



The Arab- Africa Economic Forum Kuwait 11- 12 November 2013 Recommendations

Under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, The Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, The Arab-Africa Economic Forum, jointly organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the African Union Commission and the League of Arab States, was held in Kuwait on 11 and 12 November 2013. The forum was attended by ministers, diplomats, high-level government and public sector officials, Arab, African and international organizations, Arab and African specialized organizations, as well as Arab and African intellectuals, academics, private sector and civil society from Arab and African countries.

In the spirit of the brotherhood between the Arab and African peoples and in light of the current global social and economic challenges, it was agreed that it is prime to advance the African-Arab cooperation in all fields and build on what has been accomplished thus far.

It is to that backdrop that the Africa-Arab Economic Forum was organized in preparation for the third Africa-Arab Summit that will take place in Kuwait on 19 and 20 November 2013. The Forum objectives can be summarized as follows:

1. To shed light on the status of Africa-Arab development cooperation based on the experiences of their entities involved in development operations, especially in the infrastructure sector.
2. To determine potential cooperation domains in the fields of agriculture and Africa-Arab food security.
3. To highlight potential sectors and areas for public and private investments.
4. To exchange views on the reasons underlying the sub-optimal commercial transactions between African and Arab countries and identify means for encouraging trade flow.
5. To make practical recommendations to the Third Africa-Arab Summit on policies and instruments for encouraging mutual investments and improving Africa-Arab trade.

The forum discussed issues related to the following themes:

- Development,
- Investment,
- Food Security,
- Trade Exchange, and
- Civil Society Organizations.

Participants discussed and deliberated on the above issues and concluded their discussions by the recommendations presented in the following sections.

African-Arab Cooperation in the Field of Development

- Arab and African national and regional financial institutions are encouraged to continue supporting socio-economic development including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and beyond, especially financing relevant projects in sectors such as agriculture, education, health, energy, drinking water and other social services.
- Call upon the institutions to intensify their efforts in financing small and medium-sized projects through supporting operations of national development banks and social funds in the Arab and African regions in view of their role in reducing unemployment and providing new business opportunities in the private sector.
- Encourage governments and private sector to support infrastructure in each of the Arab and African regions and between them, especially projects such as electrical grids, roads, other projects that facilitate trade and encourage investment, and pursue innovative financing mechanisms.
- Call upon the Arab Coordination Group to consider establishing a forum for enhancing cooperation and coordination with African development institutions.

- Urge Arab and African development institutions to provide more technical assistance, to build administrative and technical capacities in the Arab and African regions, and encourage African and Arab contractors, consultants and suppliers to participate in implementing projects financed by these within the framework of adopted policies and procedures.
- Call upon Arab and African institutions to scale-up technical assistance across the Arab and African countries in order to facilitate labor mobility between both regions.
- Bringing energy poverty alleviation to the forefront of Arab-African cooperation and in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in view of energy's cross-cutting nature and being central to development and poverty reduction.
- Ensuring development cooperation is anchored to and revolves around the spheres of human development and equity to ensure sustainability, inclusiveness and supporting Arab and African development initiatives.
- Increase grants for African students to study at Arab universities, and encourage Arab students to enroll at African universities. Furthermore, enhance cooperation between Arab and African universities.

Investments

- Encourage African and Arab financial institutions to develop mechanisms that encourage inter-investments in the Arab and African regions, and identify investment opportunities while working to remove difficulties and obstacles facing investors.
- Improve investment climate in both the Arab and African countries through further reforms in policies, procedures, and laws relating to domestic and foreign investment to attract more investments by both public and private sectors, particularly direct domestic and foreign investments.
- Call upon the African Union Commission and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States to organize an African-Arab forum for financial institution banking systems, investment agencies and investment funds to periodically discuss investment perspectives in the Arab and African regions.

- Establish a specialized mechanism that assists in identifying direct investments, their nature and location in all available areas, exchange of information and data about them, and promote and attract necessary funding.
- Call upon the African Union Commission and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States to organize regular workshops for investors and entrepreneurs in the Arab and African countries to consult and exchange views about the implementation of joint projects.
- Support the Arab and African chambers of commerce in their efforts to coordinate and exchange views about possible investments in various economic fields and exchanging related information and data.
- Strengthen the cooperation among agencies and institutions together with other regional and international guarantee agencies in Arab and African countries to encourage investments and protect them against risks.

Food Security

- Invite the Arab and African countries to preserve the limited capacity of agricultural resources - land and water - for the renewal of their services through adopting agricultural policies and practices appropriate to achieve food security based on agricultural sustainability.
- Call upon governments and relevant stakeholders to adopt all necessary policies and procedures to halt desertification and soil erosion and work to improve the efficiency of water irrigation and improve water productivity through the use of modern irrigation methods and sound agricultural practices.
- Call upon governments and financial institutions to allocate more financial resources to support agricultural research centers to enable them to explore the better inputs and improve agricultural practices to enhance agricultural productivity of irrigated and rain fed crops, particularly cereals.
- Call upon the Africa and Arab research centers to strengthen their cooperation in conducting joint research projects and exchanging results and sharing experiences.

- Carry out joint agricultural projects between Arab and African countries on the basis of comparative advantages in agricultural resources (land and water) in order to attain food security for the peoples of the two regions and to achieve their common interests, including projects to develop cereal production, as well as protecting the livestock and fisheries resources to ensure contribution to the Arab and African food security.
- Establish necessary infrastructure to avoid post-harvest losses to maintain the quantity and quality of agricultural crops, including centers for packaging, transporting, storing and delivering agricultural products to areas of consumption.
- Encourage small farmers to establish agricultural cooperatives and offer them necessary agricultural extension services to enable them to adopt farming practices based on scientific and practical knowledge, especially as regards to agricultural inputs and available irrigation techniques to increase the efficiency of irrigation water and agricultural productivity.
- Participants welcomed the growth of Arab Agricultural investments in Africa and called for further expanding these investments for the mutual benefit of both regions, and improvement of the investment climate.

Trade Exchange

- Remove obstacles and difficulties including tariff barriers that hinder the flow of goods and products between the Arab and African regions and establish African-Arab free trade areas to promote investments and trade between the two regions.
- Call upon African and Arab states to support the development of transportation networks necessary for boosting the inter Arab-African trade.
- Exchange information and data related to commodities and products available for export and import through the Arab and African Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and wide dissemination of this data.
- Support Arab and African trade financing institutions and cooperation between them to promote trade exchange between Arab and African countries.
- Organize regular trade expos to introduce Arab and African commodities and products and to facilitate their marketing.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

- Call upon Arab and African civil society organizations to continue the implementation of small and medium-sized projects, especially in sectors that contribute to the achievement of national development goals.

- Exchange information and experiences in the implementation of projects in the Arab and African countries, while contributing to co-financing of projects as needed.
- Develop a literacy program, especially in rural areas to enable women to engage more effectively in development activities and to improve their living conditions.

Follow Up on Implementation of Recommendations

- Call upon the African Union Commission and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to review existing cooperation mechanisms between the Arab and African regions and take necessary measures to strengthen them, and to establish innovative mechanisms as needed to implement the Arab-African Summit decisions related to Arab African economic cooperation, with a view to support sustainable development in the two regions and to achieve progress, prosperity and life in dignity for the Arab and African people.

Acknowledgment

- Participants commended the Government of the State of Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, as well as the people of Kuwait for their warm and friendly hospitality and congratulate the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development on its fiftieth anniversary and applauded its longstanding dedication and contribution to social and economic development in Arab, African and other developing nations.
- Finally, the forum praised the partnership between the African Union Commission, the League of Arab States and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for successfully organizing this important event.