

# The International Conference on the Role of Think Tanks in Developing Countries

## **Cairo Declaration**

January 18, 2009

Responding to the invitation of the Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center, IDSC, the participants of the conference from 33 countries representing think tank institutions, research centers, UN and other international, regional and national organizations assembled at the "International Conference on the Role of Think Tanks in Developing Countries; Challenges and Solutions" from 17 to 18 January 2009 in Cairo, Egypt, adopted the following Declaration.

### **Preamble**

- Whereas the world witnesses a profound and dynamic knowledge revolution that has crucially contributed to the socio-economic development of different countries, many in the south are still lagging behind in the realization of the MDGs.
- Whereas pledges of international cooperation to support developing countries have grown, the reality is that such support has been downplayed on the agenda of the developed countries.
- Whereas the challenges facing think tanks in developing countries, including lack of sustainable funding, capacity building and independence, hinder their effective role in decision making, there are emerging windows of opportunity that catalyze this role,

including the democratization processes and reform programs adopted by the countries in which these think tanks are located.

- We are convinced that close cooperation of think tanks in developing countries along with other interested similar organizations in the developed countries and United Nations organizations and other interested organizations could provide a useful basis for addressing these challenges.

### **Our Way-Ahead**

We have decided to set up a structured platform of cooperation to help developing countries to achieve their national goals through decision making support.

- We aim at
  - a) Promoting the role of think tanks in developing countries to enhance good governance and decision making.
  - b) Bringing together and forging links among think tanks institutions in developed and developing countries.
  - c) Sharing research and ideas through a common website and regular biennial conferences and workshops.
  - d) Cooperating in capacity building, exchange of visiting scholars and training researchers.
  - e) Creating the basis for collaborative research projects and other related activities by pooling expertise, financing and other resources.
  - f) Engaging in national and international advocacy on issues of common interest.

## **Procedure**

- We set our common task as to analyze situations, identify and evaluate problems using socio-ecological-economic sustainable development indicators, seeking sustainable solutions through scientific research and providing different options associated with developed scenarios that could support decision making.
- Our cooperation could be activated through the following,
  - a) Identifying common positions and interests.
  - b) Widening the dissemination of research material that supports decision making.
  - c) Systematizing a regular structured exchange of ideas and information.
  - d) Establishing working groups on issues of common interest.
  - e) Implementing joint projects.
  - f) Undertaking joint fundraising.

## **Towards Establishing a Network of Think Tanks for Developing Countries (NTTDC)**

To achieve the aspiration of this conference, participants agreed to establish the (NTTDC) according to the following principles:

### *Membership*

- Those participant organizations in the Cairo Conference in January 2009 who share the spirit and values of establishing this network are invited to constitute the "Founding Members" and to assume the role of the network "Steering Committee".
- Membership of the network is open to all interested think tanks and similar research institutions in all countries.
- UN organizations as well as other international and regional organizations are invited to join the network as partners.

### *Secretariat and Coordination*

The conference welcomes the following initiatives of IDSC:

- To establish a secretariat of the (NTTDC) while also assuming the responsibility of the Network Coordinator of the steering committee until the convening of the next conference in two years.
- To establish a website for the Network, host and maintain it until the convening of the next Conference. This website will provide a regular comprehensive and interactive framework for the exchange of information among the Member Organizations. The website will also be used to develop joint research projects and proposals and to distribute the reports and products of partner institutions. IDSC, Egypt will host the website and provide it with all needed technical

assistance and facilities. It will also appoint a Website Master for its maintenance and protection.

- IDSC will help any other Member Organization to establish a Mirror Site and its own server upon request.
- The website will be open to public access, excluding some secured areas.

**Cairo, Egypt**  
**18<sup>th</sup> January, 2009**