RELEASE IN FULL

Broader Middle East and North Africa Democracy Assistance Dialogue

While many initiatives launched under the G8-Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) umbrella continue to make advances, the most striking progress is in the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), which brings together NGOs and governments in an ongoing basis to advance democratic reform in the region. Representing a network of hundreds of BMENA NGOs and government representatives, and with multilateral support, the DAD is now focused on incountry activities that will implement reform recommendations from the Forum deliberations. To date, the DAD has convened activities in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Turkey, Yemen, and Italy. The DAD represents a series of thematic meetings, activities and research characterized by consultation and partnership between governments and civil society. The DAD's three areas of focus are women's empowerment, political pluralism, and freedom of expression.

The DAD partners developed "A Partnership between G8, BMENA Governments and Civil Society." This Partnership Document reflects the contributions of many BMENA governments and civil society leaders alike and outlines a framework of universal, democratic principles to strengthen the relationship and partnership between governments and civil society in the region. This document was acknowledged by government and civil society representatives at the 2008 Abu Dhabi Forum and is a product of based on substantive discussions and deliberations between civil society and governments that began nearly two years ago.

Since its inception more than five years ago, the DAD has facilitated effective and successful relationships between willing governments, NGOs, the media, political leaders and civil society experts in the region, and has created a collaborative and transparent environment in which to accomplish this partnership. DAD partners' work on in-country programs, including women's empowerment in Algeria, Jordan and Pakistan, and as well programs in Morocco and Yemen that are focused on freedom of expression, political party and electoral reform, are notable.

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