ARAB LITERACY PROJECT: REVIVAL OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

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Literacy sets a building block for modern societies and sustainable development. It transcends the notion of basic reading and writing skills as it denotes technology literacy as well as communication skills within a specific socio-cultural context. It sets an effective approach towards human resource development and promotes citizen active participation in the society. Eradicating illiteracy in the Arab world has become a pressing regional issue that should be placed at the top of the Arab governments' agenda, calling for collaborative efforts which would dramatically contribute to upgrading functional literacy and socioeconomic development, reducing unemployment and most importantly rescuing and promoting the Arabic language. Arabic language is one of the strongest bonds among Arab people and the backbone of Arab identity and Arab civilization, yet it has been facing serious threats imposed by globalization and technological developments challenging its existence and boosting risks of its marginalization. Hence such a threat decisively requires prompt, updated and creative unified vision and action. The League of Arab States (LAS) has failed, for many years, to actively play its supranational role to promote common Arab interests and resolve Arab issues. Its functional reengineering has become indispensable for its survival and institutional effectiveness. This study focuses on the role of LAS and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in initiating, coordinating and monitoring a unified Arab Literacy Socio-Economic Development (ALSED) Project. The mission of this process is to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development in the region through synchronization of both industrial development and illiteracy eradication.

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INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on illiteracy as a public administration multifaceted issue and investigates it from a cultural perspective. A cultural context refers here to the interrelated factors influencing the illiteracy problem, where four dimensions are identified as inseparable cornerstones: social, economic, administrative, and financial. A new vision to eradicate illiteracy in the Arab world is decisively needed to address these elements in synchrony in order to realize an added value that contributes to sustainable socio-economic development. In light of this, the first part of the study highlights the contemporary cultural conceptualization of literacy with the technological breakthroughs far exceeded the traditional approach which defined literacy as merely corresponding to basic skills of reading and writing. Thereafter, the second part provides a comparative outlook on general profile of illiteracy in the Arab region vis-à-vis global indicators. Then the study investigates both the social and economic perspectives in relation to literacy challenges and sustainability risks, referring to some success stories and lessons learned in countries in different regions. A concept note for Arab literacy and Socio-economic Development Project (ALSED) is proposed to be integrated as part of the Egyptian initiative for “Arab Illiteracy Eradication” called for by the former Egyptian President, Adly Mansour during the Arab Summit in Kuwait 2014. The paper also attempts to pinpoint the indispensable role of the League of Arab States (LAS)¹ and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) which is envisaged as the last chance for LAS to revive its supranational role. The study depended on primary and secondary sources as well as conducting interviews with key administrative officials at LAS in Egypt and ALECSO in Tunis.

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¹ The League of Arab States was established in 1945 and headquartered in Egypt. It has 22 members: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine (which is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. (United Nations Programme of Action Implementation: PoA-ISS, Regional Organization <http://www.poa-iss.org/RegionalOrganizations/21.aspx>).

I. LITERACY DYNAMIC CONCEPTUALIZATION

This section attempts to explore the concept of literacy from a cultural rather than educational context. It poses the question: Is illiteracy a cultural or educational problem? Both culture and education are inseparable in any society. They have been referred to as “sacred bond”, and some writers, such as the Egyptian writer Taha Hussein, claimed that cultural development is a prerequisite to educational development. If we define culture as “everything produced by a human hand, brain and heart”—where the hand refers to technology, equipments and buildings, and the brain represents philosophy, theories and ideas, while the heart denotes art and beauty²—then this in a nutshell how communities are built and developed. Communities cannot develop by storing knowledge in brains, but rather creating a cohesive environment where people are able to fit in and communicate effectively. As the American philosopher, John Dewey, explained this by saying that the “essence of community is communication, sharing meanings through common symbols or language. Communication is the means to social growth.”³ Hence, a community to evolve and develop needs a culture which creates unity and cohesion between generations and education stands as an integral part of it. Ms. Magda Zaki, Director of the Department of Education and Scientific Research at LAS, confirmed that literacy concept far transcends the traditional definition of basic skills of reading and writing, it rather encompasses social, economic and cultural dimensions with a strategic goal of creating a knowledge society which is placed at the top of the “Post-2015 Agenda”⁴.

In light of this, could we still define a “literate” person as someone who is able to read and write? Literacy, as many other concepts, could not be squared anymore in its traditional interpretations, given the dynamism of a multifaceted global environment. Contemporary breakthroughs in literacy conceptualization have abolished the traditional notion of being merely the ability of reading and writing. The 21st century has dramatically developed our understanding of literacy. Jerome C. Harste identified two contemporary notions: “multiple literacy” and “literacy as social practice”. Multiple literacy denotes that different cultural groups have different ways in defining it; i.e. “literacy means different things for different people”. For

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² Said Ismail Ali, Al Thaqafa wa Al Taeleem, Hal Hagar Kol Menhoma Al Aakhar, AL AHAM, October 11, 2014, at 3-4. <http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsPrint/330636.aspx>.

³ Gordon L. Ziniewicz, John Dewey, *Experience, Community, and Communication*, American Philosophy. <http://www.americanphilosophy.com/dewey.html>.

⁴ Interview with Magda Zaki, Director of the Department of Education and Scientific Research, League of Arab States, Egypt, October 29, 2014.

parents, school literacy varies from everyday literacy, same for visual-text literacy or computer literacy for youth. As for defining literacy as social practice which Harste referred to as a revolutionary definition, it claims that young people learn more about literacy outside school⁵. Literacy represents “a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups”⁶. If both concepts are merged together, we can say that literacy refers to “a particular set of social practices or a particular set of group value”⁷. In addition, UNESCO in its Global Monitoring Report indicated that reading is not a matter of “decoding and understanding of words”, but rather interpretation according to a specific social context, as different contexts reflect different perception of literacy and hence call for different literacy demands⁸. Looking at learning as a social practice, one is able to critically understand the different ways a language is used to be able to effectively communicate and used to reposition oneself in the world. How we define literacy is relevant to all economic and social practices of a specific group in a specific context.

Furthermore, technology has been a main cornerstone for the massive shift in our understanding of literacy. Kyene Beers claims that with the evolution of more sophisticated technology, literacy capacities should develop to become more sophisticated as well. Workplace has mounting demands for human capital needs far exceeding from the ability to read and write, to include as well the skill of how to use technology and engage in virtual space for addressing functional needs.⁹ Nonetheless, technology does not replace but rather complements reading and writing, as both traditional and technology-based learning has become indispensable for effective functioning and communication at the workplace.

In addition, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in its statement in 2008 defining “literacy” in the 21st century, affirmed that with the massive advancement of technology, a literate requires much more knowledge and skills than those defined in traditional literacy which basically focused on basic writing and reading skills. To be able to meet global labor market’s growing demands, one needs to acquire the following skills:

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⁵ Jerome C. Harste, *What Do We Mean by Literacy now?* 10(3) VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE 8-10 (March 2003).

⁶ National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), NCTE Position Statement- The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies, 1 (February 15, 2008).
<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition/>.

⁷ Jerome C. Harste, *Op. Cit.*, at 8-10.

⁸ DANIEL WAGNER, LITERACY, CULTURE & DEVELOPMENT: BECOMING LITERATE IN MOROCCO 270 (Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1993).

⁹ Lorna Collier, *The Shift to 21st –Century Literacies*, THE COUNCIL CHRONICAL 4-8 (Issue No. 1057-4190, November 2007).

- Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;
- Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.¹⁰

Hence, the current era requirements call for participants who are well equipped to critically think, solve problem and communicate effectively¹¹. Literacy in a “Digital Age” requires people to question, find relevant information, evaluate, create a response and share it with others¹².

Furthermore, human capital, as Noe defined, is described in terms of “knowledge, intelligence, training, experience, problem-solving, human relation, as well as insight”¹³, which signifies that the value of human quality not only denotes the ability of reading and writing as these two skills alone do not represent an added value to the individual and the community at large. The value of human capital is perceived in the skills which develop individuals into active participants in their society.

The broader meaning of “literacy” is “being knowledgeable and educated in a particular field or fields”, which emphasizes the concept of multiple literacy. Literacy revolves around four broad dimensions: skills: 1. reading, writing, verbal, access to and critically analyze as well as communicate information...etc; 2. practice; 3. learning process; and 4. text. In addition, dynamism is a main feature in literacy, implying that it is not a one-shot intervention but rather an on-going learning process¹⁴. Daniel Wagner added that literacy acquisition and maintenance could not be mandated by the government, but is rather dependent on practices, cultural beliefs and history of which it takes place¹⁵. Good education is indoctrinated

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¹⁰ National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), *Op. Cit.*, at 1.

¹¹ Rebecca Alber, *Twenty-First Century Literacy Deeper Learning*, 2 (August 1, 2014). <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/twenty-first-century-literacy-deeper-learning-rebecca-alber>. Janet Murray, *Contemporary Literacy: Essential Skills for the 21st Century*, THE ONLINE EDUCATOR 1 (March/April 2003). Available at <http://www.infotoday.com/mmschools/mar03/murray.shtml>.

¹² *Center of Media Literacy, Literacy for the 21st Century: The Hope and the Promise* 2 (2014). <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/literacy-21st-century-hope-and-promise>.

¹³ NOE RAYMOND (ET. AL.), *FUNDAMENTALS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT* 3 (McGraw-Hill, 5th ed., 2014).

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Education for All, Global Monitoring Report* 148-152 (2006).

¹⁵ Daniel Wagner, *Op. Cit.*, at 270.

in the Japanese culture as a pre-determinant factor for getting a good job¹⁶. The value of literacy materializes only when valid, i.e. when it is practiced relevant to the changing social, cultural and economic contexts, because here when it turns continuous learning and practice to an added value and hence contributes to sustainable socio-economic development.

Consequently, functionality represents the backbone of literacy. It provides people with the ability to accomplish as it enables people to “actively participate in their societies politically, civically and socially.”¹⁷

In light of contemporary conceptualization of literacy, literacy could be defined as a dynamic life-long learning process of practiced-based knowledge and skills which develop human capital capable to actively participate in socioeconomic development of their societies.

III. ADULT LITERACY IN ARAB STATES VIS-À-VIS GLOBAL LITERACY

Adult literacy in the Arab region is among the lowest global wide, which indicates a menacing threat to the region's ability to reposition itself among modern societies and to realize sustainable socio-economic development. Although adult literacy global level reached 84.1%¹⁸ rising from 83% in 2008¹⁹, still 774 million adults are illiterate and do not have basic reading and writing skills²⁰ compared with 796 million in 2008²¹. In addition, 64% of illiterate population is women in both years²², indicating that gender disparities continue to persist on a global scale. Figure 1 illustrates the global map for illiteracy in 2013, showing the highest rates in the African continent²³.

In addition, we find that in 10 countries in the world, the number of illiterate adults exceeded 10 million, namely: India (287 million), China (52 million), Pakistan (50 million), Bangladesh (44 million), Nigeria (42

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¹⁶ PRADYUMMA P. KARAN, *JAPAN IN THE 21ST CENTURY: ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY AND THE SOCIETY* 182 (The University Press of Kentucky 2004).

¹⁷ Salah Ayari, *Diglossia and Illiteracy in the Arab World*, 9(3) LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND CURRICULUM 243-253 (1996).

¹⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Adult and Youth Literacy*, 26 UIS FACT SHEET 1-4 (September 2013). Available at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs26-2013-literacy-en.pdf>.

¹⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Adult and Youth Literacy: Global Trends in Gender Parity*, 3 UIS FACT SHEET 1-4 (September 2010). Available at http://www.unesco.org/education/ild2010/FactSheet2010_Lit_EN.pdf.

²⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Op. Cit.*, at 1-4 (2013).

²¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Op. Cit.*, at 1-4 (2010).

²² *Ibid.* and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Op. Cit.*, at 1-4 (2013).

²³ Maps of the World, World Illiteracy Map (August 2013). <http://www.mapsofworld.com/thematic-maps/world-illiteracy-map.htm>.

million), Ethiopia (27 million), Egypt (15 million), Brazil (14 million), Indonesia (13 million), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12 million), where they account for a total of 556 million which exceeds two thirds of the 774 million illiterate adults globally²⁴.

The Arab states witnessed progress in adult and youth literacy rates from 1990 to 2011, where adult literacy (aged between 15 and above) reached 77% in 2011 rising from 55% in 1990 and youth literacy (age between 15 and 24 years) rate from 74% to 90%, compared with global adult and youth literacy rates with 84% and 89% respectively. However, still the Arab states have long way to go compared with other regions such as central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, etc as indicated in Figure 2²⁵.

In addition, according to 2008 indicators, the majority of the world illiterate adults exist in less-developed regions, namely, South and West Asia hitting 41%, Sub-Saharan Africa 40%, the Arab States 37%, Latin America and the Caribbean 10% and 9% in East Asia and the Pacific²⁶. Moreover, illiterate adult women rate persists to constitute two thirds of the global illiterate adults since 1990, representing 71% in East Asia and the Pacific, 66% in the Arab States, 64% in Southern and West Asia, 71% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 63% in Central Asia, 78% in Central and Eastern Europe and 61% in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 3)²⁷.

In addition, the highest literacy rates in the Arab region exist in nine countries, namely Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and Libya, which are relatively small in terms of population except for Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, we find that nine other large populated countries hit less than 75% literacy rates where Iraq, Mauritania and Yemen showing the lowest rates with 40%, 41.2% and 49% respectively²⁸. Countries like Egypt and Morocco account for more than 50% of illiterate adults in the region²⁹.

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²⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Adult and Youth Literacy National, Regional and Global Trends* 10 (1985-2015, June 2013). Available at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/literacy-statistics-trends-1985-2015.pdf>.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ Sage Knowledge, *Adult Illiteracy Worldwide, Encyclopedia of Social Problems: Illiteracy, Adult in Developing Nations*, SAGE 475-476 (2013).

²⁷ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), *Op. Cit.*, at 9, 28 (June 2013).

²⁸ Hassan R. Hammoud, *Illiteracy in the Arab World*, UNESCO 3 (2005).

²⁹ UNESCO, *Education for All- Regional Report for Arab States, Global Education for All Meeting* 10 (Paris, France, November 21-23, 2012).

Fig 1. Illiteracy Global Map.

Source: Maps of the World, August 2013.

Fig 2. Global Distribution of Adult & Youth Literacy.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, September 2013.

Fig 3. Global Illiterate Adult Population & Gender Disparity 2011.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2013.

IV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ARAB ILLITERACY CHALLENGES

In spite of the fact that adult illiteracy rate in the Arab region decreased from 74% of total population in 1970 to 40% in 2008, number of illiterates of this age category increased from 50 million to 70 million respectively,³⁰ which indicates an annual rate of 0.9% illiteracy decrease ($34\%/38 \text{ years} = 0.9\%$), meaning that the Arab countries, with such pace and environment, might require around 45 years to fully eradicate illiteracy.

Illiteracy is discussed in this research as a multifaceted public administration issue from a cultural perspective rather than a mere educational issue. Solving illiteracy from an educational dimension has proved only to be inefficient in terms of both planning and administration. This section analyzes core Arab socio-economic dimensions posing chronic challenges to illiteracy. Relevant social and economic contexts are indispensable to consider and to set a new vision for integrating illiteracy eradication policies into industrial development plans in order to simultaneously boost the pace of abolishing illiteracy and effectively

³⁰ Shawn Magin, *Illiteracy in the Arab Region: A Meta Study*, GIALENS 1-2 (2010). Available at www.gial.edu/GIALens/ossues.htm.

contribute to socio-economic development in the Arab world. In Japan, where literacy rate reached 99%³¹ jumping from 50% in 1970, two factors triggered such frog leap: First, literacy, as aforementioned, is believed to be an integral part of the culture and a precondition for employment and social status; second, industrial development starting post Meiji revolution and continued through World War II and mid 1990s, achieving economic development turning Japan into one of the strongest economies globally. Modernization has been strongly believed to be impossible to take place except through literate skilled human capital and technology being the cornerstones for socio-economic development³².

A. *Social Dimension*

The study refers to illiteracy eradication as an approach for social development, with emphasis on the important role of women especially in marginalized poor rural areas where the highest rates of illiteracy exist. Women “if properly recognized and employed, can make a difference in individuals’ wellbeing and economic growth in urban and rural areas”³³. Eradicating illiteracy in rural areas, especially of women, could create employment productive generation contributing to improving livelihood and quality of life in these communities which represent a cornerstone to socio-economic development. In Japan, in rural marginalized provinces, illiteracy eradication programs that were launched by civil society initiatives due to lack of government support, realized the important contribution of a literate woman socially as she raised the children and assisted them in studying as well as economically as an active actor in the production chain of various industrial activities. Hence, these programs targeted females who constituted the majority of learners reaching 78% in programs such as “Osaka” project³⁴. In addition, in Morocco, literacy programs targeting females proved to improve their quality of life, especially those who attended long-term programs³⁵.

An overview of the different relevant Arab social challenges is as follows:

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³¹ The World Factbook (2013). <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html>.

³² Pradyumna P. Karan, *Op. Cit.*, at 181.

³³ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, UN WOMEN 2 (2011).

³⁴ UNESCO Institute for Life Learning, Literacy and Language Classes in Community Centers. <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=14&programme=131>.

³⁵ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 11-12.

Quantitative Element: Two thirds of illiterates are women³⁶. Gender parity index (GPI) was 0.76 in 2006 which is considered among the lowest rates. An exception of only five Arab countries with adult GPI of 0.9 and above namely are United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain which exceeds world GPI average (0.88). Whereas 11 countries have GPI less than 0.83, namely Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Oman, Mauritania, Egypt, Yemen and Morocco. In addition, on average only 8% of gross enrolment in secondary education (69%) receive technical and vocational education, showing huge gender disparities which vary dramatically ranging from a share of 10% for girl in countries like Kuwait versus 43% in Egypt, while none in Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates³⁷.

Qualitative Element: The tradition of early marriage, unfavourable social attitude towards females' education and low awareness about its importance especially in rural areas, poverty and lack of financial resources force families to give preference for males education to females; shortage of financial resources to fund schools for girls to segregate them from boys; many families do not send their girls to school in case of distant location of schools from home especially at time of political unrest³⁸, among others; are core reasons for gender disparities and impose barriers to literacy particularly in rural areas³⁹. Even in urban areas, women face discrimination that violates the principle of equal job opportunity where maternity leave and child care are considered as cost⁴⁰.

In addition, policymakers cannot perceive that gender equality, schooling in rural areas, training and their impact on the overall poverty reduction and improvement of livelihoods⁴¹. Lack of political support and commitment to eradicate women's illiteracy represents a further challenging hurdle⁴². Governments address women's issues in isolation from national policies and economic reforms programs. Sustainable development through socio-economic development would never take place unless there is a unified commitment by both the government and civil society towards gender parity and women's empowerment⁴³.

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³⁶ UNESCO, *Op.Cit.*, at 11 (2012).

³⁷ *Ibid*, at 12.

³⁸ Shawn Magin, *Op. Cit.*, at 17.

³⁹ Hassan R. Hammoud, *Op.Cit.*, at 5.

⁴⁰ Jad Chaaban, *Job Creation in the Arab Economies: Navigating Through Difficult Waters*, Arab Human Development Report, UNDP 21 (2010).

⁴¹ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 12.

⁴² Hassan R. Hammoud, *Op.Cit.*, at 13.

⁴³ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 1-2.

Geographic Element: Rural-urban disparity stands as a barrier to abolish illiteracy in countries, such as Yemen, Egypt, Morocco and Sudan, where there are vast size of dispersed lands with low levels of population density. Long distances between homes and schools make it unsafe especially for females. Hence in poor rural areas marginalization has resulted in 1000s deprived from formal education⁴⁴.

Legal Element: In spite of the fact that in most of the countries, the constitutions and laws mandate equality and in particular between men and women in rights and duties⁴⁵, yet rural areas, in particular, witness improper implementation and laxity of these laws due to customs and traditions as well as high rates of illiteracy in such areas which further obstruct awareness of rights and obligations⁴⁶.

B. Economic Dimension

There has always been a negative correlation coefficient between illiteracy and economic growth, as countries with high growth national income (GNI) like Lebanon, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia with GNI per capita \$4,010, 18,270 and 8,460 reached 14%, 18.1% and 23.8% illiteracy rate in 2000. While countries ranked among the lowest global GNI per capita levels such as Yemen, Mauritania and Sudan with GNI per capita of \$360, \$450, \$340 respectively, hit illiteracy rates of 59.8%, 53.6% and 42.3%. It is believed that lack of financial resources put constraints on governments spending on educational facilities, curricula, teachers' training, etc.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, lack of economic growth fails to meet needs of growing population⁴⁸.

The Arab region has the highest percentage of youth in the world, one reason is the highest fertility rates and early marriage as aforementioned especially in rural areas which are usually poor and result in high illiteracy rates as well as unemployment and consequently low quality of life⁴⁹. Many Arab countries have always defined the problem of low youth employability in terms of mismatch between skills produced by the inefficient education systems and labour market demands. They have adopted traditional

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⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, EFA Regional Report for the Arab States* 41 (2011).

⁴⁵ United Nations Development Program, *Arab Human Development Report: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* 18 (2005).

⁴⁶ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 2.

⁴⁷ Shawn Magin, *Op. Cit.*, at 15-16.

⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Op. Cit.*, at 4 (2012).

⁴⁹ UNESCO, *Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, Op. Cit.*, at 41 (2011).

approaches to link education with socio-economic development, mainly taking the form of curriculum revision and the use of information and computer technology at schools (ICT) to learn by doing⁵⁰. Neither have these efforts improved education systems, especially in marginalized poor rural areas, nor have they contributed any added value to development of societies.

Illiteracy eradication must be part of the national policies and socio-economic development plans across the Arab region. Plans for abolishing illiteracy, if to succeed, must be integrated within industrialization plans especially in marginalized rural areas that possess the highest illiteracy rates. By looking at the activities profile in rural areas, we find that micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are the pillars for achieving both illiteracy eradication and development. If this vision is cohesively adopted and implemented across the Arab region, countries could reap the benefits of MSEs contribution to development.

How do we define micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMES)? In light of global standards, it is possible to define MSMEs in terms of number of employees, where micro ranges between 1 and 9 employees, small between 10 and 49 employees while medium is 50-249 employees. This definition might vary by country or/and according to industry. According to 2010 indicators, we find that 83% of formal MSMEs fall in the category of micro businesses representing the majority. In 132 countries where there are 125 million formal MSMEs, over 71% exist in emerging countries. In addition, in higher income economies, MSMEs employ almost 45% of workforce compared with 27% in low-income economies. In fact, in China 80% of workforce are employed by MSMEs⁵¹. As for Malaysia, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been an integral part of the government development plans and played a vital role in the rapid industrialization process and economic development which has placed Malaysia among the most open world economies⁵². That indicates the significant contribution of MSMEs as a building block to employment and economic development.

Micro and Small Enterprises Job Creation in the Arab Region:

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⁵⁰ UNESCO, *Op.Cit.*, at 15 (2012).

⁵¹ Khrystyna Kushnir (et. Al.), *Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Around the World: How Many Are There, and What Affects the Count?*, MSMEs Country Indicators, 1-6 (2010). Available at <http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/9ae1dd80495860d6a482b519583b6d16/MSME-CI-AnalysisNote.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

⁵² Mohd Zulkifli Muhammad (et. al.), *Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Competing in the Global Business Environment: A Case of Malaysia*, 3(1) INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH 1 (January 2010). Available at <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ibr/article/viewFile/3893/3945>.

Although youth represents one third (33.3%) of the Arab population compared with 14% globally which is a “demographic gift” to Arab economies if appropriately utilized⁵³, yet it hits very low rates in terms of workforce—only one third of the labor force age, especially due to very low women participation. Youth unemployment represents lost productivity to Arab economies with opportunity cost reaching 3% of GDP annually⁵⁴. It is estimated that the region needs 80 million jobs between 2000 and 2020 to absorb workforce new entrants⁵⁵.

Egypt as a Case! If we look at the Arab region, in Egypt, for example, micro and small enterprises constitute almost 99% of total private enterprises and 80% of total workforce employing 5.8 million employees. In addition, 88% of the 5.8 million work is in the micro business with 72% in enterprises of 1-4 employees and only 16% in organizations of 5-9 workers, which reflects the importance of micro and small enterprises in creating job opportunities. However, women head only 10.5% of these enterprises. Surveys further indicated that entrepreneurs, on average, completed between 8.4 years and 10.3 years of school, the younger the more educated as there is a negative correlation coefficient between age and education⁵⁶.

Economic Activities Distribution in the Arab World: There is wide range of differences among Arab countries in terms of natural resources (oil reserves, water abundance,...), land and population size, economic activities, etc.⁵⁷ Hence, we must acknowledge socio-economic outcomes diversity among Arab countries ranging from a per capita GNI of US\$64,000 in Qatar versus US\$281 in Somalia⁵⁸.

On average, agriculture and services sectors constitute more than 60% of the economic activities in the Arab world. The agriculture sector is the major employer in poor Arab countries where 50% work in agriculture and fishing, and this percentage goes down below 20% in rich countries. Despite of the fact that the services sector has flourished dramatically offering 49.5% of the region's jobs in 2008 with a marked decline in agriculture reaching 27.8%, still the latter continues to be more significant for women more than men constituting 39.3% and 27.8% of their jobs respectively.

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⁵³ Jad Chaaban, *Op. Cit.*, at 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, at 7, 22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, at 13.

⁵⁶ Hafez Ghanem, *The Role of Micro and Small Enterprises in Egypt's Economic Transition*, *Global Economic Development*, BROOKINGS 13-15 (2013). Available at <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/1/egypt%20economic%20transition%20ghanem/01%20egypt%20economic%20transition%20ghanem>.

⁵⁷ UNESCO, *Education for All Regional Report 2012 for Arab States*, *Global Education for All Meeting* (France, November 21-23, 2012).

⁵⁸ Jad Chaaban, *Op. Cit.*, at 8.

Other activities include mining and manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, hotels, restaurants, transport, real estate, finance, construction, electricity and water.⁵⁹

Arab Women's Participation in Economic Activities. Despite of women's participation in social and economic activities and in the production of the components of "human well-being", yet Arab countries neither acknowledge the importance of their participation nor reward women adequately for such participation⁶⁰. The main women labour wage activity in rural areas is agriculture especially in countries that depend on agriculture—Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Jordan, Syria, including both post-harvest activities as well as agro-processing industries such as crop, livestock, dairy products, tomato paste and others for their households and the market. Most these activities are low paid activities left for women. Such activities, agro-industry and rural industrialization, have been a source of cash and offered self-employment opportunities for women as well as establishing rural enterprises and hence get out of their closed communities and gain confidence⁶¹. Women labor has prohibited them, like in rural area in Morocco, to join literacy classes due to their busy schedule⁶², which imposes a challenge to illiteracy eradication efforts in such context.

Employability Risks Facing Arab Youth: The following factors represent major impediments to youth employability.

Access to Finance. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are more likely to identify access to finance as their biggest obstacle is large firms⁶³. Surveys on MSMEs in Saudi Arabia asserted that the main barriers for entrepreneurship include difficulties in obtaining financial support, bureaucracy, lack of credit options, lack of government support, unpredictable policy changes, and lack of training⁶⁴.

Illiteracy. No doubt that illiteracy could result in low levels of employability which set barriers to performance development. Promoting literacy is the key driver to upgrading knowledge and skills and hence improves performance and compensation rates.

Lack of Follow-up and Evaluation. Although there have been many

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⁵⁹ *Ibid*, at 7, 15, 21.

⁶⁰ United Nations Development Program, *Op. Cit.*, at 6.

⁶¹ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 2-4, 14.

⁶² *Ibid*, at 12.

⁶³ Khrystyna Kushnir (et. Al.), *Op. Cit.*, at 6.

⁶⁴ Sayed Zamberi Ahmad, *Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Problems and Constraints*, 8(4) WORLD JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 217-232 (2012). Available at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/20425961211276606>.

initiatives of micro-finances and literacy classes in the MENA region, especially targeting women in rural areas, yet there has been lack of monitoring and follow-up on these initiatives and their impact on women empowerment, and hence there is lack of information on policies outcomes, impact and challenges that are important for policymakers concerning development plans⁶⁵.

Market Access. In most financed projects, though women, for example, were trained in income-generating activities, yet they have not been trained on how to access the market. As a result, they are always exploited by traders. This calls for government technical and financial support, including opening up small shops to sell out their products, dairy products, wool, napkins, embroidered dresses⁶⁶ ..., training on marketing, or setting up distribution channels etc.

“Achieving higher rates of job-creating economic growth should remain priority”. Youth should be placed as a priority in labor market policies at the regional level, while integrating variability in the Arab countries activities⁶⁷. A new economic vision that is based on the concept inclusive growth is imperative to foster social and economic development in Arab countries where people, especially youth have been socially and economically marginalized. Focusing on supporting and developing micro and small enterprises sector play a decisive role in offering opportunities for both youth and women and hence stimulating economic as well as social development⁶⁸. Arab countries have to embark on new integrated socio-economic policies that create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship with the purpose of both economic growth and illiteracy eradication. Hence, we must integrate illiteracy eradication as part of the regional socio-economic development vision and strategy.

V. ARAB LITERACY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ALSED) PROJECT: CONCEPT NOTE

Concept: Arab Literacy Socio-Economic Development Project (ALSED) is proposed as an effective approach to achieve socio-economic development through merging illiteracy eradication programs as an integral element in socio-economic development strategic plans across the Arab world. Globally, micro and small enterprises have proved to be the

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⁶⁵ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 15.

⁶⁶ Malika Abdelali-Martini, *Op. Cit.*, at 15.

⁶⁷ Jad Chaaban, *Op. Cit.*, at 8.

⁶⁸ Hafez Ghanem, *Op. Cit.*, at 1-2.

backbone for development in most modern economies and emerging powers. In addition, recognizing the significance of the role of women, both social and economic, affirms that women empowerment is indispensable to stimulate and boost development. Similar to success stories in Japan, ALSED proposes that illiteracy eradication programs focus on teaching language in the context of learners' everyday lives. In addition, sharing experiences and challenges as well as empowering learners through a deeper understanding of their particular situation and history is key success factors as well. The main idea of ALSED is to integrate specialized hands-on literacy programs as a compulsory requirement in micro or small projects as well as other cultural developmental projects including human rights and women empowerment initiatives, financed by national, regional or/and international grants, where effective implementation of such illiteracy eradication programs is considered as a key indicator of accountability and a prerequisite for continuing to receive installments of project finances. Hence the project sustainability is tied with accountability to integrate implementation of the literacy program within the micro/small project activities. ALSED thus produces aware, skillful and productive literate human capital in a specific field of interest capable of contributing added value to communities' socio-economic sustainable development.

Target Group: The project focuses on empowering the socially and economically disadvantaged communities, especially in rural areas as well as marginalized groups in the Arab region. ALSED primarily is targeted toward adults with emphasis on youth, especially women, as considered to be key actors, yet had less opportunity to achieve literacy and to become productive actors in their societies.

Implementation: We come to realize more and more every day, and in reference to illiteracy aforementioned indicators, traditional approaches, class and teacher-centered learning, are incapable to boost illiteracy eradication leaving the Arab region at the tail of the development race in a knowledge economy era. In addition, for a frog leap to take place and embark on opportunities for growth and development, development plans must synchronize both socio-economic and literacy policies. Literacy programs should be an integral activity in a micro financed project. The entrepreneur/employer should be obliged and committed in consent to apply the literacy program for employees and workers as part of the micro project in-house vocational training. Such programs adopt the concept of functional literacy, where programs including materials, curriculum and teaching methodology, are tailored in accordance with needs of the project field of

specialization, i.e. practice-based/hands-on learning, which, in fact, creates a motivating environment conducive to learning and higher productivity.

In addition, qualified trainers and volunteers—individuals or civil society organizations which can play a vital role—are not the only means for delivering these programs, but most importantly, literate incumbents and peers who possess technical expertise concerning work flow details and terminologies utilized who could through training of trainers (TOT) develop training skills needed to practice illiteracy eradication teaching tools. There could be generalized for other social and cultural development programs, where relevant literacy programs could be integrated, as in the areas of human rights, women empowerment, health awareness, etc. In this respect, Ms. Magda Zaki asserted that NGOs, other civil society organizations as well as business community as a corporate social responsibility play an indispensable role in providing technical and financial support for implementing illiteracy eradication programs⁶⁹.

Approach to Financing and Sustainability: Effective implementation of the literacy program as a compulsory activity of a financed project should be stipulated in the contract as a prerequisite to the sustainability of financing by the funding agency, whether the funding agency is national, regional or international like the IMF, World Bank, EU, OECD, etc.

Coordination and Monitoring: A critical success factor for ALSSED is to function with service provision professionalism especially with regard to coordination and monitoring. The proposed project requires immense coordinating efforts among Arab nations as well as with regional and international development funding agencies on one hand, and effective follow-up and monitoring tools and mechanisms to evaluate and measure outcomes and impact on both social and economic activities on the other hand.

Expected Impact:

Illiteracy Eradication: Boosting illiteracy abolishment through practiced based knowledge and skills approach which creates an environment conducive to learning, motivation, and increase willingness to learn as learners could recognize and acknowledge direct impact of practiced learning on their performance as well as employability and hence meet their socioeconomic needs.

Women Empowerment: The proposed project targets adult, in particular youth and women, where women represent the most disadvantaged and discriminated in terms of employability and education. It

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⁶⁹ Interview with Magda Zaki, *Op. Cit.*.

also opens opportunities for further education. Abolishing women illiteracy simultaneously with promoting their participation as active actors in their communities represents a main driver toward establishing modern societies.

Employability: The program upgrades technical knowledge and skills needed to effectively perform specific job requirements.

Industrialization and Sustainable Socioeconomic Development: Improved accessibility to MSEs loans as well as human capital capacity building in terms of functional literacy is cornerstones in boosting industrialization development which coincide with ALSED's main goal to stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities in marginalized area and hence contribute to sustainable socioeconomic development.

Stimulate Arab Trade Integration: Stimulating economic activities and productivity across the vast Arab markets could provide a remarkable opportunity for promoting regional trade integration. The region is in dire need for integrated strategies and policies to face development challenges. Coordination of industrialization strategies and policies among Arab states have become indispensable for matching Arab economic activities with Arab markets needs as building block for Arab markets integration.

Promoting Arabic Language and Arab Identity: Arabic as the teaching language is considered among the top priorities which led the Arab League Summit in Damascus 2008 to approve the project on "Arabic Language Promotion towards Knowledge Society". The main goal is to bring back the glory and status of the Arabic language and use it in both media and education⁷⁰. ALSED implementation across the Arab region could contribute to promoting and disseminating the utilization of Arabic language, strengthening cohesion and unity among the Arab states as Arabic language is the common factor. In addition, considering the cultural dimension as an integral component in the illiteracy eradication programs contributes significantly to filling the Arab identity gap that has been a core factor in terrorism in the region, as education lacks focus on the culture of tolerance, coexistence, acceptance and respect to diversity... as core cultural values of the Arab identity have been faded and replaced by the so-called "Islamic Identity" claimed by fanatic and conservative Islamists⁷¹.

VI. ALSED AND REVIVAL OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

The League of Arab States (LAS), founded in 1945, aims to strengthen relations between its Member States through promoting collaboration

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⁷⁰ Interview with Dr. Yahia El Saidi, Head of Education Department, ALESCO, Tunis, October 2014.

⁷¹ Interview with Magda Zaki, *Op. Cit.*.

among them and safeguarding their interests. There is a wide scope of issue area for LAS, ranging from coordination of policy positions, to economic integration, to supporting literacy and the Arabic language as well as cultural heritage.⁷² Yet inefficiency has characterized its history where the ideology of Arab Nationalism has faded with the persisting inability of the Arab states to work cooperatively⁷³. There is a dire need for role restructuring to act as an active supranational power capable of addressing Arab integration and achieve its purpose of existence: Arab Nationalism. One of the most important restructuring requirements is transformation to flat organization structure which could result in more effective coordination and cooperation among the different organizations and departments affiliated to LAS, especially that all international, regional and national issues have become multifaceted calling for unified and integrated efforts across all concerned bodies. Since the latest initiative launched by former Egyptian President Adly Mansour, calling for a unified Arab Illiteracy Eradication Project, which represents a revival for LAS's Arab Nationalism role, LAS has been taking serious steps especially that the upcoming Arab Summit is planned to take place in Egypt in May 2015 where progress feedback on this initiative will be presented. In light of this, a coordination meeting took place headed by Egypt, project initiator in October 2014, and attended by ALECSO, representatives of Egyptian Foreign Affairs as well as experts from the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the meeting was to create a core group working on bringing in the other Arab countries. A second meeting, "1st Meeting for the Supreme Coordination Committee for Illiteracy Eradication Arab Contract", was planned to be held on November 2-3, 2014 in Egypt. The purpose of the meeting is to call for technical representatives from all Arab countries to discuss and set an action plan for the initiative, yet has been postponed to January 12-13, 2015 as only six countries responded positively. Reasons for lack of willingness to participate, include, lack of available technical experts delegated by Arab countries, lack of motivation of Gulf countries which represent the lowest illiteracy rates in the region, lack of financial capabilities of poor countries despite their dire need for abolishing illiteracy. Accordingly, LAS communicated postponement reasons to all Arab countries, urging them to participate and reiterating on the important role of regional cooperation in

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⁷² United Nations Programme of Action Implementation: PoA-ISS, *Op. Cit.*.

⁷³ Michel Walid Hanna, *The Arab League: A Step Towards New Norms*, WORLD POLITICS REVIEW (May 22, 2012). <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/11978/the-arab-league-first-steps-toward-new-norms>.

addressing illiteracy issue⁷⁴.

ALSED is viewed, in this study, not only as an effective approach toward sustainable socioeconomic development but also as the last beacon for LAS revival. ALECSO is a specialized organization of LAS, located in Tunis, founded in 1964 (Annex I: Foundation Declaration, Annex II: Declaration of ALECSO Continuation). ALECSO mission is to coordinate cultural and educational activities among the Arab world⁷⁵. The study claims that ALECSO should be called on in collaboration with LAS and its affiliated organizations concerned with the project at hand, as ALSED regional coordinators. Their main role is to coordinate joint efforts of Arab countries and international funding agencies to develop and activate joint mechanisms on combating illiteracy through integrating literacy programs in social and economic development programs. Furthermore, both entities will be accountable to monitoring and evaluating progress. A number of tasks are needed to effectively fulfill this goal, mainly are:

Setting-up a new vision for illiteracy eradication multidisciplinary approach where social, economic, financial, administrative dimensions stand as cornerstones. Interviews asserted that LAS and ALESCO have developed a new perspective in conceptualizing Arab illiteracy dilemma. Both Ms. Magda Zaki and Dr. Yahia El Saidi claimed that ALECSO address illiteracy eradication and adult literacy from a civilized perspective which views the problem from different dimensions, economic, cultural and social perspectives. In addition, Dr. El Saidi confirmed that the best approach is to fight poverty as illiterates are all poor and that an integrated developmental approach is the building block for abolishing illiteracy.

Initiate dialogue and coordinate between Arab nations and funding agencies include coordination meetings, negotiations, developing and

⁷⁴ Interview with Magda Zaki, *Op. Cit.*

⁷⁵ <http://www.projects-alecso.org/>.

signing protocols of cooperation. Dr. Yahia El Saidi confirmed in the interview that ALESCO is an Arab organization responsible for coordinating Arab efforts in all literacy-related fields as well as cooperating with any state and non-state organizations working in the same fields⁷⁶. In addition, since LAS act as the link between Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Education, it could play an effective coordination as well as monitoring role⁷⁷.

Develop and support systems and mechanisms to provide data on illiteracy-related issues, e.g. illiteracy rates by industrial sector, economic activity profile in rural and marginalized areas, regional market trends. There is a dire need to fill the existing information gap in order to develop realistic regional social and economic policies with high success chances.

Identify monitoring and evaluation criteria and indicators to observe, measure, document and evaluate ALSED implementation progress to ensure impact of project on daily life activities and community at large.

Promoting utilization of technology-based and social media tools, as we believe that illiterates have acquired many technology-based skills as a result of obsession and accessibility to numerous video games and social media programs. In light of this, Dr. El Saidi stated that ALESCO has integrated technology-based learning tools in a number of adult literacy programs as it encourages information technology utilization in the fields of education, culture and science⁷⁸.

Declaring a set of measures to ensure consistency of ALSED implementations across the Arab regions.

Revitalize the role of regional and national institutions, including civil society organizations, in the Arab world working in the area of SMEs, human rights, women rights, vocational training, culture, education, etc.

Promote Arab market integration, including labor, goods and services markets. Promoting and coordinating the development of regional industrial strategies and policies could stimulate regional cooperation in the Arab world, including trade in goods and services, labor market mobility as well as direct investments.

Challenges and Risks:

Lack of willingness of Gulf countries to participate in illiteracy eradication programs due to the fact they hit the lowest illiteracy rates in addition to lacking trust in institutional efficiency and accountability. A well developed project with unified vision, clear objectives and targets, as well as

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⁷⁶ Interview with Dr. Yahia El Saidi, *Op. Cit.*.

⁷⁷ Interview with Magda Zaki, *Op. Cit.*.

⁷⁸ Interview with Dr. Yahia El Saidi, *Op. Cit.*.

realistic action plan and budget, is indispensable to earn trust and commitment of all stakeholders⁷⁹.

“Red Tape”, bureaucracy, in Egypt possess challenges in the project set up and implementation phases and most importantly sustainability⁸⁰.

Financing sustainability persists to be key challenge. As an example, LAS has recently implemented, at the Arab States Fundamental Education Centre (ASFEC) established in 1952 by UNESCO in Menofeya, a TOT program for 14 trainers in the field of illiteracy eradication and adults literacy from five less developed Arab countries including Comoros and Djibouti. Total costs reached US\$30,000; i.e. US\$2,143 per trainer⁸¹. Sustainability calls for continuous effective coordination and commitment among the Arab states and international organizations, as well as serious efforts and accountability to ensure sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Illiteracy is an epidemic disease fighting development in many less developed Arab countries suffering economic and social challenges. Sustainable socioeconomic development is the key milestone for Arab states to reintegrate as strong regional force in the global power landscape. Both industrial development and literacy have always been coincided as key drivers of growth and development for vast global powers, like Japan as well as key emerging powers like China and Malaysia. Cultural conceptualization of literacy denotes that social and economic dimensions are key pillars in building knowledge economies and hence illiteracy eradication policies have to be integrated within the industrial development plans. If sustainable development is to take place in the Arab region, industrial development, basically through micro and small enterprises promotion, synchronized with illiteracy eradication functional-based programs are the key drivers. The League of Arab States (LAS) has indispensable role in coordinating efforts among member Arab countries and international organization as well as monitoring set-up and implementation of Arab Literacy and Socioeconomic Development Project (ALSSED) which is envisaged by the research as the last chance for LAS revival and to recuperate its supranational role.

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⁷⁹ Interview with Magda Zaki, *Op. Cit.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Interview with Amr Fawy, Administrator, Department of Education and Scientific Research, League of Arab States, Egypt, October 29, 2014.

ANNEX I

توصيات المؤتمر
الثاني لوزراء
المعارف والتربية
والتعليم العرب:
"يقرّر المجلس الموافقة على توصيات
المؤتمر الثاني لوزراء المعارف والتربية والتعليم
المنعقد ببغداد في فبراير / شباط / فيفري لعام
1964 ومشروع اتفاقية الوحدة الثقافية العربية
ودستور المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم
الملحقين بتوصيات المؤتمر (1) .

(ق 2009 / د ع 41 / ج 5 - 5 / 21 / 1964)

ANNEX II

تتليذاً لقرار المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي رقم 1049 بتاريخ 1988/2/3 المتخذ في دورته العادية الرابعة والأربعين وبدعوة كريمة من المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية، وتحت رعاية سمو الأمير حسن ولي عهد المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية.

عقد المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي دورته غير العادية في عمان بتاريخ 1988/7/5 بحضور أصحاب المعالي وزراء المال والاقتصاد ووفود الدول العربية الأعضاء، وبحضور كل من سيادة الأمين العام وسيادة الأمين العام المساعد للشؤون الاقتصادية بجامعة الدول العربية (مرفق رقم 1) قلعة بالسماء رؤساء، وأعضاء الوفود المشاركة في الدورة).

وبعد الكلمة الافتتاحية للسيد رئيس الدورة العادية الرابعة والأربعين للمجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي معالي الدكتور محمد العسدي وزير الاقتصاد والتجارة الخارجية في الجمهورية العربية السورية مرفق رقم (2)، ألقى معالي الأمين العام لجامعة الدول العربية السيد الشاذلي القليوبي كلمة قومية هامة مرفق رقم (3).

وقد تفضل دولة رئيس مجلس الوزراء في المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية الأستاذ/ زيد الرفاعي نيابة عن صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير حسن ولي عهد المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية بإلقاء كلمة توجيهية هامة بهذه المناسبة مرفق رقم (4).

وبعد المناقشة تقرّرها يلي:

1 - اعتبار إستراتيجية العمل الاقتصادي العربي المشترك التي وافق عليها مؤتمر القمة العربي الحادي عشر في عمان عام 1980 وإلى أن يتخذ قرار مغاير على مستوى القمة العربية تحديلاً لهذه الإستراتيجية أو تطويراً أو تبديلاً - منطلقاً سليماً لإعادة صياغة أهداف المنظمات العربية المتخصصة بشكل محدد ودقيق وبما يضع هذه الإستراتيجية العامة موضع التنفيذ وبما يمكن هذه المنظمات المتخصصة من أداء دورها الصحيح في الإسهام بدفع عجلة العمل العربي الاقتصادي قدماً إلى الأمام تحقيقاً لتطلعات الأمة العربية في النمو والتكامل والاستقرار.

2 - "الطلاقاً من احترام مبدأ الوظيفة وضرورة ترشيد الهياكل المركزية واللامركزية في بنى المنظمات العربية المتخصصة".

الإبقاء على المنظمات التالية بعد إعادة النظر في أهدافها لجهة الحصر والتحديد الدقيق.

1-2 المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم.

2-2 منظمة العمل العربية.

3-2 المنظمة العربية للتنمية الإدارية.

3 - إقامة المنظمات التالية لتستوعب المنظمات القائمة بعد صهر أهدافها وأنشطتها: