Beirut conclusions

The Beirut Workshop on the Economic Reform and the Private Sector in the BMENA Region in the context of the international financial crisis was organised by the Organization for Civil Activities (OPAC) and No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ), in cooperation with the Governments of Italy and Morocco, co-chairs of the 2009 Forum for the Future;

The Beirut Workshop falls within the framework of the 2009 Forum for the Future activities aimed at ensuring that the Sixth Ministerial Meeting discussions and outcomes are the result of a process of continuous interaction between and among Governments and civil society;

The Beirut Workshop offered a further opportunity to promote productive dialogue between civil society and governments of the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA), G8 and their democratic partners, on issues relating to the economic reform, the role of the private sector and how this reflects on political development, democracy and human rights;

The Beirut Workshop was an important component of the 2009 Forum for the Future and of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) partnership and developed the principles of partnership and cooperation between governments and civil society enshrined in the "Partnership between G-8 BMENA Governments and Civil Society" document;

The results of the Workshop will be presented to the Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for the Future 2009, to contribute constructive proposals and recommendations that could fruitfully feed the discussion between government and civil society representatives and provide momentum for meaningful cooperation between G8 and BMENA countries with the participation of civil society and private sector;

- Recalling the commitment of the countries of the region to strengthen the foundations of democracy and to broaden citizen participation in public affairs, and the commitment of the G8 and BMENA countries and other international partners to accompany and support these reforms, in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect;
- **Reaffirming** the sovereign right of each country freely to choose and develop its political, economic and social system and to promote reforms accordingly and in harmony with its national pace, potential and specificities, consistent with the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;

- **Emphasising** the role of civil society - in particular the private sector and non-governmental organisations - as legitimate counterparts of dialogue in the reform process, sharing an important responsibility together with Governments;

**The participants**

1. **Express** their satisfaction at the constructive nature of the Beirut Workshop and at the spirit of cooperation and of mutual respect that characterised the discussion;

2. **Emphasise** that economic initiatives aimed at supporting an improved business-friendly climate and broadening the spaces for free enterprise and enhanced private sector initiatives represent necessary tools for improving economic reform in all sectors of society;

3. **Recall** that a strong partnership between private sector, civil society and public institutions is crucial, for it can play a constructive role in both the elaboration of pragmatic, business-oriented implementation plans as well as being beneficial for the whole society;

4. **Express** the need for reinforced regional cooperation within and among governments, parliaments, civil society and private sector, to address issues affecting the whole society, including the current economic and financial crisis, to coordinate the efforts in developing new plans and policies to promote best practices and to enhance inclusiveness, particularly for women and youth, in public affairs, that complement and reinforce one another at the international level;

5. **Underline** that BMENA and G8 countries as well their democratic partners should continue their free and open trade policies in order to ensure the expansion of the regional and global economy and increase opportunities for job creation. Governments, private sector and civil society should work together to improve the existing regulations and their enforcements as well as elaborate new and effective ones;

6. **Underline** the need for accountability mechanisms and good governance to guarantee transparency and social responsibility. Private and public sectors should continue to work together in order to foster the necessary legislative and administrative reforms which can represent useful tools to address social justice, unemployment and poverty;

7. **Underline** that a free and open society is essential for fostering a business-oriented environment as well as a genuine and indigenous process of reform
and offers an important tool for enhancing the inclusion of all sectors of society, in particular women and youth, in public life;

8. **Underline** that Human Development and Human Security represent important factors to address for overcoming the current economic crisis and to foster economic and social development within the Region;

9. **Recognise** that the respect of the Rule of Law as an instrument for development, expanding the principle of equal opportunities to all sectors of the society, is made particularly evident in the economic sector;

10. **Encourage** regional initiatives aiming at creating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and highlights that freedom of enterprise and freedom of association go hand in hand as critical tools for reinforcing SMEs and individual entrepreneurship in all sectors;

11. **Recognise** the important role of private sector and civil society activities to support social and economic reforms, reflecting a commitment to the principles of civic engagement and democracy;

12. **Recognise** that the financial crisis has an impact on national reforms, highlighting the importance of addressing the social dimension in implementing national economic reforms;

13. **Recognise** that the recovery of large economies is not adequate for the recovery of the global economy and stress that no solutions will be possible unless they are global, coordinated and inclusive.

14. **Recall** that free circulation of information, ideas and people, also as it is made possible by the increased development on Internet-based technologies, constitutes a prospect for individuals to seize economic and social opportunities which deserve to be encouraged to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

15. **Call on** Governments and civil society to further develop, collect and use effectively and transparently credible, scientific data to understand the needs of citizens and communities and make informed decisions that are responsive to society’s needs;

16. **Invite** all stakeholders to act responsibly and accept being held accountable for the good of society and the regional economy;

17. **Request** that the organizers of the Beirut Workshop transmit these recommendations to the Sixth meeting of the Forum for the Future (Marrakesh, 2-3 November 2009) as a result of peer-to-peer interaction between Governments and civil society;

18. **Express** their gratitude to the Governments of Morocco and Italy as co-chairs, and Lebanon as the host country, for taking the initiative of this Workshop and to the Organization for Civil Activities (OPAC) and No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) for the effective conduct of the proceedings.