

Fact Sheet for the Media Forum for the Future

RELEASE IN FULL

The Forum for the Future is a joint initiative of the countries of the Broader Middle East and North Africa region (BMENA) and the industrialized countries of the Group of Eight (G8). It is a unique partnership between governments of the region, the G8, civil society representatives and private sector leaders to discuss and exchange ideas on how to best work together to support progress and expand opportunities for the people of the region.

The Forum for the Future was launched at the Sea Island G8 Summit in the United States in June, 2004. During this summit, the G8 countries stressed their commitment to promote progress in the BMENA region and to help establish an environment conducive to an informal, flexible, open and inclusive dialogue. The first Forum for the Future was held in Rabat in December 2004, co-hosted by The Kingdom of Morocco and the United States.

In preparation for the 2009 ministerial, co-chairs Morocco and Italy along with civil society partners convened three preparatory workshops across the region on: economic reform (September 26-27, Beirut, Lebanon, in partnership with the Organization for Civil Activities), political reform (October 5-6, Rabat, Morocco, in partnership with the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights), and human development (October 12-13, Doha, Qatar, in partnership with the National Human Rights Committee and the Arab Democracy Foundation).

The BMENA Initiative complements the objectives outlined by President Obama in his Cairo speech and is a natural partner for making progress in key areas – notably economic opportunity, education, good governance, human rights, and women's empowerment. BMENA's emphasis on cooperation among governments, civil society and the private sector aligns with the President's vision of partnership between the United States and countries in the region. The United States will engage with leaders from the region on issues of common interest and shared values, working together to infuse new energy into the partnership. In particular, we believe our focus should be firmly on developing a path to increasing opportunity for the youth of the region.

The Broader Middle East and North Africa participants include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

The G8 countries include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

For more information, visit: <http://www.maec.gov.ma/future2009/en/default.htm>

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