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Changing our ways

Conference paper by Khaoula Ajanane

First of all, let me express how honoured I am by your invitation to take part in your esteemed conference and offer some remarks about the very important and constantly relevant topic of the conference which will focus on the topic of economic governance, social justice and civil society.

I am very pleased to be with you all this morning to exchange ideas from different perspectives and parts of the world based on our own and very specific experiences here at the Federal Foreign office.

One of the rooms that will host the third committee's session is the Stresemann-Saal which was named after the late Gustav Stresemann who was an interesting person and politician, to say the least. By reading a little bit about his life I was fascinated by his strong commitment to his own beliefs regardless of the political prices that he had to pay sometimes. As one source has described him »his politics defied easy categorization«

We should all keep that quote in mind while we are gathered here these couples of days at the Deauville Partnership conference, because what I believe to be the major handicap of the international support, whether it is political or financial or otherwise, to Arab countries in transition is falling for easy categorization and conforming to easy and available models.

This is very relevant when discussing the roles of civil society in achieving good economic governance and creating a more just society. But it is especially more relevant when discussing international financial support of NGOs in Arab countries after the 2011 upheavals.

I will focus on my country Morocco in order not to generalize. What happens usually is that NGOs, while preparing their action plans, follow the current international trend. So it is freedom of speech one year and good governance the other, or women empowerment or youth political involvement the next...etc., and the international funds are automatically spent on those already fixed axes or pillars.

What I'm saying here and very clearly is that the 2011 events in the Arab world should have taught us, if nothing else, the necessity of changing our ways: our ways of planning, analysing or the whole decision-making processes. This should apply to all parties involved, whether they are NGOs, international institutions, state or non-state actors.

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