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The 3rd Africa- Arab Summit

Arab-Africa economic cooperation Forum discuss strategic partnership between Africa and the Arab Regions

Kuwait, 11th November 2013:The First Arab- Africa Cooperation Economic Forum kicks off today 11th November 2013, at Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, under the theme ***“Beyond the Promise: Moving forward toward an effective Africa-Arab partnership”***.The two-day event brings African and Arab government, business and civil society leaders to effecting a strategic mutually beneficial partnership between the two regions.

Officially opening the Forum, H.H. Sheikh Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the State of Kuwait, highlights the importance of the African-Arab Economic Forum as being convened a week before the 3rd Africa- Arab Summit. He hoped that the Forum comes out with practical implementable recommendations on different economic and social areas, to avail the Arab and African regions opportunities to be exploited within the framework of their cooperation for progress, prosperity and decent life.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance noted that, in an increasingly globalized world, promotion and consolidation of Africa-Arab cooperation represents an added value to the economies of the Arab and African regions. That also contributes to sustainable development, through availing opportunities for collaboration in the areas of food security, investment and trade, and exchange of experiences and knowledge, and research findings on what would enhance the objectives of cooperation.

On behalf of the Commission of the African Union, H.E. Dr. Anthony MothaeMaruping, AUC Commissioner for Economic Affairs said that the cooperation between Arabs and Africans is based on strong foundations of close bonds between Africa and the Arab world. Those strong bonds are based on ancient trade, ethnic and cultural background, linguistic bonds, shared monotheist and revealed faith, geographical proximity. That what is needed is to strive to realize the full potency of these bonds through effective and meaningful co- operation on the ground.

He called upon the participants to be faithful to the Theme and Focus of the Forum. The Commissioner said “We have to resolutely tackle the set objectives shown in the concept note .The overall theme of of:“Beyond Promise : Moving Forward Towards An Effective Arab – African Partnership” with emphasis on “ Beyond Promise”, “ Effective” and on “Partnership” is tell-tale. It is indicative. It is instructive. It is action oriented, practical and entirely hands – on. I commend those who formulated it”.



He called upon the participants to focus on: probing and agreeing on inter-regional development co-operation issues in the areas of investment, infrastructure including energy, on agriculture and food security, trade and environment and examine regional and global considerations that impact on economic development of the two regions and find ways of dealing with them jointly. Thus he stated “ We are urged to consider investment flows in both directions. We are nudged a little to put the roles of non-governmental organizations and civil society on a new and higher plateau. In short, we are urged by stakeholders to harness full energy on all fronts which is at our disposal in the two friendly regions and put it to work full throttle to accelerate broad based co-operation”.

H.E. Dr. Nabil Al Arabi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, focused in his remarks at the opening ceremony of the African-Arab Economic Forum, delivered on his behalf by Mr. Ahmed Ben Helli, Deputy Secretary-General, on setting fulcrums to determine the Forum's path in the course of Africa-Arab cooperation. That includes; creating a space for interaction between businessmen of Arab and African economists and businessmen, through which information, experiences, statistics, and funding sources can be exchanged, with a view to build an Arab-African partnership and translate the theme of the Forum "*towards an effective Arab-African partnership*" into economic projects touching the reality of African and Arab citizens.

Mr. Helli emphasized on the importance of exploring African and Arab markets to increase trade and development, noting that recent statistics at the League of Arab States have shown that the volume of the trade between a number of Arab and African countries had reached \$ 25 billion in 2010.

Over the two days, the 1st Arab- Africa Cooperation Economic Forum will explore opportunities in Africa and Arab regions and promoting collaboration between African Union Commission's Member States, the Arab region and the world at large. It will focus primarily on how the private sector actors from Africa and Arab can forge sustainable partnerships with a view to enhancing trade and investment relations between the two sides. It also will feature some national and regional project portfolios with regional investment and export trade opportunities that require international and partnerships.

The Forum's sessions themes include: Arab-Africa development cooperation, investment policy, laws, and procedures in the African countries, mutual Arab-African investments, mutual Africa- Arab cooperation in food security, and the role of non-governmental organizations in development assistance.

The Economic Forum attended by different stakeholders from Africa and Arab world including; Ministers, senior government officials, public sector leaders, leaders of the prominent private sector establishments, specialized Arab and African institutions, regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies investment consultants and economic advisors investment promotion agencies and business council, regional economic communities, and the civil society and others.



The Forum report and recommendations will be submitted to the 3rd Arab-African Summit, scheduled to take place in the state of Kuwait from 19-20 November 2013.

For Further Information consult the AU website: www.au.int , and the 3rd Africa -Arab Summit page on: <http://pages.au.int/afroarab> \ <http://www.kuwaitsummits.gov.kw>

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