



Monday, November 30th 2015

Statement by Dr Sahar Nasr
The Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) Annual Meeting
. Marseille, France .

Mr. Ghanem, Mr. Ezzine, esteemed members of the CMI Steering Committee, partners and guests, I am delighted to be here with you today in Marseilles. Given my years' experience at the Bank, I feel at home being among former colleagues and familiar faces.

We are pleased to be one of the founding members of the *Marseilles Center for Mediterranean Integration*. We joined CMI with the aim of *enhancing cooperation and integration with our fellow Mediterranean nations*. We have always had very good relations within the Mediterranean, and we are keen to be part of all forums that encourage integration in the region.

CMI also provides an *additional platform* through which we can share ideas and collaborate with our *development partners*.

With the extension of the MOU this year, we are glad to witness CMI is *embark on a new and promising episode*. We look forward to *our cooperation in the framework of the new agreement*, and hope that further discussions on the upcoming work program and themes will bring views closer together.

With the *election of H.E. President El-Sisi in June 2014*, the Egyptian Government embarked on an ambitious well-structured program that aims to restore macroeconomic imbalances, address social inclusion priorities, and achieve high, sustainable and well-diversified growth.

And in September 2015, the *newly appointed Government* was mandated to prepare a *comprehensive and integrated reform program* with a clear timeline aiming at inclusive growth. The Government's Reform Program is based on three key pillars: (i) Advancing Fiscal Consolidation; (ii) Ensuring Sustainable Energy Supply; and (iii) Improving the Business Environment.

The Government is strongly committed to move forward and on a fast track with this economic reform program, with the support of the World Bank, the European Union and the African Development Bank. And we look forward to work in collaboration with such *committed* partners in a *programmatic approach* to ensure that these reforms have a strong impact on ground.

The region is going through tough times due to the recent developments, that are very much associated with the increasing influx of refugees. Women, youth and children suffer the most—we need to work together to *address* such a daunting problem.

MENA has a very young population—this should be considered an opportunity rather than a challenge. The youth should be productive agents of the society, rather than bearers of destruction and terrorism. They should be our hope for the future, rather than the misery of our nation.

That is why, the Government of Egypt has positioned youth at the core of its development agenda, taking all measures necessary to address their *immediate needs*, and ensure their inclusion.

Youth should play a pivotal role on the *social, economic* and *political* spheres—they should be job creators rather than job seekers.

It is *critical* that all Governments provide an enabling conducive business environment for youth to start their own businesses. We should help them become entrepreneurs and translate their ideas into a productive reality.

Therefore, I was pleased to learn that during the June 2015 Steering Committee Meeting held in Marseilles, there was a universal agreement among the steering committee members and partners to choose youth as the strategic focus of CMI.

We are looking forward to seeing this *translated* into an ambitious work program and various regional initiatives. We are ready to join forces with you to move forward with this program aiming at attaining inclusive economic growth and promoting youth development.

In the end, I would like to thank you for your time and I wish you a very successful meeting full of *stimulating* and *productive* discussions.