

Closing statement

of the

International Conference

on

REBUILDING EGYPTIAN MEDIA FOR A DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

Cairo, 30-31 March 2011

The conference on Rebuilding Egyptian Media for a Democratic Future took place in Cairo on 30-31 March under the auspices of Professor Emad Abou Ghazi, Egypt's Minister of Culture, and the chairmanship of Dr Basyouni Hamada, Professor of Media at Cairo University and Dr Naomi Sakr, Professor of Media Policy at the University of Westminster, UK. The conference ended with an emphasis on the imperative of building a legal and regulatory environment that supports free and independent media, as follows.

CLOSING STATEMENT

There was broad agreement among conference participants, who included academics and practitioners in media, journalism and law in Egypt and beyond, that an enabling legal and regulatory environment should be created so that the media can serve the public and speak the truth. In the present urgent situation in Egypt conference participants see the need for fundamental change in order to protect the values and gains of the 25th January Revolution.

They see a need to encourage the emergence of free media which are based on international standards and principles of free expression, diversity, inclusiveness, transparency and public accountability. By diversity they mean diversity of ownership (public, commercial, community and other) as well as diversity of content and representation. Media structures should be subject to independent regulation or self-regulation.

There is an urgent need to provide, with immediate effect, fair, balanced and impartial representation of all political actors in the run-up to the coming parliamentary elections.

Egyptian media academics intend to disseminate a summary of conference contributions by May 15th, 2011, and offer their services as a resource and advisory board for practitioners and policy makers for the rebuilding of Egyptian media for a democratic future.