Date: 15 April 2013

Country: Egypt

The Media Diversity Institute, in partnership with the highly respected Al Azhar University in Cairo, organized a media forum under the title "Media and Parliament: Tools of Modern Democracy" on 15 April 2013 in Cairo.

The debate held at Al Azhar University was attended by an audience of around 150, including media professionals, students, researchers, journalism professors, NGO representatives, politicians and diplomats based in Cairo.

The aim of the media forum was to bring together civil society, media and parliamentarians to discuss citizen-parliament interaction, the quality of media reporting on Parliament, inclusive media and its impact on politics, and on-going reforms in Egypt and freedom of expression. Speakers were representatives from civil society, the media and MPs from across the political spectrum, from Leftist and Liberal parties to Islamists. The moderator was Ayman El-Sayyad, writer and former advisor to the President.

The roundtable debate was covered by reporters from numerous TV channels and radio

stations, news agencies and newspapers in Egypt. In the news programme at 1700, Egyptian TV [Channel One](#) broadcasted a report on media forum organized by MDI at the Al Azhar University. The Channel One news report can be viewed here.

Among the speakers at the forum "Media and Parliament: Tools of Modern Democracy"were Yasser Abdel Aziz, media expert; Mohamed Fathei, professor and writer; Hisham Kassem, publisher, Bahei El-Deen Hassan, Director of Cairo Institute for Human Rights; Mourad Ali, spokesman of Freedom and Justice Party, Reda Abdel Aziz, former Media Spokesman of Constitution Assembly; Magda El-Newashy, former parliament member of El-Wafad Party (Liberal Party); Basem Kamel, former parliament member and member of the board of Trustees in People's current; Mahmoud Abdella Abdel Rasol, former member of parliament of El-Nour Party and Hala Morgan, MDI Programme Director.

"*This is the first time that Al-Azhar academic arena witnessed such kind of diversity views in such interactional manner. MDI has included highly diversified and renowned media people, human rights organizations and political figures nearly representing all community groups* ", said Mohamed Abu Zohra, lecturer at Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

MDI is considered to be the first international organization which has extended a hand of partnership to Al-Azhar University in order to enhance diversity through different activities.

MDI's Country Programme Director Hala Morgan said that "*there should be a mechanism to secure the flow of information and transparency in implementing the laws which are considered to be the only guarantee of freedom of expression in Egypt*
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The roundtable organized by MDI in partnership with Al Azhar University had a significant coverage in Egyptian media. Apart from the news reports by numerous TV and radio stations, newspapers and agencies, ONTV provided live coverage of some parts of the debate.

The media forum was organised as part of the project " **Inclusive Parliament: Building citizens' participation in the political process in Egypt through better media, parliamentary and civil society interaction**
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, run by MDI and funded by the UK Embassy in Cairo. It is one of many other activities, including the establishment of a student website, roundtable discussions and TV programmes that will be organised during the life of the project.

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