

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS



5th CSR
annual conference
CSR and rise
of the regional
partnership
for development



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FEDERATION OF EGYPTIAN INDUSTRIES

THE EVENT - TOWARDS AN INNOVATIVE PARADIGM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN, CAIRO APRIL 15TH AND 16TH, 2019

In the framework of the EBSOMED project, the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) and BUSINESSMED organised a Business Matchmaking Forum under the theme "Towards an Innovative Paradigm for Sustainable Development across the Mediterranean". The 2-day event was held on April, 15th and 16th, 2019 in Egypt, Cairo.

Overall, the event gathered more than 950 Economic operators and stakeholders from the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Forum aimed at improving the attractiveness of Mediterranean business ecosystems by consolidating business networks and providing interactions and synergies between all actors coming from the two shores of the Mediterranean.

The event had a joint opening with the CSR Conference and started with an institutional meeting gathering the European Union Delegation to Egypt, the FEI, BUSINESSMED as well as several Egyptian ministers (Industry and Trade, Education and Social Solidarity).

Following the opening, a Ministerial Roundtable took place in view of discussing how creating alignment and synergies between government policies, private sector initiatives and civil society organizations' needs can lead to successful and sustainable regional and local partnerships.

During his intervention Dr. Khaled Abd El Azim, Executive Director of the FEI, stressed the important role that EBSOMED can play in the implementation of a regional hub for socio-economic development in the Mediterranean space. The Ambassador of the EU Delegation to Egypt, Mr. Ivan Surkos, highlighted the increasing efforts of the EU external action in enhancing the Mediterranean investments' environment to ensure stability, prosperity and job creation in Egypt and in the region and by emphasizing the fundamental role of private sector development in empowering SMEs.

Two thematic panels followed the Ministerial roundtable and were framed with regard to the partnerships-related Sustainable Development Goals. The first panel focused on the Impact of supporting vocational training and education for economic growth and was dedicated to key lessons on developing 'dual vocational training' to support the labor market insertion of women and youth in disadvantaged areas. The second panel focused on the promotion of business partnerships synergies in the Euro-Mediterranean Region through networking opportunities and project cross-sectorial cooperation.

The second day of the EBSOMED forum was dedicated to B2B meetings and companies' presentations coming from IT, Ready-Made Garments, Food industry and Chemical sector. Mediterranean companies were brought together to build interactions and synergies with the aim of consolidating strong business and commercial partnerships across the region.



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MAIN OUTCOMES

The following outcomes have been identified following the presentations and discussions of the sessions of the conference and the matchmaking forum:

1. Companies play an important role in the economies and societies of countries and in international economic relations. Enterprises can bring substantial benefits to their countries by contributing to a more efficient utilization of capital, technology and labour.
2. CSR is a process aiming to embrace responsibility for the organization's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities and other relevant stakeholders.
3. Decent work is central to improve business environment, social justice and sustainable poverty reduction and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. CSR tools are means for the business community to promote decent and productive work.
4. Within the framework of development policies established by governments and international organizations, they can also make an important contribution to the promotion of economic and social welfare; to the improvement of living standards and the satisfaction of basic needs; and to the creation of decent employment opportunities.
5. Investments and efforts of companies should have a lasting impact on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality, on sustainable development aligned with the priorities and policies as set out in Egypt's vision 2030.
6. CSR goes beyond making current business activities more sustainable. It is about developing new business models that are profitable for people, the society and the environment. CSR creates value socially, ecologically and economically.
7. CSR has a great ability in enhancing sustainable and inclusive development, increase national competitiveness and foster FDI.
8. Productive, profitable and sustainable enterprises, together with a strong social economy and a viable public sector and civil society, are critical towards achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic development and employment opportunities.

Being aware of the current challenges and the necessary requirements facing the advancement of sustainable development in Egypt, the participants at the fifth CSR Annual Conference agree to the following guiding principles:



- *To enhance the role of the different CSR stakeholders in the development, implementation of CSR practices and in the encouragement of responsible business conduct.*
- *To use CSR programs to improve and develop skills for employability and to improve working conditions.*
- *To strengthen our joint efforts to achieve concrete and sustainable results.*
- *To foster innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable technologies, products and services which address societal needs.*
- *To give greater visibility to CSR, to acknowledge enterprises efforts in this field and to encourage them to improve their performance.*
- *To promote CSR as a business opportunity creating win-win situations for companies and society.*
- *To improve knowledge about CSR and to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practices.*
- *To ensure an enabling favorable environment for all actors in CSR.*
- *To encourage synergies among public policies and private sector CSR initiatives in support of sustainable development, economic growth and job creation.*

Participants believe that these objectives can be achieved through:

- *Promoting synergies with relevant international organizations, NGOs, SMEs, multinationals and universities on CSR programs.*
- *Facilitating the interaction with companies to extend universities' knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore joint effective approaches to respond to these challenges.*
- *Promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.*
- *Supporting CSR initiatives which target the promotion of employability of young men and women through investing in education, skills development, vocational training.*
- *Engaging SMEs in CSR through designing customized low-cost activities adapted to the size and nature of SME's.*
- *Helping in creating new job opportunities, be aligned with the core business and reflected on the profitability of the organization which will secure the sustainability of the CSR policies.*
- *Promoting and supporting dialogue among CSR stakeholders on social responsibility and sustainability issues of common interest.*