of the SDGs by 2030 is a very good example of how ODA supports the implementation of the SDGs.

He demonstrated that ending AIDS is not only a health issue but it is a multidimensional aspect of economic and social impact. Therefore, AIDS is not only related to SDG Number 3.3 but it is also highly interconnected with other SDGs related to poverty, hunger and gender issues.

***“Linking funds to the sustainable development goals according to a clear roadmap is a cornerstone in dealing with the repercussions of Coronavirus pandemic.”***

**Walid Kamal**  
Country Manager, UNAIDS

## PANDEMIC AND MAPPING ODA AGAINST SDGS

When asked about how Mapping ODA against SDGs helped the WHO to overcome some of the pandemic challenges, **Dr. Naeema El Gasseer, Country Director, WHO**, stated that the pandemic have demonstrated three key messages, the first message is that we are all interrelated and interconnected. The second message is to have better systems for the sake of health and wellbeing. While the last message is that we all should be working together at all levels, to support and to protect health for the enjoyment of the best of life.

In the same context, she stressed on the importance of linking health diplomacy with economic diplomacy which will reflect positively on the preparedness to health emergencies. She indicated that WHO has called for investing in preparedness so we won't have similar pandemics.

In addition, Ms. Naeema applauded Egypt's response to the pandemic, stating that Egypt pioneered in solidarity regionally, internationally and managed a successful mitigation through multi-stakeholder engagement including of the civil society and private sector.

***“Health is at the heart of the SDGs. The pandemic has forced us to be working better, together, at all levels, to support and protect health.”***

**Dr. Naeema El Gasseer**  
Country Director, WHO

## FURTHER APPLICATIONS FOR SDGS MAPPING

**Ms. Elena Panova, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Egypt**, stated that H.E Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the president of the Arab republic of Egypt was very vocal about his ambition and Egypt's commitment towards implementing the SDGs. She also praised the unique experience of the Egyptian Ministry of International cooperation in mapping the SDGs, describing MOIC as a pioneering ministry not only regionally but also globally.

Moreover, she mentioned that there are three potential applications for Mapping ODA to SDGs, the first is to consider mapping the domestic finance against the SDGs. The second application is replicating this methodology to be taken further by other countries which will be complementary to the OECD work in mapping ODA to SDGs globally. While the third application is that the mapping gives us a chance to assess the contribution of the ODA in achieving the SDGs in every country, and she applauded Egypt's 3rd national review including where the country stands regarding all the SDGs.

In this prospect, **Mr. Jeremy Hopkins, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Representative in Egypt**, commented that if we can map private sector investments against SDGs combined with our efforts to map ODA and government finances against the SDGs, then we would have a complete picture, because we cannot achieve the SDGs without the private sector. In the same context, Ms. Randa Hamza, indicated that while working on the mapping process, it was easy to map the private sector's contribution in financing the SDGs, however these funds go uncounted.

Therefore, she stressed on MOIC's keenness to improve the mapping methodology with more stakeholders in order to be able to capture the extent to which each and every amount of money contributes across the SDGs to different targets and different goals. Because without capturing this, we will continue talking about the financing gaps.

Moreover, **Ms. Naeema El Gasseer, Country Director, WHO**, referred to the significant role of the private sector, citizens and philanthropists along with governments and financial institutions to achieve the SDGs. She also referred to the 100 Million Seha initiative in Egypt as a unique model for uniting all parties' efforts, which resulted in making a big difference in decreasing the number of people infected with virus C in a very short time.

***“We believe the mapping exercise conducted by the Ministry of International Cooperation could be replicated in other countries... we must have robust partnership if we are serious in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs.”***

**Elena Panova**  
United Nations Resident Coordinator in Egypt



**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 02**

**AFRICA CONTINENTAL  
FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA):  
PROSPECTS AND  
CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL  
TRADE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR**









# WORKSHOP 02

## AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA): PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL TRADE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR



***“In the context of multilateralism, and international cooperation, I think this African Continental Free Trade Agreement is without hesitation, the most prominent example, where coordinated and joint efforts are needed to come together. And if this is achieved, we will truly transform the African continent.”***

**Ms. Malinne Blomberg** (Moderator), Resident Representative of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Egypt

Ms. Malinne Blomberg (Moderator), Resident Representative of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Egypt gave brief introductory remarks on the potential the agreement holds for the continent. She also introduced the discussants of the workshop, which included:

H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation, Hon. Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade and Industry of South Africa (virtually), Dr. Sidi Ould Tah, Director General for the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Mr. Steve Lutes, Vice President of Middle East Affairs and Executive Director of the US Egypt Business Council, from the US Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Jamie McLeod, Trade Policy Expert at UNECA, Mr. James Howe, Senior Advisor at the International Trade Center, Mr. Ayman Kasem Division Manager, Head of Trade Development at the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, Dr. Ahmed Mukhtar, Senior Economist at the FAO Regional Office in Cairo,

and Mr. Ahmed Rezk, Deputy Representative of UNIDO, also in Cairo. Ms. Blomberg also recognized and welcomed Excellencies from South Sudan, from Burundi, as well as Namibia, and the representative from the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Ms. Blomberg informed the attendees that this session has been convened by the Ministry of International Cooperation in collaboration with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC). Mr. Hani Sonbol, CEO of ITFC, was then given the floor to set the stage and get the discussion started.

**Eng. Hany Sonbol, CEO of the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)**, started by thanking and commending the Ministry of International Cooperation for convening everyone at the first edition of the Egypt-ICF in order to discuss prominent issues. Similarly, he pointed out that the topic of this workshop could not have been more timely. Eng. Hani Sonbol proceeded by giving a brief overview of the ITFC, which was established in 2008.



***“As you all know, the ITFC started business in 2008. Since then, the ITFC has tried to serve our Member Countries and to cover most of the 57 member countries, members of ITFC. Close to \$60 billion of trade finance was actually approved over the years, \$25 million of which were approved for 30 countries in Africa. I would like to stress that the ITFC plays the role of a catalyst; we try to build partnerships, for the same purpose we are all here, meeting to discuss the importance of partnerships and the way forward.”***

**Eng. Hany Sonbol,**  
CEO of the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)

Eng. Hany Sonbol continued to highlight the importance of the topic at hand, and particularly the importance in analyzing prospects and challenges of digital trade for the private sector throughout the discussion. It was also mentioned that it is among the topics of high priority to the ITFC; this is because this sector provides pre-export inputs, as well as inputs to the agricultural sector. Mr. Sonbol stated that the ITFC has developed a novel business model for this particular topic, which includes financing mechanisms as well as great development activities, in addition to ITFC financing.

The ITFC, as stated by Mr. Sonbol, is very interested in digital trade for two reasons: first of all, because of how it intersects with agricultural technologies, a sector that represents a big portion of the ITFC portfolio. Secondly, this interest is also rooted in the fact that digital technologies reduce the transaction costs of trade. The aforementioned is one way the ITFC aims to help Member States, which is through the provision of advisory services in the area of e-trade and through the provision of technical support to Member States to become part of international platforms.

The fruitful partnerships of ITFC have resulted in a multitude of successful collaborations with international organizations, such as UNCTAD; Together with UNCTAD, the ITFC promoted the “E-trade For All” initiative, and has provided technical assistance in technology infrastructure development in Member States.

In addition, a series of conferences on agri-tech and digital supply chain have been organized in an effort to foster innovation, the usage of digital tools by farmers, and increased efficiency that yields profit for beneficiaries. Eng. Sonbol also stressed that the ITFC is very active in the field of digital trade finance. This was exemplified by the completion of the first cash against document transactions with Burkina Faso, based on companies over decks. Furthermore, Mr. Sonbol informed attendees that currently, the ITFC is working with the Government of (GoE) to further enhance national platforms, in line with the excellent efforts exerted by the GoE in the area of digital transformation.

Finally, Mr. Sonbol reiterated his gratitude to the Ministry and extended his wishes for a fruitful discussion.



**Hon. Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning of Nigeria** based her intervention on Ms. Blomberg's questions regarding Nigeria's very strategic geographical position and vibrant private sector and more specifically how Nigeria is in a position to both lead collaboration and also benefit from the AfCFTA. Furthermore, a question about Nigeria's efforts to create special agro-industrial processing zones was posed, and an additional question was posed on how these zones benefit the trading pattern with other African countries and integrate digital trade.

Hon. Dr. Shamsuna highlighted that the establishment of these zones have been pushed forward by not only providing fiscal relief through different government policies, but also by providing the major infrastructure that is required for the zones to function optimally and via e-commerce.



***"In Nigeria, today, the greatest contributor to the Nigerian GDP is the Digital-ICT sector. The last report that we had in the second quarter contributed up to 19% to the GDP. So there's a growing digital economy in Nigeria and in the Nigerian economy. We are working in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) to roll out a project that is designed to have special agricultural economic zones. These zones will be situated in different parts of the country, there will be a minimum of six zones and there will be a different mix of different activities related to the agricultural sector, government and the private sector participants. All of them will be invested in this endeavor and will be working together to set up these special economic zones. In each zone, we have already identified, working with the AfDB, the special commodities that are more predominant in this area. So we're situating the zones to best take advantage of the competitive edge of each of the zones of our country."***

According to Hon. Dr. Shamsuna, in order to foster digitalization, the government had to actively promote the use by businesses of online transactions and also promote the use of the digital economy.

***"Today in Nigeria, we have up to about \$2 billion in volume of online transactions, and it is growing on a daily basis; we are lucky to be blessed with a very large population - 210 million Nigerians, out of which 60% are youth, below the age of 35. And those guys just live in the digital world and are extremely innovative. Nigeria has about 87 different digital platforms. There are some that are global or in Africa, and they are doing great business. Two of them make as much as \$1 billion in turnover per annum."***

**Hon. Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed,**  
Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning of Nigeria

Hon. Dr. Shamsuna stressed that the large prevalence of innovation and digital tools in Nigeria, represents a huge opportunity to enhance trade in the agricultural sector, specifically to enhance intra-country trade, but also inter-country trade; trading within the Nigerian economy itself, because of its large market, but also trading within the African region, which would also promote e-commerce across Nigeria's borders. Hon. Dr. Shamsuna further pointed towards the importance of focusing value addition as opposed to the traditional export of raw agricultural goods. In light of this statement, Hon. Dr. Shamsuna announced that the special agro-industrial zones in Nigeria will have processing facilities that would facilitate exports of goods with a value added. There will also be payment platforms that will be within those zones to drive and enhance the efficiency of trade. This is planned to be implemented soon in collaboration with AfDB and the Islamic Development Bank, and the Nigerian government is working together with those partners in order to mobilize additional financial resources for these zones.

Ms. Blomberg directed questions on the centrality of both, industrialization in general and value addition on the African continent, in particular, to **H.E. Mr. Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Industry, South Africa**, and set the stage for H.E.'s intervention by mentioning that Africa's population constitutes approximately 17% of the global population, but only 3% of trade and 2% of global manufacturing.

***“The AfCFTA area is anchored in a developmental approach, which seeks to enable development through increasing the aggregate, industrial and agricultural output of the continent, a point so well made by my colleague from Nigeria. In this sense, it is not principally about one African country displacing another’s industries. But indeed, Africa is producing and growing more of what it consumes, and in the process, progressively increasing the level and proportion of products manufactured on the continent. To the point where our manufacturing output is better aligned to Africa’s share of the global population, it’s not sustainable to have 15 or 17% of the world’s population, but 3% of the world’s GDP. We can do this by building the competitiveness and dynamism of our industries, using the enormous economies of scale that larger preferential markets bring and attracting inward investment into our economies. Trade preferences play a key role in this, in that the operationalization of the AfCFTA will incentivize greater agricultural and industrial production across the continent to supply the large and growing market. It can do so only with bold and ambitious Rules of Origin that starts from inputs from agriculture and mining right through to assembly and processing. a winner takes all mentality will not be sustainable, as borders will close if countries do not see the benefits to all.”***

**H.E. Mr. Ebrahim Patel,**  
Minister of Industry, South Africa

H.E. Mr. Patel also shed light on the importance of focusing on traditional technologies to complement the fast and novel digital efforts. His Excellency assured attendees that digital technologies undoubtedly boosts African industrial development by covering production, distribution, marketing, selling delivery of goods and services by electronic means. H.E. Mr. Patel informed participants that the digital economy in South Africa is booming, having been boosted during the pandemic with limits and restrictions on physical movement of people that has introduced citizens and consumers to the potential of the platforms that are available.

Furthermore, H.E. Mr. Patel mentioned that the digital economy can contribute to African economic development in many ways,

among which are through boosting productivity in current jobs, and increasing employment opportunities. Secondly, digital supply chains enable the development of faster and more agile distribution systems. In addition, digital technologies also introduce new great products and new markets. H.E. Mr. Patel further stressed that given the large unemployment rate amongst young people who are both unemployed, and more tech savvy than their parents, this could be a youth-based opportunity. These opportunities, according to His Excellency, are not only in high-end software development only but also include expanded opportunities in call centers and jobs in telecommunications. Thus, there exist multiple entry points for young people. Moreover, digital commerce and related payment systems enable goods and services to reach remote areas and urban areas often at a lower cost, and they are often safer and more flexible. His Excellency stated that while Africa has developed and adapted these technologies in a number of creative ways, in order to enable the use of digital trade on scale, Africa needs to develop infrastructure skills and a supportive ecosystem; this includes but is not limited to the expansion of fiber optic cables, which would enable greater use of spectrum for business purposes. Connected to this is the need to bring down the cost of data, including through competition policies. Regarding the issue of connectivity, H.E. Mr. Patel stated that over the past decade there has been a drastic improvement in many parts of the continent due to the massive investments in the number of submarine cables running up and down the coast to transfer data through fiber optic cables, cellular towers, satellites, smartphones, tablets, laptops, and industrial computers. H.E. Mr. Patel added that skills development and financial resource mobilization, however, remain critical and should become the pillars of a broader digital economy strategy.

Another important point made by His Excellency is that e-commerce will need to address not only business to consumer (B2C) transactions, but also provide a solid platform for business to business (B2B) transactions, which would help integrate supply chains across the continent. E-commerce would also need to address the traditional agenda, which includes data security and consumer protection, including protection of personal information.

Furthermore, it would facilitate paperless trade administration and a simple and effective way to operate payment and settlement systems, including taxation, which is a concern which many governments have. Overall, e-commerce would help to boost African-made products and to help the growth of African digital corporations.

Finally, H.E. Mr. Patel called attention to the fact that there is not yet a global agreement governing e-commerce, which provides Africa with an opportunity to develop a fit-for-purpose approach instead of replicating the same e-commerce arrangements without taking the unique challenges of the Continent into account. His Excellency concluded by recommending the careful reflection on devised e-commerce protocols to ensure these are utilized as springboards to create jobs, to boost investment, and to industrialize the African continent.

***“MSMES make up 90% of the economy and what is shocking is that 36% of MSMES are vulnerable to shocks and hence need support from all development stakeholders, which has contributed to adoption of the 2030 strategy aligned with the SDGs and the AU Goals.”***

**Dr. Sidi Ould Tah,**  
Director General for the Arab Bank for  
Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)



In response to the question by moderator, Ms. Malinne Blomberg, regarding the benefits that are associated with digital transition for MSMEs, it was pointed out that MSMEs are among the main strategic pillars of the strategy and that they must be approached from a holistic manner and through partnerships, be it in collaboration with banks, the private sector, government or civil society. In regards to digital transition, Dr. Sidi Ould Tah underscored the necessity of providing MSMEs with an enabling environment that helps MSMEs cross borders and proceed to grow through a solid infrastructure. According to Dr. Sidi Ould Tah, BADEA has supported infrastructure development in Sub-Saharan Africa, by building 20 different roads and providing several grants to empower an African narrative. Currently, BADEA is working with SMART Africa to build a comprehensive program for fiber optics, which are essential to connectivity. For a proper digital transition and for MSMEs to flourish we must avail e-commerce across the entire continent. Dr. Sidi Ould Tah added that BADEA also currently works with the IMF and AfDB to cooperate with several countries and aspires to bridge between projects in African countries and those in Middle Eastern countries; the idea would be to have an entry point for the development axis and financing axis, which is critical for facilitating MSMEs. Nevertheless, Dr. Sidi Ould Tah referred to the challenges, which include financial challenges. BADEA is considering devising a unique insurance plan for these enterprises to equip them to penetrate the market and expand, and consequently open up new jobs for the growing labour market.

**Mr. Steve Lutes, Vice President of Middle East Affairs and Executive Director of the US-Egypt Business Council, US Chamber of Commerce**, addressed the moderator's question on how the Chamber facilitates the successful continuity of the AfCFTA by first giving a brief overview of the US Egypt Business Council. According to Mr. Lutes, the US Chamber of Commerce has been home to the US Egypt Business Council for more than 40 years, which was a by-product of the Camp David Peace Accords. The Chamber is also home to the US Africa Business Center, which coordinates policy advocacy and engagement with key government and business leaders across the continent. Its membership is extensive, engaged, and diverse, and represents almost every sector of the economy. It also covers small enterprises and businesses as well as large multinationals, which makes the center a voice of the private sector.

Regarding the ways the Chamber through the Council can support the AfCFTA, Mr. Lutes informed that there are three different ways in addition to digital transformation. Firstly, the Chamber possesses a strong convening power and does so consistently. The chamber brings together decision-makers from governments, business leaders that create opportunities to drive economic reforms that in turn drive more trade investment. The Chamber also frequently meets with the Egyptian government, whether with H.E. President Sisi or Prime Minister Madbouly or other representatives of Egyptian ministries. Another example is the virtual conference the US Africa Business Center is hosting, which advances the Africa AmCham Summit and highlights the relationships that the Chamber has, while also showcasing opportunities to leverage US-Africa business engagement. Secondly, Mr. Lutes stated that the Chamber remains fully committed to being a lead advocate in promoting a more attractive investment climate to help build the case for the types of reforms that it believes will lead to more ease of doing business in Egypt and across Africa. Mr. Lutes stressed that the Chamber is also keen on building on what is the long-term history of being at the forefront of US trade and investment relationships with Egypt and more broadly Africa, which means exploring policies and regulatory challenges and other issues that have been hurdles to trade and investment. The Chamber does so by drawing on its in-house experts, and more importantly, its member companies, which

oftentimes are in the trenches and challenges in their day-to-day business operations. Hence, Mr. Steve Lutes highlighted that the Chamber aims to draw upon best practices and bring policy and reform ideas to the table that would build confidence and more certainty for US investors and business leaders. Thirdly, Mr. Lutes expressed that the Council and the Chamber as a whole are eager to help position Egypt as a production and export hub for Africa, and in doing so, provide companies with an avenue to take advantage of the AfCFTA.

In reference to the second part of the question posed by the moderator on how the Chamber can help drive sound digital provisions across the continent, Mr. Lutes shared that, while this has been alluded to, the Chamber was already in the grasp of digital transformation, even before the emergence of COVID-19 but that the pandemic has really accelerated the adoption of digital solutions and services, by businesses, by governments, and consumers. According to Mr. Lutes, this has given the Chamber a momentum that shall be capitalized on in advocating for corresponding policies, early in the Biden administration. The US-Africa Business Center has submitted a set of recommendations on engaging Africa economically to the Biden administration; these recommendations did include encouraging the US government to assist the Chamber and industry to engage African governments to promote comprehensive digital policies. Mr. Lutes shared that nevertheless, there is a sense that today, US businesses enjoy neither consistent nor stable digital markets across the region, including in terms of electronic payments and cloud computing services. There are critical issues that are foundational to the digital economy, such as intellectual property protection, data privacy, cybersecurity, and litany of regulatory practices. In fact, in many markets and our member companies across the African continent claim that the US business community has seen many of the emerging regulatory frameworks serving as essentially non-tariff barriers to digital investment. As such, providing governments with a clear path to motivate and build momentum for their economies in this digital space, and engaging the African governments in conversations around sound governance, for digital economy, standard, digital trade rules, and good regulatory practices will go a long way towards supporting Africa's digital transformation. Finally, Mr. Lutes stressed the importance of governments investing in research, upholding fair practices in standard setting bodies, and accelerating the deployment of technologies that would support the 5G ecosystem; while also providing strong intellectual property rights for innovators, and helping allies see a larger market for trusted venvology and neutral solutions, which would enhance the region's economic viability.

***"I want to also mention the progress that we've witnessed on a bilateral basis with Egypt's new digital economy, and its ICT sector. It has seen a growth rate higher than Egypt's overall level of GDP growth equal to about 15%, for fiscal year 2019/2020. We have also seen investments in the sector increased by 35%, reaching \$3.5 billion. The Egyptian government has also strategically made a series of investments and sustainability training programs, digital service reforms, and infrastructure upgrades as part of***

*its 2030 ICT strategy. In addition, the government has had an open door and a close collaboration with the business community, as it developed its personal data protection law, which is reaping results. We have seen Google announce they were going to bring in a new leadership team and newly revamped their presence in Cairo, announcing plans to increase their investments in Egypt. We have also seen the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) inaugurate new partnerships with companies ranging from Microsoft, IBM, AWS and Cisco, for a digital builder's initiative to offer university scholarships, training, and internships to develop the next generation of IT leaders. We have seen Amazon inaugurate their fulfillment center in Egypt to re-launch souq.com, a dedicated online store for their customers offering millions of items for both local and international brands. So we are witnessing a pace increase; and I would just say that the Chamber is eager to work with not only the Government of Egypt but across the continent. We look forward to seeing the next steps coming out of this conference."*

**Mr. Steve Lutes,**

Vice President of Middle East Affairs and Executive Director of the US-Egypt Business Council, US Chamber of Commerce

In response to the question by moderator, Ms. Malinne Blomberg, regarding the findings of UNECA report on AfCFTA and digital transition, **Mr. Jamie McLeod, Trade Policy Fellow at the Africa Trade Policy Centre, UN Economic Commission for Africa**, highlighted the diverse nature of the African continent with advancements in this area experienced by some countries, such as Egypt and Nigeria, but also with many other African countries that are lagging further behind with less than 10% of the populations often having access to the internet, and others lacking the infrastructure for a transition to a digital economy. He added that COVID-19 accelerated certain aspects of digitalization in Africa, however it exposed certain deficiencies including unaffordable internet access, and limited coverage. UNECA research shows that digital payments, postal systems, and digital skills are very important foundations for building a conducive market for e-commerce in Africa. Additionally, internet cost, reliability and coverage are very important to invest in for a digital economy, where governments are encouraged to embrace and enforce competition within internet services providers. He concluded that the role of governments is very crucial in harmonizing regulatory regimes, including taxation harmonization, cross border trade regulations for increased competition, enforcement, and sharing best practices.

**James Howe, Senior Advisor, International Trade Centre**, highlighted that e-commerce marketplaces had retrenched or withdrawn prior to the pandemic. Research by the ITC found

that only 11% of platforms in Africa accept electronic payments, which shows that the vast majority of payments take place in cash, and speaks of the issue of trust. Research also found restrictions on intra-African sales, which creates problems for scaling and for developing cross-border value chains. Mr. Howe highlighted that such dynamics are affected by challenges related to the digital divide, the costs and difficulty of cross border logistics, and the cost and availability of cross border payment solutions. Challenges related to cross border logistics can be addressed by cross border facilitation of trade, e-commerce, promoting competition in cross border transportation, and cross border payment solutions. Challenges related to trust can be tackled through consumer protection, standardization of cross-border laws, and bringing together different parties in the fiscal space, the financial operators, logistics providers, as well as the traditional negotiating parties to a trade agreement.

In response to the question by moderator, Ms. Malinne Blomberg, regarding how e-commerce can serve as a strong pillar in development, **Mr. Ayman Hussein, The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation**, used the agriculture sector as an example, which can flourish with digital trade and new farming technologies, and hence be exponentially improved to achieve food security and enlarge cultivated land. He highlighted several challenges for digital trade in Africa, including policies, infrastructure and market accessibility, as well as private sector related issues. He stressed the importance of cooperation among development institutions on building initiatives that can enhance and push forward digital transformation in the region.

**H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation**, highlighted that there are three levels of cooperation; national, regional and international, where we are witnessing grand potential across these levels, especially with regards to the main issues pertaining to infrastructure, financing, and infrastructure, including cross border roads to unlock enhanced regional cooperation. H.E. noted that COVID-19 has unleashed our ability to transition digitally, shed light on the criticality of this full transition, and the role the private sector plays in this. She added that young entrepreneurs and MSMEs will greatly benefit from this digital transition, as it will empower them to expand and grow, especially through knowledge sharing, and highlighting lessons learned.

**Ahmed Maghawri, Representative of Ministry of Trade and Industry, Egypt**, pointed out that this digital transition is very critical for the Ministry of Trade and Industry in support of the AfCFTA through cooperation with other African countries. He added that supporting infrastructure is key, which is done in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

**Ahmed Mukhtar, Senior Economist, Food and Agriculture Organization**, highlighted that the agricultural sector can highly benefit from the digital transformation, but in order to do so, several challenges must be addressed, including shortage in infrastructure and telecommunications, international trade issues related to policies and protocols within the free trade area, and proper documentation for improved monitoring and communications platforms.

**Ahmed Rezk, Deputy Representative, United Nations Industrial Development Organization**, stressed the importance of quality infrastructure and capacity development, youth and women empowerment, linking local markets and MSMEs with regional and international value chains, and the facilitation of cross border trade and e-commerce across the continent, including developing lessons-learned. He noted that UNIDO's integrated programs address these support areas, in a way that can shorten the supply chain especially after the pandemic.

**Ms. Malinne Blomberg (Moderator), Resident Representative of the African Development Bank**, concluded the session by pointing out the importance of building on successful examples. She also pointed out the importance of developing infrastructure and capacity, streamlining logistics, and facilitating the use of technology and the internet across the supply chains.



The background is a solid teal color. In the upper right corner, there is a pattern of overlapping triangles in various shades of teal and green. In the lower right corner, there is a large, faint, stylized gear or cogwheel shape, also in shades of teal and green.

**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 03**

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS:  
SUPPORTING FEMALE  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
IN EGYPT**







# WORKSHOP 03



## WOMEN IN BUSINESS:SUPPORTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EGYPT

In her opening remarks of the workshop, **Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation**, highlighted the importance and extensive benefits of women's economic empowerment for the macro economy, as It adds opportunity, accelerates growth, and is in true alignment with the concept of "leaving no one behind". H.E. noted that SDG 5, "gender equality and women's empowerment" is a goal that cuts across all 17 goals of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and which the Government of Egypt has put as a priority in every strategy and partnership as a cross-cutting theme. She applauded the work of the National Council for Women as a champion for women empowerment and gender equality in Egypt and the Central Bank of Egypt for pushing this agenda forward, and concluded her remarks by drawing attention to the "Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator", which aims at addressing gender parity and was launched by the Ministry of International Cooperation, in collaboration with the National Council for Women (NCW) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), and in partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Private Sector, and is the first of its kind public-private collaboration model in Africa, Middle East and North Africa. It aims to help governments and businesses take decisive action to close economic gender gaps, design innovative plans that will encourage growth and shape the workforce landscape, advance gender parity, diversity and inclusion, and improve the ability of families and individuals to increase their income through economic mobility.

**Dr. Maya Morsi, President of the National Council for Women,** opened the workshop by thanking Minister Al-Mashat for her continuous efforts to mainstream gender in international cooperation and to put women at the heart of the development agenda. She also noted that women entrepreneurs need a more dynamic ecosystem, a strong value chain and a creative support system and community that understands their needs, especially in the midst of the pandemic.



In his opening remarks, **Mr. Ibrahim Laafia, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Egypt,** commended the gender mainstreaming policies introduced by the Government of Egypt. He stressed that gender equality is one of the founding values of the European Union, which drives the EU's commitment to women's empowerment, especially their economic empowerment. He added that women are still lagging behind with regards to their participation in the labor force and their participation in economic activities in the Arab region, which has dictated that supporting women and opportunity for equal economic empowerment and financial inclusion at the center of what the EU does in the region using the framework of the Gender Action Plan (2021 - 2025) and the Neighborhood Development International Cooperation Instruments.

In his presentation of EBRD's Women in Business Program, by **Mr. Mike Taylor, Head of the Financial Inclusion Summit,** reiterated EBRD's strong commitment to women's empowerment to expand economic growth, promote social development, and to enhance business performance. He pointed out that economic empowerment of women is critical for any national economy to progress towards its full economic potential, to achieve more inclusive, more competitive and sustainable growth, and to reduce social exclusion. Additionally, fair and full access to opportunities in the market is fundamental to sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Within the framework of the flagship Women in Business Program, first launched in 2014 and operational in 24 territories, the EBRD works in a holistic approach with partner institutions to improve access to finance for women-led SMEs, to develop sustainable credit mechanisms for the long term, and most importantly, to provide women with the relevant skills and services that foster their participation in the economy and in economic activity. The Program works with



**Dr. Heike Harmgart, EBRD Managing Director for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Region,** started off by thanking the Ministry of International Cooperation for its incredible leadership on supporting female participation and entrepreneurship, the European Union for their assistance towards innovative projects tailored for women, and the Central Bank of Egypt for its innovative access to finance for women. Dr. Harmgart noted that the EBRD has invested around 4 billion euros in the financial sector to date, that aimed at increasing the availability of financing, particularly for small, medium and micro enterprises, and in particular for financial inclusion of women and young people as well as opening up opportunities for investments in the green economy. She added that we need to make sure that the recovery process is building back better through looking at solutions that will close the gender gap, which has further opened up during the pandemic - highlighting that the EBRD was the first institution that started a crisis response resilience framework.



over 50 financial institutions and offers a unique network to strengthen the way they serve women entrepreneurs. He noted that more than 90,000 women entrepreneurs have received financial and advisory support within the Women in Business Program overall through the generous support from donors including the European Union, the Initiative for Financial Inclusion, the Middle East and North Africa Transition Fund, the United Kingdom, and through the EBRD-centered multi donor accounts.



In Egypt, where only 8% of formal, micro, small and medium enterprises in Egypt are owned by women, the Program works with three financial institutions with partnerships worth approximately 14 million euros for lending to women entrepreneurs. The Program supported over 6300 women entrepreneurs, and 21 million euros so far have been lent to 4500 women-led businesses, 1700 women have been trained in key entrepreneurial skills, including leadership and digital financial management. 130 women-led enterprises are currently accessing the advisory services which are provided through local consultants to strengthen their business operations in areas such as strategy and marketing, etc. He also added that over the past year and a half with the restrictions in place, because of the pandemic, clients and MSMEs have faced many great and unique challenges. And in response, the Program has made a huge effort to provide services and support to women entrepreneurs online, through for example digital delivery of training courses, and dedicated workshops with experts in the particularly pandemic hit sectors such as tourism, hospitality, retail, and our advisory projects continue across a range of digital platforms.



**Mr. Khaled Bassiouny, General Manager for Financial Inclusion at the CBE**, highlighted that women constitute almost half of the population in Egypt representing tremendous economic and potential opportunity; but they only contribute to only 22.5% of the total labor force. Unemployment among women is quite high, standing at 21.4% compared to 6.8% for men. Women are the breadwinners in over 3.3 million households, which makes supporting entrepreneurship and financial inclusion among women critical for Egypt's economy and its efforts under Vision 2030. The government foresees inclusive development, economic and inclusion as salient to

national wealth, where women are regarded as key players in sustainable development and are guaranteed equal rights. In this perspective, the CBE has taken the responsibility to promote and coordinate a gender inclusive financial system that addresses the barriers facing women and brought it to the forefront of its development policy agenda, including firstly regarding women inclusion as a key pillar into our National Financial Inclusion strategy. Second, applying a gender lens to all of the regulatory interventions by issuing a unified definition for women-led and owned businesses, setting the MSME's lending target at 20%, which then increased to 25% of banks loans portfolios by December 2022, issuing regulations to include banks direct microfinance lending to micro enterprises, and establishing the CBE economic account regulations, which allow the informal sector to work formally through the banks, by opening accounts for economic activity only using the ID with no commercial registration. Third, building a comprehensive gender-disaggregated database on the supply side at the CBE, where data from financial institutions in Egypt is collected and disaggregated by gender.

Nevertheless, key challenges remain that hinder these efforts, including the level of illiteracy among Egyptian women, which is addressed through CBE's financial literacy roadmap and strategy that aims to map all the different efforts and projects that target raising the financial education and awareness among the Egyptian women.



**Ms. Susan Mikhail, Regional Director of the Arab States, UN Women**, noted that by 2025, the global economy could have grown by 28 trillion US dollars, if women would have been

working on par with men. For our own region, it means 2.7 trillion US dollars, which translates into 600 billion US dollars per year. She also pointed out that research shows a direct link between the increase in the family economy due to increased economic participation within the household, to increased investment in education of children, and also health for the overall family. She also highlighted that a recent study shows that more than 50% of men in the Arab States are eager to spend more time with their children at home, which can only happen if women within the same household increase their level of economic participation. She stressed that change can only happen through a comprehensive holistic approach that consists of 1) legal reforms, 2) services including access to loans,

the care economy, transportation and social norms, and 3) engaging in a genuine and serious manner with the private sector. Ms Christine Arab, UNWomen/Egypt Country Director, added that a strong support system and extensive work on social behavioral change regarding the redistribution of the work in the homes in Egypt is needed to advance women's economic empowerment and increase their economic activity.



**Dr. Andreas Schall, Director of OECD Global Relations,** explained that in Egypt 51.8 million were dedicated to gender specific or gender mainstreaming projects. But most interestingly, the bulk aid goes into programs that integrate gender equality but do not have it as a stand-alone principle or objective, which translates to only 5% of the bilateral aid. He reiterated the need to make legal reforms and to reduce administrative barriers and costs for women entrepreneurship.

**Ms. Margaret Sancho, Deputy Mission Director of USAID in Cairo,** noted that integrating gender equity and women's empowerment is a key element of USAID's new strategy for Egypt launched in December 2020. This has resulted in shifting from having gender equity and women's empowerment as a separate intervention, to streamlining and integrating it into all of USAID's activities. USAID is supporting women entrepreneurs through networks and connections, mentoring, access to finance, and a one stop shop to provide support, answer questions, provide other non financial resources to assist women as they create their businesses. Additionally, USAID is encouraging young women and girls to get involved in business and science and technology, through technical secondary schools, reaching female teachers, students, principals, and employees and managers with technical and vocational training. Tackling gender based violence and discrimination is also critical to addressing barriers for women entering the workforce, which USAID has been supporting through partnering with law enforcement-enforcement, health care providers, social workers, to equip them with the skills, the counseling, the legal and the protection support, so they can assist women.

During his intervention, **Mr. Tarek Fayed, Deputy Managing Director of QNB,** stressed that doing business with women is not only about social responsibility or helping the community, it is also part of a profitable business and long term investment model that financial institutions need to capitalize on while partnering with like-minded champions from the business community and strong investment partners; in QNB's case these were EBRD and the EU.

**Dr. Susan Hamdy, Head of Financial Inclusion and Business Development, Banque Misr,** noted that the bank was the

first one in Egypt to sign a partnership with the IFC to expand financial banking services and products to different segments of women, enabling them with digital financial services and non-financial services after training. The Bank has also signed a partnership with Google to finance about 10,000 entrepreneurs that will also assist them in digital online learning.

**Mr. Hesham El Safty, Group Head, Financial Institutions & International Financial Services at National Bank of Egypt (NBE),** added that the Bank started supporting women in business since 2009 and continued to evolve and develop its products and gender mainstreaming policies, as it realized the potential that can be achieved by encouraging women entrepreneurs. Recently, the bank has conducted surveys and data analyses that showed 50% of the loans given to the micro sector targeted women.

**Mr. Amro Abueish, Chairman and Managing Director at Tanmia,** also noted that since 2009 nearly half of the issued loans were made to female entrepreneurs. Gender mainstreaming internally meant hiring more female partnerships officers, which reflected itself on increased number of female borrowers.

**Mr. Hany Moussa, Business Solutions Director at e-finance,** added that there are trends to be witnessed in developing countries globally including Egypt, such as the use of mobile devices, e-commerce, the trends of a cashless society, and the growing trend of e-payments. E-Finance's activities include raising awareness of artisans about the potential of e-commerce to marketing and selling their products, providing them with an online platform, and with access to finance opportunities in partnership with the Ministry of Local Development, the World Food Program, and the National Council for Women. Another initiative is supporting saving groups through linking them to the CBE to manage these saving groups through supporting selected champions and issuing credit cards for them.

Finally in her closing remarks, **Dr. Maya Morsi, President of the National Council for Women,** stressed that supporting women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs should be seen through a human rights lense and not positioned as a privilege. Women entrepreneurs are clients of financial institutions and should be treated equally as men. She also highlighted that the National Council for Women stands ready to put these financial institutions in contact with women entrepreneurs and those seeking financial assistance.





**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 04**

**FOOD SECURITY AND  
EMPLOYMENT IN THE  
DIGITAL AGE IN AFRICA**







Day — 02



# WORKSHOP 04

**FOOD SECURITY  
AND EMPLOYMENT  
IN THE DIGITAL AGE  
IN AFRICA**





**Menghestab Haile, WFP Regional Director for Southern Africa** opened the workshop by sharing that the purpose of this workshop is for it to be a south-south collaboration exercise that shares inter-African good practices that contribute to food security. He highlighted that the success of this workshop will be determined by whether we have identified opportunities to work together, shared good practices and demonstrated knowledge sharing, particularly, on the experience with the Luxor Center for Knowledge Sharing and Innovation.

Mr. Haile congratulated and commended H.E. Aly Moselhy, Minister of Supply and Internal Trade on the fact that during the peak of the pandemic, no Egyptian faced a shortage in food or a general shortage in commodities, stressing that this exemplifies an experience that can and should be shared with everyone. He also commended Minister and General Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, on the outstanding work that has and is being done on "Hayat Karima" and the "Transforming the Lives and Livelihoods of Egypt's Most Underprivileged Villages" through integrated development, which also needs to be shared with the rest of Africa. Furthermore, the work done under the leadership of Minister Al Quseir, Minister of Agriculture, with smallholder farmers by linking them with banks and linking them with resources was mentioned.

Mr. Haile then went on to briefly introduce the high-level participation from Tanzania, Namibia and DRC and representation from AUDA-NEPAD, IFAD, FAO and Regional Directors and Country Directors of WFP that will be encouraged to utilize this platform to share their respective experiences.

***"Colleagues, when I mention the Luxor Center, I do so with pride and passion. The Luxor Center is located in Upper Egypt and is for Upper Egypt but for me, Luxor is the heritage of every African and every human being; it has always been a knowledge center, which should not be a thing of the past but also of the future. Thus, and in this Digital Age, there is a need to make it a knowledge center again."***

**Menghestab Haile,**  
WFP Regional Director for Southern Africa



**H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat Minister of International Cooperation, Egypt,** reiterated that the main topic of discussion over the past two days has been on how to take successful examples that worked in countries and identify how they can be replicated in a different country. H.E. mentioned that this is a crucial exercise that can save us substantial transaction costs and can create greater impact, which is the idea around which the Egypt-ICF is built, namely "Engaging for Impact".

H.E. discussed the successful programmes executed in cooperation with the international community on agriculture, on internal trade and supply and on local development and Egypt's hope for the Luxor Center to become a regional knowledge hub for Africa. H.E. Mashat pointed out that food security is a priority for everyone, whether they work in the sector or benefit from the sector.

***"I just want to mention that I am very proud to be in a Cabinet that has the expertise of the Egyptian Ministers present here today. COVID-19 has tested governments in different ways but given the population size of Egypt, we had no disruptions in our domestic value chains with regards to food and products; this tells a lot – it tells a lot about the investment that took place in the infrastructure, and the preemptive planning to face shocks."***

**H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat**  
Minister of International Cooperation, Egypt





**H.E. Dr. Aly El Moselhi, Minister of Supply and Internal Trade, Egypt**, pointed out that from the very beginning, it was clear that Egypt had to preserve all production capacity but certainly without disregarding safety measures. Minister Moselhi then shared that together with the Ministry of Interior and the private sector, they endeavored to identify obstacles or disruptions immediately so that even with the early curfew in place, supply chains did not stop. According to H.E., among the most crucial things that need to be paid attention to is having a comprehensive distribution network that reaches even the smallest village consumer. Minister Moselhi then stated that the development of the food security domain is a win-win situation for all partners.

H.E. went on to explain that public-private partnership must be the foundation upon which decision-making is based, that investment in Communications and Information Technology infrastructure is crucial and that expediting digitalization efforts need to be prioritized in order to ensure food security through availability and accessibility. Planning ahead and having a central information system with information of land availability and water were also mentioned as crucial steps towards ensuring food security.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that among the main obstacles facing the continent is the lack of information and that this is where the Luxor Center can play an important role to fill this gap. Minister Moselhi encouraged provision of support to similar initiatives or hubs that aim to disseminate knowledge.

The importance of self-sufficiency and rethinking processes was noted by Minister Moselhi and supported by the example of the building of wheat silos in Egypt in order to circumvent the immense losses that resulted from the costs of storing the wheat and to protect its quality. H.E. informed participants that this example is also telling of the importance of the infrastructure of internal trade.

***“It is vital to not only focus on production and manufacturing in tackling food security but to also focus on logistics and the so-called “last mile” to the end-consumer.”***

**H.E. Dr. Aly El Moselhi,**  
Minister of Supply and Internal Trade, Egypt



**H.E. General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, Egypt**, started by explaining that financial poverty is easier to remedy than multidimensional poverty since it requires multidimensional interventions. According to H.E., the provision of work for all members of a family, women and youth included, is essential.

Furthermore, Minister Shaarawy noted that while Egypt has a large number of centers for handicrafts across governorates, access to resources and knowledge on distribution and other skills is still lacking, which the private sector can cure. It was also mentioned that together with WFP, the Ministry worked on projects that aim to help farmers profit from the value added on agricultural products and that help craftsmen develop skills through the “Ayadi Mizr” project.

Minister Shaarawy stressed that the rural woman in Egypt is very capable and extremely productive and that several projects were launched in order to offer opportunities for women’s economic empowerment. Through the first one, small factories were established together with the private sector for women to be part of the labor force. Furthermore, small businesses by women were supported through loans. In addressing the question by the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia regarding the beneficiaries of the Hayat Karima initiative, H.E. Dr. Shaarawy clarified that Hayat Karima is a very comprehensive multi-sectoral initiative that includes projects specifically targeting women and youth and that among the projects, is one that aimed at the development of factories, which went on to employ a labor force of which 70% are women.

Throughout the intervention of H.E. Dr. Shaarawy, H.E. referred to the interlinkages between employment and food security and nutrition and food security. In the same context, H.E. mentioned how the presidential initiative “100 Million Lives” has managed to remedy the nutrition component.

Furthermore, H.E. Dr. Shaarawy highlighted the success of the Program for the Development of Upper Egypt, which enabled the government to develop two of the poorest villages in Egypt by providing infrastructure and more and that this program was recognized by the United Nations as a best practice.

***“The focus of the Ministry of Local Development when it comes to food security is ensuring that citizens have the purchasing power to be food secure. “Hayat Karima” has pushed the government to conduct studies on contexts and especially on industries in order to have a tangible impact on the lives of citizens.”***

**H.E. General Mahmoud Shaarawy,**  
Minister of Local Development, Egypt



**H.E. Mohamed El Quseir, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Egypt**, started by recognizing the Day of the Egyptian Farmer, which coincided with the very relevant workshop. H.E. continued by stating how food security has become integral to national security.

While H.E. acknowledged that Africa has an abundance of land and human capital and diversity in soils and climate conditions, which results in a wide variety in agricultural products across the continent, H.E. Mr. El Quseir noted that there are several challenges, among which are predominantly the following: natural resource management, especially water management, the availability in agricultural land and first and foremost climate change, which hits the agricultural sector more intensely than other sectors bearing in mind that the agricultural sector contributes 15% to GDP and that its labor force represents around 25% of the population. Therefore, it was also mentioned that in the past seven years, the agricultural sector has witnessed revolutionary progress, in terms of technology and integration of farmers as a key beneficiary in all national initiatives.

The Minister also noted that digitization efforts and the integration of artificial intelligence in order to move towards a smart agricultural sector has become more important than ever in order to ensure food security and to maintain progress.

H.E. shared that the Government of Egypt is exploring and thereby spending large sums in order to find solutions and to navigate around the issue of water scarcity by diversifying water resources used, for example by using water desalination plants or groundwater. In the upcoming period, Egypt has plans to expand agricultural lands to encompass an additional four million feddans, under which the Great Delta Project falls.

Minister El Quseir stressed the dire need to address climate change, scarcity in natural resources, like water, and rapid population growth, while integrating technology and support mechanisms, provided by the Egyptian government, and fostering self-sufficiency by focusing on agriculture products with value added.

***“Agriculture is a resilient sector and it is the backbone of the economy and substantial to food security. It is deeply intertwined with other industries and has to be at the core of efforts geared towards sustainable development and the localization of production. Hence, more support, especially from development partners, is needed. Working on a center for training and studies on the sector is crucial.”***

**H.E. Mohamed El Quseir**,  
Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Egypt



**Hon. Dr. Carl Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Namibia** then emphasized that on the domestic level, the grass-root level, on farmers need to be supported at the input and the output level; at the input level, the provision of affordable and and input and access to sustainable water resources is crucial, while at the output level it is important to assist the farmer in bringing his products to the market. This would have a two-fold effect: On one hand, we would be providing food and thereby ensuring food security, and on the other hand, we would also be securing a better livelihood for the farmer. H.E. Dr. Schlettwein also stressed the fact that food security is not attainable without water security.

***“Food security has a national, regional and a continental level; and we must excel on all those levels to arrive at a world that is food secure. It is not good enough to only be food secure at a domestic level. This begs for all processes and systems, be it national, regional or continental, to be perfectly aligned. It is a huge and complex network but that is the reality.”***

**Hon. Dr. Carl Schlettwein**,  
Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Namibia

Among the recommendations mentioned by Hon. Dr. Schlettwein in order to achieve food security and securing better livelihoods, is that it is crucial to integrate the latest technologies into the agricultural sector and to improve data collection and processing across Africa. If the agricultural sector has more accurate weather predictions and soil maps, we could save so much money that could help boost production quite significantly. So the predictability of the environment, based on which we grow crops, is an area we need to concentrate on along with the accessibility to the data by the farmer.



As for best practices, Minister Schlettwein shared that Namibia hosted an Investment Promotion Forum, which aims to act on each investment request and remove barriers. In addition, Namibia has embraced the “single window approach”, which designates only one entity to provide all the information and steps in an effort to facilitate ease of doing business. Furthermore, it was also mentioned that all regulations of the agricultural sector underwent revision in order to eliminate regulations that are ineffective or outdated. In that same process, Namibia has developed regulations to govern public-partner partnerships, which have been beneficial for partnerships towards infrastructure development.

***“If we develop trade regimes that are comparable to shark pools, where dominance is the driver of making rules, we arrive at a set-up where we decide who will be consuming whom next instead of a set of rules that help us to support each other and reach food security and proper livelihoods for all.”***

Mr. Crispin Phanzu, Deputy Minister of Planning, DRC started by highlighting that Egypt is a close partner and that he shall aim to provide a brief overview of the DRC in order to give context to the experience he will share. As such, he shared that its population is at about 85 million inhabitants in 2021. It is a very young population, as half of it is under 15 years old and the over 65 years old represent less than 3% of the total population of the country.

***“The number of people affected by food security is estimated at about 27 million, which is equivalent to one in three people. The main causes of this alarming situation are natural disasters, weak purchasing power, the degradation of road infrastructure and the COVID-19 health crisis. Refugees, returnees, host families of people affected by natural disasters, single parent households mainly headed by women and people with low purchasing power.”***

Among the planning tools Government of the DRC has utilized, according to Mr. Phanzu, are: The National Plan for Agricultural Investment, the main objective of which is to stimulate the annual growth of the agricultural sector to reach 6%. Secondly, the Multi-Sectoral COVID-19 Mitigation Program, which aims to respond to the sanitary crisis and thirdly, the National Agriculture Food and Nutrition Security Program, the main objective of which is to protect employment in the agricultural sector.

Mr. Phanzu stated that these programs contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the eradication of poverty and that in order to implement these programs, the government has

been cooperating with international institutions, such as the World Bank, FAO, WFP and AfDB.

In addition, Mr. Phanzu shared that the government’s Agenda for Priority Action, which came into effect last April as a result of the national strategic development plan, amounts to US\$36 billion for 2021-2023, and has the aim of seeking sustainable solutions to the major struggles the country is encountering.

For example, in an effort to achieve SDG16, the government is working on eliminating terrorist groups to restore peace which is necessary for food security. Therefore, the President of the Republic announced the state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri provinces on 30 April 2021.

***“Concerning food security in the digital era, the government recently created the Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministère du numérique), so that the sector can serve as a leverage for integration, growth and social progress. In addition, the National Digital Plan 2025 has been developed and it has taken into account the value chain of the agricultural sector. The objective is to establish a secure infrastructure and develop a digital culture that facilitates the productivity of farmers, makes the storage of agricultural products profitable and facilitates the distribution mechanisms of agricultural goods.”***

The objective of diversifying investment, as per the Deputy Minister of Planning, is advanced by conducting legislative reforms to promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects, which will allow farmers in rural areas to transport their products more efficiently. Finally, the Deputy Minister pointed towards the importance of evaluation tools necessary to assess food security.

Mr. Bob Kalanzi, Policy Economist at African Union Development Agency (AUDA), mentioned several indications that food security is a priority for African countries, such as the comprehensive “Africa Agriculture Development Program”.

He also referred to the AUDA-NEPAD Data Programme, which is aimed at equipping communities with digital tools to enhance their participation in policy-making, planning and implementation of development initiatives at all levels. This is a program that actually looks at digitalization, technology as well as innovation.

Furthermore, AUDA-NEPAD has also launched the Environment Partnership and a Geospatial Knowledge Portal, which provides data and information on the management of Africa’s environmental resources.

According to Mr. Kalanzi, AUDA has also forged a very strong partnership with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) at the

global but more recently at the regional and country levels. In collaboration with the WFP Egypt Country Office, the Luxor Center for Knowledge Sharing and Innovation for more resilience in Upper Egypt was established. He expressed that AUDA is committed to bridge the digital gap and use digital tools as a way to improve livelihoods and inclusive development since digitalization plays an important role in ensuring rural communities have access to services for rapid economic and social transformation, which is one of the core principles of the African Rural Development Program.

To this end, Mr. Bob informed participants that AUDA is organizing the third African Rural Development Forum in Kinshasa in November 2021 to showcase sustainable practices and planning for rural transformation as well as sharing lessons learnt on South-South Cooperation, multi-sectoral and inter-sectoral approaches towards rural transformation.

Mr. Kalanzi underlined the core mandate of AUDA, which is to strengthen the capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies through advisory support and that AUDA is therefore awaiting the outcomes of the Egypt-ICF to build on this workshop.

***“COVID-19 has amplified development challenges and in particular inequalities by widening economic gaps and social inequalities, putting a strain on the achievement of the AU Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. Hence, this is an opportune time to create a new paradigm for development that leverages technology, advances inclusive socioeconomic transformation and builds back better.”***

**Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer, Representative, World Health Organization (WHO)** mainly shed light on the role of the private sector and civil society to ensure food security. Her intervention particularly focused on the link between food security and nutrition. As such, Dr. Al Gasseer mentioned that it is of utmost importance to also tackle the topic of food safety and nutrition when talking about food security.

***“There has to be behavioral awareness on the level of the individual and beyond the individual, on the level of the family unit and the community. Regarding nutrition, today 87% of total deaths in Egypt are attributed to non-communicable diseases and due to unhealthy nutritious behavior, especially that of children, youth and adolescents. Thus, we are very proud to be, together with WFP, UNICEF, FAO, part of the presidential initiative on School Feeding, which is meant to bring about a major shift by investing in the health of children.”***



**Alaa Ezz, Secretary General,**  
Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations

***“I speak on behalf of the private sector of Africa, and this is addressed to the whole panel, we witness in most African countries that there is above 30% waste in the whole supply chain of food; working on that, from production to sorting, distribution as well as transportation between countries, would simply increase what is availed for African people without spending a single cent on production or a horizontal or vertical shift.”***

**Dina Saleh, Director, Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia, IFAD,** highlighted how this workshop ideally paves the way to the Food Systems Summit that took place on 23 September, 2021.

***“Climate, conflict and COVID-19 are really the three Cs that are challenging us now. The studies around food security are alarming; we see that by 2030, the state of food security in Africa reports that about half of the population will be food insecure. This is a call for collective action, while there is a lot of fragmentation, the international community through the UN reforms has been trying to bring together these efforts to form cohesive interventions. I believe there is a lot of work to be done.”***

Ms. Saleh pointed towards the importance of looking for solutions internally and in that context she mentioned that Egyptian representatives have extensively covered solutions tailored to the local ecosystem, which is crucial and essential to having a sustainable impact.

The fact that Egypt hosts a number of sub-regional offices, was also mentioned by Ms. Saleh, to which she added that just by hosting, Egypt has access to so much information and so many valuable resources that can be used to redirect, scale up or transform some of the efforts and practices in place.

In tackling the two main drivers of food security, **Nasredin Hag Elamin, Representative in Egypt, FAO,** mentioned paying attention to the smallholder farmers by introducing farmers to markets, financial inclusion, and assisting in making agriculture climate-smart.



Secondly, he emphasized that the promotion of knowledge-sharing in Africa is of absolute importance. As such, development partners and governments alike should stand behind and support initiatives and projects such as the Luxor Center for Innovation and Knowledge Sharing.

Mr. Hag Elamin shared that he has been in Egypt for more than a year now and the way Egypt has dealt with the COVID-19 crisis, and particularly looking at the food sector and agriculture, is important to be shared since Egypt was able to make food available to everyone throughout the crisis.

He further referred to the ongoing collaborations between the Ministry of Agriculture of Egypt and African countries, specifically on water management, aquaculture and animal health and vaccine production. Mr. Hag Elamin encouraged government representatives of African countries to strive towards establishing similar partnerships.

***“The delicate and skillful balance achieved by Egypt of managing imports, holding, releasing and controlling stocks with minimum food loss, private sector partnerships and the gradual and swift food subsidy reforms that have not caused disruption nor political unrest are all aspects that are truly commendable.”***

**Jeremy Hopkins, Country Representative, UNICEF** shared that Egypt has made extraordinary strides in the field of nutrition, which is inextricably linked to food security and food safety. Mr. Hopkins stressed the fact that we cannot talk about food security without talking about nutrition.

A relevant example referred to by Mr. Jeremy Hopkins, is that of Tanzania and how its legislation on flour fortification, twelve years ago, has been catalytic in terms of improving nutrition indicators.

***“The damage that is done in terms of stunting is done and permanent by the time a child turns two years old and cannot be reversed. This is why it is important to start work on nutrition from the very beginning.”***

**Chris Nikoi, Regional Director for West Africa, World Food Programme (WFP)**, similar to other participants, identified climate change as a main challenge to food security in the continent.

A second challenge is that of achieving inclusive growth with a particular emphasis on two groups that have been historically been left behind in Africa, namely women and youth.

Mr. Nikoi highlighted that in pushing forward knowledge-sharing, context matters. For example, ministers of Egypt may discuss improving irrigation systems and shifting to solar-powered systems, however, when I look at where I am coming from and the region I am responsible for, we cannot even talk about improving irrigation systems seeing as they are fully dependent on rain water.

He also noted that while we have lots of solutions on the continent, how we capture and share them is paramount. This is where the Luxor Center for Knowledge Sharing and Innovation plays a significant role and similar South-South Cooperation platforms.

One example of the aforementioned was mentioned by Mr. Nikoi, namely the partnership between the Government of the Ivory Coast and WFP through which a Center of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition was founded in Abidjan, and that a meeting was held two months ago with the Luxor Center to explore areas of collaboration.

***“One thing we all need to remember is that food security is national security. A rule-based multilateral system needs to be enforced and peace promotion prioritized.”***





**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 05**

**THE DEMOGRAPHIC  
DIVIDE: YOUTH AND  
INNOVATION FOR  
TRANSFORMING AFRICA**









# WORKSHOP 05

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE: YOUTH AND INNOVATION FOR TRANSFORMING AFRICA

In her opening remarks of the workshop, Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation, Egypt, highlighted that international cooperation has an important role to play in overcoming the digital divide. H.E. added that the idea of the Forum is to bring all the stakeholders together on very important topics that affect all development stakeholders on the national the regional and international levels. In this line of thought, H.E. pointed out that there is no more urgent and important topic, other than youth, and the digital revolution that the world is currently witnessing along with a growing entrepreneurship ecosystem to which everyone of the speakers in the session contributes. The government, for example, has gave financial support to create Egypt Ventures, the first government-backed VC fund which takes risks and allows for more private capital bring in more investments into entrepreneurship. More generally, Egypt has taken very important steps towards youth and innovation as acknowledged by all development partners in Egypt. Nevertheless, there is a risk of a digital divide that needs to be tackled. H.E. also thanked Google for their support in co-organizing this session.

***“Africa is considered the youngest continent on the planet, with around 60% of its population under the age of 25. There is no more urgent or important topic than youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and digital innovation. Creating a framework to support the young is vital; Africa’s future depends on it.”***

**Dr. Vint Cerf, Google Vice President Global Public Sector and Internet Evangelist**, in his keynote speech highlighted in his recorded keynote speech that this is a time of unprecedented challenge, a pandemic, global warming, and all kinds of other challenges that lie before us. But in the midst of those challenges, rise opportunity. He added that in Africa and the global south there are countries adopting policies and measures and that Google identified them as “Digital Sprinters”. Those are countries that recognize the potential value of digital investment in all of its dimensions, whether human capital, physical infrastructure, training and education investment and by which they can turn digital technology into digital opportunity, growth of GDP, and improve wellbeing for their population. In such way, countries will be able to grow their GDP, take advantage of the fact that the world’s population is now on the order of 7.8 billion people and is becoming more and more connected to what is called today the global Internet.

Such reach is facilitated by the rapid spread of undersea cables, 4G and 5G and other mobile technologies, increased use of Wi Fi, and a variety of other technologies that enable internet to operate and flourish. However, he added that **it’s important to recognize that none of these technologies will produce anything of much value unless there are trained, skilled, and thoughtful and creative people driving these applications and new business models** to take advantage of the existing or future infrastructure. He highlighted that the Egypt-ICF event is a very important milestone as the company thinks about how to capitalize on the technology that the world knows about and that is being developed. Moreover, the internet will reach its potential unless it is surrounded by a cooperative environment of likeminded countries. The UN Secretary General has called for a Roadmap on Digital Cooperation as part of the Decade of Action, not only in the creation of infrastructure, but also in achieving the various sustainable development goals that the UN has set out for itself.

***“This is a time of unprecedented challenge – a pandemic, climate change and a host of other issues lie before us. But there is also opportunity. However, the technologies that offer the most potential will deliver little value if we do not have trained, skilled, thoughtful and creative people driving applications and new business models to take advantage of the digital infrastructure.”***



**Dr. Amr Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)**, shed light on the role MCIT plays in strengthening the digital infrastructure of Egypt. H.E. noted that in 2018, the ministry initiated the “Digital Egypt” strategy to foster its digital transformation based on three parallel pillars. The first is the digital transformation and the digitalization of government services with the aim of improving lives of Egypt’s citizens and easing the way they obtain their government services. The other two pillars are revolving around the training and capacity building and the encouragement of entrepreneurial activities. His Excellency highlighted that the government has invested over three years around \$2 billion in the digital infrastructure. In this line of thought, Dr. Amr highlighted the importance of having fixed broadband in rural areas and that MCIT is starting this year to roll it out to one third of Egyptian villages with an investment of around EGP 5.8 billion with the aim to connect more than 1 million households with fiber to the home infrastructure. It is expected that such initiative will achieve a leap in the possibility offered to youth to connect to the internet. Egypt is one of the countries with many international internet cables going through its land and sea which account for over 90% of the data transfer between Asia, Africa, and Europe. This is an area of collaboration with Egypt’s African neighbors, to have better, more resilient, and less expensive, access to cyber world. His Excellency concluded that Egypt is starting this year with another extremely important project which is the first ICT-specialized university in the continent along with the establishment of Creativa Centers that offer training centers as well as incubators, accelerators centers for entrepreneurs.

***“We plan to invest more than \$360 million to connect one million households with fibre-optic cables that will ensure youth can access the internet and thus the knowledge, training and career opportunities offered by the digital world.”***

**Mr. Eric Oechslin, Director, ILO Egypt**, stated that unemployment is increasing among young people and adults after the COVID-19 pandemic, and that what Africa has witnessed is that technology is at the forefront of concerns at the present time. He added that all stakeholders need to collaborate to provide more support for youth and to provide incentives for startups in the field of information technology and that there is a **need to support youth and to provide incentives for startups**.



It is important to support internet services and the expansion of technology in Africa, despite the presence of obstacles related to infrastructure such as electricity, language and the environment.

***“What we are witnessing in Africa, emphasizes our need to create a suitable environment to encourage those wishing to establish small companies and to provide support for young people, as well as to support start-ups in the field of Information Technology.”***

**Ms. Frederika Meijer, Country Representative, UNFPA,** highlighted that Africa has a huge young population of around 60% and therefore a lot of investment needs to be allocated to education and training, notably for women to reach a balanced population growth with economic growth. She added that there are various and significant gender divides in access to the internet that needs to be tackled. This is in addition to geographic and economic divides between an urban and rural areas as well as rich and poor people, respectively, in their access to internet. She concluded that for Egypt and African countries it is advised to invest from young age on with a focus on the 10 year old girls, so that they don't drop out of school as they are prone to early marriage.

***“It is extremely important to make from this young [African] population a demographic dividend which means a lot of investments need to go in education and training.”***

**Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States and Country Representative, UNESCO** stated that UNESCO has several programs and activities in Africa, including in Egypt, to address the demographic divide. He added that **everyone is capitalizing today on how internet has contributed to the global knowledge** revolution, however, there is a socio-economic divide that youth are suffering from in Africa. There is a big opportunity, he cited, and everyone is capitalizing on the technological revolution, particularly in relation to internet, which provides easy and affordable access to the internet as it has contributed to the global knowledge revolution.

***“It is necessary to engage young people in development efforts, so as to maximize the technological revolution and provide low-cost technology.”***

**Dr. Mohamed Farid Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Stock Exchange** pointed to the importance of applying digital transformation and technology to the Egyptian Stock Exchange in its various stages, including supporting small companies and here the role is to develop and modernize small and emerging companies and increase their capacity with appropriate profitability and increase their income. Using technology is becoming crucial to develop and modernize small and emerging companies. He also stressed on the importance of using technology to attract investors and invest in human capital.

***“Technology and innovation is linked to the entire value chain of the capital chain including the supply side where new companies are getting listed and where SPACs are now emerging.”***

**Ms. Maha Afifi, Director of Government Relations and Public Policies at Google,** highlighted that technology is no longer recreational and all stakeholders must discuss the conditions before and after COVID-19. She pointed out that the pandemic has drawn attention to the fact the technology is no longer recreational but rather necessary and the appropriate environment must be provided to support the private sector.

***“We need to have all players in the ecosystem thriving and succeeding otherwise the whole system will fall down, including the private sector.”***

**Ms. Anna Ekeledo, Executive Director, AfriLabs,** stated that it is necessary to work to stop entrepreneurs and investors from leaving Africa through solidarity, integration and cross-border cooperation to provide what entrepreneurs want. She added that there must be roles for governments, universities, civil society and various institutions to help in this. Through solidarity, African entrepreneurs and investors will not leave the continent, she concluded.

***“It is important to build a platform for the innovation hubs to interact with each other, network and share ideas either through event or even informally. This should be also done through a multi-stakeholder approach where all the key players of the ecosystem interact.”***

**Ms. Claudia Makadristo, Senior Advisor and Ambassador, Seedstars,** highlighted that her company has been investing in the continent for 7 years, and the first difficulty was finding companies that are looking for incubators from entrepreneurs.

She added that they do not have the appropriate ecosystem or the solidarity and participation of entrepreneurs, and the first categories of spending and training must be identified, providing them with incubators, and meeting their needs for the required talents, innovations and creativity. She stressed on the importance of meeting the needs of entrepreneurs, including having access to incubators.

***“Most of the investors invest in the later stage, we have a challenge to get enough African entrepreneurs to reach this later stage and absorb these investments. One of these challenges is related to the digital infrastructure in the continent on which the relative competitiveness of local entrepreneurs is depending.”***

**Mr. Abdoul Aziz Sy, Founder and Host, Impact Hub Dakar,** pointed out that we must determine the difference and diversity from one region to another, and it may differ from one country to the other, and the best elements required to develop the entrepreneur to become an investor must be chosen, even before graduation, they must be aware of what these sectors are witnessing, he said, pointing out that there is cooperation with Egypt through delegations for training and skills upgrading. There is an importance to encourage investment in the continent.

***“We can help people to build their capacities and our assistance may go to students even before graduation and they must be aware of what the entrepreneurship and innovation sectors are witnessing.”***

**Dr. Budzanani Tacheba, Director, Innovation and Technology, Botswana Innovation Hub,** stated that the post-COVID-19 period has increased the importance of an ecosystem to create entrepreneurs and develop their businesses, and it is a golden opportunity imposed by the COVID-19 conditions. It is time, he added, to provide training and support the entrepreneur through capacity building and financing to become an investor. He also stressed on the important role played by tech giants and international development agencies in supporting the ecosystem regionally.

***“During the COVID-19 there has been a need for very specialized services, many running on mobile and online platforms. There is a need to capacitating those particularly local***

***products which will eventually lead to more growth, valorization and commercialization on regional levels.”***

**Mr. Takunda Chingonzo, Founder of The Techvillage,** highlighted that **incubators and innovation hubs exist at the innovation frontiers** and they are entities that exist at the frontier, the very edge of what is happening within ecosystems, and we need to create the ingredients for innovation, not just ideas. Its ensuring that we have the local capacity and the skills to be able to innovate. It's important to create the space for innovation to happen with regards to the regulations.

***“Innovation hubs exist on the frontier of the ecosystem. There is a need to ensure to have the local capacity and skills to be able to innovate. However, sometimes innovations are pushed back from the regulatory framework and therefore having innovation spaces and sandboxes are important to showcase such innovations.”***

**Ms. Aminata Namasia Bazego, Deputy Minister of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education, Democratic Republic of the Congo,** stated that the educational system has to change. She added that her government is working on adding entrepreneurial education to their educational curricula to make sure the students are becoming more innovative and creative. However, infrastructure is crucial to reach such goal, internet coverage is not yet universal in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She pointed out to reflect on the Egyptian experience using tablets in education. This can be a pilot and to be expanded to the African continent. However, digital infrastructure is crucial and notably access to internet. The internet will bring creativity and encourage South-South cooperation in this area. She suggested a collaboration in this with Ministry of Education in Egypt, where at least 55,000 schools are interconnected via a central system.

***“We believe that the educational system has to change, it is no longer needed for students to stay in classes as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the educational system needs to embrace innovative ideas to make tomorrow's Africa more innovative. However, infrastructure remains a challenge especially in rural areas and we believe we can learn from the Egyptian experience in this regard.”***



**DAY — 02**

# **WORKSHOP 06**

**TRIANGULAR  
COOPERATION  
WITH AFRICA**









Day — 02

# WORKSHOP 06

## TRIANGULAR COOPERATION WITH AFRICA

This workshop was conducted in collaboration with OECD, MOIC, UN Office for south- south cooperation, and the Islamic Development Bank. Where all these institutions have been doing a lot of work, research and analysis on how triangular cooperation can change the international cooperation field.

# NO COUNTRY IS TOO POOR TO SHARE LESSONS AND NO COUNTRY IS TOO RICH TO LEARN

**Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director, OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD)**, started his presentation by affirming the OECD's continuous commitment to support triangular cooperation through various means such as providing analysis, data and policy advice with the aim of contributing to better triangular partnerships as a key route to achieve 2030 agenda.

He went further to explain that there are three key roles in triangular cooperation. First, the beneficiary partner that hosts the partnership, second the pivotal partner that shares experiences, solutions, and innovations that were tested under similar circumstances. And finally, a facilitating partner providing complimentary resources. He also clarified that Latin America and the Caribbean are the champions of triangular cooperation globally, followed by Africa and then Asia Pacific.

Mr. da Silva indicated that this workshop is a great platform to share the first findings of the new paper on triangular cooperation with Africa that is conducted jointly by OECD and UN Office for south- south cooperation. He shed the light that African countries have rich experiences that they can share with other countries as pivotal partners.

He mentioned that triangular cooperation in Africa has high potential to contribute in developing three fields, that are identified by that African Union's agenda 2063 as critical to African Development, the first field is information and communication technology, second is environment and climate change, while the third is demographic changes, including employment, urbanization, and international mobility.

He shed light on the recent works of the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation -that the OECD contributes to as a core group member- shows that triangular cooperation promotes robust partnerships and innovative solutions in supporting African capacities during the pandemic.

Therefore, he suggested that triangular cooperation should not just be a way to mobilize traditional financial resource but also to get private sector involved. He also stressed on the importance of aligning the agenda of bilateral cooperation (being north- south or south-south cooperation) with the agenda of triangular cooperation in terms of thematic areas where the topics that are being discussed under the umbrella of the triangular cooperation shouldn't be totally different that the topics that are being discussed through bilateral cooperation channels.

***“Triangular co-operation can support in addressing development megatrends in Africa and in tackling COVID-19, bringing innovative partnerships through sharing knowledge and solutions.”***

**Jorge Moreira da Silva**  
Director, OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD)

## TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PROMOTES MULTILATERALISM

In his speech, Francisco André, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Portugal, stressed that south -south and triangular cooperation play an increasingly important role in the development cooperation landscape. He drew the attention that triangular cooperation initiatives foster the exchange of knowledge, expertise, technical assistance, best practices, and ultimately, they greatly contribute to deepening relations between partners at all levels.

Mr. André highlighted that triangular cooperation is a crucial component to deal with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, because triangular cooperation supports adopting innovative and flexible solutions which plays a crucial role in enhancing our abilities to overcome social, economic and environmental challenges. Moreover, he mentioned that Portugal is a pivotal country in bridging African and South American peer

to peer relations. He also called for closer alignment with the National strategies of partner countries, as well as with bilateral programs and regional contexts.

***“Triangular cooperation is a modality that is moving rapidly in fostering the exchange of knowledge and strengthening relations between partners.”***

**Francisco André**  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Portugal



## GROWING GLOBAL INTEREST IN PROMOTING TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

Mr. Adel Abdellateef, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), stressed Egypt's key role in 2015 as the president of the G77 in preparing for the second high level United Nations Conference on south-south cooperation that brought to the fore the issue of triangular cooperation as an important instrument for International Development Cooperation.

He highlighted the need of building institutional capacity in Africa, because triangular cooperation or south-south cooperation requires institutions that will be able to exchange and receive information from other partners of the global south.

Consequently, he referred to the efforts of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation along with the OECD and Islamic Development Bank to increase the institutional capacity of the Sub Saharan African countries in particular by 2030. He indicated that this would enable these countries to maximize their benefits from triangular cooperation.

Mr. Adel Abdellateef added that there is a growing attention among many trust funds in the global south where the Islamic

Development Bank is one of the leading partners in this front. Moreover the (UNOSSC) is managing several trust funds like India UN Trust Fund, the contribution of China in the United Nation fund for south-south cooperation and the IBSA trust fund which includes (India, Brazil and South Africa).

In this context, he emphasized that (UNOSSC) is currently working with other UN agencies to promote triangular cooperating in the next few years in the fields of digitalization, vaccine equity and the green recovery.

***"It is important that we maximize the use of south-south and triangular cooperation as one of the main means of implementation of the 2030 agenda."***

**Mr. Adel Abdellateef,**  
Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

## SUCCESSFUL IMPLICATIONS OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning in Nigeria, clarified that triangular cooperation provides a new opportunity for Nigeria and a new opportunity to be able to do more for the country.

H.E. shared the example of the Lake Chad region development project, which involves, on the one hand, the governments of Niger, Cameroon and Nigeria, and on the other hand, the UN the EU, UK Government, US government and other development partners and civil society and private sector.

She elaborated that the project was designed to enable the three neighboring countries to upgrade the developmental deficit that exists within the Lake Chad region by building major infrastructure that links these three countries and hence improve the livelihood of the people in this region.

H.E. indicated that the 1st phase of this project was completed successfully and they are moving to implement the 2nd phase. In this context she clarified that this project reflected positively on the livelihood of the citizens who live in this area in terms of building houses and having medical services, she also mentioned that the reason behind the success of this project is the coordination between all the concerned parties.

***"State, local and federal governments, civil society and the private sector should work together to unlock financing that is required for us to be able to achieve the SDGs."***

**Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed**  
Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning in Nigeria

In a similar context, Mr. Anim Jerry Jacob, Senior Agricultural Officer, Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food & Agriculture in Ghana, shed the light on Ghana's successful cooperation experience with Brazil.

He elaborated that the cooperation between Ghana and Brazil emphasized on sharing technical expertise regarding the processing of Cashews. He added that both countries have exchange information about genetic materials to enhance the crops of cashews in both countries.

## TRIANGULAR AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ARE CONVENIENT MODULES FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH

H.E Mr. Salama ALGhawil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs in Libya has expressed his appreciation for the Egyptian leadership's keenness and commitment to promote peace and stability in Libya. He stressed on Libya's historical interest to enhance its bilateral cooperation with the African countries. Indicating that the Government of the National Unity in Libya is serious to go back on track with the support of the Egyptian leadership.

He referred to the south-south initiative that Libya previously launched along with Cuba and Nigeria. In addition, he urged the technical and financial institutions of the African union to explore new horizons to consolidate the south-south cooperation among African, Asian and Latin American countries, because these countries have similar conditions, and hence they can share a lot of experiences and learn from each other's practices specially while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. H.E. applauded Egypt's experience in fighting the pandemic and described it as a very successful experience.



***“South South cooperation is a very good module for developing countries because these countries have similar socio-economic climates that will foster their cooperation.”***

**H.E Mr. Salama ALGhawil**  
Minister of State for Economic Affairs in Libya

## SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION CREATE A UNIFIED VOICE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

H.E. Amb. Albert Shinigro, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation in the Republic of Burundi, has stressed that south-south cooperation is a very good platform and mechanism for exchanging skills, good practices and technology transfer.

H.E. highlighted that the nature of the south-south cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity and mutual trust among the developing countries. He also indicated that south-south cooperation module represents a powerful tool to strengthen the voice of the developing countries while they are negotiating with the international organizations.

He drew the attention that the countries in the north will eventually decrease their international cooperation budget. Therefore, he called for activating south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation. He also highlighted the importance of combining south-south cooperation, triangular cooperation and north-south cooperation in order to achieve the SDGs.



***“The Egypt – ICF platform is a good occasion to strengthen the voice and bargaining power of the countries of the South towards international institutions.”***

**H.E. Amb. Albert Shinigro**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation in the Republic of Burundi



## TRIANGULAR COOPERATION COMPLEMENTS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

Mr. Riad Ragueb, Acting Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration department, Islamic Development Bank, reiterated that triangular cooperation is not an end on its own. But rather it is one of the tools that can support development and help us to achieve the SDGs.

He also highlighted that triangular cooperation does not replace any other form of development cooperation, but rather it complements south-south and north-south cooperation.

Mr. Riad Ragueb has demonstrated three advantages of triangular cooperation, the first is creating a dialogue among the parties of this modality, the second is promoting trust between the north and south, which strengthens partnerships and joint decision-making. While the third advantage is having a room for flexibility and fostering innovation.

***“Through triangular cooperation the north recognizes that a country of the global south, have a wealth of knowledge, know how an expertise that can be shared.. So the countries of the south are in the lead with the support of the north.”***

**Mr. Riad Ragueb,**  
Acting Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration department, Islamic Development Bank

## TRIANGULAR COOPERATION CONTRIBUTES IN FIGHTING HUNGER IN AFRICA

Mr. Anping Ye, Director of the Program Support and Technical Cooperation Department, FAO, has mentioned that agriculture and food security is vital for the world, especially for the south. He clarified that triangular cooperation can endorse the food security agenda in five ways, the first is by fostering innovations, the second is enhancing the capacity building, third is combining technical and financial resources, fourth is catalyzing investments, while the fifth way is promoting innovative partnerships.

He demonstrated that FAO has always been supportive of triangular and south-south cooperation among its members including African countries. He reiterated that triangular is gaining more importance as it provides low costs and adaptive innovative solutions.

He referred to several examples of triangular agricultural cooperation in Africa such as the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) in FAO which is an innovative Africa-led fund to support African development initiatives. Its main goal is to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

Moreover, he mentioned that Netherlands and China along with FAO have donated funds and technical assistance to Ethiopia in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

***“As a flexible and dynamic evolving modality, Triangular cooperation can open new opportunities to achieve food security... Beyond knowledge exchange, peer learning and technology transfer, triangular cooperation can catalyze development in developing nations.”***

**Mr. Anping Ye**  
Director of the Program Support and Technical Cooperation Department, FAO

## JICA ENDORSES TRIANGULAR COOPERATION WITH AFRICA

Mr. SHINO Masao, Senior Representative, JICA Egypt Office, indicated that Japan has signed partnership programs with several countries including Egypt, and this program is a comprehensive framework to jointly support developmental needs of the partner countries in the region.

He elaborated JICA's triangular experience in Africa by stating that JICA had conducted a bilateral cooperation on rice cultivations and mechanization techniques in Egypt during 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, JICA, in partnership with Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), launched an initiative now known as the "Coalition for African Rice Development" (CARD) to support the efforts of African countries aiming at doubling African rice production within ten years.



***"JICA considers triangular cooperation is effective in various areas such as promoting global and regional cooperation and complementing bilateral cooperation with more rich experiences."***

**Mr. SHINO Masao,**  
Senior Representative, JICA Egypt Office

## INVESTING IN AFRICAN HUMAN CAPITAL

Ms. Rasha Ragheb, Executive Director, National Training Academy of Egypt (NTA), indicated that the academy was established in 2017 and it's headed by H.E. the president of the Arab Republic of Egypt which is a proof that we consider human capital as our most valuable asset. She also pointed that the academy has trained more than 27 thousand civil servants in the Egyptian government.

As for the south to south activities that the academy has been practicing since 2018, she explained that the academy has offered the African presidential leadership program targeting African youth (20 to 45 years old) from all over the continent. And before the COVID-19 pandemic the academy succeeded in graduating 275 trainees representing 50 countries. She indicated that the program duration is 6 weeks and fully funded by the Egyptian Government.

She illustrated that the trainees in this program study different topics related to south-south cooperation, eco system, sustainable development, and most importantly how can they be effective when they go back to their home countries. She also announced that they are resuming this program by mid-October this year.

Ms. Rasha Ragheb elaborated that the academy has two main methodologies, the first is transformational education while



the second is Multidisciplinary education. In this context she clarified that the academy aims to embed the SDGs and Africa 2063 agenda into all their training programs.

***"We believe that investing in human capital is investing in sustainable future.. And Africa is too young by its population, so it's a right investment in the future."***

**Ms. Rasha Ragheb,**  
Executive Director, National Training Academy of Egypt (NTA)



## FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS ESSENTIAL FOR REALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Khaled Abdelrahman, Assistant Director of the Administrative Control Authority (ACA) National Anti-Corruption Academy, highlighted the Egyptian leadership's awareness of the importance of fighting corruption to preserve the gains of sustainable development. Hence, His Excellency the President in 2018 has activated the National Anti-Corruption Academy, and announced an initiative to train 250 African cadres. He indicated that 218 African cadres have already been trained at the Academy during the past two years, and the last batch of African cadres will be trained next month.

He stressed that the focus of the training courses is to exchange experiences in the field of fighting corruption, as well as addressing the distinguished Egyptian experience in preparing, implementing and evaluating national anti-corruption strategies.

He clarified that the training also emphasizes on transferring Egyptian experiences and best practices and learned lessons regarding the implementation of international anti-corruption conventions. In addition to shedding the light on the leading Egyptian experience in the field of overcoming the challenges that may face the anti-corruption process.

Moreover, these trainings address Egypt's experience in using information technology to fight corruption through the project of the State's information infrastructure, which helped the state to have a unified record for all Egyptian citizen and economic entities, and hence contributed in rationalizing the subsidies saving up to 9 billion Egyptian pounds.

***"The Administrative Control Authority is keen to exchange experiences and provide trainings on techniques to fight corruption to our brothers in the Arab and African neighboring countries."***

**Mr. Khaled Abdelrahman**  
Assistant Director of the Administrative Control Authority (ACA) National Anti-Corruption Academy

## POTENTIAL FIELDS OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION BETWEEN EU AND AFRICA

Ms. Blanca Moeno-Dodson, Manager, Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), focused her remarks on the potential fields of triangular cooperation between the EU and African/Sub-Saharan countries especially in the post-COVID context. She mentioned four main fields that the triangular cooperation can flourish between EU and Africa, the first one is the field of pharmaceuticals, where countries like (Egypt, Morocco and Algeria) are positioning themselves to produce the vaccine that could be export to the European market.

The second field is digitalization strategy, where the EU-Mediterranean bilateral trade agreements can be a base to include digital trade facilitations and hence accelerate the digitalization that we are all seeking because of the pandemic.

The third field is achieving energy integration to facilitate Low carbon emissions, where the pivotal factor will be Europe's new green deal and the fact that Africa is rich with natural resources, so Africa through triangular cooperation can meet the increasing demand on green products in Europe with affordable prices.

While the fourth field is agriculture and food security, since the pandemic was a wakeup call that there are many countries that are too dependent on food exports, and hence she called the EU to rethink their policies regarding agricultural measures and cooperation with the south.

***"This is the time for the EU to harmonize tariff and non-tariff measures, transfer knowledge, join countries in research and fully cooperate."***

**Ms. Blanca Moeno-Dodson, Manager,**  
Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IS ALSO ABOUT CAPACITY BUILDING

H.E. Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation, emphasized that international cooperation is not only about financing from the international community, but it is also about capacity building. She also clarified that Egypt's cooperation with different agencies throughout the years have always involved national capacity building.

H.E. highlighted that Egypt has a south-south academy, which hopefully will be activated. She also stressed that Egypt is keen to share its experiences and best practices, as sharing knowledge and experiences together is like creating shortcuts for development. She elaborated that if a country for example implements a project or policy successfully in relation to its SDGs, and shared this practice and know-how with us then we can approach the international community having saved time rather than starting to design a strategy from the beginning.

In the same context, Al-Mashat, pointed out that coordination is vital for triangular and south-south cooperation modalities. H.E. clarified that there are 2 types of coordination; the first type includes the stakeholders within the nation (Government, private sector, civil society, international community working within borders) and that type of coordination requires a lot of clarity from the government in terms of the objectives and the vision.

While the second type of coordination is on the regional level, which means having a unified voice for the south like His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation in the Republic of Burundi has articulated.

Finally, H.E. concluded that the principles of Economic Diplomacy are considered to be one base for the next period with triangular and south-south cooperation.



***“When we talk about international cooperation, we are not only talking about financing from the international community, but we are also talking about capacity building.”***

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat,**  
Minister of International Cooperation



DAY — 02

**PANEL 05**

**INVESTING  
IN HUMAN  
CAPITAL**







# PANEL 05



## THE HOLISTIC EGYPTIAN APPROACH BREAKING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY

H.E. Dr. Nivine Al Kabbaj, Minister of Social Solidarity in Egypt, highlighted the direct relationship between reducing poverty indicators and investing in human capital. H.E. explained that investment in human development unfolds in the provision of basic human rights, including but not limited to; access to education, access to healthcare and access to decent work and employment. Therefore, a holistic approach to the reduction of poverty ensures the fulfillment of various development indicators that directly correlate to key SDGs, which in turn guarantee human and economic development.

Dr. Al Kabbaj took this chance to shed light on the Takaful and Karama initiative, which she refers to as a social safety net umbrella, as it encompasses a social protection programme which goes beyond mere financial support to cover healthcare and education, as well as preventing underage marriage. With an initial plan for targeted social investment in identifiable gaps to strengthen the impact of investment in human development, the initiative has proven to have directly contributed to the reduction of poverty in its 6 years of life. Dr. Al Kabbaj elaborated on the initiative's inclusivity as it captures interventions across the beneficiaries' entire lifespan from early childhood to old age. With 52% of the programme's beneficiaries being under the age of 24, and 75% being women, the programme aims to break the cycle of poverty and continuously strengthen human capital. H.E. salutes Egypt in its reduction of poverty indicators from 32.5% to 29.7% over the past fiscal year, bearing in mind the challenges endured during that time, whether it is the country's strive for economic recovery or undergoing the global pandemic.

## ELEVATING UPPER EGYPT FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

H.E. General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development in Egypt, focused on the Upper-Egypt Development Project during his intervention. The project was implemented in cooperation with the World Bank and the selection of the geographical scope was chosen based on CAPMAS poverty statistics, which showed that Souhag and Qena had the highest poverty rates in Egypt. The Ministry of Local Development started implementing the project in these two governorates, as a prototype. Therefore, They adopted a number of institutional reforms, following a bottom-up approach, on the level of the villages and the directorates. In 2018, the ministry was able to deliver 3500 projects, related to infrastructure, with an aim for the water sewage system to reach full coverage in cities and villages. In addition, an investment of EGP 4 billion was pumped to establish industrial zones in these two governorates, currently the operating rate is 27%. The ministry was also able to identify 14 industrial clusters and they started by supporting 4 of them, by providing the necessary resources to conserve traditional handicrafts. Finally, the project was recognised this year by the United Nations for achieving 12 SDGs.

# AN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING NARRATIVE TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF EDUCATION

**H.E. Dr. Tarek Shawky, Minister of Education and Technical Education in Egypt**, discussed during his intervention the new education system implemented in Egypt. He explained that the political leadership in Egypt considers the Egyptian citizen as the treasure of Egypt, consequently, it is mindful of improving the education to invest in the citizen. **Dr. Shawky** explained that the vision that started in 2014 intends to build a new Egyptian generation, skilled and educated to take on the responsibility of leading the country in an increasingly competitive world. Given the presence of 24 million children in the pre-university education system in Egypt, an ambitious decision was taken in 2016 to reform and rebuild the education system to comply with international standards. "The new Egyptian Education System", which started working in 2017, was proposed in a meeting with the World Bank Group in 2016, and highly supported by the political leadership. It aims to prepare the generation that will graduate in 2030 with the life and technical skills they need to obtain to fit the future of the labor market. The new system differs in terms of philosophy, curriculum, and testing methods. It was the fruit of successful consultations and effective cooperation with Development Partners like the World Bank Group, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, and WFP, but also with several academic partners in the USA, Finland, Singapore from which Egypt benefited immensely from their experience in putting in place effective education systems, between 2014 and 2017. The new system expanded to cover children from the age of 2 to 4 in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Hence, they are being prepared to graduate in 2030 with skills that will prepare them to live 50 years with their competitive skills in the labor market. The most important asset of this new system, according to **Dr. Shawky**, is changing the culture of education in Egypt. The system emphasizes promoting the narrative of learning for learning instead of the concept of memorizing to accumulate grades, long embedded in the Egyptian culture. He explained that it will take time for the whole society to reevaluate and revise the purpose of sending kids to school. Accordingly, the curriculums changed and new digital platforms were created, which were of immense utility during COVID-19.

Nevertheless, **Dr. Shawky** sheds the light also on the technical education system that witnessed valuable reforms recently. These reforms target a higher number of technical students, who are being prepared for the evolving future labor market. H.E. explained that Booklets titled "Future Jobs" will be handed to the technical students, proposing 200 new types of jobs that serve the job market, non-existing before, for them to understand their preferences.

## UNLEASHING FULL POTENTIAL THROUGH CALCULATED INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL

**Ms. Mamta Murthi, Vice President for Human Development at the World Bank Group**, discussed the Human Capital Project. She agreed with **Dr. Shawky** that people are the treasure of a nation, adding that no country was able to sustain long term growth and development without investing in its people.

**Ms. Murthi** explained that the project considers investment in human capital as investment in future productivity. The project also tries to emphasize measurement and data necessary so we can clearly understand which type of spending leads to real outcomes and sustainable investments. On the human capital index, **Ms. Murthi** said: "In the case of Egypt, the most recent assessment was 0.49, which means that a girl born in Egypt and receiving the education and health services available today will only achieve 49% of her potential", which means that public expenditures must be reviewed to explore how to enhance the outcomes of these expenditure. She also praised the Egyptian governments for adopting important reforms, clarifying that "without some of the reforms, it would have been much harder to respond to COVID", but a second generation of reforms is necessary to improve the human capital index.

**Ms. Keiko Miwa, Regional Director for Human Development at the World Bank**, underscored how the pandemic emphasized the importance of strong and resilient systems. She praised the reforms that took place in Egypt in precedence to the pandemic and how these efforts strongly aided the country in maintaining the positive growth it encountered in the past year. **Ms. Miwa** exclaimed that she would like to see Egypt take the lead in the region in assessing its progress and reaping lessons from its experience that the region could benefit from. She outlines that going forward, we should utilize the opportunities presented by crises, as they outline the key areas that need to be strengthened in our system.

## PEOPLE AT THE CORE OF THE ALL-INCLUSIVE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS NARRATIVE

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation** highlighted MoIC's 'Global Partnerships Narrative', a vision for cooperation that rests on three pillars: People, Projects and Purpose. H.E. explained that with People at the core, we become committed to addressing gaps that constrain Egyptians from realising their full potential by achieving multi-sectoral impact. Projects in action are implemented across various sectors, moving beyond the social, to accelerate human development through efforts that promote a proper transportation network, water desalination and treatment plants, access to renewable energy, agricultural interventions and economic empowerment among others. This expansion incorporates more partners in drafting an inclusive narrative, including the government, international development partners, the private sector and civil society. Finally, improving the livelihoods of the Egyptian people is ultimately the driving Purpose to achieve sustainable, impactful growth through our partnerships. **Al Mashat** explained that all projects MoIC develops and frames with other ministries is part of achieving the national SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, and that with 9 years left for 2030, every intervention contributes immensely to the achievement of the global agenda. H.E. reiterates that the decent life initiative is a cross cutting program as it touches upon several areas, and is divided mainly into 2 axes; infrastructure and investment in human capital. With all hands on deck from the cabinet, the interventions of the line ministries immensely contribute to the second axis of the initiative, which is the human component of decent life.



DAY — 02

# CLOSING CEREMONY







Day — 02  
Closing Ceremony

**Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation in Egypt**, started her closing speech by thanking H.E. President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and H.E. Prime Minister, Dr. Mostafa Madbouly, for their support of the forum. She also thanked the high-level participants and development partners who have contributed to the organization of the Egypt-ICF: the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank Group (WBG), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the United Nations (UN).



H.E. extended her gratitude for the participation of esteemed ministers from Africa and Europe, representatives of the United Nations and its different agencies, heads of international and regional financial institutions, as well as participants from the private sector, civil society and media agencies.

She affirmed that the success of Egypt-ICF in its first edition reflects the Government's commitment to support development efforts on both regional and international levels.

Al-Mashat showcased a set of ambitious recommendations that were highlighted in the Egypt-ICF Communiqué that resulted from rich dialogues, as well as sharing of points of view and visions to ensure the importance of multilateral cooperation to achieve sustainable development:

- **Establish an international monitoring framework** to monitor the commitments and agreements reached and trace their implementation at the various global summits and international platforms.
- **Maintain joint efforts with development partners** to strengthen multilateral cooperation mechanisms to overcome the challenges that emerged after COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to existing challenge to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable recovery.
- **Build effective partnerships** that have sustainable impact that include all relevant parties with the aim of achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
- **Strengthen the role of the private sector in development** through international partnerships to provide financial resources and technical support as well as consolidating environmental and social standards in all development projects.
- **Boost South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation** to ensure multilateral cooperation especially among African countries to achieve the 2030 sustainable development goals and the African Union Agenda.
- **Enhance the alignment and harmonization of business practices with international development narratives** by stimulating private sector participation and promoting public-private partnerships through collaborations aiming to define structural reforms and economic policies to achieve this goal.
- **Mobilize resources through international cooperation and development finance** to support the efforts undertaken by emerging and developing countries to improve their infrastructure.
- **Encourage digital transformation led by youth in Africa** to support its ability to correspond with developed countries and achieve innovation-based development.
- **Promote digital investment**, strengthen technological infrastructure and adhere to the African digital transformation Agenda.

In her concluding remarks, Al-Mashat emphasized the Ministry of International Cooperation's commitment to implement these recommendations in order to develop international cooperation and development finance to facilitate the effective role required to achieve the UN's SDGs.



**Amb. Collen Vixen Kelapile, ECOSOC President**, commended the recommendations set forth in the Egypt-ICF Communiqué. He stated that the document pinpoints actions and solutions to address common global challenges, from which he highlighted three key action points:

- 1) Delivering more effective and agile multilateral cooperation.
- 2) Leveraging the comparative advantage of relevant stakeholders to push towards sustainable, equitable and resilient recovery for all.
- 3) Reinvigorating international cooperation by following up on the commitments embodied in the 2030 and Addis Ababa agendas, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.

In light of the pandemic and its aftermath, developing countries have been severely affected, whilst facing acute financing constraints to adequately respond and recover, which might result in a lost decade of development gains. Amb. Vixen elaborated that the key ingredients to overcome these challenges and restore progress include entrenched solidarity amongst countries and more international development cooperation. He further explained how global cooperation propelled the COVID vaccine development at a record speed and highlighted four main areas to capitalize on these efforts for the wider achievement of the SDGs





**First**, enhanced coordination to advance the production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, treatment and diagnostics, as global public goods, as well as increased spending on health and social protection systems to embark on an inclusive and long-term recovery. Furthermore, fostering private sector engagement through adopting innovative financing mechanisms and blended finance instruments in key sectors.

**Second**, strengthened financing for sustainable development. Amb. Collen referred to the Egypt-ICF Communiqué regarding the SDG financing gap, estimated at USD 3.7 trillion per annum. He added that stimulus packages and recovery funds have

retrenched developing countries' fiscal capacity. In that context, he emphasized the need to provide technical support across all financing sources, including concessional financing, debt reduction and relief. He further stressed on the importance of updating tax norms to ensure the optimal domestic resource mobilization for financing sustainable development. He emphasized the importance of acknowledging the critical role of the private sector to realize the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the transition towards a green economy. He added the necessity to create an enabling environment for strengthened Public-Private partnerships.

## ECOSOC UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ECOSOC will convene a special meeting in the lead up to the 2022 High-Level Political Forum, which will bring together governments and other major stakeholders to assess progress achieved and explore opportunities to scale-up access to COVID19- vaccines.
- ECOSOC supports private sector engagement, especially with developing countries, through the annual SDG investment Fair, which provides a platform to accelerate the scaling up of investments for SDGs as well as the global investors for Sustainable Development Alliance.
- In February 2022, ECOSOC will convene a Partnership Forum which aims to discuss ways to define and promote effective partnerships and how they can be leveraged to advance the sustainable development agenda and the 17 SDGs.

**Third**, addressing the challenges posed by pandemic and climate change simultaneously to reduce inequalities is essential to build back fairer and more resilient. Amb. Collen highlighted the importance of meeting ODA commitments, climate finance commitments, as well as building capacities and supporting the achievement of nationally determined contributions. He emphasized that "achieving climate finance targets must not come at the expense of ODA. We must therefore look forward with hope and optimism to tangible outcomes, emanating from the COP 26 in November".

**Finally**, he stated that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of technology transfer, knowledge sharing and leveraging science, technology, and innovation as enablers and viable means for withstanding crises. The role of development cooperation is hence important to support inclusive digital transformations and to work towards narrowing the digital

divide. He agreed with the Communiqué's recommendation that facilitating access to digital technology for rural areas and women is important and requires investments in digital infrastructure and skills to accelerate an inclusive digital transformation. He added that, on the country level, technology transfer and leveraging science, technology and innovation is also needed to ensure developing countries have access to cutting edge technologies, and to unleash the demographic dividend in Africa's youth population.

In his closing remarks, Amb. Collen reiterated what was put forth in the Communiqué regarding the opportunities the pandemic creates, along with a reinvigorated development cooperation, to build a better, more equitable and more resilient future. He called for embracing these opportunities moving forward and working together in an effective and coordinated manner.





# EGYPT-ICF COMMUNIQUE



**EGYPT-ICF**  
INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION  
FORUM | 2021  
ENGAGING FOR IMPACT







# Egypt-ICF Communiqué

We, ministers of governments, representatives of international organizations, private sector, civil society, and think tanks convened in Cairo, Egypt, from 8 to 9 September 2021 at the first edition of the Egypt International Cooperation Forum to acknowledge and emphasize the role of multilateral partnerships in the post-COVID19 era to “Build Back Better”. Through a valuable exchange of ideas and insightful discussions, we look forward to including the recommendations stated hereinafter on the international agenda:

## MULTILATERALISM

- **We acknowledge that COVID-19 created the urge to foster more effective and agile multilateral cooperation** capable of addressing pressing and emerging global challenges. To that end, we commit to concerted efforts towards inclusive, effective and harmonized cooperation towards sustainable development.
- **We realize that the pandemic imposed unprecedented challenges to our development endeavors, but also created new opportunities** and pushed to the forefront of the global agenda climate change, food security, trade and digitalization, infrastructure for development and inclusive partnerships.
- **We encourage establishing partnerships that leverage the comparative advantage of the various stakeholders** to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. We therefore note the significance of capitalizing on the role of the private sector, civil society and think tanks in solving global cooperation challenges, ensuring the optimal allocation of resources, strengthening mutual accountability and achieving sustainable impact.
- **We commend the findings and instruments of current international organizations** that aim to maintain the spirit of multilateralism, and we call for effective collaborations to build on these efforts.
- **We emphasize the importance of following-up on commitments and agreements at the various global summits and international platforms**, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda, and encourage the initiation of an inclusive, multi-stakeholder global dialogue on the establishment of a universal monitoring framework to track the implementation of such commitments.

## SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

- **We recognize that South-South and triangular cooperation complement and add value to conventional forms of development cooperation**, which facilitates access to technical and financial resources, promotes knowledge sharing, exchange of experience and technical know-how and ultimately contributes to sustainable development.
- **We also assert that South-South does not substitute North-South Cooperation**, which is key to bridge the technological gap between the North and South.

- **We call for strengthening existing South-South and triangular cooperation platforms** and reinforcing the mechanisms for sharing knowledge and experience, in order to scale up successful practices through cooperative cross-border frameworks. We hence capitalize on the Buenos Aires Action plan on South-South Cooperation and the Nairobi outcome document, to further promote technical cooperation among developing countries and stimulate national and regional, social and economic development on the medium and long terms.
- **We underline the importance of increased technical cooperation to promote South-South and triangular cooperation** and acknowledge the support already provided to improve national capacities of developing countries, in line with their national strategies.
- **We urge the proliferation of knowledge sharing through south-south cooperation in light of propagating lessons learned, and sharing methodologies for planning, monitoring and evaluating** South-South and triangular cooperation, whilst building upon successful practices in the field. We underline the need for more evidence-based information regarding the scope and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation to guide future identification of priority sectors and projects and optimize the allocation of resources to accelerate our global progress.

## ADVANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

- **We reaffirm that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the blueprint** the international community needs to ensure long-term growth post COVID-19. Having reflected on the biggest challenges in its implementation amplified by the pandemic, we look forward to focusing on not only the mobilization of resources, but also measuring the impact of development cooperation.
- **We realize the 2030 Agenda results framework and encourage each country to take innovative approaches in mapping their progress** to align the results of international development cooperation projects with the SDGs' objectives. Aiming to strengthen inclusive and impactful engagement with development partners, governments, global policymakers, the private sector and civil society - this exercise will underscore key relations, as well as multidimensional linkages across sectors and projects. Thus, guiding future decision making and revealing gaps, opportunities and successful practices.
- **We are committed to streamlining and synchronizing the contributions** of different stakeholders to create necessary synergies that promote further collaboration. Streamlining efforts will not only take place on the international level, but on the national level as well by developing an integrated and inclusive approach to achieving the SDGs across all sectors, and through different channels.

## PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

- **We recognize the persistent SDGs financing gap**, as an additional US\$3.7 trillion a year will be required to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Hence, we call upon all nations and international organizations to capitalize on the indispensable role of the private sector and private investments in achieving the SDGs through the promotion of sustainable corporate practices and impact investment.
- **We are committed to enhancing the alignment and harmonization of business practices with international development narratives**, by aligning strategic business objectives with the 2030 Agenda, with a special emphasis on closing the financial gap especially amid the pandemic economic recovery. We encourage businesses to implement more inclusive economic policies that increase cross-institutional collaboration and align all stakeholders towards environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles, hence fostering impact investing and creating sustainable value chains.
- **We underscore the significance of capitalizing our progress** and shortcomings through analyzing and measuring the volumes of finances directed towards achieving the SDGs, especially in regards to private sector engagement, to assess actual impact. Quantifying and mapping the contributions of the private sector towards the SDGs will allow for more efficient allocation of funds and shed light on successful initiatives that may otherwise go unnoticed, encouraging further cooperation.
- **We acknowledge the significance of reorienting business financing tools towards new blended finance instruments** based on resilient public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships that help in fostering robust channels of communication. They would also support creating an incentivizing framework for the private sector to invest in a wider range of development sectors, as highlighted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. These partnerships are to rest on the notions of risk-sharing, transparency and accountability. With such a model in action, investments in sustainable infrastructure are to be secured, leading to a spillover effect on long-term investment plans across all key development players.
- **We encourage the formulation of multi-stakeholder task forces and working groups** that aim to:
  - 1) Determine all structural, institutional and economic policy reforms that are vital for stimulating private sector engagement in development.
  - 2) Put forward recommendations for creating an incentivizing environment for businesses to catalyze their investments towards achieving the SDGs.
  - 3) Develop risk-sharing mechanisms to build strong public-private partnerships.
  - 4) Pinpoint systemic gaps and key impact investment opportunities for private sector contribution to the development process at the national and international levels.
  - 5) Identify sectors that act as catalysts to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda.
  - 6) Outline innovative sustainable financial instruments that deliver socio-economic and environmental impact.
  - 7) Promote partnerships between the private sector and civil society.
- **We call upon governments to pursue economic reforms** to facilitate both domestic and foreign private sector investments that are coupled with capacity building and knowledge transfer to ensure long-lasting benefits.

## CLIMATE ACTION: A GRADUAL TRANSITION

- **We reiterate our commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement.**
- **We underscore the disproportionate impact of climate change;** Although African countries are the least contributors to global emissions, accounting for less than 4% of total emissions, they are deemed the most vulnerable to climate turmoil.
- **We acknowledge the negative impacts of climate change, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, on socio-economic development** in developing countries, which jeopardize the efforts exerted to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We realize the projected cost of climate damage, if no policy measures are adopted, is estimated at USD 18 billion every year.
- **We recall the commitment of the developed countries to jointly mobilize USD 100 billion** per year by 2020 from different sources of finance to support climate action in developing countries. We also encourage judicious investment in green infrastructure to stimulate economic growth.
- **We recognize the importance of international partnerships and collective efforts in addressing climate change and its consequences** especially in developing countries and among vulnerable communities in order to mobilize resources needed for building back better and greener. We reaffirm the value of sharing experience, best practices and propagating lessons learned to achieve a green transition and build resilience to climate change.
- **We therefore call upon all developing stakeholders and the international community to mobilize all means of implementation** especially finance and to have an equal ambition between financial support and mitigation reflecting common but differentiated responsibilities taking into consideration respective capabilities in light of countries' different national circumstances and pushing forward for a joint action plan to-



contribute towards the achievement of the global goal on adaptation by stepping up our adaptation actions in the context of Paris Agreement.

- **We encourage the promotion of investment and green finance in economic recovery plans.** We underline the importance of introducing new financial instruments such as green bonds and carbon market instruments to reduce GHG emissions, while taking the share of proceeds into account to meet the adaptation target in many developing countries.

## BOUNDLESS DIGITAL TRADE IN AFRICA

- **We reaffirm the role of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in boosting growth and integration of the African economies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.** We reiterate the need to finalize negotiations relating to the enactment of an e-commerce protocol as a guiding tool to harmonize data regulations, facilitate cross-border digital trade, and enable digital taxation on e-commerce. This would eventually foster an inclusive economic recovery, as youth, women and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the key beneficiaries of formalizing digital trade in Africa.
- **We acknowledge that creating an enabling environment for cross-border e-commerce in Africa** requires strong telecommunication infrastructure, cost-effective transportation, consolidated tax systems, reliable payment solutions, and overall awareness of regulatory rules and custom duties and procedures.

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

- **We acknowledge that the inclusion of women in economic activities is pivotal for sustainable growth and for expediting socio-economic recovery post COVID-19.** We also realize the importance of collective action to overcome the challenges that hinder their active engagement in digital services, as well as their economic empowerment.

- **We realize the importance of harnessing the potential of digital technologies to provide women-led businesses with vast opportunities and enhance their competitiveness.** We therefore call for enhancing accessibility to digital technology, especially for those residing in rural areas, by providing women with the necessary digital skills and strengthening their entrepreneurial capacity. We call upon increasing investments directed to ICT infrastructure, which would in turn improve internet connectivity, and ultimately promote women's participation in entrepreneurship and innovation.

- **We reaffirm our commitment to the African Union's Agenda of Digital Transformation.** We realize that driving youth-led innovative solutions to sustainable growth will foster inclusion, lower transaction costs, increase accessibility to the global market and attract multi-sectoral investments.
- **We emphasize the needed policy reforms to improve regulations and create an enabling environment to facilitate the youth-led digital transformation in Africa.** With 60% of the African population under the age of 25, the youngest continent could benefit from the accelerating momentum of digital technologies in reshaping business models by increasing access to finance and enhancing the employability of young workers to meet the demands of the digital economy job market.

## THE ROADMAP TO FOOD SECURITY

- **We emphasize the need for collective action to scale up scientific research and innovation in efforts to strengthen Africa's resilience to climate change and other shocks that threaten the food security of its people.**
- **We call upon the international community to support the development of a roadmap that outlines short-, medium- and long-term solutions for building resilient agricultural and food systems.** It would entail guidelines to facilitate knowledge sharing; promote technology transfer; adopt country-led sustainable agricultural methods; foster smart-climate practices; and support the diversification of livelihoods among rural Egypt-ICF communities seeing as they are the most vulnerable to food scarcity in the face of climatic shocks.

## INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL

- **We acknowledge that investing in human capital is key to long-term growth and sustainable development.**  
In the context of COVID-19, we recognize the vital need for ensuring equal access to vaccinations and the encouragement of relevant initiatives and vaccine production across Africa. Additionally, as important as targeting social sectors is to human development, non-social sectors such as infrastructure, transport and energy equally contribute to enhancing socio-economic outcomes and hence people's livelihoods. These sectors help expand outreach of public services, facilitate access to different markets and reduce logistical costs.
- **We realize that economic infrastructure is one of the most prominent sectors with persistent financing gaps** ranging from USD 770 billion to USD 950 billion. We acknowledge that additional financial resources (up to USD 2.1 trillion) are still needed for low middle-income and emerging countries to achieve SDG targets in education and health, transport, energy and water and sanitation sectors by 2030.
- **We further note that infrastructure investment has a multiplier effect on job growth.** It is estimated that public investment in key infrastructure sectors, if amounts to 1 percent of GDP, is capable of generating at least seven million jobs across both advanced and emerging economies.
- **We therefore emphasize the importance of addressing investment gaps** by mobilizing private and public finance to support power, transport and social infrastructure. This calls for formulating strategic infrastructure development plans, as well as gauging the amount of annual investments needed.











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