

ARAB MINISTERS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM
12 – 13 November 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Nader Al-Dahabi, the second Forum of Arab Ministers for Social Development was held in Amman, focusing on “The role of corporate social responsibility in the Arab region”, from 12 to 13 November 2008, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Management of Social Transformations Programme. This Forum is in line with the recommendations included in the Declaration resulting from the first forum conducted in the Kingdom of Morocco last year as well as with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This Forum mainly focused on private sector initiatives in the field of social development in the Arab region as well as on the South African experience. Moreover, the South African Minister is the current President of the MOST Intergovernmental Council. The Forum dealt with the existing societal strengths and weaknesses and attempted to develop methods that could help foster effective CSR initiatives in the Arab region, in the framework of a concept of CSR that contributes to the goals and priorities of sustainable development in the Arab States. Global experiences revealed that the increasing number of companies which fulfill their social duties can contribute to the achievement of sustainable economic growth.

Recommendations:

1. Thanking H.M. King Abdullah II for his ceaseless concern about social issues, as well as thanking H.E. the Prime Minister for his patronage of the Forum;
2. Ensuring that the discussions in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility are translated into actions aiming at sustainable development, and that the rights and duties of all stakeholders in the process are guaranteed;
3. Emphasizing the importance of aligning Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives with national development goals taking into consideration the role of all stakeholders;
4. Encouraging Arab States to constitute coordinating councils for social development including all the relevant stakeholders, particularly the private sector, under the supervision of the Ministers of Social Development;
5. Promoting a culture favourable to Corporate Social Responsibility in the Arab States through reviewing educational systems to include the larger concept of social development;
6. In line with the values, traditions and cultural heritage of the Arab States, emphasizing the importance of “Waqf” (endowment) as a tool to raise awareness amongst the population on the concept of social responsibility, its role and goals, in addition to stressing the importance of a transparent and professional management of Waqf so that local communities can benefit from it;
7. Forming expert technical committees to carry out analytic specialized research on social responsibility policies and make the resulting information accessible to decision makers, policy makers, academic institutions, private sector and NGOs so that it can be used for future development projects;
8. Creating indicators in the field of corporate social responsibility that are in line with the international principles established by the United Nations. Such indicators would provide essential criteria to evaluate institutional performance;

9. Highlighting the need of sharing experiences between Arab countries in order to facilitate information sharing amongst stakeholders that could be used as a base for real partnerships at the local and regional level;
10. Jordan will hold the presidency of the Forum until the next one, which will be held in Egypt;
11. Presenting these recommendations at the next Arab Economic and Social Development Summit of the Arab League, which will be held on 20 and 21 December 2008 for their endorsement as a basis for an action plan on social development.