Annual Conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs
"Egyptian-African Relations ... Towards New Horizons"

In line with what the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), was used to, that the main theme of its annual conference each year is in line with the central issues that are the main focus of Egypt's foreign policy and its current and future dimensions, which widens to include the regional and international situations that interact with this issue.

In this context, ECFA held its annual conference on the 23rd-24th of December 2017 under the title "Egyptian-African Relations ... Towards New Horizons", which was discussed in six sessions. Its various aspects covered the several tracks of Egyptian-African relations. Through 22 research papers, it was co-sponsored by a group of diplomats, experts and researchers specializing in African affairs. In this context, the agenda of the conference focused on the Egyptian-African relations, including the African dimension in Egypt's foreign policy, its relations with the Nile Basin countries and Egypt's water security, as well as Egypt's relations with regional powers.

In light of the security challenges that have become the main challenge to the development plans pursued by the Black Continent and its poor peoples, the security pillar in the (Egyptian-African relations) has been strongly present on the conference agenda through several research papers on all threats and common security challenges (terrorism, migration, human trafficking refugees); especially in areas with a direct impact on Egypt's national security, particularly the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. This is in addition to trying to highlight the common ground of cooperation that can be the starting point of the Egyptian role, especially in the field of African peace and security.

Details Pages 4&5
Editorial:
New Horizons for Egypt-Africa Cooperation

Part from ECFA Annual Conference 2017

Egypt is returning with great and comprehensive impetus to Africa, the continent it belongs to. This is not limited to normal diplomatic relations, but it extended to the continent’s issues in a way aims at Africa’s restoring of its role, influence, and potentials in order to achieve renaissance that suits its nations’ potentials and meets its peoples’ aspirations.

Therefore, the theme of ECFA Annual Conference of this year was in line with Egypt’s Role in Africa. It presented ideas for experts and specialists, and shed light on various dimensions of the situations in Africa, especially concerning Egypt’s role, and what Egypt can and should do, to realize these ideas.

The Conference has addressed the African Dimension of Egypt’s Foreign Policy and Egypt’s relations with the continent’s States. It has shown interest in the Development issues, with their various dimensions, and Security Challenges facing Development in the continent, as well as Threats and Challenges confronting the continent, such as Terrorism, Migration, Refugees and Human Trafficking, together with a special interest in Joint Cooperation Opportunities that could lead to furthering Egypt’s Role.

It was the gigantic opportunities offered Africa’s potentials that have spurred many States, including geographically distant countries from the continents Europe and Asia, specifically China, Turkey, Israel and the United States, to submit ready-for-investment projects and to propose practicing Economic Activity in Africa.

Therefore, it was important to open up new horizons for Inter-African Cooperation, which would help the Continent’s States explore their abilities to maximize the benefits of utilizing their capabilities and resources and in the meantime, would bring about human and cultural rapprochement among the peoples of the Continent. That was in line with the recommendations included in the Resolutions issued at conclusion of the Conference, perhaps the most important of which is activating the Soft-Power Elements, similar to the Roles undertaken by Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and the Coptic Church, and focusing on the content of the Media Cultural Message directed to Africa, linking it to the Peoples of Africa who are on the receiving end. The recommendation to establish an Egyptian Satellite Channel targeting Africa’s Peoples in their languages came within this trend.

It is well-known historically that Egypt has been a pioneer in establishing targeted radio broadcasting stations directed at different countries and in various languages. Those targeted radio broadcasting stations started in the 1960s, but did not continue with the same momentum they have begun their broadcasting with. This is why many call for reviving those stations after having their broadcasting strengthened and their broadcasting policies updated in line with the developments that the Continent has gone through over the past years up till now, taking advantage of experts’ opinions and specialists’ views on African Affairs.

(The Editor)
On December 11th 2017, the Council organized a panel of discussion on "Countering Terrorist Organizations following the killing of the worshipers at Al Rawda mosque in Sinai on 24 November", with the participation of the Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahnani, Chairman of the Council, Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Reedy, Honorary Chairman of the Council, General Fuad Allam, member of the National Council for Combating Terrorism and Extremism, former State Security Agency Undersecretary Dr. Najih Ibrahim, specialist in the affairs of Islamic groups, and Colonel / Khaled Okasha, Member of the National Council to Combat Terrorism and Extremism.

The Egyptian Council called for an urgent re-examination of the issue in the light of the massacre of worshipers during Friday prayers on November 24 at the Al-Rawda mosque in Bir al-Abed area in northern Sinai. This process represents a dangerous development in the practices of terrorist movements. Although the army and the police made strenuous efforts to confront the terrorists and their follow-up in the Sinai and Western Sahara, after the assassination of the police in the cases and killed nearly 16 after being confronted and capturing one of them, then the police and army managed to unravel.

Then came the announcement of US President Donald Trump on 6th of December 2017, "which covered the media on the massacre of Al Rawda in Sinai, recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the transfer of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to it." It is necessary to distinguish between this subject and the first issue, which is a dangerous development in the operations of terrorists, perhaps due to the reduction of ISIS operations in Syria and Iraq, and then the ISIS terrorists moved to Egypt, and this is what Turkish President Erdogan recently said. There are those who criticized the Azhar scholars because they did not calim for the terrorists, while the killing of the worshipers in general during the Friday prayers is considered the summit of "infidels".

The need for the Egyptian authorities to benefit from the experiences of other Islamic countries in the face of radical Islamic trends, with particular reference to the experiences of Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt's experience in the past against the extremism of the Muslim Brotherhood, after mentioning the experiences of these countries, with the aim of developing a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism and to counter attempts to spread this phenomenon.

The discussions resulted in a set of recommendations:

- It is necessary to organize lectures for detainees in all prisons for their guiding them and tolerating with some of them, instead of turning the prisons into haters of terrorism.
- Mainstreaming the accused in prisons in various professions - such as cooking, handicrafts and organizing libraries.
- There must be an alternative pot to turn extremists, when they engage in public life after they are released from prison in the framework of amnesty decisions.
- The need to take care of prisons, develop them and organize educational courses for officers and non-commissioned officers. Political decisions must be made to confront the economic hardships faced by Egyptians and the spread of terrorism in Egypt, which exploits these difficulties.
- Look for ways to attract the attention of young people and the public to fill the gap experienced by Egyptians to spread culture, art and other soft power.
- The need to develop an integrated strategy of the National Council to combat terrorism, and activate and vaccinate experts in the fight against terrorism, and benefit from the experiences of other countries.
- The preference for moderate Sufi thought, such as the thought of the sheikhs Abdul Halim Mahmoud and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb, in their thought of giving, forgiveness, tolerance and mercy to replace Takfiri thought and contain extremist Salafi ideas.
- The possibility of investing the presence of Sufism in many villages and regions, a strategy that proved successful when used in the past.
- Accelerate the amendment and development of the Code of Criminal Procedure and intensify the training sessions of judges in an open manner to deal with the situation of terrorism.
The partnership between Egypt and the countries of the African continent and its role in promoting development

Part of experts and specialists' discussion on ways to push the development partnership between Egypt and the African continent - ECFA annual conference of 2017

The issues discussed by the research papers and the discussions at the annual conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs varied to include many issues related to the title of the conference on "Egyptian-African Relations ... Towards New Horizons" between political, economic and development issues in various dimensions, and media between Egypt and African countries, and other issues of concern to the present and future of Africa. 33 personalities from the experts and specialists in the issues presented with working papers that varied between the different aspects related to the title of the conference concerning the African affairs in all its political, economic and development dimensions, as well as related to the maintenance of peace, security and stability of the continent countries, cooperation and coordination in dealing with the security challenges participated in the Conference Sessions.

The development dimension and the economic axis were part of the focus of the sessions, as part of the efforts to enhance the movement of the Egyptian role. The economic and trade opportunities that the cooperation partnerships between Egypt and the continent will discuss are examined through monitoring the current reality of Egypt-Africa relations, East Africa, and opportunities for industrial cooperation with the continent, in addition to evaluating the tools of Egyptian development work in Africa and ways to modernize them through the Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development, or launching new sector-specific initiatives, in addition to the roles of the relevant ministries in this regard. Then crystallize a vision through which the Egyptian economic interests in the continent can be strengthened.
On the framework of cultural cooperation between Egypt and African countries, as one of the areas through which the Egyptian relations can be strengthened and developed in the light of some common denominators through the religious component and other cultural components. The sessions focused on reviewing the current state of cultural and media communication between Egypt and African countries, as well as the tools that rely on this communication, and then discuss ways to develop them.

In addition, three meetings were held to review several research papers, focusing on the remaining issues of Egyptian foreign policy in the continent and discussing the opportunities for enhancing the (Egyptian-African) partnerships through the collective frameworks of African institutions, and this is through discussing the Egyptian role within the framework of the African Union (The Peace and Security Council, the peer mechanism, the mechanism of the wise men of Africa, African governance, the African Parliament) and its response to Egyptian interests.

On the international cooperation frameworks that the African environment may provide, given its geopolitical importance, with the international partners in different countries of the world, which will have implications for the relations (Egyptian - African) especially if these partnerships are in a competitive framework with the Egyptian role on the spheres of influence on the continent, and then focus on most of these partnerships, including partnerships such as (the European, Asian and Middle Eastern), as well as addressing some of the roles of regional and international powers that affect Egypt's interests in the continent (specifically its water security), such as Turkish, Iranian, Israeli and American roles. Then try to determine the dimensions of these roles and backgrounds of interest, and work to develop a vision of the Arab move towards these movements that affect his interests.
The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) has expressed its deepest condolences for the motherland sacrificial victims, the brave policemen from counter-terrorism forces, who have courageously carried out their duty in the face of mischievous terrorists in the Oases Area on Friday, the 29th of October 2017, where they sacrificed their lives for their motherland while dedicatedly performing the duty. ECFA Board Members have offered their prayers and supplications to Allah Almighty so that He would honour the police martyrs, extend His Great Mercy to them, bestow patience and fortitude upon their families and relatives, and hasten the healing of their fellow policemen who were injured while fulfilling their duty, defending the homeland and citizens and their security.

ECFA has mourned homeland Martyrs, whose lives were taken by brutal terrorists on Friday, the 24th of November 2017. They have fallen victims at the sinful hand of the Takfeerists, while performing Juma (Friday) Prayer at AR-RAWDHA Mosque, near El-Arish City. ECFA offers its prayers and supplications to Allah Almighty so that he would bestow his patience and fortitude upon Martyrs’ families and relatives, and hasten the healing of the injured.

ECFA condemns, in the strongest terms possible, those groups of misguided terrorists who have massacred innocent worshippers. ECFA also condemns all those who stand behind, back, support, or finance those terrorists to perpetrate such acts of terror, which are considered grave sins that have neither religious nor moral support. They have no justification whatsoever to commit such horrendous sins and or to carry out those dreadful crimes against humanity and against the Egyptian people.

ECFA supports all the measures taken by the Egypt’s Authorities to defeat and uproot terrorism, in order to restore security and safety to our cherished Egypt, so that Egypt’s people could enjoy peace and stability that are much needed to continue efforts for economic and social development.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) has expressed its deepest condolences to the victims of the national Police.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) has expressed its deepest condolences to the victims of the national Police.
A Meeting with a Delegation from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)

On the 7th of November 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) received a delegation from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which included: Ms. Judy Hyland, Senior Advisor to the (National Committee for Human Rights), Colonel (Petri Kajarna), Deputy Chief of Staff and Mr. (Dave Foley), Head of Legal Affairs Department.

On the other hand, the following ECFA Members attended the meeting: H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahrani, ECFA Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Ezzaat Saad ECFA Director, and Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Daour, ECFA's Israeli Studies Unit Head.

The meeting has focused on the following issues in particular: recent events in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA); positive progress in Lebanon in terms of Governance and adoption of the electoral law; Israeli threats against Lebanon and Syria; security and stability of Sana' especially after Houthi's defeat in Iraq and Syria; and reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah Movements.

The Egyptian side stressed that Egypt will NOT tolerate any terrorist activities on its territory, and that Egypt is working and coordinating with all States to eliminate the terrorist presence of those groups.

For his part, the UN Delegation stressed that Egypt's recent maneuvers to move stagnant water in the reconciliation process had been successful thanks to several characteristic elements of Egypt's Role, e.g. relations with Palestinian elites and factions, nevertheless the process is still facing many problems.

Then, talks touched on several developments in the region, both in the wake of the resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad El-Hariri, Iran's threats in the region, and the fear of escalating the pace of Israeli confrontations with Hezbollah on Syrian borders.

Doubts about the Possibility of the European Union (EU) Acting as Mediator in the Middle East Peace Process

At the invitation of the Egyptian-European Council's Chair, Mr. Muhammad Abou El-Enein, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahrani, ECFA Chairman, attended a Business Lunch on Wednesday, the 17th of December 2017, on the occasion of handing over the European Presidency by Estonia to Bulgaria after the expiry of its Presidency Term in December 1918. The lunch was also attended by H.E. Mr. Soon Sander, the Ambassador of Estonia and H.E. Mr. Popov, the Ambassador of Bulgaria.

H.E. the Ambassador of Estonia spoke on a number of topics, including his role in coordinating common positions and exchanging information with European Union (EU) Ambassadors in Cairo. He also spoke on Egypt's Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Sameh Shukry's visit to his country, Estonia, in 2019, noting that he is the first Egyptian Foreign Minister to visit his country since its independence. He also touched on strengthening relations between the two countries.

H.E. the Ambassador of Bulgaria, also spoke during the lunch, saying that Bulgaria's priorities under its Presidency of the EU would be to enhance EU relations with neighboring States. He also touched on the linkage between the primacy of security and stability in the Mediterranean States and reaching a settlement and reconciliations in Syria, Libya and Iraq.

H.E. Ambassador Mounir Zahrani asked about the willingness of the EU to act as Mediator to settle the Arab / Israeli conflict in place of the US, whose credibility was lost after President Trump has announced the recognition of “Jerusalem” as the capital of “Israel”, thus defying the resolutions of the international legitimacy. The Ambassadors of Estonia and Bulgaria agreed that they doubt the possibility of the EU acting as Mediator instead of the US, although the EU is a member of the International Quartet and despite the EU's Economic Power, which qualifies the EU to assume this role.

The ECFA Received a Delegation from the UN Department of Field Support (DFS), the Provider of Recruitment Services to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Missions

On the 19th of December 2017, Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) has received a Delegation from UN-DFS, the provider of Human Resources & Recruitment Services to UN Peacekeeping, Special Political and other Field Missions. The Delegation included Ms. Hudia Hummaida, Chief, Outreach and Workforce Planning Section at the UN, New York, and Ms. Seham Al-Kaisy, Chief of Auditing Section.

The following dignitaries were also present: H.E. Ambassador Amr El-Jowaily, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for United Nations Affairs at Egypt's Foreign Ministry, ECFA Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahrani, ECFA Director, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ezzaat Saad, and ECFA Board Member, Mr. Osama EL-Ghazaly Harb.

The aims of the meeting were for the Delegation to introduce career and field job opportunities available at the United Nations Offices in various regions and in different disciplines, and to explore ways of enhancing cooperation and coordination with ECFA to serve as a link with other research centers, Egypt Civil Society Organizations and ECFA’s partners in the Arab World. This, in turn, will publicize those career opportunities, shed light on how to apply for available job vacancies and help move beyond different stages of job application.
Dr. Yassin El-Ayouty’s Seminar

On the 13th of December 2017, the Council received Dr. Yassin El-Ayouty, Professor of International Law in New York University at the headquarters of the Council in Maadi. The seminar took over 2 hours, starting from 5:30pm, was attended by the ambassadors, the Chair and the honorary Chair, the director of the council and a number of members, as well as some non-members of the council.

The seminar focused mainly on the topics of democracy in the United States of America, comparing them with the attributes of governance in the Islamic state established by the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, and maintained by the caliphs after him, as well as a brief comparison between American democracy and the current situation in Egypt. In addition to the above, the lecture addressed the factors of the collapse of the current American administration and the recent American recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The lecture, which included some questions and inquiries, concluded that the current American democracy is a false democracy that is very different from the democracy that the founding fathers of the United States of America envisioned. They also differ completely with the principles of acceptance of the other and tolerance and consultation, which dominated the Islamic nation Mohammadiah at the time of the establishment of the first Islamic state in the era of the Prophet peace be upon him and the successor of the caliphs after him. The United States, which is called to champion the nations to achieve democracy and equality in their own countries, are violating their principles. It is still dominated by the racist outlook of black Americans of African descent, dominated by a capitalist materialism that enriches wealth and impoverishes the poor.

A Meeting on the Developments of the Situation in the Iraqi Arena... Post ‘ISIS’

In the context of the developments inside Iraq and the political and societal changes that have taken place in the past period, especially in the post ‘ISIS’ era, on 26th December 2017, the council organized a meeting with Dr. Mohammed Turki, the Arab affairs officer in the office of Mr. Ammar Al-Halim, head of the coalition of the Iraqi National Alliance (Chairman of the parliamentary majority in the Iraqi Council of Representatives), accompanied by Mr. Ahmed Hassan Al-Ansari, Advisor to Dr. Mohammed, and journalist in the newspaper Al-Watan, and the meeting was attended by the Chair and Director of the Council and a number of its members.

During the meeting, the following points were emphasized:

- The depth of the strategic relations between Egypt and Iraq, and the need not to limit them to the diplomatic side only, but must be expanded to include all political, economic and cultural fields.

- Intensify the effort and coordination (Egyptian-Iraqi) in order to restore the Arab decision to the point of moderation, and return it to its historic capitals (Cairo - Baghdad - Damascus).

- Arab and Iraqi need for the Egyptian role as the pillar of the Arab tent, which is keen on Arab interest other than the other roles.

- Emphasize the unity and independence of Iraq as a cohesive bloc, and reject all foreign interventions that seek to break up Arab countries.

- Emphasize on the independence of the Iraqi decision and its non-dependence on any regional or international forces, foremost of which is Iran.

- The need to address the problems of national minorities in the Arab countries through the establishment of an integrated human rights system that preserves the rights of all minorities regardless of their affiliations.

- The necessity of opening up Iraq to its Arab environment and developing its relations with the Arab countries.

- The need to address the situation of some of the military blocs, which was formed against the backdrop of the confrontation with the organization ‘ISIS’, similar to the ‘militias of the popular Shi'ite crowd’, as these blocs will have serious effects on the sectarian issue in the country.
International Forum On the Belt and Road Port Cities(5-8 Dec.2017)

During the Period from 5th to 8th December 2017, with special invitation, Ambassador Dr. Erzat Saad was participated in the International Forum On the Belt and Road Port Cities, which held in Tianjin territory.

Ambassador was stressed on his speech on the following points:

- Geographically, all of the Middle East is well centered within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For its unique geographical position, the Middle East is sometimes referred to as "the place where the Belt joins the Road", meaning the terrestrial and the maritime routes. The maritime section of the project, as we know, is called the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which will go past the Eastern Shores of the Arabian Peninsula before reaching the Mediterranean Sea, passing through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

- The BRI is extensively detailed within the China’s Arab policy paper, of 2016, which is the most important document assessing the relations of China with the Arab Countries. The silk and Road is mentioned twice in the document, both as legacy and prospect, and is presented as the cornerstone on which to build "Pragmatic Cooperation in the Principle of Mutual benefit and win – win results with Arab States", and it has its own importance as the first among investment and trade cooperation projects.

- China and Middle East Relations are not only based on energy but on trade as well. In fact, between 2001 and 2016, China’s trade with the Med area countries rose from around 16 Billion $ to over 191 billion $, overtaking the United States as a regional trading partner in 2010. The first countries as destinations for Chinese exports are Turkey and Egypt in the Med and the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf. Thus the Maritime side of the BRI, trade flows are likely to increase in the Med. Basin through the acquisition of ports on both sides and thanks to the opportunities arising from the doubling the Suez Canal in 2015.

- More important for the BRI is the rise of "the maritime economy". In fact, some of the goals declared by the Maritime Segment of the BRI have already been achieved in the last decade thanks to not only to several acquisitions of shares in ports located in the region, but also China’s involvement in Seaport constructions in the Arab and African Countries, China has remarkable technology in this regard.

- Seaports are important infrastructure, and are crucial pivots connecting a state’s national economy with the world economy. Also, seaports are the crucial pivots connecting the Marine countries with land-locked countries.

Ambassador Mahmoud Kareem’s participation in the annual conference of the European Consortium for Non-Proliferation

During the period from 11th to 14th of December 2017, Ambassador Mahmoud Kareem, member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, participated at the annual conference of the European Union for Non-Proliferation in Brussels. The conference gathered the largest number of international experts in the field of non-proliferation, including the High Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Disarmament, and Ambassador ‘Jack Biček’ the European Union’s special envoy for disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Atlantic Alliance (NATO) and a host of other international figures.

- Mrs / Meghanini High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Relations and Security Policy explained the UE’s interest in preventing nuclear proliferation, which represents the pivot of the Union for peace building and security policies, and she added that a short time ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed Iran’s commitment to compliance with the provisions of the Convention (ICPOA). It is considered a success for the European Union in establishing effective verification materials at the heart of the Convention, adding that she went to Washington last week and made it clear to the Congress that Iran’s agreement belongs to the world, not the United States and demanded to respect the Convention because there is no military solution for this problem nor the problem in North Korea.

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Disarmament stated that, in his statement to the United Nations Assembly, the Secretary-General had identified seven challenges to the world, including the proliferation of arms and the need for nuclear disarmament. She added that we must now make an effort to ensure commitment to nuclear disarmament from nuclear states and to achieve additional reductions, especially atomic energy, and we must work to agree on points of convergence, not the other way around.

- NATO Secretary-General Mrs. 'Gottemoller' (American), spoke of the challenges facing NATO in its attempts to weaken the NPT through alternative frameworks, the North Korean problem and ballistic missiles, Russia’s aggressive policies and the mise of the veto by the Security Council and Russia’s use of chemical weapons.

The following ways to work with NATO were identified:

- Support for international sanctions and the export control system for rogue states and stop the financing of rascal regimes.
- Support the Nuclear Nonproliferation mechanism and Security Council resolutions to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Increase information cooperation between NATO and other countries to exchange information.
- Regarding the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, the problem is expected to continue to threaten the success of the NPT Review Conference in 2020 unless the mechanisms, agenda and organizational aspects of the conference, including the list of conference procedures and the format of the final document that will determine the steps towards creating that area, are agreed upon now.
A Symposium on "Egypt's Role in Putting Palestinian Internal House Back in Order"

On the 15th of October 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) organized a Symposium on the theme of "Egypt's Role in Putting Palestinian Internal House Back in Order ... and the Implications of that on Peace Process", at ECFA's Headquarters. The Symposium was chaired by ECFA Member, H.E. Ambassador Sayed Abou Zaid, with the participation of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Barakat Al-Farra, former Ambassador of Palestine to Cairo and its Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States; ECFA Members, Major General Muhammad Mujahid El-Zayyat and H.E. Ambassador Muhammad Tawfieq; as well as Dr. Subhi Esailh, Editor-in-Chief of the "Israeli Selections" Quarterly Magazine; Major General Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Dawairy, Head of Israeli Studies Unit; and with attended Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chairman; and a number of ambassadors and academics who are also ECFA Members.

The Symposium was organized in three sessions as follows:

- **First Session:** Palestinian National Reconciliation - Opportunities and Challenges.
  (New developments that have led to moving the situation, opportunities of achieving reconciliation, process of reconciliation as well as regional and Arab environment).

- **Second Session:** Implications of Reconciliation Process on the Opportunities for Moving the Peace Process Forward (Egyptian Vision, Israeli Stance, American Stance).

- **Third Session:** Conclusion and Recommendations.

Participants of the Symposium emphasized certain points including in particular, the following ones:

- Reconciliation is not an aim per se; it is rather a first step towards completing the peace process, however such completion, in turn, requires that all parties take joint action to seek solutions for the issues facing both sides, including: (i) issues related to the problem of Gaza Strip employees, their salaries, and the deteriorating economic conditions in the Strip; (ii) the more complex problems, included in the 2011 Agreement, concerning the realization of Community Reconciliation for those who died during the confrontations between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the wake of the 2007 coup d'etat by Hamas Movement; (iii) the mechanism for elements of Hamas and Islamic Jihad Movements to join Fatah Movement; and how far Israel is willing to recognize them as part of the Palestinian Authority (PA); (iv) the Security Dilemma in Gaza Strip, and the possibility for Hamas Fighting Militia Elements to be part of the Palestinian Security Apparatus; and lastly (v) Elections and Formation of a Palestinian National Consensus Government that is acceptable to Israel, and the extent to which Israel and the West would be ready to accept the idea of Hamas Elements being part of the would-be Palestinian National Consensus Government.

- Hamas Movement accepted to enter into negotiations with Fatah Movement, with aim of bringing the reconciliation process to an end, after the Movement has issued a new document in May 2017, in which the Movement adopted approaches that are different from its basic principles. The main impetus for Hamas to do so was in fact the result of: (i) Internal Changes, i.e. deterioration of economic conditions in Gaza Strip; (ii) Regional Changes that have emerged on the political landscape, i.e. diminishing roles of the two main regional supporters of the Movement, namely Turkey and Iran, as well as the decline of the Qatari Role, the main supporter of Hamas, after the recent Gulf Crisis, in addition to the classification, by Four Alliance States (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain), of Hamas as a Terrorist Group.

- Such situation was the result of Hamas Movement's desire to uphold its existence in the Palestinian Political Arena and to avoid any attempt to push the Movement out of the political scene.
Meeting with the H.E. the Ambassador of Belgium in Cairo

On the 23rd of November 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) welcomed H.E. Libille de Cartier, Belgian Ambassador in Cairo, where Egypt-Belgium bilateral relations were the focus of discussions. Other topics were also addressed during the discussions, including areas of bilateral cooperation and means of coordination between the two countries in the areas of combating terrorism and resolving many of the Region’s crisis.

The following dignitaries were present at the meeting: H.E. Ambassador Mourin Zahran, ECFA’s Chairman and Their Excellencies Ambassadors Muhammad Shaker, Hussein Kamel, Farouq Mabrouk, Muhammad Moustafa Kamal, Abdel El-Saloussy, Muhammad El-Ashmawy, Muhammad Mourin Abdul-Lateef, as well as Eng. Ismail Othman, Dr. Eng. Nabil Shuaib, and Maj. Gen. Muhammad El-Shahawy.

The meeting began with H.E. the Belgian Ambassador reviewing the significant developments that the State of Belgium is currently witnessing, Belgium’s keenness to build balanced relations with the world States and the enhancing of European integration process through promoting the Union’s working mechanisms. She also addressed the 1940s, which date back to Belgium support to all economic reform steps undertaken by the Egyptian State.

She concluded her speech by expressing Belgium’s desire to strengthen cooperation and coordination with Egypt in all areas, foremost of which is combating terrorism and fighting religious extremism and militancy.

**Figures who visited ECFA**

- On the 27th of November 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) was visited by Mr. Yamani Biani, Deputy Director of the Eritrean Center for Strategic Studies (ECSS) and Head of African & Middle Eastern Studies Unit at ECSS, accompanied by Mr. Habeeb Muhammad Othman, Media and Cultural Attaché at the Eritrean Embassy in Cairo. The visitor was received by H.E. Dr. Mourin Zahran, ECFA Chairman, and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director. The meeting agenda was as follows:
  - The Eritrean guest noted that he visits Cairo from time to time for consultations with similar think tanks in Egypt on issues related to bilateral and regional relations, especially the African ones, as well as the situation in the Horn of Africa, adding that he wishes to establish a partnership with ECFA.
  - For his part, ECFA Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Zahran, pointed out that in the middle of the first decade of the third millennium, the relations between former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Eritrean leadership had been good. The UN issued several resolutions in 2004 and 2005 regarding demarcation of the Eritrean/Ethiopian borders and for peace-keeping on the borders between the two countries.
  - The honorable guest noted that the crisis between the Arab Quartet and State of Qatar, has led the latter’s falling further into Turks’ and Iranians’ arms. H.E. Ambassador Ezzat Saad commented saying that Doha has always had close and coordinated relations with Ankara, and such close relations were never a reaction to boycotting Qatar since last July 5th, 2017, and the same equally applies to its relations with Tehran.

Meeting with the Counselor at the US Embassy

On 27th of December 2017, the Council welcomed Mr. Matthew Lo, Deputy Counselor for Political Affairs at the American Embassy in Cairo, at the latter’s request, to discuss a number of current issues and developments in the region, in the presence of Ambassador Dr. Mourin Zahran, Chair of the Council, and Dr. Osama al-Ghazali Harb member of the Council, and Mrs. Anisa Hassouna member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

The meeting dealt with a number of issues, where the guest asked about the situation of civil society organizations in Egypt and the conditions of the detainees belonging to those organizations inside Egyptian prisons and the applicable provisions.

In response to the guest’s comments, it was confirmed that many of the detainees were released with a presidential pardon, where the names of the detainees are examined and lists of those who deserve amnesty are prepared. The standards shall apply to him and the President of the Republic shall be given the opportunity to issue amnesties. As for the Muslim Brotherhood, it was stressed that the anti-terrorist stance is the result of the violence and terror committed against the Egyptian people, the communication with foreign parties to harm Egyptian national security, the promotion of false news and the use of religion for political purposes.

On the situation in the region and specifically the recent decision on the declaration of the US President Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the guest said that the US President consulted with leaders of the countries of the region before the decision. Ambassador Mourin Zahran commented that the resolution would fuel conflict and hostility between Muslims and Jews would not lead to a two-state solution and would not lead to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict; but that it came without consultation with the leaders of the region. Trump contacted the leaders to inform them of his decision and not to consult with them. Dr. Mourin Zahran referred to the statement issued by the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs on the decision of the American president, who rejected President Trump’s decision, which would affect the credibility of the United States as an honest broker to settle the conflict in the Middle East.
National Security Issues in Egypt’s Foreign Policy, the Military, Political and Economic Dimensions

On the 24th of October 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) organized a Symposium titled “National Security Dimensions in Egypt’s Foreign Policy”, in which the ECFA Members delivered speeches, including: Staff Major General Hisham El-Halaby, H.E. Ambassador Marawan Badre, and H.E. Ambassador Muhammad El-Shazly, with the participation of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, the Director, and a number of Members.

During the Symposium, three main themes were discussed, namely:
- Military Dimension in Egypt’s Foreign Policy;
- Political Dimension in Egypt’s Foreign Policy;
- Economic and Developmental Dimension of Egypt’s Foreign Policy.

* On the Military Dimension, ECFA Member Staff Major General Hisham Halabi, addressed two main themes in his speech:
- Some historical examples of the Armed Forces’ Role in Foreign Policy.
- Features of the current Armed Forces’ Role in Foreign Policy and the factors that are common to both Military and Diplomatic aspects in shaping Foreign Policy.

He concluded by stressing the fact that Military and Diplomacy are two sides of a single coin, and that both sides should have a cumulative understanding of each other, recommending that 1973 War Case Study be taught to present generations.

* On the Political Dimension, Ambassador Muhammad Abdul-Moneim El-Shazly spoke and stressed that National Security is a broad concept that encompasses protecting the State against dangers that threaten its safety and preserving its basic tenets, the most important of which are:
- Unity and integrity of its territories and national soil; cohesion of its social fabric, unity of its people and cohesion of its internal front; preservation of its economic interests in a way that enables it to sustain its economic growth, and thus allow for achieving prosperity and stability; preserving the ethics, beliefs, civilizational norms and lifestyle of its people; maintaining regional security, especially in neighboring states; creating a regional atmosphere that ensures security and stability in the country, and contributing to the formation of an international system that is supportive of and harmonious with the state’s objectives.

He also stressed the need for all state’s circles, official and popular, to be involved in achieving national security, adding that there are six circles that are pioneers in this regard, namely: Economy, Armed Forces, Media, Culture, Arts, Scientific Research, and Diplomacy.

* As for Economic/Developmental Dimension, H.E. Ambassador Marawan Badre explained, in his speech, that basically the funding for any state’s economic development projects is to rely on their own resources, and in case these resources were inadequate, the alternative would be resorting to the international community, where funding such projects allows for aiding the Development process. He noted that there is a number of recognized mechanisms through which funding could be provided, including:
- Bilateral relations with States;
- Financing Institutions (Arab: Arab Monetary Fund, Regional: African Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank; or International: International Monetary Fund and World Bank).

Adding that there is another mechanism manifested in some International Groups that provide funding for some Developing States, or to certain geographical regions, such as the European Union within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework.

The presentations were followed by a number of interventions by the audience, as follows:

- In his intervention, ECFA Director, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, explained that the three presentations were complementing each other, noting that he could summarize his remarks as follows:
  1. Using or threatening to use Military Force is part of any State’s Supreme Policy, and a tool of its Foreign Policy or Strategy, that has components such as Economy, Culture, and Education... etc. He noted that historically, the term “Strategy” has had a military inference, being equated to Armed Forces Plans, and has evolved to become a “National Security Strategy”. The traditional concept of “National Security” leads us to think along the lines of “Military Force”, hence the existence of an intersection between connotations of National Security and Military Force at the theoretical level.
  2. For his part, ECFA Member, H.E. Ambassador Reda Shehata, pointed out that setting transparency limits in relation to National Security events and threats, necessarily affects the extent of support or endorsement received, especially in times of crises and balancing sources of threat to National Security with requirements for offering support and endorsements to the political leadership.
  3. Commenting on what H.E. Ambassador Reda said regarding the institutions forming Foreign Policy, ECFA Board Member, H.E. Ambassador Adel El-Saloucy, noted that in Democratic and European States, Parliament Institutions, always have a large and decisive role, and the parliament is one of the three main pillars of Foreign Policy Making.
  4. For her part, ECFA Member, H.E. Ambassador Hajez El-Islamboul, noted that she was not aware of many aspects included in the three presentations, especially what H.E. Ambassador Marawan’s remarks on development aspects, in which he highlighted that a particular decision was taken in a certain way, against Organizations, which led to halting the possibility of benefitting from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), while other Arab States have benefited from it.
Bilateral Relations and Hot Issues in the Visit by ECFA Delegation to Sudan

Between the 9th and 12th of October 2017, a delegation representing the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) paid a visit to Sudan. The visit aimed at continuing communications and exchange of ideas with the Sudanese Council for Foreign Affairs (SCFA), the party which originally called for the visit, in addition to holding an important meeting between ECFA Members and Sudan’s Foreign Minister, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour. The delegation was headed by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Emad Sanad, ECFA Director, H.E. Ambassador Marwan Badr, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Salah Hakemath and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Badr al-Deen Zapal Members of ECFA.

Issues discussed during the meeting with Sudan’s Foreign Minister varied and included bilateral relations, Al-Nabulsh “Renaissance” Dam and other urgent issues in the region.

In the meeting, Sudan’s Foreign Minister expressed his appreciation of the roles played by both ECFA and SCFA in driving the two Countries’ relations towards growth and mutual understanding. Within the context of his speech, and in relation to what ECFA’s delegation has raised, Sudan’s Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of developing the relations between the two Countries in all areas. He confirmed his appreciation of what has been raised by ECFA’s delegation, reiterating his valuing of the proposal concerning the creation of an Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Red Sea amongst the States bordering its shores, including Arab League Member States that are Member States of the African Union.

Specific Messages Delivered By ECFA Delegation During Its Discussions With The Ethiopian Foreign Relations Strategic Studies Institute (EFRSSI)

On the 15th and 16th of November 2017, a Delegation representing the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) paid a visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the Delegation held consultations with the Ethiopian Foreign Relations Strategic Studies Institute (EFRSSI). The Delegation included ECFA Director, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Emad Sanad, together with two ECFA Members, H.E. Ambassador Marwan Badr and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Badr al-Deen Zapal.

The Consultations Agenda included dealing with bilateral issues related to Nile River and Al-Nabulsh “Renaissance” Dam, as well as opportunities and areas of economic cooperation between the two countries.

The agenda also addressed Regional issues that included: Regional Cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the Horn of Africa Region, the situation both in Africa and the Arab World, Terrorism Issues, being a common threat to both parties, and Egypt-Ethiopia Cooperation, with a view of contributing to the implementation of the African Union (AU)’s Development Agenda 2063.

The Consultations have lead to major Outcomes & Recommendations, the most prominent of which are as follows:

In its interventions, Ethiopia side emphasized Ethiopia’s standpoint towards the most important subject issues that were on Agenda and raised in the Consultations between the Delegations of ECFA and EFRSSI, regarding Egypt responsible for the historically strained relations, accusing Egypt of being behind all Brazilian problems, be they internal or with Neighbouring States, and blaming Egypt for the slow rates of economic and social development, attributing all of that to Egypt’s attempts to monopolize Nile Water, depriving Upper Nile States of benefiting from it.

The Consultations concluded, the Ethiopian side expressed its views on issues that were included in the Agenda and raised during Consultations between the Delegations of ECFA and EFRSSI, echoing the same standpoint, that the previous requests, in regard to the dossier of Nile Water, the Al-Nabulsh “Renaissance” Dam among other matters. On its part, the Egyptian side delivered specific messages in response to what was raised by the Ethiopian side, reiterating that the dossier of Nile Water will remain a major concern to Egypt, for many decades to come, stressing the need for implementing an Integrated Strategy to deal with this dossier, either in light of previously-drawn Strategies, or based upon updating these Strategies in order to keep pace with National, Regional and International Variables.

The First Conference on “Prospects of Arabic-African-Chinese Relations within the Context of Belt and Road Initiative”

On the 21st and 22nd of November 2017, at the invitation of the Association of Arab-Chinese Friendship Associations, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Emad Sanad ECFA Director participated in the First Conference on “Prospects of Arabic-African-Chinese Relations within the Context of Belt and Road Initiative”, held in Khartoum, Sudan. The conference was attended by Officials and Scholars from more than 10 Arab and African States, and a number of Chinese Scholars and Academics. The Conference was held in eight sessions.

In his address, at the 3rd Session of the Conference, titled “Political Implications of Silk Road in both Arab and African States”, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Emad Sanad touched on Silk Road, geopolitical rivalry in the Middle East and Africa, and ways of enhancing Sino-Arab and Africa-China Cooperation, within the context of the Initiative, emphasizing that since it was launched in 2013 until now, the Initiative has been received with heated discussions by Academics, Think-Tanks as well as Local and International Media. Some observers interpret the Initiative as China’s Grand Strategy aimed at meeting China’s aim of meeting China’s Security and Military Ambitions. In light of the magnitude of the Initiative, it should be noted that it encompasses about three-quarters of the world’s population and about 60 per cent of World Gross Product (WGP). Perhaps the Initiative’s most important impact, when implemented, lies in the further deepening of political and economic integration between China and the States that would be covered by the Belt and Road Initiative.

Undoubtedly, the Belt and Road Initiative provides a rare strategic opportunity for AU’s Agenda 2063, launched by the African Union in 2015, the very same year in which Sino-African relations were upgraded to the level of “Comprehensive and Collaborative Strategic Partnership”.

The economic development that the Initiative would contribute to the Continent’s States have far-reaching important political impacts on both Arab and African regions, manifested primarily in achieving peace, social security and stability and in aiding gradual modernization of the global governance system.
China’s Envoy asserts his Country’s eagerness to establish a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its Capital

On Sunday, the 5th of November 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) has received the Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Issue (Peace Process), H.E. Ambassador Gong Xiaocheng, and his accompanying delegation, where the discussions dealt with the developments in the Palestinian National Reconciliation Process and its implications for the Peace Process, the role of Regional and International Powers, as well as Egyptian-Chinese coordination that aims to change the current status quo in the Peace Process. The issues were discussed in the presence of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Monir Zahrani, ECFA Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Essam Saad, ECFA Director, and H.E Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Badre El-Deen Zayed, ECFA Member.

During the talks, China’s Envoy reviewed the outcomes of his round of consultations with both Israeli and Palestinian officials. He stressed that there has been a change in the Israeli stance, manifested by their assurances and readiness to provide assistance to the Palestinian side and the Gaza Strip, for reconstructing the Strip, putting forward some projects before the Chinese side in this regard.

On the Palestinian side, despite the clear and diverse views regarding what is being proposed by the Israeli side and what is being promoted regarding what is called “a new US Proposal for resolving the conflict” (regional or economic).

For his part, China’s Envoy stressed his country’s eagerness to cooperate with Egypt to bring the peace process to a successful end, establish a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its Capital, and seek a comprehensive solution to resolve the Region’s crises.

The Egyptian side welcomed that, stressing the importance of Israel’s taking the initiative, and showing goodwill to prove the change of its stance, for example by freezing the building of settlements on occupied Palestinian Territory. It is equally important that the US makes a serious move to solve the crisis especially that the new US Administration is preoccupied most with the Iranian threat, viewing it as the top priority threat to peace in the Region.

Ambassador Ali El-Hefni is a participant in the first forum of the Non-Government Organization Network under the China Belt and Road Initiative

Representing the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), H.E. Ambassador Ali El-Hefni took part in the First Forum of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Network, held in the period between the 19th and 28th of November 2017, within the context of China’s Belt and Road Initiative. The forum was attended by some 199 NGO participants, including 104 NGO representatives from Foreign States and International Organizations, and 95 Chinese NGOs.

During the Forum, Egypt was represented by:

- Sharaf Foundation for Sustainable Development, represented by H.E. Dr. Essam Sharaf, Egypt’s Former Prime Minister and Chairman of the Foundation;
- Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), and Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, represented by Mr. Essam El-Deen Ahmad Shaha, Secretary-General of the Organization and Member of Egypt’s El-Wafid Political Party. Amongst the Public Figures who participated were: Romania’s Former Prime Minister, Bulgaria’s Former Prime Minister and Spouse of Tanzania’s Former President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete.
- Four parallel sub-meetings for NGOs participating in the Forum were held, and during the third sub-meeting, Mr. El-Hefni delivered a speech, in which he addressed the need for the African Continent to promote the concepts of “self-reliance” and “self-sufficiency” at all levels, be it Continental, State or Local Unit Level. Therefore, Civil Society Organizations’ role is important and complementary to State’s role, and cooperation among these organizations and their Chinese counterparts is very important.
- He has touched on how significant Egypt’s geographical location is, to the Marine Route of Silk Road, as it connects two continents (Africa & Asia), acts as a Hub for three continents, including (Europe), and a priority corridor for China, with 11 percent of International Trade and a large part of Chinese Commerce going through it. He pointed out the current and future growing importance of this corridor, in view of the diversified facilities to be offered by Egypt to International Navigation, and the Mega-Projects being carried out along the Suez Canal Region in addition to the New Industrial Zones being established within the context of the development plan of this region, as well as the benefits to be gained by African States in East and South of the Continent as a result of such plan.
Participation of H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in a Conference on "Egypt and Indonesia – A Vision for the Future" - Wednesday, the 4th of October 2017

On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary, commemorating the commencement of diplomatic relations between the two sides, a Conference on "Egypt and Indonesia – A Vision for the Future", was held in cooperation between Embassy of Indonesia in Cairo and the Al-Hikam Centre for Political and Media Studies, and with the participation of Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad ECEFA Director, H.E. Mr. Hilmi Fawzi, Ambassador of Indonesia to Cairo; H.E. Mr. Hassan Wirajuda, Indonesia's former Foreign Minister and Director of SETARA Institute for Democracy and Peace (an Indonesia-based NGO) Prof. Dr. Sri Adiningtyah, Chairwoman of the Presidential Advisory Council of the Republic of Indonesia; Mr. Cerdito Dunciprato, Member of Indonesia's Presidential Advisory Council and Spokesman of the Indonesian Consultative Council; Sir Azyumardi Azra, Professor of History and former Rector of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta; in addition to a number of parliamentarians and representatives from Al-Azhar Al-Sharif as well as academics. The conference was held in two sessions, the first addressed the theme of "Egypt and Indonesia, Strategic Cooperation in face of Challenges", and the second dealt with the theme "Cultural Relations and their Impact on Political and Economic Aspects".

During the Conference, it was emphasized that this event is important, being an opportunity to exchange views on common interests that bring countries together in all fields, which have witnessed a great momentum following the visit by President El-Sisi to Jakarta in September 2015.

During the second session, which was Chaired by His Excellency, Ambassador Saad noted the importance of enhancing cultural, scientific and technical cooperation which is inseparable from political cooperation or political relations among States, any States. In the case of Egypt-Indonesia Relations, in particular, such relations derive their value and strength from the history of these relations as well as from cultural and civilizational commonalities that are common between the two countries.

Moreover, cooperation in fighting terrorism and promoting religious tolerance is as highly cultural as it is also political, especially if we take into account the fact that adopting a security approach alone in face of the phenomenon of terrorism is not only insufficient, but also requires concurrently adopting another approach related to culture, concepts and religious discourse... etc.

Regarding bilateral cooperation between the two countries under El-Sisi Presidency, he stressed that Egypt's political leadership attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation with Indonesia at all levels, including at the cultural level. This is reflected in the signing by the two countries of four Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) among Egyptian and Indonesian Universities during 2017, in addition increasing the number of scholarships awarded by Al-Azhar University to Indonesian Students from 20 to 100 scholarships annually, as an outcome of the visit by Grand Emam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad Et-Tayyeb to Indonesia, on 21-26 February 2017.

A Dialogue with Deputy Director of Planning at Hungary’s Foreign Ministry on Developments in the Middle East

In the afternoon of the 15th of October 2017, and at the request of the H.E. Peter Kivek, Hungary’s Ambassador to Egypt, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECEFA) has received H.E. Zoltan Mark, Deputy Director of Planning at Hungary’s Foreign Ministry, accompanied by Hungary’s Deputy Ambassador to Egypt.

The Hungarian visitor inquired on the current developments both in Egypt and in the Middle East, referring to the session of rich discussions that was held by Hungary’s National Security Adviser with members of the Council at the advent of the 2017.

Egypt's former Ambassadors to Hungary, H.E Ambassador Ali El-Hefny and H.E Ambassador Hesham El-Zamaly, responded to the guest's inquiries. This comes especially against the backdrop that Hungary was the First European Union Member State to support Egypt's 30th of June Revolution, and to openly express its support to the People of Egypt in its revolt against the fascist rule, that has constantly sought to obliterate Egypt's Identity. The two ECEFA Members pointed out that the special relationship between Egyptian president Al-Sisi and Hungary’s Prime Minister, Victor Urban had opened up horizons for increased prospective cooperation between the two States both in political and economic Fields as well as in the area of technical education.

ECEFA Members also presented an assessment of the situation in Gaza and Libya and on the relations with Sudan and Ethiopia within the context of construction of the Renaissance Dam. For his part, the Hungarian guest reviewed Hungary’s policies within the European Union and its keenness to maintain a margin of independence and prevent any party from interfering in its internal affairs.
ECFA has participated in the Joint Training WorkShop on Disarmament

On Tue, 3rd and Wed, 4th of October 2017, a joint workshop on Disarmament, titled "Towards a NextGen Group of Experts on Security and WMD Issues", was jointly held by Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), Egyptian Pugwash Association for Science & International Affairs (Egypt's National Branch of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs), Arab Institute for Security Studies in Jordan, and US Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). A number of experts, academics and former ambassadors participated in the workshop, and several students and scholars attended.

In the first day, three sessions were held, which the following topics were addressed: (i) Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its Review Conferences; (ii) Nuclear Export Control Regimes; (iii) Nuclear Non-Proliferation; and (iv) Regional and International Instruments. In the second day, three sessions were held, during which these topics were discussed: (i) Nuclear Security and Nuclear Fuel Cycle (NFC)/Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); and (ii) promotion of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

The Workshop was organized in the wake of the first meeting of Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Review Conference, held in Vienna last June, and the preparations currently underway to hold the second Preparatory meeting, scheduled to be held in May 2018, in preparation for the convening of 2020 NPT Review Conference.

The most notable development in current nuclear disarmament process, was the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017, in the first legally-binding treaty instrument since the UN was established. The treaty aims at totally eliminating nuclear weapons and of the world from the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction that threaten the human race.

It is noteworthy to note that organizing this joint workshop is part of the attention given by ECFA in the issue of Disarmament and making the Middle Eastern Region safe and free of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Over the years 2014/2015, and within this context, on the 1st of February 2018, ECFA has organized a joint meeting with the Arab League, titled "Challenges facing Arab States, in particular, issues of terrorism, and the threat posed to the Middle East region by Israel's possession of nuclear weapons". ECFA organized another meeting, in 2015 to discuss the Outcomes of the Conference held in New York in April 2015, titled "Review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty". In April 2016, ECFA has organized a Joint Conference, on "The Culture of Nuclear Security", together with the Institute for Nuclear Security, within Howard E. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Participation in Amman Security Forum

At the invitation of Amman Security Forum, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Noumier Zahran, Chairmen of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), as well as H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karrar ECFA member, and Mr. El-Sayed El-Ghamam, First Secretary at Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Disarmament Affairs Department have participated in the Forum, during the period from 15th to 17th October 2017.

The Forum has addressed a number of regional and international issues concerning the region, and the agenda for disarmament, non-proliferation and terrorism. The Forum was opened by Ms. Deborah G. Rosenbaum, Executive Vice President at the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), on behalf of the Initiative’s Chairmanship (Founder & CEO, Former US Senator Samuel Augustus Nunn Jr.). The Initiative is funded by Amman Nuclear Forum and Dutch Government.

Among the participants in the Forum was H.E. Ambassador Adam Bongzik, Poland’s Permanent Representative to the UN Office and the International Organizations in Vienna, and prospective Chair of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Geneva in late April and early May 2018. H.E. Ambassador Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov, of the Russian Federation, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, has participated in the Forum opening ceremony.

Speakers at the Forum included H.E. Minister Khaled Tanqun, Chairman of Jordanian Nuclear Energy Authority, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karrar and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Noumier Zahran. The Forum has addressed themes that included topics related to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the concluding of a Treaty on Prohibition of the Production of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in July 2017, and the boycotting thereof by Nuclear States and their Allies.

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Noumier Zahran pointed out the importance of working to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by accelerating the establishment of a Zone Free from Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Massive Destruction (WMD) prior to the onset of the conference. He also noted how important it is to review and amend the Conference’s Rules and Regulations so that decisions are made by a two-thirds majority according to Article 18 of the UN Charter, and Civil Society Organizations are allowed to take part in all Deliberations, Committees and Preparatory Committees of the Conference, under all aspects of the Treaty similar to the pattern practiced in the Human Rights Council.