

Africa 2016 Forum

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In a historic step that signifies Egypt's strong return to the African continent and its desire to realize regional integration as well as to achieve a qualitative leap in the African economic relations along with providing new opportunities for mutual investments, President Abd Al-Fattah Al-Sisi, with the attendance of four African presidents, namely; the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, the Kenyan President Teodoro Nguema Mbasago, the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and the Gabonese President Ali Bongo, in addition to the Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, and the Prime Minister of Togo Kumi Silom Claso, besides tens of ministers, ambassadors and official representatives in the trade authorities, the leaders and representatives of regional and international developmental organizations and delegations that included around 1500 businessmen and investors, among others, had all inaugurated Africa 2016 Forum in Sharm El-Sheikh during the period 20-21 Feb. 2016. It was organized in collaboration with the COMESA and under the umbrella of the AU.

According to the Egyptian and African visions, the Forum represents a serious step towards realizing leaps in the field of fostering trade and investment in Africa and in the two-way economic relations among African countries.

This Forum is, also, held shortly after the signing ceremony of the Free-Trade Agreement of the three economic blocs "the COMESA, SADC, and EAC" that took place in Sharm El-Sheikh in June 2015. It is considered the basis for establishing the continental free-trade zone.

It is worth mentioning that the logo of the Forum "open hand" signifies Africa opening its hands to everyone; calling all investors worldwide to pump direct foreign investments in Africa and to benefit from the humanitarian and natural resources there.

Objectives of the Forum:

Egypt is seeking to start a more advanced and balanced phase of the investment and commercial relations with the African countries that is represented in discussing the future visions of partnership and cooperation between the government and businessmen in order to realize the economic development and to invest the opportunities and the available potentials of the continent.

This forum comes within the framework of Egypt's interest to activate the mechanisms of investment and to introduce the available opportunities and capabilities so



as to ensure further investment opportunities, not to mention the commercial expansion with various African countries.

Egypt, also, hosted "Africa 2016" Forum, thanks to the success realized in the third Summit of the Three Economic Groupings which led to the establishment of a free-trade zone including 26 states, with a total population of 625 million and with a GDP of US \$ 1.2 trillion; an important step towards establishing the economic community of Africa by 2063.

Furthermore, the Forum aims to benefit from the potentials of 500 million trained African laborers, thus providing Africa with a competitive value that attracts investments and faces the competitions with other continents, especially in light of the African orientation to liberate the trade movement among all countries and to merge with all the African alliances.

The Agenda:

According to the Agenda of the Forum, various economic fields had been proposed, salient of which are five main fields: energy, infrastructure, health and medicine, agriculture, and technology and communication. Moreover, strategic projects in the field of food security and infrastructure have been discussed along with the available opportunities for partnership with the private sector in the field of planning and the frameworks of implementing such projects.

Africa 2016 Forum was opened with an inaugural session including the address of President Abd Al-Fattah Al-Sisi, followed by the address of the

President of the African Bank for Development Akinoma Adesina; which concentrated on the development process in Africa and the role of the Bank in financing projects concerning eliminating poverty and improving the standards of living. This was followed by the word of the Director of the COMESA Regional Investment Agency Heba Salama, and Ambassador Hazem Fahmy, the Secretary General of the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development. Then a round table has been held with the participation of the presidents of the Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria, in addition to the Ethiopian Prime Minister. Participants discussed four main pivots:

The means of addressing the problem of energy facing the African continent.

The problems of the Agricultural Sector and the means of addressing food deficiency in Africa.

The current challenges and the future scenarios in the field of health care.

Address of President Abd Al-Fattah Al-Sisi:

In his inaugural speech, President Abd Al-Fattah Al-Sisi asserted the public orientation of Egypt's foreign policy towards Africa and the means of reaching an economic integration that should lead to the welfare of Africa.

President Al-Sisi emphasized that development will only be realized through integration, merging economies and mega projects which prove that "Production and work" are the only means to realize stability and progress in Africa. He also added that realizing development is the main challenge that faces Africa; thus necessitating coopera-

tion and integration among the African brethren.

The president had also noted that development needs capable arms and qualified youthful minds. He also emphasized that Egypt's call to hold this forum on its land shows its keenness to push the African economy forward; being a real opportunity to activate and crystallize the thoughts in order to realize socio-economic development and a decent life for its citizens and for the coming generations.

Activities of Day Two:

Activities of the Second day of the Forum started with the address of Prime Minister Sherif Ismail who presented the plans of economic reform in Egypt and encouraged the mutual investments in Africa.

This was followed by a workshop for Prince Aga Khan, the Chairman of Aga Khan Development Network.

A session has been held on industrialization in Africa, where the Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam delivered a speech with the participation of Tareq Qabil, the Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade of Egypt, Francois Kanimba, the Minister of Trade and Industry of Rwanda, Mansour Mokhtar, the Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank, and Ahmad Heikal, the President of Qalaa Holdings.

A session has been held on sustainable development in Africa, where Carlos Lopes, the Chairman of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Mohamed Omran, the Chairman of the Egyptian Exchange, and Benedict Oramah, the Chairman of the African

Export-Import Bank had delivered speeches.

A session has been held on investments in logistics and infrastructure and the means of increasing the competitive abilities in this field, and of increasing the demand on the African Harbours. Dr. Ahmed Darwish; the Chairman of the General Authority for the Suez Canal Economic Zone, Hossam al-Moghazi; the Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, the Chairman of the African Development Fund, and Ahmed al-Sewidi, the managing director of El-Sewidi Egypt had all delivered a speech.

A session has been held under the title "Innovation and Works" with the participation of a number of experts in the field of enterprises and technologies, including Mrs. Suha Suleiman; the Secretary General of the Social Fund for Development, and Marco Francois; the Chairman of Seychelles Chamber of Commerce.

A workshop has been held under the management of Mark Eddo; the former correspondent of the BBC and the Founder of the Nigerian Mark Eddo Media Foundation.

A session has been held over the innovation projects and the investment and business climate in Africa.

A session has been held over the role of science and technology in realizing development in Africa.

A session has been held over cooperation among the African countries, where Dr. Sahar Nasr the Minister of International Cooperation, and businessman Hisham Al-Khazindar had both delivered a speech.

A press conference for the Minister of



Health Dr. Ahmed Emad Al-Din, and the Chairman of the Egyptian Agency for Cooperation and Development Hazem Fahmy has been held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to present the developments of cooperation among the African countries in the field of health and to launch a strategy to eliminate diseases in the continent.

A session has been held over the industry of medicine in Africa where Paul Biygyhe the Gabonese Minister of Health, and Agnes Binagwaho the Rwandan Minister of Health had both delivered a speech.

“Africa 2016” Agreements:

Prime Minister Sherif Ismail witnessed the ratification of two agreements. The first agreement was signed between the Social Fund for Development, South Sinai Governorate, and a charitable institution in order to establish service projects in South Sinai with a total value of LE 41 million in the field of livestock. The second agreement was signed between the Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development which is affiliated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Social Fund in order to transfer experiences to the African countries.

Consultations have been conducted with Schneider Company in order to establish a solar power station in Egypt with a total capacity of 50 megawatt with a total investment value of around Euro 50 million.

An understanding memorandum has been signed between the Social Fund for Development and the Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development in order to apply an institutional framework

for technological cooperation in aspects of mutual interest.

Consultations have been conducted with Huawei Company in the field of the Fuel smart card service.

Minister of Investment Ashraf Salman signed several protocols, understanding memorandums and declarations, including the declaration of the African Development Bank to support the development process in Egypt with a total amount of US \$ 1.5 million. The first batch had already been delivered to Egypt with an amount of US \$ 500 million.

The African Development Bank has announced the investment of US \$ 12 billion in the field of electricity in various African states, in addition to allocating US \$ 5 billion as assistance in the Environmental Adaptation Programme in Africa.

A cooperation agreement has been signed between the General Authority for Investment and the Gabonese National Agency for Investment Promotion.

An understanding memorandum has been signed between the Qalaa Holdings and RBR Company in order to establish a railway line with total investments of around US \$ 300 million.

Serious consultations and visits have been conducted among the holding companies in African states in order to discuss the investment opportunities and to launch mutual investments especially in the fields of medicine and chemical industries.

Consultations have been conducted concerning the Nasr Export-Import Company in order to establish logistic

centers and exhibitions for Egyptian products in the African states.

A Cooperation memorandum has been signed between the Ministry of Irrigation and a Chinese energy corporation concerning cooperation in the field of water projects. In this respect, the Ministry of Irrigation is keen to cooperate with all Nile riparian countries in a project that should link Victoria Lake with the Red Sea through the River Nile in order to facilitate and enhance the inter-trade.

An understanding memorandum has been signed between the Children's Cancer Hospital (57357) of Egypt and the Togolese, Rwandan and Mozambican ministries of health.

An agreement has been signed on establishing a power plant in Nigeria.

A cooperation protocol has been signed between the Cancer Hospital in Egypt and the Togolese and Rwandan ministries of health in order to develop the capabilities of the African physicians.

Two understanding memorandums have been signed between Rift Valley Company and the Export Council for Chemical and Fertilizers in order to transfer goods to East Africa markets through railways.

Agreements on encouraging and protecting investments with nine African countries; Ethiopia, Comoros Islands, Malawi, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco have entered into force.

Recommendations:

Africa 2016 Forum has laid down several recommendations that aim at entrenching the economic ties between African countries. In this respect, officials reached a concordance on the necessity of developing the mechanisms of the mutual African action and of applying a unified action plan for facing challenges and eliminating existing burdens.

The Forum had also highlighted the importance of creating a suitable environment for investors, thus empowering Africa to play an effective political and economic role on the international level, especially that it owns the required potentials.

On the other hand, Africa 2016 Forum was a great opportunity to discuss several strategic projects, such as the means of activating and creating an African free trade zone that has been previously declared in the Africa Summit in Johannesburg.

Moreover, hurdles that face inter-trade have been discussed; on top of which are the problems of customs restrictions and the yellow card which should be addressed in order to facilitate the movement of trade between the land routes, such as Alexandria-Cape Town land route, thus reducing the time of the journey; a key factor for development among the African countries.