The Forum for the Future strived since its creation in 2004 to draw parties, governments and civil society institutions in the Middle East and North Africa together in a common space, in order to promote a comprehensive and inclusive environment for dialogue on issues related to political reform, democracy and human rights.

The two countries presiding the 2009 edition of the Forum for the Future, namely Italy and Morocco, have decided upon a series of preparatory activities leading to the Ministerial Meeting of the forthcoming forum in Morocco in early November 2009. The preparatory activities are to be organized in coordination with the network Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), and in partnership and cooperation with civil society from the region.

Three regional workshops, designed to stir debate and reflection on the topics selected for this year’s forum, have been programmed. The result of the three events would be the creation of a common ground between the recommendations of the government and civil society, and proposals for strengthening dialogue at the Ministerial Meeting.

The Italian and Moroccan governments have identified three topics for the Forum this year:

(A) political reform
(B) economic reform
(C) human development

It is in this context that the Arab Democracy Foundation organizes, in partnership with No Peace Without Justice a workshop entitled: Social Development: A new Perspective on Human Security in the BMENA Region, in Doha, Qatar on 14-15 October 2009.
The workshop will start from the Forum for the Future objectives, as pointed out in the working documents issued by the inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations’ meetings. The objective of the workshop would be to focus on the relationship between political reform and social development, and the broader challenges that fit within the human security issues.

The two-day workshop aims at opening space for dialogue between civil society activists and governments in the BMENA region, the G8, and other partners on topics related to human security: individual and collective security, economic security, environmental security, food security, and political security.

Human security re-directs the definition of the concept of security to that of the human being, not minorities or regimes. It, thus, allows for a new approach to the question of human development, by linking both concepts of freedom from fear and freedom from want in a way that ties the political to the social issues.1

*The Arab Human Development Report 2009* focuses on the concept of human security and its related issues. The report states that “there are still too many people in the Arab region living insecure lives, too many people living under persistent pressures that inhibit them from realizing their potential as human beings, and too many traumatic events cutting lives short. In some Arab countries, more than half of the population lives in hunger and want, with no means to look after their families or safeguard their own quality of life. Recent fluctuations in global food prices as well as the current global economic crisis have sent even more people into poverty and malnutrition. Health systems leave many beyond their reach. Water scarcity looms as an existential threat on the horizon. And armed conflicts take their grim toll on the destruction of human lives.”2

It is assumed in the *Report* that persistence of this negative situation is in fact the result of “the focus more on the security of the State rather than the security of the people.”3 In fact, human security and state security are highly interrelated and interdependent, mainly if the broader definition of security is adopted, “a lens through which to view a broad range of dimensions affecting people’s lives: environmental security, the state’s performance in guaranteeing human security, the human security of vulnerable groups, economic security, nutrition and food

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1 Reference to *the Arab Human Development Report 2009*

2 *The Arab Human Development Report 2009*

3 *The Arab Human Development Report 2009*

The Report also notes "policies of international powers have not been helpful. Foreign interventions and occupations have had devastating impacts on human security in the region in the immediate sense, while also damaging long-term prospects by making it difficult for the voice of reform to be heard above the din."

The Doha workshop aims at:

- Presenting social development issues in the region from the perspective of human security
- Organizing a dialogue on the strategies required to handle the huge deficit in the requirements of social development in the region
- The adoption of a Social Charter to be used as a guide to governments, civil society organizations, states, and partner international institutions in the Arab world.

Representatives of civil society organizations working in various areas of human security, government representatives, as well as representatives from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), mainly the team that prepared The Arab Human Development Report 2009, are to take part in the Doha workshop.

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4 The Arab Human Development Report 2009

5 The Arab Human Development Report 2009