

**First Forum of the Ministers of Social Development of the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia), of Egypt, of Jordan and of Lebanon**

**30th April – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007  
Marrakech, Morocco**

**THE MARRAKECH DECLARATION**

On behalf of Mr. Abderrahim Harouchi, the Moroccan Ministry of Social Development, Family, and Solidarity's invitation, the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia), of Egypt, of Jordan and of Lebanon was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2007 in Marrakech, Morocco. The Ministers of Social Development or the Moroccan, Jordanian, Lebanese, Libyan, Mauritanian and Tunisian representatives participated in the first meeting of the Forum. Algeria and Egypt expressed their regrets for not taking part in the meeting in Marrakech.

Were also present at the Forum: Mr. Zola Skweyiya, Minister of Social Development of South Africa, Mr. Joel O. Onyancha, Vice-Minister of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services of Kenya, and Mr. Pierre Sané, Assistant Director-General for UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences sector.

**DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
MAGHREB STATES, OF EGYPT, OF JORDAN AND OF LEBANON**

We, the Ministers of Social Development of the Maghreb countries of Egypt, of Jordan and of Lebanon, gathered at Marrakech on the 30<sup>th</sup> April and the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2007:

- Recognizing that the right to social development is a fundamental right;
- Recalling the different resolutions and recommendations adopted at the international and regional levels, affirming the social dimension to development;
- Recognizing the essential attention that has to be given to social questions in the formulation of national development policies;
- Reaffirming our political will and our determination to promote social development policies that integrate all dimensions of human development, and to fight against poverty and exclusion;
- Concerned to support our countries in the reinforcement of regional and sub-regional integration;
- Recognizing the importance of creating fora of Ministers of Social Development of Latin America, of Africa and of Asia, and their contribution to reinforcing regional social policies;

- Recognizing the necessity to create a Forum of Ministers of Social Development for the Arab countries, that will enable the exchange of good procedures for stronger social policies at the national and regional levels;
- Thanking UNESCO for initiating the Fora of Ministers of Social Development and for the support given to our countries for the organization of this first Forum for the Arab Region;
- Being convinced that the social sciences bring an essential contribution to the formulation of development policies;
- Affirming our conviction that a better use of social sciences can lead to more efficient policies and that to this end it is important to strengthen the ties between social sciences and policy in favor of social development. New forms of interaction between social sciences and public action, including the participation of civil society, are necessary.

**We decide to:**

- Take all necessary measures to strengthen the cooperation between our countries in the domain of social development.
- Institutionalize the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of all the Arab countries, in the aim of facilitating consultations and dialogue that will help identify more appropriate means to promote convergent social policies;
- Put in place a permanent structure for the Forum and hand its presidency to the Minister of Development, of Solidarity and of the Family of Morocco, Mr. Abderrahim Harouchi, for one year. The Minister will be the technical secretary for one year during the presidency of the Forum;
- Mandate the President of the Forum to define, in consultation with the focal points named by the Ministers of the Forum, the practical modalities surrounding the Forum and the modalities for collaboration with the civil society and the research institutions, to create mechanisms of sub-regional coordination for social policies and to establish a lasting cooperation based on the experiences of others sub-regions of Africa, Latin America and Asia;
- Take into consideration the Buenos Aires Declaration adopted on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2006 during the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus organized by UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme and the Governments of Argentina and Uruguay between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February in Argentina and Uruguay, and in particular the two following paragraphs:
  - « 3. With due respect for the autonomy of social science research, we encourage the establishment of new networks (...) to bring together social scientists, policy-makers, and non-governmental and

grassroots organizations around their shared concern for the urgent demands of social and economic development.

4. We call attention to the existence of Fora of Ministers for Social Development at regional as well as subregional levels in developing countries and suggest the creation and consolidation of permanent nexuses between the latter and the above mentioned networks. »

- Take into consideration the discussions of the Conference "From research to politics and from politics to action", organized by UNESCO, in collaboration with the Government of Kenya, in Nairobi, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2007.

**Consequently, we take the following engagements:**

1. To organize national fora of social development gathering policy-makers, researchers and civil society actors;
  2. Support exchanges between the national forums afterwards;
  3. Evaluate and promote partnerships in social development;
  4. Evaluate the programs of monetary transfers occurring in the countries of concern.
- On behalf of the Minister of Social Development of Jordan, Mr. Suleiman Tarawneh's invitation, the second meeting of the Forum will take place in Jordan in 2008. The other Arab countries of the region will be invited to join the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of the Arab countries.