منتدى غرب آسيا وشمال إفريقيا
West Asia - North Africa Forum

WANA Forum 2011
Region in Transition

9 - 10 May 2011
Amman, Jordan

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE
WANA FORUM

The WANA Forum provides a platform for working together as members of the human community. We all benefit from collective regional action to resolve conflicts, to promote good governance, to raise living standards, to protect the environment, to face challenges that no nation can tackle alone. Assuming custodianship and stewardship of our fragile world is ultimately the responsibility of every one of us, for our own wellbeing is dependent on the wellbeing of others.

–HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, WANA Forum Chairman

The Third Domain: The WANA Forum is a regional platform for dialogue among the 'Third Domain' – government, private sector and civil society – and seeks to activate and strengthen collaboration by, in part, identifying and linking existing regional initiatives. Incorporating the views of all levels of society – local communities, civil society actors, governmental institutions, the private sector – is more likely to instil a sense of ownership and legitimacy toward a more effective roadmap for the region than plans designed by external actors, or just at the national level.

Regional Cooperation: Despite the increasing global movement towards supranational solutions, many countries in the WANA region remain focused solely on national agendas. As a result, they are less able to advocate for their shared interests on the global stage. In a geopolitical era characterised by territoriality, identity and movement, the region's most pressing challenges are predominantly transnational, and thus require regional cooperation to mobilise resources, exchange lessons and best practices, promote knowledge production and dissemination, educate for citizenship and sustainable development and produce home-grown solutions to the region's challenges.

Home-grown Approaches: The WANA Forum is a demonstration of the saying 'only the tent pitched by one's own hands will stand', motivated by a keen desire for the people of the region to pitch their own tents and drive their own processes of growth, development and change, whether in the recovery of war-torn societies, the conjoining of prosperity and environmental responsibility or the strengthening of ties and bonds between peoples and cultures of the region. The WANA Forum complements existing frameworks of international cooperation by cultivating ideas and initiatives from within the region and by the

people of the region. Combining cultural tradition, knowledge and wisdom with modern perspectives gives rise to a mutual structure upon which solutions are built. The Forum aims to develop a physical and virtual space that can inspire, promote, advocate and develop innovative thinking, strategies and policies for the WANA region.

Who are WANA Forum members? Forum Members are individuals from government, the private sector and civil society – ranging from statesmen and stateswomen to students – who dedicate their time to advance the mission of the WANA Forum. Guided by the vision of Prince El Hassan and with the support of the Secretariat as facilitators, Forum members recognise the WANA Forum as their forum and are encouraged to be part of a growing network of participants with a long-term personal commitment to remain proactive and to act as ambassadors for WANA in their own professional and geographical contexts. Membership is by invitation and participation in any WANA Forum meeting entails membership.

Who sponsors the WANA Forum? Thanks to the generosity of The Nippon Foundation and its Chairman, Yohei Sasakawa, the WANA Forum is able to continue its endeavors and remain an apolitical, unaffiliated organisation that can better serve the region and its people. The Nippon Foundation is a non-profit philanthropic organisation, active both in Japan and abroad. Since its beginning, it has worked to bolster the domestic development of Japan and has expanded to include such fields as education, social welfare and public health, both within Japan and in more than one hundred countries to date. The foundation's fundamental aim is the realisation of a peaceful and prosperous global society, in which none need struggle to secure their basic human rights. As it works toward this goal, it is essential to respect the different value systems embraced by the world's many cultures while transcending political, religious, racial and ethnic divisions.

Why WANA? Prince El Hassan bin Talal has long adopted the geographic terminology of West Asia and North Africa to describe a region which stretches from Bangladesh to Morocco. The term "Middle East" was coined by the British over a century ago and is largely a misnomer – it is only east from the perspective of Europe, depicting a geographical position in relation to Europe rather than its location within Asia. The Forum advocates a definition of the region less rooted in political geography, and based on an understanding of human geography, with shifting borders, flows of people, resources and ideas. "Regional cooperation is predicated upon people's perceptions that they are part of a single region," Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said in his keynote speech at the second annual meeting of the Forum. "Doing so is not about a map or acronym, but about identity and ensuring that the so-called 'person on the street' feels that he or she is a citizen of WANA as well as a citizen of his or her own country."

WANA Forum 2011

Region in Transition

Overview of
WANA Forum 2011

West Asia - North Africa (WANA) has, in recent months, entered a period of fundamental change. While few could have predicted the nature and extent of transformation, the underlying driving forces behind the various protests have been present for some time. Indeed, the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and the Green Revolution in Iran could be considered as the forerunners of a new call for change in governance that has united people across WANA in the pursuit of human dignity and freedom. As hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in protest of political and economic conditions, in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Syria and elsewhere, the implications and consequences of change remain unclear.

In response to regional events, the annual meeting of the WANA Forum will convene actors from across the region, including academics, intellectuals, civil society leaders, political and private sector representatives, to examine the nature of the ongoing transition across the region. As a regional process, directed by and for its participants, the WANA Forum is committed to providing a non-threatening, neutral platform for dialogue and developing new regional thinking based upon shared values. It has long been the belief of Forum members that through cooperation and the participation of what HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal calls the 'Third Domain' of partnership can all sectors of society – civil, public and private – develop responsible stewardship for a more sustainable, prosperous and equitable future. The annual meeting will consider the message the WANA Forum community wants to convey to the broader region and to the international community and how economic interests of nation-states can align with holistic regional aspirations that ensure human dignity and foster social cohesion.

Contextualising Regional Events

WANA's recent political history is marked by the fragmented experimentation of imported ideologies – from nationalism to socialism, neo-conservatism to communism. This has often led to continual ideological clashes and confused political economy despite repeated efforts to frame these ideologies within pre-existing historical, cultural and religious legacies. Indeed, the failure to develop our own political systems, based on embracing common principles of transparency, accountability and citizens' empowerment has brought considerable disparity – political, economic and social – between and within nation-states in the region. WANA hosts some of the world's highest per capita GDPs and some of its lowest.

The region is home to almost 27 million uprooted and displaced persons. Conflict has, according to some estimates cost the region as much as $12 trillion in lost opportunities since Madrid and Oslo. Overall, the systems that have been put in place, which offer subsidies and belie true market value of goods and energy, leave the region's economy distorted and highly vulnerable to global price spikes in the costs of food and fuel. The reduction of subsidies, while economically necessary according to some, may ultimately lead to decreases in living conditions and outpourings of discontentment.

Disenfranchised and disempowered, people across WANA are beginning to hold their governments accountable in countries that can no longer mask political oppression with state subsidies. Reliance on mass exploitation of natural resources, with a weak industrial base to provide the required jobs, and lacking market diversity meant that the region's economy has suffered from rentierism and clientelism forcing its young people to find work outside their home countries, while causing excessive environmental damage and social fault lines.

The economic pressures faced by nations across the region are inextricably linked to demographic changes. With almost 60 per cent of the population of WANA under the age of 25, approximately 23 per cent of youth are currently unemployed and a further 27 per cent are economically inactive. Perhaps the youth have come of age in breaking their long-held silence, demanding empowerment, opportunity and the recognition of their human dignity in the face of political, economic and social oppression. The youth can be - and indeed, should be - energised to innovate, create and fuel strong economic growth.

Under rising demographic and economic strain, combined with an inability of governments to accommodate growing demands of access to education, social services, employment and political participation, people across WANA have mobilised in demanding change. The movement that materialised in Tunisia offers an opportunity to build new systems of governance, economy and regional connectedness, accompanied by new political structures that enable and empower citizens of all ages to become stakeholders of their own future.

The wave of change has been strengthened by the technological empowerment of citizens. It is increasingly difficult for authoritarian governments to control access to information, and as the cost of technology decreases, so does the required entry-level for communicative tools. Individuals and organisations are now able to play a role in informing, organising and exercising their right to freedom of expression. The spread of information means that power will be more widely distributed and informal networks will undercut the monopoly of traditional bureaucracy.

WANA Forum 2011
Building on the Forum's objectives in advancing social cohesion, improving the region's ability to recover and reconstruct in the aftermath of conflict, advocating sustainable environmental and green economy solutions, as well as its desire to mitigate against a history of imported political and economic ideologies, the

Forum will explore potential outcomes for the region once the 'sands of revolution' have settled. For instance, what constitutes sustainable political and economic structures that can foster long-term stability and ensure human dignity across the region? What lessons can be learned from the experience of other regions that have undergone similar transformations? In discussing transition, the key question becomes transition to what? What would be considered a positive outcome for the region?

WANA Forum 2011 will examine the direction of transition in West Asia – North Africa with a focus on anchoring change in WANA's cultural traditions and present-day context.

Key Questions

- How can WANA develop relevant new knowledge that can be authentically applied to local contexts within the WANA region and respond to the socio-economic needs the region is facing?

- How can WANA move from protest to inclusive citizenship that centres on both rights and responsibilities and creates an enabling environment for participation in public discussion and decision-making?

- How can WANA societies in transition find approaches in their traditions that can help them modernise?

- Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a relatively new and controversial concept in international relations. Hima is a traditional concept pre-dating Islam, which literally means 'protected area' in Arabic. Can traditional concepts such as Hima be a basis for a more comprehensive approach to regional cooperation in WANA, where responsibility to protect would be extended to include a broadly defined regional commons?

- What constitutes sustainable political and economic structures that can foster long-term stability and ensure human dignity across the region?

- What lessons can be learned from the experience of other regions that have undergone similar transformations?

- What role can and should international actors play in WANA's transition? What message does the WANA Forum community want to convey to the broader region and to the international community so that authentic views from the region can be heard?

- How can economic interests of nation-states align with holistic regional aspirations that ensure human dignity and foster social cohesion?

- How can WANA lessen its dependence on oil and foreign aid and create jobs that reduce unemployment and moves WANA away from subsidising consumption and charity?

Managing Transition in the WANA region

by Sultan Barakat[*]

The wave of protests that has swept across the West Asia North Africa (WANA) region over the past months, now termed the 'Arab Spring', has triggered fundamental change throughout our region. This change has begun, and now the societies that have experienced protests against economic inequality and political oppression in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and more recently in Jordan and Syria, have entered into a complex and precarious process that can best be described as transition. The language of "transition" rather than alternatives such as "revolution" or "development" suggests two key elements of ongoing events. First, they represent a process rather than an event. We are in store for years or decades of change – some beneficial, some not – rather than a quick "colour" revolution such as have previously been seen in corners of the former Soviet Union. Second, this transition will – by necessity rather than choice – build upon current institutional arrangements. It can, has, and will shape them, but ultimately the notion of transition highlights that it would be neither possible nor wise to pretend as if WANA states and societies are simply "wiping the slate clean" and beginning anew.

While many of us in this room, being keen observers and leaders of the WANA region, knew that pressure for change was building, few, if any, experts predicted that change would come as rapidly as it has or on such a region-wide scale. However, the WANA Forum has been speaking about the need to address some of the fundamental causes and drivers of these revolutionary movements for several years. The WANA Forum's central themes and initiatives reflect the vital need to address issues of unemployment, inequitable distribution of resources, conflict vulnerability and transformation, social cohesion and the distribution of natural resource revenues. All of these factors have contributed to the political unrest we have witnessed over the past months.

We now face the challenge of ensuring that the ongoing transition process addresses the underlying social, economic, political, and environmental stresses facing our region. What can we do to ensure that the transition goes smoothly and that it results in long-lasting and beneficial change in the region rather than a simple

---

* Sultan Barakat is a Professor of Politics and Director of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit at the University of York. He is the co-Moderator of the WANA Forum.

changing of the guard? Before we examine this further we must first briefly explore what we mean by transition.

What do we mean by 'Transition'?

Transition can be understood in a number of ways; fundamentally we can understand transition as a 'process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). We can generally accept that transition, in a political context, is a period when the conditions necessary for political stability, security, justice and social equity are being pursued. However, transition is by no means necessarily a transition to democracy and equality. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) defines transition as 'the period of transformation when a country emerging from crisis undertakes a recovery process' (UNDG/ECHA, 2009). This 'crisis' can be either a result of conflict, political crisis, or natural disasters. In 2011 we are faced with prominent examples of all three; post-conflict transition in Cote D'Ivoire and hopefully soon in Libya, post-disaster transition in Japan, and post-crisis transitions across the WANA region, particularly in Egypt and Tunisia. Here we are specifically concerned with transition following conflict and political crisis. In these situations, the capacity of government is often weak or its legitimacy is contested, and significant change needs to occur to prevent a return to crisis or conflict.

However, it is essential to point out that transition, in many cases, does not actually address the underlying causes of crisis and in practice means a regime change or a shift in power with little change to the status quo and the realities of everyday life for citizens. In this sense we can see the UNDG definition serves to reflect the mission of many international institutions but not actually the practical realities on the ground. This reflects the broader trend that theories of transition are often constructed by outsiders with an interest in conflict management rather than conflict resolution. 'Transitional justice', 'transitional authority', 'transitional assembly' and 'transitional government' are all terms coined and used by the Western dominated international community. This demonstrated that the concept of transition has been widely discussed in the past but these understandings have largely reflected what external actors can do, and see fit, rather than what is actually needed (for example these Transitional Authorities and Assemblies, often established by the United Nations, have been set up in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Somalia and numerous other countries with often limited success). The transformative aspect of transition is therefore more often an aspiration than a reality.

In addition, we have increasingly witnessed a trend, perhaps because of the limited success of some transition processes involving outside intervention, that attempts to transform situations in our region have increasingly utilised military power to influence and effect change. The ease in which decisions for military intervention are being taken in our region is worrying. Of even more concern is the apparent trend in lacking foresight and thought for the longer term. It seems now when military intervention is utilised, as can be seen in Libya today, there is a tendency for 'mission creep', where the role of the intervener and their mandate is not clearly defined

from the start and plans for the longer-term are not in place, or have not even been considered. Many recent interventions witnessed in our region are heavy handed and militaristic. They only ask questions of a humanitarian and developmental nature as an afterthought to destruction, and this seems to have increasingly become accepted as a necessary feature of transition, not just by outsiders but also by many influential voices from within the region. Rather than a focus on people, the imperatives of buying time and limiting damage to Western forces are prioritised. The use of military intervention seems to have become a common component of crisis management, when in fact we should be doing our best to limit our use of weapons – a fundamental lesson of post-2003 Iraq. Destruction as the first phase of reconstruction, or any change process is not effective (Barakat, 2005).

It is therefore vital that the WANA region develops its own understanding and definition of transition in which the focus is the end result of what we are trying to achieve, rather than the process. Transition will be an integral feature of our region for years to come so it is essential we have a clear, regionally led understanding of how we want our societies ultimately to look. Such an understanding should, in my opinion, allow for individual rights, and the protection of the sanctity of human life.

As detailed below, the nature of transition, particularly in the transition from war to peace, in any given country is never uniform or linear. Even within a single country, the nature of a transition can be extremely varied. For example, in some areas the entire population may have experienced crisis whereas other areas may not have been exposed to violence directly but may have experienced ancillary effects such as the hosting of displaced populations (Cliff et al, 2003). Hence, there is a need to avoid a centralized approach to the current transitions going on in the WANA region. All the contexts that have experienced protest movements and civil unrest are extremely different, and the social movements have had very different causes and outcomes from one country to another, from one city to another, and even from one individual to another. Although we cannot ignore the similarities and common factors across the region, it is vital that the recovery process ensures the actual needs are met and the true causes of crisis addressed on a case by case basis. As can be seen in the media commentary around the 'Arab Spring' there is a definite tendency to treat the movements the region has experienced as similar and caused by the same factors, and ultimately as one issue or problem. However, if the transition processes now underway in each of the affected countries are to be successful, local dynamics and causes need to be identified and tackled.

The Nature of Transition
A fundamental point to highlight when considering transitions and their nature is that there is never 'one transition' or a 'single transition' but rather 'multi-pronged' transitions. The moment the dynamics and processes within society are altered and there is a pursuit to alter the course and direction of that society or country, multiple transitions are inevitable. Ideally, transitions should be transformative and result in real tangible change; political systems and power structures can be changed with the balance of power shifting (whether suddenly or gradually) and moving from an

authoritarian and autocratic regime to a more democratic and representative system. Additionally, economic transformation often occurs simultaneously; either shifting the main source of economic income from one sector or industry to another, shifting towards more free-market oriented economic policies, or ultimately pursuing an economic system that secures a more equitable distribution of resources. Another major transition that should also occur is that of social change or transformation, which might involve national reconciliation in countries divided by ideological, religious, political or ethnic differences and the promotion of social cohesion.

Importantly, these various and multitudinous processes must occur simultaneously and be managed alongside one another. This daunting task is perhaps made even more challenging by the fact that each process will impact on the other, and that none of the transition cycle is necessarily linear. This is recognised by the UNDG, which states that, 'while in the past, transition processes were largely regarded as sequential or a continuum from relief to development or even from conflict to peace, it is now increasingly recognized that these facets exist simultaneously, at varying levels of intensity, susceptibility to reversals, and opportunity' (UNDG/ ECHA 2009). Conflicts, even those that have remained just beneath the surface if not actually realised for some time, can easily be triggered or reignited by the changes occurring, while stakeholders previously benefiting from the old order can cling to power and acquired resources and disrupt and stall the process of genuine change. New structures created during the transition may now be present but it may be a number of years before they can function autonomously and with complete legitimacy (Pantuliano et al, 2007). Del Castillo (2008) highlights that all these aspects of transition are closely interrelated and reinforce each other:

> *'Violence must give way to public security. Lawlessness, political exclusion, and violations of human rights must give way to the rule of law, inclusive and participatory government, and respect for basic human rights. [....] In addition, ruined, mismanaged [..] economies must transform into functioning market economies that enable ordinary people to work and earn a decent living. Failure in any one of these areas will put the other at risk.' (Del Castillo, 2008, 15)*

Numerous factors determine the nature of the transition process in different contexts. These factors include the circumstances in which the process of change began (conflict, gradual or sudden onset, internal strife, control over resources, income disparities, or ethnic rivalries) as well as the resources available to support the process, these could be national or international, human capacity, or financial or technical assistance, and the level of development and capacity of the society to begin with (del Castillo, 2008). All of these constraints and complexities mean that the transition process in reality is neither transformative nor a process of genuine change in the majority of contexts. There is therefore a more pragmatic and realistic way to consider transition. Particularly in the context of the WANA region today, one can reasonably view transition as a shift in power dynamics and in a number of contexts potentially regime change, however an overall change for the better

or positive shift to more democratic ways of doing things is not inevitable. With the downfall of long-standing regimes, we are already witnessing the emergence of power vacuums and the potential for a continuation of the status quo under a new name or label. Equally, external intervention in transition processes instead of encouraging social cohesion can in fact serve to exacerbate divisions and tensions as we saw during the sectarian violence in post-2003 Iraq as well as in other contexts. It is therefore vital that we deliberate the key issues and factors that need to be considered and managed as we seek to influence and effect meaningful development and change in the region.

Key Issues and Dilemmas when Managing Transition

There are a number of overarching dilemmas and issues that need to be considered when managing transition processes. These factors could particularly disrupt, stall and impede the current transitions happening across the WANA region.

Firstly, there is currently a tendency among international actors occupied with transition processes in countries affected by crisis and conflict to focus on short-term interventions to effect change in the immediate future rather than focusing on longer-term transformation which will ultimately produce sustainable solutions. This has resulted in the international community and so their recipient governments, constantly reacting to situations as they arise, or constantly implementing 'fire-fighting' interventions when prevention and longer-term transformation needs to be the focus. A common typology in the international discourse is the need to address the root causes of conflict, crisis and vulnerability rather than constantly managing and reacting to its symptoms. This focus on long-term change is a central part of the WANA Forum's vision and core values. HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal spoke about this at the 2010 WANA Forum; 'The challenges posed by demographic pressures, environmental stresses, widespread inequalities, entrenched pockets of poverty, chronic unemployment, deeply rooted division and numerous political, sectarian and religious conflicts present a serious threat to local, national and regional stability' (WANA Forum, 2010, 12). There is a need for sustainable job creation, fostering social cohesion, utilising cultural traditions in an effective and constructive manner to promote sustainable development and ultimately to address the underlying causes of vulnerability in our region. Transition processes, if managed correctly, provide an opportunity to do so.

Secondly, a central question that needs to be asked when any country is in the process of transition is that of what are we transitioning to? What is the ideal, and realistic, outcome that the society in question is moving towards? These are particularly pertinent questions at the moment in the WANA region. What should we consider to be a positive outcome for countries like Yemen, Libya and Syria? What should we consider as a positive outcome for the region? The international discourse now reflects the long-known fact that governance models that have developed and grown organically in one country or region are not translatable and transferable to other regions. There is a need to acknowledge this fact and in turn pursue a 'home-

grown' model of fair and legitimate governance that is relevant and applicable to the nations of WANA.

Thirdly, during transition periods there is often an opportunity for some to profit while others pay the price. This is commonly present in post-conflict transitions in particular where predatory elites and patronage networks often continue to benefit from exploitation of resources and illicit transnational resource flows (Sant'Anna, 2010). Any transition from the status quo and usual economic set-up, often to a free market-based system, will inevitably have to tackle the features of the old system. However, the profiteers will often continue to operate under the old 'rules of the game' or find alternative sources of funding facilitated by globalisation. There is a need to focus debate back on the individual and how the transition process is affecting everyone in diverse ways. Inevitably some will benefit and others may be disadvantaged by a new order.

Fourthly, of fundamental importance to a successful transition is the presence of a shared clear vision and the political will to positively promote and facilitate the realisation of such a vision. An illustration of this is the role of the Marshall Plan in the successful transition of Western Europe following the Second World War. The transition process was led by one donor, the US, with participation from the recipient states in order to create a unified vision of the reconstruction of affected states. The US had a clear strategy – to pursue political stability in Europe through economic recovery. There was a clear vision of a politically reformed and economically stable Europe based on revitalising production and industry in economies such as Germany. With funds centralised in one place, financing of the transition process could function much like a budget, without competing programmes and agendas of multiple national and international actors as is the norm in the present day. These multiple factors allowed for a stable and well managed transition process which resulted in one of the most well-regarded success stories of a conflict to peace transition. Similarly the success of transition in El Salvador is often attributed in part to the existence of a shared vision among national and international actors with respect to peace (Fargen, 2003). However, the political environment of the WANA region is one of extreme diversity and countless actors with differing goals and objectives that are not necessarily complementary and are often competing. For a vision to be effective in mobilising people it needs to be shared amongst all stakeholders and locally rooted. However, new political structures can remain fragile, as often new authorities lack legitimacy and credibility and may be associated with previous structures and partisan interests (Barakat, 2010). It is therefore vital to have 'buy in' and participation of the various stakeholders in society, including civil society and citizens, when undergoing change while at the same time managing high expectations where state institutions may not necessarily have the capacity to effect change immediately (Ibid.).

Fifthly, and very much linked with the need for a shared vision and participation, when governmental institutions and systems are going through a process of reform as part of a broader political transition it is vital that legitimacy is at the centre

of any newly formed order. An integral part of this is ensuring the very reasons that caused political unrest and crisis in the beginning are addressed adequately to prevent reoccurrence of similar events. Legitimacy will have to be at the heart of state institutions and successful transitions in WANA will depend in part on the earning of legitimacy through delivery of services in an equitable and sustainable manner and sustainable job creation. For this end we need to assess what the basis is for political legitimacy in the WANA region now the era of authoritarian rule is passing, perhaps something we could discuss over the coming days. We also need to ensure legitimacy is not undercut by the likely slow pace of reform and change in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia which have seen the resignation of long-ruling leaders. There is a danger that the legitimacy of new elites and institutions might be lost if the general population do not experience change immediately.

Sixthly, it is vital that the lessons of past transitions are not forgotten but in fact reflected on and heeded as we head into previously unchartered territory in many countries in the WANA region. We stand at a historic moment in which there is a firm imperative to initiate a broad social process of envisioning alternatives to the failed experiments of the past. To navigate the complex contours of development within a turbulent and dynamic world there exists a desire to both bench-mark globally recognised best-practice and to hold on to cultural traditions that anchor our identities and communities within the social world we inhabit. Rather than view this dual desire as a dichotomy, we should adopt a reflexive stance in which the experiences of others are judged for the lessons they may teach us in adapting knowledge to the context of our region. For example, best practices in the former Soviet Union states may not be best practice for a post-Gaddafi Libya or a post-Saleh Yemen.

The past practice of relying on the West for models of development and modernisation which are uncritically replicated has brought disastrous results. WANA states were never given the opportunity to cope with the demands of modernisation through gradual capacity building; they were treated as if they could run before they could walk. Twentieth century projects of modernisation and statebuilding in the WANA region, sponsored by Western states, were implemented with high expectations for a rapid and smooth emergence of strong state institutions that took centuries to develop in the West. In the West, over the long duree of incremental institutional development there were always alternatives and it was a long-term endeavour. In the externally-led transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan the post-conflict states were expected to implement a wide range of complex institutional reforms within short time frames and with little regard for existing capacities. We must be careful a similar thing does not reoccur in the transition contexts of the present, particularly where Western intervention is a firm feature.

A further important consideration is, as Prince Hassan has previously reminded us, the need to restore the noble art of conversation and resist reliance on 'hard' measures of intervention. We cannot alienate regimes in power, no matter how much we, our fellow citizens or the international community may disagree with

their policies and approaches to governing. This is one of the important lessons we can take from Afghanistan; that relying on 'hard' security measures alone to effect change will not work. The nature of conflict in our region is inherently complex and we must therefore keep diplomatic channels open. Similarly, we must resist the urge to see the loss of one life as more important than another. Every life lost matters, whether it is a Gaddafi supporter, or a citizen protesting for change. We need to recognise that our principles of preserving the sanctity of life apply across the board and the perceived neglect of Afghan and Iraqi casualties over the last ten years has done nothing but worsen the prospect of building a sustainable peace in both these countries. We must be conscious that this does not happen again, particularly as this trend is already beginning to emerge, largely driven by the global media, in the case of Libya.

Finally, processes of transition, if not managed effectively, will inevitably invite intervention from outside forces and the international community. There should be a drive to transform the situation during transition, often typified by instability, unrest, a collapse of the rule of law, and sometimes conflict and violence, rather than prolonging the misery and agony experienced by many civilians during transition periods. This was seen in Iraq, whereby international intervention served to prolong a state of instability and violence resulting in many deaths, and exacerbation of sectarian conflict and the worsening of the situation for over ten years with little change or transformation.

There is now the real potential for Libya to experience a similar scenario, whereby a stalemate situation with continuing and protracted fighting and violence becomes the norm and little change or transformation occurs. The potential to further exacerbate this is that international intervention will become more far reaching and extensive if the balance of power does not shift and fighting continues. Intervention from outside the region comes with its own price tag, especially if militaristic in nature, in the form of further casualties and deaths, further disruption and inherently complex dynamics of power, strategic interest, and the pursuit of influence. In the case of Libya, Professor Dirk Vandewalle, from Dartmouth College, recently stated that the transition process in Libya must now 'restructure the economy by making it less reliant on the state, devise a political formula acceptable by all actors, and create a system of law that serves all citizens of Libya equitably'. He argued that the international community could play an important role in this process by helping bring justice to Libya; helping keep the country together; and helping restructure and diversify the Libyan economy. All of these actions must be in a supportive role and are a far cry from the current military interventionism that could potentially result in foreign troops having 'boots on the ground'.

Cooperation beyond borders is critical to developing a regional position and capacity to respond that can function as a genuine alternative to outsider intervention. As Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi said at the WANA Forum in 2009; 'the contribution of our region as a whole [to managing conflict and reconstruction] is not sufficient and not visible enough'. The WANA Forum provides an arena within which we can

enter into the dialogue necessary to collectively envision a shared platform. Further, the concerns of WANA frame the region within its broader context which is crucial to respond effectively to the most urgent priorities. To this end it is of central importance that we consider and arrive at a shared regional definition of transition and what we want the outcome, or 'end-state' to be in the countries currently experiencing historic processes of change. It is vital such a definition recognises the importance of individual rights and the sanctity of human life as paramount in any 'new order', and perhaps over the next three days we can give some thought and discussion to this topic. Similarly, as a region, we need to consider alternative channels of influence and more 'soft' methods of intervention such as diplomacy as an alternative to military intervention alone which is becoming the norm for Western nations. It is with this in mind that we will be investigating the role of Qatar in peacebuilding initiatives across the region, in order to understand motivations and the spirit in which these initiatives were started. I look forward to discussing this, and other issues raised here around managing transition in the WANA region, over the coming days.

References

Cliffe, S., Guggenheim, S. & Kostner, M. (2003) 'Community-Driven Reconstruction as an Instrument in War-to-Peace Transitions', Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, CPR Working Papers, No. 7, August 2003

Barakat, S. (2005) 'Post-Saddam Iraq: Deconstructing a Regime, Reconstructing a Nation', Third World Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 4&5, 2005, pp. 571-592.

Barakat, S. (2010) After the Conflict: Reconstruction and Development in the Aftermath of War, London: I.B. Tauris.

Del Castillo, G. (2008) Rebuilding War-Torn States: The Challenge of Post-conflict Economic Reconstruction, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Fargen, P.W. (2003) Post-Conflict Reintegration and Reconstruction: Doing it Right Takes a While, Georgetown, http://isim.georgetown.edu/publications/2003_Post_conflict_Reintegration.pdf

Oxford English Dictionary (2011) Definition of Transition, Oxford English Dictionary Online, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gbo877620#m_en_gb0877620

Pantuliano, S., Buchanan-Smith, M. & Murphy, P. (2007) 'The long road home: Opportunities and obstacles to the reintegration of IDPs and refugees returning to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas', Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, London. http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1022.pdf

UNDG/ECHA (2009) 'UNDG-ECHA Working Group on Transition', UNDG/ECHA, http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=661

WANA Forum (2009a) WANA-LED Reconstruction & Recovery Expert Consultation Report, WANA Forum

WANA Forum (2009b) Report of the First Annual West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Forum, WANA Forum, 19th-20th April 2009, Amman, Jordan

WANA Forum (2010) Report of the Second WANA Forum: Pursuing Supranational Solutions to the Challenges of Carrying Capacity, WANA Forum, 16th-18th May 2010, Amman, Jordan

The silenced majority reclaim their voice – and their dignity:
But is democracy the beacon of all hope?

by Laura Haddad

As the world observes non-stop coverage of unfolding events in Egypt and across West Asia and North Africa, the common thread on the airways and in cyberspace declare the dawn of democracy for the region's dispossessed. But are they missing the bigger picture?

Although much attention is on the region's future political leadership, fair elections in themselves will not bring social cohesion. Where countries have dabbled in Western-style democratic processes, elections have often been more about the personalities and the slogans than the real issues – for people know they can rely far more on their families, tribal affiliations and closest links than on the state to meet their basic human needs. The hundreds of thousands of demonstrators across the region, who are reclaiming their dignity by the sheer act of speaking out, await a transformational change that runs deeper than who leads and who votes.

While democracy is an instrument to social cohesion, it is only one dimension. Despite the increase in the number of democracies throughout the world in recent years, there is no apparent decrease in the number, scale and range of human rights abuses and many have failed to promote economic growth and sustainable development. Even well established democracies have often failed to bring about justice (majority rule often yields injustice and double standards are apparent with the privileging of one group's suffering over another).

Democratic processes are not new to the WANA region. Iraq has a newly installed democracy; Lebanon has a complex constitution defining its democratic institutions; and Turkey is characterised by a secular political system. Yet many of these countries suffer from sectarian violence and civil unrest, high levels of unemployment and weak political infrastructure. To assume, therefore, that democracy will inherently herald a more stable era in the region fails to recognise the larger context of reconstructing and securing peace, cohesion and prosperity.

The implications of current global discourse are greater than a single country or a political system. The WANA region as a whole, like the protestors of today's Arab streets, needs to reclaim its dignity and find its collective voice. Today, unlike historic periods of prosperity, the 'Middle East' is not part of an interconnected Asia

and Europe. It is a blank on provisional maps of transnational Asian infrastructure networks (as illustrated in a recent report by Asian Development Bank Institute); it is in top-down, vertical discussions with international bodies, such as the OECD; and it finds itself absent from any inclusive frameworks of cooperation, engaging in multilateral dialogue only upon outside initiation and international leadership. It is even somehow more appealing to talk to foreigners oceans away than to neighbours across the border. Rather than equal contributors and shapers of international standards and frameworks, the WANA region mostly sits on the sidelines. Instead of fostering interdependence, we succumb to the pull of quicksand in perpetual dependence.

Even WANA's more popular name, MENA, has been moulded not by its own authentic reality – its actual geographic location to the rest of Asia – but by external perceptions; it is only East from the perspective of Europe. "The WANA region often looks to the West rather than the East although there are perhaps more adaptive lessons to learn from Asia," says Lakhdar Brahimi, former Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General and former Foreign Minister of Algeria.

While WANA is far from realising a regional entity comparable to the EU or APEC, a regional non-threatening platform for dialogue and cooperation is taking hold, which could be the beginnings of Prince El Hassan bin Talal's vision of a Community of Water and Energy for the Human Environment similar to Europe's Coal and Steel Community that paved the way for the EU. The West Asia – North Africa (WANA) Forum, which provides a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, seeks to complement existing frameworks of international cooperation by cultivating ideas and initiatives from within the region and by the people of the region.

One example is Hima (meaning 'protected area' in Arabic), which is based on a traditional system of community-based natural and human resource management practiced in the WANA region for more than 1500 years. Emphasising the role of the individual as both stakeholder and steward of the natural and human environment, Hima is one of the positive contributions that traditional knowledge and indigenous approaches of the WANA region brought and can still bring to sustainable development (social, economic, environmental and cultural) – in contrast to recently imported approaches to conservation, which have largely led to detriments in WANA and elsewhere, including the displacement of indigenous people and impoverishment of local communities that are denied access to the natural resources on which they have depended for their livelihoods.

Perhaps in a period of history where the WANA region is known more for its bleak statistics (as host of the world's largest number of conflicts and uprooted populations), it is worth recognising that the region has more to contribute than oil and delectable cuisine. As WANA's youth (with an estimated 60 per cent under the age of 30) start to reject being cast as society's economic burden, they will come to realise the vast human potential and social capital they yield. And for those who have left the region as part of the 'brain drain' phenomenon, maybe they too can see promise in a region whose rich cultural, ethnic and religious heritage and

diversity can be a source of security, stability and prosperity rather than a cause for conflict.

According to Rehman Sobhan, author of *Challenging the Injustice of Poverty* and Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue in Bangladesh, the region's rich cultural and religious inheritance represents the value added communities bring to the development process in collective ownership, such as a regional cohesion fund that aims to empower communities in becoming inclusive partners of private enterprise. This investment mechanism, based on the notion that everyone has a stake in shaping their future, is a promising alternative to the unsustainable ad-hoc, bilateral financial flows from richer countries to poorer countries.

Perhaps then the hope that is building across the WANA region will translate into peace and prosperity in their collective *bayt al sha'ar*. Created by women and tightly woven from camel and goat hair on ground looms, these tents were once home for all: rich and poor, old and young, hunter and gatherer, merchant and mystic. Combining ancient tradition and wisdom with modern perspectives gives rise to a mutual structure upon which solutions are built. Whether tent or tile, cement or cinderblock, it is the *diwan* of discussion, the *hima* of ideas that embodies the spirit of *bayt al sha'ar* – with social cohesion the most needed currency of our time.

RECONSTRUCTION & RECOVERY

The Role of the Private Sector in Reconstructing Basra

Almost every major conflict today is fought within the confines of West Asia – North Africa (WANA), impacting the livelihoods of millions of people across the region. According to a report by the Strategic Foresight Group, conflict has cost the region almost $12 trillion in lost revenue. Recognising the failures of current reconstruction efforts, the WANA Forum highlighted the need for innovative, multilateral approaches in developing regional action plans in post-conflict environments with long-term strategic planning that invests in people and their future.

Towards this end, the WANA Forum convened December 2010 in Amman for a consultation on the role of the Private Sector in Reconstructing Basra. In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the London School of Economics and Politics, the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit at the University of York and the SHM Foundation, the WANA Forum brought together representatives from Basra's local government, private and civil society actors, as well as multi-national companies and international development agencies to outline the ways in which Basra's vast resources and potential could be geared towards poverty alleviation, the empowerment of local communities, the diversification of economy and the development of socially and environmentally responsible enterprise. In a region of great national and international strategic importance, Basra represents an ideal case study for examining the emergent benefits of an integrated social, economic and environmental approach to addressing human security in reconstruction in WANA.

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, WANA Forum Chairman, stated that efforts in reconstruction require a shift from hard power to soft power, favouring a long-term human security approach based on food, energy and water security. Participants noted the importance of understanding Basra's multifaceted challenges, and raised concerns over health, unemployment, environmental degradation and a lack of social, economic and political opportunity. To overcome such challenges, Mohammad Ehsan Zia of the National Solidarity Programme of Afghanistan remarked that successful regional examples in reconstruction prove the need to engage communities in development, in setting their own priorities and empowering them to participate as agents of change in improving their own social and economic wellbeing. Community empowerment has the potential to a) raise civic awareness on the social, economic and environmental challenges as well as opportunities, b) monitor and report on investments and other issues, putting pressure on local, national and international actors to be transparent and

held accountable, and c) network within and outside of Iraq to give momentum to initiatives aimed at enhancing social cohesion through sustainable development.

Participants also reflected on how enterprise can serve as a mobiliser for reconstruction. As Paolo Lembo, Country Director of UNDP Iraq, stated, this can only occur under a conducive environment that encourages growth and development. Strengthening cross-sectoral partnerships is needed to create an enabling environment in which government fulfils its basic functions and takes a leading role in establishing mechanisms to support the private sector in the socio-economic development of Basra. Such a change would, however, require regulatory reform to enable the diversification of revenue, empowering local administrations with the capacity to offer services to help set up businesses without unnecessary legal or bureaucratic obstacles. Simona Marinescu, Senior Economist at UNDP Iraq, explained that the private sector is better placed to provide services to the community, manage resources more efficiently, and can directly support local businesses and offer greater employment opportunities. As such, Basra's 'resource-dependent' economy would undergo significant market diversification, signalling new opportunities in the private sector and lessening the burden of responsibility for job creation in the public sector.

The overall recommendations of the consultation highlighted the need to formally activate the Third Domain of partnership, promoting dialogue between civil society and the public and private sectors. One proposal was to establish a socio-economic council with cross-sector representation in Basra. A virtual regional network would also link local, regional and international actors who can provide financing, share expertise, raise awareness and work towards introducing relevant policies. Participants also emphasised the need for research to provide the grounding of knowledge needed for large-scale reform in Basra and across Iraq. A regional knowledge centre could carry out the necessary research and work required to promote large scale reform and encourage private sector development.

Participants agreed that a mechanism is also needed to train local labour, entrepreneurs and civil servants, and to engage the most vulnerable in society (socio-economically disadvantaged, youth, women and the uprooted). Such a centre could, for example, offer a programme on Strategic Leadership Development for government officials, businessmen and women and civil society – offering not only skills training but also providing the foundation in which Third Domain actors can learn from one another and work toward common goals.

The WANA Institute for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Leadership

proposal

The West Asia-North Africa region possesses a deep and proud history, a range of rich cultures and customs, and unprecedented levels of charity. Yet it is also home to many of the world's most chronic and protracted crises in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere. Human-made conflicts are exacerbated by vulnerability to natural disasters, severe water shortages, and "shocks" in the prices of food, fuel and finance (the 3Fs). Yet despite its challenges, too many countries within the region have far too long depended on foreign nations, financial institutions, and non-governmental institutions (NGOs) to design, finance and implement humanitarian, reconstruction and development activities. The result has been a loss of control for the people of the region, the deepening of external dependencies, the erosion of states' sovereignty, the de-legitimisation of governing institutions, and the erosion of cultures.

Yet the challenge is not one of resources. Countries within the WANA region have historically been among the most generous donors to humanitarian and international development programmes around the world. Rather, the larger hurdle is the limited availability of individuals to design and lead these programmes within many of the most heavily crisis-afflicted contexts. The WANA region possesses phenomenal expertise in topics ranging from agriculture to engineering, economics, and medicine but lacks institutions to adapt this technical knowledge to the unique challenges posed by conflict and other forms of vulnerability and human insecurity which are unique to the WANA region. The region would benefit from an institution to undertake this task – designing tailored strategies for resolving conflict and fragility within WANA – and to then build capacities and disseminate knowledge to civil servants, civil society, and others.

Despite the severity of this problem, the solution is elegantly simple and within our collective grasp. The WANA region can regain responsibility for and leadership over humanitarian, reconstruction and development activities by ensuring that cadres of well-trained aid workers, civil servants, and social entrepreneurs are available in every country within the region. In the event of crisis, these cadres may respond quickly and in a manner appropriate to the local culture and circumstances. This institution, which we tentatively label the WANA Institute for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Leadership (or "the WANA Institute"), will be able

to produce high-quality research and to provide in-depth seminars and courses on humanitarian, reconstruction and development issues such as context analysis, needs assessment, programme design, public administration, displacement and migration, international humanitarian law, public financial management, social development, economic development, food security, infrastructure rehabilitation, monitoring and evaluation, and managing relations with the international aid community.

The research element will consolidate existing knowledge in order to ensure its applicability to the WANA region and will develop original research, which will include reports and briefing papers, will also be converted into practically-orientated tools for policymakers and practitioners designing and managing courses in the field. Building upon this research, courses will allow participants to receive a regionally and internationally recognised degree and/or certificate. Individuals trained at the WANA Institute would then provide further training to colleagues and others within their home countries. As such, the model involved would be a form of "training of trainers" which would allow lessons provided at the WANA Institute to filter down far more broadly. In the future, the WANA Institute would also, however, develop relationships with local universities and training centres in particularly conflict-affected countries in order to allow experts to provide courses directly within these contexts in a more accessible manner.

The WANA Institute's mission will be to produce, pilot and disseminate world-class training programmes, founded in and backed up by original research, focused upon the challenges posed by conflict, disasters, reconstruction and poverty within the WANA region. The WANA Institute, with the support of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Institute of the University of York and other organisations, can become a centre defined by the mantra "research for training", rather than "research and training".

The WANA Institute will specifically target "doers" – particularly civil servants and civil society representatives – from throughout the WANA region. The Institute's research will be practically-orientated and result in pragmatic policy and programmatic options from among which practitioners and decision-makers may select based on their local circumstances. This notion of "options" replaces the traditional emphasis of many researcher institutions on "recommendations". As a regional institution rooted in an understanding of the WANA region's tremendous diversity, the WANA Institute will consistently aim to provide menus from among which leaders may select based upon their particular contexts and circumstances. What may be appropriate in Pakistan may be suitable or feasible in Sudan, and vice versa. The WANA Institute is committed to moving away from the "global best practice" model emphasised by many international actors as there are no "best" practices but rather a spectrum of informed approaches which will, in the region's diverse contexts, always require careful monitoring and adjustment over time.

Social Cohesion

WANA Social Charter

The recent events in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and other contexts across the region, serve to highlight the highly volatile political situations in many societies today. Increasing demographic pressures that strain the social fabric of the region, widening inequalities that undermine people's sense of belonging and the rise of sectarian and nationalist identities, which is increasingly leading to defragmentation and conflict, are some of the supranational challenges that can only be faced collectively.

It is in this context that in January 2011 WANA Forum members came together in Doha, in partnership with the Arab Democracy Foundation, to draft a set of principles and values to serve as the vision of WANA members and their audiences, and would emphasise a regional identity that transcends political, ethnic and ideological borders and reinforces the individual's sense of belonging to a WANA region-wide community. These principles range from regional cooperation, to building on common heritage and interdependency, to the importance of restoring human dignity, all of which are principles that the WANA Forum has advocated since its inception.

A human-centred approach to security is both essential in order to build a solid foundation for social cohesion and as a sign of social progress. Participants felt that the human component of security has not been sufficiently addressed by many WANA countries, especially in regards to individuals' socio-economic status. Many inequalities continue to exist in the region, such as the lack of access to financial resources, economic opportunities and social services, i.e. health and education. The WANA region is home to 99 million unemployed individuals and 150 million people live below the poverty line, with increasing gaps between societal groups. The WANA Forum views social cohesion as an integral part of socio-economic development, empowering everyone, including women, youth, the socio-economically underprivileged and the uprooted.

Participants highlighted the problems of current policies (or the lack of) on issues pertaining to minorities. The WANA region is culturally, ethnically and ideologically diverse, and although ethnic, sectarian, tribal and religious diversity does not in itself threaten human security, the politicisation of identities in the region often leads to polarisation, violence and armed conflict. Recognising and accommodating diverse ethnicities, languages, religions and identities in mainstream societies is an essential component of social cohesion, rather than a threat. Bakhtiar Amin, Founder of the International Alliance for Justice and Former Minister for Human Rights in Iraq, warned that social cohesion must not be equated with ethnic homogeneity and should facilitate inclusion, social equity and evolved forms of

citizenship. The WANA Vision draws on the individual's sense of belonging to a WANA region-wide community based on shared values while not eroding national identities.

The WANA Vision will be launched in WANA Forum 2011: Region in Transition as a code of conduct that inspires and governs the work of the WANA Forum. Those who endorse it are, by their support, committing and upholding the principles in their public and private spheres of life.

WANA Vision

Diverse Humanity, United in Dignity

We, as individuals from the West Asia - North Africa (WANA) region, in affirming our respect for human dignity and embracing social cohesion for the collective good, aspire to:

Achieve equal opportunity as a means to help people realise their basic human needs;

People should be able to realise their most basic human needs, live free from hunger, poverty and conflict and be granted equal opportunity to fulfil their aspirations. A more equal and just society is more likely to bring peace and prosperity.

Foster citizenship and good governance;

Promoting citizenship and participation at all levels requires developing the rule of law through transparency, monitoring, accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms with the prerequisites of good governance and supported by relevant legislation. Similarly, the establishment of standards for governance in the work of governments, security agencies, parliaments, the judiciary and local government bodies, civil society organisations and private sector entities amongst others is necessary.

Create opportunities for prosperity and sustainable development;

The vast resources in the region must be invested in a production-oriented sustainable economy that enhances market diversity and creates job opportunities. Furthermore, nations must work together to help promote enterprise and entrepreneurship so that the region can utilise its resources and lead in innovation and technology. Finally, post-conflict economies should look to building back better, investing in greener, longer-term solutions.

Commit to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in the education of future generations and investment in the region's human capital;

The West Asia - North Africa region used to be at the forefront of scientific discovery and creativity. Today, while certain areas witness high literacy rates, many qualified people are not afforded the opportunity to develop or implement their skills. This in turn leads to the brain drain, whereby many of the region's most talented individuals leave their countries to fulfil their aspirations abroad. Thus, it is essential that we strive to harness the region's human capital with the aim of offering the best services and developing economic and social welfare.

Promote processes of inclusion that harness our diversity more effectively;
West Asia – North Africa embodies a rich cultural, ethnic and religious history. Such diversity enriches the social fabric of the region, and can be a source of security, stability and prosperity rather than a cause for conflict. Thus, we must endeavour to create an enabling environment that promotes respect for differences, celebrates diversity and pluralism and ensures freedom of expression. By upholding our responsibility to protect the rights of all communities who make up our region, we can more successfully safeguard against civil unrest and foreign intervention.

Secure peace and build community resilience;
Regional strategies and mechanisms are needed to resolve conflicts and rebuild societies beyond physical infrastructure development and with the vision to restore the hopes and broaden the horizons of the peoples in the region. Only then can we collectively work across disciplines and ideological divides to avoid the break-out of future conflicts and to secure peace and resilience in the face of adversity.

Provide refuge and relief to the uprooted, strive to safeguard their rights and undertake measures to resolve the root causes of displacement;
As a result of conflict, poverty, natural disaster, marginalisation and forced migration, uprooted populations require refuge and assistance, their rights restored and their livelihoods secured. We must shoulder the responsibility of developing regional mechanisms for reconstruction and recovery that address the long-term needs of the uprooted. Furthermore, mechanisms for conflict prevention must address the causes and contributors to forced migration, including environmental factors such as energy insecurity and water scarcity.

Respect our human and natural environments as stewards of the Earth;
In order for us and for future generations to live once again in harmony with nature and in a safe, balanced and stable environment, we must draw on our ancestors' wisdom, experience and knowledge in promoting appropriate governance, norms, ethics and means to collaboratively co-manage and common-pool resources to secure livelihoods. We should thus work toward the development, implementation and management of himas in the region, in accordance with national laws and international treaties.

And to this end,

we endeavour to overcome common challenges through cooperation and interdependence, working toward regional solutions that transcend ethnic, political, social and cultural boundaries;

recognising the suffering of others as our own, we subscribe to a vision for cooperation based on human dignity and with the aim of securing a decent living and a peaceful and prosperous future for us and for generations to come;

In consequence whereof, we commit to upholding and respecting the aforementioned vision of the West Asia - North Africa Forum.

Social Cohesion Index for WANA

proposal

The Social Cohesion Index (SCI) is a pioneering and ambitious project developed by the WANA Forum to measure social cohesion within countries in the West Asia-North Africa region. This Index, which remains in its early stages of development, was created as an instrument that would allow for rigorous monitoring of social cohesion levels within those countries in order to identify challenges and support evidence-based policies.

As recent events in the region demonstrate, negative sentiments generated amongst citizens of WANA in the wake of demographic pressures, widespread inequalities, entrenched pockets of poverty, corruption, lack of political representation, deeply rooted divisions and chronic unemployment could gradually lead to social defragmentation and the outbreak of clashes and conflict if not adequately addressed.

The WANA Social Cohesion Index is based on elements that contribute to social cohesion, such as security and state capacity, equality, participation and engagement, civic culture, displacement, mutual trust, social networks, social solidarity, tolerance to diversity and inclusion, material well-being, health and social security, and emotional well-being. The final SCI is composed of indicators within these elements, based on a complex and rigorous statistical process.

The assumption is that greater social cohesion is felt in secure, egalitarian societies where there are few disparities in terms of access to income, employment, education and health. A cohesive society is enriched with its different components and social networks. It is a society where individuals trust one another and trust their state and its institutions, and out of their sense of belonging and responsibility, they actively participate in political and civic life and are willing to work towards the collective good. Tolerance to diversity would be key in such a society as opposed to politicisation of identities and ethnicities that could only lead to the marginalisation of peoples, polarisation and conflict.

Unsurprisingly, the first round of results of the SCI ranking of WANA countries from highest to lowest in social cohesion caused discontent and concern amongst many WANA Forum members. They warned that countries studied will be increasingly averse to being ranked as is the case with other performance-related Indexes. But given that the Social Cohesion Index is meant to be a social policy tool that could help a state measure its performance year-on-year with regards to social cohesion, the WANA Forum intends to turn the Index into a self-assessment

framework, instead of opting for the statistically rigorous Index route, emphasising inter-country comparison and ranking. This would encourage and enable each country within the WANA region to build its own Social Cohesion Profile, based on qualitative and quantitative indicators, identifying their own weaknesses and areas of improvement, which in turn could be addressed through deployment of resources via the Social Cohesion Fund (SCF) for which the WANA Forum is currently developing a proposal, technical/capacity-building support, peer-to-peer learning and other measures. Countries are increasingly averse to being or named and shamed; but they can be open to suggestions which improve their social cohesion status over time.

Although the SCI establishes a common denominator for Social Cohesion as the Index stands now, it is impossible to draw any conclusions as to which dimensions of social cohesion are strong or weak in each context. In order to facilitate the identification of problematic areas that need to be addressed, it is important to categorise the Index and group the indicators into different domains i.e. social, economic and political. In addition, a different weightage could be given to each category/domain. But given that there are variations in each country's context, developmental challenges, and priorities and weightages, once applied, cannot be adjusted to account for such variations, another idea could be to differentiate two types of indicators whether for an Index or Profile: core and supporting indicators. Not every Indicator is equally relevant for every country, and nor is it necessary for each country to tick each box. Thus, a core set of indicators can be identified, which will need to be collected for every country. These can be supplemented by an optional or a supporting set, from which each country can choose what it wants to collect. Any comparison and ranking (if undertaken) will be based on the core set, while the supporting indicators will provide a way of capturing the different realities in different countries.

The data used for computing the Index is mostly external, and for certain countries, much of it is unavailable. Proxies are unsatisfactory in many cases. Qualitative information such as citizens' opinions or perceptions are hard to find, so the Index tends to lean heavily towards information pertaining to the state and its institutions. To obtain acceptable quantitative data, reliable national sources should be identified. As for the intangible and qualitative data, this could be obtained by conducting primary surveys, which could be carried out through a polling company hired to design the questions and conduct surveys across the pilot countries.

The WANA Forum does not have the institutional capacity or the resources required to run this Index/profiling tool year on year across the region (as is the case with UNDP's Human Development Index or the Transparency International's annual index), and country ownership will be essential to sustain the effort. This is why the Index or Profile will have to be 'anchored' in every WANA country in a local institution capable of collecting data and producing the report each year, or perhaps every two years. Clear criteria would need to be developed regarding the type of institution this should be, and some capacity-building may be required. Some institutions (or most) will also want financial support to run the Index for an initial period.

Next Steps

- Preparation of a project proposal to refine and finalise the SCI/profiling tool and initiate in-depth assessment in a couple of pilot countries – initial duration could be 12 months.

- Finalisation of the tool, including refining the indicators[1], identification of data sources, and development of guidelines to conduct the exercise for partner institutions.

- Implementation of the project in pilot countries, including identification of partner institutions in each pilot country, training and capacity-building support, collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

- Data analysis and preparation of country reports by national partner institutions[2], including identification of strengths and weaknesses of each country.

- Collation and synthesis of country reports and lessons learnt by the WANA Forum Secretariat.

- Establishment of an online repository/portal to disseminate the results and the tool itself. An Index or Profile is only useful if people know about it, accept it and use it. An online central database and information repository could include not only the Index results but also supplementary information, documents and reports from each country. An advocacy campaign might also be needed to demonstrate its existence and usefulness. The link between the Index (or elements of the Profile) and other global indices, especially those that deal with fragile or conflict-affected states, should ideally be established if this instrument is to be used as an early warning indicator of conflict.

- Development of a plan for replication/scaling up and policy advocacy at national, regional and global levels.

---

1 Experience suggests that the more complex an indicator set, the more difficult it is to elicit data and secure ownership. The 12 elements could be compressed to as few as three (for example social, economic, political dimensions of social cohesion; or the classic dimensions of social inclusion, social capital and networks, solidarity and trust), or a few more such as security and stability which are particularly relevant for the region. But twelve seems far too many and must be consolidated.

2 See State of Democracy reports for various countries, guided/supported by international IDEA but driven largely by in-country stakeholders.

A COHESION FUND FOR WANA

proposal

Social Cohesion, as defined by Ibn Khaldoun, a renowned Muslim scholar of the Middle Ages, is a force that binds groups together through a common language, culture and social behaviour. Yet despite the WANA region's rich historical and cultural roots, its social fabric is weakening in the wake of demographic pressures, widespread inequalities, entrenched pockets of poverty, deeply rooted divisions, numerous political, sectarian and religious conflicts and chronic unemployment. In a volatile and vulnerable region such as WANA, social cohesion – the intangible bond that holds members of society together and facilitates progress, development and prosperity – is a key component of stability and peace. It is an ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, challenges and equal opportunities through integrated social, economic and environmental policies that facilitate inclusion, integration and participation. Social cohesion is an integral part of socio-economic development that seeks to empower everyone.

The regional social cohesion fund aims to empower communities to retain their collective identity, become inclusive partners of private enterprise and emerge as equal stakeholders, with both rights and responsibilities. This investment mechanism, based on the notion that everyone has a stake in shaping their future, is a promising alternative to the unsustainable ad-hoc, bilateral financial flows from richer countries to poorer countries. Although development loans and grants from regional financial institutions play an important role in the WANA region, they need to be complemented by a more and productive financing mechanism for investing funds that benefit the entire region and not only in times of conflict.

A leading Social Cohesion Fund for the WANA region is needed to fill existing and future gaps:
- Excessive debt capital;
- Nascent social investment market;
- Many transactions occur as donations;
- Existing social investment vehicles focus on existing for-profit social ventures;
- Absence of favourable regulatory frameworks for social cohesion projects;
- WANA private equity markets crippled by difficult investment exit strategies;
- Raising new funds in WANA requires a unique investment thesis and strategy;
- WANA social capital markets need to be developed by drawing on the Third Domain;
- Security concerns block the development of various social cohesion projects;
- Government intervention remains high.

The objective of the Fund is to support projects and initiatives that serve the overarching aim of fostering social cohesion and strengthening solidarity within and across West Asia and North Africa. Governments, private sector and civil society across the region will be invited to contribute to the fund and to give local communities across the region a 'corporate equity stake' in order to create a permanent source of income generation. Ultimately, the aim is to address the deep social, economic and environmental injustices by attempting structural change that provides opportunities for greater inclusion.

Project eligibility is contingent upon the applicant's ability to demonstrate the potential and lasting impact of the initiative on fostering social cohesion. Since integrated solutions are required to address multifaceted challenges, the project needs to address and aim toward at least five of the following dimensions of social cohesion:

- **Equality:** Promoting access to resources, such as secure and fair employment and affordable quality education and healthcare, and legal and institutional mechanisms that can help to break the cycle of exclusion and poverty.

- **Participation and engagement:** Promoting civic participation and community engagement with the aim of strengthening their solidarity and sense of belonging to the communities they live in.

- **Capacity-building and community ownership:** Developing the capacity of individuals and communities to work toward long-term home-grown solutions.

- **Sustainable development:** Promoting environmental stewardship across sectors, linking the natural environment with social justice and advocating collective action toward a more equitable and sustainable future.

- **Partnership and collaboration across sectors:** Activating the Third Domain (government, private sector and civil society) in partnership and building trust among them.

- **Diversity and inclusiveness:** Fostering an enabling and inclusive environment that promotes respect for differences, celebrating diversity and pluralism and protecting the rights of all individuals and groups who make up the WANA region.

- **Connectivity:** Promoting regional connectivity, such as opening communication lines and facilitating trans-boundary movement of peoples, resources and ideas.

Environment

THE REVIVAL OF HIMA IN WEST ASIA – NORTH AFRICA

Bridging traditional understanding and modern-day practices

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), the United Nations University – Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the West Asia - North Africa (WANA) Forum and the World Justice Project (WJP), in partnership with the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) held a three day regional workshop in April 2011 on Hima governance that was held at IRCICA in Istanbul, Turkey. Hima, which literally means 'protected area' in Arabic, is a community-based environmental resource management system that promotes sustainability, conservation, environmental protection and social justice.

The workshop drew 32 participants from different countries across the WANA region, comprising representatives from NGOs, government agencies, universities and local communities. Participants examined traditional and contemporary approaches in community-based resource management, such as Himas, and protected area management, such as Nature Reserves, drawing on economic, social, environmental and cultural knowledge and wisdom as well as legal mechanisms and the potential for regional cooperation. In the current context of transition in the region, the workshop highlighted the importance of Hima as a concept that emerges from within WANA in contrast to the blind copying of imported models, and emphasised the empowerment of local stakeholders, recognition of natural and cultural resources, provision of sound political and legal frameworks, in addition to economic viability and resilience to crises.

The workshop appraised the rationale for devising a strategic policy, based on discussions from the workshop and synthesis of the case study write-ups, to revive the Hima approach to meet present-day challenges. By integrating traditional knowledge and wisdom with scientific innovation, the objective of this regional collaboration is to establish a community-based environmental resource management system that is applicable not only to the WANA region but for the rest of the world as well. Based on a set of principles and indicators within a legal framework and grounded in the region's rich tradition of Islamic ecological ethics, pilot studies were proposed for verifying and modifying the Hima management system.

The policy brief on Hima governance, the first of its kind, will serve as a tool that can be adapted to meet the needs of local communities, while the proposed

knowledge management system will be the region's hub for sharing case studies, interactive maps and proposed regional projects. Journalists attending the workshop suggested the production of a documentary on Hima to capture men and women's oral history, indigenous knowledge acquired and maintained for over 1500 years.

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Chairman of the WANA Forum, said he hopes that the outcome of the workshop will serve the larger aim of cultivating and developing WANA's cultural traditions and values, including its 'knowledge heritage', in order to respond more effectively to the socio-economic needs of people in the region, irrespective of labels and groupings. "The challenges facing the region are transnational," he added.

Toward Supranational Mechanisms to addressing the Challenges of Water Scarcity

According to the UNDP, more than 45 million people in the region lack access to clean water or safe sanitation. With water scarcity an imperative to political, social and economic sustainability and security, the WANA Forum gathered some of the region's foremost experts in water to address the concept of supranational mechanisms for water security in WANA.

The consultation, which took place February 2011 in Amman, examined transnational water policies and concepts to help promote transnational cooperation on water across the region. The outcome of the consultation will be a policy brief on supranational mechanisms for ensuring improved water management and governance. A transnational approach is particularly important as almost 65% of water resources in WANA are shared between two or more nations. Establishing and promoting dialogue among nations that share water resources will lead to fairer agreements and measures based on international laws and conventions. Proper management of shared water resources also requires a knowledge base of technical, political, and legal issues, to enable the development of a body of information on regional water resources and policies.

Drawing on His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal's vision of a WANA equivalent to the Community of Coal and Steel, Dr. Walid Saleh, Regional Coordinator at the United Nations University – Institute for Water, Environment and Health, stated that water is closely linked to human security, as it forms part of the water, energy and food security nexus. He observed that water might – and indeed, should – serve as a source of social cohesion and socio-economic development in the future for WANA. Integration of water management policies with that of energy and food can help provide for the most basic needs of people in WANA. Furthermore, the integration of these three resources can build regional dialogue and cooperation, establishing a platform for discussion at a regional level, comparable to that of the European Union during the 20th century, and most recently the ASEAN community. The consultation was geared towards transnational cooperation on water management policies, and examined how public, private and civil society sectors could cooperate to improve water management across WANA.

Noting the fragile water situation in WANA, participants called for immediate intervention to improve water management and the efficiency of water use. The merits and disadvantages to water management measures as potential solutions

to water scarcity problems were discussed, with desalination and biosaline agriculture amongst the recommendations. However, it was agreed that the adaptation measures and the efforts to cope with water scarce conditions must take into consideration specific constraints and requirements such as available data, existing capacities, financial resources, technology, and institutions. Without securing reliable data on the status of freshwater ecosystems and the potential responses they may exhibit under climate change, it will be very difficult to design efficient and economically-feasible adaptation measures especially when considering the different timeframes of responses and consequences.

In order for WANA countries to develop adaptation measures and strategies to cope with the potential impacts of climate change on water resources, collaboration and coordination between stakeholders at the national and regional level should exist. Governments must take into consideration the demands and needs of both the private and civil society sectors for responsible and fair policymaking. Dr. Mukhtar Hashemi, Associate Researcher at Newcastle University, UK and Scientific Advisor for the Ministry of Energy, Iran presented the importance of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in providing water policy solutions for the region. Similarly, Dr. Abdelrahman Tamimi, Director General of the Palestinian Hydrology Group for Water and Environmental Resources Development, and Dr. Tarek Merabtene, Assistant Professor at Sharjah University, UAE both encouraged policymakers to take into consideration the potential for socio-economic policies that become self-sustaining, and provide for water-poor communities.