

FORUM FOR THE FUTURE 2009: ADVANCING PARTNERSHIPS WITH MUSLIM COMMUNITIES



"I often say that while talent is universal, opportunity is not. And so we are committed to building ladders of opportunity to help develop the enormous talents that reside in the people..."

— Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in a November 3 speech in Marrakesh, Morocco, reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to broad engagement with Muslim communities around the world and outlined concrete steps the United States is taking to follow up on the "New Beginning" launched by President Barack Obama launched in Cairo in June. She was addressing the 2009 Forum for the Future, an initiative of the Broader Middle East and the North Africa region (BMENA), the G8 countries, and civil society and private sector groups.

Secretary Clinton announced new partnerships in the following areas as part of the Administration's outreach to Muslim communities:

Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

The United States will be a partner in advancing entrepreneurship, job creation and economic opportunity in Muslim communities by providing tools and investing in pioneering local stake-holders and programs. Projects include:

- Convening an *Entrepreneurship Summit* in Washington, D.C. in early 2010 to bring together innovators in Muslim communities and America's business leaders to advance entrepreneurship and create economic opportunity.
- Launching a *Global Virtual Entrepreneurship Network* to connect entrepreneurs, investors, mentor networks and business support services, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Fostering investments in the International Finance Corporation's Private Enterprise Partnership and in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's program supporting human capital development.

- Initiating *Youth: Work*, a five-year, \$30 million U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) project to meet the needs of vulnerable youth in Jordan, in collaboration with the Government of Jordan, the private sector, and NGOs.
- Launching a \$76 million initiative in Yemen to increase economic opportunities, improve delivery of social services, and enhance local governance and civic participation.

Science and Technology

The United States will help lay the foundation of knowledge economies that will spur innovation, and support societies grappling with economic and environmental challenges.

Initiatives include:

- Establishing the *U.S. Science Envoy Program* in which three of America's most prominent scientists, Dr. Ahmed Zewail, Dr. Bruce Alberts and Dr. Elias Zerhouni, will travel to North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia to engage their counterparts and deepen and develop partnerships in science and technology.
- Establish the *Global Technology and Innovation Fund* to facilitate private-sector investments in technology and education programs.

Education and Exchanges

The United States is supporting education to prepare young people throughout the world to seize the opportunities of the 21st century. Initiatives include:

- Contributing \$45 million to the Government of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission to support infrastructure upgrades and teacher training, and increase access to education, especially for youth, women, and those living in vulnerable areas.

Continued...

- Sponsoring the *BMENA Community and Technical College Grants Program* to create partnerships between U.S. community colleges and community and technical colleges in the BMENA region.
- Allocating \$7.25 million for *Higher Education Scholarships* to American universities for under-served secondary school students in the BMENA region.
- Investing \$12.5 million in USAID's new *Youth Education Project* in Morocco for quality educational services for out-of-school youth.

Civil Society 2.0

The United States is launching Civil Society 2.0, an initiative to empower grassroots civil society organizations around the world by helping them use digital technology. The initiative will:

- Deploy a team of experienced digital technologists to work with civil society organizations.
- Allocate \$5 million for pilot programs to bolster the new media and networking capabilities of civil society organizations, including online learning.

Women's Empowerment

Empowering women and girls and expanding their opportunities to participate fully in their societies are core priorities of the United States. Efforts include:

- Providing initial funding to launch the *BMENA Regional Gender Institute*, to offer grants, conduct research and promote scholarship related to gender issues.
- Allocating \$2 million to fund Innovative Women's Empowerment Programs to strengthen women's participation in all aspects of society.

Inter-Faith Engagement

With its tradition of respect for all faiths, the United States seeks to deepen mutual understanding and create new partnerships with Muslim communities around the world. To that end, it will:

- Foster biannual *Inter-Faith Working Groups* to bring together leaders across faith communities, government, civil society, and the private sector to address community challenges.