



## **Closing statement of the Arab Social Democratic Forum**

**Cairo, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

On the initiative of Social Democrats parties of Egypt, Palestine, and Tunisia, the first meeting of the Arab Social Democrats Forum was held in Cairo on 20 January 2013. The Arab Social Democrats Forum was attended by 19 major parties from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region based on democratic and social justice values, in addition to observers of sister European, African, Asian and South American social democratic parties and unions. The Forum was convened in partnership with the Global Progressive Forum, the Party European Socialists, the S&D group in the European Parliament, and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies.

Two major topics characterized the discussion of the first meeting of the Forum. On one hand, the Forum highlighted the numerous challenges facing democratic transition in the Arab World. On the other, the Forum discussed ways to meet these challenges and ensure a steady progress towards achieving the demands and aspirations of the Arab Spring: namely freedom, democracy, social justice, economic development, rule of law, and good governance. The economic and social crisis was also at the centre of our discussions.

The region needs progressive cooperation to face its three major political challenges:

1. Transforming autocratic states into democracies (with a new political system, check and balances, reformed justice and freedom of the media),
2. Ending the Israeli occupation of Arab land and fulfilling the Palestinian people quest for self-determination and the independence and the realization of their inalienable rights as an integral part of the Arab Spring aspirations for freedom and justice,
3. While at the same time answering the demands of the people for improved living conditions and increased job creation, in an environment of social justice. Together we represent a strong voice in opposition to the rhetoric and populism of conservatives.

To meet these challenges, the Forum declares that it will form a focal point for solidifying and directing the political social democratic movement in the Arab world through effective coordination on a domestic, regional and international level.

We are deeply committed to further developing this common project and to take the Forum to the next level. In order to do so, the Forum decided:

1. To encourage partnership, coordination, the exchange of ideas and resources between the parties already established and nurture nascent parties and the under establishment in the Arab world;
2. To provide political, moral, financial and logistical support to parties under foundation based on social democratic principles;
3. To publish and disseminate social democratic ideas that demonstrate the ideology's principles, such as equality, freedom of expression, women's rights, minority rights and rights of non-Arab

peoples in the Arab world and producing political programs and manifestos for social democratic parties;

4. To establish effective means of communication and exchange between Arab social democrats and their international counter parts in order to focus global support through partnerships and joint participation for the promotion of common principles;
5. To follow up on the work done and to organize new activities in the upcoming period; to further develop the youth and women dimension by identifying and supporting initiatives in favour of the youth and women's empowerment.

**List of Signatories:**

FFS, Algeria

ESDP, Egypt

PUK, Iraq

JSDP, Jordan

PSP, Lebanon

USFP, Morocco

Fatah, Palestine

PNI, Palestine

Ettakatol, Tunisia