Final Statement
Of
The Fourteenth Annual Conference
“Cooperation in Establishing Resilience toward Global Risks
In the Arab Region”
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
17th to 19th of December, 2014

We the administrative leaderships of ministries, governmental organizations, public and private sectors and civil society organizations in the Arab countries, together with representatives of the following international organizations:-

- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UNDESA
- United Nations Development Program – UNDP
- United Nations Environment Program – UNEP
- Global Compact of the United Nations – UN Global Compact
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia UN-ESCWA
- World Bank – WB
- Transparency International – TI
- European Training Foundation – ETF
- Arab Network NGO Development – ANND
- Arab Thought Forum

The participants of the Fourteenth Annual Conference held from the 17th to the 19th of December 2014, in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt under the title "Cooperation in Establishing Resilience toward Global Risks in the Arab region", and under the kind auspices of His Excellency the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Dr. Nabil el Araby.
Express our profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Nabil el Araby – the Secretary General of the League of Arab States for his kind auspices to the conference, and to Mr. Amr Mousa as keynote speaker, where he presented a contemporary vision of the nature of risks that face the Arab region, and displayed advanced thoughts on how to cooperate for establishing resilience to confront those risks. There is no doubt that Mr. Mousa's attendance has been an added value to the quality of the conference’s works and activities. We also extend our gratitude to all the ministries, governmental authorities, public and private sectors and civil society organizations in the Arab states which participated through their delegates. We thank also all the international organizations which covered all themes and topics of the conference through their high-level work/research papers and significant participation of a distinguished group of specialized experts.

The 11th, 12th and 13th annual conferences of the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), held in Cairo, Egypt and in Oman, Jordan in the years 2011, 2012, 2013 respectively, have recognized specific indicators of the roadmap for the advancement of the Arab societies through endeavors to bring about real changes, on top of which were: promotion of good governance, combating corruption, establishing states on robust institutional basis, enforcing the rule of law, activating accountability practices, providing for the conditions of integrity and transparency, enhancing public participation and raising interest in international cooperation.

Participants’ visions have been concretized through the discussions of presented papers which are reviewed according to the themes of conference sessions as follows:-

**Session 1 : Risks of the Economic System:-**

The Conference,

- **TAKES NOTE** of the sharp decline in investments, and consequently in the economic growth in most of the Arab countries, especially those who have been facing political problems and structural changes in the state systems and their options.
- **UNDERSTANDS** that the inflationary pressures in many Arab countries caused clear disparity among citizens’ incomes, economic levels and quality of what they receive from life necessities.

- **NOTICES** the impact of the consecutive global financial crises on the Arab states, and how these crises led to poor demand, and high prices of raw materials and products which caused:
  
  - Structural disruptions in the economic and financial policies.
  - Weaknesses in competitiveness.
  - Intensified unemployment rates.
  - Higher food and energy bills.
  - Accumulated debts particularly in the non-oil Arab countries.
  - Increased financial and trade deficits in governmental budgets.

- Crises, regardless of their causes, have proved that cooperation opportunities between the Arab states in order to address economic risks and avoid their negative impacts require the utmost degree of resilience in vision and options.

- **UNDERSCORES** that there is a strong need for a clear, realistic and flexible vision of economic cooperation mechanisms among Arab countries; on top of which: the establishing of a free trade zone, holding of intra-trade agreements between the Arab states and establishing an Arab Customs Union before launching the Arab Common Market.

- **CALLS ON** all consultants accredited by decision-making Centers in the Arab countries to diagnose risks associated with the external and internal economic phenomena, and measure their geopolitical impacts on the national and regional levels.

**Session 2: Risks of the Social Order:**

**The Conference,**

- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the national and local heritage and more specifically the traditions and value systems, began to lose most of their ability to face the overwhelming flow of knowledge and information transmitted through telecommunication media and cyberspace without permission or censorship, to the extent that one can say that national borders
have become totally helpless and flaccid against the crossing floods of new values.

- **NOTICES** that new risks that have emerged in the social scene in the Arab region, such as the spread of arms and weapons, inadequate handling of problems related to senility, lack of proper care for childhood and contrasted degrees of social and legal acknowledgement of women's role and women's rights, in addition to the return of tribal and sectarian practices which are used to breach the efficient administrative rules of the state and its entities.

- **EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN** about the increasing influence of the social prestige on the collective behavior patterns of the Arab communities, which led to the absence and marginalization of talented people and those who possess scientific capabilities and practical expertise.

- **EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN** about the spread of internal and external displacement and migration phenomenon in a number of the Arab region countries which witness various risks related to the lowest conditions and standards of living. The conference **STRONGLY BELIEVES** that the crucial solution for such problem is to accelerate all cooperation processes of establishing resilience in the region.

- **REAFFIRMS ITS CONCERN** about profound income disparity among community members and segments, which is an extremely serious phenomenon that has led to the emergence of extremism and organized crime in conjunction with low chances of getting good education, poverty, ignorance and unemployment.

- **NOTICES** the emergence of new risks in some Arab communities especially in the oil producing states. These risks have already started to attack social harmony and unity of values in some societies and their social, cultural and even political effects on Arab communities started to ring some warning bells.

- **NOTICES WITH CONCERN** the over excessive stirring of events by huge and dominant media capabilities via the cyberspace which showed strong influences on the social and cultural activities and reflected so rapidly on the political movements and their orientation.

- **RECOGNIZES** that the cooperation opportunities among the Arab states to face those social risks can be very fruitful under a compatible integration between the governmental institutions and the civil society organizations.
Session 3: Risks of the Public Administration System and the Application of Governance.

The Conference,

- **NOTICES** that the political, economic and social crises that the Arab region faced and is still facing, reveal obvious weaknesses in governance applications and public administration systems as well as fragility and low institutional standards of the constituents of the state systems.

- **BELIEVES** that weak control rules, poor implementation of legislations and low level of skills have all led to distorted organizational structures of ministries and governmental organizations and the collapse of many service systems and prevalence of corruptive financial and administrative practices.

- **UNDERScores** that there is an obvious need for new governance and for radical update of public administration systems so that they can respond to the political, social and economic changes and reduce the risk of institutional collapse, while taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which are currently discussed at national, regional and global levels.

- **IS FULLY CONFIDENT** that establishing mechanisms and practices, such as whistle-blowing mechanisms and internal studies, for applying transparency, accountability, participation, self-assessment of regulatory frameworks and measures for participation in decision making, equality, management responsibility, eligibility and ethics of rendering public services represents a crucial prerequisite for confronting the risks of weakening the state and its power.

- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that there are real challenges and risks facing the Arab countries; the most crucial of which are maintaining the rule of law, enforcing the law and facing organized crime as well as all other practices that threaten social peace as well as a decent and secure life.

- **RECOGNIZES** the need to firmly confront thoughts and practices of exclusion, marginalization and discrimination, corruption, patronage and wasa in civil servants recruitment, with due transparency, they must be considered as the main factors that dislocate and frustrate
communities, undermine citizenship, contradict with social justice, cause failure to all development efforts and finally help create an environment of extremism, hatred and conflicts.

- **RECOGNIZES** that the main step to developing an effective roadmap for addressing these risks with proper resilience is the capability to detect risks of poor public administration system and diagnose problems related to the applications of the new governance.

- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the predominance of any authority over the other in such a way that would scratch its sovereignty and independence, will definitely lead to facing real risks with harsh impact on the performance of the public administration and stability of the society, as well as facilitating impunity.

- **UNDERSCORES** the importance of creating a culture of local accountability to achieve a balance between local and central governments, which contributes to local development, and especially enhancing services.

- **NOTICES** that the successive crises at the international, regional and national levels have proved the fragility of the constituent systems of states’ institutions, especially in the countries which faced constitutional and institutional collapse.

- **RECOGNIZES** that to ensure the sustainability of a new and efficient system of public administration requires capacity-building for electoral stakeholders, preceded by developing youth leadership competences.

**Session 4 : Risks of the Infrastructures:**

The Conference,

- **FOUND** that there is an overall consensus that the infrastructures of most Arab countries (especially non-oil states) have been weak, incomplete and suffering from various problems and risks, especially roads and bridges systems, water resources, sewage systems, electricity networks, telecommunications, schools, universities and hospitals, in addition to the helpless and limited capabilities of the scientific research institutions.

- **DIAGNOZES** that the risks of such impotent infrastructures are due to insufficient funding, poor maintenance, incompetent management and corruption. All these factors have clearly reflected in the low
quality standards, bad performance and low level of institutional competency.

- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the infrastructure risks represent the critical point in the stability of any political system, where as citizen satisfaction at the level of services provided contributes directly to its stability.

- **STRESSES** that the development of the infrastructure systems is an important condition for sustainable development and for raising the rates of development.

**Session 5 : Risks of the Environmental System:**

The Conference,

- **RECOGNIZES** and **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the Arab countries in general face different environmental risks, such as:-
  - Water poverty and water sharing between neighboring countries on the same river basin.
  - Desertification and groundwater depletion.
  - Increased rates of environmental pollution.
  - Abuse of clean environment and the emergence of diseases and risks that threaten secure living.

- **NOTICES** a number of clear indictors that show real deterioration of viable environmental systems in some Arab countries that were affected by military operations, violence and conflicts through the last two decades.

- **CALLS ON** all the Arab governments to employ their human, and financial capabilities, and to seek help and assistance from the specialized international organizations to develop radical solutions for the present extensive environmental pollution, and to set plans for providing the requirements of an environment that can protect and preserve human being, fauna and flora lives.

- **REALIZES** that facing and preventing the causes of pollution comes before spending on handling its effects, therefore strong and effective cooperation between Arab countries in facing and preventing the causes and impacts of pollution is critical.

**References of the Final Statement:**
- We **STRESS** upon the importance of promoting the implementation of (Johannesburg Plan) and the provisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) relevant to all types of weaknesses related to facing and managing disasters and assessing their risks.

- We **REAFFIRM** the Hyogo Declaration and its framework related to building the capacities of nations and communities in order to confront disasters. We also **REAFFIRM** the common statement of the extraordinary session on the Indian Ocean disaster, and risk reduction for a safer future as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Japan (Kobe – Hyogo).

- We **CALL ON** related international organizations to launch initiatives that can accommodate new concepts, including the following:-
  - Being prepared to confront risks.
  - Promotion of safety culture in all communities.
  - Resilient cooperation for strategic alliances.
  - Integration of risk reduction approach in emergency preparedness programs.
  - Professional assessment of losses due to risks and the costs of risk reduction and confrontation.
  - Reform and reconstruction plans to accelerate the transition stage towards sustainable physical, economic and social recovery.
  - Proactive alliances for non-political risks.
  - Classification of the degree of severity in the prioritization of confrontation and in setting priorities.
  - Monitoring progress towards institutional development and public sector reforms in order to address risks.
  - Expanding the soft confrontation applications of risks via the virtual space.
  - Mechanisms for promotion of inhabitants’ capacities to confront risks.
  - Support of United Nations organizations' efforts in confronting risks that threaten the international peace and security, such as: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and drugs proliferation.

- We should **TAKE INTO ACCOUNT** the fact that one in every six human beings living on the planet (i.e. More than one billion people) are living on less than one US Dollar per day, they do not have the necessities that can keep them alive, face situations of chronic hunger, diseases and environmental hazards.
- We **PROMOTE** mechanisms that apply the concept of "Immunity against risks", and improve people's resilience in dealing with risks and consequences of disasters.

- Social justice represents an effective approach for facing the risks of inequality. Hence, we **TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION** "The Vienna Declaration" which includes a plan for combating terrorism and crime and for facing the challenges of the 21st century.

- We **TAKE INTO ACCOUNT** the principle of complementarity enshrined in "Rome Statute", which provides for the adoption of national judicial proceedings as a first defensive line against impunity.

- We **CALL UPON** the augmentation and promotion of the capabilities of the UN Commission on Human Rights, especially in monitoring the levels of compliance with its declarations.

- We urge all parties to **INCREASE** their attention to *Yokohama Strategy* for a safer world: “Guidelines for natural disasters prevention, preparedness and mitigation”, as well as the *Geneva Mandate*.

**Main Conclusions:**

- The rich dialogue supported with work/research papers presented by the experts showed deep understanding of the risks’ characterization and measurement dilemma. Accordingly, the conference has moved towards the development of a methodological vision on how to prepare ourselves for dealing with the risks according to their priorities and degree of severity, and has become strongly biased to the adoption of a resilience oriented approach when diagnosing the risks facing the infrastructure systems of the Arab countries (economic, environmental, public administration, governance, public utilities systems and social order), the components of such approach are strength, availability of opportunities, resources, responsiveness to crises and the capability to recover.

- The participants would like to express their full satisfaction that the conference has been a genuine and important opportunity to develop an Arab vision for risks measurement standards within highly
accelerated changes in the Arab region, and without losing sight of the interaction mechanisms at the regional and international levels. Consequently, the conference can state now that the features of the roadmap have clearly emerged in the light of a high level intellectual interaction between the experts and the participants. That was what we have been looking forward to in spite of the complexity of the mission.

- We extend our thanks and gratitude to the participating international organizations and their delegated experts who presented fine work/research papers and valuable experiences which enriched our dialogue and discussions, and enabled the audience to come out with a clearer vision of the nature of challenges facing the Arab region.

- After reviewing the final statement of the Thirteenth Annual Conference held in Amman, Jordan from 9-11 December 2013, we acknowledge its decisions and find them fully consistent with the needs of the current phase, and we pledge to exert more efforts to activate them.

- We acknowledge all the recommendations listed in this statement and suggest them to be presented to the Fifteenth Conference.

- All participants would like to extend their thanks and gratitude to the president, people and government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for their kind hospitality and outstanding reception.

- We support the proposed title for the 15th conference expected to be held between the 15th and 17th of December 2015 in any of the Arab states capitals (Venue to be decided later).

The proposed title is "The Developmental Agenda in the Arab Countries Beyond 2015"