



# CLUB DE MADRID

## PARTICIPATION, DIALOGUE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA PROJECT

### Club of Madrid Members Involved

#### Former Presidents:

Jorge Quiroga, **Bolivia** • Cassam Uteem, **Mauritius**

#### Former Prime Ministers:

Abdulkarim Al Eryani, **Yemen** • Sadig Al Mahdi, **Sudan** • Philip Dimitrov, **Bulgaria** • Zlatko Lagumdžija, **Bosnia & Herzegovina** • Lionel Jospin, **France** • Valdis Birkavs, **Latvia** • Wim Kok, the **Netherlands** • Jennifer Shipley, **New Zealand** • Kjell Magne Bondevik, **Norway** • Felipe González, **Spain**

### Project Partners

European Commission • UNDEF • **Bahrain**:

Jamal Fakhro, Abdulaziz Abul, Abdalnaby Alekry • **Egypt**: Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies • **Jordan**: Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan •

**Morocco**: Maroc 2020 • **Saudi Arabia**: King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies • **Spain**: FRIDE: Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior • **Tunisia**: Ahmed Driss • **Yemen**: Yemen Womens' Union; the Political Development Forum.

### CLUB OF MADRID: Promoting Leadership for Democracy That Delivers

The **Club of Madrid** is an independent organization dedicated to strengthening democratic leadership around the world by drawing on the unique experience and resources of its Members – 72 former Presidents and Prime Ministers from 51 countries.

In partnership with individuals, organizations and governments that share its goals, the **Club of Madrid** provides peer to peer counsel, strategic support and technical advice to leaders and institutions working to further democratic development around the world.

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## PARTICIPATION, DIALOGUE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA PROJECT

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Strengthening Dialogue and Democratic Values in the Middle East and North Africa Project is an initiative of the Club of Madrid designed to assist leaders in the region address a challenge they all face: that of effectively and constructively managing reforms and transformations in process throughout the region.

### WHY DEMOCRATIC VALUES?

The Project is based on the belief that, as project participants state: "Citizens must be free to exercise their rights as described within the framework of a law-based State, in accordance with internationally defined standards such as those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

### REGIONAL RELEVANCE

While national reform agendas and movements in the Arab region have promised and guaranteed expansion and consolidation of constitutionally protected civic rights, very few of these reform agendas have been put into practice.

As social demands for democratic participation increasingly call into question the current government structures and practices, these calls coupled with improved access to information have resulted in increased regional disillusionment and disenfranchisement, leading to increased civil unrest. Unemployment is on the rise, leaving the region's youth population more vulnerable and volatile.

This Project addresses the urgent need for dialogue and consensus between leadership and civil society and the advancement of the ongoing reform processes.

### PROJECT GOALS

- To respond to the challenges of citizens' expectations of democratic development through participatory, pluralist, transparent methods.
- To create strategies for dialogue among civil society, national authorities and experts, and to foster inclusion of civil society, including women and youth, for increased freedom of association and political participation.
- To develop consensus frameworks for further reforms based on locally defined parameters and promote institutionalizing dialogue processes.
- To share findings and accomplishments regionally to promote a consolidated approach for the participation of civil society in the formulation of policy for strengthened freedom of association.
- To promote greater gender awareness, identifying the obstacles to women's political participation and the centrality of equal political participation for a functioning democracy.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Active participation of over 500 leaders in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen from executive, judicial and legislative bodies including heads of state and government, ministers, members of upper and lower legislative houses, political parties and civil society organizations, activists, journalists and academics.
- Participation of civil society and government interlocutors in joint discussions to address unresolved and fundamental roadblocks in national consensus building processes, sometimes initiating and facilitating direct, open dialogue for the first time between opposing parties.
- Consensus building processes and institutionalized dialogue advocacy resulting in locally owned and drafted policy recommendations reached through the engagement of government and civil society leaders in over 25 dialogue activities facilitated by Club of Madrid Members and national partners.
- Delivery of policy recommendations to heads of government and state aimed to consolidate ongoing reform initiatives and advance democratic values in the region. Presentation and publication of these recommendations by national stakeholders ensure local ownership and widespread coverage.
- Promotion of policy recommendation implementation through continued peer to peer counsel with leaders at the highest level, alongside public advocacy and dissemination activities aimed at building awareness of, and adherence to, international guarantors of civic and political rights.

*"This project will work to understand and develop the best strategies for working with regional governments – while understanding the opinions of citizens – to help bring democratic reform. Freedom of association is one part of the political reforms that will take the cooperation of all groups and parties and will test the real and not just adopted democracy of a nation"*

*Al Imam Sadig Al Mahdi  
Former Prime Minister of Sudan  
Club of Madrid Member*

