



# THE 2<sup>nd</sup> CAIRO FORUM

2025

OUR SECOND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
HOSTING 80+ EXPERTS FROM MORE THAN 25 COUNTRIES

DISCUSSING THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES  
ON THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND  
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

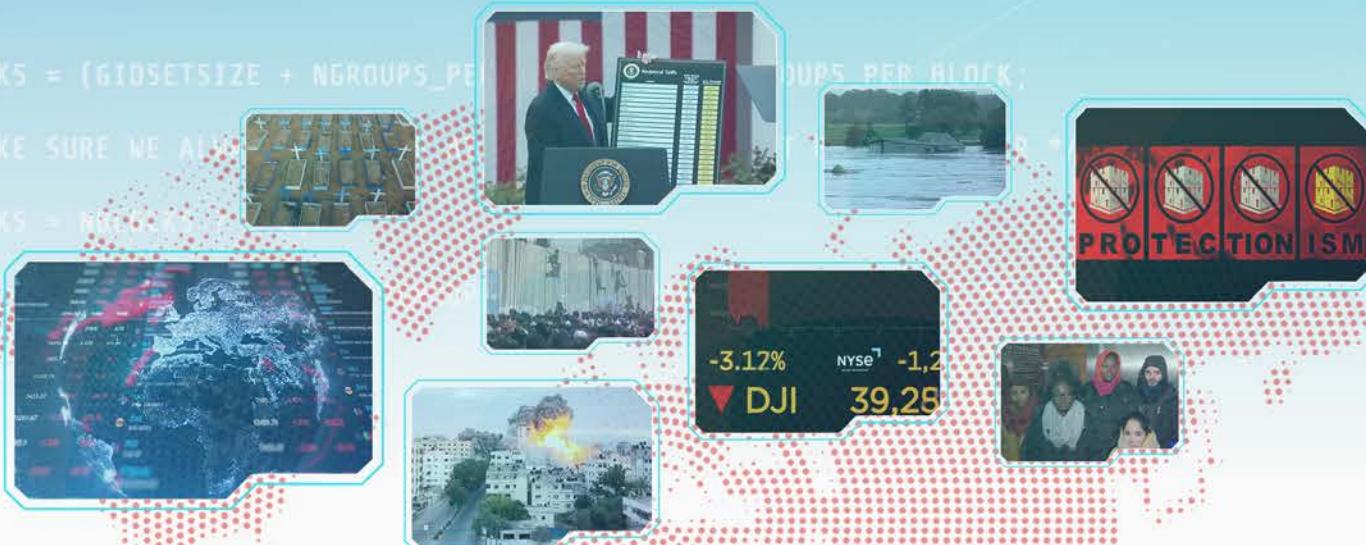


# THIS YEAR'S STORY



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# MORE GLOBAL DISRUPTION IN 2025: WHAT'S HAPPENING? & WHAT'S NEXT?

The disruption of the world has been building up for the last decade, primarily due to accumulated failure of the multilateral system in light of weaponized geopolitical conflicts and deteriorating climate conditions. The pace of disruption has multiplied several times, with the dawn of 2025 coinciding with the inauguration of Trump's second presidency. In a matter of hours, he took extreme actions that gravely shook the global health system, international trade system, all international efforts to slow down the deterioration of the climate condition, not to mention radical positions in dealing with the ongoing geopolitical conflicts especially in the Middle East.

The disruption in global financial markets is unprecedented, and global as well as regional growth and development in 2025 - not to mention the years to follow - are impossible to forecast. All regions in the world have been hit hard; whether Europe, Asia, Canada, Latin America, Africa or the Middle East. Protectionism is emerging more than ever as countries seek to protect their interests from the aggression of the biggest economic and political power in the world, the United States of America. The failure of the multilateral system is dragging the world back to the Mercantilist era.

seek to protect their interests from the power in the world, the United States of dragging the world back to the Mercantil

That's why this year in CAIRO FORUM 2, we have 2 Main Objectives:



First, to explore developments in key existential issues such as the future of the multilateral system in light of its daily exposed failure and the roles of BRICS and G20; How the US China contest is affecting the rest of the world; The turmoil in the Middle East and its economic implications especially with energy concerns; The climate, energy and poverty nexus; not to mention the faster-than-human-coping developments in artificial intelligence and its implications; and the spider web interconnections among all the above topics.

Its second objective is to capture a landscape snapshot of the world economy following 11 months of Trump's presidency. Specifically, how the US "America First" policies and disruptive withdrawal from international organizations affect Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Since we at ECES believe that the youth are not just the future but rather the leaders of today, Gen Z's opinion in all of the above issues will be heard.



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# THE 2<sup>nd</sup> CAIRO FORUM

2025



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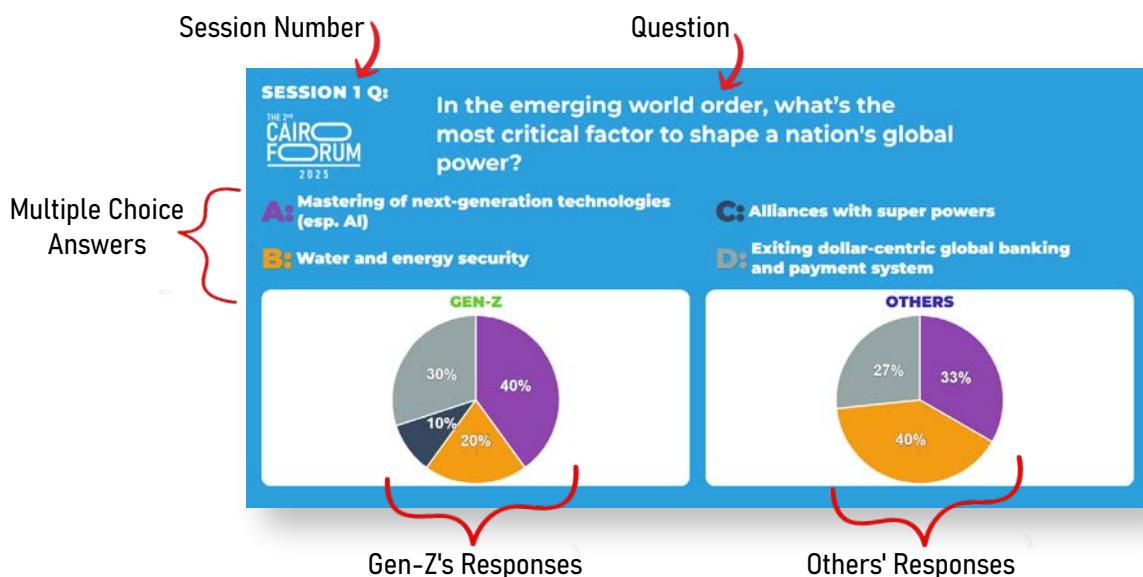
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## INTRODUCING LIVE POLLS

Since we at ECES believe that youth are not just the future, but rather the leaders of today, Gen-Z's opinion in all sessions was heard through an innovative live poll system. The questions and their responses are shown in each plenary session in which they have participated.



## OPENING SESSION

### Welcoming Remarks

The opening session of CAIRO FORUM 2 brought together H.E. Lt. Gen. Kamel El-Wazir, Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Industry and Transport; Mr. Omar Mohanna, Chairman of the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES); Dr. Thomas Volk, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS); and Dr. Abla Abdel-Latif, Executive Director and Director of Research at ECES, who collectively set the tone for the forum by addressing Egypt's strategic economic role amid ongoing global disruptions.

H.E. Lt. Gen. Kamel El-Wazir, Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Industry and Transport, emphasized Egypt's commitment to dialogue between government and research institutions and conveyed President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's support for the forum. He outlined Egypt's ambitious industrial and infrastructure agenda, including plans to raise industry's share of GDP from 14% to 20% by 2030, double industrial employment to 7 million jobs, and expand green industries to 5% of GDP. A comprehensive industrial strategy has identified 28 priority industries—such as engineering, petrochemicals, textiles, and automotive manufacturing—selected based on competitiveness, labor intensity, market size, and energy efficiency. Over the past two years, the government has introduced low-cost financing initiatives exceeding EGP 270 billion, helping revive more than 1,000 factories and strengthen exports. He also highlighted major infrastructure investments exceeding EGP 2 trillion over the past decade, including roads, railways, and modern electric transport systems. Egypt has developed seven integrated logistics corridors linking production zones to ports and markets, positioning the country as a regional and global hub for transport and trade. Crucially, Egypt is working to connect these corridors to major international routes, notably the India–Gulf–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), reinforcing its role as a bridge between Asia and Europe and strengthening the strategic importance of the Suez Canal.

Omar Mohanna, Chairman of ECES, described the forum as a platform for addressing profound global uncertainty driven by geopolitical rivalry, market volatility, climate pressures, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence. He emphasized Egypt's unique geographic and strategic position to help bridge divides between North and South and East and West, and noted that discussions will explore global economic governance, US-China competition, declining development finance, and pathways toward inclusive and sustainable growth.

Dr. Thomas Volk of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung highlighted Egypt's importance as Germany's leading trading partner in North Africa and a key player in regional energy, transport, and industrial policy, reaffirming Germany's commitment to economic cooperation.

Dr. Abla Abdel-Latif, Executive Director of ECES, concluded by stressing the forum's focus on multilateralism, global power shifts, energy security, climate challenges, artificial intelligence, and the role of youth, whose voices are being actively incorporated into the forum's deliberations.



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Jeffrey Sachs

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROFESSOR/ JEFFREY D. SACHS

University Professor and Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, and President, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network



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- Multipolarity means responsibility of the major powers to stay out of each other's way so we don't have conflict.
- We need common security and multilateralism under the UN Charter for a multipolar world to survive.
- The United States is coming to understand it cannot prevail in a trade war with China or a hot war with China.
- A state of Palestine should be the first order of business now, the first order of business, not the end of the process.
- A peace plan for Gaza means a state of Palestine on the borders of the 4th of June 1967.
- A true Arab region needs unity — not only political unity, but infrastructure integration: transport, power, digital connectivity, and ecology.
- Egypt has many great gifts. among those are sunshine. you have so much solar potential. You could power Europe with it, all we need is a cable and a lot of solar modules and you would be the powerhouse for Europe.



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: H.E. STEPHEN LÖFVEN

Former Prime Minister of Sweden

- What I want you to remember are three things: the honesty to admit that the world is in a very bad place, the urgency of changing the false narratives that guide it today, and the need to unite all forces that believe in democracy and multilateralism.
- The defining threats of our time are no longer isolated crises, but a dangerous convergence: expanding wars, an accelerating arms race, a worsening climate emergency, and a steady erosion of democratic values. Together, they are reshaping global stability and testing humanity's capacity to choose cooperation over collapse.
- The world has now for the 10th consecutive year witnessed an increase in military spending which now has reached 2.718 trillion US.
- We allocate so much money in emissions that is threatening the planet and at the same time claiming that we haven't got enough to save it.
- The world possesses the resources needed; the challenge lies in how we choose to deploy them. While a handful of individuals hold wealth rivaling the needs of entire nations, harmful subsidies often take precedence over sustainable development. By redirecting funds wisely and coordinating public and private investment, we can



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simultaneously address climate, environmental, and biodiversity challenges, creating a stronger and fairer global economy for all.

- Instead of focusing on how to constantly build up an ever-increasing military force, nations should allocate more resources towards measures to assure one another safety.
- The idea that the world's wealth is a zero-sum game is false and dangerous. We are all interconnected, and when richer nations invest in poorer ones, it lifts people out of poverty, strengthens their countries, and benefits the global economy. Moving away from this cooperative approach is a moral and economic mistake that undermines shared prosperity.
- Denying the climate crisis or claiming action is too difficult is a dangerous misconception. We must trust the science, recognize the real costs of inaction—such as food insecurity—and commit to ending the warming that threatens our planet through firm targets for net zero emissions and the development of new technologies.
- Democracy may be challenged, but it thrives by embracing diverse perspectives and shared decision-making. Strong leadership alone cannot replace the collective wisdom of the people.
- All over the world democracies have been built by the hands of the people. Many of them putting their own life on the line.
- True security cannot rely solely on military force or weapons. Nuclear arsenals bring ultimate insecurity, threatening global destruction.
- It's time for the world for a totally different concept: mutually assured survival and get rid of nuclear weapons at the latest 2045.
- Nationalism and isolation cannot solve global challenges. Limiting focus to one's own country only worsens problems, while true leadership means acting for your nation through cooperation with the wider world. Ultimately, people must expect their leaders to engage responsibly on the global stage.



## PLENARY SESSION ONE

# Can the Existing World Order Survive the Present Geoeconomic and Geopolitical Entanglement? Or Is There a Need for a Brand-New One? And What Would It Look Like?



The global system stands at a pivotal moment, shaped by deep geoeconomic and geopolitical entanglements. The post-World War II liberal international order is increasingly strained by great power competition, fragmented trade blocs, and the emergence of non-Western economic centers. In this context, economic interdependencies are often leveraged as strategic tools, challenging the effectiveness of multilateral institutions and testing the very concept of globalization.

This session will confront one of the most pressing questions of our time: can the current world order be reformed to address today's crises? or has the need for change become so fundamental that a new global architecture is required? Featuring leading strategists with diverse regional perspectives, the discussion will move beyond identifying points of weakness to exploring the principles, institutions, and mechanisms that could underpin a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient world order for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How is the current global order evolving, and what are the key pressures - economic, geopolitical, and institutional - shaping this transformation?
2. How are global power dynamics shifting, and what emerging structures (bipolar, multipolar, or coalition-based) might define international relations in the near future?
3. Which principles and norms are essential to create a more stable, equitable, and resilient global system, and where do current institutions fall short?
4. How can rising powers, especially in the Global South, play a constructive role in shaping global governance rather than acting solely as counterweights?
5. What practical steps can major international institutions take to regain credibility, ensure effective multilateral cooperation, and manage global challenges in this new, complex order?



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## MODERATOR



**Abla Abdel Latif, PhD**  
Executive Director and Director of Research, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)

## SPEAKERS



**Dr. Jorge Chediek**  
Chair, Academic Council, Center for International Studies, Catholic University of Argentina



**Dr. Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour**  
Distinguished Senior Fellow, Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), & Professor of International Relations, School of International Relations, Tehran (via ZOOM)



**Dr. Jin-Yong Cai**  
Partner, Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), China



**Paolo Magri**  
President Advisory Board, Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Italy



**Dr. Samir Saran**  
President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India



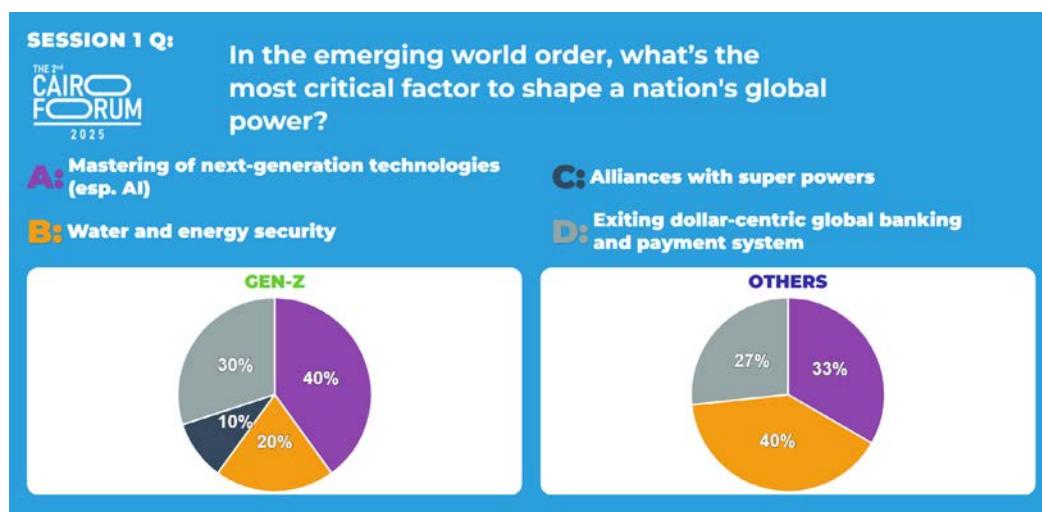
**H.E. Ana Palacio**  
Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Spain, and Visiting Professor at Georgetown University

## KEY MESSAGES

- Erosion of the Old Order: The post-WWII liberal international order is unraveling due to great power competition, creating a landscape defined by "transactionalism," uncertainty, and the weaponization of economic interdependence.
- US Revisionism vs. Chinese Patience: The US is viewed as an "angry" revisionist power retreating from the very system it built because it perceives the deal as no longer fair. Conversely, China is positioning itself as the "mature adult" in the room, advocating for stability and multilateralism while rejecting zero-sum games.
- Rise of the Global South: The "Rest" (India, Brazil, etc.) are no longer waiting for the West; they are building their own resilience networks. However, the Global South must transition from acting as a "trade union" opposition to assuming the responsibilities of leadership.
- Regional Fragmentation:
  - Europe: Possesses deep institutional "know-how" on conflict resolution and multilateralism but struggles with internal division and dependence on the US.
  - Latin America: Internally fragmented and violent, yet free of interstate war. It faces a dual dynamic: US pressure regarding security/migration versus pragmatic economic partnership with China.
  - Middle East/Iran: View the US attempt to maintain hegemony through militarization as a failure that breeds instability.
- The "Plurilateral" Future: The future will likely not be a single global government but a web of "plurilateral" arrangements where specific groups of countries cooperate on specific issues, with key nations acting as connecting hubs.

## Recommendations

- Empower the UN General Assembly: Shift power away from the Security Council (which is paralyzed by vetoes) and make the General Assembly the supreme decision-making body to ensure inclusivity.
- Reform Financial Institutions: Immediately reform the governance of the World Bank and IMF to give the Global South fair representation and restore Western credibility.
- Focus on Pragmatic Execution: Move beyond political posturing to focus on concrete deliverables: job creation, infrastructure development, stable energy, and AI integration (the "China approach").
- Codify International Law: Transform international law into a strict code of conduct with collective global responses to violations, ensuring rules apply equally to powerful nations.
- Strengthen the G20: Utilize the G20 as a primary vehicle for consensus-building, as it is more representative than the G7 and more functional than the current UN Security Council.
- Abandon Zero-Sum Thinking: Acknowledge that attempting to build a new order against a major power (like the US) is impossible; the goal must be "complexity management" rather than total dominance.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION TWO

### Shrinking Resources of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and the Threat to SDGs Implementation, Especially in Africa



The global development agenda has reached a critical turning point, marked by a deepening crisis of finance unfolding amid intense geopolitical entanglement and unprecedented global realignment. The financing gap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has not just widened—it has catapulted, now surpassing \$4 trillion, exposing the systemic fragility of the global development architecture and the erosion of collective commitment to shared global priorities.

As the world bifurcates into polarized blocs, cooperation is being subordinated to strategic competition, where development finance is exploited as an instrument of geopolitical influence and national interest. This reorientation of priorities is clearly visible in the actions of major donors like the United Kingdom and the United States' and the European Union's assertive pivot toward "geopolitical interests"—all signal the conclusion of needs-based development. Consequently, Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Africa's essential source of long-term capital, are operating under immense, unsustainable strain.

This session will confront this new strategic reality. We will debate how Africa can assert its strategic non-alignment, demand profound institutional reform from DFIs, and implement innovative financial strategies to secure the trillions required for the SDGs, ensuring the continent does not become a casualty of the shifting global order.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. As global aid contracts and development finance becomes increasingly politicized, how can Africa secure the financing it needs without becoming collateral damage in a new era of geopolitical rivalry?
2. With the global order shifting from cooperation to competition, can Africa redefine its role from aid recipient to strategic partner by asserting genuine nonalignment and negotiating from a position of strength?
3. If the traditional development finance model is collapsing, what new mechanisms can African nations build for self-reliant growth?
4. What reforms must multilateral development banks and DFIs undertake to restore trust, expand lending capacity, and support Africa's priorities on the continent's own terms?
5. How can partnerships between DFIs, governments, and the private sector be strengthened to mobilize additional resources for SDG-related projects? What reforms in the global



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financial system are necessary to unlock fairer access to development finance for the Global South?

6. And how can developing countries themselves create enabling environments to make the most of the resources available?
7. What is stopping private capital from flowing in to the Global South, even with DFI guarantees?
8. How can limited DFI resources be leveraged to crowd in private capital?



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## MODERATOR



**Tarek Tawfik**  
Deputy Chairman, The Federation of Egyptian Industries, & Vice Chairman, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)

## SPEAKERS



**Elena Panova**  
UN Resident Coordinator in Egypt



**Stephane Guimbert**  
World Bank Division Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti



**Dr. Mark Davis**  
Managing Director for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)



**Dr. Nangula Nelulu Uaandja**  
Chief Executive Officer Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB)



**H.E. Dr. Rania El Mashat**  
Egyptian Minister for Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation

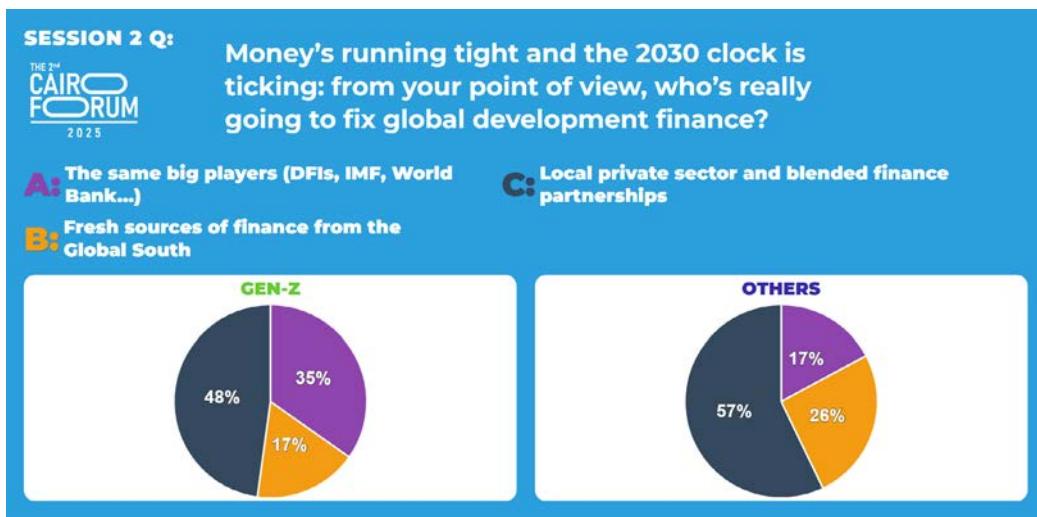
## KEY MESSAGES

- The global development landscape is experiencing severe strain, driven by shrinking donor commitments, geopolitical shifts, and ongoing economic uncertainty.
- Official development assistance is projected to fall between nine and seventeen percent by 2025, following a similar decline the year before. This drop has widened Africa's annual financing gap to an estimated 670 to 760 billion dollars.
- At the same time, internal constraints have made the challenge even more difficult. In many cases, Africa cannot use its own available capital, such as the nearly 400 billion dollars held in pension funds, because there are too few well-prepared, low-risk, investment-ready projects on the continent. As a result, this capital is invested in safer and more predictable opportunities outside Africa, instead of supporting development at home.

### Recommendations

- Adopt a foreign policy that remains independent and works with all major global partners, avoiding pressure to take sides in geopolitical rivalries.
- Strengthen domestic economic foundations to retain local capital and reduce reliance on external financing.

- Expand blended finance mechanisms that use limited public resources to de-risk investments and attract private capital.
- Increase the use of debt for development swaps to convert existing debt obligations into funding for climate and human capital projects.
- Promote public private partnerships to deliver infrastructure when government budgets are limited and cannot fully fund large projects.
- Establish country led platforms such as Nexus of Water, Food and Energy program “NWFE” to define national priorities and present clear, transparent pipelines of bankable projects to global partners.
- Encourage DFIs to sell some of their existing loans or investments to recover funds, allowing them to lend more to long-term, country-focused development projects.
- Expand investment in project preparation to address the shortage of viable projects and unlock greater private sector participation.
- Prioritize high-impact investments, such as building or improving the national electricity network (including power plants, transmission and distribution lines, and substations), which provide reliable power and support broader economic growth across industries and communities.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS





## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: H.E. NABIL FAHMY

Egyptian Former Minister of Foreign Affairs



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- The bipolar system gave way to unipolarity and now to a fluid, contested and unpredictable landscape where no single pole has unilateral conclusive sway.
- The Middle East is not a passive observer, but a central theater in which global rivalries, regional ambitions, and local aspirations intersect.
- As nations in the region assert greater independence, it becomes clear that no sustainable security can rely on external powers alone.
- What we lack and urgently need is a regional security architecture based on mutual confidence and collective responsibility.
- A world that allows perpetual occupation and daily injustice cannot credibly speak of law or equality.
- Self-determination, sovereignty and non-discrimination demand a consistent position which ends occupation, which recognizes the state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital and activates mechanisms of accountability for violations of international law.



- If the world truly wishes to rebuild trust and global governance, Palestine in our region must be the starting point.
- There cannot be permanent Israeli military presence in Gaza. The withdrawals can be gradual, but they have to be sustained and they have to end beyond the borders of Gaza.
- We cannot ignore what's happening in the West Bank where more land is being eaten up, where more violence is being used against Palestinians.

## PLENARY SESSION THREE

### The Middle East Dilemma... Where To? Are We Ever Going to Reach the Day After? And How Would It Look Like?



The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always lain at the heart of Middle Eastern tensions, yet the way it evolved in the last couple of years reflects the deeper rivalries, shifting alliances, and power struggles that define the region. At the present time, the Middle East stands at a crossroads — its cities scarred, its people weary, yet its spirit unbroken. From Gaza's shattered streets and the huge humanitarian toll due to Israeli genocide, to the fragile economies of Lebanon and Syria, the region faces a reckoning that extends beyond war: how to rebuild not just what was lost, but to build a stronger future than before.

"The Day After" keeps looking like a distant dream with permanent peace still questionable while at the same time there are ongoing talks about reconstruction. The question deepens: can reconstruction become more than recovery? Can it bring the day after closer? Can it be rebirth?

This session explores how nations, investors, and communities can try to turn ruin into renewal — and fragility into the foundation of a lasting peace.



#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What does "The Day After" look like for the Middle East?
2. Beyond a cease-fire, what are the economic and social characteristics of "The Day After" that can offer enduring stability, rather than merely pausing the next conflict?
3. Who decides the economic and political future? Crucially, how do the people of Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria ensure their voices and needs are central to the reconstruction plans?
4. What are the most effective models for rebuilding governance and restoring public trust in a post-conflict environment?
5. Where do the Palestinians stand on the reconstruction of Gaza? And what is the role of the Arab countries?
6. What role can international financial institutions, investors, and development partners play in supporting reconstruction and stability?

## MODERATOR



**H.E. Dr. Ziad Bahaa El Din**

Lawyer and Egyptian Former Deputy Prime Minister

## SPEAKERS



**Mirette F. Mabrouk**

Senior Fellow  
Middle East Institute (MEI)



**Dr. Khaled Ezzelarab**

Associate Professor of Practice,  
and Director of Middle East  
Studies Program, AUC, Egypt



**Dr. Majd Al Naber**

Director General, Team Leader  
and Senior Researcher  
Sustainable Development  
WANA Institute, Jordan



**Dr. Tarik M. Yousef**

Senior Fellow, the Middle East  
Council on Global Affairs



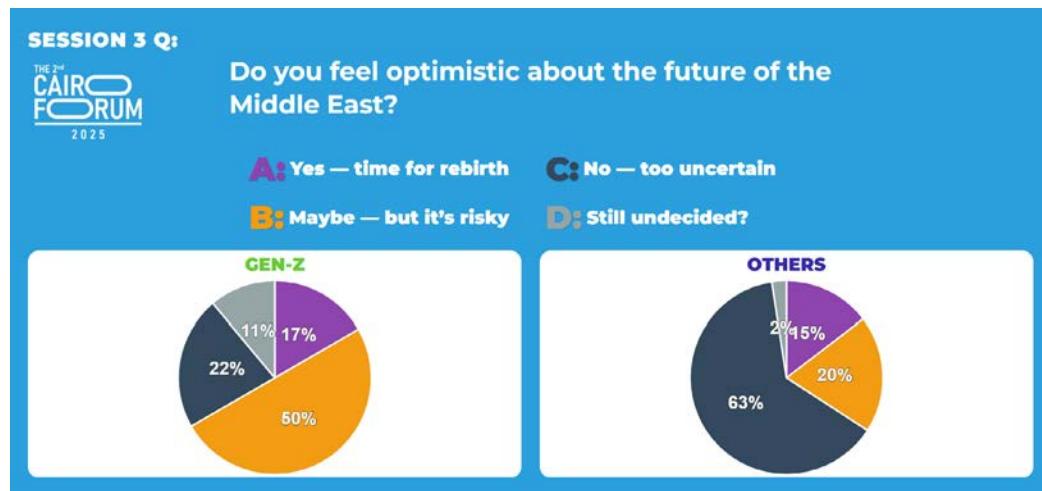
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## KEY MESSAGES

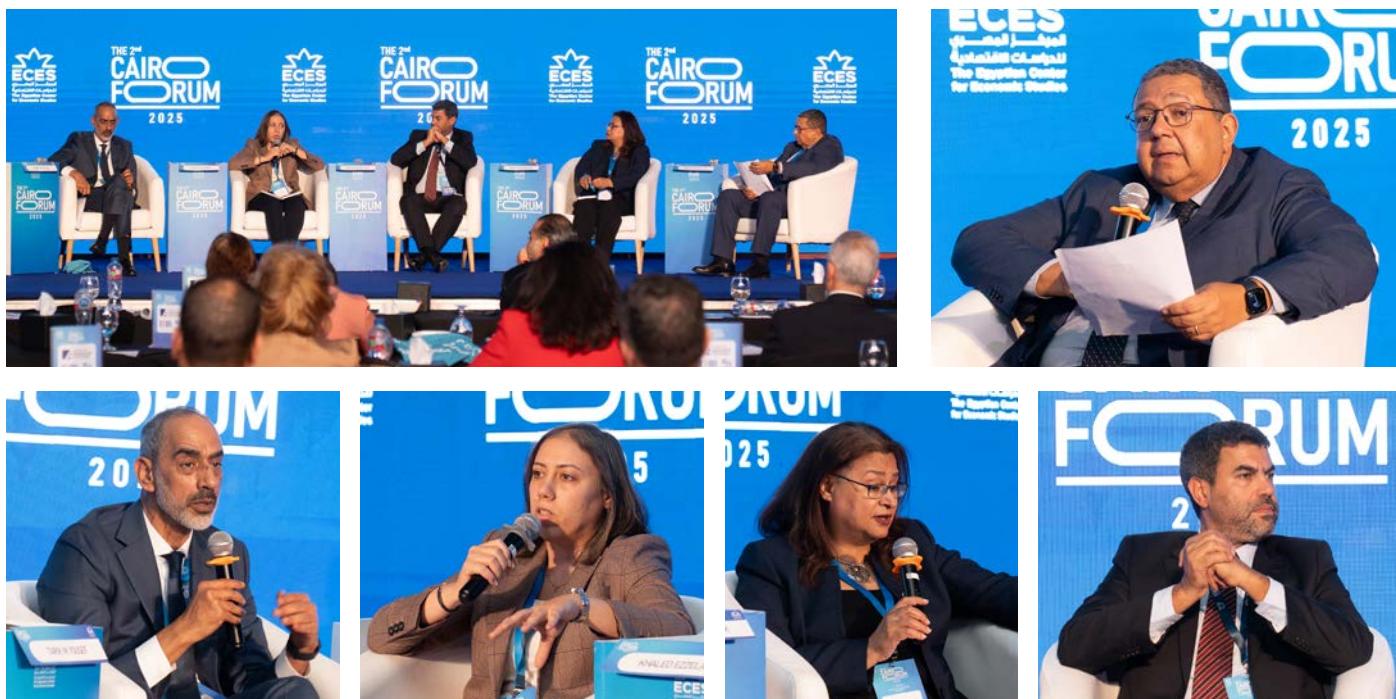
- The discussion framed the current moment as a "historic crossroads," a pivotal point in time that presents a "historic opportunity" to reshape the future of the Middle East.
- A central argument emerged that Israel, for the first time in a generation, is perceived as the primary shared threat to all nations in the Middle East, creating an unprecedented potential for regional alignment.
- Nations across the region are rapidly diversifying their defense partnerships, driven by a growing questioning of the long-standing US security umbrella, particularly in the Gulf.
- The regional system promoted by the United States over the last 15 years—built on the three pillars of the Abraham Accords (Arab-Israeli normalization, the isolation of Iran, and the exclusion of Turkey)—is now collapsing under the weight of Israel's current actions.
- Any future reconstruction efforts are impossible without a viable political framework. No entity will invest in rebuilding Gaza only to see it destroyed again, especially given the region's limited resources, which are often used as tools of political leverage.
- A remarkable shift in global public opinion has occurred, particularly among youth and progressive movements, leading to increased support for Palestinian rights. The youth hold significant power to influence policy agendas through social media activism and grassroots initiatives.
- The recent conflict shattered the Gulf nations' perception of being "islands of stability." This has triggered a new understanding that the security of the Gulf is intrinsically linked to the security of the entire region, and lasting stability can only be achieved collectively.
- The concept of "The Day After" remains a distant, theoretical, and highly unstable notion. The lack of a viable alternative vision from Israel is seen as intentional, stemming from a preferred outcome of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their historic land.

## Recommendations

- There is a need to redefine reconstruction as holistic societal recovery. The concept of "The Day After" must move beyond the narrow definition of physical reconstruction. It was asserted that true recovery requires a comprehensive, human-centered approach focused on rebuilding the entire social and economic fabric of society. This holistic model is the only viable path to create sustainable livelihoods and restore human dignity, rather than simply rebuilding cities that remain vulnerable to future conflict.
- Policymakers should prioritize the establishment of a regional security architecture based on mutual confidence and collective responsibility.
- Urgent attention should be devoted to fostering serious collaboration among Arab countries, particularly in the fields of education and health, with a focus on strengthening human capital.
- The key message concerning the changing positioning of Israel in the Western world and the changing perception of Gulf as an island of stability, calls for adjustments in policies across all countries of the region and a stronger role for the Arab League.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION FOUR

### A New Cycle for North-South Connectivity - The Mediterranean Sea and IMEC-Egypt



The recent disruptions in the Red Sea and Suez Canal have underscored the vulnerability of existing traditional routes. As maritime chokepoints become increasingly exposed to geopolitical tensions, the diversification of trade corridors and the creation of flexible, multimodal networks have emerged as strategic priorities.

Against this backdrop, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), first introduced at the 2023 G20 Summit, was envisioned as a multimodal corridor connecting India to Europe through the Middle East. However, rising regional instability, logistical and economic efficiency concerns have prompted policymakers involved to rethink the model.

This re-evaluation has given rise to a broader vision of an interconnected network of corridors that can ensure flexibility and cost efficiency rather than relying on a single route. Within this expanded approach, other countries such as Oman and Egypt are emerging as pivotal partners in strengthening regional connectivity and reducing dependence on volatile routes. In particular, IMEC-Egypt (IMEC-E) has gained momentum as a cost-effective and politically stable alternative.

This session will discuss all existing and proposed corridors. The discussion will assess trade-offs in cost efficiency, transit time, and geopolitical resilience and other issues.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What combination of emerging connectivity routes can best deliver a secure, efficient, and future-ready network for global trade between Asia, Africa, and Europe?
2. How can Egypt and other Mediterranean nations leverage their geographic and infrastructural advantages to play a central role in this evolving ecosystem of corridors, turning connectivity into long-term economic and industrial value rather than simple transit?
3. What institutional and financial frameworks are needed to harmonize standards, coordinate infrastructure investments, and ensure that these projects operate sustainably and inclusively across regions?
4. How can this emerging network of corridors redefine North-South economic relations, transforming them from transactional trade routes into engines of shared development, innovation, and regional stability?
5. Can any of the new corridors substitute Egypt's Suez Canal?



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## MODERATORS



**Dr. Abla Abdel Latif**

Executive Director and Director of Research, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)



**Mohamed Sherine El Naggar**

Chairman, Naggar Shipping Company, & International Expert for Connectivity

## SPEAKERS



**Anita Prakash**

Director, Policy and Partnership at Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, Jakarta & Head, Research Lab Asia (via ZOOM)



**Ambre Eyoum**

Special and Diplomatic Advisor to Gérard Mestrallat, French President's Special Envoy for IMEC



**H.E. Romana Vlahutin**

Special Envoy for Strategic Connectivity, Three Seas Initiative National Coordinator, Croatia



**H.E. Nasser Kamel**

Secretary General, the Union for the Mediterranean



**H.E. Francesco M. Talò**

Italian IMEC Special Envoy  
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## KEY MESSAGES

- Connectivity is no longer just roads or communication systems—it now drives global trade, shapes alliances, and defines economic power.
- Competing global initiatives are rewriting the rules of trade: China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the EU's Global Gateway, and the U.S.-backed India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (IMEC).
- The current IMEC route bypasses Egypt, running through the Gulf, Jordan, Israel, and the Mediterranean, leaving untapped regional opportunities.
- Even where construction is delayed, IMEC functions as a multi-dimensional platform connecting production hubs, trade networks, and industrial cooperation.
- Egypt's strategic location in North Africa, combined with its growing industrial base, makes it a natural hub to strengthen IMEC's value chains.
- A recalibrated "IMEC-E" can bring Egypt directly into the corridor, boosting commercial viability, geopolitical leverage, and inclusivity, while addressing inefficiencies such as limited rail capacity.
- Egypt's geostrategic advantages, from the Suez Canal to rapid access to Europe and Turkey, make it a fast, efficient gateway for regional and global trade.
- Europe's push for nearshoring and resilient supply chains post-COVID presents a golden opportunity for Egypt and India to attract investment and broaden corridor membership.
- Political stability, secure borders, and predictable regulations are essential to unlock private-sector participation in ports, railways, and logistics infrastructure.
- With a robust industrial base and growing renewable energy capacity, Egypt can sustainably supply Europe, attract industries relocating from East Asia, and reinforce regional trade networks.

## Recommendations

- Integrate Egypt into IMEC through a dedicated “IMEC-E” extension linking ports, industrial zones, and trade corridors.
- Strengthen political stability, regulatory predictability, and investor-friendly reforms to encourage robust private-sector participation.
- Forge Egypt-India-EU industrial and logistics partnerships to capitalize on nearshoring trends and build resilient value chains.
- Position Egypt as a regional production and export powerhouse by expanding renewable energy and modernizing infrastructure.
- Establish a coordination mechanism to align standards, investment plans, and project execution across Egypt, India, GCC and the EU.
- Leverage Egypt's strategic position to integrate African markets into IMEC, creating a gateway for emerging economies and regional trade expansion.

SESSION 4 Q:

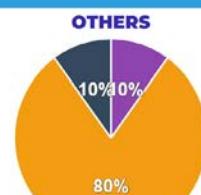
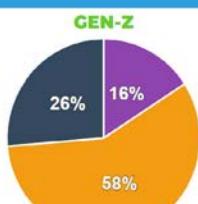
THE 2<sup>nd</sup>  
CAIRO  
FORUM  
2025

What should the top priority be in  
introducing new global trade corridors?

A: Environmental sustainability and green logistics

C: Political alliances

B: Economic efficiency and faster delivery times



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION FIVE

### International Trade Policy in a Severely Disrupted World: Threats to Necessary Predictability and Stability for Investment Decisions



For decades, international trade has been thriving under a rules-based system, securing - to a large extent - stability and predictability in trade and investment relations. While bilateral and regional trade agreements played an important role in expanding trade and investment opportunities, the main guarantor of stability and predictability has been the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core.

Since the beginning of 2025, that order has been shaken to an unprecedented level of uncertainty. Unilateral, trade-restrictive measures disregarding multilateral rules have been on the rise with ever increasing levels of tension between trading partners.

At the same time, recent events have resurrected among the majority of trading nations as well as the global business community a renewed appreciation of how indispensable a rules-based system is for the prosperity of the global economy. And, conversely, how costly it is to lose it.

This session will discuss concerns of global business community related trade and possible solutions.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How best could the current state of global trade be described in light of recent "shocks" to the system manifested in the use of tariffs by the US?
2. How does the global business community value the stability and predictability it provides? What would be the estimated cost of losing it?
3. What are the expected systemic consequences of recent actions by the major trading powers? Will the global trade order shift from a rules-based to a power-based system?
4. The current WTO system is no longer capable, in its current state, of facing new global challenges. What are the main changes that need to be introduced to the 30-year-old WTO system now to make it fit for purpose?
5. In the absence of willingness by the US to play its traditional leadership role, to what extent could the recent "shock" to the system motivate middle trading powers to take initiative and provide the leadership necessary to reform the WTO?



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6. It has always been established that there is a close link between trade policy and investment policy, has that link become closer so as to mandate a new level of policy coherence? If so, how should that be considered going forward, particularly from a developing country's perspective?
7. What should be a desirable outcome from the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in March 2026?



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## MODERATOR



**Abdel Hamid Mamdouh**  
Senior Counsel, King and Spalding LLP - Geneva Office, & Former Director of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO

## SPEAKERS



**Ambassador Alan Wm. Wolff**  
Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) (via ZOOM)



**Dr. Stefan Schepers**  
Executive Director, Independent High-Level Groups for EU Policy Innovation



**Valerie Picard**  
Head of Trade, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)



**Dr. Simon J. Evenett**  
Professor of Geopolitics and Strategy, IMD Business School, Switzerland (via ZOOM)



**H.E. Waleid Gamal Eldien**  
Chairman  
Suez Canal Economic Zone



**Mohamed El Gawsaky**  
Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Egypt  
For Planning, Development and Digital Transformation  
(On behalf of H.E. Hassan El Khatib, Egyptian Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade)

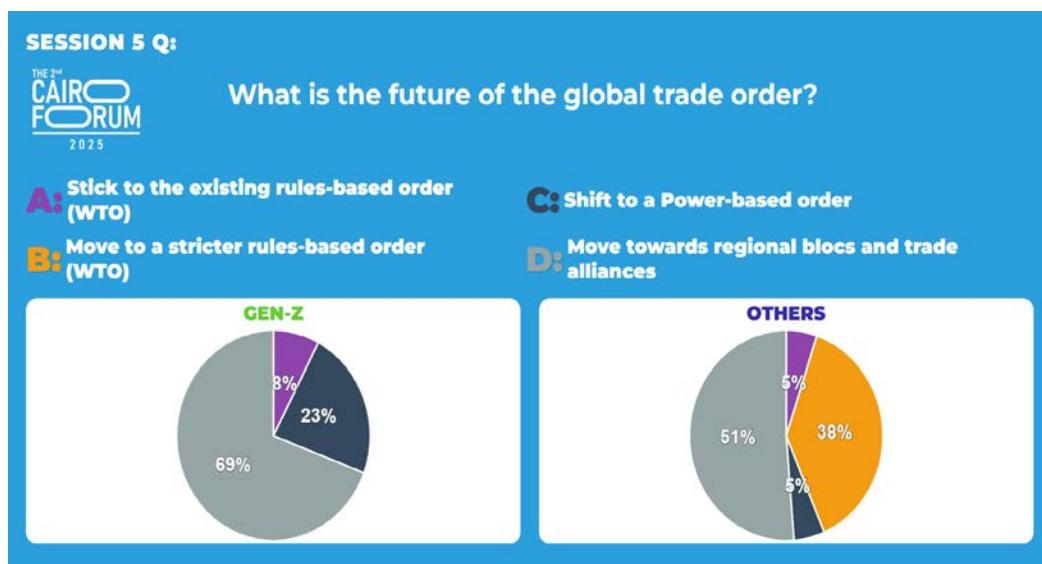
## KEY MESSAGES

- Global trade has entered a new security-driven era, with the United States reshaping its trade policy to prioritize geopolitical alignment over commercial logic—reversing three decades of globalization-led economic integration.
- The rules-based multilateral order is eroding, creating a vacuum with no emerging alternative and leaving developing countries particularly vulnerable to being caught between competing power blocs.
- Business uncertainty is at its highest in years, as firms face unpredictable tariffs, proliferating non-tariff barriers, and overlapping regulatory regimes, amounting to a systemic—not temporary—shock.
- A collapse of the WTO-centered system would have severe economic impacts: The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) research projects a 33% fall in developing countries' non-fuel exports and a 5% permanent GDP hit; for Egypt, estimated losses reach 20% in exports and 3% of GDP.
- For Egypt, global disruptions present both risk and strategic opportunity. Structural shifts in investment patterns have already boosted the Suez Canal Zone, attracting \$11 billion in 3.5 years (mostly FDI), driven by labor competitiveness, energy costs, and market proximity.

- Egypt acknowledges the fading of past globalization models, but strongly defends multilateralism as essential for fair competition.
- Three critical weaknesses in the global system require urgent attention:
  - Declining predictability in global trade rules and standards.
  - Structural paralysis within the WTO's consensus-based decision-making.
  - Insufficient integration of private-sector expertise in global rulemaking.
- The goal is not the preservation of the 1995 WTO model but the survival of a cooperative international order capable of supporting growth, addressing societal priorities, and managing geopolitical risk.
- The moment represents a structural turning point, not a temporary disturbance. The upcoming ministerial must launch a time-bound reform agenda addressing consensus rules, plurilateralism, and special and differential treatment.
- Safeguarding an open and predictable global trading system is a long-term effort—"a marathon not a sprint"—but essential for global stability, investment, and development, especially for emerging and developing economies.

## Recommendations

- Efforts to reform or reinvigorate the multilateral system must avoid sidelining major players.
- Maximum transparency of trade measures should be guaranteed through the WTO Secretariat.
- Establishing a binding dispute settlement system where rulings are enforceable.
- Organizational restructuring of WTO to create an empowered executive body, rather than relying on an unworkable committee of the whole.
- Strengthening the mandate of the WTO Director-General to lead and set agendas.
- Establishing a formal mechanism for incorporating expert input from business, labor, environmental, and development stakeholders.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION SIX

### Europe's Predicament: Lost between Disagreements within the EU and Trump's Pressure



Europe today faces a moment of strategic uncertainty. Internal divisions within the European Union, from economic governance and migration policy to energy security and defense, are testing the strength of European integration. At the same time, growing pressure from Washington under the Trump administration has intensified transatlantic tensions, challenging Europe's autonomy in global affairs. These overlapping pressures have left the EU navigating between maintaining unity at home and asserting independence abroad.

As geopolitical rivalries deepen and new economic blocs emerge, Europe's ability to act cohesively will shape not only its own future but also the global order. This session brings together policymakers, strategists, and thought leaders to examine how Europe can respond to external pressure while overcoming its internal fractures, and whether the continent can redefine its role as a credible global actor in a rapidly shifting world.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What are the most significant internal divisions currently undermining the EU's ability to respond collectively to external challenges?
2. How has the Trump administration's approach to trade, defense, and foreign policy reshaped the EU-U.S. relationship?
3. Can Europe build greater strategic autonomy without deepening existing divisions among its member states?
4. In the face of global uncertainty, what tools or frameworks could strengthen Europe's economic and geopolitical resilience?
5. How can Europe balance the preservation of liberal democratic values with pragmatic responses to shifting power dynamics worldwide?



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## MODERATOR



**Ivana Dragicevic**  
Founder, Europe Future Center

## SPEAKERS



**Piotr Buras**  
Head of Warsaw office, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)



**Dr. Claudia Schmucker**  
Head of Geopolitics,  
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Center, German Council on  
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**Paolo Magri**  
President Advisory Board, Italian  
Institute for International Political  
Studies (ISPI), Italy



**H.E. Ana Palacio**  
Former Foreign Affairs Minister  
of Spain, and Visiting Professor at  
Georgetown University



**H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė**  
Former President of Lithuania

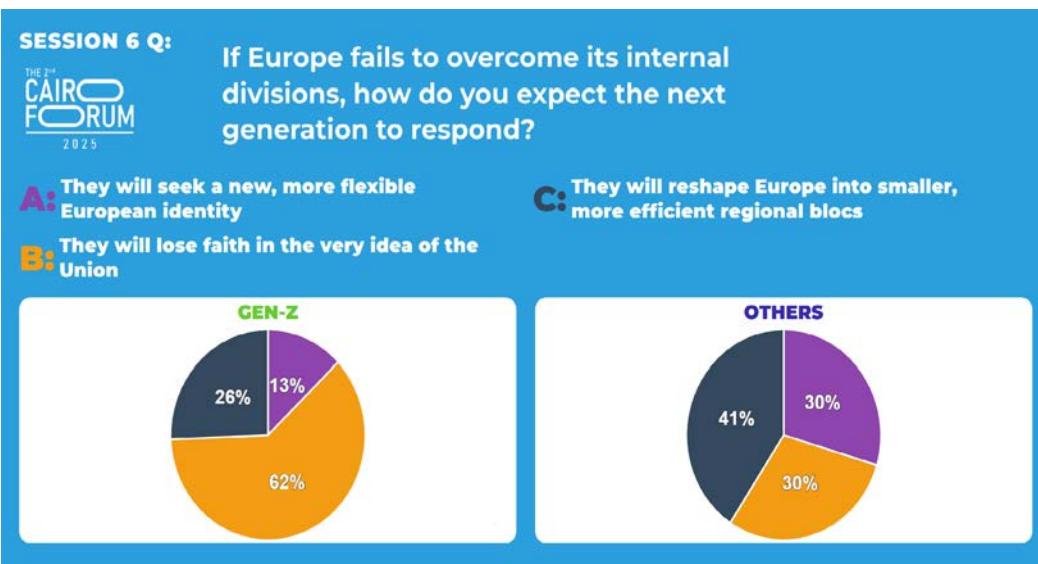
## KEY MESSAGES

- The European Union is not on an inevitable path of decline; historically, crises have served as critical catalysts for deeper integration and stronger institutional capacity.
- The current geopolitical moment represents a structural turning point in the international order, requiring Europe to move from reactive crisis management to strategic self-definition.
- Europe is increasingly compressed between a coercive Chinese economic model and a protectionist US approach.
- Europe's security environment has deteriorated due to Russia's conventional war on the EU's eastern flank and the growing strategic ambiguity of the transatlantic relationship.
- The most serious threat to EU cohesion no longer stems from intergovernmental disputes, but from deep internal political polarization and the rise of illiberal and extremist movements within member states.
- External actors are actively exploiting Europe's internal divisions through political, informational, and economic instruments to weaken democratic institutions and strategic unity.
- Past European policies, particularly in the energy domain, were built on the flawed assumption that economic interdependence would automatically generate political moderation and stability.
- Europe's experience with Russian energy dependency has demonstrated that economic leverage can be weaponized and that political sovereignty is inseparable from economic independence.
- Disunity and fragmentation in major international crises have significantly reduced the Union's political voice and global credibility.

- Institutional inertia, slow decision-making, and structural dependence on external actors increasingly undermine Europe's capacity to defend its interests and protect its values.
- The future of Europe's liberal democratic model is no longer determined by normative appeal alone, but by its demonstrated capacity to deliver security, stability, and prosperity.

## Recommendations

- Adoption of a comprehensive strategic framework designed to strengthen the European Union's resilience and transform structural vulnerabilities into sustainable sources of power.
- Build genuine European economic sovereignty by completing the Single Market, strengthening industrial and technological capacity, and reducing strategic dependencies in critical supply chains.
- Translate Europe's economic weight into credible geopolitical power through the creation of an integrated European defense framework and strengthened joint military-industrial capabilities.
- Pursue a more diversified and pragmatic foreign policy by expanding strategic partnerships with the Global South and emerging middle powers beyond traditional transatlantic frameworks.
- Reform EU governance by reducing the scope of unanimity, empowering "coalitions of the willing," and introducing more flexible institutional arrangements to enable faster, decisive action.
- Shift from crisis-driven policymaking toward the long-term construction of strategic autonomy capable of protecting European interests and internal stability.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION SEVEN

# Caught Between BRICS and a Disoriented West, How Does the Future of the Global South Look Like?



The global balance of power is shifting. As the BRICS bloc expands and seeks to redefine global governance, the traditional Western-led order faces uncertainty, fragmentation, and hesitation. Caught between these two poles, the Global South has become both a geopolitical battleground and a potential driver of a new multipolar world.

Countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America are increasingly asserting their voices, exploring new trade alliances, investment routes, and technological partnerships. Yet, they also face the challenge of maintaining independence while engaging with competing powers that offer distinct models of development, finance, and influence.

This session brings together global policymakers, economists, and strategists to explore how the Global South can navigate this evolving landscape, balance opportunity with autonomy, and conceptualize the kind of global order that may emerge in the years ahead.

### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How is the expansion of BRICS reshaping the global economic and political landscape, particularly for developing economies?
2. In what ways has the West's current disorientation, from internal divisions to shifting priorities, affected its credibility and partnerships with the Global South?
3. How can countries in the Global South leverage competition between BRICS and Western powers to advance their own development agendas?
4. Is a truly independent Global South strategy possible, or will alignment with one bloc remain inevitable?
5. How might these dynamics influence investment, innovation, and institutional reform across emerging regions such as Africa and the Middle East?



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## MODERATOR



**Dina Sherif**  
Executive Director, The MIT Kuo Sharper Center for Prosperity and Entrepreneurship

## SPEAKERS



**Dr. Jiuzhou Duan**  
Assistant Professor  
Tsinghua University



**Mamadou Biteye**  
Executive Secretary, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)



**Dr. Thomas Gomart**  
Director, French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)



**Sunjoy Joshi**  
Chairman, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)



**H.E. Mariya Gabriel**  
Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Bulgaria, & President, Robert Schuman Institute

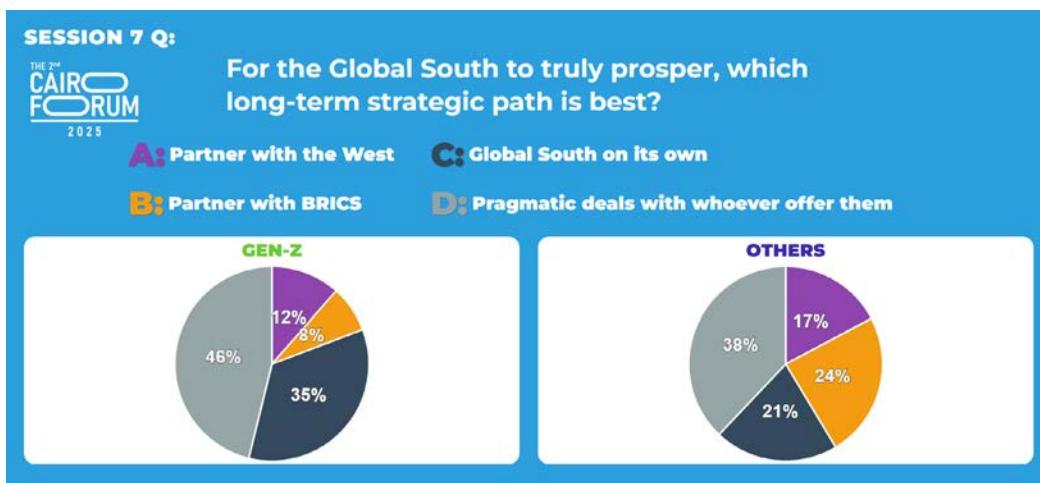
## KEY MESSAGES

- The post-Cold War order is transforming from a unipolar to a multipolar world structure:
  - The rise of the BRICS coalition now represents over 40% of the global economy, increasing its economic and political weight.
  - The traditional Western-led governance system is challenged by internal fragmentation and strategic hesitation.
  - The global landscape is defined by multipolarity with various power brokers, not a simple binary choice between blocs.
- The core challenge for the Global South is to strategically navigate this new era not only by leveraging new partnerships (e.g., BRICS) for benefit but also avoiding dependency on any single new bloc. It should also maintain economic relations with a still-influential but evolving West.
- There is a key shift in agency, with capitals in Africa, Asia, and Latin America becoming central hubs for debate, actively demanding a role in defining global norms and economic rules.
- This global shift presents both significant challenges and opportunities for the African continent:
  - Strong economic growth and major demographic potential from a large youth population are a major demographic opportunity
  - BRICS expansion (with Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Africa as new members) offers expanded opportunities for trade, investment, and technology transfer.
  - Institutional Fragmentation is a major challenge with a lack of harmonized policies between countries and weak cross-border institutions, hindering initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
  - Another challenge is the heavy reliance on external funding (~70% of AU budget) and dependence on foreign institutions/NGOs for data and analysis.

- Funding gaps is a major financial challenge, with fiscal pressures limiting the ability to finance indigenous development and innovation.
- Egypt is at a strategic crossroads as a new BRICS member and a historical leader in the Non-Aligned Movement:
  - The core challenge is to translate BRICS membership into concrete economic benefits and enhanced influence in the Middle East, Africa, and the Global South.
  - Egypt needs to move from a passive recipient to an active agenda-setter within blocs. It should do so by leveraging its position to attract diversified investment and technology from across the Global South.
  - It should strengthen its capacity to act as an influential voice for both the Arab world and Africa.
- The Arab world is currently fragmented. The region faces the challenge of engaging with multiple major powers (US, China, EU, BRICS) from a position of internal division:
  - While some Arab countries have built competitive economies, the region lacks a unified economic voice, leading to vulnerability and external dependency.
  - The Arab world should abandon the historical pattern of alignment with a single external power and deal with different partners in a pragmatic way.
  - The Arab world lacks a cohesive regional economic bargaining framework (comparable to ASEAN). This framework would allow Arab states to negotiate on trade, investment, and standards as a bloc and would also prevent great powers from playing Arab states against each other.

## Recommendations

- The developing world should focus on pragmatic diversification by building partnerships with BRICS members, Western nations, and regional peers, while avoiding exclusive alignment with any single bloc.
- Investing in domestic research institutions and think tanks is crucial for generating local data and analysis.
- Accelerating regional integration by harmonizing regulations and policies to realize the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Organization (AfCFTA).
- Capitalization of Egypt on its geographic and cultural position by acting as a strategic connector between African and Arab priorities in BRICS and other international forums.
- Establishing an Arab council focusing on forming unified positions in trade, investment, and digital standards with external partners.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION EIGHT

### Emerging Markets and Financial Markets Disruption Following 11 Months of Trump



The global financial landscape has entered a period of renewed volatility and recalibration following eleven months under the Trump administration. Policy shifts in the United States – ranging from trade realignments and fiscal expansion to evolving stances on monetary policy – have sent ripple effects across global capital markets, influencing exchange rates, risk appetite, and investment flows. For emerging markets, these disruptions have created both challenges and opportunities: heightened uncertainty on one hand, and the potential for strategic repositioning on the other.

Emerging economies, particularly in regions like the Middle East and Africa, now face a complex equation – balancing domestic reform agendas with the external shocks generated by U.S. policy adjustments and global investor sentiment. The reactions of capital markets, fluctuations in commodity prices, and the recalibration of global value chains are reshaping growth prospects and financing conditions.

This session brings together senior policymakers, investors, and financial experts to unpack the implications of these shifts. It seeks to explore how global investors are adjusting their strategies, how emerging markets can navigate a more fragmented financial order, and what policy tools can strengthen market resilience amid global unpredictability.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How have shifts in U.S. fiscal, trade, and monetary policies over the past eleven months influenced global capital flows and investor sentiment toward emerging markets?
2. In what ways are Middle Eastern and African markets uniquely exposed or positioned to benefit from these global financial disruptions?
3. How can policymakers in emerging economies enhance resilience and maintain investor confidence amid global uncertainty and shifting policy signals from major economies?
4. What strategies are global investors adopting to manage volatility while identifying sustainable opportunities in emerging markets?
5. To what extent can regional financial cooperation or innovation – including digital finance and fintech solutions – help mitigate external shocks and strengthen local capital markets?



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## MODERATOR



**Omar El Shenety**  
Research Consultant, ECES, &  
Adjunct Faculty, AUC

## SPEAKERS



**Dr. Farouk Soussa**  
Head of MENA Research,  
Goldman Sachs



**Wael Ziada**  
Managing Partner, Zilla Capital



**Karim Sawabini**  
Partner & Portfolio Manager  
Moon Capital



**Ehizogie Binitie**  
CEO  
Resrv Technologies LTD



**H.E. Ahmed Kouchouck**  
Egyptian Minister of Finance

## KEY MESSAGES

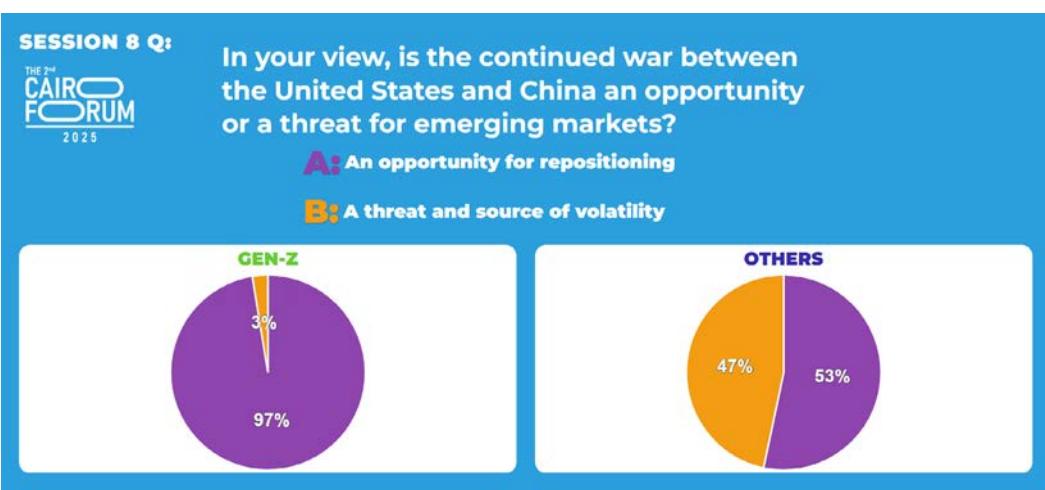
- Emerging markets are navigating a turning point as shifting global capital flows, easing commodity prices, and divergent inflation paths reshape their macroeconomic landscape. While several economies—such as India and South Africa—saw inflation ease, others like Turkey continue to struggle with persistent domestic inflationary pressures and currency weakness.
- Currency performance has been mixed: some currencies, including the South African Rand, the Brazilian Real, and the Israeli Shekel, remained broadly stable, whereas others experienced notable depreciation. The Indian Rupee has also been losing value recently, though at a slower pace than extreme cases like the Turkish Lira.
- External vulnerabilities remain significant. Total external debt and debt service obligations have continued to rise, increasing pressure on fiscal space and heightening sensitivity to global financing conditions, particularly for countries reliant on external borrowing.
- In Egypt, the Central Bank maintained stability this month (November 2025), following October 2025 interest rate cut, which helped ease liquidity pressures while keeping the policy stance aligned with disinflation goals. However, the broader macro environment remains exposed to shifts in global risk sentiment.
- Gold continued to attract strong investor interest as a safe-haven asset. As many analysts note, “I was a big bull on gold” reflects the strong conviction that precious metals remain one of the most effective risk-mitigation mechanisms amid global uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and volatile capital flows.
- Africa is emerging as a strategic anchor in the global economy, supported by demographic momentum, expanding markets, and abundant critical minerals. Yet the continent’s potential remains constrained by limited regional integration, uneven policy implementation, and persistent structural challenges—factors that continue to shape investment perceptions and long-term growth prospects.

### Recommendations

- Maintaining consistent fiscal and monetary policies across emerging markets and Egypt is essential to build investor confidence, reduce risk premiums, and preserve

macroeconomic stability while supporting long-term growth.

- Expanding the liquidity of capital markets by facilitating new listings, attracting diverse domestic and international investors, and strengthening market infrastructure, which will enhance investment flows and resilience across the region.
- Mobilizing domestic, diaspora, and international capital to fund strategic and productive sectors can channel liquidity effectively into trade finance, SMEs, and export-oriented projects, reinforcing Egypt's and other emerging markets' positions as regional manufacturing and export hubs.
- Proactively engaging with Gulf and Asian partners and multilateral institutions is critical to attract long-term investment, improve trade linkages, and integrate emerging markets into reconfigured global value chains.
- Addressing structural and external vulnerabilities by reducing trade and energy deficits, enhancing resilience to shocks, and supporting firms in infrastructure, reconstruction, and export markets.
- Implementing clear medium-term macro-financial frameworks, including debt, fiscal, and monetary strategies, will anchor expectations, guide investment decisions, and reinforce policy credibility across Egypt and emerging markets.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## PLENARY SESSION NINE

### How Do We Reach the Africa that We Want?



Africa is entering a period of exciting opportunities, with potential for transformative economic growth, social development, and regional integration. The continent's vision for the future emphasizes inclusive progress, innovation, and sustainable prosperity.

Endowed with 30% of the world's critical mineral reserves—such as cobalt, lithium, and nickel—vital for clean energy technologies, Africa is uniquely positioned to a key player in the global green transition. Further Its strategic location at the crossroads of global trade routes, supported by expanding port infrastructure, strengthens its role as a logistics and manufacturing hub. Combined with high returns on mineral exploration and growing investments in sustainable development, Africa stands as a key player in shaping the future of global energy and supply chains.

This session explores what it will take to achieve the Africa that its people aspire to. It will examine how partnerships between governments, regional organizations, international institutions, and private-sector actors can foster inclusive growth, drive innovation, and expand opportunities, not only in terms of economic output but also in creating long-term, sustainable, and equitable outcomes for all communities.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What are the main obstacles, internally and externally, currently limiting Africa's inclusive growth and development?
2. How can innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship be leveraged to accelerate progress across sectors and regions?
3. In what ways can regional cooperation and international partnerships strengthen resilience and opportunities?
4. How can investment in human capital, education, and capacity building drive long-term transformation?
5. What practical steps can governments and the private sector take to ensure that growth translates into equitable outcomes for all communities?



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## MODERATOR



**Mohamed Kassem**  
Secretary General, ECES, &  
Chairman, World Trading Co., Egypt

## SPEAKERS



**Ehizogie Binitie**  
CEO  
Resrv Technologies LTD



**Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli**  
President and CEO  
ONE Campaign (via ZOOM)



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session video



**Ayo Sopitan**  
CEO and Founder  
Metalex Commodities Inc.



**Mamadou Biteye**  
Executive Secretary, the African  
Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)



**Nathalie Delapalme**  
CEO, Mo Ibrahim Foundation



**Dr. Nangula Nelulu Uaanda**  
Chief Executive Officer, Namibia  
Investment Promotion and  
Development Board (NIPDB)

## KEY MESSAGES

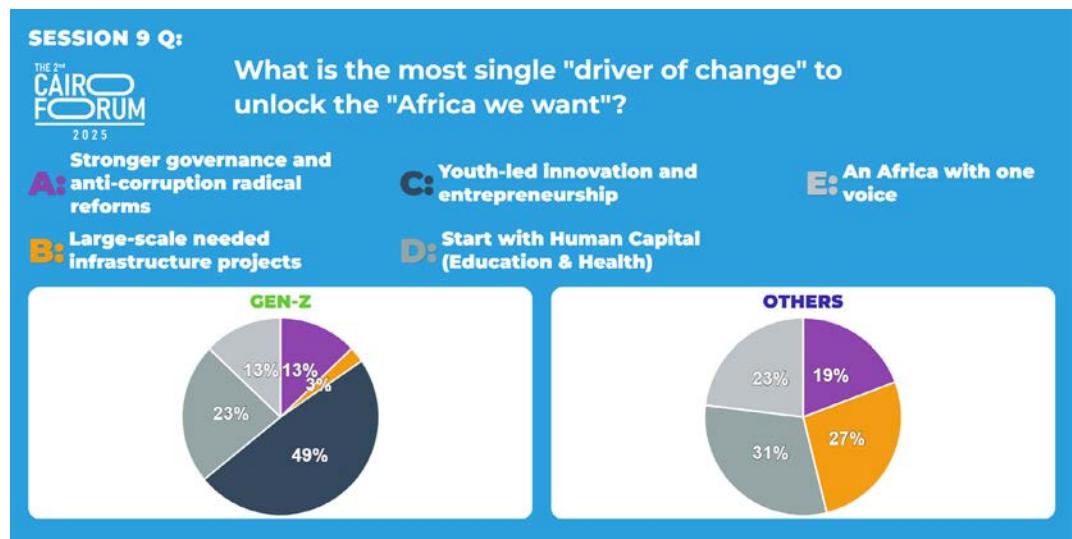
- Africa is entering a decisive moment shaped by demographic weight, strategic geography, and global supply-chain restructuring. Strong fundamentals exist, such as 30% of global critical minerals, youthful population, expanding market, but progress is limited by fragmentation, capacity gaps, and weak regional coordination.
- "Everyone in the world has a seat at the table; Africa is on the menu, and everyone's eating except for Africans." This urgency demands proactive value capture and a shift from commodity-driven growth to human-capital-driven, knowledge-based sectors for sustainable development.
- Youth population (60% between 15-24) offers a competitive advantage, yet enabling mobility and skills development remains key to unlocking this potential.
- Domestic and diaspora capital remain underutilized, while gaps persist between AU/AfCFTA commitments and practical implementation, slowing the integration needed to scale African enterprises.
- Africa must establish cohesive continental positions in global negotiations on minerals, AI, energy, and debt to strengthen leverage. Ownership of data and narratives remains limited, requiring stronger control to attract investment and reduce perceived risk.

## Recommendations

- Strengthen human-capital systems through expanded technical and vocational training, enable regional mobility for skilled labor, and link education to market demands to support the transition toward knowledge-based economies.
- Mobilize domestic and diaspora capital by creating pan-African investment platforms and formalizing investment channels, while institutionalizing public-private partnerships at

national and regional levels to remove cross-border barriers and scale enterprises.

- Accelerate AfCFTA implementation by harmonizing product standards and customs procedures, then translate these commitments into enforceable national policies to enable seamless regional trade.
- Build sector-specific African value chains in textiles, automotive, food processing, and green minerals through industry clusters that leverage regional coordination and attract investment in priority sectors.
- Establish unified African positions in global forums on minerals pricing, energy access, debt restructuring, and AI regulation, using coordinated negotiation strategies to maximize continental influence and ensure equitable participation in global value chains.
- Increase African ownership of data by investing in continental real-time data platforms and supporting Africa-led research strategies, creating the evidence base needed for policy-making and narrative control.



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## LUNCH SESSIONS *(by invitation)*

### LUNCH SESSION ONE

#### The Escalating Crisis in Sudan and the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa stands at a critical crossroads, with the ongoing conflict in Sudan threatening to destabilize one of the world's most fragile regions. Since the eruption of fighting in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, millions have been displaced across borders, triggering one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises in recent history. The impact of this conflict has extended far beyond Sudan's borders, straining neighboring countries such as South Sudan, Chad, and Ethiopia, all of which are grappling with their own political and economic pressures.

At the same time, the wider Horn of Africa faces overlapping challenges: climate-driven droughts and floods, fragile governance, rising food insecurity, and an overstretched humanitarian system.

This high-level session brings together leading policy thinkers and regional experts to unpack the political, humanitarian, and economic dimensions of the crisis. It aims to explore not only the immediate emergency response but also long-term pathways for stability.

#### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What are the key political and economic dynamics fueling the crisis in Sudan, and how might they reshape power balances across the Horn of Africa?
2. How can regional and international actors coordinate more effectively to address both humanitarian needs and long-term stability?
3. In what ways can the private sector and development institutions support resilience in the Horn of Africa beyond emergency relief?
4. How can lessons from Sudan's crisis inform future conflict-prevention strategies across fragile regions in Africa?

#### MODERATOR



**Mirette F. Mabrouk**  
Senior Fellow  
Middle East Institute (MEI)

#### KICK-OFF INTERVENTIONS



**Dr. Amani El Taweel**  
Consultant, Al-Ahram Center for  
Political and Strategic Studies



**Dr. Mustapha Kamel Al-Sayyid**  
Emeritus Professor of Political  
Science, Faculty of Economics and  
Political Science, Cairo University



**Anja Beretta**  
Head of the Regional Programme  
for the Economy of Africa, Konrad-  
Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)



**Nabil Nagemeldin**  
Journalist Specialized in  
International Relations

## KEY MESSAGES

- Sudan is experiencing a catastrophic humanitarian collapse, with millions uprooted, essential services in ruins, and entire communities facing starvation, violence, and the breakdown of social order.
- The ongoing conflict in Sudan is not a conventional conflict. It represents more than a domestic power struggle; it is a focal point of regional instability with profound humanitarian, geopolitical, and economic ramifications. The dynamics are shaped by competing ambitions of regional actors, the fragility of Sudanese institutions, and the historical underinvestment in governance and infrastructure.
- The scale of displacement is unprecedented, overwhelming host communities, accelerating disease outbreaks, and deepening resource scarcity across vast areas.
- Critical social systems have collapsed—schools, hospitals, water networks—eroding the very foundations of community resilience and long-term recovery.
- Humanitarian access is dangerously restricted, with damaged infrastructure, blocked routes and insecurity, making it nearly impossible to provide food, medical care, and protection at the scale required.
- Human suffering is expanding rapidly, especially in historically marginalized regions where malnutrition, medical shortages, and protection risks have reached life-threatening levels.
- Failure to act will intensify regional instability, disrupting trade, fueling migration pressures, and straining already fragile neighboring systems.
- A decisive, coordinated humanitarian response is urgently needed, grounded in civilian protection and rapid restoration of essential services.

### Recommendations

- Addressing this crisis requires a multi-dimensional strategy. Short-term measures should prioritize humanitarian relief and protection of civilians. Medium-term efforts must engage regional powers in a coordinated diplomacy that incentivizes the alignment of investment and security objectives with stabilization goals. Long-term solutions should embed Sudanese ownership of peace processes, supporting institution-building, resource governance, and equitable economic development that diminishes the leverage of external actors over domestic politics.
- Guarantee safe, reliable humanitarian access by establishing protected corridors and negotiating secure passage for aid workers and relief supplies.
- Rapidly scale up life-saving interventions—emergency food assistance, mobile health units, trauma care, and psychosocial support for the most vulnerable.
- Restore critical infrastructure immediately, prioritizing water systems, health facilities, and essential transportation links to stabilize communities and enable aid delivery.
- Launch targeted community-based recovery programs to rebuild livelihoods, strengthen local governance, and support social cohesion as part of a longer-term stabilization pathway.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## LUNCH SESSION TWO

# Can Global Cooperation Actually Transform the Global Financial Landscape to Achieve Fair and Inclusive Climate Finance?

The global climate finance debate has entered a new phase. Despite major pledges and international commitments, the gap between ambition and action remains wide. Developing countries continue to face barriers in accessing funds for adaptation and mitigation, while debt burdens and complex financing mechanisms limit their capacity to respond to climate challenges. At the same time, developed economies are rethinking their responsibilities, and international financial institutions are under growing pressure to reform outdated systems that fail to deliver equitable outcomes.

This session explores whether genuine global cooperation can transform the financial system into one that supports climate justice and shared prosperity. It will examine how partnerships between governments, financial institutions, and the private sector can foster more inclusive, responsible, and impactful climate finance – not just in terms of mobilizing capital, but in ensuring it reaches those who need it most.

## DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. Are global financial institutions truly evolving fast enough to meet the climate finance needs of the Global South, or are we still trapped in old frameworks?
2. How can debt relief, innovative finance tools, or blended finance mechanisms be scaled up to unlock fair and sustainable climate funding?
3. What practical steps are needed to shift from climate finance promises to delivery – especially for adaptation and loss-and-damage priorities?
4. How can trust be rebuilt between developed and developing economies in climate negotiations to ensure shared accountability and real progress?
5. As new economic alliances emerge, can climate finance become a bridge for cooperation rather than another area of competition?

## MODERATOR



**Dr. Noha El-Mikawy**

Professor of Practice in the Public Policy and Administration Department and Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, AUC

## KICK-OFF INTERVENTIONS



**Elias Demian**

Head of Environmental Economics Unit, Regional Coordinator of South-East Europe and Benelux LIFE Monitoring Teams, Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE)



**Afif Barhoumi**

Investment Promotion Expert  
UNIDO ITPO Bahrain



**Dr. Amro Elshurafa**

Executive Director of the Utilities and Renewables Program, King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC)



**Roula Majdalani**

Senior Climate Change Advisor,  
Director General's Office of ICARDA



**Alex Benkenstein**

Programme Head, Climate and Natural Resources Programme, SALIA



**Nathalie Delapalme**

Chief Executive Officer  
Mo Ibrahim Foundation

## KEY MESSAGES

- International finance was built for a different era, focused first on reconstruction, then on poverty reduction—not on confronting a planetary climate emergency. The result is a system fundamentally misaligned with today's risks.
- The current climate finance architecture is failing the Global South, directing capital toward debt-based mitigation projects while severely underfunding adaptation, resilience, and loss and damage—the areas where vulnerable countries need support most.
- This imbalance creates a structural injustice: The nations least responsible for emissions bear the highest financial burdens, often through expensive loans that deepen debt vulnerabilities rather than support long-term resilience.
- Creditworthiness—not climate vulnerability—still determines capital allocation, producing a multi-trillion-dollar gap and locking many countries out of essential climate investment.
- The system's slow processes and risk-averse mechanisms have eroded trust, turning climate finance from a tool of global solidarity into a barrier to action.
- A resilient climate strategy requires more than money—it requires building ecosystems, strengthening local innovation, and enabling green manufacturing, climate-smart agriculture, and renewable energy industries to take root.
- Focusing on bankable entrepreneurs and predictable regulatory environments can unlock private-sector participation and reduce reliance on volatile external financing.

### Recommendations

- Embed a “Vulnerability-First” principle into all climate finance decisions, ensuring capital flows reflect exposure to climate risk—not just credit ratings. This would de-risk investments, increase equity, and ensure resources reach the communities most exposed to climate shocks.
- Shift financing instruments away from high-interest debt, to prioritizing grants, guarantees, blended finance, and risk-sharing tools that prevent debt accumulation in vulnerable countries.
- Invest in local green ecosystems, supporting entrepreneurs, SMEs, and value chains in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Countries that build strong green ecosystems and regulatory agility will become future hubs for sustainable industries, supply-chain resilience, and region-wide climate adaptation.
- Strengthen regulatory frameworks and data systems, creating predictable environments that attract long-term private investment in adaptation and resilience.
- Prioritize adaptation and loss-and-damage funding, ensuring that the most climate-exposed regions receive resources for immediate protection and long-term stability.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## LUNCH SESSION THREE

# Towards Inclusive, Responsible and Impactful AI Cooperation – Discussion of Expectations from the AI Impact Summit in India February 2026 (Jointly Organized by ECES & ORF)

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming economies, reshaping industries, and influencing nearly every aspect of modern life. Yet, as innovation accelerates, it also reveals widening inequalities between countries with access to AI capabilities and those left behind, and between the potential for progress and the risks of misuse. Building a framework for inclusive, responsible, and human-centered AI cooperation has therefore become one of the defining global priorities of our time.

This session brings together leaders from Egypt, India, and beyond to explore the key challenges countries face in ensuring AI drives inclusive and responsible growth. It will examine how emerging economies can play an active role in shaping the future of AI governance rather than merely adapting to it, while considering how to balance innovation with accountability, empower local talent, and ensure that technological progress contributes to shared prosperity and sustainable development.

The session will especially look ahead to the upcoming AI Impact Summit in India in February 2026, where Egypt is also preparing for the summit and positioning itself to contribute meaningfully to the discussions and expected outcomes.

## DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How is AI already reshaping economic and social systems, and what kind of global cooperation is needed to ensure its impact benefits all societies?
2. What are the expectations from the AI Impact Summit, and which outcomes would you consider most important for fostering inclusive and responsible AI cooperation?
3. What models can countries adopt to balance innovation with accountability, ensuring that AI remains a tool for empowerment rather than disruption?
4. How can partnerships between governments, academia, and the private sector create AI ecosystems that reflect ethical standards and local needs?

## MODERATORS



**Dr. Samir Saran**

President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India



**Dr. Abla Abdel Latif**

Executive Director and Director of Research, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)

## KICK-OFF INTERVENTIONS



**Abhishek Singh**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India



**H.E. Suresh K. Reddy**

Ambassador of India to the Arab Republic of Egypt



**Karima El Hakim**

Country Director, Egypt and Director Africa, Plug and Play Egypt



**Dr. Hoda Baraka**

ICT Minister Advisor for Technology Talents Development & AI National Lead & Acting Director of the Egyptian Center for Responsible AI



**Anirban Sarma**

Director, Centre for Digital Societies, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)



**Mohamed Hanno**

Partner and Managing Director, Arab Computers and Chairman, Alexandria Business Association (ABA)

## KEY MESSAGES

- AI is now a core driver of global economic power, with an expected contribution of up to \$22 trillion to global GDP—making it as foundational as electricity or the internet in earlier eras.
- Governments in the MENA region are investing heavily in AI, signaling that AI capability is increasingly tied to national competitiveness, state capacity, and long-term development.
- The central question for Egypt and similar economies is no longer adoption, but strategic adoption—how to accelerate opportunity while controlling systemic risk.
- Three structural challenges hold back progress:
  - Concentrated control of computing power, cloud infrastructure, and data among a few global firms, deepening technological dependency.
  - Outdated regulatory systems that lack frameworks for safe data sharing, privacy protection, and algorithmic accountability.
  - A persistent implementation gap, where strategies exist but execution is slowed by talent shortages, fragmented budgets, and unclear institutional mandates.
- Egypt has already demonstrated the potential of applied AI, with national health screening systems, Arabic speech models, and legal automation built using local data—proof that targeted AI can strengthen public services and create new digital industries.
- Building national talent pipelines is the most critical enabler, requiring coordinated university–industry partnerships, retention strategies, and specialized training programs.
- International collaboration among emerging economies—such as Egypt, India, Brazil, and South Korea—can reduce dependency, support joint standards, and expand access to computing power and R&D.
- The cost of inaction is far greater than the risks of structured engagement, as countries that lag behind will lose competitiveness, technological autonomy, and influence in global digital governance.

### Recommendations

- Rapid adoption must be paired with careful guardrails, promoting innovation in low-risk sectors while enforcing strict oversight in sensitive domains like health, justice, and finance.
- Create an actionable national AI execution roadmap, with clear institutional mandates, measurable milestones, and ring-fenced funding for priority sectors.
- Establish a secure, privacy-preserving data governance framework that allows responsible access to public datasets and supports AI development without compromising rights or trust.
- Develop sovereign digital infrastructure layers, complementing global cloud providers with open-cloud or national computing capacity to reduce long-term dependency.
- Invest aggressively in talent pipelines, including specialized training tracks, incentives for retention, and structured university–industry R&D partnerships.
- Prioritize AI deployment in high-impact, low-risk sectors—such as agriculture, logistics, citizen services, and local-language applications—while enforcing strict oversight in sensitive areas.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## LUNCH SESSION FOUR

# A Deep Dive into the Future of AI Technologies: Risks, Opportunities and Regulatory Challenges

The economic imperative for embracing AI is undeniable. Global AI solutions are projected to inject over USD 22.3 trillion into the world economy by 2030, with every dollar invested expected to generate nearly five dollars in return. For the MENA region, where technology spending is forecast to reach \$169 billion by 2026, AI is already transforming critical sectors, from accelerating financial inclusion for the unbanked in Africa to enhancing food security. This is not a distant future; it is our economic present.

Yet, this opportunity is shadowed by immediate and severe risks. Key concerns include job displacement, data privacy, widening the digital divide and the spread of misinformation through generative AI tools. Furthermore, the immense energy required to train large language models forces a difficult choice between pursuing technological advancement and upholding our climate commitments—a critical dilemma for the Global South.

This session brings together experts in ICT and AI to how to maximize the benefits of AI while addressing its challenges using a balanced, inclusive, and forward-looking approach.

## DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What are the key risks that AI poses? Despite the vast benefits and massive potential of AI, the global rush to advance this technology, whereas receiving very limited funding to decrease its adverse effects.
2. What are the regulatory measures taken throughout the world in response to AI's potential drawbacks, and why does effective enforcement still lag behind?
3. How can emerging economies move from being recipients of AI innovation to active contributors shaping its global direction and long-term impact?
4. What are the most urgent policy and governance priorities for managing AI's societal and economic impact across different regions?

## MODERATOR



**Ziad Aly**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Peacock Investment Holding,  
& Host of the 2043 Podcast

## KICK-OFF INTERVENTIONS



**Hyun Goo Kang**

Director, Korea-Egypt Digital  
Government Cooperation Center (DGCC)



**Anirban Sarma**

Director, Centre for Digital  
Societies, Observer  
Research Foundation (ORF)



**Marwa Abbas**

General Manager  
North-East Africa, IBM

**Dr. Ahmed N. Tantawy**

Partner and Chief Technology Advisor to SDM HealthTech

**Saad Sabrah**

IFC Country Head for Egypt, World Bank Group (WB)

**Dr. Hoda Baraka**

ICT Minister Advisor for Technology Talents Development & AI National Lead & Acting Director of the Egyptian Center for Responsible AI

**H.E. Dr. Mohamed Salem**

Egyptian Former Minister of Communications and Information Technology

## KEY MESSAGES

- Artificial intelligence has shifted from a futuristic idea to a central engine of global economic power, reshaping production systems, competitiveness, national security, and technological leadership.
- The global divide is no longer between adopters and non-adopters, but between countries that passively consume AI and those that actively build, localize, and govern their AI ecosystems.
- Emerging economies face mounting risks: Mass data extraction, concentrated market power, dependence on foreign compute, widening skill gaps, and the misuse of advanced models without the necessary safeguards.
- Structural constraints—inaccessible government datasets, fragile talent pipelines, overreliance on a handful of global providers, and broad but non-operational ethical frameworks—slow progress and deepen strategic vulnerabilities.
- Delay is costly. Slow adoption leads to economic marginalization, but reckless adoption without guardrails erodes public trust and exposes citizens to harm.
- Countries must position themselves as strategic architects of AI, not passive consumers—building capabilities that protect sovereignty, competitiveness, and long-term national benefit.

### Recommendations

- The path forward requires a unified strategy that simultaneously advances:
  - Enablement (skills, computing, data access)
  - Localization of value (sovereign datasets, national IP, contextualized models)
  - Actionable governance (sectoral rules, testing, accountability, and safety mechanisms)
- Establish a national applied AI infrastructure with stable computing access, secure data pipelines, and long-term institutional mandates to reduce dependence on global hyperscalers.
- Create enforceable, sector-specific AI regulations that mandate risk testing, oversight, and safety evaluations—especially in health, finance, and justice.
- Accelerate skills development and talent retention programs to build a durable, nationally anchored AI workforce rather than a transient one.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## LUNCH SESSION FIVE

# Fueling Uncertainty, the Energy Dilemma in the Region and Its Ripple Effects on Maritime Trade

The global energy landscape is undergoing a major transformation, and the Middle East and North Africa region sits at the heart of this transition. As energy producers balance between traditional fossil fuel exports and ambitious renewable energy goals, market volatility and shifting geopolitical alliances are creating deep uncertainty. The recent disruptions in oil and gas flows, coupled with fluctuating prices and the accelerating global push for decarbonization, are redefining the region's economic outlook and its role in global energy security.

At the same time, maritime trade routes, particularly the Suez Canal and the Red Sea corridor, are facing growing risks from regional tensions, thus causing supply chain disruptions directly affecting the energy supply and causing Energy security risks especially in Countries that rely on imported fuel. The intersection of energy market instability and maritime vulnerability has exposed new fault lines that threaten both regional growth and global trade continuity.

This session brings together leading experts, policymakers, and industry leaders to explore how regional actors can navigate this dual challenge: ensuring energy security while maintaining the stability of critical maritime routes. The discussion will focus on innovative energy strategies, the balance between fossil fuels and renewables, and how regional cooperation can mitigate risks that extend far beyond national borders.

### DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. How is the ongoing energy transition reshaping the geopolitical and economic dynamics of the MENA region?
2. In what ways are disruptions in the Red Sea and Suez Canal influencing global trade flows and regional energy markets?
3. How can the region balance short-term energy security with long-term commitments to sustainability and decarbonization?
4. What role can regional cooperation and public-private partnerships play in securing energy supply chains and maritime stability?

### MODERATOR



**Heba Saleh**  
Financial Times  
Cairo Correspondent

### KICK-OFF INTERVENTIONS



**Kabir Taneja**  
Deputy Director and Middle East  
Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme,  
Observer Research Foundation (ORF)



**Marwan El Sammak**  
Chairman & CEO, Ship & CREW S.A.E.  
and Vice Chairman of Alexandria  
Chamber of Shipping



**Steffen Krueger**  
Country Director Egypt, Konrad  
Adenauer Foundation (KAS)



**Linda Mabheha-Olagunju**  
Founder and CEO, DLO Energy  
Resources Group



**Mohamed Sherine El Naggar**  
Chairman, Naggar Shipping Company,  
& International Expert for Connectivity

## KEY MESSAGES

- Africa sits at the crossroads of overlapping crises—energy insecurity, fragile maritime routes, and stalled industrial development—creating deep structural vulnerability across the continent.
- Maritime disruptions in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb are crippling trade, as attacks by armed groups force ships to reroute, increasing delivery times, raising costs, and destabilizing global supply chains that African industries depend on.
- Shipping alliances are increasingly bypassing African waters, undermining the competitiveness of African exporters and driving up import prices for essential goods, machinery, and energy technologies.
- Africa's renewable energy sector is dangerously import-dependent, relying almost entirely on foreign-made solar panels and critical components—especially polysilicon—leaving countries acutely exposed to supply shocks.
- China's dominance in solar technology production, enabled by scale and coal-powered manufacturing, makes it nearly impossible for African producers to compete, embedding high carbon footprints into Africa's energy transition.
- Local capacity for manufacturing, recycling, and energy storage remains minimal, even in countries with massive solar installations, preventing the emergence of a robust African clean-energy value chain.
- Industrialization is constrained by fragmented regional markets, underused trade agreements, and limited cooperation in energy production and distribution, reducing opportunities for competitive manufacturing hubs.
- Energy security is now inseparable from national and regional stability, as geopolitical tensions, sanctions, and supply controls shape investment decisions and increase the risk profile for industry.
- Africa's vulnerability is systemic, linking maritime insecurity, energy dependency, and industrial stagnation into one reinforcing cycle that threatens long-term resilience and economic autonomy.

### Recommendations

- Strengthen maritime security rapidly, prioritizing shared surveillance systems, coordinated naval capabilities, and risk-pooling mechanisms to reduce the impact of attacks and route disruptions.
- Develop regional manufacturing hubs for renewable energy components, focusing on feasible entry points such as mounting structures, inverters, and small-scale storage systems to gradually build technological self-sufficiency.
- Invest in solar panel recycling and repair infrastructure, reducing dependency on imports while lowering environmental and economic costs of large-scale renewable deployment.
- Use regional trade frameworks—especially AfCFTA—to align energy and industrial strategies, enabling cross-border supply chains, shared grids, and competitive regional specialization.
- Diversify energy portfolios, combining renewables with natural gas and available domestic resources to create more stable, shock-resistant energy systems that can support long-term industrialization.

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS





## THE GEM VISIT

An exclusive visit to the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) for tour and dinner on the evening of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.



# CAIRO FORUM 2 IN A NUTSHELL

**14**  
SESSIONS

HOSTED  
**86**  
SPEAKERS

FROM  
**28**  
COUNTRIES

**700+**  
ATTENDEES





## APPENDIX: SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

### A



**Abdel Hamid Mamdouh**

Senior Counsel, King and Spalding LLP - Geneva Office, & Former Director of Trade in Services and Investment, WTO

Prior to that he was a Senior Counsellor in the Services Division and was Secretary of the WTO Council for Trade in Services since the establishment of the WTO in 1995. During that time, he was also responsible for legal affairs in the area of Trade in Services. During the Uruguay Round negotiations his responsibilities included legal matters relating to the drafting of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). His previous positions in the GATT include: Assistant to the Deputy Director-General of the GATT and legal advisor on GATT dispute settlement.



**Abhishek Singh**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India

Director General, National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, India Shri Abhishek Singh, IAS, is a career civil servant with 30 years of experience in governance and policy formulation. He specializes in leveraging technology to enhance governance. His responsibilities include Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies, Human Centred Computing (HCC), and the Digital India Bhashini Division. Previously, he served as CEO, Karmayogi Bharat in the Department of Personnel & Training, and as CEO of NeGD, DIC, and MyGov under the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and is also an alumnus of IIT Kanpur.



**Abla Abdel Latif**

Executive Director and Director of Research, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES)

Dr. Abla Abdel Latif, originally a Professor of Economics at AUC, is currently the Executive Director and Director of Research of The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES). She was the Chair of the Presidential Advisory Council for Economic Development for eight years until last September 2024.

In 2013, she was honored with membership of the Committee of Fifty, whose mission was to draft Egypt's Constitution following June 30, 2013.



**Afif Barhoumi**

Investment Promotion Expert, UNIDO ITPO Bahrain

Mr. Barhoumi has over twenty years of hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, MSME development, innovation, incubation, and investment promotion.

In 1995, he began working at the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL), where he remained until 1999. During his time at IDAL, he participated in the UNIDO delegate program, serving at UNIDO-ITPO Milan. In 1999, he moved to Investcom as a marketing and commercial consultant for one of Syria's mobile networks. By early 2000, he joined UNIDO-ITPO Italy and was stationed in Lebanon as a national consultant, overseeing Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan under the project "Preparatory Assistance for Supporting SMEs in the Arab Region." By mid-2003, Mr. Barhoumi had become an Investment Promotion Expert and Program Coordinator at UNIDO-ITPO Bahrain for the International Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, which runs entrepreneurship and investment development programs in 54 countries. Mr. Barhoumi earned his BS in Business-Computer in 1994 and later completed an MBA at the Lebanese American University.



#### Egyptian Minister of Finance

Previously, he served as the Vice Minister of Finance for Fiscal Policies and Institutional Reform. Since 2016, he has been the Chief Negotiator and Government focal point with the IMF. He also serves as Egypt's non-resident Executive Director at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). He leads Egypt's inter-ministerial team managing the annual economic dialogue with the EU. Kouchouk is a board member of several institutions including the Monetary-Fiscal Coordination Council, the Arab African Investment Bank, Talaat Mostafa Holding, and the Urban Development Economic Authority. He has previously served on the boards of the Central Bank of Egypt, Egypt Air Holding, and Misr Fertilizers Production Company (MOPCO). With nearly 25 years of experience, he worked as a Senior Economist for the World Bank (2013-2016) and held leadership roles in the Ministry of Finance and other ministries. Kouchouk holds a master's degree in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School and a master's degree in economics from York University, UK, and a BSc in Economics from the American University in Cairo.

Ahmed Kouchouk



#### Partner and Chief Technology Advisor to SDM HealthTech

Dr. Ahmed N. Tantawy's career spans several key stages, beginning as a university professor in the USA, France, and Saudi Arabia, where he contributed to academic leadership and advisory roles. He then joined IBM, holding various technical and executive positions from 1988 to 2013, including CTO roles and leading major innovation projects globally. Since 2013, Dr. Tantawy has served as an expert advisor to leading corporations, the World Bank, the UN, and government agencies. As an entrepreneur, he founded the Egyptian Applied Innovation Center in 2019 to address national challenges through emerging technologies. He is Chief Technology Advisor at SDM HealthTech in Saudi Arabia, a principal advisor to venture capital funds, and a board member of national and regional initiatives. His commitment to community extends to trustee roles in nonprofits focused on education and sustainable development. With 34 patents, 4 books, and over 100 scientific publications, Dr. Tantawy remains deeply engaged with the academic and scientific community. He holds a Ph.D. in Computer Engineering from Grenoble, France, complemented by executive education at Harvard, MIT, and IBM.

Ahmed N. Tantawy



#### Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE)

Previously, he was deputy director-general of the World Trade Organization (WTO). He is the author of Revitalizing the World Trading System (Cambridge University Press 2023), selected by the Financial Times as one of best books of 2023 in economics. He is a founder of the Trade for Peace (T4P) Initiative. His numerous recent writings on current trade topics can be found at [www.piie.com](http://www.piie.com) and [www.WTO.org](http://www.WTO.org). Prior to joining the WTO Secretariat, Ambassador Wolff was a leading member of the trade bar and chairman of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC). He has served as a senior US trade negotiator in and advisor to both Democratic and Republican administrations, and is a lifetime National Associate of the National Academies. He has lectured on trade policy and related subjects at universities around the world.

Alan Wm. Wolff



#### Programme Head, Climate and Natural Resources Programme, SAIIA

His work at SAIIA has focused on a number of resource governance-related themes, particularly climate change, energy and the just transition, extractive industry governance and the sustainable blue economy. He has conducted research in several African countries and has strong linkages with key regional institutions such as the African Union Commission and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as within broader national and regional policy and research communities.

Alex Benkenstein



#### Consultant, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies

She is a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and has numerous publications on regional security, international relations, African affairs, and women's empowerment. El Taweel lectures at the Nasser Military Academy and the National Defense College in Muscat, Oman, serves as Editor-in-Chief of the African Strategic Report at the Information and Decision Support Center, and is the former Editor-in-Chief of Afriqat published by the General Egyptian Book Organization. She is a member of the Boutros Ghali Award Committee for African Studies and the State Incentive Awards Committee at the Supreme Council of Culture. Amani is an analyst of African and Sudanese affairs on Arab satellite channels and regularly writes articles for Independent Arabia and Egypt 360 websites. She holds a PhD in political history and international relations from Ain Shams University.

Amani El Taweel



Ambre Eyoum

Special and Diplomatic Advisor to Gérard Mestrallé, French President's Special Envoy for IMEC

She is a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and has numerous publications on regional security, international relations, African affairs, and women's empowerment. El Taweel lectures at the Nasser Military Academy and the National Defense College in Muscat, Oman, serves as Editor-in-Chief of the African Strategic Report at the Information and Decision Support Center, and is the former Editor-in-Chief of Afriqat published by the General Egyptian Book Organization. She is a member of the Boutros Ghali Award Committee for African Studies and the State Incentive Awards Committee at the Supreme Council of Culture. Amani is an analyst of African and Sudanese affairs on Arab satellite channels and regularly writes articles for Independent Arabia and Egypt 360 websites. She holds a PhD in political history and international relations from Ain Shams University.



Amro Elshurafa

Executive Director of the Utilities and Renewables Program, King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC)

Amro Elshurafa has over 20 years of experience in renewable energy policy, electricity market design, and power systems modeling. He has led several national power modeling initiatives at both the utility and distributed scales. Credited with more than 60 publications and patents, parts of his research have been adopted by organizations such as BP in their Statistical Review. Recognized among the top 2% of scientists globally by Stanford University, he holds a Ph.D. in engineering and an MBA in finance. Amro serves on the executive committee of the World Utilities Congress and is also a board member of the Saudi Electricity Regulatory Authority.



Ana Palacio

Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Spain, and Visiting Professor at Georgetown University

Ana Palacio, an international lawyer by training, was the first female Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain. She has accomplished a long career in public service, from leading positions in European institutions to the front lines of the World Bank Group. Among the positions she has held in major foundations and think tanks, her position as a member of the Board and the Strategy Committee of the Atlantic Council stands out. In addition, she has recently been appointed as a member of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies' Academic Council. Currently, along with leading Palacio y Asociados, the European Union consultancy, she is a regular speaker at international conferences and a contributor to different publications, including a monthly column for Project Syndicate, and a weekly column for El Mundo (Spain). She is a visiting professor at the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and is a frequent speaker at international conferences.



Anirban Sarma

Director, Digital Societies Initiative, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

His research focuses on technology policy, particularly AI, the digital economy, digital public infrastructure, platform governance, sectoral applications of ICTs, and the future of work. He is the co-author of GeoTechnoGraphy: Mapping Power and Identity in the Digital Age (Penguin Viking, 2025). Anirban chaired the Think20 task force on digital affairs during the Indian and Brazilian G20 presidencies in 2023 and 2024. Previously, he served as Chief International Outreach and Communications Officer at the National Digital Library of India. He also worked at UNESCO, leading tech-for-development initiatives across South Asia for nearly ten years. In 2007, Anirban received the Inlaks Scholarship to pursue a second master's degree in media and communications at the London School of Economics, graduating with Distinction. He was earlier a double gold medallist at Jadavpur University in Kolkata.



Anita Prakash

Director, Policy and Partnership at Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, Jakarta & Head, Research Lab Asia

She is the founder of Research Lab Asia, which provides research solutions for trade and Infrastructure for emerging economies and global south with a focus on GVCs and supply chains, investment in infrastructure for manufacturing and digital economy, and connectivity in Asia, Europe and Africa. Her important works include Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, Asia-Europe Connectivity, and new supply chains in Indo-Pacific. She is developing the research framework for India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Previously, she has served as Director in the Government of India in the Department of Commerce and NITI Aayog. Anita is a Distinguished Fellow at the Council for Strategic and Defence Research (CSDR), India and a member of Research Advisory Committee of the Center of Excellence for Global South (DAKSHIN).



Anja Berretta

Head of the Regional Programme for the Economy of Africa, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

Since January 2025, Anja Berretta has been heading the Regional Programme on Economy in Africa, based in Nairobi. From 2019 to 2024, she led the Regional Programme on Energy Security and Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa. She began her work with KAS in 2008 as a trainee in the Regional Programme for Political Dialogue in West Africa and subsequently worked in the Evaluation Unit of the Department of European and International Cooperation, where she was responsible for evaluations and programme management. From 2017 to 2018, she served as Learning and Evaluation Manager at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in London. She studied Cultural and Social Sciences at the Universities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Marne-la-Vallée, France, as well as International Relations and European Studies at the Universities of La Sapienza, Italy, and Osnabrück. In addition, she completed a postgraduate certificate course in Advanced Studies in Development and Cooperation at ETH Zurich.



Ayo Sopitan

CEO and Founder, Metalex Commodities Inc.

Ayo Sopitan is the founder and CEO of Metalex Commodities, which delivers carbon-neutral critical metals from Africa to the world. Prior to Metalex, Ayo held consulting and commodity trading-related roles at Bank of America, Ernst & Young, Accenture, S&P Global, and Open Link Financial over a 15-year career. He is an investor in over 25 startups and is a member of several angel networks and syndicates. He holds degrees from Bryant University and New York University and is a fellow at the Legatum Centre for Development and Entrepreneurship at MIT.

C



Claudia Schmucker

Head of Geopolitics, Geoeconomics and Technology Center, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

Previously, she was Head of DGAP's Globalization and World Economy Program. She has published extensively on European and transatlantic trade policy, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Doha Round as well as on the role of informal global forums such as the G7 and G20. Schmucker holds a PhD in economics from the Freie Universität, Berlin.

D



Dalia Grybauskaitė

Former President of Lithuania

Grybauskaitė focused on lifting the country's economic fortunes, emphasized Lithuanian security issues and welcomed a NATO battle group as part of the Alliance's "enhanced forward presence" in Lithuania. D. Grybauskaitė also served as Finance Minister for Lithuania and European Union Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budgets. Dalia Grybauskaitė remains widely popular with the Lithuanian public after ending her second and final presidential term. She continues to speak widely on energy security, transatlantic relations, geopolitical security, sustainable development, economic transparency and accountability, women's leadership. President D. Grybauskaitė serves on a number of advisory boards and commissions.



Dina Sherif

Executive Director, The MIT Kuo Sharper Center for Prosperity and Entrepreneurship

Ms. Dina H. Sherif was the Executive Director of the Legatum Center for Development & Entrepreneurship at MIT and a Senior Lecturer at the Sloan School of Management. With over 20 years of experience in sustainable development, corporate sustainability, youth engagement, social entrepreneurship, and women's economic inclusion, she is interested in the role of the private sector in sustainable development. She founded her own social enterprise, Ahead of the Curve, in 2012 and is a Senior Advisor to Ashoka. Dina previously held the Willard Brown Chair for International Business at the American University in Cairo and was a founding director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement. She has published several works, including a book and reports on philanthropy and responsible business practices in the Arab region.



### CEO, Resrv Technologies LTD

He is the Co-Founder and former CTO of Rancard Solutions, where he pioneered patented work in Artificial Intelligence and Social Recommendation Systems. Previously, he was CEO of Brij, where he helped drive mobile money interoperability across Africa, expanding access to financial services at scale. As CEO of Resrv Technologies and ClearSpace Labs, Ehi leads the development of financial and technology infrastructure that powers liquidity and cross-border trade flows.

**Ehizogie Binitie**



### UN Resident Coordinator in Egypt

Ms. Panova has over 22 years of experience in development and management, specializing in programme management, cross-area collaboration, resource mobilization, and financing in both government and private sectors. She most recently served as Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan. Previously, she held leadership roles at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), including Senior Programme Coordinator at the UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul, Deputy Country Director of UNDP Ukraine, and Private Sector Engagement Specialist at UNDP Headquarters in New York. She also managed a flagship employment creation and micro-financing project at UNDP Bulgaria and helped establish a private sector Global Compact network. Before joining the UN in 1999, Ms. Panova was Executive Director of a Bulgarian NGO supporting micro, small, and women entrepreneurs. She holds a master's degree in international law and foreign trade from the University for National and World Economy as well as a master's degree in microelectronics from the Technical Chemical University, both in Bulgaria.

**Elena Panova**



### Head of Environmental Economics Unit, Regional Coordinator of South-East Europe and Benelux LIFE Monitoring Teams, Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE)

His work focuses on assessing the impacts of environmental and climate policies at both macroeconomic and sectoral level, covering industry, shipping, agriculture, and tourism. He also serves as Regional Coordinator for South-East Europe and the Benelux in the LIFE Programme Monitoring Teams—an EU-funded mechanism supporting environment and climate action—having monitored over 60 projects in Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Elias has worked with international organizations including the IMO, UNEP/MAP, and UNEP ROWA, advising on maritime sustainability, climate adaptation, and financing mechanisms. His recent work includes technical assistance and policy support in Iraq and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the Athens University of Economics and Business on the macroeconomics of climate change.



### Head of MENA Research, Goldman Sachs

Ms. Dina H. Sherif was the Executive Director of the Legatum Center for Development & Entrepreneurship at MIT and a Senior Lecturer at the Sloan School of Management. With over 20 years of experience in sustainable development, corporate sustainability, youth engagement, social entrepreneurship, and women's economic inclusion, she is interested in the role of the private sector in sustainable development. She founded her own social enterprise, Ahead of the Curve, in 2012 and is a Senior Advisor to Ashoka. Dina previously held the Willard Brown Chair for International Business at the American University in Cairo and was a founding director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement. She has published several works, including a book and reports on philanthropy and responsible business practices in the Arab region.

**Farouk Soussa**



#### Italian IMEC Special Envoy, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Previously, he served as Diplomatic Advisor to Prime Minister Meloni, Permanent Representative to NATO, Italy's Ambassador to Israel, Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Consul General in New York, and Deputy Diplomatic Advisor to PM Berlusconi. He also held postings at the Italian Embassies in Germany, Japan, and the UN Mission in New York, and served as a Lieutenant in the Carabinieri Corps. He has 40 years of experience in international relations, with a focus on transatlantic affairs, the Middle East, the Arctic, technological innovation, security, and energy policy, and is active as a conference speaker and consultant. Ambassador Francesco M. Talò holds a Law degree (summa cum laude) from the University of Rome.

Francesco M. Talò

H



#### Egyptian Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade

El Khatib is a non-executive Board Member of the Central Bank of Egypt and formerly served as an Independent Board Member of the Sovereign Fund of Egypt. He also lectures on Private Equity Venture for Master of Finance students at Imperial College London. He was Managing Director Equity at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and has held key roles in private equity, including Managing Director at the Carlyle Group and Managing Partner at EFG-Hermes Private Equity. His expertise spans financial institutions, energy, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, real estate, and charities. El Khatib chaired the Egyptian Junior Businessmen Association and the Egyptian Private Equity Association. He is a founder and trustee of Misr ElKheir Foundation and has served on boards including the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies and the American Chamber of Commerce in Cairo. He holds an MBA with highest distinction from California State University, Sacramento, and a BSc in Civil Structural Engineering from Cairo University.

Hassan El Khatib



#### Financial Times Cairo Correspondent

Heba Saleh is the Cairo Correspondent of the Financial Times, focusing mainly on political and economic developments in Egypt and North Africa. She has reported from most countries of the Arab world for the FT and before that for the BBC.

Heba Saleh



#### ICT Minister Advisor for Technology Talents Development & AI National Lead & Acting Director of the Egyptian Center for Responsible AI

Hoda Baraka is also a Professor of Computer Engineering at Cairo University. She leads several national skilling initiatives under Digital Egypt Generations and oversees the National AI strategy and governance framework to ensure ethical AI deployment. Previously, she served as First Deputy Minister of ICT from 2006 to 2013 and was National Director of Egypt's ICT Trust Fund. Dr. Baraka has over 40 years of experience in digital transformation and has received the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa prize for her contributions to education through ICT.

Hoda Baraka



#### Director, Korea-Egypt Digital Government Cooperation Center (DGCC)

He has an extensive experience in AI and has held leadership roles including Team Leader at the Artificial Intelligence Convergence Headquarters and the Public Cloud Business Unit, and Research Fellow at the Electronic Government Headquarters. Kang has led generative AI projects supporting communication for the disabled, early detection for slow learners, AI-based research support, smart fire administration, labor inspection, and patent examination services. He holds an IT MBA from KAIST and a bachelor's degree in economics from Seoul City University.

Hyun Goo Kang



Ivana Dragicevic

Founder, Europe Future Center

Previously, she was executive producer and editor-at-large at N1 Television and chief foreign correspondent at Croatian Public Broadcaster. Ivana is a 2022/2023 Europe's Futures Fellow at IWM Vienna. With nearly 30 years of experience, she has produced documentaries on global security and geopolitics, collaborating with the European Parliament on projects like Voters 2024. She is the founder of Europe Future Centre, and a member of the Trilateral Commission and author of two acclaimed books on global order and security. Ivana received many awards, including the 2024 Gordana Susa Award for best TV journalist in the Adria-Balkans region and the Europa Award for EU affairs reporting.



Jeffrey D. Sachs

University Professor and Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, and President, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

He is President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Co-Chair of the Council of Engineers for the Energy Transition, Commissioner of the UN Broadband Commission for Development, and an academician of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences at the Vatican. Previously, he was Director of the Earth Institute, and served as Special Advisor to three UN Secretaries-General and is an SDG Advocate under António Guterres. He spent over 20 years as a professor at Harvard University, where he earned his B.A., M.A., and PhD degrees. Sachs has received 42 honorary doctorates and prestigious awards including the 2022 Tang Prize in Sustainable Development and the Legion of Honor from France. His recent books include "The Ages of Globalization (2020) and Ethics in Action for Sustainable Development" (2022).



Jin-Yong Cai

Partner, Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), China

His career in development finance and capital markets has closely intertwined with China's economic reform, opening up and development over the past three decades. Previously, he was CEO of the World Bank Group IFC, and had worked at Goldman Sachs, TPG, Morgan Stanley and China International Capital Co. Cai holds PhD from Boston University.



Jiuzhou Duan

Assistant Professor, Tsinghua University

Previously, he was visiting fellow at Harvard Kennedy School and American University in Cairo. His research is focused on the field of Middle East politics and society in general, with a special concentration on China-Middle East relations and the political economy of development.



Jorge Chediek

Chair, Academic Council, Center for International Studies, Catholic University of Argentina

Previously, he was Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation. He has held senior United Nations roles in Latin America. Jorge is a visiting professor in Argentina and has contributed extensively to advancing global South-South cooperation initiatives, including organizing major conferences and launching key platforms to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development. He holds a Master's degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.



Deputy Director and Middle East Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

His work focuses on India's relationship with the Middle East specifically looking at the domestic political dynamics, regional security, non-state militant actors and the general security paradigm of the region. He has authored books, chapters, and is a regular contributor to national and international newspapers and publications. He is also the author of 'The ISIS Peril: The World's Most Feared Terror Group and its Shadow on South Asia' (Penguin, 2020).

Kabir Taneja



Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Transport and Industry

Previously, he served as chief of staff (2014–2015) and Chairperson of the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces since December 2015. He was responsible for overseeing several projects including, the New Suez Canal excavation project in 2015, the side canal excavation for East Port Said Port, execution of the national road project, the Galala Plateau project in Ain Sokhna, and Rod El-Farag Axis, among others. He was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and the Excellent Service Medal.

Al-Wazir graduated from the Military Technical College with a specialization in construction, and holds a Master's degree in Military Science from the Command and Staff College, a fellow of the Higher War College, and completed the senior leadership course at Nasser Military Academy.

Kamel Al-Wazir



Partner & Portfolio Manager, Moon Capital

Karim is a partner/portfolio manager at Moon Capital covering emerging markets since 2003, when it was Oaktree Capital Management's Emerging Market Fund. Prior to that, he worked for Morgan Stanley for three years in the Investment Banking Division in the Global Communications and Media Group. Karim began his career in the Investment Banking Division of J.P. Morgan & Co. in the Financial Institutions Group. He received a B.S. degree in International Business and Finance, with a minor in Economics, from Georgetown University.

Karim Sawabini



Country Director, Egypt and Director Africa, Plug and Play Egypt

El Hakim Karima is renowned and recognized within her community to be one of the youngest female enablers and investors in the tech startups ecosystem in North Africa and was featured several times in local and regional publications such as, Enterprise Egypt, Techcabal, Tech Crunch, Al Monitor and Al Mal news. Her work revolves around ecosystem building, VC investment and startup acceleration/incubation which was duly recognized throughout her previous work at Fawry, Falak Startups and Orascom Development Holding. She holds a BSc. in Business Administration from the American University in Cairo and a MSc in Market Intelligence and Research from Sciences-Po Paris (IEP).



Associate Professor of Practice, and Director of Middle East Studies Program, AUC, Egypt

Khaled Ezzelarab is a Middle East journalist who has reported major regional events for international and pan-Arab news organizations since 2003. As a BBC World Service correspondent, he covered conflicts in Gaza, Yemen, Syria, and Egypt's uprising and aftermath. He later led the Cairo news website Aswat Masriya for Thomson Reuters Foundation, doubling its traffic with a digital storytelling approach. Ezzelarab then became a senior news editor at Sky News Arabia, and in 2020 joined the American University in Cairo as an associate professor. He founded the Reporting History talk series and the Hikayat Masriyya podcast, and continues publishing work focused on journalism's future and social media's impact. His documentaries have won multiple awards in Egypt and the UK.

Khaled Ezzelarab



**Linda Mabhena-Olagunju**

Founder and CEO, DLO Energy Resources Group

Linda Mabhena-Olagunju is Founder and CEO of DLO Energy Resources, a Black woman-owned independent power producer operating some of Africa's largest wind farms. She is among the first Black women globally to own and run utility-scale renewable energy plants, developing major projects in South Africa and expanding across Zambia, Botswana, and Nigeria. Linda serves on advisory boards including Oxford University, the Zayed Future Energy Prize, Energy for Access, and City Power Johannesburg. She has won multiple international awards for her leadership in energy, including the Forbes Africa Entrepreneur Award, the Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman Award, and the CNBC All Africa Business Leaders Award. In 2022, she launched the DLO Skills Initiative, an AI-driven platform to train Africa's renewable energy workforce. She holds law degrees from the University of Cape Town and University of Aberdeen, and is a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Kuo Sharper Fellow.



**Majd Al Naber**

Director General, Team Leader and Senior Researcher, Sustainable Development, WANA Institute, Jordan

Al Naber is a specialist in sustainability and integrated natural resources management and policies in the Arid region. She manages several projects addressing the environmental security in the WANA region. Al Naber takes a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses the fields of climate change, food and water securities, environmental displacement and migration, social inclusions, vulnerability and gender. She has an extended experience in the sustainability of agriculture system under scarce conditions of drought, salinity and water scarcity. Majd Al Naber earned her Joint Doctorate degree from Wageningen University and Research Centre and Universite Paul-Valley Montpellier 3, and MSc from CIHEAM-Bari.



**Mamadou Biteye**

Executive Secretary, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

Previously, he assumed various esteemed positions, including Vice-President, Global Head of Inclusive Growth, Regional Head of Social Impact for the Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East, and Africa Region, Managing Director Africa for the Rockefeller Foundation, and Oxfam's Regional Director for West Africa.



**Mariya Gabriel**

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Bulgaria, & President, Robert Schuman Institute

Previously, she was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria. Mariya was member of the European Parliament, and served as European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society (2017-2019) and European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth (2019- 2023).



**Mark Davis**

Managing Director for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Previously, he served as Regional Director for Central Europe (covering Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and Regional Director for Bulgaria and Romania. He joined the EBRD in 2013 as Head of Armenia, where he expanded the Bank's local business and contributed to creating the Armenian Private Equity Fund. Before EBRD, Mr. Davis held senior roles at Goldman Sachs in Moscow and Morgan Stanley in London. He began his career at the World Bank as a Senior Country Economist and Adviser in Washington, DC and Europe. He holds a PhD in Economics from Tulane University, New Orleans.



Marwa Abbas

#### General Manager North-East Africa, IBM

With over 30 years at IBM since 1994, she has held key leadership roles across Egypt and the Middle East & Africa region. In 2013, she launched IBM's first MEA Digital Sales Center in Cairo. In 2022, she became the first female General Manager of IBM Egypt. Marwa drives strategic growth, digital transformation, and AI adoption, while championing youth empowerment and women in tech. She serves on the boards of Beltone Holding and AmCham Egypt, and is a certified board director from the IFC-World Bank Group. Marwa holds a BSc in Computer Science and an MBA from the American University in Cairo.



Marwan El Sammak

#### Chairman & CEO, Ship & CREW S.A.E. and Vice Chairman of Alexandria Chamber of Shipping

He began his career in the early 1990s at Worms Alexandria Cargo Services, founded by his late father. He advanced to General Manager of WORMS' Technical & Operations Department, then led Medlevant Shipping, Hapag-Lloyd's sister company. In 2017, Hapag-Lloyd Egypt was established with him as Chairman. Marwan founded Ship & CREW S.A.E to provide integrated maritime, transport, and logistics services in Egypt. He actively participates in civil society, serving as Vice Chairman of the Alexandria Chamber of Shipping, Board Member & Treasurer of the French Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, and various other leadership roles in industry and community organizations. Born in Alexandria in 1968, he graduated in Marine Engineering & Ship Building from Alexandria University in 1991, with extensive expertise in technical, management, and business development fields.



Mirette F. Mabrouk

#### Senior Fellow & Director of Egypt and Horn of Africa Programme, The Middle East Institute (MEI)

Mirette F. Mabrouk is a senior fellow and founding director of the Egypt and Horn of Africa Program at the Middle East Institute. She focuses on economic development, regional security, and sustainable development in the Middle East and North Africa. Before joining MEI, she served as deputy director and director for research and programs at the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council and was a fellow at Brookings Institution. With over 20 years in journalism, she founded Egypt's The Daily Star Egypt (now The Daily News Egypt), the country's only independent English-language daily newspaper at the time, and was publishing director at IBA Media. Her work has appeared in major international media, and she is an author on Middle East economic issues. She holds an MA in Broadcast Journalism and a BA in Mass Communication from the American University in Cairo.



Mohamed El Gawsaky

#### Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Egypt For Planning, Development and Digital Transformation

He leads efforts to expand Egypt's foreign trade capabilities, strengthen global partnerships, and technology transformation across the trade and investment ecosystem to enhance efficiency, and competitiveness. With more than 24 years of experience across the public and private sectors, Eng. El Gawsaky has built a distinguished record in strategy formulation and execution, as well as growing businesses through venturing into new arenas, territories and green field technologies across emerging markets. Previously, he served as Undersecretary at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, where he led Egypt's international cooperation portfolio and positioned the country as a strategic hub for global technology companies and digital-economy investors. Earlier in his career, he held several executive leadership positions in leading local and multinational corporations, driving strategic expansion and operational excellence across diverse markets. El Gawsaky holds a Master of Business Administration from the American University in Cairo and a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from Ain Shams University.



Mohamed Hanno

#### Partner and Managing Director, Arab Computers and Chairman, Alexandria Business Association (ABA)

Mohamed Hanno is on the board of Borg El Arab Technological University, the Board of Trustees Alexandria National University, and the Board of Trustees of Alamein International University. Previously, he held several prominent positions, including Chairman of the Alexandria Software and Information Technology Association (ASITA), Board Member of Etal Transport, An Egytrans Group company. He served on the board of Alexandria Business Association as Vice Chairman and Treasurer. As the head of ABA's Advocacy Committee, he was responsible for the issuance of ABA's private sector business index 'ISLAH' and the Micro Enterprises Reform Index in collaboration with the IFC. Mr. Hanno has also served as Chairman of ABA's Microfinance Project's advisory board and has an experience of more than 20 years in the field of microfinance. Mr. Hanno has more than thirty years of experience in the IT field and is the Managing Director and founder of Arab Computers, Alexandria's leading IT systems supplier and business partner of leading international IT companies like Cisco, Dell, HP and Microsoft. His earlier experience includes working for a US IT company in Silicon Valley.



Chairman of Expolink, & CEO of World Trading Company, & ECES Secretary General

Mr. Mohamed Kassem chairs the boards of directors of several institutions and companies, including the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera), the World Trading Company, and the Egyptian Exporters Association (Expolink). Previously, he held several esteemed positions, including commercial attache at the Ministry of Foreign Trade. He is member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, the Egyptian Businessmen Association (EBA) and the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs.

**Mohamed Kassem**



Egyptian Former Minister of Communications and Information Technology

He is also Senior Consultant at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and a member of the Board of Trustees at Alamein International University. Previously, he has held key leadership roles including Chairman of the Executive Office of the Arab Ministers of Communications, Chairman of the Boards of Directors of Telecom Egypt and TE Data Company, and President of the Information Technology Institute in Egypt. He also works as a consultant in Information and Communications Technology. He holds a PhD in Computer Engineering with a specialization in Artificial Intelligence.

**Mohamed Abdel Kader  
Salem**



Chairman, Naggar Shipping Company, & International Expert for Connectivity

Previously, Mr. Sherine El Naggar held several positions at Naggar Shipping Co. (family business), including operations manager and chartering manager. He succeeded in 1990 in starting the first container transhipment hub in Egypt at the port of Damietta. In 1995, he introduced the first two gantry cranes owned by private sector in Egypt as additional capacity for Damietta Port. He established a joint venture with Suez Canal Authority to operate two coastal vessels for movement of containers between Egyptian Ports (vessels: Nagda I and Nagda II), the Egyptian Container Line (NVOCC), a Ropax line connecting Mersin with Port Said and Suez with Dibah in Saudi Arabia, and Norna Shipping Corporation (a tanker owning company with a fleet of 6 tankers.) In 2005, he started Egyptian container line service with two RORO vessels. In 2007 he started Red Sea bridge service with RORO ships between Suez, Jeddah, Aqaba and Port Sudan. He edited the first port information guide "Naggar's Ship owners' guide to Egyptian Ports and the Suez Canal" in 1983, and issued second port information book "Tanker Ports of Egypt" in 1991. El Naggar holds BSc. engineering from the American University in Cairo (AUC.)

**Mohamed Sherine  
El Naggar**



Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

Previously, he held leading positions in both the Egyptian Human Rights Organization and the Arab Political Science Association. He directed the Center for the Study of Developing Countries at Cairo University. Al-Sayyid was a member of the Committee on Global Security and Cooperation of the US Social Science Research Council, and has been a visiting scholar at UCLA, Harvard Law School, Colgate University, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He has published extensively in Arabic, English, and French on Political Economy, Human Rights, and civil society. Al-Sayyid holds a Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

**Mustapha Kamel  
Al-Sayyid**

N



Egyptian Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Nabil Fahmy has been a career diplomat for over three decades, served as Egypt's Ambassador to several countries, including the United States and Japan. He held numerous government and international positions mostly focusing on crisis management, conflict resolution & arms control. He founded and was Dean of School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, at the American University in Cairo (AUC). He is Chairman of Lynx Business Advisors, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cairo Regional Center for International Commercial Arbitration. He has published three English and Arabic books and is a syndicated columnist and an active public speaker.

**Nabil Fahmy**



**Nabil Nagmeldin**

Chief Executive Officer, Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB)

Dr. Nangula Nelulu Uaandja is also a Chartered Accountant by Profession and has served as an auditor and business consultant over 24 years at PwC Namibia, and was the Firm's first female and first black Country Managing Partner. Previously, Nangula was Deputy Chair of the President's High-Level Panel on the Namibian Economy. She also serves on Namibia's Green Hydrogen Council, overseeing sustainable energy initiatives. Her academic work focused on the collaborative role of the public and private sectors in driving inclusive economic growth and addressing shared challenges. She holds a PhD in Business Leadership, studying public-private collaboration for inclusive growth.



**Nangula Nelulu Uaandja**

Journalist Specialized in International Relations

A seasoned media professional with extensive experience in television journalism, editorial management, and media project launches, Nabil Nagmeldin has built a distinguished career across leading regional and international media organizations. With a strong foundation in editorial judgment, leadership, and training. Throughout a career spanning over two decades, he has held several senior positions including Channel Interviews and Assignment Desk Editor at Alghad TV (Cairo), Head of Performance and Quality at Al-Dawliya Media Group (Dubai), and Launch Producer at Al-Rai TV (Kuwait) and Al Ekhbaria TV (Riyadh). Earlier in his career, Nagmeldin contributed to respected networks such as Abu Dhabi TV, Al Jazeera, MBC (London), BBC World Service Television, and World-Wide Television News (WTN), gaining broad exposure to global media operations. He holds a Diploma in Journalism from the London School of Journalism and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Cairo University, in addition to several professional training programs.



**Nasser Kamel**

Secretary General, The Union for the Mediterranean

A career diplomat for the Egyptian government, Nasser Kamel held the position of Ambassador of Egypt to the United Kingdom from 2014 to 2018. He was also Ambassador to France in the period 2006-2012, during which he took part in the drafting of the Joint Declaration of the 2008 Paris Summit that marked the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean. Furthermore, between 2012 and 2014, he was Assistant Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs. From 2004 to 2006, he was the Director of Egypt's Public Information Service. Prior to this position he served in various embassies, including Washington (1984-1988), Lisbon (1990-1994), Tunis (1994-1998), Brussels (1999-2001) and Paris (2001-2004).



**Nathalie Delapalme**

CEO, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Previously, she was Inspecteur General des Finances at the French Ministry of Economy and Finance. She has served as an advisor to the French Government on Africa and Development and worked with the French Senate's Finance and Budgetary Commission. Nathalie is co-Secretary General of the Africa-Europe Foundation, sits on the boards of the International Crisis Group and Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), and is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations and the World Economic Forum's Expert Network. She is honored as Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite.



**Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli**

President and CEO, ONE Campaign

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli has over 25 years of experience in international development, focusing on social innovation in Africa. Beginning at McKinsey Chicago, she returned to Nigeria to lead the FATE Foundation and founded LEAP Africa and African Food Changemakers, supporting African leaders and agribusiness entrepreneurs. She co-founded Sahel Consulting and AACE Foods. Ndidi sits on boards including the Rockefeller Foundation and Chanel Foundation, and has been a fellow at Harvard Kennedy School, McGill University, Aspen Institute, and Eisenhower program. She received a National Honor by the Nigerian Government and the Harvard Business School Distinguished Alumni Award. Ndidi is a published author on entrepreneurship, social innovation, and resilient agriculture in Africa. She holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and an undergraduate honors degree from Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.



**Noha El-Mikawy**

Professor of Practice in the Public Policy and Administration Department, and Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, AUC

Previously, she was regional director of the Ford Foundation for the Middle East and North Africa. She worked with UNDP's Bureau of Development Policy and Regional Bureau of Arab States as the regional policy advisor, providing technical advice on governance programs of UNDP offices across the Arab region. In addition to being a policy practitioner, El-Mikawy's academic background includes research development and management at the Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn, Germany, as well as teaching at UCLA, AUC, the Free University of Berlin and the University of Elangen. She has published two books on Egypt with AUC press and several articles and book chapters on governance and institutional reform in Egypt and the Arab region, including with Oxford and Cambridge University Press. El-Mikawy serves on the governing board of the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) as well as the advisory board of the Swedish Dialogue Institute. She holds a master's degree in comparative politics and international relations and a PhD in comparative politics from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).



**Noha Adly**

Advisor to the Minister of Communication and Information Technology for R&D

She is also a Professor of Computer & Systems Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Alexandria University. Dr. Adly has served in several positions since 1988 locally and abroad. She served as Head of ICT sector at Bibliotheca Alexandrina for more than 20 years, where she was responsible for the BA's overall ICT strategy & the design and implementation of its digital initiatives. She was appointed as First Deputy to the Minister of Communications & Information Technology from 2013 to 2016. She is author/co-author of more than 60 publications in peer reviewed journals and scientific conferences. She holds a PhD in Computer Science from Cambridge University, UK.

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**Omar El-Shenety**

Research Consultant, ECES, and Adjunct Faculty, AUC

Omar El-Shenety has over 15 years of experience in investment banking, private equity, and strategy consulting, having worked with various family offices and high-net-worth investors. Omar also serves as adjunct faculty at the American University in Cairo and the University of London at AAST, and is a research consultant at the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, focusing on macroeconomic and financial analysis for the Middle East region. He holds a Global Executive MBA from Columbia Business School and London Business School, a Master of Laws from King's College London, and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the American University in Cairo.



**Omar Mohanna**

Chairman, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES); Chairman, Chubb Insurance Egypt; Prometeon Tyre Egypt Co. (Pirelli); Chairman, Coca-Cola HBC Egypt; & Chairman, The United Bank

Omar Mohanna is former Chairman of Suez Cement Group of Companies (SCGC), a subsidiary of the German Multinational Group Heidelberg Cement AG. With over 25 years of commercial and investment banking experience with Egyptian and international financial institutions, he was Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Egypt Arab African Bank (EAAB). He also held the position of Managing Director of Accor Hotels Group in Egypt and has been a member of the Board of Directors of diverse companies. He is the former President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (AmCham Egypt) and is Chairman of the Egypt-US Business Council. He is also a member of the Italian Egyptian Business Council, the French Egyptian Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, the Egyptian Businessmen Association and Egypt's International Economic Forum among others. At the broader community level, he is a Board member of the Association for the Protection of the Environment, and member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Relations. As an economist, industrialist and active member of the business community, Mohanna has brought his knowledge and expertise to bear at the policy level in his capacity as Chairman of the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES).



**Paolo Magri**

President Advisory Board, Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Italy

He is a member of the Europe Policy Group at the World Economic Forum (Davos), serves on the Board of Directors of LUISS University, and is a member of the Council of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). He frequently appears as a speaker, writer, and commentator for various media outlets. His publications include: *Il marketing del terrore* (co-authored with Maggioni, 2016); *Il mondo di Obama. 2008–2016* (2016); *Il mondo secondo Trump* (2017); *Post-vote Iran. Giving Engagement a Chance* (co-authored with Perteghella, 2017); *Four Years of Trump. The US and the World* (co-authored with Del Pero, 2020); *Il Conflitto senza fine* (2024); and *Europe in the Age of Insecurity* (co-authored with Alessandro Colombo, 2024).



**Piotr Buras**

Head of Warsaw Office, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

His topics of focus include Germany's EU and foreign policy, Poland in the EU, and EU politics. Buras is a journalist, author and expert on German and European politics. Between 2008 and 2012 he worked as a columnist and Berlin correspondent for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the biggest Polish daily newspaper. He started his professional career in the late 1990s at the Center for International Relations in Warsaw, one of the first Polish think-tanks. He continued his career at the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham and at the University of Wrocław (Poland). He was also a visiting fellow at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin. His recent book *Moslems and the Other Germans. The Reinvention of the Berlin Republic* was published in Polish in 2011.



**Rania Al-Mashat**

Egyptian Minister of Planning, Economic Development & International Cooperation

Previously, she served as the Minister of International Cooperation, and was the first female Minister of Tourism. She held several esteemed positions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington DC, served at the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) as the Sub-Governor for Monetary Policy and was CBE's liaison with the IMF and the Sovereign Rating Agencies. She is a member of several boards, including those of the Egyptian Stock Exchange, the Egyptian General Authority for Free Zones and Investment, the Arab International Bank and the Arab Investment Bank, among others. She is also a member of several Advisory councils and international alliances including, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) GenU, and Founding Member of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) launched by the Rockefeller Foundation, among others. Al-Mashat authored key publications on economic diplomacy and climate finance, and has received prestigious awards for her leadership in international cooperation and tourism reform. She holds a PhD and MA in Economics from the University of Maryland, and executive education from Harvard and Oxford.



**Romana Vlahutin**

Special Envoy for Strategic Connectivity, Three Seas Initiative National Coordinator, Croatia

Previously, she assumed various esteemed positions, including EU Ambassador to Albania; Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of Croatia, and has held senior diplomatic roles in Washington, Belgrade, and strategic positions at Croatia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also worked with the UN ICTY, Council on Foreign Relations, and OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Ambassador Vlahutin is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Her expertise includes strategic infrastructure, EU connectivity, foreign and security policy, and European enlargement. She holds a BA from Zagreb University and an MPA from Harvard University.



**Roula Majdalani**

Senior Climate Change Advisor, Director General's Office of ICARDA

Ms. Majdalani has had a distinguished career with the United Nations, working in development and political roles in the Middle East and Africa. From 2010 to 2021, she was Director of the Arab Center for Climate Change Policies and led the Climate Change Cluster at UN-ESCPWA, focusing on sustainable management of water, energy, and food resources. She joined ESCWA in 1989, serving in technical and leadership positions, and managed the ESCWA Technology Center in Amman. She holds a master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Syracuse University and previously worked at Dar Al-Handasah Consultants in London. Ms. Majdalani serves on several advisory boards for international and regional organizations and was recently appointed to the Global Water Partnership.



Saad Sabrah

IFC Country Head for Egypt, World Bank Group (WB)

Saad is a multicultural professional with international expertise and a career spanning over 24 years in major multinational institutions in the USA and the Middle East/ North Africa region. He is recognized for animating and turning visionary thinking to elevate corporate value and purpose in the leadership arena. He is also a subject matter expert in infrastructure investment, public private partnerships, corporate governance, and digital economy development. Prior to joining the IFC in 2004, Saad worked in Management Consultant at the strategy practice of KPMG Consulting as well as at NDC Group Advisory Services practice in the USA. In that capacity he advised senior management of multinational corporations in a wide range of industries on business strategy and investment decisions as well as advised government client and public agencies on business process and foreign investment development and competitiveness. Saad holds a Master's degree in Business Management from Strayer University in the USA. He also holds a dual Bachelor's degree, in accounting and in decision science/management from George Mason University in the USA.



Samir Saran

President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India

Samir Saran also serves as the Founder and President of RPIF, the entity responsible for administering the Raisina Dialogue and its associated events. Samir curates the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship platform on geopolitics, and chairs CyFy, the annual conference on cybersecurity. He serves on several international advisory boards, including the Global Future Council on Geopolitics of the World Economic Forum, and has authored multiple books and papers on governance, climate, technology, and India's foreign policy. He holds a PhD from the UK's Global Sustainability Institute, a Masters from LSE, and a Bachelor's in Engineering from Manipal Institute of Technology. His latest publications include GeoTechnoGraphy: Mapping Power and Identity in the Digital Age with Anirban Sarma, The New World Disorder and The Indian Imperative with Shashi Tharoor and Pax Sinica: Implications Dawn with Akhil Deo.



Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour

Distinguished Senior Fellow, Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), and Professor of International Relations, School of International Relations, Tehran

Previously, he has been with IPIS for the last three decades serving as its Director General from 1999 to 2004 and IPIS President and deputy Foreign Minister from 2016 to 2021. He was also Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva. Professor Sajjadpour is also a media commentator appearing in Iranian National TV on international developments. He has a weekly column in the oldest Iranian Newspaper, Ettalat under the title of Foreign Policy in Turbulent World. He holds a PhD from George Washington University and was Post-Doctoral Fellow at Harvard University.



Simon J. Evenett

Professor of Geopolitics and Strategy, IMD Business School, Switzerland

Professor Evenett is the Founder of the St. Gallen Endowment for Prosperity Through Trade, the non-profit home of the Global Trade Alert, the Digital Policy Alert, and the New Industrial Policy Observatory--three independent monitoring initiatives on commercial policy changes. Simon and his team support Developing Country WTO Members to prepare for Trade Policy Reviews, supply them with trade policy dashboards, and provide evidence-driven thematic workshops on topics at the core of world trade. He is also Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Trade and Investment, and has taught at Oxford University and the University of St Gallen, and has held Visiting Professorships at Johns Hopkins University (twice) and the University of Michigan (three times). He is a former World Bank official and has served on two commissions on the future of globalization and the world trading system.



Stefan Löfven

Former Prime Minister of Sweden

Previously, he was appointed by the UN Secretary-General to lead a High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism and became a resident fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics. He served as Prime Minister of Sweden (2014–2021) and Leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party (2012–2021), leading the party to two election victories. Known for his strong commitment to democracy, European values and human rights, as Prime Minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven was the driving force behind the proclamation and signing of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Gothenburg Social Summit for fair jobs and growth in 2017. Löfven studied social work and began his career as a welder and trade union leader, serving as President of IF Metal (2006–2012).



**Stefan A.V.J.G.  
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Executive Director, Independent High-Level Groups for EU Policy Innovation

He is also Honorary Director General of the European Institute of Public Administration (Maastricht), and he consults for governments and businesses. Stefan is co-editor of key publications on EU innovation policy and governance, including "Reimagining Africa" (2023) and "Revolutionising EU Innovation Policy" (2016). He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Edinburgh, UK.



**Steffen Krüger**

Country Director Egypt, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation (KAS)

Previously, Mr. Krüger managed the KAS country program Morocco / Mauritania (2018-2023) and an EU program to promote the political participation of women in Benin and Morocco (2018-2022). From 2015 to 2018, he was a consultant for the francophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa at the headquarters of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Berlin. He was head of the KAS country program in the DR Congo with a focus on the reform of the security forces, promotion of civil society and the rule of law from 2012 to 2015. From 2006 to 2011, Mr. Krüger worked for different US-based organizations. Prior to that, he started as a project assistant (2002 - 2005) with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Benin, West Africa. Mr. Krüger holds a Diploma in Political Science (University of Marburg) and a Graduate Degree in International Education (SIT Graduate Institute).



**Stephane Guimbert**

Country Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti, Middle East and North Africa, The World Bank (WB)

Previously, he was the Bank's Operations Policy Director in the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency (OPCS). He co-led the coordination of the IDA/IBRD COVID-19 vaccines program, the steering of the new Country Climate and Development Reports. He also established a coordination mechanism with other multilateral development banks (MDBs) on operational policies and strengthened the partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He headed the team preparing and negotiating IDA replenishment strategies and policies, and coordinating their implementation across the institution. He managed the transformation of the IDA financial model and the creation of the IDA Private Sector Window. He also led the corporate finance function for the IDA and World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) balance sheets, including for the 2018 IBRD capital increase. Prior to joining the Bank, Stephane was economist at France's Ministry of Economy and Finance. He holds Masters degrees from Ecole Polytechnique, ENSAE Paris and the Sorbonne University.



**Sunjoy Joshi**

Chairman, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

Joshi began his career in the Indian Administrative Service in 1983, serving 25 years in various roles before joining ORF in 2009 to focus on energy and environment. He has served on the boards of national energy companies like ONGC and OIL and has expertise in energy policy, water management, and fiscal regimes for oil and gas. Joshi has been a Visiting Associate at the International Institute of Strategic Studies and a Distinguished Visitor at Stanford University. He is also Vice President of the Mountain Children's Foundation, supporting rural Himalayan children, and frequently publishes on technology, energy, and development in the context of global trade and sustainability. He holds Master's degree in English Literature from Allahabad University and Development Studies from the University of East Anglia.



**Suresh K. Reddy**

Ambassador of India to the Arab Republic of Egypt

Ambassador Suresh Reddy has had a distinguished career since he joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1991. He has served in Cairo, Muscat, Abu Dhabi, and Islamabad and later as India's Ambassador to Iraq, ASEAN, and Brazil. Amb Reddy also served as Special Envoy of Government of India to Iraq. In the Ministry, he has held sensitive and crucial positions, including Head of Office of Minister of State for External Affairs and has been engaged with the neighboring countries in different capacities including as Desk Officer/Director/Director-General. He also established and headed the first ASEAN Multilateral Economic Relations Division and, in that capacity, while strengthening engagement with ASEAN & EAS, was also looking after ASEM, ACD & APEC related issues.



Tarek Tawfik

Deputy Chairman, The Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI), & Vice Chairman, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES); President of The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt; Chairman Cairo Poultry Group; First Vice President of The Federation of Mediterranean Business Organization (BUSINESSMED)

Tawfik is a Board Member of the General Authority for Investments and Free Zones (GAFI), Egypt Sovereign Wealth Fund, Egyptian Countryside Development Company, the Egyptian Food Safety Authority, the Chamber of Food Industries, Agricultural Bank of Egypt, Industrial Modernization Center-Ministry of Foreign Trade & Industry, Egyptian Poultry Federation, The Holding Company for Cotton, Spinning, Weaving & Garment. Tawfik holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering - Cairo University, a master's of engineering from California Polytechnic State University (Pomona), and an MBA degree from San Francisco State University.



Tarik M. Yousef

Senior Fellow, the Middle East Council on Global Affairs

His career has spanned the academic and think-tank worlds as a faculty member in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs; and Senior Fellow at Brookings and Director of the Brookings Doha Center. His involvement with public policy includes working at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the UN. He holds a PhD in economics from Harvard University. His research has focused on international economics and political economy. He has contributed more than 80 articles, chapters, and reports, and co-edited several volumes including most recently *Public Sector Reform in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons of Experience for a Region in Transition* (Brookings Institution Press, 2020); *The Gulf Cooperation Council at Forty: Risk and Opportunity in a Changing World* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022); and *The Middle East's Fragile Reset: Actors, Battlegrounds, and (Dis)order* (Middle East Council on Global Affairs, 2023).



Thomas Gomart

Director, French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)

He serves on the scientific committee of the Institute of Advanced Studies in National Defense (IHEDN) and is a member of the editorial boards for the French journals *Politique étrangère*, *Revue des deux mondes*, and *Études*. Thomas Gomart was also part of the French Ministry of Armed Forces' strategic review committee for the 2017 Strategic Review of Defense and National Security. He has published extensively on topics including Russia, digital issues, think tanks, and geopolitical risk. Thomas Gomart earned his EMBA from Hautes Études Commerciales de Paris and his PhD from Pantheon-Sorbonne University. He has been honored with the rank of Knight of the National Order of Merit.



Thomas Volk

Head of the "Middle East and North Africa" Department, Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung (KAS)

As of August 2024, Dr. Thomas Volk serves as the Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Dr. Volk began his tenure at the Foundation as Coordinator for Islam and Interreligious Dialogue at the headquarters from 2014 to 2016. He then managed the Foundation's Senegal/Gambia Office in Dakar from 2016 to 2020. Following this, he led the Regional Program for Political Dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean based in Tunis from 2020 to 2024. In 2023, he oversaw the reopening of the Foundation's Egypt Office in Cairo. From February 2024 until August 2024, he headed the Israel Office in Jerusalem.



Valerie Picard

Head of Trade, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Ms. Picard oversees ICC's global public policy engagement on trade and customs matters. Previously, she was Deputy Director of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, a public-private partnership co-led by ICC that delivers targeted trade reforms in developing economies. Prior to joining ICC, Ms. Picard practiced law for 20 years, both in private practice and in-house, notably advising on legal matters relating to public-private partnerships and the development and operation of ports and terminals in Africa and Asia. She holds degrees from Duke University School of Law and Smith College.



**Wael Ziada**

Managing Partner, Zilla Capital

Wael Ziada has over two decades of experience in financial markets in the Middle East. He was appointed as Minister Assistant for Investments and Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Previously, he assumed various esteemed positions, including Non-Executive Board Member of Banque du Caire, Executive Chairman and CEO of EFG Hermes Finance, and a member of the Executive Committee of EFG Hermes Holding. He led EFG Hermes's non-banking financial activities, helping it become one of the fastest-growing sectors for the group, and headed its award-winning research division, expanding its coverage to over 12 countries and significantly growing its digital services. He holds a BA in Economics from the American University in Cairo.



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**Ziad Aly**

Chief Executive Officer, Peacock Investment Holding & Host of the 2043 Podcast

Founder of "The 2043 Project," a newly established initiative aimed at developing individuals and institutions to become #2043able. Previously, he was Chairman and CEO of ALZWAD for Economic Development Co. He founded and managed innovative ventures such as Club Executive (a fashion retail chain), L'escapade Café at the Cairo World Trade Center, and Protech (an IBM partner later becoming a NOKIA agent and part of RAYA holding). He led a turnaround operation for Aramex Egypt and played a key role as part of Vodafone Egypt's senior executive team, contributing to its rise as a model company in Egypt and the Middle East. He also founded The Post Distribution Company, wholly owned by the Egyptian National Post Authority, serving as its first CEO. Ziad sits on the boards of Bedaya, the SME fund and Plantform Agri, a leading exporter of agricultural produce to the USA and Europe, among others. He previously served on boards including the Egyptian Chamber of Information Technology, the Egyptian Federation for Industries – SME Committee, and the Technology Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Egypt.



**Ziad Bahaa-Eldin**

Lawyer and Egyptian Former Deputy Prime Minister

He also serves as non-executive Chairman of Bank of Alexandria and Uswah Capital (KSA), and holds non-executive board positions at several Egyptian and regional companies including MTI Egypt, Albaraka Bank (Bahrain), and Sinai White Portland Cement. Previously, he held several esteemed positions including Executive Chairman of the Financial Regulatory Authority "FRA", and Executive Chairman of the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones "GAFI". He has legal experience in Egypt and Washington DC and has served on the boards of the Central Bank of Egypt and the National Bank of Egypt. He holds a Ph.D. in Financial Law from the London School of Economics



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