



North-South Centre

European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity



Strategies for Social Development and Social Cohesion in the Euro- Mediterranean Region



Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt
28 June - 1 July 2002

STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION IN THE EURO- MEDITERRANEAN REGION

**International Conference
Alexandria, Egypt**

28 June – 1 July 2002

REPORT

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North-South Centre, Council of Europe

In collaboration with:
Center for the Study of Developing Countries
Cairo University, Egypt



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The Trans-Mediterranean Programme of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe began in 1994. Its aim is to facilitate and reinforce dialogue and cooperation between the countries on the two sides of the Mediterranean in the following fields: the promotion and protection of human rights, intercultural dialogue, education and youth, role of medias, migrations issues.

FOREWORD

Mr Miguel Angel Martínez

Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and
Member of the European Parliament

The Conference on Social Development in the Mediterranean organised in Alexandria by the North-South Centre, of which this report is a summary of the main contributions, was without a doubt one of the high points of our activities in 2002 and yet rich in initiatives.

Our meetings took place in magnificent surroundings, marked by a powerful symbolic value which could do nothing but inspire the participants in their debates. In fact, even before its official opening, the impressive new Library was lent to us by the Egyptian authorities in a sort of unforgettable preview. Aware of the privilege that we were being allowed to share, we are particularly pleased to be able to thank Mr Ismaël Serageldin, director of the Alexandria Library and his employees for their invaluable help and kindness.

No less important – and no less decisive to the success of the Conference – was the contribution made by Cairo University's Centre for Studies of Developing Countries, our chosen partner in the preparation and organisation of the Conference. We would also like to thank them and express our hope that we will be able to explore other fields together, so that our collaboration can go further, after this frankly positive first step.

In this magical framework of Alexandria and its Library, our meeting could only be another link in the chain connecting past and present. It is a chain of tolerance and universal dialogue between different peoples and cultures, where the differences prove to be much less important when we get to know each other better, when we discover each other and manage to go beyond the unjustified and usually erroneous clichés and prejudices. This dialogue is particularly relevant, or even indispensable, in today's context, where the stress tends to be placed on the differences and the rifts rather than on our common history, on that which separates us rather than the values that we share and which are the *raison d'être* of the Council of Europe: freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, naturally including international law.

It was in this atmosphere that our Conference outlined the problems and difficulties marking relations between the two sides of the Mediterranean. It was in a spirit of dialogue, openness, and especially tolerance that we stressed the importance of cooperation and of a sincere, true partnership, precisely to solve the problems raised.

As our common objective was to build an area of stability and peace in the Mediterranean, we soon came to the conclusion that social development was the surest and perhaps even the only way to stabilise the region on a sustainable basis and prevent the increase in radicalisms and extremisms on all sides. We also focussed on the fact that in terms of social development the primary short-term objective should be the fight to eradicate poverty and exclusion.

We have to recognise how many of the participants, especially most of the speakers whose job it was to launch the debates, like all of us, seriously complained about the flagrant deficiencies in the mechanisms and processes undertaken in this field, whose results had been real disappointment. No one admitted defeat, however. On the contrary, everyone affirmed their determination to redouble their efforts to dynamise cooperation and partnerships, which were the indispensable conditions for reinforcing social development, everywhere where it is still only a project, especially in the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

It soon became clear that if these partnerships were to be set up between the different states, their proclaimed goals would only be achieved if the same process was also launched between the actors of European and Arab civil societies.

In addition, political instability and conflicts, particularly in the Near East, were naturally mentioned as being factors standing in the way of development, and even of social cohesion in the region. We were then all asked, all of us who were convinced of our responsibility for advancing along the road of progress, to mobilise in favour of peace which, as Willy Brandt said, «is not everything, but without which nothing is possible».

As an instance and instrument of the Council of Europe, our North-South Centre was particularly pleased with one of the main conclusions of the reflection at Alexandria: that which led the participants to state radically that the social development process can only be imposed if it is accompanied by respect for human rights, which naturally include the right to health, education, work, a healthy environment and security from all points of view.

Through its Transmed programme, for years now our Centre has been developing a solid framework for dialogue between Europe and the Maghreb and Mashrek countries. This dialogue benefits particularly from the quadrilogue structure that characterises the North-South Centre. This is how relationships are forged, as was the case in Alexandria, between government representatives, parliamentarians, locally elected officials and members of associations in the countries on the two sides of the Mediterranean.

The guidelines and activities of the Transmed programme are completely in line with the logic of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership developed by the European Union, commonly referred to as the Barcelona Process. Thanks to the expertise and extent of the networks that this programme has been able to develop and reinforce since its creation, there is no doubt that it could be an important tool for the European Union in implementing partnership and cooperation activities between the countries to the North and South of the Mediterranean.

I am convinced that on finding out about the proceedings of the conference in Alexandria, our readers will realise that it is a region and an issue where it is urgent to intervene with a firm political will, while implementing the necessary resources. I hope that you will find in this report useful information and arguments that will encourage you to take the road where all participation and support are more than necessary.

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FIRST PART

Opening speeches

Mr Miguel Angel Martínez

Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and Member of the European Parliament

Mr President, dear friends,

Only a few days ago we had an important meeting of the Committee for Development and Cooperation of the European Parliament. The meeting was addressed by the Commissioner, who administrates the largest part of the European Union budget and who had come to explain how the Union intended to match its policies in the field of agriculture and in the field of development aid in a coherent way.

My questions – my challenges – to the Commissioner had to do with social cohesion. I reminded him that solidarity has been one of the basic values upon which the European Communities were launched and have developed. All along the European construction process, solidarity has meant a permanent concern and consistent action aiming at cutting down the existing inequalities between countries, or between regions within every single Member State, and even between different social groups at any level.

As a matter of fact, the concept of solidarity has brought us towards the more sophisticated one of social cohesion. Indeed, making European societies more compact, more equal and thus more just and more stable has become a basic goal of the whole European project, one of its identifying features. One may even say that, at least for the more progressive sectors in Europe, each and every single policy of the Union should be evaluated as more or less positive – as more or less acceptable – by means of measuring the added value which that policy brings in terms of social cohesion for Europeans, whatever they are and wherever they live.

To be more precise, in a concrete example: the *raison d'être* of the whole European policy to heavily subsidise agricultural products was the aim of offering farmers and rural populations in general a real chance to improve their living standards and to come closer in all ways to those reached by more urban sectors of society.

But where I wanted to bring the Commissioner was to a case which is becoming more and more frequent and more and more burning nowadays, especially in the scenario of a globalised world. What about European Union policies meant to improve internal social cohesion, and which may nevertheless have the opposite effect, namely, to exacerbate inequalities and therefore disrupt social cohesion at international and world level?

My questions, on that day, directly concerned agricultural subsidies, where the current effects of European internal solidarity and social cohesion on our own societies and peoples are having an obviously opposite effect on societies and peoples outside European borders, namely societies and peoples in the developing world, for the South. But similar issues may be raised in many other fields: industry, for instance.

My point, therefore, was that as we do operate in a globalised world, where Europe, by the way, wishes and needs to play a significant and progressive role, it is no longer sufficient to judge each European policy only in view of the added values that it may bring in terms of internal social cohesion within Europe. Those policies will also have to be judged in view of the added value that they may introduce in terms of world social cohesion. And no policies will be acceptable if they increase international inequalities and imbalance, even if, on the other hand, they may contribute to social cohesion in Europe itself.

The reaction that I got from the European Commissioner, on the occasion I am referring to, was quite surprising and even quite shocking. He stated that social cohesion was, in any case, a priority for internal policies of the European Union and that one was not supposed to take into consideration the effects that such policies might have at an international level. He even implied that it would be up to the action of the European Union in the field of development cooperation to try to correct inequalities provoked by other policies of the Union itself!

This is the type of contradiction that we are currently facing in the policy-making bodies of the European Union. And this should give you an idea of the hard daily pressure that we have to mobilise in order to make our ideas come through, even if one often tends to believe that such ideas should be self-understood principles, accepted and supported by everybody. No, that is not the case.

And, more specifically, it is not the case when one addresses the Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean situation. Actually, this is an area where the number of significant contradictions and paradoxes within the European approach is particularly high, and where joint action from North and South to secure progress in what should be fruitful cooperation needs to be most seriously discussed, decided, coordinated and implemented. Meetings like this one in Alexandria should be useful and even instrumental for that purpose.

In any case, and first of all, I believe that we have to study and describe the current momentum in the Euro-Mediterranean state of affairs fairly and objectively. We must identify some of the contradictions and paradoxes mentioned, in order to elaborate a number of strategic proposals for further action.

And we have to start remembering that it was about seven years ago that a certain process was launched, which we were all going to name after the city where it was born. I mean the Barcelona process. It was, by the way, a genuine partnership and joint venture built together by the European Union and by the countries and peoples from the Southern and Eastern shores of our shared and common sea. The Barcelona process did not appear by chance and it was not a present from anybody. It was the result of many debates, of many efforts and of a good deal of political will and dedication from men and women who had been in each of our countries for years fighting for peace, for justice, for balance, for cooperation and for sustainable development around the Mediterranean. It was the success – or so we believed then – of our shared and strong conviction that our peoples' best future could only be secured in a framework of interdependence and of solidarity. And there was one more point at the start of our mobilisation, and that was that there would be no stability, no prosperity, no freedom and no peace secured for every one of our peoples, as long as even one of them remained deprived of stability, prosperity, freedom and peace...

I am sure that you will all remember the great hope that we all expressed at the launch of the Barcelona process. Well, seven years later, I honestly feel that it is almost an understatement to say that those great hopes and expectations have been deceived and even betrayed.

Indeed, at the time of the French Presidency of the European Union a couple of years ago, and much more recently under the Spanish Presidency, there were two Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences, one in Marseilles and the other in Valencia. And as our leaders tend to be diplomatic and polite, criticisms of the lack of progress of the Barcelona process were reasonably – or rather unreasonably – low at these two big meetings. Fortunately on the fringe of each of them, parallel civil society sessions and forums, with the active participation of our North-South Centre, denounced in very strong terms how great and how frustrating the almost absolute lack of tangible results of the Barcelona process was for the peoples living on the developing side of the Mediterranean.

A few weeks ago, in Algiers, I had the privilege to address the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audio-visual Operators (COPEAM). And I openly claimed there that, in my view, the Barcelona process had been shelved almost from its very beginning. I even dared to state my impression that, where our cooperation is concerned, things are now no better than they were seven years ago. And I expressed my fears that the planned Conference in Valencia and the input of the

Spanish Presidency at large was not going to improve things - rather the opposite. In Algiers I listed three or four major fields where things have obviously worsened in recent times. And now, especially after the Madrid European Summit, there are a couple of other issues to confirm this pessimistic impression of mine.

In any case, these impressions are far from being based on subjective feelings. Unfortunately, they are based on facts that we can't ignore or deny. Let me share a few of them with you, for your consideration and further discussion.

I have said, and I repeat, that things are no better now than they were in Barcelona in 1995, for instance in the following fundamental areas.

All these years, the gap has become considerably deeper between the countries of the European Union and the so-called partners from the South and East of the Mediterranean. Therefore, we have not made any progress towards a more equal Euro-Mediterranean setup. On the contrary, the inequality is today considerably bigger than ever before, in spite of the main goal proclaimed in Barcelona of tangibly reducing this gap, this difference.

My second piece of evidence is that the gap that I have just mentioned has not got deeper only because of the considerable growth of the European side of the coin. It is also the result of the enormous difficulties that the Southern partners face in getting started. The very least one can say is that these countries seem to be blocked, that very limited progress can be recorded in their economies, in spite of serious efforts here and there in the political field. One of the most dramatic consequences of this situation is the exodus produced in many of the countries, with equally worrying consequences: the brain drain of qualified manpower, which should be fundamental for the development of their societies, and, even more, the massive emigration of unqualified workers who leave their homes and come to Europe searching for ways of earning a living, trying to survive, and producing a phenomenon about which I shall comment a bit later, but which is creating tensions and conflicts that are unprecedented at least in the dimension that they are reaching nowadays.

Another great disappointment is certainly caused by the highly unsatisfactory way in which the existing cooperation programmes between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners have been conducted. Even the Association Agreements that have been signed produced very limited benefits to the peoples of the countries whose living conditions they were supposed to improve. On the other hand, bureaucratic procedures and a logical, but heavy control of expenditure have meant that a huge amount of interesting projects could not be implemented. Actually the budgetary provisions placed at the disposal of the programmes were seldom fully used and, year after year, the lines have been reduced in the general budget of the European Union.

By the way, a couple of days after the Valencia Conference where the Mediterranean was defined as a "strategic priority", the Union draft budget for 2003 was presented and it shows a reduction of about 20% in cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean basin.

Last but certainly not least, when we compare Euro-Mediterranean relations today with what they were in 1995, we immediately have to recognise that they have deteriorated completely where the Middle East conflict is concerned. In Barcelona, all hopes were raised towards a peaceful settlement, while now we are watching the genuine massacre and daily deeper humiliation of the Palestinian people. The war logic has overtaken peace efforts and, anyhow, we all know that this conflict is a very sensitive issue with great influence over the political atmosphere in the whole of the Euro-Mediterranean landscape.

I said last, but what was last a few weeks ago is regrettably not last now. Unfortunately, in connection with the end of the Spanish Presidency of the European Council and with the most recent Summit in Seville, two other major issues have arisen, which again worsen the Euro-Mediterranean situation. Both concern the migration question and address several countries of the Southern Mediterranean, often in a humiliating way.

Unfortunately I have not enough time to say much about each of them. Let me just quote one and the other.

Europe has shown its ugliest face – its most reactionary face - when dealing with what some people call the “immigration problem”. Probably, you all know about the very restrictive and regressive views and approaches that have been adopted. That goes against what both the European Commission and the European Parliament have been elaborating in this connection: medium and long term strategies for the development of the countries that the migrants come from, integration and training of the migrants in Europe, in order to give them the possibility to stay among us in full dignity and to come back to their homes as qualified and useful people for their own societies. And so on. Unfortunately none of this succeeded in getting any priority attention. The prevailing vision was how to stop migrants from coming and how to expel them as soon as they were not necessary to our developed industry or agriculture. What a shame! And what a contradiction of the philosophy and the values which we proclaim in Europe as the identity card of our own unity project!

The second aspect of this question is as bad as the first one. I mean the efforts by some to punish the countries which “would not prevent their people from emigrating”, to launch sanctions and to cut development and cooperation aid to those Southern countries who would not contribute towards closing their own territories... This deserves no more comment. It is again a shame, but it is above all simply stupid, as expressed by the Swedish Prime Minister, “Because without European assistance a number of countries would necessarily produce many more desperate emigrants reaching Europe in one way or another”. Mind you, the toughest line was not formally accepted in Seville. But the ideas were in the air and they are in line with the proposals of the extreme right and right forces that are gaining political weight in most European countries: populism, demagoguery, ultra-nationalism, combined with feelings and reactions of racism and xenophobia. All of it gives us great concern as it relates to the very worst of European identity and to our most horrendous, still quite recent history.

My friends, this is the scenario as I see it today in our Mediterranean region. Some may think that my vision is particularly dark and pessimistic. I am afraid that I am only pretty realistic when assessing the framework in which we live and in which we are supposed to act.

Because, in any case, my response to such a vision will never be that of accepting what we do not like, nor that of giving up on the goals that must remain unchanged and demand more from us than ever before. It is true that I have mentioned our frustration, our disappointment, even the perplexity that many of us feel in view of a situation which has not improved as it should have, and as we had expected it would.

Here is where the Council of Europe and our North-South Centre have a unique role to play. The Council of Europe remains the guardian of the values upon which the project of European unity was launched in the middle of the last century: democracy, respect for human rights, freedom, social justice, tolerance, enhancement of the rule of law... We must always keep in mind that the project I refer to was founded upon the slogan “never again”. “Never again” to what we have seen of totalitarianism and of destruction, of war and intolerance, of extermination and genocide. Never again -this was why the Council of Europe was founded and has maintained its action until today.

And there is no better forum to express our concern and our refusal to accept as unavoidable a process that we do not like and we cannot accept. Our North-South Centre, which is formally called “European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity” is the best instrument that the Council of Europe has created, in order to undertake and to channel the adequate response to make our people aware and to mobilise our societies in an effective way. Because just shouting our protest, just condemning, is surely not enough: one has to go further in order to achieve results, in order to reverse the course of History again and to bring it back at least to where it was – where we were – seven years ago, in Barcelona.

The quadrilogue structure of our Centre brings together government agents, parliamentarians, local authorities and representatives of the associations and organisations that make up the civil societies of our respective European countries. And that makes us an ideal microcosm to discuss and to launch concrete initiatives of far reaching political and social ambition.

But our North-South Centre is not only a body to bring together significant and genuine representatives of European societies for close debate and strategic cooperation. It is also a very meaningful promoter of direct contacts between these European representatives and those from countries of the South. In this precise issue, the Centre thus undertakes the responsibility of bringing together European political and social leaders and their alter egos in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The Centre recognises its vocation and assumes the task of a dialogue which will prove indispensable in order to put the history of our region back on the track of peace and progress.

This Conference of ours in Alexandria is, above all, a step in this process that we have decided to take forward: a process of resistance to the current negative tendencies, a process of restating our confidence in our ideas and in our strength, in our chances of success, a process of reaffirmed mobilisation for our shared goals of building a peaceful, balanced, interrelated, united and progressive Mediterranean region.

I am sure that you will all agree with me that we could not find a more suitable country than Egypt, a more inspiring city than Alexandria and a more reliable partner than the Centre for Study of Developing Countries of Cairo University, for the venue of this event. Equally, we could not find a more committed audience than the one represented by the participants in our Conference.

That is why, on behalf of the North-South Centre, I want to thank our hosts for their warm hospitality and I want to welcome all the participants, while inviting all of you to express your ideas in full freedom and with open hearts and minds.

The conclusions of our work will be followed carefully by many people and organisations around the Mediterranean. They will also reach the Council of Europe at large and the European Parliament where a majority of members do share our concerns and our commitments. But above all, what will be important is that each one of us takes the responsibility of going further forward, giving full publicity to our debates and using every opportunity to promote awareness on the issue in the circles in which we act. In this way, the effort made by the Conference organisers will be more than well rewarded.

So my friends welcome and good work. Bear in mind always that, if we stick to our values and never forget our goals, we shall definitively overcome!

Thank you.

H.E. Raouf Saad

Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Mr Jos Lemmers, Director of the North-South Centre,

Dr Mustapha Al-Sayyid, Director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Countries,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr Lemmers and Dr Al-Sayyid for the choice of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina as the venue for this Conference. Indeed this choice serves as a good reminder of the role that the Bibliotheca Alexandrina has played in history as a two-way bridge for cultural, scientific and human interaction between great civilisations around the Mediterranean, though with frictions during some eras of history. Let me also underline my admiration for the choice of the topic for this Conference, "From Poverty to Dignity". The formulation of the topic reflects a deep sense of understanding of the different aspects of poverty, and the need for a roadmap from poverty to dignity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is important to realise that poverty does not only mean material deprivation, i.e. hunger and lack of shelter and clothing, but also deprivation from adequate health care and education opportunities. Equally important, poor people are usually excluded from the political life that directly affects their lives, and, as a result, they become particularly vulnerable to adverse events beyond their control. Therefore, poverty as a multi-dimensional problem, with implications on economic, political, and social aspects of people and societies, requires a comprehensive approach, as well as a high level of coordination on the national, regional, and even international levels.

Indeed, in a globalised world, poverty cannot be treated as merely a national problem. This is very much the case in the Euro-Mediterranean region, where the disparities between the North and the South are huge and threatening. In this regard, the figures are very telling. Ireland's GDP per capita, which is among the lowest in the European Union, was around \$21,000 in the year 2000, while Tunisia's GDP per capita, which is among the highest in the Southern Mediterranean region, was \$5,300 in the same year. Other indicators are numerous and they all lead to the same conclusion.

It is not surprising that the Barcelona process defined poverty reduction in the Southern Mediterranean region as one of its objectives. Attaining this goal should directly contribute to the success of the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. We should remember that this huge area will bring together the markets of at least 27 countries with a population of approximately 600 millions. It is intended to increase competitiveness in the Southern Mediterranean, and consequently create new job opportunities, eventually raising the standards of living in these countries.

However, experience shows that opening up the economy to foreign competition generates new forms of poverty for marginal social groups. Indeed, when the initial inequalities are huge, market forces may deepen these inequalities, leading to the marginalisation of the most vulnerable people, the poor. This is definitely not what we want, and not what the Barcelona process envisaged.

Therefore, I believe that both the State and civil society are responsible for the formulation of comprehensive strategies to counteract the side effects of the market forces. Such strategies should include, among many other things, the creation of effective social safety nets, the development of a transparent and efficient taxation system, the development of a fair education system, and well thought out insurance and welfare programmes. More comprehensively, poverty should be addressed

not as a merely humanitarian problem but rather as a developmental issue. Consequently, poverty should be treated as part of the right to development as a basic human right.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is ironic that poverty is reaching appalling levels and dimensions in the age of globalisation, when the world is achieving unprecedented scientific and technological advances. We need to reflect thoroughly on the globalisation aspect of poverty, as globalisation removes barriers to advances as well as poverty. The worst thing that could ever happen would be to "globalise poverty". Interdependence and development therefore become concepts of mutual interest for the poor as well as for the rich and not merely a donor/recipient relationship.

The events of September 2001 should help us to identify poverty as a danger that must be fought. In fact, the whole international community should realise that "the fight against poverty" is no less important than fighting other threats, with its repercussions on the whole international fabric which is constantly globalising.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a pleasant stay in Alexandria, which has truly become a shining example of cultural and tourist modernity in the Southern Mediterranean, and hope that the Conference will provide you with an appropriate opportunity to make a contribution to the concepts and goals of strategies for the social development of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

SECOND PART

Outcomes of the conference

Remarks of the plenary sessions

1) **Achieving coherence between economic and social policies for human development**

- Economic growth does not guarantee a reduction in poverty or inequalities. Social policies must ensure the redistribution of wealth for economic growth to benefit a broader number of people. In that sense, a higher coherence between economic and social policies needs to be achieved as a prerequisite in the fight against poverty.
- In the context of globalisation, the problem of development is not so much related to the scarcity of resources than to their mismanagement in detriment to the poor. Thus a fight against poverty intrinsically involves a fight for a new approach to resource management.
- Economic exclusion generally goes hand in hand with political exclusion. Social organisations, networking activities and the capacities of people and partnerships should be rethought and strengthened to empower the poor.
- A rights-based approach is fundamental in the fight against poverty. At the international level, there are already legal frameworks and instruments to support social, political, economic and cultural rights to empower the poor. These instruments are the cornerstones of the fight against poverty, considering their political weight in the states that have ratified them.
- A participatory approach to the fight against poverty means that the poor themselves develop and elaborate strategies to alleviate poverty. For that purpose, a political change is required, where the concept of citizenship has to be redefined to include the poor so that they have a say in the policy-making process and the drawing up of strategies to alleviate poverty. This active and inclusive participation of the poor should be guided by principles of good governance, democracy and transparency at all levels (civil society, state and international institutions in both the North and South.)

2) **Shared social responsibilities: towards social development and cohesion in the Mediterranean region**

- Cooperation and partnerships are essential to support social development and cohesion in the Mediterranean region. Nevertheless, the establishment of partnerships should not be exclusive to heads of state and government. The Arab and European civil societies, unions, local and regional authorities and parliamentarians should also do the same. Dialogue and exchange are at the heart of this dynamic of cooperation between the different actors and levels.
- One can find the origin of global poverty – as a universal threat to people’s basic human rights – far beyond the community level. Although local development projects are essential to fight the poverty that affects people in their daily lives, the issue of global poverty should also be looked at from a systemic point of view. As a result, shared responsibilities should not be regarded from regional, national or local levels only but also from a global perspective.
- Where shared responsibility is concerned, the private sector should work together with civil societies and abide by the standards of the International Bill of Human Rights which consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. Instances of appeal to ensure that all actors – including the most powerful

– take their share of responsibility towards the poor should be established at an international level. Shared responsibility along with human rights protection should be enshrined in international law.

- A solid social system must be established to face unexpected events so that public expenditures hold up during times of crisis and the poor can resist economic and social insecurity ensuing from economic fluctuations, natural disasters or epidemics.

3) The contribution of international institutions to the fight against poverty and social exclusion

- Comparative studies have shown that reducing inequalities not only contributes towards the reduction of poverty but also benefits economic growth. Thus, international institutions should aim their efforts in that direction and bring their decisions closer to the beneficiaries all at once.
- The informal economy for survival is an important part of the macroeconomics of southern countries. Unfortunately, workers in the informal sector do not benefit from social protection – where it exists – and thus do not enjoy international or national standards. It is essential to reinforce labour organisations and unions to encourage the formalisation of work whether it is to guarantee access to credit or to provide them with social security.
- Countries on the south side of the Mediterranean have the essential human, financial and environmental resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals if the political will is there.
- To face the lack of transparency which occasionally characterises the decision-making processes of international institutions, a judicial authority should be established to counter decisions violating human rights.
- The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should not be considered as exceptional actors but rather as being part of a cluster of actors in the fight against poverty.
- Faced with structural adjustments or any other WTO conditions going against the economic, social or cultural rights guaranteed in the International Bill of Human Rights, a state is not only entitled but is legally bound by international treaties to turn down such conditions.

4) Towards a Euro-Mediterranean partnership responsible for and committed to social development and social cohesion

- Political instability and insecurity prevent poverty alleviation and inequality reduction in the region. The Barcelona Process should go together with a strong peace process in the Middle East. Its objective of creating an area of prosperity through sustainable and balanced development cannot be achieved without sustainable peace. A true and committed political dialogue is required to put an end to insecurity and instability, which represent a permanent violation of human rights in the region.
- Specific programmes in different fields (scientific, cultural, economic, social, etc.) involving a broad range of actors (governments, parliamentarians, NGOs, local authorities and international agencies) should be reflected on and carried out with a firm political will and the appropriate tools.

- A new moral impetus to fight against poverty is needed. To put forward such a moral system, coalitions and partnerships are essential. Organisations such as the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe can play a key role in promoting and facilitating cooperation to support a common approach to social cohesion in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- The diversity and dynamism of civil societies should be intrinsic to the consolidation of social partnerships with the empowerment of citizens as a primary objective. Empowering civil society and enabling states to engage with their citizens in a substantive and democratic partnership is essential in tackling the long-standing and apparently persisting problems of poverty.
- Cooperation and partnerships among international organisations and key players in the field of human rights and development have to be strengthened to build social cohesion, where the poor also benefit from the latest technologies and scientific advances to control health and social risks. The same opportunities must benefit all for the global social aspect to alleviate poverty and inequalities.
- A common approach to social cohesion should not be seen as a linear, progressive process where social and political developments result from cumulative knowledge and progress. A genuine dialogue for cooperation and partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region should be driven by a respect for different cultures and identities throughout the Mediterranean region, thus acknowledging the potential and richness of diversity.
- Among the many dimensions of cooperation between North and South, migration remains one of the most important and encompasses a wide range of issues (brain drain, refugees, human trafficking, migrant life in the host country, etc.) A serious dialogue on migration issues needs to start urgently among countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The economic and social dimensions of migration issues should be the starting point of discussions since they interrelate – in one way or another – with social development and human rights protection in the region.
- The political deficit can only be solved with a common approach to the problems of the region – an active approach with a number of simultaneous objectives of which the most important are: to found a common political vision of Europe and the Mediterranean in the world, to give a clear signal in the EU of the benefits of cooperation and partnerships in the region, to define a network of principles and procedures for dealing with sensitive issues such as peace in the Middle East, immigration and regional security, and to bring civil society into the elaboration and implementation of policies and programmes of action.

Reports of the working groups

Working group 1: **Achieving coherence between economic and social policies for human development**

The following actions were proposed:

- Recognising human development policies as an integral part of human rights, and the right to live with dignity as one of the human rights.
- Acknowledging the fact that peace in the Mediterranean region is essential for orienting resources towards human development.
- Distinguishing the different levels of analysis and action.

At a **macroeconomic level**, it is necessary to revise the tools used in macroeconomic policy with a view to making them more flexible. Strong macroeconomic and macro-political constraints are hindering the fight against poverty and explain the global failure to reduce poverty. From the macroeconomic point of view, this type of insertion in the world economy has led to very high financial dependence and to a difficulty in implementing the distribution of revenue which in the end favours the rich.

The modification of macroeconomic constraints would leave room for manoeuvre to reduce the vulnerability of the poorer classes.

The **sectoral level** is better adapted to the poor, particularly in terms of agricultural, rural and financial policies in the field of micro-credit.

It is vital to insist on the importance of partnerships between regions and localities.

At an **international level**, there should be coordination with financial institutions.

It is necessary to:

- Focus on the institutional aspect. A new thought rethinking the role of the State. Even if public expenditure has to be reduced, this should not affect spending on education, which is of vital importance to human development.
- Activate and encourage the role of civil society, with an adequate formation of NGOs, in order to form groups and lobbies and to network all the actors to reinforce social cohesion.
- Develop the participative approach of the beneficiaries of projects by means of appropriate listening to prevent withdrawal and violence. The social aspect of poverty and not its economic aspect only should be taken into account. Social development should be a top priority.
- To disseminate the different experiences in the fight against poverty to capitalise on and be inspired by these same experiences.
- To distinguish between two levels of action:
 - The governmental level to stress the importance of employment, education and health policies;

- The parliamentary level, considering parliament as an agent of development and not just as a lawmaker.

Working group 2: The Contribution of International Institutions to the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion

Introduction

The working group investigated potential approaches and methodologies to enhance the contribution of international institutions in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Towards this end, the group bore in mind the guidelines established by the organisers of the conference, which included:

- Organising civil society and non-governmental organisations to promote different human development.
- Shared social responsibilities and role of political powers.
- Taking stock of the social and developmental context in the Mediterranean and the partnerships that can be forged.

The working group addressed the above issues at four different levels of interaction and involvement by international institutions and poverty alleviation efforts, which are:

- Specific interventions and programmes.
- The national level.
- The regional (Mediterranean) level.
- The global level.

From the outset, the working group decided to adopt a broad definition of "international institutions" and to address its recommendations to a broad range of institutions to include not only the international financial and trade institutions (IMF, World Bank and the WTO) but also others, such as the UN agencies, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Arab League, and the African Union.

The recommendations were as follows.

1. Specific interventions and programmes

- a. To recognise the important contribution of NGOs to social development and thereby legitimise NGOs and civil society associations and create the right conditions for them to operate effectively.
- b. To implement concrete measures to ensure that international organizations have direct access to local NGOs.
- c. To form partnerships with all stakeholders (governments, intergovernmental organisations, local and regional authorities, civil society and the business community) in the implementation of projects.
- d. To prepare responsible entry and exit strategies (international organisations).
- e. To strengthen democratic culture and institutions in the Mediterranean. In this respect to seek the experience of international organisations like the Council of Europe to share their expertise in the field.
- f. To promote educational exchange programmes across the Euro-Mediterranean region. For example, to extend the ERASMUS programme to include exchanges of students and university lecturers from the countries of the southern Mediterranean.

- g. To encourage and strengthen genuine partnership between the NGOs of the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean.
- h. To design and adopt effective emergency programmes to deal with conflict situations especially in the case of Palestine. In addition, the development of an emergency fund is recommended.
- i. To establish *joint consultative groups* involving governments, IGOs, NGOs, local authorities and the business community to consider the elaboration of projects related to the fight against poverty.
- j. To avoid wastage of resources and duplication of efforts through greater coordination among international organisations for the implementation of projects on local and national levels.
- k. To better target donor funds to reach the communities concerned and to minimise excessive overheads.

2. The National Level

The working group stressed that the activities at the national and regional levels should receive priority. Recommendations at the national level included:

- a. To encourage all countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region, especially on the southern and eastern shores, to establish and adopt national anti-poverty plans in line with the international commitments made at the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) and its five-year review in Geneva (2000). In this respect to exchange "good practice" between the northern and southern parts of the Mediterranean.
- b. To stress the importance of early and proficient preparation of the Millennium Development Goal Reports (MDGRs). This applies not only to countries south of the Mediterranean in addressing urgent developmental needs but also the countries of the north on how they should fulfil their commitments to supporting the developing countries especially in the form of increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) (up to 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP) and addressing issues of external debt.
- c. To achieve *policy coherence* across all government departments. In the same respect, to consolidate fragmented social policies in a strong national strategy aimed at poverty eradication and reinforcing social cohesion.
- d. To ensure complete national ownership of anti-poverty strategies and MDGRs.
- e. To strengthen the capacity of states to:
 - i. Deliver and implement pro-poor policies, programmes and interventions.
 - ii. Resist conditions imposed by external actors especially when contradicting national priorities and strategies to fight against poverty.
 - iii. Enhance their negotiations with the international financial and trade institutions.
- f. To ensure effective use of relevant regional and international reports such as the Arab Human Development Report and the Arab League Report on the

implementation of the World Summit on Social Development, the latter of which will be due in 2005.

- g. To achieve an appropriate balance between capital and labour mobility across the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- h. To fully recognise the concept of *shared responsibility* of all countries and parties when dealing with the issue of external debt.

3. The regional (Mediterranean) level

- a. To recognise the Mediterranean (north, south, east and west) as a holistic entity in political, social, economic and cultural terms. In this respect to consider the establishment of regional institutions like:
 - i. A Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean.
 - ii. A Mediterranean Crisis Resolution Forum.
 - iii. A Mediterranean Investment Forum.
- b. To address the delicate issue of migration in an open and responsible manner and to the benefit of all concerned.
- c. To find effective strategies to deal with *extremism* in all countries of the Mediterranean and beyond.
- d. To seek the establishment of a long-lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East that takes into consideration the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people in a secure and independent state.
- e. To address the importance of dealing with regional conflicts, including the situation in Cyprus. In this regard, it was stressed that the poor were among the first victims of these conflicts.

4. The global Level

- a. To project the cultural traditions of the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean entity at a global level.
- b. To find the appropriate *positioning* of the Mediterranean in the global geo-political context, e.g., with regard to NATO and to an independent Mediterranean position to the Middle East conflict.
- c. To achieve coherence between economic and social policies by establishing greater dialogue and cooperation between the policies of the international financial and trade institutions focussing largely on economic policies and the UN agencies' policies concentrating mainly on social issues.
- d. To advance, adopt and implement the "human rights framework" across all international organisations as a ready, authoritative framework for moving from poverty to dignity for all.

Working group 3: Shared social responsibilities towards Social Development and Cohesion in the Mediterranean regions

- Shared social responsibility is a highly ethical concept, involving the participation of all players: the state, local authorities, NGOs, companies and citizens. It should therefore be exercised within the framework of national and international agreements.
- The state is an essential player in the exercise of social responsibility, as it represents the common interest, creates the constraining legal frameworks and ensures their enforcement. In the context of globalisation, however, governments are being faced with legitimacy crises and tend to withdraw from the social front. It is therefore vital to reinforce the social responsibilities of other players.
- The development of civil society by *ad hoc* forms of organisation lies at the heart of the possibility of sharing social responsibility, though we cannot deny that the private business sector should progressively begin to play a part in the sharing of responsibilities, especially in the fields of respect for human rights, workers' rights and the environment. Where multinationals are concerned, shared social responsibility also means respect for the savoir-faire, knowledge and cultural and natural heritage of the countries in which they operate, as well as a transfer of technologies, indispensable to the Southern countries.
- Shared social responsibility should also lead to the development of new ethical tools and instruments to facilitate the involvement of the different players and to pave the way for the elaboration of new legal frameworks.
- Social responsibility should be exercised with the poor and not just for the poor. In order for the poor to be able to participate in exercising social responsibility, their dignity must be recognised. Dignity is the poor's wealth and their main trump card in reaching social agreements.
- Social responsibility can be shared at different levels and with the participation of different players. This sharing means equal conditions and identical access to income, information, services and power.
- In the case of obvious inequalities between the players concerned, the sharing of social responsibility should take the form of a contract that places the players at the same level. Without balanced power, it is impossible to share social responsibilities.
- It is necessary to distinguish social responsibilities shared inside a country from the sharing of social responsibilities between countries and particularly between North and South, in this case, between Europe and the non-European Mediterranean countries.
- Within countries, the sharing of social responsibility means that the poor are given a real space to express themselves, even if there is not yet any political response to their needs. In fact, the poor should be actively involved in the processes of elaborating the answers to their problems.
- Within countries, the sharing of social responsibility also means recognising the inequalities between areas and regions: the areas with fewer resources require special attention.
- Within countries, the identification of the most vulnerable groups is also part of shared social responsibilities. When a vulnerability has been identified, it should then be possible to "give a voice" to the groups in question, though taking care to avoid discrimination or any attribution of guilt.

- Within countries, raising public awareness of the condition of the poorest helps to find responsible and shared solutions before violence can break out. Social mobilisation can also lead to a change in the relationship between state and citizens.
- The sharing of social responsibility between non-European Mediterranean countries means setting up mechanisms for capitalising on their knowledge of resources, experience, cultures, etc., which should be put to good use in order to create a framework for the exercise of social responsibility in the respect for each one's own identity. The creation of a network of institutes for Mediterranean studies might benefit such a step. In that context, the regional integration between Mashrek and Maghreb would be a priority.
- These same countries should insist on the use of international funds for the creation and reinforcement of cross-border and transnational cooperation aimed at developing their own strong points and sharing the responsibility for finding solutions to common social problems in the region.
- Between North and South, and particularly between Europe and the non-European Mediterranean countries, shared social responsibility should touch on a number of fields, trying to avoid focussing this sharing only on the issue of migration. The fields requiring shared responsibilities are: migration, investment by multinationals, trade, culture, research and the transfer of knowledge, peace and democracy.
- Between North and South, the sharing of social responsibilities also means the recognition and negotiation of controversial aspects, while avoiding imposing solutions by force.
- The sharing of social responsibilities between North and South should evolve towards horizontal systems, such as the creation of networks in the different fields to ensure the free exchange of knowledge leading to the equitable development of human, natural and vocational resources.
- The debts of the southern countries fall within the framework of shared social responsibilities.
- Respect for the international legal frameworks is still the basis of all equitable sharing of responsibilities.
- Finally, complementarity in the exercise of social responsibility is an essential element that must be respected in order to ensure that diversity finds expression and that individuals can exercise their own responsibility at their own level, without any kind of oppression or colonisation.
- Above all, the sharing of social responsibility is an expression of democracy at all levels, including transnational.

Final declaration

We, the participants in the Alexandria Conference on Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for Social Cohesion and Social Development:

Note the following:

- A. At the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995, 117 heads of State or Government adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action, which represented a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. The eradication of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration were identified as key objectives, complemented by 10 commitments. Five years later, the 24th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS-24) was convened in Geneva in June 2000 to review the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments.
- B. Since the Copenhagen summit, the globalisation process has presented new challenges for the fulfilment of the commitments made and the realisation of the goals of the summit. The globalisation process has provided many beneficial opportunities but it has also created widespread concern over its potential damage and social costs. The globalisation process has accelerated capital transfers and strengthened free-market approaches, in many cases leading to greater economic growth, but the capacity of governments and the international community to supervise and organise the resulting changes for the benefit of all has fallen short of human needs. Current trends in globalisation have contributed to a sense of insecurity as a number of developing countries and transition economies have been marginalised from the global economy. Moreover, poverty is a feature not only in the developing countries but increasingly in the industrialised nations. There is a need for collective action to anticipate and offset potential negative social consequences of globalisation and to maximise the benefits of a stronger world economy for all members of society, in particular the poor and marginalised. Social development should become the intentional goal of global economic development, not a wishful side-impact through potential trickle-down effects.
- C. Due to the lack of a clear and realistic prospect of drastic poverty reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals, it is not surprising that there is growing civil society discontent over the current trend of globalisation and that these prevailing trends are often identified with the role of the international financial and trade institutions. It is no secret that civil society activists view the policies of the international financial and trade institutions as major factors in the global process of impoverishment. This can be seen from the civil protests at the meetings of the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF. The G8 meeting in Genoa and European Union Summits have begun to attract the same types of protest.
- D. There can be no doubt that the role of international financial and trade institutions in achieving poverty eradication is critical. Their lending and trade policies can have tremendous positive or negative impacts on the social development of people. Areas of major impact include:
 - *Structural Adjustment Policies* – It is well documented that the inappropriate design of structural adjustment programmes fostered by the World Bank and the IMF has weakened the management capacity of public institutions as well as the ability of governments to respond to the social development needs of vulnerable sectors of society and provide adequate social services. It is important to ensure that, when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to, they include social development

goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and enhancing social integration. The Bretton Woods institutions have indeed begun to pay more attention to the social development dimension of their structural adjustment programmes and lending policies. However, this process needs to be further strengthened.

- *External Debt* – The external debt burden has weakened the capacity of many governments and eroded resources available for social development. IFIs should be encouraged to take action to achieve rapid progress towards faster, broader and deeper debt relief as agreed under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and to implement appropriate debt relief initiatives that can lead to a sustainable solution to their debt burden. Some attempts have been made to introduce the HIPC but this is still limited.
- *International Terms of trade* - The persistent decline in the terms of trade for commodities exported from African and other developing countries has prohibited growth of real national income and savings to finance investment. Moreover, it is important to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries in transition to address their participation in the world economy through the WTO. UNCTAD could also play an important role in this context. It is essential for developing economies to participate effectively in international economic forums, and in international trade negotiations, including the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO.
- *Sustainable development* - The IFIs should give much more emphasis to the overall objective of facilitating sustainable development and increase their support for national health and education programmes. The right to a healthy and sustainable environment should be constitutionally recognised, and access to this right should be effectively pursued. Such a rights-based approach, based on the United Nations covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, should provide guiding principles not only for governments, but also for the IFIs that advise and influence those governments.
- *Human rights* - Policies of the international financial and trade institutions have had tremendous impact on human rights and in many cases have undermined the international human rights standards set by the international community. This runs counter to obligations of the State under the various human rights covenants. Whilst these institutions are not human rights institutions per se, and are not primarily intended to promote human rights, at the very least the impact of the policies they advocate should not contradict international human rights standards that have been set and agreed.

In the light of the above analysis, the participants at the Alexandria Conference:

1. State as our conviction that the attainment of life in dignity for all and the fulfilment of the objectives of sustainable development are within reach and that all the necessary means to achieve these objectives already exist in the world today. We confirm in this context that Global United Nations Conferences of the past decades have provided a comprehensive global agenda for action and that only political will is required to achieve desirable progress towards objectives that have already been agreed upon.
2. Note with satisfaction that progress towards social development is being made in all regions of the world, recognise that there is no one universal path to social development and welcome the existence of different pathways to attain the objectives of such development as well as the valuable experience and good practices from which all regions could learn.

Particularly noteworthy are those experiences where the most vulnerable groups have been able to take a lead in defining programmes bringing in their own, too often excluded wisdom and talents.

3. Reaffirm the commitments made by States on all continents to recognise the primacy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and other international and regional legal instruments confirming the fundamental, universal, indivisible and interdependent rights of all individuals wherever they may live. It is the first and foremost responsibility of States to promote and protect these rights and to serve the people's interests on that basis.
4. Affirm our dismay and indignation over the fact that half of the world's population has to survive on less than 2 dollars a day and that their right to live in dignity is being denied. We consider this prevailing poverty the greatest mass-violation of human rights in the world today. We also note that poverty is a global problem and that it exists in all regions of the world, including areas where high living standards have been attained by a large majority.
5. Note that currently practised economic, financial and trade policies are not designed to serve the people's fundamental interests to which States have committed themselves by subscribing to universal and regional human rights protection mechanisms. Existing economic policies continue to ignore the world's greatest resource of all: its people and the untapped potential of their talents and workforce. Global unemployment is shamefully high and this represents a missed opportunity for humanity. If current policy trends prevail, the agreed objective of reducing absolute poverty to half by the year 2015 will prove unattainable.
6. Declare that the pursuit of life in dignity for all and the attainment of social development objectives constitute the greatest investment opportunity for humanity as a whole and for sustainable, global economic development. Social development is not a drain on the economy or a mere correction mechanism to make economic policy acceptable, but a necessary and indispensable component of sound economic policy.
7. Demand as a matter of priority that an acceptable balance be achieved as soon as possible between macro-economic, financial and monetary, and global trade policies to bring them in line with the first objective of achieving life in dignity for all and that this be considered the first and foremost challenge of governance in a globalising world.
8. Propose the following steps to strengthen universal, regional and national social development policies:
 - Firm commitment to, and full application of gender related objectives: investment in girls and women is a sustainable investment in social development.
 - Sharing and learning from best social development practices ranging from micro-credit schemes and self-employed women's experiences in Asia, to traditional solidarity practised in Africa and social rights standard setting in Europe.
 - Full recognition of the interdependence of human rights, democracy and development and the need for transparent and accountable governance over national and global markets to make them serve the public interest.
 - Recognition of the essential role of civil society as a mainstream actor for global social development and as a watchdog to identify trends running counter to the public interest.
 - Reaffirmation of the recognised principle in international law of not backtracking on social achievements and holding governments accountable to this principle by monitoring the state of compliance with economic, social and cultural rights.

- Engagement not to violate the human rights of citizens not under a State's direct jurisdiction: this means minimising the negative external impact of States and citizens and companies under their jurisdiction. Application of the principles of transparency and accountability, and of the right to compensation, for example the ecological debt principle for inflicted pollution and environmental damage.
- Application of peer group pressure within each region to achieve higher social standards.
- Punishment of government officials or any other actors withholding information on practices which may violate human rights, including social rights.
- More resources for elaborate human rights monitoring mechanisms.
- Investment by all countries in social policy according to their means, as is also practised within welfare states that have chosen to afford it. In this context the commitment to 0.7% of GNP for development assistance should be considered a minimum standard.
- Recognition that globalisation without democratisation is unfair and unsustainable and a violation of the basic democratic principle that people should be involved in decisions affecting them. People should have a say about matters that concern them at all levels of society, from local to global.
- Recognition of the enormous importance of education, from capacity building in the global South to raising awareness of the need for new consumption patterns and sustainability in the North. Adequate funding should be set aside for education to raise the level of acceptance and public support for global development objectives as a matter of common interest for global human security.
- And the bottom line: social development efforts are most successful where the poor and vulnerable have been able to define programmes on the basis of their own talents, experience and only too-often excluded wisdom.

Summary reports and analyses of the conference by Prof Larbi Jaidi and Prof Pandeli Michel Glavanis

Prof Larbi Jaidi

Chairperson of the Bouabid A. Foundation, Professor at Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco

There are more and more international conferences on the issue of poverty. But the gap between what is said and what is done is not getting any smaller. What can we do to make progress in the fight against social exclusion? What conditions need to be created to establish coherence between economic and social policies in order to favour human development in the Mediterranean region?

The Alexandria seminar helped to establish an innovative approach in dealing with these issues: respect for human dignity is the most appropriate way to ensure a favourable outcome for the problem of poverty. It was a matter of combining within the same measure economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights and the right to development. At the centre of this measure was the principle of shared responsibilities, which was clearly stated, making it possible to underscore the role of social and associative movements in mobilisation in defence of fundamental rights and respect for human dignity. It also made it possible to focus on the relations that need to be established with the State and the other components of society when drawing up and implementing the appropriate social strategies. The ambition of this meeting was to help to re-establish a project, that of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership committed to and responsible for shared development and strengthened social cohesion.

The title "from poverty to dignity" reflects a profound understanding of the different aspects of poverty and the need to draw the main lines of a programme of action making it possible to act in favour of respect for human dignity. Poverty is not only a question of material deprivation. It is a multidimensional phenomenon, whose implications for the economic, political and social aspects of peoples and societies requires a significant approach with a high level of coordination of initiatives and policies, at a national, regional and international level. The articulation between economic and social policies has long been recognised. In a globalised world, poverty cannot just be treated as a national problem. This is the case in the Mediterranean region, where the disparities between North and South are very great.

Globalised or regionalised society has become a high-risk society. And the risk is no longer linked only to natural phenomena; it is produced by human activity. This globalised society is also a society that maintains or invents traditions to recreate community ties. Religious fundamentalism is the fruit of unbridled globalisation or regionalisation, which it both uses and fights against. Paradox: it is at the moment when democracy is spreading around the world that there is growing disillusionment with it. Politics has lost its centrality and attraction. There are many that consider it powerless in the face of market forces managed by professionals that do not care about the real stakes of society. Renovating democracy means both finding mechanisms for holding the political, economic and social actors accountable and for including marginalised groups in the political game.

Globalisation and regionalisation are a reality. It is important to ensure that they become vectors of well being for the peoples of the region. They must abide by moral and ethical imperatives, including respect for human dignity. Ethical globalisation is the hope of establishing ties of understanding between populations with different cultures, traditions and social conditions. The art of acting from this perspective does not just boil down to intergovernmental action in the strict sense. It depends on the capacity of the decision makers to consult and listen to civil society. The booming associative movements are gradually building a world with its own language for talking to the political powers and business players who are witnessing the vitality and renovation of democratic expression. This is why

it is up to governments, regional institutions and multilateral organisations to organise the debate with the new partners, without exclusion, but with a concern for transparency and shared responsibilities.

Since the Barcelona Conference, the construction of a Euro-Mediterranean project has been guided by a utopia called regional solidarity. Today, this utopia has lost a lot of its power for several different reasons: because the project has been reduced to a minimalist version, the implementation of a free-trade zone, because the doctrine of free trade is becoming less convincing and, finally, because the argument of economic effectiveness is not enough to lend legitimacy to a joint project. We need a new utopia, one that cannot be defined in terms of economics, but one that should take into account the confrontation of economic objectives and other, social and political objectives. We need rules for reconciling democratic experience and the supranational nature of the problems posed, in order to found the legitimate provisions on a more solid base, bringing into play the heterogeneous aspects of social life.

It is precisely because the social reality seems very distant from the united vision announced by the Euro-Mediterranean project that the content of this project should be revived. In addition to the essential technical discussions, it is the political deficit that needs to be covered. This deficit can only be solved with a common approach to the problems of the region - an active approach with a number of simultaneous objectives of which the most important are: to found a common political vision of Europe and the Mediterranean in the world, to give a clear signal in the EU of the benefits of cooperation and partnerships in the region, to define a network of principles and procedures for dealing with sensitive issues such as peace in the Middle East, immigration and regional security, and to bring civil society into the contemplation and preparation of policies and programmes of action. In each of these fields, what counts is not the short-term result. What counts is the implementation of a process involving a credible, legitimate institutional approach.

The activities of the North-South Centre have strengthened understanding between Europe and the other regions of the world. They have acted as a catalyst in triggering processes aimed at the defence of human dignity. The Alexandria Conference was an important step towards this end. After the conference, we are convinced that future activities will be even more centred around processes creating policies that must reflect human dignity and that must focus even more on regional solidarity. And the partners of civil society, the political decision makers and economic players must all be made part of this process.

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Participants at this conference agreed that "Poverty is not inevitable" and that, although its elimination was complex and difficult, it could be achieved. To embark on such an objective, however, demanded more than international commitment or noble aspirations. To make progress, the participants noted, we must adopt new ways of working collectively on a global scale and to create partnerships across the Mediterranean (*mare nostrum*) as well as between states and civil society. The conference also noted that the "elimination of poverty" was about ensuring that the poorest people benefit as we move towards a global society and that developing countries, and their citizens, must be empowered to take the lead in both identifying their own objectives and setting the agenda for an anti-poverty strategy. In this perspective, which was echoed repeatedly during the discussions, the North (nations, agencies and organisations) is invited to become an active, supportive and ethical partner and contribute in a substantive manner to the work that is prioritised by the anti-poverty strategies of the South (states, citizens and civil society).

To achieve such partnerships is of course a formidable challenge and the participants acknowledged, and highlighted, on numerous occasions throughout the conference, the immense difficulties and obstacles in the path of both bilateral and multilateral approaches to the elimination of poverty. Issues such as fair terms of trade, financial stability, foreign investment, the abuse of human rights,

empowering civil society, addressing gender inequalities, sustainable development and environmental concerns, were among the many that were discussed in several panels and identified as constituting elements in a "long list" of priorities that needed urgent attention.

Of particular significance is the fact that most presentations and comments refrained from the conventional conceptualisations of poverty, related to quantitative approach of "a dollar a day calculation", and instead highlighted the fact that poverty is a complex of issues which includes access to primary health care, lack of education, absence of essential services, limited democratic accountability, the protection of human rights and even the need to ensure that the rule of law is respected. Thus, this was a conference that clearly set itself wide-ranging and ambitious targets, especially in the way in which it focussed on such concerns as social exclusion, empowering civil society and enabling states to engage with their citizens in a substantive and democratic partnership to tackle the long-standing and apparently persisting problems of poverty.

The recognition of the multidimensional nature of poverty enabled this particular North-South dialogue to move towards a wider, global and, in some respects, innovative approach to the formulation of anti-poverty strategies. Thus, different discussants and contributors highlighted the centrality of "effective and good governance" in promoting sustainable livelihoods and thus enabled a people-centred approach to the elimination of poverty to gain centre stage in the formulation of conference recommendations. In particular, the right-based approach, encouraging participation, social inclusion and the need to establish institutions and strategies that protect civil entitlements, constituted a critical component of many of the recommendations. This, of course, enabled the recommendations to focus on sectoral or programme approaches rather than the more traditional concern with projects.

Thus, the Alexandria conference was a North-South dialogue, which echoed many international resolutions for the elimination of poverty but in particular the need:

- To create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable the people of the Mediterranean and its hinterlands to achieve social development, and
- To eradicate poverty in this region through decisive national actions (anti-poverty strategies) and international cooperation (bilateral and multilateral partnerships), as ethical, social, political and economic imperatives for the 21st century.

From such an analytical approach, however, even the market approach to economic change needs to be revised, as the conference argued for the promotion of "pro-poor growth". To achieve this, however, and especially in the context of increased globalisation, is no simple task. The task ahead is demanding, but there is no return to the intellectually bankrupt development theories of the previous century. Debates will and must follow as to how to put into practice the laudable recommendations of the Alexandria conference.

THIRD PART

Contributions of participants

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Poverty Alleviation Strategies in some Arab Countries¹

1. Introduction

Poverty is a problem that has been haunting mankind since the dawn of history. Its most threatening repercussions have been its effects on human resources, which are by far the most valuable resources. In spite of its importance, the question of human resources has only recently become a salient issue on the world agenda, even though second to material and natural resources.

Poverty presents a major hurdle to sustainable development and to economic growth. It represents a threat to peace, as well as to political and social stability, since it provides a fertile ground for fanaticism and extreme opposition to the state itself. Consequently, the process of alleviating poverty encompasses both partial and institutional participation. For example, even though basic services such as education and health care are provided free of charge, they are sometimes not accessible to certain groups and individuals, who are too poor to afford the accompanying expenses.

Alleviating poverty is a multidimensional process that consists of: 1. providing financial and material subsidies to the poor (social security), 2. providing the necessary services to improve the levels of health and education, as well as the skills necessary to empower and qualify the poor to participate, work and produce (the basic tenets of human capital), and 3. providing employment and income-generating enterprises that ensure the participation of the poor in the labour market through the provision of soft loans allocated to small-scale enterprises, as well as access to the markets (the economic aspect).

The concept of good governance gained ground in the nineties. According to the World Development Report of 2000/2001, three additional aspects of poverty alleviation are based on the accumulated experiences of the past decade, namely enhancing opportunities, empowering people and improving security.

This report is based on literature dealing with poverty alleviation, as well as reports made by various Arab nations on the efforts exerted to fight poverty.

2. Definitions and Measurements of Poverty

Defining poverty and the poor is not easy. There is no general agreement on the concepts or terminology related to poverty. However, this does not preclude the existence of a score of different means to measure poverty, which include the use of specific quantifiable data (such as the average consumption rate per person, the physical criteria that indicate infant malnutrition), as well as the use of descriptive but inaccurate criteria (such as the subjective evaluation of poverty, a process known as the participatory approach for assessing poverty).

Most of the poverty measurement criteria address the problems of those who live below the poverty line. Thus, poverty could be defined as the inability to meet the basic needs, which cover material necessities such as food, clothing, housing, clean water, education and health, as well as immaterial needs such as the right to participate, personal freedom and social equity. The average share of the individual of the family income or family expenses are also two of the criteria used to evaluate living

¹ This paper is based on a report of "Evaluating female poverty alleviation strategies in Arab countries" prepared by the author for the Arab League in March 2001.

standards. However, these criteria are not exhaustive, since they do not cover a score of important issues such as wealth, health, life expectancy, literacy and access to public goods and services.

Recent studies of poverty depend more and more on a deep and multidimensional analysis of the complex phenomenon rather than the simple criteria used hitherto. Poverty has lately been considered as a three-dimensional phenomenon that consists of three basic elements, namely income and consumption, net assets and security, independence and self-respect. The concept is closely related to the idea of capabilities, which does not address the access to goods but the actions that the individual is able to perform. Thus one could say that low income does not necessarily reflect the situation of the individual below the poverty line, but his lack of power does.

To make up for the complexity of the measurement criteria, one should distinguish between three types of poverty, namely low income, human poverty and capability poverty. When assessing levels of poverty in different nations to develop appropriate poverty alleviation policies, the World Bank tends to focus on the first criterion, namely the level of income. The UNDP, on the other hand, adopts the concepts of human poverty and capability poverty. The concept of human poverty can be regarded as complementary to the level of income criterion. Consequently, any policies that address the problem of poverty should take into consideration the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, which covers income and economic activities, health and education as well as empowerment, security and equity.

To be able to set priorities and to implement policies effectively, policy makers have to identify the poor, their residential areas as well as their overall characteristics such as levels of education, employment, and housing and demographic conditions.

2.1. Income Poverty in Arab Countries

Most of the Arab nations have adopted a concept of poverty based on the level of income, meaning the inability to meet the basic needs (such as food, clothing and shelter). Levels of income, spending and consumption are the sole indicators of poverty. National reports have displayed a tendency among Arab nations to measure poverty on the basis of family or individual share of the income. A material evaluation of the basic needs was adopted to define the poverty line. Absolute poverty is a manifestation of the minimum level of access to basic needs, and an estimation of the minimum income earned by the individual to provide the minimum amount of nutrition, containing the right amount of calories required by an adult per day. National surveys of income, expenditure and consumption rates that are carried out periodically to allow for a comparative perspective were the cornerstones of those reports. The first survey of family budget was carried out in Egypt in 1958. An estimate of the percentage of the poor in every country has been made, covering details such as gender. Some nations such as Egypt and Yemen have carried out surveys that take into account gender differences, while other nations, such as Tunisia, have carried out studies on the number of households headed by women and by men. According to table 1 (p. 37), the percentage of those living below poverty lines ranged from 6.2% in Tunisia to 35% in Lebanon. The percentage of poverty is without exception higher among households headed by females. The only exception to this rule is rural areas in Morocco.

Table 1: The percentages of the poor (males and females) in some Arab countries

Nation	The Poverty Line	% of the poor among men, or families headed by men	% of the poor among women, or families headed by women
Jordan	–	A total of 21.3 %, 93 % among which, are households headed by men	A total of 21.3 %, 7 % of which, are households headed by women
Tunisia	–	A total of 6.2 %, 48.5 % of which, are households headed by men	A total of 6.2 %, 51.5 % of which, are households headed by women

Sudan	–	–	88 %
Iraq	–	–	–
Palestine	1390 Sheikal per family/month	20 %	26 %
Lebanon	–	34 %	36 %
Egypt	LE 698 per person/year	20.3 %	24.1 %
Morocco	3922 derham in the cities, 3037 derham in the countryside	11.8% in the urban areas, 20% in the countryside	12.8% in the urban areas, 17.5% in the countryside
Yemen	2310 Riyal per person/month	26 %	31 %

Source: Human Development Report 1999 and 2000.

Basic poverty criteria based on gender have indicated that the households headed by females suffer even more than those headed by males (Table 2 p. 38, and table 3, p. 39).

Table 2: Human Development Indicators according to gender: (F) females, (M) males

Nation	Human Development Guide According to gender	Life Expectancy		Literacy		Registration Rates		Per Capita National Product	
		Age F	Age M	% F	% M	% F	% M	US \$ F	US \$ M
Jordan		71.8	59.1	82.6	94.2				
UAE	0.793	76.7	74.1	77.1	73.4	72	66	5398	24758
Bahrain	0.803	75.5	71.3	81.2	90.2	82	78	4799	19355
Tunisia	0.688	71	68.6	57.9	97.4	68	74	2772	7982
Algeria	0.661	70.6	67.7	54.3	76.5	64	71	2051	7467
Saudi Arab.	0.715	73.7	70.2	64.4	82.8	54	58	2663	16179
Sudan	0.453	56.8	54	43.4	68	31	37	645	2139
Syria	0.636	71.5	66.9	58.1	87.2	56	63	1218	4530
Iraq	0.548	65.3	62.3	43.2	63.9	44	57	966	5352
Oman	0.697	73.5	69.1	57.5	78	57	60	2651	16404
Qatar	0.807	75.6	70.2	81.7	79.8	75	72	6624	28508
Kuwait	0.827	78.4	74.3	78.5	83.7	59	56	13347	36466
Lebanon	0.718	71.9	68.3	79.1	91.5	77	76	1985	6777
Libya	0.738	72.4	68.5	65.4	89.6	92	92	2452	10634
Egypt	0.604	68.3	65.1	41.8	65.5	66	77	1576	4463
Morocco	0.57	68.9	65.2	34	60.3	43	56	1865	4743
Yemen	0.389	58.9	57.9	22.7	65.7	27	70	311	1122
Arab Coun.	0.612	67.5	64.6	57.3	71.5	54	65	1837	6341
Dev. Coun.	0.634	66.4	63.2	64.5	80.3	55	63	2169	4334

Source: Human Development Report 1999 and 2000.

Table 3: Female to Male ratio according to Human Development Indicators

Nation	Life Expectancy	Literacy rates (%)	Registration Rates (%)	Per capita National Product US\$
Jordan	104.28	70.98	90.14	24.47
UAE	105.89	90.02	105.13	24.79
Bahrain	104.92	63.82	85.71	35.31
Tunisia	104.82	67.61	77.19	18.05
Algeria	121.49	87.69	–	–
Saudi Arabia	105.52	93.79	105.36	36.60
Sudan	105.27	86.45	101.32	29.29
Syria	105.59	72.99	100.00	23.06
Iraq	105.67	56.38	76.79	39.32
Oman	106.37	73.72	95.00	16.16
Qatar	107.69	102.38	104.17	23.24
Kuwait	104.99	77.78	93.10	16.46
Lebanon	105.19	63.82	83.78	30.15
Libya	106.88	66.63	88.89	26.89
Egypt	103.50	59.45	91.89	34.73
Morocco	103.51	105.04	109.09	21.80
Yemen	101.73	34.55	38.57	27.72
Arab countries	104.49	80.14	83.08	28.97
Dev. countries	105.06	80.32	87.30	50.05

Source: Human Development Report 1999 and 2000.

Table 4 (p. 39) indicates that the human aspect of poverty scores much higher than low income levels, which is again an indication of the low levels of health and education compared to the levels of income in all the Arab nations when those two criteria are taken into account.

Table 4: Poverty Rates

Nation	Human Poverty	Poverty rate US\$/day	Poverty according to the national poverty line
Jordan	8.8	7.4	15
UAE	17.9	–	–
Bahrain	9.6	–	–
Tunisia	21.9	1.3	19.9
Algeria	24.8	15.1	22.6
Saudi Arabia	–	–	–
Sudan	35.5	–	–
Syria	19.3	–	–
Iraq	32.9	–	–
Oman	22.7	–	–
Qatar	13.7	–	–
Kuwait	–	–	25.5
Lebanon	10.8	–	–
Libya	15.3	–	–
Egypt	32.3	3.1	22.9
Morocco	38.4	7.5	26
Yemen	49.4	5.1	19.1
Arab countries	–	–	–
Developing countries	–	–	–

Source: Human Development Report 1999 and 2000.

2.2. Characteristics of the Poor

The major manifestations of poverty are not restricted to low income, but go further to include lower levels of education, unemployment, underemployment and deteriorating living conditions. These manifestations apply to both males and females. However, the male poor are better off. On the other hand, most of the poor are illiterate and underemployed. The employment criterion varies according to gender. According to some studies, the poor, especially women, depend mostly on pensions and remittances as a major source of income. The percentage of unemployment, on the other hand, is rather low, which indicates their inability to stay unemployed for a prolonged period of time, which results inevitably in their acceptance of low-paid jobs. Thus, the major problem facing the poor is not unemployment, but rather the difficult working conditions they are forced to endure. The highest levels of poverty are recorded amongst agricultural and industrial workers, or those engaged in the informal sector. These jobs require no basic skills or expertise. Poverty is usually accompanied by deteriorating living conditions, the inability to purchase goods, as well as the increased number of non-working family members and the high rates of child labour. Accordingly, education and employment are of undeniable importance to the empowerment and social integration of the poor. Improved living conditions have their positive effects on the lives of the poor, especially women.

The apparent discrepancy between males and females according to the human indicator of poverty is a function of the obvious differences in literacy rates between the two sexes. Thus, the key to fighting poverty and reducing the discrepancy between males and females is by giving special attention to the education of girls as well as fighting female illiteracy. (see the recommendations section)

A special look at the conditions of the poor in a number of Arab nations reveals the following:

Jordan: Poor families suffer from low levels of education and high rates of illiteracy, especially among women. The female members of poor families are usually not engaged in income-generating activities, which accounts for the limited sources of income. The size of the families raised by the poor exceeds by far the size of the families of wealthier women, noting that around 70% of poor families consist of more than 7 persons, compared to only 33% of the better-off families. The birth rate in poorer households is much higher than among wealthier ones, a fact which is reflected in the average age composition of the family. Also levels of unemployment among women who live in poverty reach up to 57.9%, and exceed 58.8% among women who live in absolute poverty, compared to only 31.5% among female members of better-off families. Finally, the average monthly income ranges between 93 dinars for the poor families, and 407 dinars for the better off families.

Tunisia: According to the National Report, females are more vulnerable to poverty than males, which is reflected in a rate of 51.44% for females compared to 48.56% for males. A high percentage of poor women belong in the active and young age group between 15 and 39, recording 37% compared to 24.32% among the males belonging to the same age group. These figures stress the importance of employing women as one of the means of fighting poverty. The percentage of females covered by the national programme for low-income families amounts to only 3.7%, which indicates the importance of providing social security for poor women, noting that the rates of social security coverage on the national level amount to 80%, which is a rather high rate. 40% of the girls between ages 6 and 24 are not enrolled in educational institutions. On the other hand, only 45% are registered in primary schools, even though the rates of educational services extend to include around 99% of all school-age children of both sexes. Working poor are mainly employed by the agricultural sector. Most of them dwell in traditional housing with potable water and electricity. The main source of energy used by this population group is liquid gas.

Palestine: The Poverty Report indicates that households headed by women suffer more hardships than those headed by men. Around 73% of the poor families headed by women live in absolute poverty, and are unable to meet the minimum amount of basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, as compared to 63% of the poor households headed by men.

A positive correlation has been proven between levels of education and standards of living. The higher the level of education, the higher the income and the lower the working hours. Thus, levels of poverty are much higher among those who did not complete primary education (32%) than among those who have completed primary education (23%) or those who have completed secondary education (20%), or even those who have completed two years of education in a higher institute (12%). Rates of poverty among college graduates are quite low (8%), though this rate is considered rather high for international standards.

On the other hand, there is also a correlation between the levels of poverty and access to services, especially access to a sewerage system. The percentage of the poor who do not have access to a sewerage system amounts to 71.1%. Those deprived of basic infrastructure such as water and electricity supply are also the poor.

Finally, rates of female participation in the labour force are extremely low, noting that women are major candidates for unpaid jobs. Their participation is almost completely restricted to the lower rungs of the employment ladder, and they rarely assume leadership positions. Women are usually paid less than their male counterparts, and housework is a factor which deprives them of their share in the labour market.

Egypt: The highest rates of poverty are among the illiterate whether male or female, both in urban and rural areas (the rates are 43.7% and 36.3% in urban areas, and 33.7% and 31.5% in rural areas). Poor people with basic education or less represent 79% and 84% of poor men and women respectively. The highest levels of poverty are found among agricultural and industrial female labourers, as well as those employed by the informal sector. As previously indicated, these marginal jobs do not require any kinds of skills or experience. Poverty is usually manifested in deteriorating living conditions.

Morocco: According to a poverty study in Morocco, the impact of poverty on women who did not have any kind of education is even greater (29.3% in the countryside compared to 15.2% in the cities). This category accounts for 86.4% of the total poverty rates of women in rural areas and 59.3% in the cities. The higher the level of education acquired, the lower the poverty rates. Poverty rates vary from 18.7% to 11.3% in rural areas and from 11.3% to 1.4% in urban areas, depending on the level of education.

Economic activity is also one of the most important social upgrading tools used by women. Poverty has many forms: low income generated by the economic activity, different forms of underdevelopment and the absence of skills. More than half of the poor working women (52.6%) in the urban areas are labourers and more prone to job interruption and unemployment.

Indications show that the phenomenon of the female head of the family is generally related to poverty. Households headed by an independently working woman are more likely to be poor, (24.4% in urban regions, compared to 20.2% in rural regions). This could be explained by the fact that women are engaged in occupations that generate a low income. This is especially true for women living in the cities, where the percentage of poor women heading a household reaches up to 21.2%, while this phenomenon is very limited in rural regions. Analyses also indicate that the size of the families headed by women is also directly correlated to poverty.

3. Poverty-related indicators in the Arab Region

In spite of the lack of statistical tools to measure indicators of poverty in the Arab region, especially poverty among women, and in spite of the different conceptions and measurement tools used by various governments (in terms of income or human resources), still poverty-related symptoms, such as illiteracy and the rate of participation in the labour force, all indicate the width of the gender gap in most of the Arab world.

Notwithstanding the high per capita share of the gross national product for the Arab region as a whole compared to other developing nations (4,140 \$ US compared to 3,270 \$ US), as well as the relatively higher health indications, still the education rates are alarmingly low, especially in a world that considers information and technology primary sources of power. The rates of illiteracy amount to 59.7% in the Arab world compared to the average of 72.3% in the developing world as a whole. On a regional level, illiteracy rates are lower in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, though these nations have lower incomes. However, one should not jump to conclusions. A comparative study of both Jordan and Oman indicated that the national product in Oman is three times higher than Jordan; meanwhile, literacy rates in Jordan are 19.8% higher. The total sum of Arab nations does not reflect the discrepancies between the different nations, nor does it indicate similar discrepancies between males and females. Statistics indicate a larger gender gap in our Arab region than in the rest of the developing world.

Poverty-related facts and data, such as the rates of illiteracy and participation in the labour force, all indicate the width of the gender gap in the Arab world. With the possible exception of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, levels of illiteracy are higher among females, while literacy of females stands at less than two thirds of the predominant rates of literacy among males in Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. However, this gap narrows considerably, when we cast a look at primary and secondary school as well as university registration rates. Enrolment rates for females amount to more than 75% of the total enrolment rates of males in all the Arab nations with the exception of Yemen. Rates are even higher in Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar and the UAE. Enrolment rates at schools reflect the efforts exerted at short and medium term to develop the educational sector. Literacy rates, on the other hand, are not so sensitive to improvements in the level of educational services offered. Literacy requires longer time spans to show improvements. The narrowing of the gender gap in terms of school registration rates is a function of the efforts exerted by Arab governments to put an end to the gender discrimination in relation to educational services. School registration rates for females amount to 83.8% of the male registration rates in the Arab region as a whole, while they stand at 87.3% in the developing world, which indicates greater gender discrimination in the Arab world than elsewhere in the Third World. Arab nations have, therefore, to make more effort to narrow the gender gap in the field of education.

It is also expedient to consider the expenditures on public services and subsidies as an indicator of the levels of public services and social security systems provided. It is also an indication of the state commitment to support the low-income sectors of society. Public expenditure in Saudi Arabia amounts to 30%, followed by Kuwait (28%) and Jordan (25%). The expenditure rates recorded in Syria and Egypt are lower, amounting to 12% and 10% respectively. The ratio of the funds allocated to public education to the GNP does not exceed 7% in the whole Arab region. Only Jordan, Tunisia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Algeria record rates higher than 5%. On the other hand, the ratio of subsidies to the total public expenditures has recorded a general decrease in all Arab nations in 1997 from the predominant rates of 1990, with the exception of Morocco and Yemen. In 1997, subsidies amounted to the highest percentage of public expenditures in Yemen (35%), Syria (29%) and Algeria (26%). The percentage of subsidies provided by other nations such as Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan, on the other hand, did not exceed 15%. One should note, however, that these nations have all implemented the economic reform programmes advocated by the World Bank, which call for the reduction of general subsidies and their substitution with subsidies that are directed to the poverty-stricken only, as a means of reducing public expenditure and lowering the state budget deficits.

4. Poverty Alleviation Strategies

The problem of poverty is generally not openly discussed by the governments of a score of Arab nations, some of which do not even admit its existence. The Egyptian government, for instance, has only started to tackle the problem in the past two years. Other nations such as Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia and Palestine, on the other hand, have addressed this problem openly and have worked on formulating and integrating poverty alleviation policies in their overall development plans. Nevertheless, most of the Arab nations have made plans and designed programmes to help the poor

and the vulnerable (such as female heads of households, the handicapped and peasant women). These programmes encompass subsidies, financial assistance and the provision of free services in the fields of health, education and employment. However, such programmes remain inadequate compared to poverty reduction policies adopted by other developing nations. Most of the Arab nations still suffer from poverty, whether in terms of income or human resources.

Poverty has been recognised by most nations to be a complex phenomenon that cannot be eliminated with the help of economic growth alone, but through a multiplicity of other mechanisms. The essence of poverty reduction policies is the diligent efforts to increase human capital through the improvement of the education and training systems, especially basic education, as well as the reinforcement of health care and social security measures to enhance the effectiveness of the labour force. Education, especially of females, helps in reducing poverty through the empowerment of the poor to increase their sources of income. It covers birth control mechanisms, health improvement measures, and helps the poor to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. These elements enhance the opportunities of the poor to find better employment and to positively participate in the development process. Education could also be a determining factor in expanding social equity and eliminating the marginalization and exclusion of the poor from the development process.

All Arab countries have given utmost priority to the issues of education and training, as well as to the health and social assistance to the poor, with a special emphasis on the provision of legal and political protection. Arab nations have worked on the provision and improvement of health services, birth control mechanisms and the elimination of the subtle discrimination practiced against women. Nevertheless, rural, Bedouin and poor residential areas still suffer from the deterioration and sometimes absence of health services. Arab nations have shown their commitment to international standards in the field of female employment and in fighting the discrimination endured by women in a number of areas, such as the limited female participation in income generating activities and their occupation of jobs that require no skills and generate minimal income. Poor households, especially those headed by females, have recently enjoyed a number of protective measures crystallised in social security legislations that provide a monthly pension to help poor women manage their affairs and to protect them from falling prey to poverty. A number of mechanisms were adopted to that effect, the major burden of which falling on the shoulders of the ministries of social affairs, health, education and the labour forces. However, other actors, such as the social funds, took their share of the responsibility.

4.1. Overview

The problem of poverty has been given a very high priority on the Arab and international agenda, due to its negative and serious repercussions which necessitate multilateral cooperation. The issue of poverty is of extreme importance to a large segment of individuals in the Arab world. Arab nations have generally adopted comprehensive programmes that take the various aspects of poverty alleviation into account. Poverty alleviating strategies are not restricted to providing the poor with the necessary financial means, but they extend to include the following:

1. Enhancement of opportunities open to poor women through the provision of jobs, credit, roads, electricity, outlets for their goods, comprehensive economic growth and a pattern of growth that is advantageous to the poor.
2. Building up human capital through the provision of education, training, water, sewage systems, health services and the skills that are indispensable for employment.
3. Empowerment is one of the most important elements that should be taken into consideration when formulating poverty alleviation strategies directed at women. The empowerment of people, which allows them to take part in designing poverty reduction plans, has an undeniable impact on their ability to tackle the problems associated with poverty. Empowerment is a two-dimensional concept. It has a quantitative dimension associated with the size of the resources at the disposal of individuals and their freedom to make use of those

resources, and a qualitative dimension related to their participation in the development process through cooperation and coordination with peer groups, as well as a total awareness of their social status, their self-esteem and the absence of the feelings of inferiority associated with poverty. This qualitative dimension is also reinforced by self-reliance and the existence of a group identity and social solidarity, which enables them to improve their lot and to resist injustice. Empowerment, in the sense described above, enables individuals to be creative and inventive and helps them to develop their potential, work within an institutional framework and take group decisions. It contributes to the development of a cohesive group that is fully aware of its social, economic and political potential.

4. Ensuring security for the poor through building up their potential, diversifying family activities and providing various insurance mechanisms to help them in absorbing possible shocks, such as public works, promotion programmes for school enrolment, as well as the provision of health insurance and social security

4.2. Poverty Alleviation Policies

This part of the report sheds light on the basic traits of the most important policies and programmes that were implemented in some Arab countries, for which we have relevant data or surveys on the strategies adopted to fight poverty. However, some generalizations can be drawn regarding all the Arab non-oil states. Individual cases will be surveyed in the following section of the report.

Most Arab nations have adopted comprehensive economic strategies to fight poverty, some of which date back to the fifties, though the majority were implemented in the nineties. However, no special ministry or governmental authority was assigned the task of putting down a comprehensive plan to fight poverty. Some nations have specifically put down plans dedicated to alleviate poverty. Most of the national poverty alleviation policies, however, have incorporated plans to fight female poverty. These policies are translated into plans, programmes and projects by the relevant ministries, such as the ministries of social affairs, labour, health and education. Everywhere in the Arab world, with the exception of Palestine, policies are designed by the central government. The participation of the poor in designing those plans has been denied to them everywhere in the Arab world with the exception of Palestine and Tunisia. However, various institutions, such as national committees, do take part in designing and implementing these policies. The plans were generally guided by the resolutions and recommendations of the international conferences such as the Women's Conference in 1995, the Social Development Summit in 1995 and the International Conference for Development and Population in 1994.

The multi-dimensional plans include economic as well as social aspects, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Accelerating economic growth rates to outreach population growth rates, thus creating a clear, direct and positive impact on the income levels of the poor and raising them above the absolute poverty line. Economic and investment chances for the poor are to be enhanced through the financial support of small-scale enterprises.
2. Achieving equality of opportunities and justice in the distribution of the benefits of the development process to all social groups.
3. Fighting poverty through a host of social security measures and improving the living conditions of the poor through the development of the surrounding material and social infrastructure.
4. Developing educational, training and awareness raising programmes.
5. Narrowing the gender gap on all social and economic levels and reintegrating the poor.

6. Eliminating the causes of marginalisation and exclusion.
7. Boosting the spirit of national solidarity among the different social spectra.
8. Equipping women with skills, knowledge, credit and appropriate technology to enhance their ability to perform the activities of their choice. Enhancing employment opportunities for the poor and providing training and rehabilitation programmes to help integrate them in the labour market.

A multiplicity of mechanisms is adopted to translate these policies into programmes, and their implementation is supervised by the relevant ministries, social funds, national committees and non-governmental organisations. These programmes and other related projects are financed by the state, the various contributions made and donor agencies. Programmes include income-generating activities, human capital accumulation and safety nets.

4.2.1. Income generating activities

The following procedures were undertaken for the integration and reintegration of poor into the productive labour force.

1. Empowering the poor to help them acquire capital and resources.
2. Giving the poor access to credit-making institutions, including young women who do not have access to traditional sources of collateral security.
3. Simplifying banking procedures, such as the minimum level of deposits required.
4. Participation of the poor in the decision-making processes of credit making institutions and service providers.
5. Providing technical and professional training, as well as appropriate training that corresponds to their needs and those of the labour market.
6. Providing financial and technical support to the relevant organizations.
7. Increasing the financial and technical support offered to the voluntary associations that provide training services to the poor.

4.2.2. Human Capital Accumulation

States have adopted a set of training policies with the aim of rehabilitating the poor, reducing illiteracy, especially among females, and increasing the rates of comprehension of the education curricula. Arab nations have taken measures to that effect, including:

1. Opening adult teaching centres in all areas plagued by high rates of illiteracy.
2. Constant cooperation between the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations, especially women's organization working in that field, through the provision of all possible help including the necessary teaching materials and staff.
3. Passing legislations which make education obligatory till the age of 16.
4. Improving school conditions and time in the rural areas, to correspond to the peculiarities of those areas.
5. The expansion of schools in all urban and rural areas ensuring their proximity of the families.

6. Establishing a national culture that calls for the education of both sexes.
7. Providing poor girls with assistance to limit the percentage of dropouts.

4.2.3. Safety Nets

All the nations surveyed have systems of social support provided by national assistance funds and the relevant ministries, such as the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs. These systems cover permanent and temporary financial aid, free educational and health services, and the provision of the basic infrastructure such as water and electricity supply and a sewage system. A social security network is also provided. First among the measures undertaken to help women access financial and social assistance is the activation and the expansion of the services provided by the National Assistance Fund, as well as the simplification of the procedures required to provide women with the necessary financial aid. Women are also made aware of the donors providing this kind of assistance. However, the scarcity of funds and the slow pace and complication of the procedures are among the most important hurdles that stand in the way of providing poor women with the necessary financial assistance or social services.

Social Funds for Development

Social Funds have become a recurrent phenomenon in the Arab World in the past few years. These funds aim at fighting poverty, reducing unemployment rates, improving the level of social services and giving the deprived access to those services. Through those funds, states have succeeded in giving political legitimacy to economic reforms and encouraged social participation in the development process. The management of social development programmes has improved and its transparency has increased accordingly. Social Funds act as mediators who channel governmental and donor funds to finance small projects proposed by individuals or other institutions. They enjoy a high level of institutional independence, as employment policies are not subject to the state employment criteria. They also adopt simpler measures to compare the numerous projects proposed.

However, the level of institutional independence enjoyed by these funds varies from one nation to another. Whereas the Jordanian and Lebanese funds enjoy a high level of independence, half the board of directors of the Egyptian Social Fund consists of government employees, which adds to the bureaucratic character of the institution.

Even though the first and foremost aim of Social Funds was to reduce the social costs associated with economic reforms, they have come to embrace wider goals, which allowed them a closer cooperation with the numerous ministries in all relevant states. Social Funds worked on creating job opportunities, reinforcing the infrastructure and providing basic services to the poor. The Egyptian Social Fund has financed around 32 literacy projects, which covered 15,000 persons. Social Funds also finance small loans to individuals.

Social Funds cooperate with NGOs to access the poor in both the rural and urban areas. They are faced with a host of challenges, first among which is the difficulty of reaching decisions on the number of quick loans afforded to projects vis-à-vis the quality and effectiveness of the projects which receive finance. A number of necessary steps such as the evaluation and follow-up of the projects are abandoned for the sake of budgetary cuts. Social Funds are also faced with the problem of their temporary nature, in spite of the constant increase in their budgets and the difficulty of deciding on the priority given to loans or infrastructure grants to help the poverty stricken.

Notwithstanding the noticeable achievements made in formulating and implementing poverty reduction policies, there are still a number of obstacles that limit the utility of those programmes and which were revealed in the country reports. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Poverty reduction policies, which are intended to attack poverty, often fail to attain that objective, due to their preoccupation with providing self-employment to the poor, notwithstanding the fact that the very poor are always wage-workers.
2. The difficulty of specifying the target group, due to the absence of training programmes for the employees of the development institutions, which would allow them to make the right decisions about the target group and to expand the selection criteria, which had been hitherto restricted to the economic dimension, to include other aspects such as gender, religion or group.
3. High illiteracy rates among the target group make the calculation of profits and sales a rather tedious task.
4. Funds are extended for only short terms, which do not allow enough time for an enterprise to bear fruit. Income generating enterprises have to undergo four stages, namely: a period of training, which extends from 2 months to one year, to acquire the necessary skills; providing support and encouragement during the first two years of the project; the stage of growth in the third and fourth year coupled with continued training activities; and finally the financial independence stage. These four stages are usually ignored.
5. The lack of concern with empowering the target group through awareness and potential building efforts.
6. The establishment of a task force charged with providing services and raising the awareness of the target group in all areas related to economic activities, as well as health and social services.
7. Some of the drawbacks suffered by such institutions and organizations include: the absence of appropriate leadership, inefficient administrative capabilities, inadequate auditing organizations and financial systems, and a thin base of financial and human resources, coupled with the lack of expertise, skills and commitment among the working staff. Poor judgment and the limited capabilities to mobilize financial as well as human resources and to make a noticeable impact on the state policies are among the major obstacles.
8. The unavailability of funds to expand the implementation of projects and programmes on a wider scale to cover a large number of villages and local communities.
9. Lack of coordination between different government and non- governmental agencies working in the field of poverty reduction: this applied to intra-ministerial coordination, inter-ministerial coordination, coordination between government agencies and NGOs and between the different NGOs. Lack of coordination among the providers of assistance to the poor results in the minimisation of the effectiveness of these efforts, duplication of efforts or conflicting initiatives.
10. Centralisation spread of corruption and weak institutional and capacity building, in both government and non-governmental organisations, are major drawbacks in implementing poverty reduction policies. The absence of good governance has been a major obstacle to the proper execution of policies and programmes.

5. Country-specific Strategies for Poverty Alleviation

This section is based on reports received by some Arab countries. The Arab countries are arranged in alphabetical order (in Arabic).

Jordan

Up till the mid-eighties, poverty was not a priority item on the Jordanian official agenda. However, with the beginning of the economic recession, official policies started giving this issue more and more attention. In accordance with the Economic and Social Development Plan of 1986-1990, a comprehensive study was carried out on the pockets of poverty with the objective of defining policies and measures that aim at limiting the increase in poverty rates. First among those policies was the establishment of the National Assistance Fund in 1986 to provide the necessary support and rehabilitation for poor families. In 1990 a Development and Employment Fund was set up to provide loans for those hoping to start economic enterprises, especially for the unemployed and the newcomers to the labour market.

At the beginning of 1998, a programme was initiated to increase social productivity (social security) with the aim of reducing poverty by means of four major strategies:

1. Financial and material assistance provided by the National Assistance Fund, as well as food coupons, health security and bread subsidies.
2. Material and social infrastructure services represented by the improvement in living conditions (urban development), the upgrading of roads, water and sewerage networks, as well as health services, schools and other social services.
3. Income generating enterprises through the financing of small-scale projects to create employment opportunities and diversify sources of income. Governmental actors involved in those initiatives are the Development and Employment Fund, the Ministry of Social Development, The Agricultural Credit Institutions, the Industrial Development Bank (the technician fund), as well as the Nour Al Hussein Institution and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, in addition to a score of other NGOs, including feminist organisations.
4. Training and rehabilitation programmes carried out by technical education institutions and centres.

The Jordanian state adopted a multidimensional approach to tackling the problems of poverty, a phenomenon that has nearly paralysed the progress of rural and poor women, and that is mostly restricted to those groups. The programme encompasses 26 projects, 15 of which are directed at urban women, while 11 are aimed at rural women.

Poverty-related policies and legislations were until recently not gender based. Nevertheless, ever since the state proclaimed the National Strategy for Women in 1993, official recognition was given to the policies designed to provide services to poor women, which aim at improving their and their families' social, health and educational standards. Other steps were taken to improve the conditions of female workers in the informal and seasonal sectors.

It should be noted that the Jordanian National Committee for Women's Affairs is currently updating the National Women Strategy. A sub-section of the strategy has been dedicated to the issue of poverty, covering human security and social protection, noting that the issue of poverty is part and parcel of the overall issues of human and social security. This sub-section also covers other issues such as education, health, violence, handicaps, the elderly, households headed by females, the environment, food security and the population.

Within the framework of the work plan and the recommendations of the Fourth International Women's Conference (1995), a national action plan for "upgrading" Jordanian women (1998-2002) was prepared by government and nongovernmental organizations, with major emphasis on poverty as one of the most important issues.

The Comprehensive Development Plan, on the other hand, has integrated the gender approach in all sectors of the economic and social development plans for the years 1999-2003. One of the major objectives of the plan was bridging the gender gap at all economic and social levels (the Ministry of Planning 1999, p.10). The plan adopted the concept of sustainable human development as part of a four-dimensional process consisting of:

1. Development and economic growth conducive to employment and the gradual elimination of poverty.
2. Achievement of social equity between the two genders.
3. Applying the concept of good governance to the field of public administration.
4. The protection of the environment and the sound management of natural resources.

Projects concerned with the reduction of poverty

Most of the government and non-governmental projects concerned with reducing poverty have focused on the provision of loans to small-scale or micro enterprises. According to a study carried out by the Ministry of Planning on the micro-finance sector in Jordan, a sizeable percentage of women make use of those loans. However, these beneficiaries are mainly covered by nongovernmental programmes, which indicates that NGOs have had more success than the state in reaching those women, or that their lending stipulations have been more sensitive to the needs of this sector.

One of the most successful projects carried out hitherto, has been the project of the Rural Women's Groups, which has been implemented by the Jordanian Hashemite Human Development Fund in cooperation with the UN Development Fund for Women. The project aimed at empowering rural female workers both economically and socially, by ensuring their direct control over the production process, as well as the development of a sustainable lending model for women, to be implemented in the future.

The implementation of the group collateral system, which has been under preparation for a prolonged period of time, has proven more favourable to women, since it has increased their chances of obtaining loans even in the case of their failure to provide a guarantor. Thus the system prevented the exclusion of some women from the project.

The most important lessons learned from these projects are:

1. In spite of the promotion of the concept of micro-finance, which does not favour the provision of non-financial services, it is rather obvious that a great number of women are in need of training to secure the success of their enterprises.
2. The concept of group collateral had a score of positive effects, noting that the beneficiaries, usually the very poor women, had been up till now unable to come up with any other guarantees.
3. Assessment reports of this project indicate its noticeable effects on increasing the income of the beneficiaries, who had used this income in improving their living conditions. Some of those women have sent their sons to college, while others have decided on expanding their enterprises.

Tunisia

The Tunisian state has adopted poverty alleviation policies and strategies that are compatible with its definition of the concept of poverty. Projects implemented have had a social dimension concerned with the amelioration of the living conditions of the poor. The geographical dimension, on the other hand, has focused on surveying the groups that are most vulnerable to poverty; and finally the economic dimension was concerned with employment programmes, as well as the reintegration into the labour force and the economic structural adjustments.

It should be noted that the special programmes that have been implemented have aimed at reinforcing the social dimension of the comprehensive development strategies. Funds allocated to cover social services reached up to 500 d per capita in 1999 as compared to 200 d in 1987. The rates of social funds were sustained at 20% of the Gross National Product, in spite of the implementation of economic reforms, which usually have negative effects on social expenditures.

Special programmes concerned with the reduction of poverty and the amelioration of the living conditions of the poor can be subdivided into three categories:

1. Social assistance programmes based on the social concept of exclusion.
2. Programmes concerned with upgrading the peripheries based on the geographical concept of exclusion.
3. Special mechanisms to support women, based on the concept of gender-based support.

1. Social Programmes: Social Assistance and Health Care Programmes

These are basically relief programmes aimed at providing assistance to the poverty stricken families, who have lost their provider, or whose members were unable to engage in income-generating activities due to personal reasons (such as chronic disease, disability, old age or childhood), or due to social reasons such as widowhood or divorce, that are coupled with the necessity to provide for young children, who are unable to work. Most of those programmes aim at providing a minimum amount of income or services to help the target families in meeting their needs. These programmes could be classified into:

- The National Programme for Poor Families.
- The free medical assistance programme.
- Seasonal and circumstantial assistance.

The National Programme for Poor Families

It is considered one of the most important social relief programmes on account of the number of families served and the size of funds provided. Services provided by the programme are mainly periodical financial assistance offered to poor families, based on the criteria specified by the relevant authorities in the Ministry of Social Affairs, in charge of managing the programme. The annual grant amounts to 436 dinars that are dispensed to the beneficiary once every three months. The overall amount of the funds allocated for the year 2000 amounted to 49.6 million dinars. According to the survey carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the total number of beneficiaries was up to 370,000 individuals. 90.2% of these beneficiaries are heads of families, 62.2% of whom are females, while 69.2% are the elderly (over 60) and 17.7% are disabled.

The Free Medical Assistance Programme

This program is a crystallization of the motto "every citizen is entitled to health", which has been propagated by Tunisian law (law no. 91-93 of 1991). It aims at providing treatment opportunities and health care for needy families. This program enables the poor to benefit from all the free health care services provided by public hospitals. Needy families that are not covered by any kind of social insurance system can make use of the above mentioned services for a symbolic fee. In addition to this

health coverage aimed at assisting poor families and especially women, complementary programmes are also offered to provide mother and child care, as well as birth control programmes directed exclusively at women.

The Seasonal and Circumstantial Assistance Programme

This programme, supervised by the Tunisian Union for Social Solidarity, a state-sponsored NGO, provides assistance to poor and needy families on religious and national occasions, as well as in the cases of family emergencies. According to data available at the Tunisian Union, the size of funds supplied at the beginning of the school year or on religious feasts, from 1997 till 2001, exceeded 60 million dinars. The average number of recipients per year amounts to 400,000, noting that those funds are delivered to families, which signifies a gender balanced distribution.

As to the assistance provided in emergencies or personal circumstances, statistical data provided by the Union reveal a percentage of female beneficiaries, which exceeds 57% of the total. Among those, 16.5% are allocated to widows, while 7% are allocated to divorcees, which indicates that women are more vulnerable to the difficulties and hardships of the daily life.

2. Economic and Social Dimension Programmes

Following the economic transformations witnessed by Tunisia in the eighties and nineties in the aftermath of the economic structural adjustment plans carried out by the Tunisian state and its opening up to the outside world, a strong need was felt to tackle the ensuing problems of poverty and unemployment. These two related phenomena were considered a national priority, due to their impact on the stability of the state. Henceforth, a score of initiatives were made by the state starting from the early nineties up till the end of the 20th century. These initiatives included the establishment of special institutions to deal actively with the two phenomena:

- Programmes for the reintegration of youth into the labour market, in force since 1987.
- The establishment of the National Solidarity Fund in 1993.
- The establishment of the Tunisian Bank of Solidarity in 1997.
- The establishment of the Micro-Finance Fund in 1999.
- The establishment of the National Employment Fund in 2000.

These programmes and institutions have given special care to the conditions of poor women, who are facing difficulties of integration in the labour force.

Programmes for the Employment and the Integration of Youth

Those programmes, which aim at preparing young people for a profession, were carried out by the Ministry of Employment. They provide employment opportunities to the young and recommendations to facilitate their integration into the active labour market. The percentage of female beneficiaries of those mechanisms exceeded 60%.

Programmes of the Tunisian Bank of Solidarity and the Micro-Finance System

In addition to all national finance mechanisms, a specialized bank was established to support entrepreneurs who lack the ability to provide the necessary collateral to obtain loans. The Tunisian Bank of Solidarity was established in 1997 to provide micro-finance. The bank targets the groups that cannot make use of the traditional lending systems provided by ordinary Banks. These groups consist of recent graduates who are seeking employment, as well as workers released from their jobs for economic reasons, who have acquired enough skills to enable them to start their own enterprises and to be reintegrated into the economic cycle. Women's share in the loans granted amounted to 30% in the last three years.

The new small-loan system introduced by Law no. 67 for the year 1999 aims at enabling development associations to provide small loans that do not exceed 1000 dinars at an interest rate of 5%. Associations interested in working in that field have to obtain finance from the Tunisian Bank of Solidarity. This system aims at empowering the poor and the needy who are willing to start income-generating enterprises, and providing them with soft loans. These associations have succeeded in making 6,913 loans, amounting to a total sum of 120,131 dinars, with an average of 741 dinars per enterprise. Loans made to women amounted to 32.3% of the total sum, and 33.8% of the total number of loans. This system is to be developed even further in the future, and the share of women is to witness a noticeable improvement. This mechanism is undeniably one of the best means at the disposal of poor women, due to its potential

The National Employment Fund

This fund was established to reinforce employment programmes, manifesting flexibility of implementation and financing new initiatives. It aims at employing young men and women of different specializations and helps in opening up more opportunities. Rates of female employment ranged from 5% in the area of public works such as the construction works to 58.5% in the programmes of adult education carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

3. *The Geographical Dimension Programmes: The National Solidarity Fund*

This programme was conducted within the framework of efforts to shed light on the geographical dimension of poverty. It aims at upgrading regions suffering from isolation and scarcity of materials as well as personal resources that help in the integration into the overall economic and social cycle. When the programme was first launched, a survey was made of the areas of intervention, assigning priority depending on a set of criteria, represented by the degree of isolation, the scarcity of economic resources and the population's living standard. These criteria have been extensively covered in the second part of this report. Ever since its early beginnings, the programme has succeeded in intervening in 1,327 regions, inhabited by around 216,597 families. The funds allocated amounted to 544,269 Tunisian dinars, 63,033 of which were allocated to financing income-generating enterprises, while the rest was allocated to the finance of infrastructure projects and the improvement of living conditions. The sectoral distribution of these funds reflects the priority assigned to the improvement of electricity and water supplies, which were allocated 28.6% and 20.3% of the funds respectively. The priority given by the Fund to improving the living conditions of families in general and women in particular is a reflection of the direct impact of the two above-mentioned aspects on the conditions of rural women, usually assigned the task of providing water from remote areas. The supply of electricity, on the other hand, helps in saving other traditional sources of energy, and consequently in reducing the burdens of women. The rate of extending electricity supplies at the national level, thanks to the intervention of the National Solidarity Fund on the one hand, and the ninth development plan, on the other hand, reached up to 94.6%. Around 91.6% of the areas had been connected to potable water networks by 1999.

4. *Special Female-Support Mechanisms*

In addition to social, economic and geographic programmes, the Ministry of Family and Women's Affairs has embarked upon extending all national programmes, especially the economic finance programmes, to cover women in general and rural women in particular, through the establishment of special mechanisms and programmes to improve the living conditions of rural women.

The establishment of a mechanism to support small-scale enterprises run by women had an undeniable role in the promotion of an economic integration culture among women, as well as the identification of the finance mechanisms, and the available opportunities in the field of employment. These mechanisms contributed to the improvement of the efficiency of the intervening associations, in the area of lending and micro finance, through the organization of workshops in cooperation with the Tunisian Bank of Solidarity.

A survey of the above-mentioned programmes has revealed the following:

1. The diversification of these programmes, which take the social, economic and geographical aspects of poverty into account.
2. These programmes target the family as the basic social unit in need of support and care.
3. The increasing importance of economic and social integration programmes.
4. Women had their fair share of all these programmes in the late nineties.
5. The increased concern with helping women to lead an economically active life and to force their way into the labour market.
6. The priority assigned to small-scale enterprises and to self-employment by the programmes dedicated to the reduction of female poverty.

Algeria

Fighting female poverty is a major aspect of the strategies of social protection and national solidarity adopted by the Algerian state, noting that the deterioration of the economic and social conditions of a sizeable percentage of female heads of families and rural women was a result of the economic restructuring strategies carried out by the state.

The Algerian state has adopted a multidimensional approach to fighting poverty, covering economic and human capital aspects as well as social security.

1. The Economic Aspect of Poverty Alleviation Strategies

The Algerian government has adopted general programmes aimed at meeting the basic needs of women and helping them escape poverty through participation in income generating activities.

Two programmes stand out among those concerned with reducing female poverty:

1) *The Social Network System* which provides permanent financial aid to needy families. The beneficiaries of this system total one million people. This kind of assistance can be classified into two types: random assistance, which covers 48% of elderly, disabled and non-working women, and compensations allocated to women in return for their contribution of 8 hours a day in public benefit work organized by community organizations. However, this latter type, which attracts only qualified women and girls, is relatively limited as a result of the predominant social culture. This network is supervised by the National Social Development Agency established in 1996, which includes a Supervisory Board and a Follow-up Committee, representing feminist organizations; a fact which allowed them to adopt special measures that are favourable to female heads of families and non-working women.

2) *The micro-finance system* established in March 1999, affording poor women the chance of establishing income-generating enterprises. This system is primarily directed at women, who for social reasons, are forced to engage in home-based activities that are compatible with their family and economic responsibilities. The programme also provides social security for the beneficiaries. The state has allocated 14 billion Algerian dinars to that effect. Generally, women with disabilities enjoy social and health care programmes, as well as direct financial assistance, social integration and other special benefits, such as free transportation. As per this strategy, priority was given to the community sector. Its potential and capabilities in the field of poverty reduction have been researched. Thus, the community sector in Algeria represents an undisputed organizational force in terms of number and human resources, capable of contributing to efforts towards sustainable development.

Economic Equality

Algerian law provides for gender equality in the field of employment. It prohibits all kinds of discrimination based on gender in the area of employment and wages. However, women enjoy special protection manifested in the following stipulations:

1. The prohibition of female night work.
2. The prohibition of female work on official vacations
3. Women are entitled to delivery and post-natal leave, and are immune to dismissal during that time.
4. Women are entitled to two hours for breastfeeding in the first six months after delivery, and to one hour in the following six months.
5. The assignment of hazardous jobs to women is prohibited by law.
6. A woman is entitled to unpaid leave, in the case of her husband's transfer to another position, or to child-care leave, if her child is under the age of 5, or has a disability that requires special care.

As to the integration of rural women into the development process, the following procedures were adopted:

1. A number of national and partnership programmes were set up to extend constant technical assistance, which had visible positive effects on productive capacities and agricultural investments.
2. Integrating the female rural aspect into the national system of agricultural guidance. Thirty supervisory groups were formed to extend their assistance to women.
3. Providing support to a number of developmental projects, giving special attention to the upgrading of rural women. These programmes aim at:
 - Attracting more than 1,200 women to take part in income-generating activities, in the fields of grain cultivation, animal husbandry and in the area of small and medium-scale investments.
 - Fighting illiteracy in the mountain regions among females aged between 8 and 20, within the framework of agricultural development strategies, after carrying out proper field research, noting the great contributions offered by the community sector in carrying out a literacy campaign in the project area.
 - The enrichment of handicrafts through the facilitation of loans and the promotion of economic activities, noting the existence of feminist production associations.
 - The implementation of model projects for the development of agricultural and pastoral activities, currently employing 300 girls in small and medium sized institutions (fruit trees, needlework, milk production, etc.)

2. Building-up Human Capital

Education: The right of girls to education, the elimination of female illiteracy and the improvement of qualifications

The rapid and constant increase in the rate of female school enrolments is a function of the improvement of their overall conditions. The Algerian state has been concerned with this issue ever since it passed the Obligatory Education Law in 1976. The rate of school enrolments for girls amounts to 90.6%, while the overall rate of school enrolments stands at 92.85% compared to 1988, where the ratio of school enrolments for girls was only 88%. The school enrolment gap between the two sexes was visibly reduced in the last decade, a trend manifested by the fact that the percentage of girls in primary education equalled the percentage of boys in the same stage, (45.9% in 1995 and 46.65% in 1998). On the other hand, the ratio of girls in secondary education exceeds that of boys (49.8% in 1995 and 54.89% in 1998).

These noticeable developments in the percentage of school enrolments of girls were a result of the great efforts and the amount of resources allocated by the state to that effect, such as:

- The allocation of one quarter of the state budget to the education sector (7,500,000 schoolchildren).
- The establishment of 15,507 primary schools, 6,432 of which were located in rural areas.
- The establishment of 1,200 secondary schools.
- The establishment of 783 boarding schools in rural, desert and remote areas.
- The availability of 4,412 school cafeterias, which serve more than 600,000 pupils daily, especially in remote and isolated areas.

These expansions witnessed by the educational structures and reinforced by the availability of a boarding system have contributed to a visible increase in the number of schoolgirls. Public authorities have also adopted a number of measures to encourage the school enrolment of children in general and girls in particular, and to put an end to the phenomenon of drop outs that is a direct result of the deteriorating purchasing power of the family, and which usually represents an obstacle to the school enrolment of girls.

Among those measures are:

- The provision of scholarships to 162,079 pupils, 76,179 of whom are girls.
- The provision of free school books and tools to needy children, in the framework of a school solidarity system, which covers more than one million pupils per year.
- The improvement of the school transportation system in remote areas, allowing the transportation of girls to their high schools, which are usually quite far from their residential areas.

Positive results in the area of school enrolment were reflected in the receding rates of female illiteracy among girls above the age of 10, where the rate decreased from 56.6% in 1987 to 40.27% in 1998, compared to a rate of 23.65% among males.

The war against illiteracy has been reinforced by the contributions of NGOs, and the National Council for the Elimination of Illiteracy is implementing literacy campaigns in cooperation with a number of NGOs, a service extended to women in one third of the states, especially the most disadvantaged ones.

Health

In addition to the mechanisms introduced to protect the health of women and children, public authorities have adopted a number of measures for the protection of women's health, one of the priorities of the national health programmes, as per the Health Charter, ratified in 1998. Free health

care, especially in the field of birth control, the early detection and prevention of disease and the increase in the number of health care facilities in remote areas have all helped in extending health coverage to women and children. A field study conducted in 1997 revealed that around 98% of the population had access to health services. Women represent a larger percentage of the recipients of health care services, depending on a rural or urban setting. These measures contributed to a reduction in fertility rates and mortality rates among girls below the age of 5, as well as to a decrease in female mortality in childbirth, a rate which is still relatively high.

Social Security

Social legislation provides special protection to women, advancing maternity and pension rights of females, within the framework of a comprehensive national social protection strategy, covering around 80% of the total population. All working women enjoy paid maternity leave of 14 weeks. Their delivery expenses are covered by a comprehensive medical system. Non-working women, indirectly covered by the social security system, are entitled to a number of services in the field of maternity insurance. Women are allowed to retire at the age of 55 (instead of 60), with the possibility of reducing that age by one year for each child, up to a maximum of 3 children. Another system of early retirement, based on the free choice of citizens, was introduced in 1995.

At the executive level, a department for family, women's and children's affairs was established, with sub-departments dealing with each of the above issues within the Ministry of Social Solidarity. This Ministry is considered the main authority in charge of defining, implementing and assessing national policies in the area of family affairs. The department is assigned the task of coordination between the various ministries and government organizations concerned with women's affairs, as well as the implementation and evaluation of a national programme for the protection and upgrading of women.

In addition, a number of high-level government consultative bodies have been set up, where all the active government and non-governmental actors participate in defining the most important elements of national policies in the area of women and family affairs. This body has undisputed consultative power in that field.

A permanent national committee was also established and assigned the task of following up on the recommendations of the national workshops dealing with the protection and upgrading of women. This committee includes representatives from the most important ministries and governmental organizations, women's NGOs and public figures known for their contributions in this field. This committee has presented an exhaustive report on the conditions of women in Algeria to the head of government, in which they discussed, in particular, fields where women are still disadvantaged. A score of measures were proposed for the enhancement of the role of women and the provision of additional legal protection. One of the main tasks of this national committee was the formulation of a successful national strategy for the protection of the family and its stability, as well as for the upgrading of its social and economic role, and the reinforcement of the values of solidarity among its members.

Palestine

Poverty alleviation efforts in Palestine have been the focus of local and international attention, due to their serious effects on current political developments. Donor nations have allocated a major part of their assistance funds to basic social services, such as health and education, as well as to the finance of projects that have direct and visible effects on standards of living, which have recently gone from bad to worse. Thus, funds were allocated to subsidising the employees of the Palestinian Authority, and were mainly channelled through emergency employment or relief programmes.

Means used to fight poverty

Assistance

The aid received by the needy is usually their major source of income. The Ministry of Social Affairs is the most important institution in charge of providing material and financial assistance to the poor. Needy families receive help on the basis of a number of criteria, such as widowhood or old age (48.6%), physical disability (34%), the absence of the husband (31%), the absence of the income provider (7.9%), orphan (5.5%) and the insufficiency of income (5.9%). The second largest institution in charge of assisting the poor is the Relief and Employment Agency for Palestinian Refugees, which usually extends assistance to poor refugees. The third types of institution in charge of assisting the poor are the alms committees, which extend their assistance seasonally, especially during the month of Ramadan and the feasts. Other services such as education, vocational training and health care are also provided. A score of charity organizations contribute financial and material assistance to needy families. Direct voluntary charity extended by the families and relations of the poor are a major manifestation of feelings of social solidarity. However, such acts are not constant and involve no commitment or obligation on the part of the donor.

Vocational Training and Rehabilitation

with the aim of empowering them and enabling them to find employment, to ensure a decent standard of living. Being the poorest social group, women have been the target of a number of special programmes. The Ministry of Social Affairs has implemented a sewing training programme, directly helping women in obtaining employment. The needs expressed by factories and required skills were assessed and women were trained and employed accordingly by these factories. The Relief Agency has also contributed by establishing youth training centres in the refugee camps, which provide training services to women, helping them to open up workshops. Women's cooperatives were also established to help in the employment of women.

Job Opportunities

Due to the fact that unemployment has been the major source of poverty in Palestine, a score of institutions have contributed to the provision of employment opportunities to young men and women. Bekdar, the Palestinian Institution for Reconstruction and Development, is one of the major institutions which extend their assistance to job seekers. However, since its main activities are in the area of infrastructure, women are not major recipients of its services. The Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, adopts a programme, providing employment to farmers with minimum wages. A number of women have benefited from these programmes, though that female farmers have been assigned home-based activities.

Official Institutions implementing female lending programmes

Women have been generally unable to meet the basic lending stipulations imposed by the banks. Therefore, a number of official institutions, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, have decided to adopt a lending programme to help women start small enterprises. These women are offered the necessary training in the fields of administration, accounting and marketing. They are also provided with the collateral guarantees required by the lending institutions, thus empowering them through self-employment. The Ministry of Social Affairs has also set up a bureau for poverty alleviation, in charge of extending financial assistance and health care services to poor women.

The *Refugee Relief Agency* has also implemented a number of micro-finance projects, ranging between \$1,000 and \$5,000, directly covering women in need of social care. 60 loans have been extended hitherto, and the necessary training has been provided to guarantee the success of their enterprises. The Ministry of Agriculture has also extended agricultural loans to assist women in cultivating medical herbs such as chamomile and thyme, in building up beehives to sell honey, and in raising poultry and cattle. The Ministry has also provided them with guidance and has helped them in

marketing their products. The Ministry also provides constant guidance to rural women on the techniques of food production, thus helping them in the preservation and sale of food products. Currently, and due to the release of many workers, the Ministry has provided around 5,000 days of work to unemployed male workers, for a wage of 30 shekels per day. Women were not included in this programme and the great majority of the unemployed are men who used to work in Israel.

Local and international NGOs establish special female lending projects²

In the mid eighties a number of local NGOs worked on establishing lending and development institutions, with the objective of improving the living standards of Palestinian families. Loans were extended to be invested in income-generating enterprises. These institutions can be classified into four categories:

a. Palestinian non-governmental lending institutions: such as the Economic Development Group, the Arab Corporation for Development and Lending and Technical Corporation for Development. These institutions merged in 1996 to form the Palestinian Development Fund.

b. International Lending Organizations: which started their activities in the sixties and seventies. These are represented by ten major organizations, the Palestinian Relief Fund, the UNDP, Save the Children Fund, the Catholic Relief Fund, Care, ANIRA, CARETMAS, the Lutheran Union, the Council of Churches, YMCA and the Women's Economic Enterprise Center - Quebec. A number of these institutions provide their services directly to the target groups, such as the Palestinian Relief and Employment Agency, while others have worked via local community organizations, such as ANIRA, which executes its projects through local organizations, such as the Culture and Liberal Thinking organization. On the other hand, international NGOs such as the Women's Economic Enterprise Center - Quebec and the Catholic Relief Fund have transferred their programmes to the Businesswomen's Association - Assala.

Throughout the past decade, both the Save the Children Fund and the Catholic Relief Agency have provided women with very small loans (100 to 500\$ US) that have been used by these women in meeting their needs, or in starting very small enterprises, represented by home-based trade activities, or street vending. Women repay these loans in monthly or bimonthly instalments. A period of grace ranging from 2 to 6 months and sometimes a year is allowed. The loans are made at an interest rate of 20 - 24%. On the other hand, the Women's Economic Enterprise Center - Quebec has extended loans ranging from 1000 to 10,000 \$ US.

c. Local Non-governmental Organizations. Represented by a number of local non-governmental organizations, whose programmes include lending activities such as: Agricultural Relief, the Engineers Syndicate, the Arab Centre for Agricultural Development, the Culture and Liberal Thinking Organization and the Bissan Center for Research and Development. Some of these organizations have implemented a number of programmes for women, where they have extended assistance to hundreds of poor or vulnerable women. One of the major institutions, extending loans to women is the Bissan Center for Research and Development. The Agricultural Relief Agency, on the other hand, is the only institution that targets female agricultural workers, providing them with support within a comprehensive programme that aims at empowering women. It covers agricultural loans, guidance and a fixed interest rate of 2%.

d. Lending institutions restricted to women. Due to the small size of loans and their insufficiency in starting an enterprise, two institutions were formed in the past two years with the aim of extending support to women who wish to start their own enterprises. Those institutions are the Fatten Institution and the Palestinian Business Women Association - Assala.

² The Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Department of Planning and the Development of Women's Participation, Lending policies, and the equality of access to men and women.

Student Loans

In view of the strong correlation between education and employment, which implies the power to resist poverty, the Ministry of Education has been adamant about providing free education³, or in return for symbolic fees, up till the end of secondary education. Books are also made available at low prices. Nevertheless, needy families consider these expenses a burden, no matter how low they are, which results eventually in an increased rate of drop-outs or failure. The costs of education are not restricted to school fees and books, but include school uniforms and transportation. A number of institutions have worked on easing these burdens on poor girls, in an attempt to support them in completing their education till the end of high school. Due to the fact that girls are usually the first victims of deteriorating economic conditions, and are deprived of the completion of their studies as a result of the absence of the financial means to cover their transportation, a number of institutions such as the Women's Affairs Team, have decided to extend support to needy female students, especially in rural areas. A number of other local and private institutions provide students, especially university students, with loans, which they are committed to repay after graduation. Hundreds of students have benefited from such loans.

Empowerment Programmes

Deprivation is the twin of poverty. Feelings of deprivation among the poor lead inevitably to a score of psychological and social problems. Most needy families have imposed some kind of social isolation on themselves, due to their inability to pay the costs associated with social visits.⁴ Researchers have traced numerous manifestations of frustration and despair among the poor, a great number of whom resorted to some kind of fatalistic explanations to justify their poverty and to feel better about their condition. A number of women's organizations such as the Women's Affairs Team have adopted empowerment programmes that are directed at women, especially in the rural areas, to help them restore their self-confidence and their power to change. These programmes attempt to increase women's awareness of their political and social rights, and provide them with the necessary information to access services and lending institutions.

Attempts have been made to approach different mass media to change the predominant view of women and their role in society and to refute common misconceptions. Most ministries have assigned a department to handling women's affairs. The role of these departments varies from one ministry to another. The National Committee for Upgrading Women was formed lately to follow-up the implementation of the Beijing resolutions. A statistical department which handles the two genders has also been established.

Still one could say that the political situation in Palestine is the main cause of the deteriorating economic situation. The absence of social equity and the unbalanced access to wealth are among the major causes of poverty. The socially marginalized are the most prone to falling prey to poverty. These are represented by the elderly, the disabled, women, residents in remote villages and refugees. A comprehensive assessment of the psychological and material conditions of the poor is a prerequisite to escaping poverty. Support should be extended to poor women in the form of training, as well as the opportunity to participate in the productive process. Women should be allowed to provide input in decisions affecting them, and participatory decision-making is one of the main factors of a project's success. This in turn dictates upon the policy makers of the Palestinian Authority the need to formulate a medium-term development strategy, which is based on upgrading the infrastructure, as well as the improvement of educational and health services in villages and refugee camps. Special attention should be devoted to the task of bridging the enormous gap in the distribution of the national income. Investments should focus on the productive sector, as well as the development of

3 Symbolic fees are collected from the students of public schools, while the poverty stricken are exempted. The Ministry of Social Affairs undertakes the payment of school fees for those whose families receive financial support, while others are exempted according to their financial situation.

4 Hadil Risk Al Qazaz and Nader Ezzat Said, Poverty in Palestine, Case Study, The Development Studies Program, Beir Zeit University, 1999.

infrastructure. Such measures would be helpful in abandoning the concepts of relief work and philanthropy in the fight against poverty for a more balanced and sustainable development concept.

Until such a vision is fulfilled, the existence of social protection networks would help in providing a reasonable amount of protection for the poor. The coordination between these institutions within a framework of partnership would help the poor in diversifying their options and would boost their ability to make better use of the available alternatives.

Egypt

Most of the economic indicators refer to Egypt's success in the implementation of structural adjustment programme, as well as its ability to attain economic stability. Egypt currently enjoys a robust financial position, which will undoubtedly improve its chances of attaining rapid growth rates as per the forecasts of the World Bank (1997). However, such achievements have to be viewed in a more comprehensive framework, which takes into account the many challenges facing the state, especially those of poverty and unemployment. In 1995, unemployment in Egypt amounted to 10-13% of the total labour force. A high level of unemployment was recorded especially in the informal sector. Poverty rates are still rather high, amounting to 28% in 1996. Some studies indicate an increase in the poverty rate between 1991 and 1996.

The continued existence of the phenomenon of poverty among specific social and economic groups during that timeframe is an indication of the existence of a number of economic and social factors, which are at the root of the phenomenon. The question now is, what are the measures undertaken by the state regarding the elimination of poverty and the redistribution of wealth?

State efforts to alleviate poverty

Poverty is a very critical issue. Its existence is denied by most of the public officials, who are well aware of the negative effects of the structural adjustment policies on the standards of living of the low-income social sectors. Thus, a number of policies aimed at supporting those classes have been formulated and executed.

Notwithstanding the absence of a specific state authority, which bears the responsibility of planning, monitoring and coordinating the numerous programmes and activities directed at the poor, the Egyptian state has adopted a multi-dimensional strategy to improve the living standard of its citizens. These include income generating activities, human capital and social network strategies.

The Ministry of Planning has formulated general economic and social development plans on the short, medium and long terms that have been translated into action plans by the different ministries and state institutions. The government is also attempting to fight poverty in a number of ways, such as direct assistance extended by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the provision of free education, literacy campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Education, free health services from health clinics and a host of local hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, etc. Goods subsidies are also provided by the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade, and rural development projects are implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The fourth five-year economic and social development plan has adopted a number of objectives, first among which are:

1. Increasing women's participation in the different fields of economic development, especially in the productive and industrial fields, to assist poor women.
2. Adapting the vocational education and training offered by the various programmes to the needs of women, within the framework of labour market demands.

3. Reinforcing small-scale enterprises run by poor women in rural areas, and simplifying administrative procedures (soft loans, education, training facilities etc.)
4. Enhancing the role of community organizations working in this field and coordinating their activities with those of small-scale entrepreneurs.
5. Expanding lending projects and attempting to affiliate them to national banks, as well as attempting to revitalize endowments and activate fund-raising campaigns.
6. Organizing fairs and exhibitions to market products in coordination with the relevant ministries to specify local and international market needs.
7. Organizing the informal sector and providing legal protection and social insurance to women employed by this sector, as well as correcting statistical biases, which ignore the contribution of women in that sector.

Efforts exerted on the total economic level

The Egyptian price-fixing experiment is one of the most impressive of its kind at the international level. It succeeded within a relatively short timeframe in rectifying most of the errors in the overall economy, and was able to reduce the inflation rate from around 20% to 3.8% in 1997-98. In addition, a breakthrough was made in mending the basic shortcomings of the economy (such as real negative interest rates). Efforts were made to accumulate extensive foreign currency reserves.

On the other hand, social protection measures were sustained. Basic food items such as bread are still subsidized, while the overall number of subsidized goods has been reduced. However, the subsidy system has become more focused. Educational and health services provided by the state have been extended, which has gradually been reflected in lower infant mortality, greater life expectancy at birth and increasing literacy rates.

The Social Development Fund was established to address the short-term negative effects of economic reforms. Social expenditure was thus sustained, while budgetary cuts were only restricted to the field of public investments.

Human Capital Accumulation Efforts

Educational Policies

The Egyptian government is well aware of the importance of education as a means of realizing economic growth, reducing poverty and enhancing social equality. The productive capacity of the state depends highly on its accumulated human capital.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy has been identified as the main reason for the exacerbation of poverty. Thus, the fight against illiteracy is imperative and should be the target of collective government and non-governmental efforts. In addition to an improvement of the internal capacity, and the improvement of services provided by literacy programmes, efforts must be channelled to encourage the non-governmental sector to take part in delivering these services.

Since the early nineties, the state has allocated increased funds to the reduction of illiteracy. The General Association for Literacy and Adult Education (GALAE) was consequently established with the support of the Social Development Fund, extending its literacy programmes to cover the whole country. Enormous government funds were allocated to these literacy campaigns, increasing from LE 6 million in 1992-93 to LE 97 million in 1995-96. An additional LE 105 million was contributed by the Social Development Fund. Government services in the field of fighting illiteracy thus covered all 26

governorates. The contribution of the non-governmental sector has been extremely effective and fighting literacy has been a basic element in the services provided by NGOs to the community (in addition to health services and small loans) (Asaad 1998).

Health Care

Egypt has a relatively efficient network of institutions and health care facilities which cover rural as well as urban areas. Egypt has been one of the pioneer states in the region to put up a comprehensive health care system on a national level. However, in spite of the latest developments in the occurrence of some diseases as well as the extensive number of the employees in the health sector, health indicators remain relatively low compared to the criteria of other developing nations. Most of the health problems in Egypt can be attributed to poverty, unhealthy environment and the limited financial resources allocated to the sector. In addition, the treatment approach adopted by the health care system in Egypt has failed to address the real problems facing the health care sector, which are epidemic in nature, thus necessitating the adoption of preventive medical techniques.

Safety Networks

Safety networks were formed in Egypt prior to the economic reform and structural adjustment era. They depended on a complicated system of diffused subsidies financed by the state budget and covering basic food items, housing, transportation, electricity, energy, education and health services. In addition to the assistance provided to numerous families, and the financial aid extended to the poor sector through the Ministry of Social Affairs, interest-free loans were provided by the Nasser Social Bank, as well as soft loans which are extended to unemployed youth to finance income-generating micro-enterprises.

The Ministry of Social Affairs

The Ministry of Social Affairs is involved in a number of interventions which aim at reducing poverty directly through social assistance and pension programmes, or indirectly through a large number of non-governmental organizations, supervised and supported by the Ministry. In addition, the Ministry oversees the Nasser Social Bank, an institution in charge of a large number of alms committees all over the country.

The government has also sustained its support to the Social Development Fund and the Shorouk programme in their administration and development of a large number of poverty alleviation programmes through the Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with a number of government and non-governmental organizations. Among these actors are the relevant authorities, non-governmental organizations, the Nasser Social Bank, social development organizations and community organizations. The Mubarak Programme for Social Solidarity is aimed at achieving human development and serving low-income social sectors, such as the disabled, those suffering from chronic diseases and unemployed youth. One of the most important traits of this programme is its attempt to strike a balance between the mobilization of the productive potential of the beneficiaries, and the provision of financial and material assistance.

Social Assistance Programmes provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (the Human Development Report for Egypt 1996)

The Ministry of Social Affairs is involved in a number of programmes which aim at alleviating poverty directly through its social assistance and relief programmes, or indirectly through the large number of non-governmental organizations working under its auspices. The Ministry is also in charge of supervising the Nasser Bank, which runs a large number of alms committees.

In addition to the strong support provided by the Social Development Fund, and the various poverty reduction programmes conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with a number of government and non-governmental organizations, which include the relevant authorities, NGOs, the

Nasser Social Bank, social development agencies and regional social associations, the Mubarak Social Solidarity Programme plays an important role in elevating the levels of human development for the low-income groups. One of its most important objectives is the attainment of a balance between the provision of production facilities to the beneficiaries and the provision of direct financial and material assistance.

The role of the Nasser Social Bank (established in 1971) in enhancing social equity in Egypt

The Nasser Bank was established in 1971 with the objective of enhancing social equity among the citizens. To that effect, the Bank extends loans to low-income individuals as well as grants and aid to the needy. At present, financial resources of the Bank are obtained from the profits made through banking activities, investments, alms (zakat) money, grants and donations. This Bank is different from other banks and financial institutions in that it is the only institution granted the right by law to collect alms and donations and to disseminate these donations in charitable activities to help the poor and needy.

The Bank provides a score of services, depending on the forms of poverty tackled. It extends loans in the range of LE 1000 - 10,000 per enterprise, that are to be repaid in monthly instalments over a period of 3 to 5 years, at an annual interest rate of 6%. The Bank allocates LE 350 million annually to that effect.

Poor citizens obtain financial and material grants via the alms committees. Around LE 42 million are allocated to these activities. The Bank also extends loans to the poor and the disabled to manage income-generating enterprises. Again a sum of LE 150 million is allocated for that purpose. The Bank is also involved in granting social interest-free loans to the needy, who are faced with social obligations they cannot meet, such as wedding costs, illness, emergencies, earthquakes etc. These are to be repaid over a period of three years. The number of beneficiaries of this system has amounted to around 300,000 individuals, with an average of LE 500 per individual. The Bank also supports the construction of housing and extends rural development loans, with the aim of turning certain villages into productive units. Social services also fall into its field of activity, such as the funding of pilgrimage trips. The Bank is also involved in a score of banking and investment activities (investments have reached around LE 1 billion). It supports the establishment of micro enterprises through its low-interest lending system at an interest rate of 3 - 4%, which is lower than the predominant market rates, provided the enterprise has a social value (such investments amount to LE 700 million per year).

The Pension System

1. The Sadat Pension introduced in 1980 is allocated to senior citizens over the age of 65, the disabled or the legal heirs to those deceased before 1/7/1980, who did not enjoy any kind of social insurance coverage. The allowance of LE 37 was allocated to around 920,000 persons in 1994-95.
2. Other pension systems cover members of the labour force who do not enjoy the benefits provided by pension and social security legislation. The age of the beneficiaries ranges between 18 and 65. The law provides for direct financing, in return for symbolic wage deductions from the insured. The total sum allocated to the beneficiaries, who receive a monthly sum of LE 45 each, was around 7,489,000 in 1994-95.
3. The social security system, on the other hand, is extended to cover widows, divorcees, orphans, families of convicts, the disabled and the elderly. The monthly sum ranges from LE 10 for orphans to LE 33 for the elderly or the families of convicts.

The Mubarak Social Solidarity Programme (1996)

To cope with the effects of the economic reform programme, a strategy had to be adopted to support low-income citizens. Thus, the Ministry of Social Affairs has introduced the Mubarak Social Solidarity programme, which aims at increasing the levels of human development and activating the basic productive forces by establishing income-generating enterprises.

The programme also hopes to invigorate the entire service sector to address all kinds of social ills. The target group to be covered by this programme is families whose income stands below LE 100 per month, such as the disabled, the chronically ill, unemployed youth etc. The programme extends support to productive enterprises and training activities and provides financial and material assistance, health care and prostheses. It also supports the needy and disabled.

Within the first nine months of 1996, around 2 million individuals were surveyed as possible candidates for the services provided by this programme, half of whom were then actually covered. Throughout this period, a total of 6 million people benefited from the programme. The financial equivalent of the aid extended is about LE 65.3 million, more than 50% of which was allocated to the establishment of income-generating enterprises (EHDR) 1996.

The Social Development Fund

The Social Development Fund was established in January 1991 as per decree No 40. However, it became officially active in 1993. The Social Fund is one of the most important and effective models in the field of the development of small-scale economic enterprises. Its achievements are impressive even when compared to other funds at the international level.

The Social Development Fund is a semi-autonomous government institution under the direct supervision of the prime minister. It is funded by the Egyptian government in cooperation with the World Bank, the International Development Agency, the European Union and a score of Arab funds and donors. The Social Development Fund was established to protect and improve the living conditions of the poor and the unemployed throughout the economic reform era. Its mission is to facilitate the implementation of Egypt's economic reform plans through the dilution of the negative effects that structural adjustments have on the low-income sector, as well as through the reinforcement of Egypt's institutional capacities both at the government and non-governmental level to develop new social programmes and update existing ones.

The objectives of the Fund are achieved through the reinforcement of income generating activities and labour, provision of basic social services and the encouragement of local participation and awareness with the help of five basic programmes: the Public Works Programme, the Community Development Programme, the Enterprise Development Programme, the Human Resource Development Programme and the Institutional Development Programme.

NGOs

No 32 of 1964. They are affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs. According to the above law, these organizations must be registered, whether they are welfare organizations active in one specific area or community development institutions with multiple activities. The financial resources of these NGOs are mainly service fees obtained in return for the services they provide, or the sales revenues of their products, local charities, the donations made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and other government agencies, and some foreign funds. At any rate, the non-governmental sector is still not ready to assume a larger role in fighting poverty (Asaad, 1998). In spite of their relatively large number (14,000 active in different fields and covering an extensive geographical area), the majority of these NGOs suffer from institutional problems and restraints, as well as limited financial capacities, which prevent them from playing an effective role in the development process.

*The National Programme for Overall Rural Development (Shorouk)*⁵

The restructuring of the Egyptian village started in 1994 through a comprehensive programme under the name Shorouk. The programme is supervised by the local administration. It is based on the expansion of overall popular participation in rural communities. The main goal of this programme is to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas. To attain this goal, four objectives had to be realized:

- The development of local communities through the effective use of local resources.
- increased productivity.
- The provision of local employment opportunities through the diversification of economic activities.
- The enhancement of the social, cultural, educational, training and local health systems and the improvement of the government and non-governmental performance in the provision of services to the local communities.

This programme has been extended to cover the period between 1994 and 2017, and is divided into four phases: the start, the take off, growth and sustainability.

The concept of comprehensive rural development refers to the radical changes undergone to achieve an overall growth in all aspects of local community life, as well as the promotion of participatory democracy in cooperation with the state. It aspires to introduce changes and multi-dimensional development through the provision of means to support the local communities in realizing social growth and sustainable development based on self-reliance and the mobilization of local resources. The state performs the complementary role of coordination, financing and the provision of technical assistance to ensure popular participation.

However, the total dependence of this project on state support raises two questions. What is the relationship between the national development plan and the Shorouk projects and what happens if there was a conflict of interests between the designers of the national plans? Are the services provided to fill the gap in some services or to provide the needs of the deprived areas?

6. Recommendations in designing poverty alleviation policies and strategies

1. The strategic framework for fighting poverty should include 3 levels, the macro-level, the meso-level and the micro-level. At the higher levels of the national economy, governments are accountable for these programmes and are responsible for the formulation of policies that target the poor. This level encompasses economic growth, employment policies, and financial and pricing policies. The meso-level, on the other hand, is concerned with transforming comprehensive policies into structural activities. This level serves to connect the macro and the micro levels, and is concerned with the efficiency of development processes and the implementation of a good governance system. The micro-level deals with activities that directly affect poor families. Within that level, practical approaches are implemented in cooperation with all the actors involved in the process.
2. Achieving high economic growth rates, based on the equal distribution of the benefits of development among the population and concerned with the ability of the poor to participate in the development process, enabling them to benefit from the services provided through the eradication of their deprivation and feelings of alienation. A number of nations have formulated poverty reduction plans, based on increasing the income of the poor, through participation in income-generating enterprises, or through the establishment of financial institutions that extend their lending services to the poor.

⁵ *The Human Development Report*, 1996

3. Arab nations are characterized by the relative youth of their population, which makes it imperative to generate new employment opportunities at a rate that exceeds population growth rates. Social and infrastructure services should also be increased in accordance with population growth. The economic development plan, on the other hand, should take the conditions of the poor into consideration. Past experience has indicated that economic growth per se is not sufficient for the eradication of poverty.
4. To be able to formulate policies, design programmes, implement and assess the poverty-related projects, one has to fully understand the multiple dimensions of poverty. It is thus of extreme importance to make use of the available quantifiable and quality data to better understand the different statistics and to be able to analyse the various coordinates, such as income distribution, human development, health indicators, death rates, education, labour, nutrition and other important elements. Statistics play a significant role in identifying target groups and appropriate projects. Quality analysis should also be undertaken, as a basic component of a comprehensive understanding of poverty everywhere.
5. The establishment of sustainable enterprises through an equitable distribution of resources is based on the capacity building of communities. Focus groups should be formed, meetings should be held with community representatives, and social priorities should be set. Comprehensive studies and the analysis of societal needs prior to the beginning of the project are a must, to be able to find out in what way different social groups other than the target group are affected by the activities of the planned project. Projects should include support in the implementation of the findings of the organized workshops and in building up other needed skills and capacities, to guarantee the success of the model projects.
6. The concept of participatory development means the active participation of the beneficiaries in the decision-making process, implementation, distribution of revenue and assessment. All of the above guarantee the sustainability of the project and the self-reliance of the participants. Non-participatory development, on the other hand, involves the formulation of plans by the donors or the government officials, with no societal input. The focus here would be on financial output. The target groups do not play any role in the decision-making process and their technical expertise is not put to any use.
7. The short and medium-term effects of the project on the local economic climate, social relations and environment should be taken into consideration. Attention should be paid to the use of renewable resources, and the actors involved in the planning and implementation of the project should make sure that the needs of the present generation will not endanger the interests of coming generations.
8. Top-down developmental approaches have proven their failure, since they result in projects that do not conform to the needs of the communities. By teaching target groups to be self-reliant and by believing in their capacity to deal with the problems they are facing, projects implemented by them will undoubtedly be sustainable and successful.
9. Poverty alleviation strategies should have a balanced view of all kinds of available resources (be they natural, human or material), taking into consideration the input of all of these resources in the future generation of income. Thus, investment in the development of human capital, which is not expected to generate any direct revenue, would surely result in the future generation of income for those who are interested in improving their potential. Human development has undeniable effects on the redistribution of income and the alleviation of poverty. Training programmes are effective tools for empowering women in their quest for a productive role. Women should also be encouraged to start small-scale productive enterprises through the provision of loans, marketing services, appropriate technology and training that is adjusted to their needs. The cultural and social standards of women should be upgraded and utmost priority should be given to the eradication of female illiteracy, especially in the rural

areas and poor urban areas. The vocational capacity of the poor, especially women, should also be improved.

10. General policies should also take equity of distribution into account. These policies greatly affect the conditions of the marginalized. Social and economic gaps should also be taken into consideration to avoid future social conflict. The forms of social deprivation and need vary. Poverty and low income are among its basic manifestations, so are feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and insecurity, which invariably result in increased social tension. To be able to eradicate deprivation, states should formulate effective policies to address this problem and to avoid relying completely on market mechanisms to meet these needs. Social development needs interaction between the market, the state authorities and the political actors in society.
11. The formulation of poverty reduction policies should be predicated on the distinction between low-income poverty and human poverty, which encompasses other criteria such as lack of knowledge and insecurity rather than lack of wealth. Levels of deprivation should also be classified according to status and gender.
12. Last but not least, ending the Israeli occupation and mobilizing collective efforts to that effect, in addition to securing the appropriate conditions for the return of Palestinians to their homeland and to their possessions. Available natural resources should also be invested to ensure social integration and comprehensive social development. The Palestinian economy should be disentangled from the Israeli economy, and the siege imposed on Iraq, Sudan and Libya should be ended and with it the suffering of these Arab peoples.

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Strengthening coherence between economic and social policies for human development

When trying to understand what characterises the ideas and values of modern societies compared with traditional societies, some people give pride of place to economic ideology. One of the most popular ideas is this: economic life is the infrastructure or the foundation of our societies. It plays a predominant role in all other aspects of social life. In simple terms, it means that if the economy is going well, then society is in good health.

In fact, the legitimacy of this dominant position of the economy in the life of society was possible in the western countries thanks to the compromises between social classes. The sharing of the wealth produced benefited all, thanks to the constant increases in salaries, which avoided crises of under-consumption in the 19th century and also thanks to the social protection that guaranteed minimum incomes to the sick, the retired or the unemployed and played an anti-cyclical role.

The legitimacy of the economy in a dominant position in the social system might seem to go without saying, if economic growth was accompanied by a reduction in inequality and an increase in social cohesion. Economists immediately retreat into the alternative competitiveness where social cohesion, the legitimacy of the economy as an infrastructure of society, is shaken. If the economy is left to itself, the aggravation of all kinds of inequalities (of income, in education, in housing, etc.) is inevitable. This is where the social and political link must take centre stage and make sure that moral sentiments such as a sense of equity lead to an acceptable sharing of power and wealth. This is the only way to control the tumultuous relationship between the economy and society; it is the way to reconcile the economic and the social.

1. THE CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

1.1. The context

The opening-up of the economy and the constraints on the globalisation/regionalisation process

Today references to globalisation/regionalisation dominate all analyses of the national economic environment and its difficulties, especially on the southern side of the Mediterranean: all our evils, those of yesterday and of today, the risks for tomorrow come from opening up the economy. In order to avoid a kind of magic approach, it is essential to point out that this phenomenon is an unavoidable trend in today's international and regional economic relations, but that it can take different, more or less tolerable, more or less acceptable or desirable forms, depending on the responses that the actors of a particular country are prepared to make in the fields affected by this trend.

Why is this opening-up so worrying? The concerns have to do with the fragility of certain situations: timid, unstable growth, precarious or poorly paid jobs, massive unemployment, the burden of deteriorating public finances, vigorous international and regional trade but ongoing conflicts, and less acute monetary disorder but still volatile financial markets.

In view of this operation as a global economic system, how can we manage relations with partners? How can we expect to manage national economic development in these as yet unindustrialised societies and territories?

After the implementation of vast programmes of structural adjustment or economic and social reform, the situation of the economies in the South and East Mediterranean countries (SEMC) may seem relatively healthy. The results of these economic efforts are still reduced, however. Today, of course, we can expect nothing except competition between nations and companies on an international scale. Development is, above all, the achievement of a society on the move, of a society that does business and of its entrepreneurs. It is true that companies are not the only achievements of entrepreneurs; their performance depends on their immediate relationship with their environment. The State and the market have a role to play in this process.

Concern also arises from the problems of managing international and regional interdependence and adapting national economies. Interdependence has become both broader and deeper. Adaptation is both global and permanent. This means great mobility of behaviour and constant questioning of accepted situations. A central issue therefore has to do with the best way of combining this need for mobility and for questioning accepted situations with the legitimate, fundamental aspiration to a sufficient level of social protection.

Concerns of social protection

Slower growth and the increase in economic interdependence have hindered incomplete social protection systems, built at great cost. There is a worrying reversal of causality: economic growth led to the development of social protection. Could it be that, today, social protection is penalising ongoing growth in an increasingly competitive world?

Behind this first issue there is a double question: what room for manoeuvre does a State have today for implementing a social policy of its own, now that the economic frontiers are opening up more and more? There is no simple, rapid answer to this question. It is not social protection that stands in the way of growth or employment, it is perhaps the way it is organised and financed. There is room for calm reflection in this field, without taking ideological sides.

The question about room for manoeuvre in each country is in fact something of a false good question. To deny all room for manoeuvre would be to accept the idea that calling the *acquis* into question was inevitable. This has not been proven, but if it is true we must define exactly how it should be called into question. The risk would be that of inaction, on the pretext that action was impossible or dangerous. So there is room for manoeuvre at a national level and there is also perhaps a margin of error. The worst of all would be inaction.

The constraints of the new environment require dispassionate, but urgent reflection on these questions. As in many other fields, theoretic reflection does not give us any key-in-hand solutions or any immediately usable recipe. In the SEMC, the problem is that of the evolution of complex systems that were set up in different times. We have to understand their insufficiencies and adverse effects, take inspiration from the lesson to be learnt from the experience of our partners or other foreign countries – though nothing is directly transposable – and, above all, clarify the goals that social protection systems are supposed to achieve. This clarification falls within the scope of an active political approach, which, far from being fatalistic, would get ahead of an evolution that the constraints of opening-up, demography and funding might otherwise impose.

The slightest ease in responding to social needs

There are a number of reasons for the difficulty in meeting future social expenses:

- The uncertain effects of slower growth: fast growth facilitates the funding of social advantages. Everything points to the fact that, for growth to compete for the easy funding of social protection, it must be of a different magnitude from that observed in the last ten years. If this scenario cannot be excluded a priori, it is conditioned by a multitude of factors that seem difficult to achieve at medium term.

- The constraints of opening-up: the opening-up of the economy weighs on social protection in a number of ways. Even if social expenses are not the main factor of the gap between the costs of labour in different countries, the deflections that would lead to increasing these labour costs even temporarily must be watched. In addition, the increased mobility of capital prevents funding redistribution through the taxation of this capital, just as it prevents excessively lax management of social budgets, which reflects on monetary stability.
- Demographic constraints: the margin for demographic adjustment is small (whether as a result of the recovery in the birth rate in the developed countries or of a change in the age pyramid in developing countries).
- Lack of room for manoeuvre in public expenditure: in a context of economic crisis, there is very little room for manoeuvre in public expenditure. If adjustments are possible when it comes to financial management, and even if we can imagine appropriate mechanisms for enlarging coverage in the unstructured sector, the constraints that most developing countries have to face are, to a great extent, inherent in the poor level of development and apathetic growth that characterise them.

1.2. The challenges

Difficulties in reconciling prosperity and social cohesion

At the dawn of the new century, as in many other developing countries, the SEMC are experiencing serious difficulties in establishing both prosperity and social cohesion. An important cause of these difficulties is the accumulated delay of many years in the acceptance of responsibility for social cohesion. The other, unfortunately often-neglected cause of these difficulties lies within the very systems that are supposed to deal with them. The devices - taxes and transfers, regulation of employment, social assistance services and others - have not succeeded in correcting the social imbalances that are becoming increasingly structural. As the systems of action were originally designed for the explicit purpose of protecting citizens against these shocks and of offering guarantees against different forms of uncertainty, their long-term effects have been the opposite of the expected results.

Several important problems arise, making it more and more difficult for public decision makers to reconcile the expansion of prosperity and social cohesion in upcoming decades. The SEMC today have to face major stakes. A context in which we expect a lot, if not everything, from the State: control of balances, national solidarity, and bringing production up to a competitive level, an effective but cheap State, motivating regulations and a controlled opening-up, and exigent citizens who want their basic needs to be satisfied quickly. The challenges are such that they make it necessary to mobilise all available and potential resources.

Different types of reforms must be implemented to deal with these problems and there are two main goals at the heart of these reforms. On one hand is the consolidation of a strong economy based on a solid fabric of industrial undertakings, agricultural holdings and service companies and on the development of dense, effective transport and communication infrastructures. On the other hand is a need for distributive solidarity to redress the inequalities without sinking under increasingly heavy debts that would asphyxiate the production of goods and wealth.

Following the example of the rest of the world, the changes in the economies of the SEMC are aimed at reconciling two different principles, that of productivity and profitability, which makes it necessary to constantly seek a reduction in constraints and expenses, and that of the State as a guarantor of national solidarity, which it can only fully assume by taxing the producers of wealth. There is no fatal antagonism between these two principles. It is important to resolve the apparent contradictions in arbitration appropriate to our situation and our culture. The essential adjustment of structures cannot affect employment or the fight against poverty.

In any case, the methods of approaching these problems must be reformed. It is a question of setting up a way of operating based on the optimal mobilisation of resources, regulations to prevent abuses, transparent management and evaluation to verify respect for commitments. It is a modernisation project that could change the face of the SEMC and meet the needs of the 21st century.

Solidarity mechanisms and institutions to be renewed

In general, social solidarity mechanisms and institutions are not built only on the basis of the need for them. Their content and their relative importance are the fruit of historic evolution and of "institutionalised compromises". The SEMC are no exception to this rule. The phenomenon of social solidarity goes back a long way in the history of our society. Countries on the south side had a large number of welfare institutions arising from tribal customs and founded on the beliefs of Islam. The application of traditional or Muslim law led to mutual aid practices at different levels of social life. The zakat obliged Muslims to redistribute a part of their resources to the needy. These solidarity mechanisms originating in a community and religious spirit have not totally disappeared but they have remained badly organised.

Accompanying social change, solidarity in its modern form was born with the penetration of the protectorate. These social devices nevertheless remained embryonic. Once independence was achieved, a social insurance scheme was introduced, bringing together the services provided by social security institutions and mutual societies. Historic and also technical reasons made at least a part of Moroccan social security compulsory.

Today, non-public forms of social solidarity are reaching their limits. Family solidarity is diminishing in certain fields although there is life in it yet. It has run into the limits of its low level and its partial nature and it cannot deal with all risks. However much scope the private and optional mechanisms gain, they cannot completely replace compulsory public schemes. If individuals are given the freedom to insure themselves, those who are most exposed to the risks will turn to insurance, which will result in the insurers selecting their clientele or charging high prices. Social protection mechanisms have helped to forge the cohesion between countries, by making them a community with greater resistance to political and socio-economic shocks. This acquis is under threat today.

A need for solidarity

In the course of the last fifteen years, the needs for solidarity have intensified under the effect of the profound changes in economic and social contexts. The combination of the slowdown in growth, globalisation of markets, financial concentration, unstable exchange rates and the intensification of competition has been reflected by a run on productivity, which is unfavourable to employment.

Work becomes rare, while capital is not systematically oriented towards productive investment because of the greater lure of monetary and financial speculation. The result is well known: unemployment, precarious jobs, and an increase in social inequalities. This rarefaction of work generates anxiety and insecurity; it also makes the professional insertion of the most vulnerable people more difficult and costly.

Where the capital factor is concerned, its application is subject more and more to purely financial considerations. Rather than investing, companies often prefer speculation, as financial products themselves have diversified a lot and benefit from tax advantages. And when they invest in production, it is often to improve productivity, and the effects on employment are often tiny or negative. The joint effect of financial globalisation, the greater movement of capital and the effect of taxation on labour limits demand and aggravates the inequalities between nations, territories, social groups and individuals.

At the same time, from a sociological point of view, we find an increase in individualism and family isolation, a relaxation of the social bond, even greater family instability, and the emergence of new diseases. The upshot here too is the inadequacy of institutional structures, in spite of some

adjustments made to deal with the social emergency. The road to the restoration of family and neighbourhood solidarity and the extension of socially useful activities is wide open.

2. FIELDS OF ACTION

2.1. The fight against poverty

In the SEMC, poverty has receded somewhat here and there but it is fundamentally dependent on the vagaries of the climate. If we observe the configuration of poverty we find that there is a large concentration of vulnerable population on the threshold of poverty. In poverty alleviation strategies, public spending is a powerful instrument for relieving the burden of this social wound. However, in order to reach the destitute groups, the funds must be allocated to the regions or areas in which they live and to the services that they use most. Several studies of the impact of public spending on the social conditions of the poor have shown that the funds do not always go where they are needed most.

The State plays a dominant role in social assistance mechanisms. But, as a whole, the existing social assistance mechanisms are far from being adequate as safety nets as they do not reach many poor and vulnerable people. They were not designed with a view to a clearly articulated strategy of poverty alleviation and prevention. In addition, they are fragmented and dispersed among many different public authorities. Moreover, there is no well-established framework for interactive follow-up of the effects of these mechanisms on the target populations. Certain mechanisms or some of their components seem well targeted at the poor. Others are not, such as subsidies for certain basic products, which mainly benefit the better-off strata, or their impact is insufficient, like youth employment programmes. The prospects of action in the fight against poverty depend largely on the opportunities for strong, regular growth and the effective allocation of public funds.

The reduction of poverty means a rise in per capita GDP, growth responding to certain criteria and social investment designed to reinforce the potential of the disadvantaged strata of the population. Job creation is a key element of this kind of strategy which, given the structural profile of our economies, should also focus on the expansion of agriculture in arid areas and the development of economic activities in enclave regions. In addition, without supporting the creation of non-agricultural jobs in the rural areas and the development of micro-companies, especially in small and medium-size villages, it will be difficult to significantly reduce poverty.

Although the growth of economies is an essential condition for poverty reduction, it requires additional intervention from the public authorities in certain fields in order to increase the protection of the poor. Knowing that the poor population is basically concentrated in rural areas that are relatively poorly equipped with physical and social infrastructure, the development of these essential services (water, electricity, access roads, elementary education and basic sanitation) is the main field of additional action to both stimulate growth and to distribute benefits more widely.

An effective fight against poverty also requires a profound reform of the social transfer mechanisms and social protection institutions in order to support the survival of the most disadvantaged populations. It is necessary to repair the weaknesses of these institutions and rationalise their intervention programmes. The goal is to maximise financial transfers to the poor, target resources at activities that benefit the disadvantaged and restore the original mandate of these institutions.

2.2. Employment

Unemployment is nudging the 1.5 million mark and is growing every year. *Long-term unemployment*, or recurring unemployment, has become the manifestation and the main source of exclusion. *Youth unemployment* is becoming more and more worrying. The percentage leaving school without a diploma or qualifications is high and *these young people with no qualifications* are at particularly high risk of professional and social exclusion. A growing number of *young people with vocational training*

are having trouble finding jobs. The relative weight of *unemployment of qualified young people* is becoming even greater with the growing selectivity of companies' hiring practices.

A proactive policy is needed to deal with unemployment, but will not be enough to eradicate it. As a result, new economic and social policies should help speed up growth and reinforce employment. The prospects for the labour market in the light of demographic growth seem to indicate an ongoing increase in the active population, due basically to the development of work by women. If economic growth is accompanied by greater gains in productivity, the volume of employment should only increase moderately. It is necessary to realise that acceleration in growth due to an increase in endogenous growth factors would not have the immediate effect of substantially increasing the number of jobs or reducing long-term unemployment.

Improving the skills of the available labour force and developing intermediation in the labour market may have positive effects on the level of employment. The same applies to programmes of public utility work, of aid to independent work and of encouragement for NGOs working in the field. All measures taken to this end are important: we must improve the effectiveness of employment policies and stabilise unemployment so that it protects us against the deterioration of the situation in the labour market.

The insertion mechanisms set up almost everywhere in the SEMC have shown varying success with regard to the increase in unemployment. Crowding-out effects are always important, however, and we must continue to reinforce training/adaptation/re-conversion programmes for the qualified unemployed, strengthen measures favouring young developers, and encourage the creation of company breeding grounds. The most effective devices in terms of insertion into jobs are those close to the companies.

If the modernisation of socio-productive systems is not speeded up, it is at risk of generating even more job losses. The ongoing changes in companies dictated by new constraints in competitiveness must be accompanied by new modes of production and organisation. The present situation is characterised by heterogeneity in the development of forms of job management implemented by companies. The re-composition of the economic fabric linked to competitive strategies should result in job management favouring recourse to negotiated flexibility, the reinforcement of qualified personnel, the adaptation of institutions in the labour world and the modernisation of professional relations.

The main goal of companies is not employment but the defence of their market position. Competition drives them to rationalise their activities as much as possible in order to reduce their prices, which in turn leads to redundancies. The result is the loosening of the ties between production and employment and a weaker economic growth content in work. Women are getting more and more involved in the labour market. The result is that, even if demographic pressure grows weaker, the supply of female labour will continue to grow. This growth will naturally depend on economic development.

The debate on the reform of labour legislation has become important in the SEMC for two reasons: tough international competition obliges companies to find ways of constantly and rapidly dealing with new conditions and current labour law is less and less adapted to the major structural changes.

The standards that govern individual and collective links between employees and companies are necessarily subject to the influences of economic, technological and political changes. The concern for protecting and promoting employees does not necessarily go against the preservation of the rights of the company as an economic and social unit.

It is obvious that the present labour regulations neither protect workers against the abusive use of reductions in working hours nor enable companies to flourish in a stable environment. Will the reform of labour legislation define new rules on the management of labour relations?

Will the ongoing adjustment in certain countries provide appropriate answers to the worrying problems of individual and collective labour relations? Will they define an effective, operational legal framework for these relations? Will they enable the institutions dealing with work relations, be they worker's delegates, trade unions or the labour inspectorate, to go from a state of conflict to one of cooperation? Will they participate in the promotion of a new concept of the company? The first condition for flexibility is the existence of a good working climate in the company. By its very nature, this climate cannot simply be installed by legislation or the introduction of collective agreements.

2.3. The crisis in the social protection system

As it is today, in spite of its faults, the social protection system in the SEMC provides essential, indispensable services. It first served to distribute a social income (whatever its limits) to the most needy. Then, for decades, although to a lesser extent, it has been the vector of the social function of risk coverage, assistance and relative redistribution, which we cannot do without.

The crisis of the social protection systems does not mean that these systems are bankrupt and that we have to put behind us all the positive achievements that they have brought. We must regard it as a crisis of development, an adaptation of the implementation of a new social policy. To talk about reforming them is to say that we must give them new bases that are solid enough to envisage new stages in social progress, beyond the mere preservation of their achievements.

A social protection system always has two main functions: the prevention of risks by compulsory insurance (which brings a kind of horizontal solidarity between individuals) and redistribution (which consists of organising vertical solidarity between high and low incomes). In the SEMC, there are three causes for the decreasing performance of this function of redistribution by social transfers:

- The diversity of the system's organisms and situations make it difficult to regard as a system in the full sense of the word, i.e. a set of structures acting in a certain space each with its own specific function, optimising the performance of the whole by synergy of their actions. Social providence has a multiform configuration without order or complementarity.
- The quantitative extension of the population covered does not produce proportional qualitative progress. Where retirement is concerned, pensions do not keep up with the cost of living. With regard to health, the contributions cover fewer and fewer expenses. Family allowances are out of touch with the costs of a child. In this sense, we can talk of a law of decreasing performances in this social protection system.
- The opacity of the system is also a waste factor: the gap between the deductions and the expenses is widening, management costs are rising, the financial product from the investment of reserves is developing poorly, and social deductions sometimes lead to backward transfers: forced savings finance sectors that have nothing to do with these social categories.

3. CONDITIONS FOR JOINT DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Finding a balance between economic flexibility and social cohesion

The potentially important long-term challenges for social cohesion, which are the result of trends in the economic, technological and organisational fields, have been widely identified. An evaluation of their impact on the sense of belonging, trust and security that are decisive to social cohesion still remains to be made. It is safe to say that pressures on social cohesion will evolve in the next two decades, while unemployment, unequal pay, demographic changes, technical progress, the liberalisation of trade and greater competition in the market will continue to cause economic and social turmoil.

The distribution of costs and the advantages of change are also a significant challenge. Future social cohesion will be politically and practically impossible to achieve if the sacrifices and costs of transition required by a flexible economy are regarded as being supported by the poorest and weakest part of the population rather than society as a whole.

The rhythm and extent of the adaptation that we need in order to be able to meet the needs of a dynamic, flexible economy will also depend, at least in part, on the rhythm of economic growth. Weak growth might bring with it social conflicts and the disintegration of the consensus about economic policy. Stronger growth, on the other hand, could reduce the urgency of the adaptation, while providing greater room for manoeuvre. In view of the modest long-term growth prospects, however, it will probably be necessary to implement mechanisms for managing the economic and social risks resulting from this turmoil and the new demands of flexibility. Indeed, the adoption of new strategies to ensure the complementarity of economic and social objectives instead of opposing them is a priority issue not only for government and companies, but also for individuals.

We need innovative thinking on ways of counteracting the social fractures and providing effective insurance against the pertinent economic and social risks, while encouraging active participation in the community and the sharing of aspirations and values. Indeed, the long-term compatibility of economic flexibility with sustainable social cohesion depends a lot on the capacity to adapt and innovate of governments, companies and citizens.

3.2. A global, coherent, participative hands-on approach

A policy of economic and social change can only be a long, drawn-out job and it will take time to clear the roads to reform in our countries. It calls for simultaneous, coordinated intervention at all levels. It involves all the actors, both working alone and in concert with the others. The effectiveness of this modernisation depends on one essential condition: long-term action, because these efforts will be a long time taking effect. Even if, in today's social emergencies, we must immediately envisage massive, targeted measures, they must be followed by the creation of a plan of action.

Solidarity is aimed at a society consisting of people who live their everyday lives in a limited environment that does not necessarily reflect politico-administrative divisions. The SEMC are trying to encourage decentralisation. This movement will accentuate the importance of spatial roots for economic, social and cultural activities. Social policies, which are the vectors of solidarity, must not escape this phenomenon.

As these policies are put into practice, two major issues will appear. They are the complexification of districts, of decision-making processes and procedures, and the necessary articulation of the spatial levels of social action. The national level requires a regulatory and legislative framework, the regional level will, at longer or shorter term, seek to define essentially organisational guidelines for managing budgets and procedures, and the hands-on level will reflect the immediate, regular relationship of the professionals with the beneficiaries of the social policies. The trends reveal several issues which need to be clarified.

We must accept the idea of applying territorial divisions that take into account "the living space" of the populations to institutional solidarity. The question still remains of determining the right space for action. The territorial space is built by the actors, its geometry is variable and it fluctuates depending on places, the moment and the social dynamics. The politico-administrative space must also be adapted to reality so that situations can be managed flexibly. The places where solidarity takes place must, in fact, be able to take into account the representations of the actors. The necessary adaptation of the decision makers to the variety of situations also means that the prerogatives of the different spatial levels must be defined. For all that, the coherence of choices and priorities must leave a place for local initiative.

In order to implement public policies, the State must come closer to the terrain; the government's decentralised services must be able to develop true local management. In the organisation of its

presence in the field, the State's interlocutors are the decentralised local authorities that expect a lot from it. In the highly sensitive domain of social policies, for example, where needs continue to grow and change in nature and where the fabric of competences is particularly complex, the local authorities and the social actors expect the State services to set up a general framework so that the actions of each one are organised in harmony, while also expecting them to know how to adapt their own interventions to the specific needs of the territory in which they operate.

One of the reasons that lead a central administration to practice at a local level is making decisions adapted to the specific situations and environment in question, adapting public policies to local contexts or to the different expectations of users, allowing those in the field to take the initiatives themselves, motivating agents by giving them room for manoeuvre instead of shackling them with rigid rules. Decentralised management alone is not a source of shared responsibility if it is not part of a process of realising objectives defined in concertation with central administrations. Thus, we must clarify decision-making mechanisms and responsibilities between the central administration, decentralised ministerial services and local authorities in order to establish the link between autonomy and responsibility.

Neither the State nor other public entities can respond alone to the immense need for joint development of Moroccan society. In addition to their role as producers of wealth, companies have a broader social function, especially when it comes to vocational training. Without a living network of associations and insertion initiatives, the rifts in society will only become greater.

The actions and initiatives for which the State is responsible will only be accepted as such if they express a general interest that does not correspond only to the ideas of the political and administrative decision makers and are also the product of concerted preparation with all the economic and social actors involved.

For the relationship between the State and society not to be one of guardianship, for the general interest to be effective, it all really depends on the wealth of the social fabric, on the vitality of social mediations and on the dynamism of the social actors. Public action is only effective if the State has opposing actors (trade unions, professional organisations, associations, etc.) that are sufficiently involved to be the legitimate representatives of particular interests and also work towards the expression of the general interest. The quality of social mediations is decisive in the preparation and implementation of effective public policies. It is no less important in preventing the conflicts that these policies may produce or, at least, in regulating them in some way other than in incomprehension and confrontation.

The participative approach is a factor representing clarity and responsibility: it specifies the rights and obligations of each actor. It takes different forms depending on the nature of the fields of intervention and the institutions involved. It should be based on the accurate identification of the actors involved, their remit and the nature of each party's commitments. It recognises the principle of negotiation and it presupposes ties of concertation and dialogue between the State and the other components of society. It specifies the rules of the game in terms of responsibilities, objectives and ways of evaluating actions undertaken. It is a way of guaranteeing the balance of mutual commitments.

The challenge that the State has to face at the beginning of the 21st century is that of rationalising public management. To do this, it must rethink forms of public intervention and review the effectiveness of the institutions in charge of public policies.

Efforts will be made to make better use of public funds and to do more with fewer resources. The State must endeavour to reduce waste and improve efficiency and effectiveness. It must do better not only in managing its resources but especially by acting differently. The scope and weight of regulation affect both structures and the productivity of institutions' interventions. A rigid, strongly centralised institution that values procedures over initiative naturally creates obstacles to its own performance.

The State's productivity and effectiveness also depend on the level of coordination between its different departments and between these and public institutions. The ways of achieving this must be appropriate to the logic of the parties involved. They will focus on the development of horizontal relations between departments sharing the same interests or linked by common objectives requiring close collaboration. This coordination will try to ensure the coherence of public action, which is essential if we consider the nature of the challenges facing the State.

The new environment gives greater autonomy to private actors in managing their decisions. It is therefore normal for organisations suffering the consequences of legislative and regulatory measures to be heard and allowed to express opinions on public policies. The creation and maintenance of a climate of mutual trust is an essential precondition for effective concertation between the different actors in economic and social life. Trust makes sense when it is part of a culture of responsibility. The management of public and private decisions can only be improved by motivating the economic and social actors and holding them accountable. They will only make the evaluation of commitments easier.

3.4. Supporting and legitimising the non-conventional economy

One of the reductionist trends in the relationship between economic and social is to reflect on the dominant forms of activity and insertion or those that present themselves as dominant (modern companies, employees, etc.) Pluralism of forms of economic activity and their hybridisation are not well tolerated or, at least they are not perceived as mere fields for marginal insertion or experimentation. At a conceptual level, an in-depth study of the different economic modes is certainly necessary to better identify the different forms of local initiatives and relational modes that are established between the actors. The boundary between a subsistence economy, a local market economy, an informal economy and a gift economy is permeable.

However, what is cruelly lacking in these activities bringing primary forms of solidarity is a sort of legitimacy, while modern economies benefit from a cultural hegemony that not only suffocates other approaches but also leads to the destruction of traditional forms of solidarity. We thus need a more fundamental conceptual leap, a broadening of the paradigm: it is a question of reintegrating the economy into society, i.e. of no longer thinking of economic development separately from the social link, of life in a territory and of people's identity.

Must we institutionalise the non-conventional economy? In order to lend further legitimacy to these activities, several actors have proposed the creation of an "interdependent" or "social utility" sector, to which a number of specific advantages could be given. This approach, which has the merit of being simple, would facilitate the recognition of these economic actors, though it seems difficult to implement because of the heterogeneity of the activities and statuses represented. Above all, this kind of sector would run the risk of being perceived as the receptacle of activities for the excluded, which would condemn them to becoming "occupational ghettos".

Now there cannot be watertight boundaries between the modern economy and other forms of activity, the essential being to ensure a "continuum" between these forms of economy in the framework of the territorial dynamics of citizenship. Rather than a "dichotomous" institutionalisation, it is better to proceed using forms of support that are specific to the different modes of activity (recognition of qualifications, grants for services rendered, etc.)

There are different forms of support. It is a matter of first integrating these activities into the dynamics of territorial development and combining all development activities within the same territory, in order to set up interdependent networks permitting optimal use of existing resources. In other words, it is a question of betting on a dynamic of solidarity installed over time, which will pave the way for economies of scale, which will provide common tools for marketing etc., because installing new engineering means new technical assistance devices for projects and training for the actors, but must also be very flexible and be able to intervene permanently and broadly upstream of the creation of activities, to help the local "compost" to mature.

Two key factors appear essential when installing this engineering: “the existence of actors who will be catalysts” and “a new philosophy of public action”. It is a question of ensuring the perennality of these initiatives through permanent funding while encouraging “intermediary structures” whose role is to mobilise public and benevolent market resources at the service of a pluralistic, interdependent local development approach.

3.5. Reinforcing the role of governance

The adaptation to the radical, destabilising changes that will probably accompany and activate economic growth should arouse interest in decision-making and participation methods. It is important to improve systems of governance not only in terms of democratic instances in the political sphere, but also in terms of companies and communities where many vital decisions are taken every day. The private sector should lead the way by restructuring forms of organisation to take them away from classic authoritarian hierarchical systems.

The reinforcement of democratic infrastructures in our society will provide a triple dividend. Firstly, the improvement in methods of governance will probably make it possible to preserve respect for the differences between populations. Secondly, there will very likely be indispensable synergy between systems of governance encouraging the accountability of society and the installation of a climate of trust that is necessary for the success of a decentralised economy animated by innovation on one hand and more flexible social order on the other. Finally, progress in methods of governance towards greater sharing of responsibilities in the workplace and in the community may encourage the public to take notice of what everyone has to gain from the flexibility of an economy in perpetual movement.

3.6. Giving the welfare state a new sense and orientation

There is wide consensus as to the need to deeply renew the welfare state’s constitutive devices and institutions to keep up with the changes in the basic needs of the population. It remains to be seen if this reform can be successfully implemented by progressive change or whether it will be necessary, in view of the importance of the transformations required, to make a clean break with the past.

A wide debate marked by different opinions has been devoted to the role of the existing institutions, especially those of the welfare state that will contribute to the future by accentuating and not reducing antagonism between social cohesion and economic flexibility. These disagreements also arose when the question came up of the extent to which progressive reforms of social policies, already widely undertaken, would develop the adaptability needed in an increasingly agitated world.

Some thought that social cohesion might be threatened by the negative action that certain social programmes tended to exercise. Other, more optimistic people, consider that progressive reforms and the maintenance of the basic structures of existing social protection and assistance systems would be enough. From their point of view, administrative reform of the programmes in stages by these public entities would enable them to maintain their role as primary direct providers of social services with the risk of excessive rigidity or uniformity.

From this point of view, more transparent mechanisms for forearming the population against economic and social risks means significant ruptures with the traditional mechanisms of the welfare state to achieve the combination of adaptability and sense of security.

3.7. Holding society accountable

The extension of the issue of solidarity – going from the sole responsibility of the social participants to that of society as a whole – is now part of a movement whose basic premises should be questioned. Why is the extension of the issue of solidarity to society as a whole insurmountable? The answer does not lie only at the level of the appearance of “new actors” coming to join, complete and compete with them in the field of the inventiveness in insertion.

In fact, at a time when the diversification of forms of work and fractures in the identifying modes linked to them is increasing, it is important to consider that the solutions to be found are not the sole responsibility of "intelligent" public social policies; they also need the implementation of a veritable "social intelligence". In other words, they are the conditions for passing from state solidarity to the exercise of multiform solidarities that must be envisaged. First we must identify the position of each actor on the chessboard of insertion. Then we must think about the status of a series of emerging spaces where relationships between actors are managed, in terms of the frontier areas where these actors operate. That is, we must ensure the emergence of collective actors, a product of the spontaneous hybridisation of players, competences and resources, based on the logic of setting up insertion projects.

Nevertheless, neither an employment policy nor a social policy social eliminating pockets of poverty and establishing a minimum of protection for all can be decreed. Social insertion is not only the state's business. It requires the mobilisation of all the components of society to create the right conditions for the insertion of neglected populations. The social question must be taken into account better by the social partners. It needs more active intervention from civil society. The reinforcement of the associative expression of the hardest-hit populations can favour the mobilisation of internal and external funding on a contractual basis.

In any case, it is essential to favour cooperation between institutional operators – at a national and local level – and the people living in poverty or at least their representative associations. This participation will be sought during the conception, implementation and evaluation of decisions that are particularly likely to have repercussions on the most disadvantaged.

3.8. Seeking coherence of solidarity tools

Whether at a national or local level, many global measures or more specific actions are undertaken to try and respond to today's problems. This intervention is intended not only to bring aid to deprived populations or to respond to identified problems, but also to encourage the community to participate in the insertion effort to increase its chances of success. Although indispensable and often useful, these means still have their limits.

Indeed, in spite of the improvements and innovations and their reduction, insertion tools do not have the expected effects. Even if results are visible, the overall effects are limited and the problem of "launching" measures or devices still recurs. In spite of all financial efforts and energy expended, offers of insertion do not allow us to really nip the process in the bud: "if insertion progresses, exclusion gallops". The example of housing shows that housing programmes for the disadvantaged are fast reaching their limit. The regulations on measures favouring professional insertion are still pretty rigid.

Generally speaking, we should insist on the absence or weakness of articulation between the different measures or actions, which are sources of adverse effects. The fragmentation of the measures and their contradictions lead to the opposite of the desired result. Adverse effects can also affect the action of solidarity itself which, if it is too compartmentalised and stratified, makes each of the different social players act according to his or her own logic, thus running the risk of harmful dysfunctions and the total loss of sense of the intervention.

In this situation, which is far from the desired objective, the problem today is perhaps not the creation of tools. We are finding more and more that constant creation of tools and measures cannot be an effective solution against the extension of problems of exclusion. The point lies in the finalisation of these tools. They are not an end in themselves. They are merely instruments in the service of the users' ends. In the light of these considerations, it might be productive to ask ourselves as to what we want to do with the available tools and means, as to their pertinence to the goal in question and as to the changes that this implies in their conception and their use.

3.9. Forming a strong social pole

An ambitious social policy requires a politically strong social pole, with prospective vision and a coherent approach. The State is the ultimate guarantee of social cohesion. It must therefore have the means to fulfil this role and must be given the appropriate organisation and tools of expertise and evaluation. The synthetic approach of the social becomes more and more necessary as its scope is divided among several ministerial departments and institutions placed in charge of specific transversal devices. More generally, this type of situation can result in a waste of resources, the complication of procedures, and difficulty in harmonising interventions.

It is therefore urgent to define a global, coherent approach to social action supported by a limited number of strong, articulated ministerial poles. To do this, competences divided among different ministries and organisms at a central and local level should be articulated. This will give the social administrations the capacity and the will to put over their point of view in the negotiation of priorities at a national level. This will reduce the risks of compartmentalisation and avoid rifts between social departments. It will also make the expertise, concertation, policy-making, follow-up assessment and control more effective.

An ambitious social policy also means that an important effort must be made to optimise public spending, ensuring the proper programming of social budgets in liaison with other budgets (like those for infrastructures or national education). The revision of the spatial and inter-sectoral division of public social expenditure should favour rural and peri-urban areas. It should focus on the poorest provinces. It should give priority to literacy, basic education, vocational training and basic health care. Improving the effectiveness of managing the expenditure on social sectors also requires a reform of the management bodies in order to reduce management costs and direct the flows of expenditure towards actions that really benefit the target populations.

3.10. Necessary evaluation

The evaluation of the mechanisms for solidarity activities involves countless difficulties, both in terms of conception of the evaluation itself and the methods, the levels at which it is exercised, the populations that it concerns, the sponsors that initiate it, the ways of implementing it, the conditions of its appropriation by the actors concerned and the effects that it has on political decisions.

Here, we would like to insist on the conditions necessary for setting up evaluation schemes. These conditions are as follows. Evaluation is, by definition, multi-institutional. It is not merely management control, because it is a question not only of measuring the good management of resources allocated but also, and above all, of giving an opinion on the impacts, results and social efficiency of the tools used and the action taken.

Evaluation is a shared device in the strong sense of the term. This means that it is not the exclusive tool of the decision makers. It should be a form of culture common to all: elected officials, decision makers, actors and operators in the field. It is not an outcome at any given moment; it is an ongoing process-taking place over time. Evaluation of results is necessary to political and administrative leaders so that they can reformulate objectives and adjust the organisation and allocation of resources. But it must also constantly feed micro-decisions and ongoing actions. Finally, evaluation should be exhaustive. It should be one of the tools that enable us to refuse what is today and what might be tomorrow the reference of objectives and priorities.

Conclusion

Poverty is defined as deprivation of elementary capacities and not, according to the usual standards, as a simple shortage of income. This definition is in no way intended to deny the evidence: low income is indeed one of the essential causes of poverty. However, using income to reduce poverty should not be the final objective of public policies. Many people defend the priority of "economic

rights” linked to the essential material needs and relegate democratic rights to second place. This position boils down to a simple question: should we give priority to fighting poverty and destitution or guarantee political and civic freedoms, which are of arguable use to the people concerned? Are we justified in addressing this problem as an alternative between the economic and the political? Must we stick to this simple dichotomy that reduces to practically zero the value of political liberties because of the urgency of economic needs?

The real problem should be reformulated in another field: it needs us to take into account the network of interdependences associating political liberties with the definition of economic needs and their satisfaction. These interconnections are not only of an instrumental nature; they are also structural. The importance of political freedom as one of the elementary capacities is undeniable. It is legitimate for human beings – who are social creatures – to wish to have their free participation in social and political activities recognised. In addition, the formation of our values in a critical, non-doctrinaire framework requires a process of open communication and free discussion that cannot exist without the recognition of political freedoms and civil rights.

Political liberties play an instrumental role because they act as a stimulus to governments and the individuals or groups responsible for defining political guidelines. Governments are thus encouraged to listen to the demands of those they govern. Democracy, beyond its intrinsic legitimacy, plays a protective role and has a constructive function.

Putting an end to human poverty requires a willing State that creates the right political conditions for fundamental reform. Above all, this ambition requires a democratic space, where individuals can voice their demands, act collectively and fight for more equitable distribution of power. This is the only way for appropriate resources to be invested in the priorities of human development and for access to means of production to be more equitable. This is the only way for macroeconomic policy to focus on the poor and for the markets to give them broad opportunities to improve their living conditions.

States firmly committed to creating a momentum and political environment favourable to the eradication of poverty can take measures in several key sectors. These measures will have the effect of giving the poor a place on the political chessboard and of supporting mobilisation and society-level partnerships to work in favour of the poor: I) promoting the political participation of all, II) encouraging public-private partnerships, III) facilitating bottom-up planning, IV) guaranteeing accountability and transparency, V) preventing the criminalisation of politics, VI) protecting the freedom of the press, VII) encouraging legal actions (creating independent associations), and VIII) favouring civic education.

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From Development to Empowering Civil Society

The field of development studies is relatively new - barely 50 years - after World War II. Until then, development was in effect equated to the "white-man's burden": colonialism. Underdevelopment was equated to environmental determinism and social Darwinism, and the non-European world was the "other world" for the West: colonisers and colonised OR developed and underdeveloped OR modern and traditional. Thus, development as a conscious effort to deal with poverty, enhance economic performance and improve civil society was non-existent. It was solely the preserve of Western cultures and societies to develop. The extension of development to the non-European world emerged for the first time during the 1950s: the Cold War. The ideological and global political dimension of development, therefore, was there from the start.

During the 1950s and 1960s, two issues attracted the attention of most theorists and practitioners: modernity versus tradition and Western capitalist parliamentary democracy versus Soviet centralised planned socialism. Development in those early days was seen in linear and progressive terms (Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* was the classic text). By the end of the 1960s, however, optimism started to fade⁶. Developing societies were not developing. The 1960s, of course, were also the decade of *National Liberation* and the end of formal colonial power. It was in the early 1970s that the first critics of the development process emerged and development started to have a dual meaning: modernisation as well as dependency and the struggle for independence. The two competing meanings also produced two very different accounts of the origins of underdevelopment: modernisation (and its internal causes) and dependency (and its external causes). Thus, in the 1970s, two important issues emerged in development studies. In fact, there were two distinct meanings of what development was and two distinct accounts of what the problem of underdevelopment was - i.e. the conceptualisation of the obstacles to development.

By the end of the 1970s a further complication emerged. Some non-European societies were showing signs of development (South East Asia and the 'Four Little Tigers'). Industrialisation was taking place at a rapid pace in some areas, at the same time as the first serious signs of industrial decline were emerging in the West. Thus, two sub-theories emerged with regard to both the meaning and practice of development: Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) and the new international division of labour⁷. By the end of the 1970s, two issues took centre stage - irrespective of the competing approaches and conceptualisations. *First*, economics and economic growth held centre stage in all the prevalent paradigms and were paramount in all theory and practice. *Second*, diversity with reference to the reality of global social was ignored in favour of a single collectivity, where all societies were still assumed to be able to move forward in some linear notion of progressive socio-economic and political development. The Rostow paradigm reigned supreme, albeit with the final stage taking on different characteristics depending on the political approach of the theorists.

Nevertheless, the 1970s and the early 1980s also saw the rise of a number of radical non-European political movements - emerging in the new independent states. They called for their narratives to be

6 The United Nations commissioned the ex-Canadian Prime Minister, Lester Pearson to carry out a global study of the development effort after almost two decades of sustained development practice. The report, known as the Pearson Report, 1970, noted that developing had deteriorated on all indicators and the development effort was not working.

7 For an official account of the NICs see World Bank, (1993) *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, OUP. (especially Overview); for a critique see: Bienefeld, M (1981), "Dependency and the newly industrialising countries: towards a reappraisal", in D Seers (ed.), *Dependency Theory: A Critical Reassessment*, Francis Pinter; and Browett, J (1985), "The Newly Industrializing Countries and Radical Theories of Development", *World Development*, 13 (7); and Glavanis, Pandeli, (1981), "Historical materialism or imperialist apologia? A re-evaluation of industrialisation in the Third World", *Sociology*, 15, (431-435). The classic text advocating the NIDL is Fröbel, F., Heinrichs, J. and Kreye, O. (1980), *The New International Division of Labour*, Cambridge, CUP.

heard and started to re-write their own histories. Thus, and for the first time in several centuries, the European meta-narrative - *us and them / the other* – faced its first intellectual and political challenge on a global scale. It was in the 1980s that this challenge intensified and placed on the development agenda issues related to culture, identity, gender, race, ethnicity, substantive democracy and empowerment. This had a significant effect on both the intellectual and political supremacy of the Western development paradigm. Thus the Western development model was no longer the sole model for development.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the development of the anti-development paradigms also produced a further development: *diversity* and *difference* entered the vocabulary. By the 1990s, therefore, the meaning of Development was quite complex. Cultural and social development had also introduced such concepts as: *empowerment / civil rights / democracy / environment*. It is in this sense that we can talk of *The Trajectory: from Exclusion to Empowerment* during the close of the 20th century⁸. This was in fact the period (prior to the full scale introduction of structural adjustment policies on a global scale), when developing societies, or at least certain social groups within them, were making a valiant effort to take control of their destinies and their development.

Nevertheless, at the start of the 21st century the problem of development is still with us. Some societies may have “developed” in the past decades - South East Asia for example. The fact remains, however, that the majority of the globe still experiences serious hunger, marginalisation, shortage of health and education, lack of substantive democracy and absence of civil society. Thus, the central question that should be asked is: *Has development theory reached an impasse? Can development theory contribute to development?*

After almost five decades of trying, the results are disastrous and it is not surprising that some development theorists have written articles and books discussing, arguing and even proposing *The Irrelevance of Development Studies* (coined by Michael Edwards). In fact some authors have even suggested that development theory has little to do with development practice, and instead suggest that we should focus on the fact that development practice is about power⁹. Development theory, they argue, is about different accounts of the causes of underdevelopment, but has nothing to do with actual development practice. Thus, at the turn of the century, not only do we have a problem of conceptualising “development”, we also have a problem with the relationship between *development theory* and *development practice*. It is imperative, therefore, to set the scene for a new and alternative approach which concerns itself primarily with human development: *i.e. the strengthening of civil society and the consolidation of social partnerships with the primary objective of empowering citizens*.

From ‘Poor Resources’ to ‘Poor Politics’: The Agenda for the 21st Century

It was during the late 1970s and especially during the 1980s that we also saw the emergence of widespread political and theoretical critiques of the state in developing societies. The focus of the theoretical critique was the *public interest* view of the state, which had underpinned the development policy ideas of the 1950s and 1960s. One set of critics (post-dependency theorists), rejected the existence of an identifiable *public interest*, in favour of a conception of the state founded on class and power relations. Neo-liberal critics, on the other hand, developed the *private interest* view of the state, to counter the ‘public interest’ arguments. Private interest ideas, exemplified as structural adjustment policies have underpinned efforts to reduce the size of the state, through cuts and privatisation, and to introduce competition within the state structures. Thus, in pursuit of divergent objectives, left-wing and right-wing critics of the state advocated devolution to non-governmental bodies of both state activities and decision-making. Finally, some critics sought to reform the state, through ‘up-ending’ and decentralisation, believing that the state can be made to operate more

8 See Poulton, R. & Harris, M (1988) *Putting People First: Voluntary Organisation and Third World Organisations*, London, Macmillan.

9 See Pearse, Jenny (1992), “NGOs and social change: agents or facipulators?” in *Development Practice*, 3 and Thomas, A. (1992), “Non-governmental organisations and the limits to empowerment”, in Wuyts, Mackintosh & Hewitt, (eds), *Development Policy and Public Action*, Open University Press.

effectively in the interests of the less powerful. By the start of the 1990s, therefore, and travelling along different paths, the IMF, World Bank and the post-dependency radicals argued in favour of NGOs as the key actors in the development drama taking place in developing societies (stage).

It was during the middle of the same decade (1995) that world leaders, alarmed by the deteriorating socio-economic state of many developing societies, and by then the clear failure of SAPs to generate any substantive change, organised the "World Summit for Social Development" which took place in Copenhagen. At this summit, world leaders agreed to ten objectives of which the first two were critical¹⁰:

- To create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development and;
- To eradicate poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind

The first provides the framework, which in effect spells out the strengthening of civil society, and the empowerment of citizens, while the second sets the target to be achieved, which argues for a significant improvement in social welfare for all citizens. Thus, the eradication of poverty was translated into issues of gender, equality of opportunity, access to education and health and environmental sustainability. As objectives that also became known as the *International Development Targets (IDT)* they are laudable. What is of interest, however, is to note that certain issues, which are inextricably linked to the empowerment of civil society, are missing. These are: *human (civil) rights, non-discrimination and livelihoods or employment*. Nevertheless, the significance of the Copenhagen summit is that it placed at the centre of the development agenda the fact that poverty reduction and an increase in social welfare could only be achieved through a radical reform of political structures and, in effect, the empowerment of civil society and citizens.

This was the recognition that in sustainable development practice, the ultimate objective of substantive democracy and development is for citizens to be empowered in order to play an active and determining role in their own future. Thus, it became accepted that the primary objective of development was the strengthening civil society. This is the scenario, which places the citizen and civil society at the centre of the stage and as the leading actors in the drama of development practice. This, of course, is in distinct contrast to the previous five decades of development theory and practice and especially of the SAPs, which was concerned about scripting for a show where others had written the scenario and the citizens were crowds or masses who performed for the benefit of outsiders.

Civil society, of course, includes a variety of organisations such as: NGOs, PVOs, charities, benevolent societies, religious organisations, etc. What is important, however, is to consider the legal, political, social and financial structures that allow such organisations to function in order for civil society to be empowered. In other words: how can a *third sector* be established for the benefit of the citizens and with the sole purpose of enhancing substantive democracy. Thus, the primary objective of development practice needs to focus on the nature of the relationship between the citizen and the state and not on the mechanisms that allow greater flexibility in the market economy or the means by which NGOs can disburse funds, which are intended to deal with the negative socio-economic effects

¹⁰ The other objectives are:

- To promote the goal of full employment.
- To promote social integration.
- To promote full respect for human dignity and to achieve equality and equity between women and men.
- To promote and attain the goals of universal, equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the access of all to primary health care...striving to strengthen the role of culture in development and preserving the essential bases of people-centred sustainable development.
- To accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa.
- To ensure that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to they include social development goals.
- To increase significantly and/or utilise more efficiently the resources allocated to social development.
- To promote an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development, in a spirit of partnership.

of structural adjustment policies. Development practice *must* distance itself from the conventional and clearly bankrupt paradigms, which (for over five decades) presented an image of developing societies, which portrayed their citizens as *powerless victims in need of charity*. This, in fact was much closer to the concept of "*white man's burden*" than many of us care to admit! Citizens in developing societies can no longer be seen as an audience watching the drama or, at best, as actors who have been allowed to participate as "extras" in a global extravaganza that is being scripted in Washington (IMF & World Bank), Brussels (European Union) or the American and European headquarters of International NGOs.

The problem of images and perceptions cannot be separated from the methodology of intervention. As long as the citizen in developing societies continues to be seen as either the problem (modernisation) or as the victim (post-dependency), development of substantive democracy cannot take place. For that to happen, we need to move away from development studies and the Eurocentric development theories produced by several generations of western scholars. We need to engage with a different vocabulary where the relationship between citizens and the state, the empowerment of civil society, respect for diversity, and substantive democracy occupy privileged analytical positions. In other words we need a significant paradigm shift, *if* the anti-colonial struggles and the struggles for national liberation are to start to mean something for the millions of citizens in developing societies who continue to experience oppression, exclusion and marginalisation, hunger, unemployment, ill-health and illiteracy. Thus, we need to develop a new methodology of action, which will nurture, develop and consolidate substantive democracy and empower civil society in developing societies. It is in such a framework that we need to consider the collaborative nature of developing practice and the role of NGOs.

In this respect, the Copenhagen meeting of 1995 constituted a radical paradigm shift in development theory and practice, which in effect moved away from "development" per se to substantive democracy and the empowerment of civil society. Within such an analytical framework, of course, even the market approach to economic change needs to be revised. The Copenhagen summit suggested the promotion of "pro-poor growth" in which citizens of developing societies, no matter in how limited a way, became "key players". To achieve this, however, and especially in the context of increased globalisation of commodities, markets and especially financial markets is no simple task. The task ahead is demanding, but there is no return to the intellectually bankrupt development theories of the previous century. Debates will and must follow as to how to put into practice the laudable sentiments of the Copenhagen summit and the many international meetings that have followed.

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Migration policies and the Euro-Mediterranean region - the role of the Council of Europe

Recent major steps in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

The goal of prosperity, democracy, stability and security is an essential objective for the development of the populations of the region Mediterranean. It is also in the interest of the whole of Europe, because the Mediterranean region represents the "closest foreign countries" to the south.

The goals defined in Barcelona in 1995 have lost none of their importance and are even more vital after 11 September and after the recent election results in several European countries achieved by populist parties that defend xenophobic ideas.

"The overall goal is to create an area of peace and stability, of shared prosperity thanks to sustainable, balanced social and economic development, to the development of cooperation and to mutual understanding and tolerance between peoples with different cultures and civilisations."

This goal cannot be achieved without open, innovative dialogue and sustainable Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. It is essential to set up this partnership not only to fight against poverty, but also to further human rights, good governance and the rule of law in the Mediterranean region.

From this point of view, it is fortunate that the EU countries that met in Valencia for the 5th Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers on 22 and 23 April 2002 stressed the need to implement a *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, as a logical framework for cooperation, and adopted a Plan of Action that included all the goals of the Barcelona process, in order to give new political momentum to the process, which, unfortunately, has had its ups and downs since 1995. They emphasised the need to facilitate the pursuit of cooperation not only in the political, security, parliamentary, economic, financial¹¹, commercial and industrial spheres but also in the social, cultural and human fields, in those of justice, the fight against drugs, organised crime and terrorism, and finally in dealing with issues related to the social integration of migrants, immigration and the circulation of people¹².

We can see that, from Barcelona to Valencia, the foreign ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean region were working on the basis of a very clear idea: until the huge gap that separates the rich and the poor countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region is eliminated, the incentive to migrate will be strong and it will be impossible to stop the flow of illegal immigration.

In a world full of inequalities, walls, barbed wire and electronic surveillance will have a limited effect, as we have already seen on the border between the USA and Mexico or in Sangatte in France. No wall has ever stopped anyone from dreaming of a better life or from emigrating to try and realise that dream.

At the extraordinary meeting of the European Union Council in Tampere in November 1999, it was recognised that, on the contrary, what was necessary was to wish to and be able to deal with the issue of migration as a whole, to analyse the structural causes of poverty and respond to them

11 The ministers recognised the need to increase investments in order to foster growth and employment in the Mediterranean Basin. They were pleased with the decision to set up a stronger department in the EIB to mobilise resources, especially for investments by the private sector. In this regard, the Presidency noted the lively support from the Mediterranean partners for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Bank.

12 See the conclusions of the Presidency – 5th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers – Valencia (22-23 April 2002) – paragraph 5.

exhaustively (see the Tampere Declaration that addresses political aspects, human rights and the questions of development in the countries of origin and transit and also recognises that it is necessary to ensure more effective management of migratory flows at all stages).

The European Union countries recently reaffirmed this point of view at the Seville Summit (22-23 April 2002), when they recognised that:

1. The reinforcement of security measures and control mechanisms at the European borders to stop illegal immigrants will be useless until we attack the profound causes of migratory flows, the foremost one being poverty¹³.
2. Migratory flows should be dealt with on the basis of the rule of law, involving the countries of origin and of transit (cf adoption of a Global Plan to fight illegal immigration and a plan for managing external borders).
3. The intensification of economic cooperation is essential in reducing migratory flows.
4. Efforts towards integrating legal migrants should be intensified.

The decision by the members of the European Union not to follow the proposal of the Seville Summit to suspend cooperation agreements and re-examine the level of aid to "uncooperative countries" in the fight against illegal immigration was an important step in this direction.

The contribution of the Council of Europe in the field of migrations

The Council of Europe's capacity to contribute to the Barcelona process is, I must admit, limited compared to that of the European Union. Nevertheless, the Council of Europe and the Council of Europe Development Bank can be proud of a longstanding tradition of work in the field of migration. In terms of action, the Council of Europe has defined effective policies aimed at integrating migrant workers and, since the European Union Council in Tampere, has managed to set up a strategy for controlled management of migratory flows. More recently, it has focussed particular attention on the protection of the human dignity of migrants (both legal and illegal) and their families. It can, indeed, count on the initiatives of the North-South Centre, which is implementing a trans-Mediterranean programme, and on the important contribution of the Council of Europe Development Bank and its constant ability to invest in projects related to migration¹⁴.

Let us recall some of the main standards on the subject:

- The European Convention on Establishment (ETS No. 19).
- The European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (ETS No. 93).
- The Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144).
- The European Convention on Social Security (ETS No. 78).

Allow me to stress the importance of the Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers. This document, which is intended to complete the protection guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter, is based on the principle of equal treatment for migrant workers and those of the host country¹⁵.

13 See the conclusions of the Presidency – Seville, 21-22 June 2002 - paragraph 33.

14 According to Article II of its Articles of Agreement, "The primary purpose of the Bank is to help in solving the social problems with which European countries are or may be faced as a result of the presence of refugees, displaced persons or migrants consequent upon movements of refugees or other forced movements of populations and as a result of the presence of victims of natural or ecological disasters."

15 The provisions concern the main aspects of migrant workers' legal status, and particularly recruitment, medical examinations, vocational orientation exams, travel permits, residence and work permits, reuniting families, accommodation, working conditions, the transfer of savings, the right to social benefits and health care, the expiry of work contracts, redundancy, rehiring and the preparation for their return to their countries of origin.

On the other hand, where the European Convention on Social Security is concerned, it is important to mention the contribution made by the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Security in Bratislava (May 2002), which dealt with the issue of the contributions made by migrant workers to funding health insurance and pension schemes in an aging Europe. By changing our way of looking at legal immigrants, the conference showed that migrant workers represented an important, positive contribution and not a threat to European societies.

Another important contribution to the plan of action that is worth mentioning here is the recent "Diversity and Cohesion" report by the CDMG (European Committee on Migration), which, based on the principle that diversity enriches society, is aimed at facilitating relations within the community.

I cannot resist the temptation of talking to you today, albeit briefly, about the *Migration Management Strategy*.

This strategy¹⁶, whose actual implementation will be one of the subjects on the agenda of the upcoming Ministerial Conference in Helsinki (16-17 September 2002), is based on the protection of individual human rights, at the centre of which is the right to movement provided for in Protocol 4 to the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights) and, as a result, the need to manage migratory flows in such a way as to guarantee full enjoyment of this right. The strategy is based on the theory that Europe is and will always be a destination for immigration, for economic, social and demographic reasons.

Basic principles of the migration management strategy

If it is to succeed, the management of migratory flows requires all parties involved – countries of origin, transit and destination, regional authorities, international organisations and non-governmental organisations – to pool their efforts to create a more favourable international climate for the effective management of migratory flows.

This strategy envisages four main courses of action: first, the alignment and, whenever possible, the inclusion of migratory policies in foreign policies in order to create a favourable environment for cooperation; then, the implementation of information programmes for potential emigrants telling them about the possibilities of migration and dispelling any false hopes; thirdly, setting up training programmes for those in charge of managing migration in the countries of origin; and finally, the establishment of dialogue with the countries of origin in order to combat the deep causes of illegal migration and find appropriate solutions.

Today, I am going to talk to you at least about points 1 and 2. They have to do with migration in the broader framework of international affairs. They suggest that migration should be dealt with not only as a matter of national sovereignty, which it is without a doubt, but also as a priority in international concerns.

To do this, we have to begin at a national level by integrating migration or at least the questions of coordinating migration with the other government sectors involved. The issues related to migration are often dealt with separately, with little or no coordination between the competent authorities. As a rule, ministries of the interior or of justice are responsible for controlling entry, ministries of foreign affairs for humanitarian matters, ministries of social affairs for integration, and so on. It is not unreasonable to think that international cooperation will be easier if there is already communication going on at a national level.

To ensure the follow-up of this first stage, it is important to rethink migration management so that it is not regarded as an issue to be dealt with exclusively at the border or within the frontiers of the country of destination, but as a phenomenon to be dealt with as far upstream as possible, taking into

¹⁶ The complete text of this strategy can be found in the report of the small working group on a migration management strategy called "Towards a migration management strategy" – CDMG (2000) 11 rev.

account and dealing with the conditions at the source. It is not a question of moving the responsibility from the countries of destination to the countries of origin, but of thinking up more effective, more comprehensive intervention strategies. The key word is "globality". The application of a global migratory policy does not mean launching and/or promoting a migratory programme. It is simply a balanced, coherent response by public authorities to all issues related to cross-border movement. In other words, it is an approach that combines all the means of action: border control, asylum, family reunification, integration, trafficking of migrants, and returning to countries of origin.

It is absolutely necessary to adopt a global vision if we want to establish a constructive dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination, but the different parties concerned must develop a mutual understanding of the particular interests that they wish to defend.

Today we can say that, on one side, they are talking the language of survival and on the other that of law and order.

These differences in priorities explain why cooperation on international migration is still an ideal and not a concrete reality, but it is also equally true that the creation of a setting favourable to organised international flows involves the need to search for concerted solutions. For example, we have to adapt trade and the flow of capital and envisage the implementation of focussed development programmes in order to reduce migratory pressures and examine the forms of consultation, networks and communication to be set up, according to the Barcelona process, re-launched in Valencia and reaffirmed in Seville.

Point 2 of the strategy, devoted to information, recommends information programmes for potential emigrants. Unfortunately, we only have very limited information on how would-be emigrants, and especially illegal ones, obtain and deal with information when deciding on their departure, their itinerary and their destination. We do know, on the other hand, that the information reaches them in many different ways. We have good reason to believe that much of the information is incomplete or inaccurate and that, in some cases, it is deliberately distorted to force them to use the "services" of migrant traffickers. All this should encourage us to pay more attention to the dissemination of clear, reliable information by means that are both accessible and credible to would-be emigrants.

There is also reason to believe that the effectiveness of intergovernmental cooperation will be increased considerably if we pay more attention to collecting and exchanging information and statistics on international migratory flows. The international community cannot continue to rely on vague estimates or orders of magnitude and all serious efforts towards setting up reliable databases will be worthwhile.

The protection of the human dignity of illegal migrants

As I have already said, the Council of Europe, as a human-rights organisation, is seriously concerned about the extremely dangerous conditions to which many illegal migrants (women and children) are exposed.

Illegal migrants who risk their lives to reach countries where they think they will find a better life are victims in three different ways:

1. Victims of the economic crisis and policy of their countries of origin that lead them to go elsewhere to seek the basic means of surviving and improving their social condition.
2. Victims of the traffickers and the mafia that profit from these goals and have found a way of diversifying to these more profitable criminal activities.
3. Victims of the exploitation to which they may be subject when they arrive in the countries of destination, if they actually arrive.

The European Court of Human Rights has often dealt with matters related to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and the compatibility of deportation procedures with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture has visited a large number of special placement structures and has published reports on the unacceptable conditions in which asylum seekers and illegal migrants are detained.

The Human Rights Commissioner has also strongly criticised deportation procedures that do not respect human rights.

Finally, the Committee of Ministers recently decided to begin preparatory work on a convention on the illegal trade in human beings.

Conclusion

At the end of my presentation, I would like to express my wish and hope that the RAP-MED (Rapporteur on co-operation in the Mediterranean basin) will have new opportunities to see other important aspects of this action, and especially work on the development of projects (like those of the Council of Europe Bank - CEB), and more generally, the contribution of other sectors of the Council of Europe, such as the North-South Centre, etc. in order to get a complete picture of the Council of Europe's specific contribution in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This contribution consists of helping the Mediterranean countries to work towards building societies based on human rights, non-discrimination, democracy, participation, social cohesion and equal opportunities and on the rule of law. In other words, this means working towards sustainable development in the region.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

Agenda

Evening of the 27 June and morning of the 28 June:

Arrival of participants in Cairo

28 June at 12.00 pm

Departure from Cairo to Alexandria

Friday 28 June

6.30-7.30 pm

Opening session at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

- ◆ Mr Miguel Angel Martínez, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre
- ◆ H.E. Ambassador Raouf Saad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Egypt)

7.30-8.00 pm

Tour of the Bibliotheca

8.00 pm

Welcome reception

Saturday 29 June

First plenary session

9.30-11.00 am

Achieving coherence between economic and social policies for human development

Chair

Mr Miguel-Angel Martínez, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre

Keynote speakers

Mrs Heba el Laithy, Faculty of Economics, Cairo University (Egypt)
Mr Pierre Salama, Centre d'Économie de l'Université de Paris Nord (France)
Mr Candido Grzybowski, Director - IBASE and Chairperson of the World Social Forum (Brazil)
Mrs Gabriella Battaini-Draconi, Director General, DG III - Council of Europe
Prof Larbi Jaidi, Chairperson of the Foundation A. Bouabid and Professor at the University of Rabat (Morocco)

11.00-11.30 am

Lunch

Second plenary session

11.30-1.30 pm

Shared Social responsibilities: towards Social Development and Cohesion in the Mediterranean region

Chair

Prof Pandeli Glavanis, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Newcastle (UK)

Keynote speakers

Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr Bernard Suaud, President of the Committee on Social Cohesion, CLRAE – Council of Europe
Mrs Leila Gad, Social Fund for Development (Egypt)
Mr Bedoui Mongi, Expert in Social Development (Tunisia)
Mr Adib Nehmeh, Ministry of Social Affairs (Lebanon)

Debates

1.30-3.00 pm **Lunch**

Third plenary session

3.00-5.00 pm **The contribution of international institutions to fight against poverty and social exclusion**

Chair Prof Pandeli Glavanis, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Northumbria (UK)
Keynote speakers Mr Jamal Al-Kibbi, World Bank (Egypt)
 Ms Azita Berar Awad, Manager, National Policy Group - Policy Integration Department, International Labour Organisation (Switzerland)
 Dr Ibrahim Awad, International Labour Organisation (Egypt)
 Mr Gaith Fariz, UNDP Representative

Debates

5.00-5.30 pm **Coffee break**

5.30-7.00 pm **General debate**

8.00 pm **Dinner**

Sunday 30 June

During the second day of the meeting, participants will be given the chance to share experiences on means used to fight against poverty and exclusion. They should also reflect on types of cooperation that have proved to be effective in the past and on possible scenarios for the future. For this purpose participants *will split into three working groups* to go into the topics presented in the plenary sessions.

Each group is requested to cover the following *three dimensions of partnership* and to come up with practical recommendations to be reported at the last plenary session.

- **Organising civil society and non-governmental organisations to promote a different human development**

In a globalising world, civil society and NGOs are led to play an important role. Because of their ability and capacity to work along with communities and people, they can propose and make changes based on people's daily reality. Their contributions to social cohesion and development can be as numerous as they are varied and the idea here is to explore possibilities to strengthen and consolidate partnerships in the region.

- **Political power and shared responsibilities**

The objective is to explore the interplay of political stakeholders at different levels and to identify their potential for cooperation within the countries and among European and Southern Mediterranean countries.

- **Taking stock of the social and development contexts in the Mediterranean: what has been done and has to be done?**

What actions can be undertaken to consolidate social cohesion and to fight against poverty? How can partnerships for social development be strengthened?

WORKING GROUPS

Working group 1: Achieving coherence between economic and social policies for human development

Working group 2: The contribution of international institutions to the fight against poverty and social exclusion

Working group 3: Shared Social responsibilities toward Social Development and Cohesion in the Mediterranean

9.30-11.00 am Working group sessions

11.00-11.30 am Coffee break

11.30-1.30 pm Continuation of the working groups

1.30-3.00 pm Lunch

Fourth plenary session

3.00-5.00 pm Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership committed to and responsible for Social Development and Social Cohesion

Chair Mr Mustapha El Sayyid, Director, Centre for the Study of Developing Countries

Keynote speakers Mrs Gabriella Battaini Dragoni, Director General, DG III Cohesion Social, Council of Europe
Mr Klaus Halla, Director, Strategic Planning, Ministry for Social Affairs and Health (Finland)
Mr Ahmed Ait Haddout, Director General, Office of Development of Cooperation (Morocco)

Debates

5.00-5.30 pm Coffee break

5.30-7.00 pm Closing session

- Dr Ismail Serageldin, Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina
- Mr Jos Lemmers, Executive Director of the North-South Centre, Council of Europe

8.00 pm

Dinner

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