

ECONOMIC PRIORITIES AFTER THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS



البيت العربي Casa Árabe

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Arab nation

الأمم العربية



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Policy and Economic reform in the transition processes.

A new historical cycle is just starting in the Arab and Islamic region. The post-colonial order, with all its different phases, moments and vicissitudes, is being substituted by a new one where human dignity and political and social rights have priority. The current revolutions, which are impelling the implementation of this new order, have resulted from the accumulation of multiple factors and dynamics: a new and demographically immense generation, with an urban profile and educated; processes of modernization frustrated by the lack of social and professional promotion; political systems which have progressively turned predators of their citizens and where repression and terror were intensively applied as an instrument for controlling the huge gap between governors and society; and an international policy predatory as well and devoted to its strategic and economic interests, without any concern towards the suffering of those oppressed and humiliated citizens.

In consequence, critical socioeconomic problems have undermined and conditioned for years economic development in Arab countries: out-of-date educational systems, low competitiveness and industrial development, limited commercial integration at the regional level, food and energy insecurity, corruption, vague business-state relations, etc. These unresolved problems and the consequent high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, have contributed so, together with those political factors derived from the lack of freedom and human rights violations, to the outburst of Arab revolutions in various countries of the region. For this reason, the consolidation and success of the processes of transition and democratic reform, initiated after these revolutions, will depend also on the progress achieved in facing those socioeconomic aspects.

The process will be necessary long and complex, like every other case of transition towards democracy in the world, and will have to combine political with social and economic elements. All them, – competitive and free elections, juridical security, economic efficiency and productivity – constitute the good governance in which the state of law is based. The aim is to build up a new relationship between State and society, and for doing so all elements entailing political, social and economic components will have to converge.

To transform the socio-political structure of these countries in transition will require, in parallel to the political ones, introducing changes and reforms in their economic system, as well as new social pacts that will bring together the participation of political and economic actors, in order to achieve more inclusive and sustainable models of economic growth and development that manage to create employment and opportunities for the youth, in addition to a more distributive wealth system. Changes and redefinitions of priorities need to be done at the productive level, through policies of structural change in the different sectors, from labor markets to education and finance, as well as in the regulatory and institutional frameworks in which economic agents and organizations operate. Hence, these socioeconomic aspects will require special attention in the political agendas of these countries during and after the processes of transition just initiated. A broad set of questions and options are so now opened about the new lines of economic policy and actions considered a priority.

With the objective of analyzing and debating those economic priorities that will have to be defined and pursued during these crucial periods of change, Casa Árabe, in collaboration with Le Cercle d'Economistes Arabes and the GDRI DREEM (C.N.R.S. International Research Group for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Economic Research), organizes this international conference. After a first analysis of the economic effects and implications of the revolutions, with the international financial crisis in the background, experts in each field will examine and discuss as well some of the main economic aspects and areas that will require special attention in the current process of transition: the reform of the education and the creation of employment opportunities for the youth; competitiveness, private sector development and governance; commercial opening and economic liberalization; industrial policy and resource management.

Now that the political processes of transition and reform has just started is fundamental to tackle these issues from a long-term perspective for the stability and sustainability of the democracies to be born.

Gema Martín Muñoz
Director general of Casa Árabe

MONDAY 21st OF NOVEMBER

Casa Árabe Headquarters (c/ Alcalá, 62) - 28009 - Madrid

From 9:30am to 7:00pm.

Free entrance, with inscription: 915630652; economia@casaarabe-ieam.es

PROGRAM

09:30 Reception of participants

10:00 **Opening**

Gema Martín Muñoz, Director general of Casa Árabe and its International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies.

Samir Aita, President of Le Cercle d'Economistes Arabes and Director general of *Le Monde diplomatique. Editions arabes*.

El Mouhoub Mouhoud, Director of GDRI DREEM, Université Paris-Dauphine.

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 **Session I: The Economic Dimension of the Arab Revolutions: impact and perspectives**

Chair/Rapporteur: **Olivia Orozco**, Socioeconomic & Business Program Coordinator, Casa Árabe.

Political Economy of Arab Revolutions: Perspectives and analysis

El Mouhoub Mouhoud, Economic Professor and Director of the GDRI DREEM, Paris-Dauphine University.

Arab Revolution and the global financial crisis

Nidal Rashid Sabri, Professor and Dean of College of Economics, Birzeit University.

12:30 **Session II: Building up New Frameworks to Deal with the Youth Bulge in Arab Countries**

Chair/Rapporteur: **Mohamed Ali Marouani**, Associate Professor in Economics, Paris1-Sorbonne University.

Creating Economic and Social Perspectives for the Youth

Samir Aita, President of Le Cercle d'Economistes Arabes and Director General of *Le Monde diplomatique. Editions arabes*.

Regional integration and cooperation after the Arab spring

Frédéric Blanc, General Manager of the Femise and Chief Economist of the Institut de la Méditerranée.

13:30 Lunch break

15:00 **Session III: Political Governance, Competitiveness and Private Sector Dynamics**

Chair/Rapporteur: **Jacinto Soler**, partner-director of Emergia Partners and Professor of Economics, Pompeu Fabra University.

Political Governance and Economic Policy

Samir Makdisi, Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut.

Challenges and priorities of social economy in the Mediterranean

Carlos Lozano, Coordinator of the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Social Economy (ESMED).

16:30 **Session IV: Commercial Opening and Economic Liberalization: risks and compromises**

Chair/Rapporteur: **Gonzalo Escribano**, Senior Analyst of the Real Instituto Elcano and Professor of Applied Economics in the UNED.

Small scale farming and food sovereignty: Exporting versus Subsisting. Tunisia & Egypt

Habib Ayeb, Social Research Center, American University of Cairo.

State and Industrial Transformation in the North of Africa

Fatiha Talahite, Researcher at the CNRS, Centre d'Economie de Paris Nord (CEPN), University of Paris 13.

17:30 **Conclusions: Economic Priorities after the Arab Revolutions: moving forward**

Organized by **Casa Árabe** with the collaboration of Le Cercle d'Economistes Arabes and the GDRI DREEM (C.N.R.S. International Research Group for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Economic Research).

Seminar coordinated by: **Olivia Orozco**, Socioeconomic and Business Program of Casa Árabe.

Organized by:

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