
IASMUN

Background Guide



ARAB LEAGUE

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS



HELLO DELEGATES,

WE ARE GENUINELY EXCITED TO HAVE YOU JOIN THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (AL) COMMITTEE! WE ARE YOUR CHAIRS—YAHYA AHMED, HEAD CHAIR AND ADITYA SAINI, CO-CHAIR—. WE ASSURE YOU THAT YOU ARE ADDRESSING ONE OF THE MOST DEMANDING AND IMPORTANT ISSUES AT THIS CONFERENCE. FOR YEARS THE CONCEPT OF COLLECTIVE ARAB SECURITY HAS SERVED AS A CORE PRINCIPLE—A NOBLE AIM—BUT PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN CHAOTIC AND PARTIAL. CURRENTLY THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA) AREA FACES A COMPLEX SCENARIO: ONGOING INTERNAL CONFLICTS, NON-STATE ACTORS FREQUENTLY ALTERING THEIR STRATEGIES AND KEY INTERNATIONAL POWERS MANEUVERING THEIR POSITIONS STRATEGICALLY RESULTING IN WHAT IS TERMED "SHIFTING ALLIANCES."

YOUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS SUBSTANTIAL: YOU MUST MOVE BEYOND FEUDS AND ONGOING POLITICAL DISPUTES TO GENUINELY ESTABLISH A COHESIVE FUNCTIONAL ARAB DEFENSE FRAMEWORK. THIS IS FAR FROM A TASK. YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER THE DIVERSE SECURITY CONCERNS OF ALL PARTIES—FROM THE WEALTHY GULF MONARCHIES ANXIOUS ABOUT REGIONAL POWER, TO POPULOUS STATES FACING INTERNAL STABILITY CHALLENGES TO MINOR NATIONS RELYING SIGNIFICANTLY ON EXTERNAL SECURITY ASSURANCES. WE URGE YOU TO CONSIDER PERSPECTIVES BEYOND YOUR NATION'S INTERESTS. HOW DO YOU REINTERPRET THE ESSENCE OF THE 1950 JOINT ARAB DEFENSE TREATY TO ADDRESS THREATS SUCH, AS ADVANCED CYBER ASSAULTS, THE PROLIFERATION OF MISSILE TECHNOLOGIES AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM? MOREOVER HOW DOES THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF NON-ARAB NEIGHBORS, ESPECIALLY IRAN AND TÜRKİYE COMPEL YOU TO REVISE THE FRAMEWORK OF COLLABORATION? ARRIVE READY CONSIDER IDEAS AND KEEP IN MIND THAT DIPLOMACY IS CRUCIAL. THIS COMMITTEE WILL SUCCEED ONLY

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS



IF YOU ARE OPEN TO COMPROMISE AND SINCERELY WORK TOWARDS
CREATING AN ARAB FUTURE THROUGH CONSENSUS.

WE'RE EAGER TO WITNESS THE ENTHUSIASM AND THE CONCESSIONS YOU
BRING. LET'S GET STARTED!

SINCERELY,

YAHYA AHMED, HEAD CHAIR

ADITYA SAINI, CO-CHAIR LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

AGENDA 1



“REIMAGINING REGIONAL SECURITY – BUILDING AN ARAB DEFENSE FRAMEWORK IN AN ERA OF SHIFTING ALLIANCES”

A. BRIEF OVERVIEW AND CURRENT RELEVANCE

THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES WAS ESTABLISHED BACK IN 1945. ITS MAIN GOAL WAS TO HAVE EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER AND ACTING COLLECTIVELY. HOWEVER, LETS BE FRANK: THEY HAVE NEVER TRULY SUCCEEDED IN CREATING AN UNIFIED DEFENSE SYSTEM. YOUR TASK, AS DELEGATES, IS TO CONFRONT THIS ISSUE AND DETERMINE HOW TO DEVELOP A DEFENSE STRUCTURE THAT IS CONTEMPORARY, STRONG AND GENUINELY UNIFIED. WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT, AT THIS MOMENT? DUE TO THE REGIONAL TURMOIL—SIMPLY OBSERVE THE CHAOS SPILLING OVER FROM WARS, IN YEMEN, SYRIA AND LIBYA—AND THE ONGOING PRESENCE OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS POSING A CONTINUOUS URGENT DANGER.

WHAT COMPLICATES MATTERS FURTHER IS THE INCREASING ROLE OF -ARAB REGIONAL ACTORS, SUCH AS IRAN AND TÜRKIYE. ADDITIONALLY ESTABLISHED PARTNERS (THE US, RUSSIA, CHINA) ARE ABRUPTLY CHANGING THEIR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES. THIS COMPELS NATIONS TO SERIOUSLY RECONSIDER THEIR DEPENDENCE ON EXTERNAL SECURITY GUARANTEES. NUMEROUS COUNTRIES, THOSE WITHIN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) ARE BROADENING THEIR ALLIANCES ENGAGING WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA WHILE MAINTAINING TIES, WITH THE U.S. THIS ENTIRE SCENARIO RESULTS, IN A WEB OF "CHANGING ALLIANCES " INDICATING THE ABSENCE OF A UNIFIED CONSISTENT ARAB SECURITY STRATEGY.

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B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

TO GRASP OUR POSITION YOU MUST BEGIN WITH THE 1950 JOINT DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION TREATY.

- **THE 1950 TREATY:** THIS AGREEMENT IS WELL-KNOWN FOR DECLARING THAT A MILITARY ASSAULT ON ANY MEMBER IS CONSIDERED AN ASSAULT ON ALL MEMBERS. IT ESTABLISHED THE PERMANENT MILITARY COMMISSION ALONG WITH THE JOINT DEFENSE COUNCIL. DESPITE ITS NATURE IT HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN INEFFECTIVE. THE TREATY COLLAPSED DUE, TO POLITICAL DEDICATION AND THEY NEVER SUCCEEDED IN CREATING A UNIFIED MILITARY LEADERSHIP.
- **INTER-ARAB DISPUTES:** THROUGHOUT THE CENTURY DOMESTIC DISAGREEMENTS AND INDIRECT CONFRONTATIONS—RECALL THE ARAB COLD WAR OF THE 1960S?—CONSISTENTLY UNDERMINED ANY EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A UNIFIED SECURITY FRAMEWORK.
- **THE GULF WARS (1991, 2003):** IRAQS INVASION OF KUWAIT EXPOSED THE AREAS RELIANCE ON SUPPORT. THE GULF COUNTRIES DEPENDED ON US-LED ALLIANCES, FOR SECURITY COMPLETELY IGNORING THE ARAB LEAGUE’S DEFENSE FRAMEWORK.
- **THE ARAB SPRING AND INTERVENTION (2011 ONWARDS):** THE TURMOIL AFTER THE ARAB SPRING EXPOSED FRESH SECURITY CHALLENGES: NON-STATE ACTORS, CIVIL CONFLICTS AND LARGE-SCALE REFUGEE EMERGENCIES. MILITARY CAMPAIGNS, SUCH, AS THE ONE SAUDI ARABIA HEADED INTO YEMEN PROCEEDED WITHOUT THE ARAB LEAGUES CONSENT. THIS FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED THE REGION’S DIVISIONS.

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- **THE JOINT ARAB FORCE (JAF) (2015):** THE JAF REPRESENTED AN EFFORT TOWARD SOLIDARITY. FOLLOWING THE RISE OF ISIS AND TURMOIL, IN YEMEN AND LIBYA LEADERS ESSENTIALLY CONSENTED TO ESTABLISH THIS FORCE. HOWEVER DISPUTES REGARDING FINANCING THE LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE) HINDERED THE PROJECT. IT NEVER LAUNCHED, EFFECTIVELY CEASING TO EXIST BY 2017.

C. CHALLENGES TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

- **POLITICAL DISPUTES AND COMPETITIONS:** SIGNIFICANT DIVISIONS REMAIN. THIS CONCERNS THE ENDURING CONSEQUENCES OF THE QATAR DIPLOMATIC CONFLICT, CONTINUING PROXY BATTLES (SUCH AS IN YEMEN) AND DISPUTES OVER FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS, INCLUDING THE POSITION OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD OR FORMING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES, WITH NON-ARAB NATIONS.

- **RELIANCE ON EXTERNAL POWERS:** NUMEROUS STATES PRIORITIZE THEIR BILATERAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS WITH KEY INTERNATIONAL ACTORS (THE US, UK, FRANCE, RUSSIA, CHINA) FREQUENTLY CONSIDERING THESE PARTNERSHIPS MORE DEPENDABLE, THAN JOINT ARAB INITIATIVES.

- **DISAGREEING ON THE DANGER:** STATES FUNDAMENTALLY CAN'T AGREE ON WHAT THE MAIN THREAT IS. FOR SOME, IT'S CLEARLY IRAN'S REGIONAL INFLUENCE; FOR OTHERS, THE PRIORITY IS DOMESTIC UNREST OR THE ACTIONS OF NON-STATE GROUPS. SINCE THERE'S NO COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE THREAT, A UNIFIED RESPONSE IS IMPOSSIBLE. •

- **SOVEREIGNTY WORRIES:** DELEGATES ARE GENUINELY WORRIED ABOUT HANDING OVER COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THEIR NATIONAL MILITARY HARDWARE TO SOME NEW, POWERFUL ARAB AUTHORITY. THEY FEAR LOSING CONTROL.

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II. PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

MANY ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO FINALLY BRING THE CONCEPT OF ARAB COLLECTIVE SECURITY TO LIFE, BUT POLITICAL FRICTION AND AN INABILITY TO AGREE ON MILITARY OVERSIGHT HAVE ALWAYS BLOCKED THEM.

THE 1950 JOINT DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION TREATY IS THE INITIAL LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, ESTABLISHING THE JOINT DEFENSE COUNCIL. ITS STRENGTH IS PROVIDING A FOUNDATION FOR THE IDEA OF UNITY. CONVERSELY ITS PRIMARY FLAW HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN THE LACK OF ENFORCEMENT TOOLS RESULTING IN IT OFTEN BEING IGNORED DURING SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL EMERGENCIES. THE LESSON HERE: THE TREATY REMAINS MERE TEXT UNLESS LEADERS DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO THE POLITICAL EFFORTS NECESSARY, FOR COLLABORATIVE MILITARY ACTIONS. THE JOINT ARAB FORCE (JAF) INITIATIVE (2015) WAS A MUCH MORE RECENT EFFORT, AIMING TO CREATE A 40,000-TROOP RAPID RESPONSE UNIT TO HANDLE REGIONAL INSTABILITY. THIS AT LEAST SHOWED A RARE MOMENT OF UNIFIED INTENT RIGHT AFTER A WAVE OF REGIONAL CHAOS. ON A MODEST LEVEL THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) JOINT SHIELD FORCE OFFERS INSIGHT INTO RESTRICTED SUB-REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THIS UNIT CONDUCTS COMBINED EXERCISES AND HAS ACTED JOINTLY (SUCH AS IN BAHRAIN). ITS CHALLENGE LIES IN ITS MEMBERSHIP AND THE REALITY THAT INTERNAL GCC DISPUTES (, LIKE THE 2017 QATAR BLOCKADE) CAN SWIFTLY UNDERMINE ITS COHESION. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH SUB-REGIONAL SOLIDARITY IS ACHIEVABLE IT REMAINS FRAGILE. CANNOT SUBSTITUTE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PAN-ARAB APPROACH.

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ULTIMATELY THE ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION (IMCTC) UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SAUDI ARABIA HAS CONCENTRATED ITS INITIATIVES ON COORDINATING EFFORTS AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG ITS 41 MEMBER STATES. ITS STRENGTH LIES IN ITS MEMBERSHIP AND DEDICATED ATTENTION TO A COMMON ADVERSARY—TERRORISM—WHICH HAS ENHANCED COLLABORATION ON IDEOLOGICAL AND MEDIA FRONTS. NEVERTHELESS, IT REMAINS STRICTLY A -TERRORISM ENTITY, RATHER THAN A COMPREHENSIVE DEFENSE ALLIANCE. THE KEY LESSON IS THAT IT'S ALWAYS EASIER TO COOPERATE WHEN YOU FOCUS ON A SINGLE, AGREED-UPON DANGER THAN WHEN YOU TRY TO LAUNCH AN AMBITIOUS, ALL-INCLUSIVE DEFENSE ALLIANCE.

III. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS / QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

DELEGATES MUST NOW FIND A WAY PAST THESE PAST FAILURES TO CRAFT A SECURITY FRAMEWORK THAT IS BOTH POLITICALLY ACHIEVABLE AND MILITARILY FUNCTIONAL.

A. POTENTIAL STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

- **PHASED INTEGRATION:** DON'T DEMAND FULL JOINT MILITARY COMMAND RIGHT AWAY. START SMALL WITH HIGHLY SPECIALIZED COOPERATION (LIKE SHARING INTELLIGENCE, PROTECTING BORDERS, OR COUNTER-TERRORISM TRAINING) AND GRADUALLY EXPAND THE MANDATE.
- **CYBER DEFENSE UNIT:** WE SHOULD ESTABLISH A PERMANENT, WELL-FUNDED JOINT ARAB CYBER DEFENSE UNIT FOCUSED STRICTLY ON SAFEGUARDING VITAL INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS.
- **STANDARDIZED PROCUREMENT:** CREATE AN ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE PROCUREMENT AGENCY. THIS BODY WOULD COORDINATE ARMS BUYING, WHICH WOULD BOTH LOWER COSTS AND STANDARDIZE MILITARY EQUIPMENT—CRITICAL STEPS FOR SMOOTH JOINT OPERATIONS.

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- **REGIONAL SECURITY GUARANTEE: PROPOSE A COLLECTIVE SECURITY GUARANTEE THAT IS TRULY BINDING. TO MAKE SURE MEMBERS COMPLY, THE GUARANTEE MUST HAVE REAL CONSEQUENCES, PERHAPS FINANCIAL PENALTIES OR THE TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF VOTING RIGHTS.**
- **FOCUS ON NON-STATE ACTORS: REDEFINE THE PRIMARY THREAT ASSESSMENT. EXPLICITLY FOCUSING ON COUNTER-TERRORISM AND INTERNAL STABILITY WILL LIKELY SECURE BROADER AGREEMENT ACROSS THE MEMBERSHIP.**

B. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE AND POSITION PAPERS

1. **HOW HEAVILY SHOULD THE PROPOSED ARAB DEFENSE FRAMEWORK RELY ON OUTSIDE POWERS (LIKE THE P5 MEMBERS) FOR THINGS LIKE FUNDING, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, OR CRITICAL INTELLIGENCE?**
2. **GULF STATES WORRY ABOUT REGIONAL INFLUENCE AND MISSILE DEFENSE, WHILE NORTH AFRICAN STATES ARE FOCUSED ON TERRORISM, MIGRATION, AND DOMESTIC STABILITY. HOW CAN THE FRAMEWORK SUCCESSFULLY COMBINE THESE VERY DIFFERENT SECURITY PRIORITIES?**
3. **SHOULD THE FRAMEWORK BE ORGANIZED UNDER THE CURRENT ARAB LEAGUE STRUCTURE, OR WOULD A NEW, SEPARATE MILITARY ALLIANCE BE NECESSARY TO BYPASS THE LEAGUE'S HISTORICAL POLITICAL GRIDLOCK?**
4. **WHAT POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS COULD WE OFFER SMALLER STATES TO ENSURE THEY FULLY CONTRIBUTE THEIR RESOURCES AND PARTICIPATE COMPLETELY?**
5. **WHAT CONCRETE ACTIONS—OTHER THAN STARTING A WAR—CAN THE FRAMEWORK TAKE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO PROXY ATTACKS OR INTERNAL AGGRESSION DIRECTED AGAINST A MEMBER STATE?**

AGENDA 1



IV. REFERENCES / SOURCES

- TREATY OF JOINT DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE STATES OF THE ARAB LEAGUE (1950).
- ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT COMMUNIQUÉS REGARDING THE FORMATION OF THE JOINT ARAB FORCE (2015).
- REPORTS BY INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) ON DEFENSE COOPERATION.
- ACADEMIC JOURNALS AND THINK TANK PUBLICATIONS ON MIDDLE EAST SECURITY, COLLECTIVE DEFENSE, AND ALLIANCE POLITICS (E.G., CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES).
- STATEMENTS AND OFFICIAL FOREIGN POLICY DOCUMENTS FROM MAJOR MEMBER STATES (E.G., SAUDI VISION 2030 DEFENSE LOCALIZATION GOALS, UAE NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY).

AGENDA 2



“THE ARAB ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE: BUILDING TECHNOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE IN A POST-OIL WORLD”

BRIEF OVERVIEW:

AS THE GLOBAL ECONOMY SHIFTS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS THE ARAB REGION FINDS ITSELF AT A CROSSROADS. FOR YEARS OIL INCOME HAS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN DRIVING DEVELOPMENT BY FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE, EDUCATION AND GROWTH. YET WITH THE WORLD TURNING FROM FOSSIL FUELS DUE, TO CLIMATE PLEDGES RISING RENEWABLE ENERGY ADOPTION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT ARAB COUNTRIES MUST HASTEN THEIR PACE IN DIVERSIFYING THEIR ECONOMIES. THIS TRANSFORMATION IS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO AS THE "ARAB ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE," HIGHLIGHTING KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN ECONOMIES AIMED AT SECURING STABILITY, IN OIL INCOME. ALTHOUGH TECHNOLOGICAL SELF-RELIANCE IS PART OF THIS SHIFT IT GOES FURTHER, THAN MANUFACTURING TO ENCOMPASS A RANGE OF HUMAN CAPITAL GROWTH, RESEARCH PROFICIENCIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS FOR FOSTERING AND SUSTAINING TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN ECONOMIES. ADDITIONALLY TECHNOLOGICAL AUTONOMY IS CRUCIAL FOR THE ARAB COUNTRIES TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE SAFEGUARD SECURITY AND SUPPORT YOUTH EMPOWERMENT.

KEY POINTS:

- THIS IS INTENSIFIED BY THE RELIANCE ON OIL.
- THIS TECHNOLOGY HAS STEADILY BECOME A FACTOR, IN COMPETITION AND INNOVATION.
- RESILIENCE MEANS DECREASING DEPENDENCE, ON TECHNOLOGIES.
- INVESTMENT IS EQUALLY AS SIGNIFICANT AS CAPITAL.
- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

AGENDA 2



HISTORICALLY ARAB ECONOMIES HAVE RELIED PRIMARILY ON OIL AND GAS RESOURCES AS THEIR INCOME STREAMS. THIS APPROACH TO THE ECONOMY ENABLED EXPANSION. ALSO INTRODUCED SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES. GRADUALLY DUE, TO EVOLVING CIRCUMSTANCES AND DOMESTIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES INITIATIVES AIMED AT DIVERSIFICATION WERE INITIATED.

THE OIL BOOM OF THE MID-20TH CENTURY ENCOURAGED ADVANCEMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES ALTHOUGH RELIANCE ON SPECIALISTS AND FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY REMAINED SIGNIFICANT. THE SURGE IN COMPETITION DURING THE 1990S AND EARLY 2000S INTRODUCED GLOBALIZATION GUIDING THESE NATIONS TOWARD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, SERVICE SECTORS AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION. ESTABLISHING ZONES IN THE UAE ENHANCING TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN JORDAN AND INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS IN NATIONS REPRESENTED INITIAL ATTEMPTS, AT DIVERSIFICATION.

FOLLOWING THE ARAB SPRING IN 2011 WORRIES ABOUT INCLUSIVITY AND JOB CREATION GREW MORE SIGNIFICANT. AUTHORITIES INCREASINGLY UNDERSTOOD THAT TECHNOLOGY MIGHT AID IN TACKLING YOUTH JOBLESSNESS AND ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS. THE RISE OF COMPUTING SPED UP THIS CHANGE: PROGRESS IN AI, CLOUD TECHNOLOGIES, AUTOMATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY ALONG, WITH OIL PRICE FACTORS, RENDERED TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS NEARLY INDISPENSABLE.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- HIGHLY COMPLICATED LARGE-SCALE EXPANSION PLANS, SUCH AS THE SAUDI VISION 2030 AND EGYPT VISION 2030.
- DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL HUBS SUCH AS DUBAI INTERNET CITY AND BEIRUT DIGITAL DISTRICT, AND THE TECH ECOSYSTEM IN AMMAN.

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- EXPANDING PROJECTS IN RENEWABLE ENERGIES ACROSS THE GULF AND NORTH AFRICA.
- ADOPTION OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES, FIN-TECH SOLUTIONS, AND SMART-CITY TECHNOLOGIES.

CURRENT RELEVANCE

IN THE ERA NOTHING IS MORE ESSENTIAL THAN ACHIEVING AUTONOMY. AT PRESENT THE ARAB REGION POSSESSES ONE OF THE POPULATIONS GLOBALLY—A SITUATION THAT PRESENTS BOTH SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES AND NOTABLE CHALLENGES. AN ECONOMY CANNOT GENERATE EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT INDUSTRIES AND, WITH ADVANCED SECTORS IMMENSE POTENTIAL CAN BE UNLOCKED.

MOREOVER TECHNOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE IS CLOSELY LINKED TO SECURITY. AMID GROWING RISKS AND RELIANCE ON SYSTEMS IN SECTORS LIKE FINANCE AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE DEPENDING ENTIRELY ON FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY PRESENTS A DANGER. THE POST-OIL PERIOD OFFERED COUNTRIES A CHANCE TO EMERGE AS FRONTRUNNERS IN AREAS SUCH, AS ENERGY, GREEN HYDROGEN, DIGITAL FINANCE AND AI-BASED PUBLIC SERVICES.

KEY POINTS:

- SIXTY PERCENT OF ARABS ARE UNDER THIRTY YEARS OLD LEADING TO A RISING NEED FOR JOBS, IN THE TECHNOLOGY FIELD.
- INTERNATIONAL OIL MARKETS ARE HIGHLY VOLATILE, SO DIVERSIFICATION IS ESSENTIAL.
- THE ESSENTIALS FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND CYBERSECURITY ARE EXPERTISE AND CAPABILITY.
- THIS POSITIONS THE ARAB STATES TO COMPETE IN FUTURE GLOBAL MARKETS WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY.

AGENDA 2



PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM -

REGIONAL EFFORTS

SEVERAL REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS WERE CREATED FOR THE ARABS EMPHASIZING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, ALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIES AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF RESEARCH. THESE EFFORTS DIFFER, LAYING THE GROUNDWORK, FOR COLLABORATION.

MAIN REGIONAL INITIATIVES:

THE ARAB STRATEGY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION 2014-2024 MARKED AN ADVANCEMENT, IN ENHANCING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND ENCOURAGING PREPAREDNESS.

THE 2018 ARAB DIGITAL ECONOMY FRAMEWORK ENCOURAGED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IN E-COMMERCE AND COLLABORATION IN CYBERSECURITY.

THE ICT ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES INCLUDE TRAINING SCHEMES AND INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL PROJECTS.

PAN-ARABIAN RENEWABLES COOPERATION: JOINT KNOW-HOW INVESTMENT IN PHOTOVOLTAIC AND WIND IS RELEVANT.

NATIONAL POLICIES

THE MAJORITY OF GOVERNMENTS HAVE EMBRACED LONG-RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOCUSED ON TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND BROADENING THE ECONOMY.

AGENDA 2



EXAMPLES:

- SAUDI ARABIA IS A VERY SERIOUS INVESTOR IN AI, ROBOTICS, GREEN ENERGY, OR MEGAPROJECTS SUCH AS NEOM.
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: EFFORTS FOCUSED ON DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL TECH COLLABORATIONS HAVE TRANSFORMED IT INTO A DOMINANT FORCE.
- EGYPT: DEVELOPING DIGITAL MANUFACTURING, EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY, AND ICT INFRASTRUCTURE
- JORDAN: THIS COUNTRY IS HOME TO A NUMBER OF SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT AND IT OUTSOURCING COMPANIES.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- BOOMING TECH STARTUPS IN THE DOMAINS OF FINTECH, E-COMMERCE, AND EDTECH.
- GREATLY IMPROVED SOLAR ENERGY ADOPTION, INCLUDING SOME OF THE MOST ENORMOUS SOLAR PLANTS IN THE WORLD.
- THIS WOULD INVOLVE E-FRAMEWORKS RECOMMENDING AN UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES.
- AN INCREASING NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES, INCUBATORS AND INNOVATION HUBS ARE WELCOMING VISITORS.

MAJOR CHALLENGES:

- THE INVESTMENT IN R&D IS LESS THAN THE AVERAGE.
- A CONTINUED DIGITAL DIVIDE BETWEEN HIGH-INCOME AND DEVELOPING ARAB STATES.
- THE OUTCOME IS A LOSS OF TALENT BECAUSE YOUNG INDIVIDUALS LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES.
- HEAVY RELIANCE ON IMPORTED SEMICONDUCTORS, SOFTWARE, AND EXPERTISE.

AGENDA 2



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. WHAT STRATEGIES CAN ARAB NATIONS ADOPT TO LESSEN THEIR RELIANCE, ON OIL OVER THE RUN WHILE MAINTAINING ECONOMIC STABILITY THROUGHOUT THE TRANSITION?
2. WHAT ACTIONS CAN THE ARAB LEAGUE UNDERTAKE TO ENHANCE COLLABORATION, IN TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE?
3. IN WHAT WAYS CAN MEMBER STATES PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF TALENT AND MINIMIZE BRAIN DRAIN AMONG YOUNG INNOVATORS?
4. WHICH INDUSTRIES, LIKE AI, RENEWABLE ENERGY, BIOTECHNOLOGY, CYBERSECURITY OR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING—OUGHT TO BE FOCUSED ON FOR ESTABLISHING SELF-RELIANCE AND WHAT IS THE REASONING?
5. WHICH STRATEGIES CAN ENHANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) WITHIN THE AREA. PROMOTE COOPERATION, AMONG UNIVERSITIES, GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR?
6. HOW CAN ARAB COUNTRIES BALANCE FOREIGN TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE GOAL OF REDUCING RELIANCE ON EXTERNAL POWERS?

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4. IRENA. RENEWABLE ENERGY MARKET ANALYSIS: MENA.
5. ARAB LEAGUE. ARAB STRATEGY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION.
6. OECD. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MENA REGION.