Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Germany, Berlin

Berlin, 25th October, 2007

G8-/BMENA Subministerial Meeting of the Forum for the Future“
Berlin, 22/23 October 2007

Concluding Remarks made by the German Co-Chair

Lively discussion in all 3 panels, which shows the interest of the participants – be they governments or representatives of civil society.
Opinions sometimes differed; but orientation and objectives were the same.
Let me mention some examples:

φ Pertaining to “Women’s Empowerment” (1st panel), several countries gave impressive pictures of latest developments in favour of an increased female participation in society – including new laws or law amendments.
φ NGOs underlined that there could never be peace, never open societies, if women’s rights were disregarded. They asked for the establishment of a “Gender Institute”; this idea was taken up by governments’ representatives with a very positive attitude.

In the 2nd panel (“Democratic Reform”) most interventions stressed that the struggle for democracy was a long one, in fact, one that could never reach its end, because “when societies change, democracy has to change”.
Some reference was made to the Helsinki process and the chances to “copy” it in an appropriate manner for the BMENA region.
It was stated that democracy needs stability, reliability and accountability and that democracy is a free choice.

By developing democracy setbacks cannot be avoided and mistakes can happen. But since it is an ongoing learning process, shortcomings can be repaired and overcome.

In the field of “Education” (3rd panel) it was emphasized that communication channels had to be opened. Civil society has to be part of it. Like this “academics are taken to the fields”.

Education should cover many aspects and is also fundamental for democracy, employment, economy and environment.
Numerous national and regional initiatives work to increase the level of education under different conditions.
Education is and should be the first priority in politics because – not in the least it is the core investment in human resources without which a country cannot progress.

A.O.B.
Pakistan announced its intention to open a “Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence” in Karachi like it exists already in Morocco and in Bahrain.