

Regional Agenda

# Advancing Dialogue on the Future of the Middle East and North Africa

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2017



Under the theme “Responsive and Responsible Leadership”, the upcoming Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland (17-20 January, 2017) could not be more important given the rapidly evolving global landscape and the attendant imperatives for leaders from all sectors and geographies.

The Middle East and North Africa region is inarguably deeply affected by these changes, while at the same time addressing significant homegrown transformations. The Annual Meeting will therefore be a key opportunity for leaders not only to think through implications of the new global context – ranging from the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to the new US political leadership – but also to reshape the region’s economic and social agendas, which face the clear imperative of more inclusion and less energy-dependent growth.

It is clear that any economic and social advancement of the region as a whole is ultimately predicated on decreasing instability, resolving conflicts and reconstructing both the physical and human infrastructure in fragile societies. The Annual Meeting will therefore provide a platform for multistakeholder diplomatic dialogue on key geopolitical and humanitarian issues, including on the situation in Iraq and Syria.

Underscoring this ambition for the region, the Annual Meeting’s theme is a universal leadership imperative. As Klaus Schwab has posited, a leader needs a radar system and a compass: radar is necessary as it makes us continuously aware and sensitive to the context – responsive, while also being inclusive of the expectations of all stakeholders; and a compass shows the overall direction, the true North based on values and vision – responsible.

How can we incorporate responsive and responsible leadership into the Middle East and North Africa? We are focusing on three pillars:

## Catalyzing Conflict Resolution through Diplomatic Dialogue

The Arab world is seeing continued geopolitical strife in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Israel-Palestine, and others.

Therefore, key international and regional stakeholders will hold an informal dialogue on the future of Syria in a private session chaired by Staffan de Mistura as well as a larger private discussion on the overall geopolitical situation in the region under the Informal Gathering of World Economic Leaders (IGWEL) format.

In addition, there will be a rich public programme focusing on the broader geopolitical issues in the region.

## Enabling a Generational Transformation

In light of falling oil prices, the impact of technology, youth unemployment almost double that the rest of the world; and a need for economic liberalization, decision-makers in the region are implementing comprehensive reform programmes, with significant implications for the future generations.

We will be exploring these implications under two themes:

1. **The Future of Arab Economies** – What will the Arab world look like in light of the changes of the Fourth Industrial Revolution? Will societies move forward or be held back?
2. **Making Complex Reforms Work** – Given the downward pressure on revenues, governments must adapt and implement difficult reforms, economically and politically. What are the conduits and barriers to successful change?

## Strengthening Humanitarian Response through a Systems Approach

While the Arab world accounts for just 5% of the global population, Arabs account for half of the world's refugees. Syria alone has seen over 10 million of its population displaced.

The global humanitarian crisis is therefore disproportionately affecting the future of the region and it is crucial that the responses from the international community are not only more robust, but also more holistic in terms of the actors involved and the tools deployed, moving away from *ad hoc* pledges to more structured and long-term commitment.

## World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa Dead Sea, Jordan 19-21 May 2017

The upcoming Annual Meeting will also be a curtain-raiser for the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa, with the presence of H.M. King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein and a number of other government and business leaders, who will drive the agenda of the meeting.

## Programme at a Glance

### Sessions: Advancing Dialogue, Rebuilding Trust

#### Informal Discussion on the Future of Syria (Private)

Wednesday, 18th January, 2017, 8.30-9.30

At a time of great shifts on the ground and in international diplomacy, key international and regional stakeholders will hold a high-level informal dialogue on the future of Syria chaired by Staffan de Mistura, United Nations Special Envoy to Syria.

#### IGWEL: Stabilizing the Middle East (Private)

Thursday 19 January, 14.30 -16.00

Middle Eastern and North African countries have made important progress reclaiming territory from violent extremist groups, but a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict is more elusive than ever. A breakdown in trust between negotiating parties is the central obstacle, and diplomatic efforts must be not only restored, but also redoubled to achieve a sustained cessation of hostilities.

- Where do we stand in tackling the crisis and what are the conditions necessary to bring all parties to the negotiating table?
- What can be learned from previous attempts at negotiation, and what common priorities and incentives remain?

#### Plenary Session on Responsive and Responsible Leadership in the Arab World

Thursday 19 January, 18.00 - 19.00 – Plenary

Over 400 million people live in 22 Arabic-speaking countries today. What does responsive and responsible leadership mean in an Arab world where the majority of the population is less than 25-years old?

#### Interactive Session: Syria and Iraq, Ending the Conflict

Friday 20 January, 10.45-11.45

In the face of shifting regional alliances and massive human suffering, what is the way out of the spiral of conflict in Syria and Iraq?



## Sessions: Enabling a Generational Transformation

### MENA Outlook Lunch, “Rewiring the Middle East and North Africa”

Tuesday 17 January, 12.30-13.45

What new foundations are needed to rewire the Middle East and North Africa to relaunch growth and development?

### The Future of Arab Economies

Wednesday 18 January, 13.00 -14.00 – *Al-Arabiya Televised Session*

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution transforms the way people live, work and produce, how can Arab economies realize the full potential of a digitally enabled future?

### Press Conference: Accelerating Reforms in the Arab World

Wednesday 18 January, 16.00 -16.30

The determination of Arab leaders for economic reforms has created a unique momentum to stimulate growth and create much needed jobs. This press conference offers an opportunity to get perspectives from both government and business leaders on how to accelerate and make complex reforms work in the region. This will also be a curtain raiser for the agenda of the 2017 World Economic Forum on MENA to take place in Jordan, 19-21 May.

### A Special Conversation with King Abdullah II of Jordan

Thursday 19 January 10:45 - 11:15

With His Majesty Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

### Interactive Session: Saudi Arabia Vision 2030

Thursday 19 January 12:45 - 13:30

Saudi Arabia’s reform plans aim to transform the country’s economy and society and move away from its oil dependency. How can this vision be achieved by 2030?

### MENA Reforms Dinner, “Accelerating Reforms”

Thursday 19 January, 20.00 - 22.00 – *Interactive Dinner Session*

Join a strategic dialogue on priorities and best practices for structural reform in the region. This session was prepared in collaboration with the Forum’s Regional Business Council and Regional Strategy Group on the Middle East and North Africa.

This strategic dialogue brings together regional and international partners and experts to explore the innovations, approaches and tools to pursue necessary reforms in the region at a time of uncertainty and increased polarization.

## Sessions: Strengthening Humanitarian Response through a Systems Approach

### A Day in the Life of a Refugee

Sessions throughout the week – Hilton Garden Inn

Join this powerful experience to understand the struggles and choices that refugees face to survive each day. The experience was developed by the Crossroads Foundation and designed by refugees, internally displaced persons and NGOs.

### Inside Za’atari/White Helmets Exhibition

The photographers of Inside Za’atari, supported by Save the Children, show the diversity of their fellow refugees through portraits and testimonies that illustrate their fears, losses and worries, but also their hopes, aspirations, joys and dreams.

### Humanitarian Hub

Sessions throughout the week – Congress Centre

Solution-oriented sessions led by practitioners involved in conflict resolution, refugee integration and private-sector engagement in times of humanitarian crisis

### Global Situation Space

Sessions throughout the week – Congress Centre

From conflict refugees to climate migrants, embark on a visual exploration into the causes and consequences of our refugee crisis now and through time.

### Investing in Peace

Wednesday 18 January, 16.30 - 17.30 – *Arena Session*

Local and foreign businesses can have an unintended impact on fragile and post-conflict environments. What business practices can be adopted to “do no harm” and best contribute to conflict resolution and reconciliation?

### Building New Alliances for Humanitarian Action

Thursday 19 January 09.00 - 10.15 – *xChange Session*

Assisting over 65 million displaced people has placed humanitarian response under severe stress. What public-private partnerships are needed if this figure reaches 100 million?

### Realizing the Migration Dividend

Thursday 19 January, 12.30 - 13.45 – *Hotel InterContinental, Turmalin/Adular/Quarz*

How can businesses and governments respond to the short-term challenges of migration to tap into its long-term dividend?

### Open Forum: The Race against Racism

Thursday 19 January, 18.30 - 20.00 – *Swiss Alpine High School Auditorium*

With the continued increase in international migration, what will it take to build more pluralism, tolerance and equality into our communities and societies?



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The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

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