



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (EAFORD)

Side Event at the UN 26th Human Rights Council Development and Human Rights in Egypt

The International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) in partnership with the Ecumenical Alliance for Human Rights and Development (EAHRD) organized a side event at the 26th Human Rights Council at the UN in Geneva on Monday 23rd June 2014.

H.E. Dr. Walid Abdelnasser, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the UN, was one of the main speakers in addition to Mr. Ahmed Abdellatif from the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), Ms. Iman Salama from UrbanMonde and Ms. Carla Khijoyan from the World Council of Churches.

Among the attending guests was H.E. Mr. Ahmad Shaheen, the Egyptian Consul in Geneva.



Dr. Walid Abdelnasser summarized the history of social and economic development in Egypt highlighting the participation of women in political life since 1956 and their right to vote since 1920. He then introduced the items of the new constitution focusing on human rights and the responsibility of the state towards youth participation in political life. The 2014th constitution explicitly refers to equality between men and women for the first time in the modern history of Egypt. Dr. Abdelnasser also confirmed that the Egyptian government welcomes all constructive initiatives of development agencies as long as they respect the local regulations.



Ms. Iman Salama stated the challenges facing youth in Egypt today focusing on the right to decent housing. She assessed the need of the government to provide a legal framework organizing urban development and ensuring equal rights for all in access to properties and lands.

Mr. Ahmed Abdellatif placed education and culture in the heart of social rights. Using knowledge to achieve social development is a key concept in today's societies. He also highlighted the role of women in innovation and change. Referring to the Egyptian constitution he explained how specific figures related to budget allocations for health and education are mentioned demonstrating the commitment of the government to human rights.

Ms. Carla Khijoyan presented the interconnectedness between religion and development. She stressed on the important role that faith based organizations play in the progress of Egyptian communities. Both Christianity and Islam place human dignity at the heart of their values. There can be no peace without social justice. Interreligious collaboration in development advances peace through establishing social justice.



The aim of the panel was to show how development can transform societies and contribute in establishing states based on human rights. Egypt is going through a transitional phase on social, economic and political levels. All stake holders, including civil society, are called to join efforts in order to build peaceful and prosperous communities.