



Centro de Estudios de Oriente Medio  
Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura

## **Draft program INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **Non Government Organizations for development Working in the Middle East, land of conflicts**

Madrid, 25<sup>th</sup> y 26<sup>th</sup> of November de 2008

The Foundation has been working since 1992 in the field of cooperation for development in different countries and regions, where it has been performing an important task in partnership with different local organizations. The Foundation has made the Middle East its priority area for work (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq) although it is also working in many other different regional areas such as: North Africa, Asia, south and central America as well as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the past years, FPSC and its local partners had achieved many projects and consolidated their commitment towards achieving social and economical insertion and integration of vulnerable groups of population such as: disabled people, rural population, refugees and displaced, women, youth in unstable situation, etc...

In 2005, the FPSC was recognized as "Qualified" NGO for Development by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID). This recognition has been only given to 25 Spanish NGOs and is allowing them to apply for first-rank financial grants for development projects. The following year the FPSC was included in the ECHO lists (European Commission, Humanitarian Aid Office) as a partner.

Middle East can be qualified as the most complex area of the planet. In a small stretch of land various conflicts are going on: the complex Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the Lebanese and Iraqi wars.

In that region, war is part of the daily life. Poverty is not the unique factor to spark conflicts, as it happens in other areas. Data compiled by the United Nations Human Development Report show that absolute poverty does not exist in these areas although there are deep economic differences between people but since 1948, instability is the major obstacle for the development of the region.

Even though the majority of the people in these countries are fighting hard to live a decent everyday life and to progress in their professional and family lives etc... the national and international political situation are not allowing them to be able to do it.

Through the last twenty years, FPSC has dealt with many of the challenges derived from the situation in this the area. Just to mention a few of them: the construction of the Israeli wall, the Iraqi war, Lebanese conflicts. In order to achieve successfully their projects aiming to provide hope and decent life to the people of the region FPSC and its local partners had to overcome many day-to-day problems and difficulties created by the situation.

FPSC is the leading Spanish NGO in volume of activity, resources and permanence in the Middle East region, where it has been carrying out cooperation projects since 1992. Numerous agreements, programs and projects have consolidated FPSC work in the Middle East in the

following sectors of cooperation: education, attention to disabled people, vulnerable social groups and rural development.

We may consider as FPSC highlights achievements in the Middle East are:

- The consolidation of a stable partnership with its local partners, stability which has materialized with the establishment of the Association *Euro-Arab Network of Development and Integration NGO* (READI) with 44 NGOs members from both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, FPSC presides the Network.
- As an acknowledgement of its work done in the Middle East, FPSC is also the only Spanish NGO granted in 2004 with the General Consultative Status of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

To end with this presentation, it is important to recall the creation in 2006 of the *Center for Middle Eastern Studies of the Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture* (CEMOFPSC) which today is inviting you to participate to this new seminar. The Centre commitment is to *do theory* out of the field experience of FPSC, with the objective to promote research and analysis of the questions related to the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Egypt and Jordan) and with a desire to contribute to a wider knowledge about different cultures and peoples in order to work towards building peace.

CEMOFPSC had already organized two previous conferences about the political situation in the area ("*A hope for peace in the Middle East?: UNIFIL*" and "*Religion: The missing dimension of the Diplomacy and Politics in Middle East*"). After twenty years of work, it is time for FPSC to stop and reflect, and to share with other Organizations, its experience in development in this land of conflicts.

So that the aim of this new International conference: *Non Government Organizations for development, working in the Middle East, land of conflicts*, is to present a global view of the role of cooperation for development in Middle East, to analyze policies and strategies of work followed by donor countries (United States, European Union, United Kingdom, Italy Spain, Japan, Iran) as well as international and local NGOs, to study the problems and difficulties encountered in the process of coordination and completion of the projects and finally to analyze the complementarities between working methodologies.

The papers presented and the conclusions drawn from this meeting will be published in digital and print material. With the aim to deepen in the knowledge of the concrete problems facing the societies of these countries and also in order to share experiences and strengthen the cooperation for development in these countries. The seminar will also contribute to the sensibilization of Spanish people about their necessary contribution to peace-building process.

### **Thematic structure and organization of the conference:**

The Conference will be divided into two one-day sessions. Each session will start with the presentations of expert speakers which will tackle the questions described in the program and will open the debate. Each session table will have moderator and *rapporteur*, he /she will be an expert responsible for the content of the presentations and the final conclusions.

The sessions will be closed to public and press.

Simultaneous translation (English and Spanish) will be provided.

The sessions have been defined following the working steps of a Non Government Organizations for Development and will include the following topics.

#### **Day 1: NGOs States and International and supranational organizations: strategies of cooperation in Middle East:**

- Role of NGOs in zones of conflict.
- Aid for development as an instrument of foreign policy
- Influence of the strategies defined by donor countries on projects selection and achievements
- General principles of each International NGO: long- term strategy.

## Day 2: NGOs, *microproblems* and solutions. Synergies and coordination in Middle East, land of conflicts

- Land of conflicts: Characteristics which affect NGO work. Assessment of *microproblems* (i.e. obstacles generated by political, social, economical and historical circumstances).
- Possible synergies. General analysis of the area of cooperation, general view about global aid density and destination (shortage or saturation), assignation and objectives of aid.

### **Duration, date and place:**

The conference will be held in Madrid on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

### **Participants:**

50 experts have been considered as the most appropriate number of participants, representatives of:

- 1.- Cooperation Agencies: governmental agencies and donors
- 2.- International and national NGOs for development
- 3.- Local NGOs for development: local partners
- 4.- Civil society: beneficiaries, private sector, municipalities
- 5.- Middle East experts and consultants

The countries and organizations that will take part in the Conference will come from: Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, United States, Jordan and the European Union.

### **Visibility:**

Brochures, posters and publications of minutes will clearly show the identity of the Conference's fund-raisers.

### **Organization of the sessions:**

Presentations will last for ten minutes. Please send your paper before November 1<sup>st</sup> to the Conference's technical office for subsequent publication.  
Please attach half-page *curriculum vitae*.

### **Travel, accommodation and board expenses in Spain:**

The Conference's technical office will take care of flight and rail bookings and payments from the point of origin to Madrid, plus accommodation in Madrid throughout the duration of the Conference.

#### **Blanca de Mesa**

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