



Press Release

UN Conference backs support for Egyptian and Tunisian broadcast media

The Anna Lindh Foundation joins forces with international organisations for the promotion of pluralistic and independent media to ensure the success of democratic transition in the Arab region.

Paris, France – 1st of June, 2011: A UN-backed conference in support of Tunisia and Egyptian media broadcasters concluded last night with leading media corporations, intergovernmental organisations and donors pledging their commitment to coordinate and join up efforts in support of the process of democratic transition in the Arab region.

Taking place at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris, the International Conference underlined a number of priority needs for Tunisian and Egyptian media broadcasters, including:

- Working to restore trust between the societies in the process of democratic transition and its media
- Putting in place regulations related to reporting and broadcasting
- Reinforcing and promoting a '3 tier system' of private, public and community media
- Working to professionalise the new media sector in partnership with civil society actors
- Supporting media in representing the diversity of the people

Opening the Conference, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, said: *"The transformations in the region open a historic window of opportunity. We are seeking to create conditions where media institutions can supply the information necessary for the good functioning of democratic societies. At the same time, we are working to equip citizens with the skills to enable them to place demands on social institutions, including news media."*

Habib Belaid, President Director General of the Tunisian Radio, said: *"We want the New Tunisia to be a land of tolerance and dialogue between cultures, where all citizens, whatever their faiths or political opinions, can learn to live in freedom and democracy,"* adding that, *"We must help our medium in moving from a 'propaganda tool' to a public service, supporting citizens in learning how to live in democracy."*

Paul Walton, speaking at the Paris Conference on behalf of the Anna Lindh Foundation, said: *"The transition and opening up to democracy presents new opportunities and challenges for intercultural*

For editors

The Anna Lindh Foundation is an organisation shared and resourced by the forty-three countries of the Union for the Mediterranean with the mandate to bring people together for dialogue between cultures. With its headquarters in Alexandria, the Anna Lindh Foundation runs a EuroMed network of over 3000 civil society organisations with the aim of facilitating their collaborations and common actions.

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The Anna Lindh Foundation is co-financed
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dialogue. In this context, the Foundation will continue to work with partners to support the capacity of journalists and media bodies to tackle issues of cultural diversity and report on social transformations in their communities."

As an immediate follow-up to the Conference, international media bodies including the European Broadcasting Union, the Arab State Broadcasting Union and the COPEAM Audiovisual Network will partner in organising a series of media encounters in Tunisia between 23 and 26 June 2011 in the framework of the Anna Lindh Foundation's Tunis Exchange Forum; the Tunis Forum will bring together 150 NGO leaders and media practitioners from the Arab region and Europe to share experiences on democracy and citizenship, and to develop joint initiatives across the two shores of the Mediterranean.

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