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“Find Your Voice” A Cross-Cultural Forum on Political Participation and Civic Activism

**Rabat, Morocco
April 25-26, 2008**

Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations were written and ratified by 50 young Moroccans and Americans at the “Find Your Voice: A Cross-Cultural Forum on Political Participation and Civic Activism” conference held on April 25th and 26th, 2008. The conference was organized by Americans for Informed Democracy (AID), the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), and the *Institut National de la Jeunesse et la Démocratie* (INJD), an initiative under the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports. The conference was supported by the U.S. State Department’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The recommendations are directed towards the U.S. government, the Moroccan government, the media, and civil society organizations.

- 1) The Moroccan government should create an official space for youth to congregate and formulate unified measures that can be addressed and considered in the government, such as an elected non-governmental national youth council.
- 2) The Moroccan government should reform the political party law to increase decision-making abilities of youth in political parties. For example, a youth quota should be established.
- 3) The Moroccan government and NGOs should create educational programs that teach young people Moroccan laws, the importance of civic participation, and opportunities to participate in civil society.
 - a. Examples include online, televised, and mandated in-school civic education programs for primary through secondary school levels.

- b. Promote and increase communication between schools and civil society actors and organize simulations and training sessions on rights and duties.
- 4) Moroccan political parties should promote and increase internship opportunities for youth to deepen their experience with party operations and the political system.
- 5) The Moroccan government should provide incentives for civic participation, including creating grants at the university level to encourage involvement in civil society projects and instituting a community service requirement as part of the university curriculum.
- 6) The U.S. government should increase funding to support Moroccan university students' participation in civil society programs.
- 7) The Moroccan government and political parties should promote debates and town hall meetings between party leaders and constituents, to ensure an ongoing dialogue.
- 8) The Moroccan government should increase collaboration between local associations and local authorities.
- 9) The Moroccan government and media bodies should clarify and publicize media laws and journalism ethics.
 - a. Inform the people of their right to public information
 - b. Publicize Moroccan media law, including rights of journalists
 - c. Promote and stress the importance of international media ethics
 - d. Extend above media laws and ethics to new media
- 10) We applaud the U.S. efforts to support independent Moroccan media. We think the U.S. government should continue to provide funding to train Moroccans interested in media/journalism, including:
 - a. International exchange programs
 - b. Trainings in Morocco and in the U.S.
 - c. Scholarships to attend journalism schools, workshops, or take part in internships
 - d. Focus on independent journalists engaging in new media.

- 11) Moroccan media bodies should provide more funding to train Moroccans interested in media/journalism, including:
 - a. More international exchange programs
 - b. Grants to journalists and independent media for education, training, and internships

- 12) The Moroccan government and civil society should increase funding for and training on computer and media literacy to promote civic and political participation. These trainings could be conducted via:
 - a. Internet cafes
 - b. Local NGOs and associations
 - c. Youth centers
 - d. TV programs
 - e. Primary and secondary school programs

- 13) Moroccan and international NGOs in Morocco should conduct a comparative study to learn from the experiences of foreign governments how they have developed laws to address the expansion of the internet, with the purpose of using the study as an educational tool at the secondary school and university level.