

FUTURE ACTIVITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FORUM FOR THE FUTURE

Civil Society at the G8 BMENA Forum for the Future

The second G8-BMENA Forum for the Future will take place on 12 November 2005 in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Both Bahrain and the UK would like interaction between civil society and governments of the G8 and BMENA region to be an important element of the event.

Democracy Assistance Dialogue

A central component of the Forum for the Future is the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), co-ordinated by the governments of Turkey, Italy and Yemen in consultation with NGO counterparts from each of those countries. After two civil society meetings in Istanbul (Empowering Women in Public Life and Democratic Development) and Venice (Political Pluralism and Electoral Processes), the DAD has had a successful start. The DAD aims to foster productive dialogue between civil society, governments and parliaments of the region on issues of democratic development. Recommendations from the Venice meeting are presented to Ministers at the International Colloquium of government and civil society being held in Rabat on 1-3 October. DAD partners are supposed to present recommendations for continuing the process at the Forum for the Future.

Civil Society Dialogue

As part of the G8 BMENA Plan of Support, civil society dialogues took place last year in Beirut, New York and Rabat. As follow-up, the UK Presidency of the G8 wants to build on civil society conclusions by facilitating events that can involve a wider representation and focus on some of the key issues that civil society identified at these previous meetings. Meetings have been organised on the following themes:

Transparency and Corruption

Rule of Law

Women in Employment

Human Rights

On each of these themes a series of meetings are going to take place in the run up to the Forum. Taking note of civil society calls for action, the aim is to generate specific action plans on how civil society can assist in making progress on these issues. The intention is for a limited number of civil society representatives from each of these thematic meetings to discuss their proposed action plans with Ministers at the Forum. Further activity would then follow from the action plans with the support of G8 and BMENA governments. The aim, in other words, is to progress from wide-ranging civil society meetings to more focused programmes of action.