



## Pillars of civil society in the Arab world

Conference paper by Abdellali Mastour

First: the United Nations has confirmed that sustainable human development is to expand people's choices and to expand their opportunities and enable them to participate in the DM.

Second: most human experiences have proved that the legitimacy and success of States are primarily related to the States capacity to enable its citizens to participate in the DM and to integrate them in this process. Furthermore, social justice and democracy are the basis of economic progress and national security.

Third: encouraging and supporting the community democratic participation in political choices, and in public policies and decisions are considered as the basis of civil society roles.

Fourth: most UN reports confirm that the major challenges facing us today are developing trust, encouraging participation and integration, cooperation and solidarity. Also, fighting exclusion, marginalization, intolerance and extremism are among the major challenges.

Fifth: the issue of the democratic participation (social, economic, cultural and political) sums up the roots and the manifestations of the political and social crisis of the Arab regimes.

Sixth: the demands for freedom and justice, and the demands to participate in the DM were the goals and aspirations of the youth protests in the Arab spring countries.

Seventh: Arab civil society organizations have been trying since the nineties to defend human rights and to endorse democratic citizenship rights ...

But these efforts are limited due to the following reasons:

1. Weak civic and democratic culture among many political, economic and social Arab actors.
2. The backwardness and the fragility of cultural, social, political, economic and legislative environment in which civil society works.
3. The limited interaction between civil society, the citizens and the rest of the economic, political, cultural and social actors.
4. The limited human resources of civil society organizations and their lack of organization.
5. The Weak commitment to Human rights values, democracy and justice values in the framework of international relations.

Eighth: The United Nations, the European Union, the United States and international organizations are making important efforts to promote and support the democratic, economic and social reforms in the global South but these efforts have a limited impact on:

1. Developing the willingness and capabilities of these countries to commit and comply with the rules and mechanisms of human rights, democracy, transparency and justice.
2. Gaining the citizens' confidence and increasing the citizens' participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life.
3. Defeating the causes of sectarianism, marginalization, exclusion, intolerance and violence.
4. Establishing international and regional relations that implement and respect and commit to the international conventions, UN resolutions, International humanitarian law and human rights.

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Ninth: We Arabs are responsible for the stumbled path toward the humanization, modernization and democratization of our political, economic, social and cultural systems. But the weak commitment of the International system to international conventions, UN decisions and international humanitarian law, and the arbitrariness of its interventions in our affairs and in our national, regional and international relations, multiplies the problems and obstacles facing us in order to achieve human rights reform and to promote democracy and development in our countries. It also, feeds the proclivity to corruption, tyranny, extremism and violence in our communities.

Tenth: we can summarize the agenda of civil society in the Arab countries as following:

1. The development of a culture of democracy, human rights and tolerance.
2. Enable the participation of citizens in the political decisions and public policies locally, regionally and nationally.
3. Fight corruption, tyranny, extremism and terrorism nationally and internationally.
4. The development of the global system and rebuilding international relations on the basis of human rights, democracy and sustainable human development and solidarity.

Eleven: We can summarize the most important conditions and the pillars of the democratic participation and the development and the strengthening of civil society capacity to participate in decisions and public policies:

1. The development of a culture of human rights and democratic citizenship.
2. Strengthening the freedom and the independence of civil society.
3. Creating a political, legislative and institutional environment for civil society work.
4. The Strengthening and the development of a decentralized democracy and the inclusion of elected councils in the political decisions and public policies, locally, regionally and nationally.
5. Strengthening the human and institutional capacities of civil society organizations.
7. The cooperation between civil society organizations and the political parties, trade unions and the international organizations.
8. Democratization of the global system and the strengthening of the parliamentary and elected institutions roles. Additionally, the strengthening of the role and the resolutions of the United Nations.
9. The institutionalization of the civil society participation in the policies and decisions making in international and regional relations.
10. The establishment of international cooperation with the Arab countries on the basis of compliance with the rules of transparency and democratic participation of the civil society institutions and economic and social actors in the legislation and public policies and decisions.

Twelve: I appreciate and I highly value the growing trend in the European Union to help correct the global system, and to encourage the development of relations between North and South, and the support of economic and political reforms in the Arab countries etc.

I believe that the „Declaration on the Right to Development“ adopted by the United Nations since 1986, is an appropriate reference for „World Charter for conviviality“.

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