



Annual Report

2023

Edited by
Dr. Ezzat Saad

Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) Founders:

Ambassador Abdel Ra'ouf El-Reedy
Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Shaker
Dr. Bahieldin H. Z. Elibrachy

ECFA Body:

Ambassador Mohamed Abd El-Hayy Mohamed Al-Orabi	Chairman
Ambassador Abdel Ra'ouf El-Reedy	Honorary Chairman
Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mustafa Kamal	Deputy Chairman of the Board
Ambassador Dr. Ali Hossam El-Din El-Hefny	Secretary General
Ambassador Dr. Salah Abd El-Razek Ibrahim Halima	Treasurer
Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad El-Sayed	Executive Director
Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Abd El-Hamid Ibrahim Hegazy	
Dr. Mohamed Hisham Abbas Zaazou	
Ambassador Dr. Abd El-Rahman Salah El-Din Abd El-Rahman	
Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Abd El-Moneim Al-Dargami	
Mr. Ayman Mohamed Adly	

Address:

Tower 2 Fakhir- Osman Towers, Nile Corniche, Maadi, 12th floor.

Telephone: (202) 25281091-6

Fax: (202) 25281093

Email:

info@ecfa-egypt.org
ecfa.egypt@yahoo.com
ecfa.egypt@outlook.com
ecfaegypt@gmail.com
ecfa.egypt.2020@gmail.com

Website: www.ecfa-egypt.org

Deposit No.

Table of Contents

➤ Word from the Editor	8
<u>Chapter I</u>	
<u>Conferences, Seminars & Workshops</u>	
➤ Symposium by Ambassador Sayed Qasem El-Masry on his Book “Muslim Minorities”.....	11
➤ Meeting of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States with ECFA members	12
➤ Meeting of Mr. Amr Moussa with ECFA members on “The Egyptian Role in MENA region”.....	13
➤ Roundtable discussion on developments of the situation in the Sudan and the Egyptian position regarding it.....	14
➤ Annual Conference of ECFA on "The Repercussions of the War in Ukraine on the Middle East and Egypt".....	15
➤ Roundtable between ECFA and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Cairo on "Egypt and Uzbekistan .. Joint Cooperation Prospects"	19
➤ Seminar by Prof. Dr. Gouda Abdel Khaleq Titled “A View of the Economic Situation in Egypt”.....	21
➤ Seminar by Engineer/ Yehya Zaki on "Suez Canal Economic Zone: Opportunities and Challenges".....	23
➤ ECFA joint workshop with the Future Center for Advanced Research and Studies on "Strategic Transformations in Asia and their Impact on the Arabian Gulf Region".....	24
➤ Symposium by Ambassador Youssef Zadeh on “The Roots of the Conflict in Ukraine and the West’s Role in Fueling It”.....	26
➤ Joint seminar between ECFA and the Embassy of Belarus about an article by the late Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir V. Makei on “The International Order and Its Challenges”.....	27
➤ Seminar on "UN Secretary-General António Guterres' vision on the New Agenda For Peace"	28
➤ Joint Seminar between ECFA & Kemet Boutros Ghali Foundation for Peace and Knowledge on “China in a Changing World”.....	29
➤ ECFA’s commemoration of the centenary of the late Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid - Former Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.....	31
➤ Roundtable discussion on the “Assessment of the initiative of Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily the UN Envoy on Libya”.....	32

➤ Symposium on "Egypt - Turkey Relations .. Opportunities and Challenges".....	33
➤ Seminar on the "African Peer Review Mechanism".....	34
➤ Launching Ceremony of the Exchange Mechanism between ECFA and the Chinese Embassy in Cairo.....	35
➤ Seminar on "Developments of the Situation in the Sudan".....	37
➤ Symposium on “United Nations Special Envoys .. Appointment, Tasks and Effectiveness of their Roles”.....	39
➤ Seminar entitled “Are We Witnessing the Emergence of a New Global Order?” ...	40
➤ Joint roundtable dialogue between ECFA and the Chinese Embassy in Cairo on "Investing for Exportation".....	41
➤ Seminar on the “Outcomes of the Meetings of the BRICS Ministerial Conference and Opportunities to expand the Group’s Membership in Light of Global Challenges”.....	43
➤ Symposium on "Egypt and Illegal Immigration .. Challenges and Mechanisms to Combat It".....	44
➤ “India Foundation – West Asia and North Africa (WANA)” Conference “Reconnecting Roots for Shared Prosperity” at ECFA.....	45
➤ Roundtable Discussions on the Developments of the Crisis of the Grand Ethiopian Dam.....	46
➤ Meeting of ECFA's Economic Committee.....	47
➤ Two Seminars on “Developments of the Situation Related to the Nile Waters and the Ethiopian Dam” (19 July & 23 August).....	48
➤ Seminar on “The Distinctive characteristics of the African Union personality”....	50
➤ Seminar by Mr. Mohamed Fayek on "The Future of the Egyptian / African Relations".....	52
➤ A Joint Symposium between ECFA and the Belarusian Side on “The Global Food Security in the Current Geopolitical Environment”.....	53
➤ Symposium on “Diplomacy of War and Peace: Fifty Years Over 1973 War”.....	55
➤ Seminar on “the Developments of the Situation in the Sudan and Its Future Consequences”.....	56
➤ Roundtable Discussion on “The Economic Crisis in Egypt and Its Dimensions” ...	58
➤ Symposium on “The Personal Experience of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby in the Diplomatic Field, and as a Former Foreign Minister of Egypt”.....	59
➤ Joint Symposium on “The Palestinian Issue .. To Where? With Regard to the Latest Developments”.....	60
➤ Symposium of Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry on His Journalistic Experience in the US from	

1995 to 2000	61
➤ A Symposium on “The United Nations System for Human Rights”	62
➤ ECFA’s 2023 Annual Conference “The Palestinian Cause Between Settlement Efforts And Liquidation Attempts”	63

Chapter II

Meetings & Visits **65**

➤ Visit to ECFA by the Deputy Ambassador of India	66
➤ Visit by ECFA Board of Directors to the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding	67
➤ Visit to ECFA by the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Parliament	68
➤ Visit to ECFA by a delegation of the European Union Mission in Cairo	69
➤ Visit by the Ambassador of Vietnam in Cairo to ECFA	70
➤ Visits to ECFA by the Head of the Office for the Protection of the Interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Cairo (29 March & 16 November)	71
➤ Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Hungary to Cairo	73
➤ Visits to ECFA by the Ambassador of Australia to Cairo (3 April & 22 November) ..	74
➤ Visit to ECFA by a Palestinian Delegation to Introduce the Campaign of “For Palestine”	76
➤ Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Japan to Cairo Mr. Oka Hiroshi	78
➤ Visits by a Delegation of the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Sudan	79
➤ Visit to ECFA by Mr. Thomas Volk, Regional Program Director at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation	81
➤ Visit by ECFA Delegation to Belgrade	82
➤ Seminar on "Developments of the Economic and Financial Conditions in Libya"	84
➤ Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Singapore in Cairo	86
➤ Visit of ECFA’s Delegation to Budapest, Hungary (26 – 29 September)	88
➤ Meeting with Dr. Mariam Sadek Al-Mahdy Former Foreign Minister of Sudan and Vice President of Umma National Party for Political Communication and Foreign Relations	90
➤ Visit of the Delegation of the Central Institute of the History and Literature of the Chinese Communist Party	91
➤ Meeting with the Russian Professor Aleksey Vaselev	93
➤ Visit to ECFA by a delegation from the International Crisis Group	94
➤ Visit of the German Military Delegation to ECFA	96
➤ Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Belgium to Cairo	97

Chapter III

Field visits

98

- ECFA Members' Visit to the New Administrative Capital..... 98

Chapter IV

Members' Participations

99

- ECFA Participation in Launching the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace) 99
- ECFA Participation in the Activities of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures..... 100
- Ambassador Ezzat Saad's Participation in the XXIV International Academic Conference of the Higher School of Economics..... 101
- Participation by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi in a Conference on the Non-Aligned Movement in a Changing World..... 102
- Visit by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad to the Russian Federation (15 – 21 May)..... 104
- Lecture by Ambassador Ezzat Saad on "International Economic Relations and Economic Diplomacy"..... 106
- Participation of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi in a Symposium Entitled "Dialogue between the Great Wall of China and the Pyramids"..... 107
- Participation of Amb. Ezzat Saad in a forum of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on "Combating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals".. 109
- Visit by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad to the Republic of Uzbekistan..... 110
- Participation of Ambassador Ezzat Saad a Symposium on "The June 2013 Revolution and Egyptian Foreign Policy .. Challenges and Achievements" at the Supreme Council of Culture..... 111
- Ambassador Ezzat Saad's participation in the second "Africa – Russia" Summit 113
- ECFA Participation in the Conference of "Egypt and Russia .. Eighty Years of Strategic Partnership"..... 115
- Participation of Dr. Yousry Abo Shady in the 67th Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (25 - 29 September 2023)..... 116
- Participation of Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in the Ceremony of Launching the Arabic Edition of Mr. Xi Jinping Book "Respecting and Guaranteeing Human Rights"..... 118
- Participation of Dr. Yousry Abo Shady in the International Forum of Primakov Center (28 - 29 September 2023)..... 120
- Participation of Ambassador Ezzat Saad in the Third Forum of Silk Road Network for Civil Society Organizations (SIRONET) Entitled "People – To – People Bonds"

(19 - 21 October).....	122
➤ Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaity’s participation in the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (17 – 18 October).....	124
➤ Participation by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in the Event of the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, on “The Middle East in a Changing World Order” (30 October).....	126
➤ Visit by Ambassador Ayman Mousharafa to Belgrade.....	127
➤ A Virtual Lecture by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi on “Egypt in the Contemporary International Relations” to the Serbian International Institute of Politics and Economics.....	128
➤ Other Contributions by ECFA Chairman, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby.....	130

Chapter V

Press Statements

133

➤ ECFA Statement Commenting on the Annual Report of the U.S. Department of State on Terrorism (2021) (2 March 2023)	133
➤ ECFA Statement on the Occasion of “Commemoration of the 75 th Anniversary of the Nakba” (15 May)	133
➤ ECFA Statement on the Occasion of “Africa Day” (25 May).....	135
➤ ECFA Statement of Solidarity with the Libyan People As a Result of Storm Daniel (13 September).....	136
➤ ECFA Statement of Solidarity with the Moroccan People As a Result of the Earthquake (13 September).....	136
➤ ECFA statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people, and condemnation of the Israeli attacks series on Palestinian cities since the dawn of October 7 th 2023 (8 November)	137
➤ ECFA statement from the Council condemning the Israeli escalation and massacres in the Palestinian territories (2 November).....	138
➤ ECFA Statement on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November)	139

Chapter VI

ECFA Memoranda of Understanding & Cooperation with New Partners

141

Chapter VII

ECFA Publications in 2023

142

Word from the Editor

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) is pleased to launch this eighth edition of its annual report for 2023, the year that witnessed the election of a new Board of Directors (in December 2022), headed by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the members and their synergies with ECFA partners, it was possible to hold a large number of activities, including seminars, conferences, workshops, and discussion panels, in addition to various visits to the Council's headquarters and outside it. ECFA received many foreign figures and delegations to consult and exchange views on many local, global and regional issues of common interest.

This includes hosting the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, in January 2023, as he reviewed the international state of affairs and the challenges it entails, its effects on the Arab world, and the existing means to overcome them, as well as Mr. Amr Moussa on February 6, 2023, who spoke about "opportunities available to Egypt to activate its role." This is while the Council celebrated this year the fiftieth anniversary of the glorious October War under the slogan "Diplomacy of War and Peace," during which His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry, delivered a speech at the opening session.

It is worth noting that the Council's meetings with its partners provided the opportunity to inform them of the internal developments in Egypt, as the economic crisis in the country was addressed, while exploring means to overcome it. In this context, ECFA organized two symposiums for both Professor Dr. Gouda Abdel Khalek, Professor of Economics at Cairo University, and the former Minister of Solidarity and Social Justice, who delivered a lecture entitled "An Overview of the Economic Situation in Egypt", on February 23, 2023, and Dr. Ahmed Galal, the former Minister of Finance, on "The Economic Crisis: Its Dimensions and a Vision to Get Out of It", on October 12, 2023.

Some of the Council's activities also tackled a number of priority files from the perspective of Egyptian national security, such as the Palestinian cause, especially developments since Operation "Al-Aqsa Flood" on October 7, whereby ECFA annual conference was held on December 7, 2023 under the slogan: "The Palestinian cause among settlement endeavors and liquidation attempts." It also addressed the Libyan crisis and the Syrian and Sudanese files, in addition to the Ethiopian dam file, which was the subject of many discussions with foreign delegations. This is in addition to the Council's 2022 annual conference which was held on February 11, 2023, under the slogan "Implications of the War in Ukraine on the Situation in the Middle East and Egypt."

In this context, ECFA managed to launch an exchange mechanism with the Chinese Embassy in Cairo in April 2023, while it concluded a number of memorandums of understanding for cooperation with similar think tanks, including the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (July 2023), and the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (September 2023).

The report includes the usual annual activities such as members' participations in various events, including lectures, seminars and workshops, as well as press releases issued by ECFA on some occasions, and memorandums of understanding on cooperation with ECFA's new partners, and congratulations letters issued by it, in addition to the Council's publications in 2022.

We hope that this publication would achieve its desired goal, and would reflect the efforts of the Council and its esteemed members, especially for the ladies and gentlemen whose circumstances prevented them from participating in these activities throughout the year.

Dr. Ezzat Saad
ECFA Director

Chapter I

Conferences, Seminars & Workshops

Symposium by Ambassador Sayed Qasem El-Masry on his book “Muslim Minorities”

On January 10, 2023, ECFA organized a symposium, in which Ambassador Sayed Qasem El-Masry presented his book entitled “Muslim Minorities,” which was introduced by Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the former Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and attended by a number of ECFA members, experts and researchers concerned with minority issues. Ambassador El-Masry indicated that the book “Muslim Minorities” is the result of a decade-long personal experience of the problems of Muslim minorities in the world, with a focus on Asia, given that Muslim minorities constitute one third of the Islamic world, where a minority lives in non-Islamic countries. Most minorities belong to the country in which they are located, with the exception of Western Europe, where most minorities in this part of the world are immigrants. In many cases, the countries in which these indigenous minorities live are the ones that invaded them, and most of them had Islamic sultanates with international relations, while a neighboring country invaded and occupied their lands.

The research shows that the problem with Muslim minorities is not a religious problem at all, but rather a racial and ethnic problem, and stems from the desire of the countries in which these minorities exist to assimilate them into the societies in which they live. In his speech, Ambassador Qasem also tackled the issue of human rights, and how countries have sought to make it an internal matter in which other countries may not interfere, noting that the United Nations has called for the conclusion of about 9 universal contractual agreements on various human rights, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and its counterpart on civil and political rights, the Convention against Torture... etc., in order to establish a binding legal instrument for the implementation of what was stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which can be applied in member states in accordance with their internal law, and with their ratification of it.

Ambassador Qassim also referred to the background contained in the book about the emergence of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its tasks, explaining that it serves as a global framework that brings together Muslims now, decades after the end of the Islamic Caliphate in 1924. In this regard, he noted the cultural strategy for the Islamic world, which was issued in 1990 in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, entitled: “Nothing is sacred except the revelation of heaven, and everything other than that is man-made,” which explicitly called for criticizing the Islamic heritage.

The participating ECFA members interacted with the author of the book, who responded completely to their questions and inquiries.

Meeting of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States with ECFA members

On January 17, 2023, ECFA hosted His Excellency the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, who presented the international state of affairs, the challenges it entails, its effects on the Arab world, and the ways available to address them. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and was attended by many ECFA members, experts and researchers interested in following up and extrapolating international and regional developments.

His Excellency the Secretary General noted that the current international situation, specifically represented in the Russian-Ukrainian war, is perhaps the most dangerous situation the world has witnessed over the past 75 years. Although it is close to the Korean situation in the early 1950s, as well as the Cuban crisis in the early 1960s, these crises were controlled, thanks to the guidance of the concerned leaders at the time, in contrast to the current crisis which pace is dramatically accelerating between Russia and the West, leading to talk about not ruling out the use of tactical nuclear weapons, which threatens international peace and security, and even the entire world order. Among the dangers that the world currently faces is the spiraling towards the end of the unipolar global order, represented by the United States, and the U.S. conflict with the rising Chinese power, which will lead to falling into the "Thucydides Trap," and also to the inevitable occurrence of a new Cold War.

In addition, there are some significant developments that would enhance the scenario of confrontation on the global scene, most notably the following: Germany announced several months ago that it would increase its defense budget to 100 billion euros, and this raises questions about the impact of this on NATO on the one hand, and on the European Union on the other hand, especially after Brexit, and even on the international scene; China's ambition to double its nuclear capabilities, amid American warnings that Beijing seeks to possess a "nuclear superpower"; The tremendous advancement in North Korea's nuclear weapons and its ongoing challenges and provocations; Announcing the "AUKUS" alliance among Australia, Britain, and the United States, and holding joint exercises between India and Japan for the first time during January 2023. It is expected that any potential use of nuclear weapons will not be limited to two parties; meaning that if there is a nuclear confrontation between Russia and the West, there will be a Russian-Chinese, or Chinese-Western nuclear confrontation; as logic entails that a nuclear power will not allow itself to be subjected to the control of another power that has a larger strategic stock of nuclear weapons. This undoubtedly puts the future of all humanity at stake.

Regarding the regional situation, it is very dangerous, especially since the Russian-Ukrainian war and its developments have direct repercussions on the Arab region by virtue of its geographical proximity. The situation could get worse if a nuclear confrontation breaks out between Russia and the West. The Arab League tried to mediate to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, and the League's Ministerial Council took a decision on March 9, 2022 to establish an Arab contact group for this purpose, but that mediation was not destined to succeed, like many other mediations offered by a number of other international actors.

Meeting of Mr. Amr Moussa with ECFA members on “The Egyptian Role in MENA region”

On February 6, 2023, ECFA organized a meeting with the Egyptian Diplomatic Club, in which it hosted Mr. Amr Moussa, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to talk about “the opportunities available to Egypt to activate its role.” The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and attended by a large number of ECFA members, experts and academics concerned with internal, regional and international situations.

The guest reviewed the multiple challenges plaguing the current international state of affairs, namely the crisis of the global order and the many speculations regarding the shape of the possible new order in terms of polarity, parties' relations, alliances, and mutual influence, under the Russia-West conflict in Ukraine, its repercussions, and the continuing U.S.-China competition and trade war, including the Taiwan issue, in addition to the accelerating pace of conventional and nuclear armament, which poses an existential threat to humanity, in addition to the crises imposed by climate change issues, the continuation of the Covid-19 crisis and its challenges, and the shortage in supply chains, which contributes to increasing the intensity of food crises and poverty in various regions of the world.

In a related context, the guest discussed the regional situation and its developments, noting that the Arab regional system is disintegrated, and there is no such thing as Arab national security, especially in light of the different visions of Arab countries about the main sources of threat to the Arab peoples. He also referred to the Iranian and Turkish interventions in the region, and to the Iranian nuclear program and the real threats it entails, denouncing at the same time that the Western world has turned a blind eye to Israeli nuclear armament, which gives a great comparative advantage to Israel in the region, even though it constitutes major violations of the relevant international treaties. This is in addition to the tense Palestinian situation, and the extremely complex situations of other Arab countries such as Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Sudan.

In this context, Mr. Amr Moussa affirmed that Egypt must strive to strengthen its soft power in all fields and at various levels, in order to stop the decline of Egypt’s regional role, warning of any internal divisions that may threaten the internal stability of the Egyptian state, especially at the present time. He also indicated the possibility of presenting Egyptian initiatives that would be welcomed by a small number of Arab countries, not necessarily all of them, while emphasizing the importance of the participation of at least one country from the Arab Maghreb, another from Arab-African South, a third from the Arab Mashreq, and so on. In the same context, he pointed out the importance of promoting relations with emerging countries such as Brazil and India, and diversifying Egyptian foreign policy options, while emphasizing the incapability of the Non-Aligned Movement to deal with the current challenges, especially in light of the severe state of polarization that the world witnesses nowadays.

Roundtable discussion on developments of the situation in the Sudan and the Egyptian position regarding it

On February 9, 2023, ECFA held a roundtable discussion on developments of the situation in Sudan and the Egyptian position regarding it. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and was attended by Ambassador Hossam Eissa, Assistant Foreign Minister for Sudan Affairs, and Ambassadors Marwan Badr, Salah Halima, Ezzat Saad, and Mohamed El-Noqaly. Ambassador Hossam Eissa presented the outcomes of the Sudanese-Sudanese workshop meeting that was held during February 2023 in the New Administrative Capital, and an evaluation of the outcomes, in addition to his appreciation for a future vision. Based on the discussions that took place in light of what the guest presented to ECFA experts, the opinion concluded as follows:

Despite the delay in the Egyptian move to play a role in the developments that Sudan is witnessing regarding the political process, and the obstacles that this may raise, and the belittling of this role, in fact, it was necessary for Egypt to open the door for holding such a meeting, and to place it within the framework of the Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue to forces that are still outside the framework agreement.

Emphasizing that this meeting and its outcomes aim to continue efforts to achieve general consensus among the forces, parties, and components of Sudanese society, and against the backdrop of Egypt's commitment to a strategic approach to supporting the choices of the Sudanese people, and in connection with continuing to deal with all these forces and parties.

Supporting chances to open dialogue through the tripartite mechanism and the quartet mechanism with the Forces of Freedom and Change - Central Council - the Framework Agreement - to reach understandings that lead to convergence between the outcomes of this agreement and the outcomes of the Cairo Document for Political Consensus.

Urging the Framework Agreement Document group to commit to opening dialogue, whether through the tripartite and quartet mechanism or through a direct channel with all parties, forces, and civil groupings, whatever their position.

Annual conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs on "The repercussions of the war in Ukraine on the Middle East and Egypt"

On February 11, 2023, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs held its annual conference under the slogan "The Repercussions of the War in Ukraine on the Situation in the Middle East and Egypt," with the participation of a number of senior diplomats, experts, and specialists. The conference was opened by Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

The theme of the Conference imposed itself strongly, not only given that the war represented the key geopolitical development in decades, and was the dominant factor in international relations since the beginning of last year, and is likely to continue this year, and perhaps for many years to come, but also because of the geopolitical repercussions this war entails, bringing major powers competition and geopolitical alliances back to the forefront of the global scene, and creating a state of division and severe polarization, which has left many countries, especially developing countries, confused about how to deal with them. As for the geoeconomic repercussions, linked to the unprecedented economic sanctions on Russia due to the war, their direct and indirect effects have extended to include all parts of the globe, causing unprecedented turmoil, chaos, and enormous pressure in the global economy. This "comprehensive economic offensive" against Russia, experts affirm, has revealed an important new reality: the era of inexpensive, risk-free and predictable sanctions has in fact ended.

Accordingly, the Conference addressed three axes: The first tackles the repercussions of the war on the rivalry of the major powers in the region (the United States, Russia, and China), taking into account the absent presence of Europe, as it remained - willingly or forced - part of the American strategy, whether by imposing sanctions on Russian energy exports or part of a broader American move to secure the energy needs of European countries, under the repercussions of the war, especially from the Middle East region. The second axis discussed the repercussions on the Arab countries and neighboring countries (Türkiye, Iran, and Israel), while the third axis shed light on the political, economic, security, and military repercussions of the war on Egypt.

With regard to the first axis, the Conference concluded by emphasizing that the Middle East will remain an important arena for major powers' competition. It may be true to say that each of the three powers does not have the same goals in the region, and that even if Russia or China do not attempt to replace the dominant role of the United States in it, each of them has goals that contradict American interests in it. While the United States is trying to limit its military footprint in the region, China is trying to expand its economic influence without provoking partners or being drawn in militarily. As for Russia, it seeks to enhance its security and economic interests, and thus its global standing, in addition to seeking opportunities to undermine American influence.

Hence, it can be said that many of the moves and goals of the three powers are not similar, taking into account that the moves of each of them can affect the other within the broader framework of major powers competition. It is worth noting that there are many estimates indicating that due to this competition, most of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa are likely to remain in a state of stagnation during 2023, and there are even opportunities for escalation and different scenarios that could spark fighting here and there.

Regarding the axis related to the repercussions of the war on the Arab countries, Türkiye, Iran, and Israel, the Conference noted that there is a strong trend that believes that the escalating competition between the Western alliance led by the United States and the Russia-China axis provides opportunities for the middle powers, in addition to the threats it represents. Perhaps this is clearly evident in the visits of three major powers leaders to the region during the past year (President Biden's visit to Riyadh on July 13-16, 2022, President Putin's visit to Iran on July 19th, and the Chinese President's visit to Riyadh on December 7-9, 2022).

In this context, there is no doubt that the repercussions of the war on the competition of major powers represent an opportunity for the Arab countries, as it provides them with a margin for political maneuvering and a kind of balance in Arab-U.S. relations, which helps reduce the repercussions of any potential shifts in the U.S. policy towards the Middle East during the coming years. The conflicting major powers will have to pay further attention to the viewpoints of the Arab countries, especially if the latter make good use of the cards they have.

On the other hand, as for the three neighboring Arab countries, the war and its repercussions have placed the three countries facing difficult and complex challenges. In this regard, Türkiye sought to exploit the crisis to its advantage as much as possible, enabling it to play sensitive geopolitical roles that were reflected in the Turkish behavior in the region, whether with regard to Syria or Libya. As for Iran, it was the only country that chose to support Russia militarily during the war, which greatly reduced its margin of maneuver and consolidated its position as an original party in the Russia-China axis. This position also had decisive repercussions on the chances of reviving the nuclear agreement signed in 2015.

As for Israel, it initially tried to adopt a neutral position, or so it described it, imposed by considerations related to the Iranian military presence in Syria. However, with time, and especially since the revelation of Iran's involvement in supporting Russia with drones, the Israeli position has shifted sharply with regard to appeasement with Russia, as many Western estimates indicate the presence of Israeli intelligence and military support (defensive weapons) to Ukraine directly or through NATO; in addition, Israel has greatly benefited from the security repercussions of the war, in the form of arms sales to many

European countries, especially Germany, after the war prompted these countries to increase their defense spending.

In connection with the last axis concerning investigating the repercussions of the war on Egypt politically, economically, security-wise and militarily, the participants expressed their satisfaction with Egypt moving forward with its foreign policy based on diversifying options and openness to everyone, which is obvious whether from Egypt's moves towards the three major powers (the United States - Russia - China) or its position in the multilateral framework. It is no secret that Cairo was the first to call for an emergency meeting of the League of Arab States to discuss the Ukrainian crisis, which led to the establishment of an Arab contact group to play a mediation role with the aim of promoting and supporting reaching a political solution to the crisis.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated in his opening speech, Egypt has exerted unremitting efforts to interact at the bilateral and multilateral levels to contain the negative repercussions of the crisis, stressing Egypt's interest in defending the multilateralism, and warning against the consequences of international action by seeking to establish new rules outside of this system.

It is worth noting in this context the recent visit made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow at the beginning of February, and his statements during it, which affirmed Egypt's interests and intertwined relations with various powers, which expressed the entrenchment of this trend in Egyptian foreign policy, despite the enormous pressures it faces, and both Moscow and Washington's understanding of this policy.

On the economic level, the war has greatly contributed to exacerbating the repercussions of the Covid-19 crisis, especially given the significant rise in food and energy prices. It is worth noting here that Egypt refused to employ economic sanctions against Moscow in connection with the war in Ukraine, and the Egyptian government is credited in this regard with having, from the beginning, formed a crisis cell, headed by the Prime Minister, to deal with the economic repercussions of the war, by taking measures and procedures to secure the country's reserves of strategic goods and food needs, including alleviating pressures on the Egyptian economy and citizens with limited income.

On the other hand, the Conference confirmed that there were positive effects of the crisis, represented in multiplying Egyptian exports of liquefied natural gas by almost 100%, according to Bloomberg. This was achieved thanks to persistent efforts to take advantage of the effects of the war on the global energy sector, which served as the main catalyst for positive structural transformations that this sector is expected to witness in the coming years. The focus of these transformations has been mainly the focus of many countries in the developed world on shifting towards clean energy. In this context, Egyptian interests converged with the European Union's efforts to find alternatives to Russian gas and diversify its energy sources, which prompted the Egyptian government to

provide domestic consumption of Egyptian gas and direct it to export, while increasing reliance on renewable energy.

It is important here to point out that, in the context of its diplomacy to deal with the food security crisis, Egypt called from within the United Nations, in September 2022, for launching a global debt swap initiative, and also offered cooperation in establishing an international hub for storing and trading grains on its territories. In his statement before the 77th session of the General Assembly last September, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry drew attention to the “multiplier effects” of what he described as multiple crises in the international reality and their intertwining, most notably “food insecurity,” resulting from the failure of the international community for many years in achieving sustainable development goals, eliminating hunger and achieving food security.

Among the main conclusions of the Conference in this regard was the emphasis that the crisis may serve as an incentive to reduce the volume of Egyptian imports and enhance investment in the agricultural and industrial sectors, including encouraging farmers to grow major crops, diversifying the import markets for wheat and foodstuffs that the Egyptian market needs, and localizing national industries, which is what the Egyptian government has already begun to do.

Finally, from a security and military perspective, the participants concluded some lessons learned from the war so far, including the strategic importance of regular armies, and their continuous modernization, to ensure the strengthening of their capabilities to face the new challenges imposed by modern military and security technology. In this regard, it has been indicated that drones now represent a basic capability for ground forces and an effective tool in modern warfare. Regarding the future of Russia’s role as a major arms supplier to countries in the region, including Egypt, the picture does not seem clear in this regard, although it is logical to say that the protracted war will affect Moscow’s arms exports to its customers in the region.

It should be noted that the Conference attached a priority to the concept of national security. In this regard, energy security, food security, and climate security were referred to as important dimensions within the concept of national security, especially in the context of the challenges imposed by the current global reality.

Roundtable between ECFA and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Cairo on "Egypt and Uzbekistan .. Joint Cooperation Prospects"

On February 18, 2023, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Cairo, in cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, organized a round-table discussion entitled "Egypt and Uzbekistan... Joint Cooperation Prospects," at the St. Regis Hotel, on the sidelines of the visit of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to Egypt, which marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. A number of Uzbek think tanks participated in the meeting: the Institute of Strategic Studies and the Center for Economic Studies, under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Institute of International Relations under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, and the International Institute for Central Asian Studies.

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassador Mansurbek Kilichev, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Cairo. The main session, which was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, was attended by the following participants:

- Mr. Bobur Usmanov, Deputy Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- Mr. Ahmed Al-moslemany, President of the Cairo Center for Strategic Studies.
- Mr. Obid Hakimov, Director of the Center for Economic Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- Counselor Hamdy Abu El-Enein, Undersecretary of the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Daniyar Kurbanov, Director of the Institute of International Relations under the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Major General Hamdy Labib, Vice President of the Dialogue Foundation.
- Mr. Sherzod Fayziyev, Director of the Afghanistan and Iran Unit at the Institute for Central Asian Studies.
- Professor Dr. Ahmed Ragab Rizk - Dean of the Faculty of Archeology at Cairo University.

The speakers discussed Egypt-Uzbek relations from their political, economic and cultural aspects and bilateral cooperation in the field of combating terrorism, extremism and organized crime. ECFA Chairman affirmed that Egypt and Uzbekistan have strong and

distinguished historical and cultural relations, which have witnessed, over the recent years, a strong impetus and a mutual keenness to enhance cooperation in a number of common files, most notably the economic and investment file. He referred to the important visit held by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to Uzbekistan in 2018, which strengthened the path of relations between the two countries and generated a major breakthrough in various fields and at all levels. He also highlighted the convergence of political visions between the two countries' leaders, especially since both leaders attach a high priority to the fields of sustainable development.

On his part, ECFA Director indicated that the two countries do not lack contractual frameworks to advance their bilateral relations towards broader horizons, as there is a joint commission for economic, scientific and technical cooperation established since 1996 and a regular mechanism for political consultation between their two Foreign Ministries. This is in addition to two Egyptian-Uzbek friendship associations; One in Cairo, and the other in Alexandria.

Seminar by Prof. Dr. Gouda Abdel Khaleq Titled “A View of the Economic Situation in Egypt”

On February 23, 2023, ECFA organized a meeting, in which it hosted Professor Dr. Gouda Abdel Khaleq, Professor of Economics at Cairo University, and former Minister of Social Solidarity, to give a lecture entitled “An Overview of the Economic Situation in Egypt.” The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and attended by Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mounir Zahran, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Mohamed Tawfiq, and Ali El-Hefny, and Dr. Hisham Zaazou, as well as a group of experts, academics and researchers concerned with Egyptian internal affairs and developments.

The guest reviewed glimpses of Egypt's history, pointing out that the Egyptian pattern is an open format, in constant interaction with its environment, and it cannot help but be so, especially since Egypt is located at a crossroads between three continents. He added that accumulated challenges have cast a shadow on the Egyptian economy and its activity over the past decades, mainly what several studies have shown that the Egyptian industry has upheld relying on external sources to secure production elements, and even products, while neglecting its domestic sources, and that most of the agricultural output is exported abroad, which means that the Egyptian economy is hollow and weak. The Egyptian economy is still a rentier economy, in addition to the dependency of monetary policy on fiscal policy, growing population growth rates, as well as hot money, estimated at 21 billion dollars in 2022, compared to 19 billion in 2021.

The guest also referred to the Egyptian state's experience in borrowing from the International Monetary Fund, the latest of which was announced on October 22, 2022, with Egypt obtaining a new loan worth \$3 billion, and additional financing of \$1 billion through the “IMF Resilience and Sustainability Trust” that was newly established. He added that the flotation of exchange rate was not a good decision, as the exchange rate dilemma in Egypt is represented in the rise in the foreign component of domestic spending and production, and the state's commitment to liberating hot money, leading to its flight, and from floating in general in light of these structural characteristics, resulting in negative effects on production, on the state's general budget, on inflation, and on income distribution.

In this context, Dr. Abdel Khaleq recommended declaring a “war economy” and implementing a serious austerity program to reduce overall demand, in parallel with taking measures to advance production to increase overall supply, including: reconsidering unnecessary government expenditure and postponing some mega-projects, operating idle factories, introducing a progressive tax rate on income, instead of the value-added tax, in order to achieve justice, reintroducing the tax on profits resulting from stock market transactions, setting a declared ceiling for public debt that cannot be exceeded (debt governance), and promoting mechanisms for facilitating services, combating corruption and bureaucracy at all levels and sectors, setting a maximum limit for increasing the amount of money at a rate equal to the increase in production to ensure monetary stability, and placing restrictions on the movement of hot capital, imposing restrictions on imports in implementation of Egypt’s rights as a member of the World Trade Organization as per the text of Article 12 and Article 18-B of the GATT, which may allow controlling the trade deficit to a lesser extent, issuing new legislation and amending existing laws to achieve efficiency and equity, and amending the exchange rate system by pegging it to a basket of currencies instead of pegging it to the U.S. dollar alone, which is what the Egyptian state has recently begun to do, with the aim of stabilizing the real effective exchange rate.

Seminar by Engineer/ Yehya Zaki on "Suez Canal Economic Zone: Opportunities and Challenges"

On February 27, 2023, ECFA organized a meeting, in which it hosted Consulting Engineer/ Yehya Zaki, former Chairman of the General Authority of the Suez Canal Economic Zone (August 2019 - August 2022), to talk about the topic "The Suez Canal Economic Zone: Opportunities and Challenges." The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, and attended by Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Abdel Moneim Omar, and Dr. Kamal Abu Aqeel.

The guest briefed the participants on the history of the establishment of the Suez Canal Economic Zone, which dates back to the era of the late Prime Minister Kamal El-Ganzouri, following his visit, along with a number of Egyptian businessmen and investors, to a Chinese city at the beginning of this century, which has a huge industrial zone which helped attract investors to it, and greatly contributed to supporting the advancement of the Chinese economy. In this context, the Economic Zones Law was issued in Egypt (No. 83 of 2002), which is considered the best economic zones law in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The political leadership worked to maximize the importance and investment in the Suez Canal region in 2014, after the state of turmoil that the country witnessed between 2011 and 2013. A study was prepared on the Suez Canal Economic Zone and was completed before the summer of 2015, which resulted in the amendment of the aforementioned law and the issuance of Law No. 71 of 2015, for which an executive regulation was issued regulating its implementation and application.

The guest added that the capabilities, capacities, infrastructure, and network of facilities that the Suez Canal Economic Zone currently enjoys qualify it to attract additional diverse investments, as well as the integration of industrial zones with the sea ports included in the economic zone, which has contributed to facilitating trade internally and externally. In this context, he called for the need to resolve legislative and executive clashes between the institutions concerned so as to achieve the highest possible efficiency and benefit by the Economic zone to the Egyptian economy.

ECFA joint workshop with the Future Center for Advanced Research and Studies on "Strategic Transformations in Asia and their Impact on the Arabian Gulf Region"

On March 1, 2023, ECFA held a joint workshop with the Future Center for Advanced Research and Studies on "Strategic Transformations in Asia and their Impact on the Arabian Gulf Region," in which representatives of both institutions participated. In this regard, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, indicated that at the heart of the transformations in Asia is certainly the continued rise of China and American fears of taking its place as the first power in the world. There is no doubt that whenever the problems of U.S.-China relations are wisely managed, or solutions are found for them or even working to alleviate them, all of this will be in the interest of other states, whether developing or developed, including Gulf states, evidently.

He added that there is a significant list of global problems and issues that the United States and China can cooperate on; even regarding the war in Ukraine, and the Western criticism directed at China for its refusal so far to oppose the war, a significant current believes that China believes that the war is a mistake for Russia, and that with some diplomatic effort, its "neutral" position can be transformed to be constructive. In connection with the rise of China and America's competition with it, it is noted that dealing with China has become the top foreign policy consideration of the major powers, and even of almost every country. The economies of many countries rise or fall in tune with Beijing's purchasing powers and tastes. From a Western perspective, China's strategic openness and expansion extends beyond defending core Chinese interests, while the Belt and Road Initiative is being evaluated as a reflection of Beijing's global ambitions. In this context, the U.S. military strategy is being focused in the Indo-Pacific region, and it has sought to strengthen its relations with the so-called Quad countries, and to encourage the Europeans to have a naval presence in the operations' scene. As for intelligence agencies, they focus on China's "cyber" activities, and on coming up with a better understanding of China's decision-making mechanism and goals. However, these military, intelligence, and diplomatic efforts have not yet been coupled with a clear strategy that can attract friends and compete with a state like China, which is the leading trading partner for every country in the region.

As for the Arabian Gulf region, there is no doubt that the major powers' competition had a significant impact on Iran's position in the region, which has become very close to

Russia and China. There is no doubt that Iran's acceptance as a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Samarkand, and its participation in the 2023 summit - hosted by India - is clear evidence of this. Evidently, the war in Ukraine led to a kind of “trusted defense partnership” between Moscow and Tehran. On the other hand, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Emirates have been accepted as dialogue partners in the organization, and this will enhance the ability of these countries to create a balance between their relations with the United States on the one hand and with both China and Russia on the other hand, and it also enables them to achieve significant economic benefits with economic cooperation dialogue with Central Asian countries rich in energy resources, bringing its states together with the Gulf Cooperation Council states in a strategic dialogue, launched from Riyadh on September 7, 2022, includes cooperation in all areas of common interest, in addition to bilateral cooperation frameworks.

There is no doubt that the trends of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its vision for political and economic governance are consistent with the Gulf vision, which is an additional consideration for greater openness and cooperation with the organization. On the other hand, regardless of the transformations in Asia, the adoption of a realistic policy by the Gulf states, and the countries of the Arab region in general, that intersects with the principles of political and economic governance on which Chinese policy is based, all of which greatly benefited China and the Arab world alike. The Gulf states and other states in the region have found in China, and in other leading economies in Asia such as India, Japan and South Korea, reliable partners who can help achieve their ambitions within the framework of the comprehensive development plans of many countries. Most Arab countries today raise slogans such as localizing industry, even defense industries, ensuring technology transfer, and many others through the policy of heading east. The Gulf states and Arab states in general also supported China’s position in connection with the Uyghurs community against Western criticism, and also supported Beijing’s narrative of countering terrorism and religious extremism in Xinjiang Province.

Symposium by Ambassador Youssef Zadeh on “The Roots of the Conflict in Ukraine and the West’s Role in Fueling It”

On March 7, 2023, ECFA organized a symposium, in which it hosted Ambassador Youssef Zadeh, the former Egyptian ambassador to Ukraine, to talk about “the roots of the conflict in Ukraine and the West’s role in fueling it.” The symposium was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassadors: Mounir Zahran, Ezzat Saad, Mohamed Tawfiq, Abdel Moneim Omar, Farouk Mabrouk, Reda Al Taifi, Salah Halima, and Mohamed El Ashmawy, in addition to Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal, and Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry.

Ambassador Zadeh reviewed the history of relations between Moscow and Kiev, and how the latter was the origin of the current Russian state, adding that a trend prevailed in modern Ukrainian history, which is the need for the country’s regime to be loyal to the West, otherwise a revolution will take place, which is what actually happened in the 2004 and 2014 revolutions. This trend has increased Russian concerns regarding developments in Ukraine, and that this would endanger Russian national security, especially in case Ukraine joined NATO, as this would lead to deploying NATO missiles on its territory, which would directly threaten Russian territory, due to its close proximity of it. He added that Russia also intervened to protect the population in eastern Ukraine, who were subjected to persecution and various racist practices by the Kiev government, most of whom, by the way, are of Russian origins and tendencies.

In this context, Ambassador Zadeh indicated that the West is strongly contributing to fueling the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, thus prolonging the war, as it provides all forms of support to Ukraine, politically, militarily, and economically, and this may lead to an unexpected and grave escalation in the course of the war. He also referred to the role of U.S. Under Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, in particular, in convincing the current U.S. administration which is guiding all of Europe at this critical historical stage, to continue the crisis and support Ukraine in this regard.

Joint seminar between ECFA and the Embassy of Belarus about an article by the late Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir V. Makei on “The International Order and Its Challenges”

On March 15, 2023, ECFA held a joint seminar with one of the Belarusian think tanks, in the presence of the Ambassador of Belarus to Cairo at ECFA’s headquarters, to discuss an article by the late Belarusian Foreign Minister, Vladimir V. Makei, about the so-called “liberal international order from a Western perspective - Liberal International Order: Can it be saved in Today's Non–Hegemonic World?”, which was published in the journal: *Russia in Global Affairs*, January – March 2023 issue. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Ambassador Mohamed Tawfiq, Ambassador Alaa Al-Hadidi, and Dr. Mona Khalil, participated on behalf of ECFA.

According to the author, the West's interest in this issue is mainly due to the rise of China, which is inevitable, in his opinion, and the increasingly decline of the United States. Here China is seen as a long-term threat to the liberal order and U.S. values and interests. This is versus “an authoritarian international order in the making.” But he adds that the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, Britain’s exit from the European Union, mass migration from the Middle East to Europe, and growing populism and right-wing nationalism in some Western European countries, all of this has put the future of the international liberal order in doubt.

The late author concludes that the world is a very diverse place; Therefore, the international order must reflect this diversity. In this context, he proposes in his article that the United Nations formulate a charter for global diversity in the twenty-first century, so that all member states in a concerted manner are able to establish some basic principles for managing international relations in a non-hegemonic manner that respects the very diverse world, which is what the participants called for.

Seminar on "UN Secretary-General António Guterres' vision on the New Agenda For Peace"

On March 19, 2023, and at the invitation of Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem, Rapporteur of ECFA's Permanent Committee on the United Nations, ECFA held a meeting, in which it hosted Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Idris, former Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York, and member of the Advisory Group to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Peacebuilding Fund, to speak about "the vision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, on the New Agenda for Peace and his efforts to crystallize it," which is the agenda that the Secretary-General had presented on the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, in 2020, under the slogan "Our Common Agenda." A number of ECFA members participated in the meeting, including Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mohamed Anis Salem, Mohamed Tawfiq, Mohamed El-Ashmawy, and Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal.

Ambassador Idris indicated that the New Agenda for Peace represents a revival of the peace agenda put forward by the former United Nations Secretary-General, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992, but international circumstances changed - for the worse - to a large extent; as the geopolitical differences between the major powers have severely increased, as have the challenges related to the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, terrorism, extremism, wars, conflicts, cyber competition, nuclear proliferation, climate change, and ways to achieve sustainable development...etc.

The Secretary-General's report in this regard entitled "Our Common Plan: Addressing Current and Future Challenges" was issued in September 2021; in which he affirmed that international cooperation is more needed than ever but also harder to achieve. Hence, the report addressed the requirements needed to strengthen international cooperation during this century, to address the challenges mentioned previously, while emphasizing that this cooperation should be comprehensive and multi-faceted, and not limited to the security dimension only, and that it should address the root causes associated with these challenges and difficulties, without being merely limited to its symptoms.

Joint Seminar between ECFA & Kemet Boutros Ghali Foundation for Peace and Knowledge on “China in a Changing World”

On March 21, 2023, ECFA, in cooperation with the Kemet Boutros Ghali Foundation for Peace and Knowledge, held a seminar entitled “China in a Changing World” at the Egyptian Diplomatic Club, attended by a number of diplomats, experts and researchers. The participants agreed that, in fact, the rise of China, the continuation of this rise, and American concerns that China would take its place as the world’s primary power is the essence of the transformations in Asia and the entire world, which are increasingly shaped by the competition between the United States and China. Each party seeks to maximize its interests and mobilize allies and partners, especially by the United States, to enhance power and influence against the other party’s power and influence, which means further competition and polarization. Hence, states seek to maintain a kind of balance, as much as possible, towards these two superpowers. This requires the ability to maneuver and employ the necessary cards and tools that would create common interests with each of them, thus protecting each party from the potential pressures expected to be exerted by either of them.

Some have pointed out that the strategic competition between the United States and China has two dimensions: a regional dimension and a global one. The regional competition includes each country increasing its intervention capabilities and military options in the East Asia region and beyond. The conflict between the two countries is evident in its regional dimension, especially in the western Pacific Ocean and the sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region. In this context, there is a widespread belief in the United States that China intends to create an exclusive maritime zone of influence in the South China Sea. Hence the announcement of the Trilateral Security Partnership (Australia-US-United Kingdom AUKUS, announced on September 15, 2021).

As for the competition in its global dimension, it is due to the conviction of the U.S. administrations, since Obama’s until present, that any gains in China’s influence must come at the expense of the United States. Hence Washington's view of Chinese initiatives, represented mainly by the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative, as a reflection of Beijing's global ambitions, and an expression that its national interests are in every corner of the world, and that Chinese openness and strategic expansion exceeds defending core Chinese interests. It is noteworthy in this regard that President Xi Jinping's goals are linked to a diplomatic

mentality that is highly sensitive to anything that China considers an attack on its national pride, and that this diplomatic stance, which is called the "Wolf warrior diplomacy," makes Chinese officials alert to any insult or criticism of China.

Some American writers have argued that the United States' strategic competition with China is capable of developing to serve as "the governing principle of U.S. economic, foreign, and security policies." There is also a widespread conviction that Washington is increasingly looking at all of its international relations through "China's prism", including its relations with Europe. The Biden administration can be expected to increase pressure on U.S. allies to take a position in the intense China-U.S. conflict, and to join the U.S. in balancing against China by restricting China's access to advanced technologies and monitoring Chinese foreign investments.

ECFA's commemoration of the centenary of the late Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid - Former Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States

On March 22, 2023, ECFA commemorated the centenary of Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid (1923 - 2023), former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to honor him and in recognition of the great contributions he made in the service of his cherished country and the Arab nation. A number of diplomats, academics and public figures participated in this commemoration, who were brought together while working closely with the late minister by diplomatic missions or situations, including Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Mustafa Al-Fiqi, Dr. Ali El-Din Hilal, Dr. Mufid Shehab, Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Abdel Moneim Omar, Farouk Mabrouk, Sayed Shalaby, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Mohamed Mounir, Mohamed Al-Darghami, Hussein Hassouna, and Mr. Atef Al-Ghamri, in the presence of some of his family members.

The participants discussed various aspects of the deceased's life, noting that he was one of the pioneers of calm and firm Egyptian diplomacy, and that his diplomatic career was associated with the nation's major causes in foreign policy and diplomacy. He began his diplomatic career by negotiating the agreement on British evacuation from Egypt in 1954, then negotiating the return of diplomatic relations between Egypt and France in 1957 after they had been cut off following the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956. These experiences qualified him to chair Egypt's permanent delegation to the United Nations at a delicate period in the history of the Egyptian state and its foreign policy, for a period of 12 years (1972-1983). That period during which he was appointed to manage what was known as the Mena House negotiations to follow up on the Camp David Accords, during which the firm side of his personality appeared, alongside his calm diplomacy.

It was also noted that Dr. Esmat Abdel Meguid, during his tenure as the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the one who coined the term development diplomacy. He wanted to harness the peace that Egypt had achieved after decades of wars to direct energies towards development, and he requested that the relevant ministries and agencies in the field of development be invited to this conference. He also directed Egypt's embassies abroad to build Egypt's foreign relations in a manner that serves the development process in Egypt. In fact, since the launch of this concept, Egyptian diplomatic activities have revolved around making Egypt's development goals, including trade, investment, technology, and tourism, on the national agenda of the Egyptian embassies. Hence, the name of Dr. Esmat Abdel Meguid is worth remaining prominent among the notable Egyptian diplomats, and for his biography to remain a model for future generations of Egyptian diplomacy to aspire to.

Roundtable discussion on the “Assessment of the initiative of Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily the UN Envoy on Libya”

On March 29, 2023, ECFA held a closed roundtable dialogue, in which it hosted Ambassador Ahmed Abdel Meguid, Director of the Libya Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding the initiative recently launched by Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, the United Nations Envoy, to hold presidential and parliamentary elections this summer, evaluate it, and identify the positions of the Libyan parties, as well as the regional and international powers regarding it, and chances of its success, and the prospects for the future. The meeting was moderated by Ambassador Mohamed Badr El-Din Zayed, Rapporteur of ECFA’s Permanent Committee on Arab Affairs, while Ambassadors Marwan Badr, Mohamed El-Ashmawy, Mohamed Tawfiq, Salah Halima, Mohamed Anis Salem, and Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, participated in it.

Ambassador Abdel Meguid gave a comprehensive presentation of the developments on the Libyan scene, the new international initiative, its circumstances, and the initial reactions, explaining the motives for Egyptian reservations regarding this initiative and the elements of its many shortcomings, and its attempt to marginalize the Libyan House of Representatives, the legislative and legitimate institution concerned with approving special legal instruments regarding the proposed initiatives and agreements. The initiative also contains disregard and ambiguity regarding one of the most dangerous dimensions of the crisis, which is the spread of weapons in the Libyan territories, and the presence of foreign mercenaries and armed militias, which have a significant negative impact on the security situation in Libya, and contribute to the complexity of reaching a political settlement there.

We observe that the positions of Western countries in support of this initiative, as shown at the meeting of the International Contact Group on Libya, hosted by Washington, D.C. on February 23, 2023, with the participation of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, and officials from Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Qatar, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Britain - comes in the context of its plans to besiege Russian influence in the entire African continent, and remove Russian Wagner mercenaries from the Sahel and Sahara and from Libyan territories, especially in light of the repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, in order to prevent Russia from opening a new front in the south of the European continent in the soft underbelly of NATO led by the United States. This is also consistent with Washington identifying some military targets in southern Libya, such as in Fezzan and Murzuq, with the aim of liberating some of the main communication points where Haftar and Wagner’s forces are stationed, and which are located between Libya and the countries of the Sahel and Sahara region.

Symposium on "Egypt - Turkey Relations .. Opportunities and Challenges"

On April 3, 2023, ECFA held a symposium on “Egypt-Turkey relations... opportunities and challenges,” against the backdrop of recent rapprochement steps between the two sides, the most recent of which was the visit of Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Foreign Minister of Turkey, to Egypt last March. The list of speakers included Ambassador Abdel Rahman Salah, ECFA Member and former Egyptian Ambassador to Turkey, Ambassador Mohamed Zaazou, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for East and South Europe Affairs, Ms. Minister Plenipotentiary Marwa Farghaly, Head of the Egyptian Commercial Representation Office in Turkey, and Mr. Mohamed Kassem, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Exporters Association, and rapporteur of ECFA’s Economic Affairs Committee. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, and a number of ambassadors, academics and researchers participated in it, including Ambassadors: Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mohamed Anis Salem, Wafaa Al-Hadidi, Salama Shaker, Mohamed Idris, Rakha Hassan, Salah Halima, Abdel Moneim Omar, Hisham Zadeh, Mohamed Al-Dorghami, Dr. Sadiq Abdel-Al, and Dr. Diaa Helmy.

The meeting tackled what happened during the aforementioned visit of the Turkish minister, the desire of both sides to restore relations at the ambassadorial level, and coordinate to hold a summit between the two presidents, in light of the political will and directives by both President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, when they met in Doha, in November 2021, on the sidelines of their attendance of the opening ceremony of the World Cup, to launch the path to reaching full normalization of relations following exploratory rounds, accompanied by several positive developments over the past years, including Turkey’s clear determination to settle its differences with Arab countries, such as the Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

The meeting also discussed opportunities to enhance relations between the two sides, especially at the level of investments and trade, given that Turkish investors enjoy a significant presence inside Egypt, especially in the textile and ready-made clothing sector. This is in addition to reviving tourism and cultural paths and strengthening people’s diplomacy between the Egyptian and Turkish peoples. On the other hand, the participants pointed out the importance of coordination with the Turkish side to promote a peaceful settlement in some pressing Arab issues, such as the Syrian and Libyan crises, in addition to working towards adopting steps that would enhance confidence between the two sides, to move forward with bilateral cooperation towards greater and broader horizons.

Seminar on the "African Peer Review Mechanism"

ECFA organized a seminar on April 11, 2023, during which Ambassador Ali El-Hefny, ECFA Secretary-General, delivered an overview on the "African Peer Review Mechanism" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its establishment. A number of ECFA members participated in the meeting, including Ambassadors Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mounir Zahran, Salah Halima, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed El-Dorghamy, and Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal.

Ambassador El-Hefny indicated that the mechanism was established in March 2003, with the aim of achieving integration and regional cooperation, exchanging experiences and information, and achieving best practices at the level of the African continent, and that its 20th anniversary will be celebrated next May. He added that the mechanism started relatively small and expanded over time, until the number of its members currently reached 43 countries out of a total of 55 member states of the African Union. The Comoros, which currently chairs the Union, was the last country to join the mechanism. The Mechanism has also become one of the Union's institutions, and has conducted reviews in the field of governance in 26 member states in six priority areas. It also has close cooperation links with other AU institutions, such as the AU Peace and Security Council and the Panel of the Wise.

The mechanism is distinguished by its purely African character, given that all its members and staff are of diverse African nationalities, and there is no foreign representative or expert in it. This in itself is considered a strong impetus on the path towards enhancing joint cooperation and mutual trust between African countries, and is also evidence of the extent of awareness of African identity, and the potentials and capabilities it entails and upon which we can rely and maximize, thus contributing to achieving African common good. The mechanism is also characterized by its voluntary nature, as it exercises its functions only in countries that have voluntarily accepted it, while these member states adhere to the outcomes of the mechanism, voluntarily and morally.

It is worth noting that the reports issued by the mechanism, which are characterized by a great deal of efficiency and quality, are carried out independently and directly, without interference from the authorities of any member state of the mechanism, and this is one of the additional features that characterize the mechanism.

Launching Ceremony of the Exchange Mechanism between ECFA and the Chinese Embassy in Cairo

Within the framework of cooperation between ECFA and the Embassy of China in Cairo, the exchange mechanism between the two sides was launched, in a ceremony at the embassy headquarters on April 18, 2023. The first joint event was also held within the framework of this mechanism, under the slogan “Advancing the building of the China-Arab community with a shared future by benefiting from Chinese-style modernization”. Ten persons from the Chinese side participated in this important event, led by China’s Ambassador to Cairo, Mr. Liao Liqiang, Minister Plenipotentiary, Zhang Tao, Minister and Advisor for Economic and Commercial Affairs, Zhou Zhengcheng, and Minister and Advisor for Political Affairs, Zhao Liang. ECFA delegation included Ambassadors Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Magdy Amer, Abdel Fattah Ezz El-Din, Salah Halima, Ali El-Hefny, Mohamed Badr El-Din Zayed, Dr. Diaa Helmy, and the businessman, Mohamed Qassem.

Both the Chinese Ambassador and ECFA Chairman delivered an opening speech, in which they praised the extent of the progress of bilateral relations between Egypt and China, and the keenness of the two countries to enhance this positive trend in all fields, in parallel with strengthening the China-Arab cooperation frameworks and advancing them towards broader horizons, while benefiting from the "Chinese Path to Modernization" put forward at the twentieth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which was successfully held in October 2022, and which is a distinguished product of the ancient Chinese civilization extending for more than five thousand years, and which includes unique and inspiring characteristics, which addressed the concerns of developing countries, and expressed their aspirations sincerely, not least the achievement of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and its call to respect the history and traditions of various countries, which are equal in principle, regardless of their size, and also to respect their own choices and visions in development paths and modernization models, without dependence or imposition of conditions from abroad, and consistently with the interests of the peoples of these countries, with their various sects and ethnicities, which differs from the conditional Western-style development path.

In this context, the general debate session included an exchange of visions about the inspirations and opportunities that the Chinese modernization theory can offer to Egypt and the Arab countries, as well as Chinese mediation in reaching an agreement to resume

diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran on March 10, 2023, which revealed a deep Chinese understanding and awareness of regional issues, including Beijing's ability to deal with hot and sensitive issues in the region, the region's vision of China's role and influences, and regional issues in which it can play a greater role, including regional and international issues in which cooperation between Egypt and China can be strengthened. This is in addition to the region's vision of the United States' role and the extent of its presence, including what adjustments the United States can make to its policy in the region, in light of the increasing Chinese role there. Finally, the latest developments in the situation in Sudan, and the available ways to address them.

Seminar on "Developments of the Situation in the Sudan"

On May 2, 2023, ECFA held a seminar on the latest developments in the situation in the Sudan, against the backdrop of the armed confrontation between the Sudanese army and Rapid Support elements. Ambassadors Salah Halima and Mohamed Badr El-Din Zayed, Dr. Sayed Fleifel, and Dr. Heba Gamal El-Din spoke during the event, while it was moderated by Ambassador Marwan Badr, Rapporteur of the ECFA's Permanent Committee on African Affairs, in the presence of a number of ambassadors, academics and researchers, including ambassadors: Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Wafaa Bassim, Mounir Zahran, Rakha Hassan, Hisham Zadeh, Mohamed Al-Darghami, Mohamed Abdel Moneim Al-Shazly, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Mona Omar, Farouk Mabrouk, Hisham Al-Zemaity, and Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal, Dr. Yousry Abou Shady.

The participants expressed their regret for what is happening in sisterly Sudan, and discussed future scenarios for these developments, including the specter of partition, as some pointed out that there are quite a few studies, mainly Western, that propose some solutions, all of them being very dark, such as the right to self-determination, followed by the choice among self-rule, federalism, or confederation, reaching the point of re-demarcation of political borders, and the consequent end of the nation-state. There is no doubt that the current stage that Sudan is going through reveals extreme weakness, which would pave the way for such scenarios, especially in light of the internal differences among the Sudanese factions.

In this regard, the participants recommended the following: Commitment to emphasizing the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan and the situation consensually reached with the consent of the Sudanese people, and non-interference in its internal affairs. Commitment to integrating the Rapid Support Militia into the armed forces (in the police / in the civil sectors / or demobilization with financial support), merging or dissolving any other militias, and removing any foreign militias (Wagner), while supporting and preserving the national military institution, and carrying out security and military reforms in its regard. A ceasefire, and ending the war with the withdrawal of the Rapid Support Forces to gathering centers outside the capital, and the presence of the military and security institutions in their original centers and locations. Deploying civilian observers to monitor the ceasefire, as well as the cessation of hostilities, and opening and securing humanitarian corridors, whether to provide humanitarian aid or to repair and modernize the medical infrastructure and vital facilities in the capital, in preparation for the rebuilding and reconstruction phase.

They also urged the Sudanese side to develop the political process within the framework of a comprehensive Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue inclusive of all political forces and parties, and to move towards resuming the political process provided that the framework agreement is reformed and modernized by: expanding the scope of civil participation by including the democratic bloc, the forces which expressed reservation, and the other forces who expressed rejection, especially since the reasons for reservation and rejection no longer exist following these developments, and expanding participation in the tripartite and quartet mechanisms.

Symposium on “United Nations Special Envoys... Appointment, Tasks and Effectiveness of their Roles”

On May 9, 2023, ECFA organized a symposium on the theme “United Nations Special Envoys... Appointment, Tasks and Effectiveness of their Roles,” in which Ambassador Ramzy Ezzedine Ramzy, former First Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, delivered a speech. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and moderated by Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem, Rapporteur of the Permanent ECFA’s Committee on the United Nations, and attended by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Youssef Zadeh, Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal, and Dr. Yousry Abou Shady.

Ambassador Ramzy indicated that there are many designations given to whoever is chosen to perform a specific role on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, most notably the special envoy, the special representative, the personal envoy, the special coordinator, and the special advisor. These designations are often linked to decisions issued by the Security Council, the General Assembly, or by the Secretary-General based on Articles 98 and 99 of the United Nations Charter, which give the Secretary-General the authority to play a role in resolving armed conflicts by peaceful means, through what he deems appropriate. While the fields of work of these individuals vary, according to the needs; whether political, military, environmental, economic, or humanitarian...etc.

Regarding the appointment process, it is noteworthy that the Secretary-General is the one who makes the decision to appoint someone as his special envoy, provided that this is preceded by a consultation process with the Security Council, including the five permanent member states, as well as with the concerned states parties such as Syria, for example, in the case of the Special Envoy for Syria. There may be a special envoy from heads of state, heads of government, ambassadors, or United Nations employees known for their competence and experience. Regarding the method and mechanism of work, the personal envoy deals with all parties concerned with the conflict, whatever they might be, directly, and also communicates with the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as some relevant units and agencies within the Organization, such as the Department of Peace Operations, the political, financial and administrative units, as well as the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, etc., as required by the tasks of each individual case.

The Special Envoy presents reports to the Security Council orally, during public or closed sessions. It is assumed that there will be interaction and discussions regarding these reports and their results. The UN Secretary-General, in turn, drafts corresponding reports and submits them to the General Assembly and the Security Council. Finally, ECFA recommended that there be a special representative of the Secretary-General for epidemics, especially at this time in which pandemics and diseases are spreading.

Seminar entitled “Are We Witnessing the Emergence of a New Global Order?”

On May 23, 2023, ECFA hosted an event entitled “Are we witnessing the emergence of a new global order?”, in which Ambassador Mohamed El-Badry, Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs, spoke. The meeting was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem, Rapporteur of ECFA’s Standing Committee on the United Nations, while a number of ECFA members, academics and researchers attended, including Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mounir Zahran, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed El-Ashmawy, Magued Refaat, and Wafaa Basim, Ahmed Zein, Ali El-Hefny, Dr. Sadiq Abdel-Aal, and Prof. Mohamed Kassem.

Ambassador El-Badry gave a general overview of the stages of the rise and fall of empires and major powers throughout history, and its association with the shape of the global order and the type of polarity that exists in it, starting with the empire established by Alexander the Great, which formed the first unipolar system on the global scene, and ending with U.S. unipolarity immediately after the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late last century.

The guest also noted that, following World War II, the global order gradually began to witness a complex type of interconnection and intertwining among international actors, in which technological revolutions and globalization played a major role, which led to the emergence of the highest level of interdependence in the history of humanity and international relations, in addition to the hierarchy of the global order, and the spread of cross-border, for-profit multinational investments and companies in various countries around the world. This is in addition to the continuation of the conventional, and even nuclear, arms race on the international scene.

In light of the speculation that is echoing about the emergence of a new multipolar global order, and based on in-depth analysis of many relevant statistics, Ambassador El-Badry indicated that the analysis of the current polarity refers to the United States, China, the Eurozone, and Germany, adding that the world is facing a new global order with unprecedented dynamism and known direction, but unknown results.

Joint roundtable dialogue between ECFA and the Chinese Embassy in Cairo on "Investing for Exportation"

In the framework of ECFA's interest in contributing to the efforts aimed at finding solutions to the difficulties currently facing the Egyptian economy, including the need to develop exports and examining related obstacles and challenges, ECFA organized an event on May 31, 2023, in cooperation with the Chinese Embassy in Cairo, under the slogan "Investing for Exportation", which was attended from the Egyptian side by: Mr. Hossam Heiba, CEO of the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI), and representative of the Egyptian Commercial Service at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Mr. Mohamed Kassem, Coordinator of the Economic Committee at the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Egyptian Exporters Association, and from the Chinese side, by Mr. Zhou Zhencheng, minister counselor of the economic and commercial office at the Chinese Embassy in Cairo and his assistants, and Mr. Zhao Liang, Minister Counselor and his assistants, in addition to a number of experts and ambassadors who are ECFA members.

The symposium addressed three main axes, the first of which is Investing for Exportation, which requires increasing production that is compatible with international levels and standards, technically and environmentally, which cannot be achieved without a significant increase in investments, especially foreign ones, as export is achieved through production, and the latter is achieved through investment. In this regard, it was agreed that the problems witnessed at the level of global production chains due to the "Covid-19 pandemic" and geopolitical tensions could provide opportunities for Egypt to become a new – and indispensable – attractive region for international investors from the main markets in Europe and the United States.

This requires keenness on formulating a vision for the future of Egyptian exports by investing in industrial and agricultural production for exportation in the first place. In this context, the Egyptian side presented in detail the additional benefits and facilities approved by the Supreme Council for Investment during its recent meeting chaired by the President of the Republic, which was welcomed by the Chinese side, stressing its keenness on promoting these benefits and facilities within Chinese business and financial circles. On the other hand, the Chinese side hailed the recent visit held by the Chairman of the Suez Canal Economic Zone to China, describing it as successful, and that he had already received pledges of additional Chinese investments in the region.

As for the second axis, it tackled Egypt's participation in the Shanghai International Exhibition, organized annually by China for the purpose of encouraging developing countries to display their products of various goods and market their exports within China. Egypt was chosen to be the guest of honor of the first exhibition in this regard in 2018, with the participation of 172 countries and regions, more than 3,800 companies, and more than 400,000 Chinese and international buyers. On his part, Mr. Hossam Heiba, GAFI CEO, announced that he will visit China soon to promote investments in Egypt and urge Chinese companies to operate in Egypt.

The third axis addressed means to benefit from the unique Chinese experience in the field of export development by discussing some ideas, such as establishing a national export academy, which provides Egyptian exporters with advice and technical assistance to enhance exports to various countries of the world. The Chinese side has shown special interest in this idea, namely through organizing training and educational courses to develop Egyptian capabilities in this regard, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the symposium addressed the challenge of the lack of foreign currency, its repercussions on the production process and chances to attract foreign investments, as well as the necessity of working to solve this problem in a manner that facilitates the work of companies operating in Egypt.

Seminar on the “Outcomes of the Meetings of the BRICS Ministerial Conference and Opportunities to expand the Group’s Membership in Light of Global Challenges”

On June 7, 2023, ECFA held a meeting on “The outcomes of the meetings of the BRICS Ministerial Conference and opportunities to expand the Group’s membership in light of global challenges,” in which Ambassador Ali El-Hefny, the Rapporteur of ECFA’s Standing Committee on Asian Affairs and Secretary-General, spoke. A number of ECFA members participated in the meeting, including Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Mounir Zahran, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed Al-Dorghamy, Abdel Moneim Omar, Atef Sayed Al-Ahl, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Magued Refaat, Adel Al-Salousi, Hisham El-Zimaity, and Dr. Diaa Helmy.

Ambassador El-Hefny pointed out that in light of the debate taking place at the regional and international levels recently regarding the growing challenges in the international community, the escalation of crises, and the lack of international consensus regarding many of the situations that followed World War II, whether in terms of political, economic, financial or monetary situations. Many theses have been put forward regarding the United States’ hegemony, and the possibility of the continuation of the unipolar order that actually began in the 1990s, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and new features began to loom on the horizon at the global level with the rise of the People’s Republic of China, and the emergence of promising international economic blocs such as the BRICS founded by China, Russia, India, and Brazil, and then South Africa joining it.

The global situation has recently been characterized by a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty, especially in the wake of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian military operation in Ukraine, and the tremendous pressure this has led to on the global economy, including major powers and developing countries alike. All of this included many questions raised regarding the position of the BRICS, as its ministerial meeting was recently held in South Africa, in preparation for the Group’s summit meeting in August 2023 in Cape Town. It is worth noting that the upcoming summit will discuss existing requests from 19 countries that have expressed their desire to join the Group, with a view to establishing a legitimate economic bloc to confront the current challenges and crises, and looking forward to a new, more just world, in which the lost balance will be restored, away from hegemony, control and dictates, especially since the BRICS now includes five countries that together represent 43% of the Earth’s population, and with a GDP that has recently surpassed that of the G7.

In this context, Ambassador El-Hefny presented his vision and assessment of the possibility for new members to join the BRICS, affirmed the necessity for the five countries to agree regarding the joining of any new country, and this is an uncertain matter in the case of some countries due to several considerations related to the economic situation of the countries wishing to join, and the minimum possible level of stability for their economies, and whose economic crises represent burdens that the BRICS founding countries do not wish to bear at the present time, indicating at the same time that the countries of the group may be tempted by the issue of strengthening their structure in order to maximize their position on the international stage.

Symposium on "Egypt and Illegal Immigration .. Challenges and Mechanisms to Combat It"

On June 12, 2023, ECFA held a symposium entitled "Egypt and Illegal Immigration... Challenges and Mechanisms to combat it," in which Ambassador Mohamed El-Dorghamy, member of ECFA Board of Directors and Rapporteur of the Permanent Committee for Immigration Affairs and Egyptians Abroad, spoke, and Ambassadors Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Ali El-Hefny, Farouk Mabrouk, Magued Refaat, Salah Halima, Youssef Zadeh, Abdel Moneim Omar, and Prof. Dr. Sadiq Abdel-Aal participated in it.

Ambassador El-Dorghamy indicated that Egypt is considered one of the countries with a long-standing experience in the field of combating illegal immigration, and has been, since ancient times, and still is, a major crossing point between the East and the West thanks to its unique and distinct geographical location. Therefore, it is a receiving country, a transit country, and an exporter of immigration, at the same time. It was a destination by many direct and indirect neighboring countries, especially Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Chad, Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and others. On the other hand, the Egyptian presence outside the borders is estimated at 10-12 million Egyptians, whether permanent residents or temporary immigrants, which is of relative importance to Egypt. It represents a strong Egyptian human presence in various locations and jobs in diaspora countries and places of expatriation. This presence also has a financial return that has its weight in the Egyptian balance of payments, as remittances from Egyptians abroad amount to more than USD 30 billion annually. In a related context, there is a significant number of illegal Egyptian immigrants, estimated at about 2-3 million individuals.

At the internal level, there are about 6-8 million immigrants and refugees living in Egypt, and enjoying all basic services, as the refugee or resident enjoys freedom of movement within the Egyptian territory, in light of the state's adoption of a policy based on not establishing refugee camps. The health insurance system also covers foreigners and refugees who also benefit from various health campaigns, most notably the 100 Million Healthy Lives' campaign and others. In addition, there are about 75,000 students who benefit from educational services and the right to attend public schools, without distinction between refugees accredited by the United Nations or those residing with no asylum requests.

Egypt has largely managed to curb illegal immigration flows, by controlling land and sea borders, enacting laws that limit illegal immigration operations, and impose penalties on smuggling gangs. The beginning of serious action by countries was the launch of the first national strategy to combat illegal immigration (2016-2026). Moreover, the issuance of Law No. 82 of 2016, with its executive regulations specifying the steps that must be taken, including the establishment of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons. In this context, Egypt has signed many cooperation agreements with the European Union and at the bilateral level with the Italian, German, Greek and other governments. In this context, it must be asserted that security dealing alone is not sufficient to overcome or limit the phenomenon of illegal immigration, and that a serious, integrated approach must be adopted that seeks to address the economic, social and political root causes that led to the growth of this phenomenon which helps to confront it more effectively.

“India Foundation – West Asia and North Africa (WANA)” Conference “Reconnecting Roots for Shared Prosperity” at ECFA

Over two days, June 17 and 18, 2023, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted the first edition of the “India Foundation – West Asia and North Africa (WANA)” conference, under the slogan “Reconnecting Roots for Shared Prosperity”, based on a proposal submitted by the India Foundation, affiliated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, in order to hold consultations with ECFA and a number of Arab researchers on regional and international issues of common interest, and to explore possible ways of cooperation regarding them. The visiting India Foundation delegation included: Dr. Ram Madhav, Chairman of the India Foundation and former Secretary General of the Bharatiya Janata Party; Mr. MJ Akbar, Member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation and former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; Dr. Alok Bansal, Director of the Foundation and a former Indian Navy officer; Dr. Haseeb Drabu, former Finance Minister of Jammu and Kashmir; Mr. Anile Trigunayat, former Indian Ambassador to Jordan and Libya; and Ms. Soumya Chaturvedi, a Research Fellow at the India Foundation.

The first day focused on discussing bilateral relations between Egypt and India and means to enhance them, in addition to the visions of both sides regarding regional and international issues. The Egyptian side included the ambassadors: Mohamed El-Oraby, Ezzat Saad, Ali El-Hefny, Mohamed Hegazy, and Mohamed Al-Noqaly, as well as Dr. Mohamed Kamal, Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal, and Dr. Mohamed Ezz Al-Arab, head of the Arab and Regional Studies Unit at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. The participants affirmed that Egypt-India relations do not only date back to the era of Nasser and Nehru, but extend deeper to Saad Zaghloul and Mahatma Gandhi, but they certainly witnessed a major development during the era of President El-Sisi and Indian Prime Minister Modi. In this regard, reference was made to the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Cairo on June 24, 2023, and its importance. The two sides also agreed on the idea of the importance of international “multi-currency” in trade, and not just the U.S. dollar. The talk was also positive about Egypt’s request to join the BRICS, and the importance of India’s support for this request. The meeting also discussed ways to support the "strategic partnership" between the two countries in all fields.

On the other hand, the second day witnessed interaction between the Indian delegation and researchers from several Arab countries (Palestine - Libya - Sudan), including: Dr. Mohamed Gharib, Secretary of the Fatah Movement in Cairo; Dr. Ramzy Odeh, Secretary General of the “For Palestine” Campaign; Mr. Qasim Awad, Palestinian Campaign Coordinator; Dr. Mohamed Al-Hadi Al-Dayri, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Libya (by video); Dr. Mustafa Al-Zaidi, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Libyan Popular National Movement; and Ambassador Dr. Ali Youssef, Acting Chairman of the Sudanese Council for International Affairs. In this regard, the participants gave a general overview of the existing situations in Palestine, Libya and Sudan, amid interaction from the Indian side. The Arab researchers also requested India’s support for the demands of the peoples of their countries, in a manner that contributes to achieving security and stability in them and in the entire region, which was welcomed by the Indian delegation.

Roundtable Discussions on the Developments of the Crisis of the Grand Ethiopian Dam

On June 26, 2023, ECFA held a roundtable that discussed developments of the Ethiopian dam crisis and the Nile waters in general, as well as the related repercussions on the Egyptian nation, especially in light of Egypt being one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and attended by Minister Plenipotentiary Ahmed Sherif from the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassadors: Marwan Badr, Salah Halima, Ezzat Saad, and Mohamed Idris.

The meeting gave a general overview of the current situation in respect of the Ethiopian dam, which showed that the Ethiopian side is still intransigent in its position, and determined to move forward in implementing its unilateral policy to fill the dam's reservoir, without reaching a binding agreement regarding its filling and operation between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, thus, imposing a *fait accompli*, without the slightest regard for the technical standards and the grave environmental impacts resulting therefrom, and also without the slightest consideration for the interests of both Egypt and Sudan.

He also addressed the legal mechanisms and relevant agreements, and the rights they guarantee to all countries of the basin, explaining the share of these countries in the Nile waters, and stressing at the same time Egypt's urgent need to ensure the provision of water, given its location in one of the most water-scarce regions in the world, especially since rainfall and groundwater rates in Egypt are the lowest of the basin countries, forcing it to pay a huge food bill to compensate for the water shortage and meet the citizens' needs.

It was noted that the Egyptian political leadership issued directives to cooperate with the Basin states in establishing a number of projects and some dams for development purposes, which refutes the statement that Egypt stands against development in those countries, as some claim. The leadership also urged the Egyptian business community to invest in Ethiopia, in the hope of building confidence with the Ethiopian regime, which is what actually happened. However, all these endeavors, with their clear good intentions, did not change anything in the position of the Ethiopians. In this regard, the participants denounced the clear Ethiopian intransigence against concluding the binding agreement, stressing that Egypt will not give up its water rights of the Nile River.

The meeting affirmed that Ethiopia always shirks any obligations it has in connection with its water projects, even if that is inconsistent with the applicable rules of international law, and it also seeks to enjoy amending any agreement in the future however it means to it at any time, and in a manner that achieves its desires, otherwise it withdraws from it. It was also emphasized that whatever the political differences among the Ethiopian factions, they are united when it comes to their position on the Nile waters and the dam, and even believe, despite their differences, that Egypt is a new colonial state. In turn, all successive Ethiopian governments are attempting to bring forward this vision and confirm it to domestic public opinion, in a way that suggests that they actually make a living from this matter.

Meeting of ECFA's Economic Committee

On July 5, 2023, at the initiative of businessman Mohamed Kassem, coordinator of ECFA's Economic Committee, and Chairman of the Egyptian Exporters Association, the Committee held a meeting to discuss the broad outline of its work plan during the remainder of the year 2023, with the participation of Dr. Ahmed Darwish, the former Minister of Administrative Development, the former Chairman of the General Authority of the Suez Canal Economic Zone, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, and Ambassador Dr. Youssef. E-Sharqawy, Dr. Diaa Helmy, and Dr. Mohamed Hassouna.

The Committee Coordinator indicated that the current global economic system suffers from great challenges and many risks, as a result of the severe geopolitical tensions among the major international powers. The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed a major crisis in global supply chains, which has affected the economies of developed and developing countries alike, with the resulting focus on the idea of "nearshoring" and "friendly shoring," instead of "offshoring." This is while the climate and energy crises, which are closely associated, are escalating, especially since the emissions causing the climate crisis result from the use of fossil fuels to generate energy. This is at a time when some countries, especially developed countries, have resorted to restarting nuclear reactors to generate energy, after the repercussions due to the Ukrainian crisis in this field.

The participants also appreciated the recent modernization steps, such as changing the Ministry of Manpower to the Ministry of Labor, and starting to formulate the National Employment Strategy, which was announced by the Minister of Labor in March 2023, as well as the ongoing parliamentary amendment to the Labor Law, which is one of the important laws that witnessed extensive discussions over the recent period.

In this context, the participants agreed that the Committee's work plan should include the following: the economic aspect of Egypt-Turkey relations and means to enhance relevant mutual investments, especially in light of the recent rapprochement between the two countries, which culminated in the announcement of the exchange of ambassadors between them on July 4, 2023. As well as obstacles to economic interaction between Egypt and other countries at the economic level, and consultation on available ways to overcome them. In addition, means to support the manufacturing of Egyptian fruits in particular, such as oranges and mangoes, and prepare them for exportation, instead of exporting them raw, and consider how to promote this, especially since the returns on manufactured products are much higher than the returns on raw materials. There is also the need to communicate and coordinate with other parties concerned with economic and commercial issues, in addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Federation of Egyptian Industries, and the Egyptian Exporters Association.

Two Seminars on “Developments of the Situation Related to the Nile Waters and the Ethiopian Dam”

On July 19, 2023, ECFA organized a seminar, convened by Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Hegazy, member of ECFA Board of Directors and coordinator of the Council’s Permanent Committee for Water Resources and Climate Change, in which Dr. Hegazy presented “the developments of the situation related to the Nile waters file and the Renaissance Dam,” in light of the summit meeting that brought together the President of the Republic, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and the Ethiopian Prime Minister on July 13, 2023, on the sidelines of Sudan's neighboring countries summit, convened by Egypt. The meeting was attended by Ambassadors Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, Youssef El-Sharqawy, Atef Sayed Al-Ahl, Aly El-Hefny, Salah Halima, Abdel Moneim Omar, Dr. Hisham Zaazou, Dr. Sayed Fleifel, Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal, and Dr. Hazem Atiyatallah.

Ambassador Hegazy presented the developments regarding the relevant situation, noting that the statement of the Ethiopian Prime Minister in this regard includes official assurances that the Nile is a gift from God, and that this statement represents a commitment on the part of the Ethiopian official not to harm Egypt’s water interests, and pledged to launch the relevant negotiations within four months. However, Ambassador Hegazy stressed that communication in order to launch negotiations during this period does not mean stopping the fourth filling carried out by the Ethiopian government. Hence, the statement leads to a kind of cautious optimism for both Cairo and Sudan. Anyways, among the scenarios proposed in this regard are the following: reaching a binding legal agreement, either defining the relationship with the Renaissance Dam or the relationship with the various dams from Lake Tana to the Renaissance Dam; Summoning the UN Security Council, and working in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to defend Egypt’s rights and national security.

On the other hand, on the 23rd of August 2023, ECFA invited Ambassador Dr. Mohammed Hegazi, member of the board of directors and the coordinator of the permanent committee of water resources and climate change at ECFA, to present “The Developments in the situation of Nile Water and the Ethiopian Dam”. This seminar came after the beginning of the negotiation process between Egypt and Ethiopia on 20th of August 2023, based on the outcomes of the summit that is held between President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi and the Ethiopian Prime Minister on 13th of July 2023, on the sidelines of the Egyptian initiative of the neighboring countries of Sudan.

Participated in the seminar Ambassadors: Mohamed Al Oraby the chairman of the board, Ezzat Saad director of the council, Youssef Al Sharkawy, Ali Al Hefny, Salah Halima, Abdelmoneam Omar, Ibrahim Al Showemy, and Dr. Sadek Abdelaal, Advisor Hazem Youssef, and Mr. Ahmed Abo Shady.

Amb. Hegazi asserted that the launch of negotiation doesn't mean stopping the fourth filling of the dam which is done by the Ethiopian government. He pointed out that the characteristics of the new round of negotiations is reaching a limited point, as we can't do anything after the fourth filling of the dam.

In the fourth filling of the dam, about 44 billion cubic meters will be stored at the end of this period, this is along with confirmation that "the dam will protect itself by itself". By this way, the fourth filling of the dam will have an impact on Egyptian National Security.

Therefore, we must work on the investment of different soft powers, and to use the Egyptian diplomacy, in addition to having a diplomatic messages that encourage other countries, organizations, and concerned agencies to interfere in this sensitive time to support Egypt in its rights. Also, at this stage, it's important to speak to the World Bank and Security Council to engage in the ongoing negotiation process, as the negotiations reached a limited point.

Amb/ Hegazi pointed out that the statement of the Ethiopian Prime Minister and the launch of negotiations at this time, could be due to the international pressure on Ethiopia. This pressure could be from Washington which hosted the negotiation rounds and contributed to preparing the final draft that Ethiopia refused to sign. Also, this round of negotiations could be "analgesic" to the downstream countries until the end of the fourth filling of the dam.

The reason for the timing of negotiations could be also the Ethiopian will to establish other dam projects upstream, and these projects require huge fund and approval of both countries Egypt and Sudan. As the fund for the renaissance dam was difficult, and there was a refuse from the World Bank to fund the dam. Hence, Addis Ababa is trying to not repeat the same experience with the other dams, in order to be able to have an international fund for these dams. The strongest evidence for this justification is Aby Ahmed's meeting with the chief of the World Bank after his visit to Egypt in July 2023.

Seminar on “The Distinctive characteristics of the African Union personality”

On the 28th of August 2023, the council organized a symposium on “The distinctive characteristics of the African Union personality”. The speaker in this seminar was Ambassador/ Amr Al-Gowely, the strategic advisor of the vice chairman of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, the visiting member in the multilateral diplomacy program of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Started the symposium Ambassador/Mohamed Al Oraby, the chairman of the council. Participated in the seminar Ambassadors: Ezzat Saad the director of the council, Ali Al-Hefny, Youssef Al-Sharkawy, and Abdel-Moneam Omar, and Dr. Sadek Abd-Elaal, in addition to a number of concerned academics and researchers with the African Affairs.

In the beginning of his speech, Amb/ Al-Gowely pointed out that the African Union, in general, seems to have a political character that have a different characteristics from the other international organizations including the United Nations. For example, and in answering question, is the African Union an International Organization or supranational organization?

The answer is that there’s a sort of relation between the international and supranational character of the African Union. The members of the Union is trying to enhance moving from the level of international organization to the level of supranational organization. In fact, the decisions of the union and its powers regarding the intervention in the member states reinforce this, as the Union interfere in member states affairs in case of serious violations to human rights. Moreover, the union can suspend the membership of its members in the case of coups, and these powers even the United Nations cannot perform, only can be done in the case that the member state didn’t pay the fees of the membership.

In a related context, is the secretariat of the commission federal or union?, given that the president of the commission is elected, as well as, the rest of the commission’s staff including the vice president, this is a unique situation. This makes it difficult to see the composition of the commission as one team, as everyone is being elected.

Likewise, the budget raises a question that is it subjective or participatory?, it’s noted that the daily activities are funded by the member states, while the program budget – which is the largest (about 90%) – is funded by partners especially the European Union, taking into consideration that 50% of the union’s budget is born by 5 countries: Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria. Therefore, there’s a kind of imbalance among the member states in this regard.

There's another question, is the Union a continental organization that represents countries or a network of sub-regional groups like ECOWAS, SADC, etc. ?, It's noted that there's an ongoing agreement on a mechanism to divide the work between the Union and these groups, but it should consider the case of erupting conflict, and asking, will the African Peace and Security Council have the main role or the groups that have main role?

On the other hand, one may feel that the Union is an organization and the secretariat is the one that manages the African work as a whole. There's cooperation between the organs of the organization as a whole, but what's happening is a kind of expansion for the organization, which means that there's many parallel and repeated positions, and many of these positions have no actual description.

Finally, one of the features of the Union, also, is the absence of real negotiations among the countries on the decisions and conclusions which may be revealed by summits or meetings, given the practice that the drafting committee is the one that prepares the final documents, and the results could be prepared in advance. So, this may affect the overall performance of the African Union as a whole.

Seminar by Mr. Mohamed Fayek on "The Future of the Egyptian / African Relations"

On September 9, 2023, ECFA organized a symposium, in which Mr. Mohamed Fayek, the former Minister of Information, spoke about "The Future of Egyptian/African Relations," after the publication of his memoirs under the title "A March of Liberation," which was published by the Center for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut in July 2023. The meeting was moderated by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, President of the Council, while a large number of diplomats, academics and researchers concerned with African affairs participated.

The guest referred to the main stations in his life's journey, starting with his early upbringing in the city of Mansoura, then the family's move to Cairo and his enrollment in the Ibrahimiyya Secondary School, then the Military College in 1946, through his participation in the 1952 revolution, then his work in both Military Intelligence and General Intelligence under the leadership of Zakaria Mohi. Religion, until he assumed the Ministry of National Guidance, which later turned into the Ministry of Information, and as President of the National Council for Human Rights. In this context, the guest went on to discuss his role as a General Intelligence officer in Egypt's rediscovery of Africa, and its pioneering liberation role in the African continent, after President Abdel Nasser early realized the importance of Egypt's regional role as a national liberation force opposed to colonialism and supportive of the right of peoples to obtain independence. Then, Fayek established radio stations called "The Voice of Africa from Cairo," which addressed the African peoples in their local languages, which reached twenty-five languages, and had a great influence due to the spread of radio in villages and remote places, and thus Cairo's message reached almost everywhere.

In this context, Egypt succeeded in establishing close relations with most of the national liberation parties and movements whose leaders were keen to visit Egypt. As the number of representatives of these movements increased in Cairo, Fayek established the "African Association" in the Zamalek area in Cairo, to be the headquarters for the offices of these movements, which played an important role as a communication movement between the leaders of the movements in their countries and the Egyptian government, as well as with the embassies of foreign countries sympathetic to them in Cairo. . The association also issued the magazine "Africa Renaissance," whose articles were written by representatives of African liberation movements and a number of Egyptian researchers. It is worth noting that the association was frequented by leaders of liberation movements, many of whom later became presidents of their countries, such as Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Sam Nyoma in Namibia, Agostinho Neto in Angola, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

For their part, the participants praised the memoirs of “A March for Liberation” as being more than just a biography of a person, no matter how numerous or high the positions he held. It is a documentation of a number of the most important milestones of political development in Egypt, in the past seventy years, during the eras of Presidents Abdel Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. It also does not limit itself to political matters. Rather, we find in it talks about many artistic and literary figures, such as Umm Kulthum, Abdel-Wahhab, Abdel-Halim, Farid Al-Atrash, Fairouz, and Sabah, among the artists, and about Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasim, and Tawfiq Ziyad, among the poets of the Palestinian resistance, and about his meetings with figures who influenced the history of... The world, such as the Cuban freedom fighter Guevara and the Chinese Prime Minister Xuwen. In all of these matters, Fayek wrote about what he witnessed, saw, or heard directly, in an objective manner and with clear moral integrity, without exaggerating in presenting his role and value, which is certainly something to his credit.

The participants also stressed that it is not an exaggeration to say that Fayeek rediscovered Africa in the 1950s, using the tools that were in place at that time and achieved great success. Therefore, today, with Egypt renewing its interest in the African continent, it must benefit from the experience of the 1950s and learn from its lessons, but in different circumstances and context. As Fayek says, we must study the past to serve the future.

A Joint Symposium between ECFA and the Belarusian Side on “The Global Food Security in the Current Geopolitical Environment”

On the 25th of September 2023, the council held a joint seminar with on “The Global Food Security in the current geopolitical environment”, in cooperation with the Belarusian Embassy in Cairo and the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Research.

Participated in the meeting, the Ambassador of Belarus to Cairo/Sergei Terentiev, Ambassador Dr. Ibrahim Al – Dkhery the General Director of the Arabic Organization for Agricultural Development, which is affiliated to The Arab league, Mr. Kirill Petrovsky the advisor of Belarus to Italy and the advisor of the permanent mission of Belarus to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in along with, Mr. Anton Dudarenok, Mr. Olga Lazorkina, and Mr. Vitali Romanovski from the Belarusian Institute.

Participated in the seminar from the council, Ambassadors: Dr. Ezzat Saad, Ali Al-Hefny, Dr. Sadek Abd Elaal.

In the symposium, the participants asserted that the world is witnessing an accelerated geopolitical events that enhances the dilemma of Global Food Security. In this regard, they talked about the features of this dilemma for Belarus and the Arab Countries, stressing on the importance of cooperation to overcome the recent challenges in this concern.

In a related context, the representatives of the council pointed out the efforts of Egypt to overcome the risks of the Global Food Security. As these efforts include diversifying the sources of export, in addition to having a strategic stock of the strategic food goods, and conducting national projects to increase shortage capacities.

Moreover, Egypt expressed its position about Global Food Security in different international conferences that dealt with this issue. These international conferences include the second summit of Africa-Russia, the 18th summit of G-20, the summit of “77+ China”.

In a related context, the participants affirmed that the developing countries is suffering from the crises of food security. As the impact on the developing countries includes high food and fertilizer prices. Hence, the needs of these countries should be considered, specially the African countries. By this way, this will decrease the impact of the crisis on the economy of these countries especially in the aspects of food security, supply chain, and energy.

In conclusion, it’s important to find urgent solutions to provide food and fertilizers to these countries with reasonable prices to help them overcome this crisis. These solutions could include the search for fund mechanisms that support agriculture and food systems in these countries.

Symposium on “Diplomacy of War and Peace: Fifty Years Over 1973 War”

On the 3rd of October 2023, ECFA organized a symposium about October victory and the passing of 50 years since the war. The symposium was divided among three sessions: the opening session, the first session “Egypt and the Road to the War”, and the second session “An Overview about the International and Regional Environment for the period from 1967 to 1973”. Participated in the symposium His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs/Mr. Sameh Shokry, The Ambassadors: Mohamed Al- Oraby, Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem, Dr. Mohamed Badr El Din Zayed, Dr. Ezzat Saad, and Professors: Dr. Ali El Din Hilal, Dr. Mohamed Kamal.

The symposium has discussed the following:

- Affirmation that the victory of October is a military victory, in addition to the victory of diplomatic efforts before, within, and after the war. This war is an example of cooperation between military and diplomatic actions to reach a peaceful solution. The role of diplomacy flourished in negotiations and mediations to restore Taba and Sinai.
- This war resembled all meanings of dignity and loyalty to the homeland. This war is an example of restoring the land with dignity through military force, and victory was achieved after defeat. Also, through this war, the country sees the future and give an example of a country that seeks peace and present a respect for sovereignty, by this way, it's important to learn from it in recent issues.
- This war is an example of collaboration between diplomacy and force. It manifests the cooperation among state institutions on different levels, and among the Arab countries except the period of polarization.
- The setback of 1967 had a sad impact on the people, as it indicates the failure of the state. From the setback to the victory, the efforts of the former president Gamal Abdel Nassir is figured out in rebuilding the military and its confidence, and understanding the reasons of defeat. War of attrition was a turning point at that time, and the years after that were difficult, and there was change in the Egyptian foreign policy like its cooperation with United States of America as an ally. Also, This period witnessed the use of petrol as a weapon.
- The period between 1967 and 1973 is important and there's no studies about it, although there are documents for this period. In this regard, there's a suggestion that to release the documents and create a unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to be called “The Historian of the Egyptian Diplomacy” to document the Egyptian diplomacy as the counterparts USA and Israel. This period, as well, witnessed changes on local, regional and international levels.
- On the international level, there's an American interest in October victory, and it presents a vital policy of USA towards the Middle East. This period witnessed the rise of the role of Henry Kiesinger and his idea of “Gradual Diplomacy”, his efforts to push Egypt-USA relations, and his support to Israel. The position of USA before, within, after the war is consensual and competitive. Also, the war was unpredicted to USA as well as the decision of oil embargo.
- On the level of Arab states, there's no agreement regarding the war among the Arabs. In spite of the Arabic support to Egypt and Syria at that time through oil weapon, loans, and grants, and military support, this period witnessed a division and polarization among Arabs. The efforts of Abd El Nassir appeared in this time in restoring Arabs cohesion.

Seminar on “the Developments of the Situation in the Sudan and Its Future Consequences”

On the 8th of October 2023, ECFA held a symposium entitled “The developments of the situation in Sudan and its future consequences”. The seminar is moderated by Ambassadors: Marwan Badr, Dr. Salah Halima. The speakers in the seminar are Dr. Amira Al Fadel Former Minister of Social Affairs and Development of Sudan, Kamal Hassan Ali Former Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League and Former Minister of Investment, Dr. Adel Abdel Aziz El Fiky Professor of Economics in Khartoum University and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sudanese-Egyptian Integration (Sudanese NGO), Othman Merghany Editor –in-Chief of the Sudanese Newspaper Al-Tayar. Participated in the seminar number of Egyptian and Sudanese figures. In this symposium, Dr. Salah Halima presented an initiatives for the settlement of Sudanese conflict.

The Seminar addressed the following:

- Affirmation about the importance of the symposium as it witnessed the participation of Egyptian and Sudanese civil society. It's said that it's important to find a peaceful solution, however this is not an easy situation as the initiatives didn't lead to a positive impact. But, the initiative of the neighboring countries have a good chance to succeed as Egypt aware of the situation and it combines the neighboring countries. Also, there's initiatives from Sudanese but this needs a comprehensive dialogue.
- It's important for all Sudanese actors to be involved in the settlement process to end the conflict and accepting the solutions that combine all parties. In order to reach a solution, there's an issue which appears in the weakness of state and civil institutions and absence of clear vision for those who manage the conflict. For the transitional period, it's important to prolong this period and to not proceed directly to the elections, to prevent any political conflicts in the recent time. After the transitional period, it's important to conduct a national dialogue that don't exempt any party.
- There are three scenarios regarding the end of the conflict. First one is the end of the war and conducting a comprehensive political process, this is the hoped scenario. Second scenario is the end of the war and continuous of fragmentation with the possibility of existence of military dictatorship if the political parties didn't promote for the democratization process. This is the most likely scenario. The third scenario is the worst one as it means the continuity of the war after 2023 and to lead to civil war and secession of north Sudan.
- On the economic aspect of the conflict, there's a lot of damage to the Sudanese infrastructure, losses for companies, destruction of around 80% of the industries, and losses for the macroeconomics especially public revenues and GDP. This is in addition to the displacement of Sudanese and being refugees in neighboring countries.

- Concerning the reconstruction, it's said that it's the time to prepare for the reconstruction after 6 month of the conflict as this needs time from the international organizations. There's reliance on the strategic framework of Arabic Food Security for the expansion of reclamation of agricultural land and improving production. This can be done in cooperation with Egypt as it has excellence in scientific research, human factor and agricultural techniques.
- Concerning the situation in Sudan, there's recommendation about the importance of having national media that support the development projects, and assurance on ending the conflict. For the Egyptian Sudanese relations, there's recommendation to implement the strategic agreements between the two countries, in addition to praising the role of Egypt in the conflict. In this regard, it's said that it's important to have civil initiative to the settlement of the conflict. On the 11th of October, the council held a meeting to framing the initiative that is presented by Ambassador Dr. Salah Halima.

Roundtable Discussion on “The Economic Crisis in Egypt and Its Dimensions”

On the 12th of October 2023, ECFA held a meeting with Dr. Ahmed Galal Former Minister of Finance, this seminar is based on, an initiative from Mr. Mohamed Kasem Rapporteur of the Economic Committee. Participated in the meeting number of ambassadors who are members of the council.

Dr. Ahmed Galal pointed out that the economic crises is one of the vital topics. There are different names for it but there's consensus that there's a crises. Also, there's difference in describing the crises as this depends on the perspective.

Therefore, for describing it, there should be references to refer to it. These references include overall finance balance, growth rate, and social justice.

Concerning the reasons for the economic crises, there are reasons related to macro policies. This include monetary policies and the role of the central bank as it should be limited to inflation policies and to not provoke the holy trinity, this is in addition to the problem of the background of the governor of the central bank.

The other reasons of the current crisis is the moving of exchange rate and its impact on inflation. The finance policies has an impact on the current crisis, as well. In this regard, it's important to activate the principle of unified arbitrage.

The other reasons for the crisis is related to growth incentives, as the latter is directed to real estate sector other than other sectors. Therefore, it's important to redirect incentives and policies to other sectors, in addition to reframe custom policies. For the unequal opportunities as a reason for the economic crisis, it's worth paying attention to education and health sectors through rearranging the priorities, and reconsider policies related to wages.

In seeking a solution for the economic crisis, there's suggestion to redirect development for policies after focusing on the development through number of projects. For the role of the state in the economy, it's important to clarify its role as a policy maker and market observer, in addition to rearrange priorities in this regard, and to shed light on the role of politics and political system in this regard, and paying attention to health and education sectors.

Symposium on “The Personal Experience of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby in the Diplomatic Field, and as a Former Foreign Minister of Egypt”

On the 26th of October 2023, the council organized a meeting with Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby to discuss his personal experience in the diplomatic field, in particular, his posts in Israel and United States of America. In addition to talking about his experience as a foreign minister of Egypt in a crucial time of the Egyptian history in 2011.

Participated in the seminar number of the members of the council, in addition to students from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, besides, participation of diplomatic attaché from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the meeting, Amb. Mohamed Al-Oraby talked about his experience in the diplomatic field, in addition to his work as a foreign minister of Egypt in a critical time in 2011, as this period presented challenges to Egypt and to the officials at that time.

In this context, the ambassador said that he joined the ministry of foreign affairs in 1976. During his work in the ministry and in the different posts, he witnessed several events like the visit of the late president Mohamed Anwar Al-Sadat to Jerusalem, Camp David Accords, Baghdad conference, assassination of President Al-Sadat, and the events of 11th of September. Also, the ambassador talked about the influence of important political figures like Botrus Botrus Ghaly and Amr Mousa on him.

About his posts, he said that he started to work in the Egyptian embassies in Kuwait, London, Washington, Tal Aviv, and then being ambassador for Egypt in Germany from 2001 to 2008. After that he was associate to the minister Ahmed Abo Al-Ghait for the ministerial affairs at that time. Moreover, he worked in the ministry of transportation, then he was informed that he will be the minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011.

Amb. Al-Oraby described the day of the Oath as a special day, and the period of his service as minister of Foreign Affairs was fruitful despite it was a short period. The instructions for him at that time is to be calm regarding the Egyptian Foreign policies. In addition to, the concentration in the foreign policy, at that time, on the policies towards the Arab and African Countries. Concerning his resignation from the position of minister Foreign Affairs, this was based on agreement with Dr. Essam Sharaf to not be included in the next ministerial reshuffle.

On the other hand, he described his post in Israel as important and helped to understand the psychology of Israel and its people. In a related context, he said that “Toofan Al-Aqsa” operation will lead to a shift in the psychology of Israeli Army and Its people, adding that the Egyptians have a great position in Israel.

Regarding his post in Washington, it was important as well, and witnessed events like exempting Egypt from the military debts to the United States of America, as this qualified Egypt to enter Parise club after rescheduling the debts. Adding to that, this event is a sign of proactive strategy of Egypt and of making use of the situation.

In the end, Amb. Al-Oraby expressed his gratitude to the period of his work in the Egyptian Foreign ministry as it was interesting and exciting period, in which he came across important and vital international relation events that is happening in a decreased time framework.

Joint Symposium on “The Palestinian Issue .. To Where? With Regard to the Latest Developments”

On the 2nd of November 2023, the council, in cooperation with the Institute of Arabic Research and Studies, held a symposium in the institute, titled “The Palestinian issue, to where, with regard to the latest developments”. This symposium is held after the developments in Palestine and the continuous attacks of Israel on Gaza strip since the 7th of October 2023.

The symposium is held upon five aspects with five speakers as follow:

Amb. Barakat Al-Fara, the former Palestinian ambassador to the Arab League, spoke about “Israeli plans after Gaza operation”.

Amb. Atef Sayed Al-Ahl, member of the council, talked about “Force displacement of Palestinians and the Egyptian role”

Dr. Mohamed Kamal, the director of the institute and vice chairman of the council, spoke about “The developments of Gaza in the view of United States of America to the future of the international system”

Dr. Hazem Gad, advisor of the ministry of Justice and member of the council, talked about “Israel and the International Law”

Amb. Diab Al-Louh, Ambassador of Palestine to Egypt, and his topic was on “The future of Palestine State”

Started the meeting Amb. Mohamed Al-Oraby, the chief of the council, and Dr. Mohamed Kamal. Participated in the meeting number of the council members, academics, and researchers from the institute.

In the symposium, participants condemn the repeated attacks of Israel on Gaza strip, affirming that this is against the international law and the international humanitarian law. Adding that the international community and Security Council have to take the responsibility of cease fire in the besieged Gaza strip since the 7th of October. They said that the continuous Israeli airstrikes lead to thousands of deaths in the strip as most of them were women and children, in addition to the injured and displaced people.

During the meeting, they called the international community to have a serious lead to establish independent Palestinian state and its capital East Jerusalem according to the borders of the 4th of June 1967, based on the solution of two states. As this is the only guarantee to stop the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine.

In a related context, the current crisis revealed many issues, including that the Palestinian issue is the priority for the Arab and Egypt and cannot be ignored. Also, this crisis showed the other face of the western governments, and its double standards concerning the international issues, ignoring the life of thousands of innocents. As they are should be protected in accordance to the human rights and safety.

Symposium of Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry on His Journalistic Experience in the US from 1995 to 2000

On the 5th of November 2023, The council organized a meeting with Mr/ Atef Al-Ghamry , the Journalist and member of the council. This meeting was about the personal experience of Mr. Atef in chairing Al-Ahram Office in United States of America for five years from 1995 to 2000, after chairing the office for two years in London. This meeting includes his experience in USA with influential decision makers, besides, attending important events that he witnessed while being a reporter in the White house in Washington, and in United Nations in New York.

Attended and participated in the meeting the chief of the council, and number of members of the council, in addition to students from Faculty of Economics and Political Science Cairo University.

The meeting started with welcoming Mr. Atef and thanking him for his willingness to share his prestigious experience as journalist and reporter for Al-Ahram in USA and London in important events.

Mr. Atef talked about moving to the office of Al-Ahram from London to USA based on a request. Adding that, he started to have a weekly article during his work in USA, this article is mainly to tackle the changes in USA politics at that time. Also, he said that he attended a session about the American politics in which he knew the secrets of USA politics and decision making. In this regard, he wrote an article about the background of decision making in USA foreign policy entitled "Ruler or Ruled" in 1983.

As well, he mentioned his meetings with prominent American figures like James Baker, the chief of White House employees, and minister of treasury in the presidency of Ronald Reagan, and the foreign minister and the chief of white house in the administration of president George H.W. Bush.

He referred to his attendance to a conference, based on invitation from James Baker, about the American Foreign Policy in the 21st century. In this conference, former foreign ministries talked about USA foreign policy and how it should be, in addition to criticizing the unawareness of Middle East culture. Talking about the importance of developing awareness about Middle East culture and building relations in this regard to enhance the American foreign policy. Based on this conference, he wrote three articles in Al-Ahram about the perceptions of USA foreign ministries of the future.

In a different context, Mr. Al-Ghamry talked about how the 6th of October is perceived at that time in USA, saying that number of American solders admits the strength of Egypt in this war. This is in addition to praising and acclaiming the Egyptian solders after crossing Suez Canal. And they justified that by saying they appreciate the strong one. In an answer for a question about late president Al-Sadat and the war, It's said that in 1967, Israel gave a painful attack to Egypt, and Egypt did the opposite in 1973. Also, Henry Kiesinger said that USA didn't take the talks of Al-Sadat seriously about the war, trusting in Israel military capabilities, but the war revealed a new spirit power that the Egyptian soldiers had.

In the end, Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry said that his work in the White House and in the United Nations was important and fruitful, as he witnessed several important events.

A symposium on “The United Nations System for Human Rights”

On the 13th of November 2023, the council hosted Ambassador Wafaa Basim, member of UN committee for civil and political rights, and former assistant for minister of foreign affairs and permanent representative of Egypt to the European headquarter of UN in Geneva. She addressed the organs of UN system which is concerned with human rights, in addition to the international agreements under the United Nations in this regard, and to what extent the countries comply with the obligation of these agreements.

Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby, the chief of the council, began the meeting. Participated in the seminar Ambassadors: Moner Zahran, Dr. Ezzat Saad, Salah Halima, Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry, Dr. Noha Bakr, in addition to students from Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Future University.

Ambassador Wafaa Basim addressed the human rights system, clarifying that the framework of this system is the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. This declaration includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These covenants are not new and include all rights of humankind. Prior to these covenants, there was an agreement of prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide which is presented to the international community in 1948 after genocide of Second World War. Ratification on this agreement is completed in 1952, and the Palestinian issue didn't trigger according to this agreement.

In a related context, Ambassador Wafaa mentioned that the diversity in the topics, lead to prevalence of new agreements. These agreements are like the International Agreement for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the International Agreement of Eliminating all kinds of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, The Convention of Child Rights and its accompanying protocols, the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention for Protecting Rights of all Immigrant Workers and their Families, and the Convention of Refugees.

In addition to the previous agreements and Conventions, there are Treaty Bodies that is related to these agreements. These bodies are for checking human rights and to what extent there are compliance with these agreements. These agreements have mechanisms for individual complains after using the internal channels of complains within the state. Decisions of these bodies are non-binding, but only have a moral impact.

In the end, she referred to notes about the mechanisms of these agreements and to what extent countries abide by it. These notes include that the more the call for human rights, the less the compliance with it. Also, from he notes, the prevalence of double standards as a result of focusing on interests, the politicization of these treaties, calls for the right of privacy, in addition to the rise of untraditional topics.

ECFA's 2023 Annual Conference "The Palestinian Cause Between Settlement Efforts And Liquidation Attempts"

On December 7, 2023, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs held its 2023 Annual Conference under the slogan "The Palestinian Cause between Settlement Efforts and Liquidation Attempts," with the participation of a number of diplomats, university professors, experts, and specialists. The Conference was opened by a representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman.

The recent events that took place in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the construction and expansion of settlements, the operations of apartheid and racial discrimination, the alteration of the demographic structure in favor of the Israelis, policies of judaization of the West Bank and Jerusalem, the demolition of homes, the expropriation of property...etc., were perpetrated – and are still being perpetrated – by the Israeli Occupation authorities, in a blatant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, including the practices of genocide, collective punishment, and the killing of innocent children and women. This necessitates tackling these developments, as well as the Palestinian Cause and its future in their broader context, especially in the wake of Operation Al-Aqsa Toofan last October 7, and the brutal Israeli retaliation.

The Conference addressed four axes: The first is "developments of the Palestinian Cause," including the causes and repercussions of Operation Al-Aqsa Toofan, the Israeli approach to managing the conflict, Israel's crimes and the international justice architecture, and post-war scenarios in Gaza. The second axis dealt with the policies of the major powers and their positions regarding what is happening in the Occupied Territories (the United States and its Western allies, the Russian Federation, China and India), in addition to the multilateral approach to the conflict, whether in regional frameworks or within the framework of the United Nations system. The third axis focused on the positions of regional powers, specifically Iran, Türkiye, and the Arab Gulf states, while the fourth and final axis covered "The Egyptian Role: Opportunities and Challenges," and reviewed the issue of forced displacement of the Palestinian people, the Egyptian position on it, the Egyptian support for the Palestinian cause, and Cairo's vision for scenarios of the post-Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The Conference concluded that the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, in retaliation for Operation Al-Aqsa Toofan, was not in fact targeting only the Hamas movement, claiming that it is a terrorist organization, which entails the right to self-defense, as Israel claims, but it also aimed to bring about a geographic and demographic change in the Gaza Strip in favor of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people, which is an extension of the same Israeli practices over the past decades in the West Bank. The Conference affirmed that the Occupying Power does not have the right to legitimate defense in accordance with international law against the legitimate national resistance, especially since Israel is already practicing the measures referred to, whether in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip, as they are carried out under an official strategic

vision, through the Israeli army, forces, security services, and extremist settlers and their terrorist organizations.

The Conference stressed that Operation Al-Aqsa Toofan was not only a response to the Israeli and extremist Israeli settlers' violations of the holy sites under state terrorism, but also due to the practices and procedures witnessed in the West Bank – which took place and are still ongoing – aimed at bringing about the aforementioned geographical and demographic changes in favor of Israel. The Conference asserted that it is an illusion for Israel to imagine that it can integrate into the region and enjoy peace and stability with such practices that would liquidate the Palestinian Cause and cause the Palestinian people to lose its legitimate rights stipulated in international legitimacy resolutions. In this context, the Conference affirmed that the ongoing crisis taking place in the Gaza Strip was revealing of several matters, most notably that the Palestinian Cause cannot be ignored, and that it is a priority for the Arab and Islamic states and their peoples. It also revealed the ugly face of many Western governments, as some of them appeared to be complicit and allied with Israel, supporting it militarily, politically, materially and in the media, and are also partners within the framework of the Israeli strategic vision regarding the future of the Palestinian Cause.

While the Conference appreciated the positions of countries supporting legitimate Palestinian rights, which were embodied in the regional and international conferences that were held, most notably the Cairo Regional and International Peace Summit, and the Riyadh Arab and Islamic Summit, as well as the positions of these states in the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council's resolution in mid-November 2023 to hold humanitarian truces, noting in this regard the position of the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres. In contrast to this position, a group of Western countries have adopted a position that pushes for the continuation of the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, ignoring its repercussions on the security of the region in general, and on Egypt's national security in particular. Egypt has warned – and continues to warn – of the consequences of this aggression and its practices.

The Conference also emphasized the importance of continuing the active and effective action of the Ministerial Mechanism emanating from the Arab-Islamic Summit, with the aim of formulating an international position for a ceasefire, and calling for an international peace conference to settle the Palestinian Cause in a comprehensive manner, based on international legitimacy and the Two-state solution initiative. The participants commended Egypt's primary and decisive position rejecting any attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians, which would liquidate the Palestinian cause, whether by altering the demographic composition or reducing the area of the Palestinian state according to the Two-state solution. The participants also saluted the tremendous efforts made by the Egyptian government and civil society organizations to alleviate the humanitarian disaster endured by the Palestinian people in Gaza. Moreover, the Conference called on Arab states and other states to double their humanitarian support for the victims of the Israeli aggression, especially as Israel is moving forward with its aggression crimes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, making the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in modern history.

Chapter II

Meetings & Visits to ECFA

Visit to ECFA by the Deputy Ambassador of India

On January 11, 2023, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, and Ambassador Mohamed Hegazy, member of ECFA Board of Directors, received Mr. Asheesh Gupta, Deputy Ambassador of India to Cairo, along with the First Secretary of the Embassy, to consult on a proposal submitted by the India Foundation to organize the first edition of the "India - West Asia and North Africa (WANA)" conference, in cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, under the slogan "Reconnecting Roots for Shared Prosperity."

The Indian guest stressed the importance they attach to relations with Egypt, noting the achievements these relations have realized in terms of trade exchanges (\$7.26 billion) and the volume of investments (\$3.2 billion), as well as the imminent opening of the Information Technology University in the 10th of Ramadan City. He added that they are looking forward to President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's visit to India on January 26, 2023, expressing their confidence that it will be a historic visit with a great impact on the overall relations between the two countries. The guest pointed out that the "India Foundation" is affiliated with the ruling Indian "Bharatiya Janata Party", and that it is coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian government to launch the first edition of the aforementioned conference. He also noted that in light of the ongoing cooperation between the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and its Indian counterpart, which is part of the organizational structure of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry's opinion has concluded that ECFA will be the partner of the India Foundation in organizing and hosting the first edition of this conference.

He stated that the conference will serve as a platform for consultations and discussions among researchers and experts from various think tanks from Egypt, Algeria, Djibouti, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Jordan and Tunisia, in addition to the India Foundation delegation, which includes researchers from India and its neighbours, to discuss issues of interest to the concerned countries, namely: Civilizational ties; Deepening cooperation for regional security; Trade and investment for sustainable development; Technological and digital cooperation in order to promote socio-economic development; Enhancing relations through Maritime Connectivity; and supporting communication among peoples through health, education, culture and tourism. The conference was held on 17 – 18 June 2023.

Visit by ECFA Board of Directors to the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

On February 1, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, Chairman of ECFA Board of Directors, ECFA members, and ECFA Director, visited the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), at the invitation of Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif, the CCCPA Director General.

- 1- The CCCPA Director General gave a comprehensive presentation on the CCCPA activities since its establishment in 1994 and its role in training Africans and Arabs in peacekeeping operations, as Egypt currently ranks sixth on the list of the largest contributors in these operations. He also addressed the role of the CCCPA with regard to issues such as women, peace and security, preventive diplomacy, and preventing and resolving conflicts, in addition to other roles carried out by the Center in issues such as the environment, climate change, and sustainable development, in addition to the mechanisms that the Center has in this regard, including the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, which held its third edition in November 2022.
- 2- In his speech, ECFA Chairman welcomed cooperation with the CCCPA, proposing to establish a partnership between the two sides, and to consider the possibility of holding joint activities that would address issues of vital importance to Egypt.
- 3- During the meeting, a discussion took place on a number of regional and international issues, and opportunities to discuss them in detail between the two sides.
- 4- In this context, the situation in the Red Sea region, the Horn of Africa, conflict areas in the African continent, and the Egyptian role in Africa in general, were discussed. In addition, ECFA members put forward a number of ideas and proposals aimed at strengthening the role of the CCCPA and expanding its activities.
- 5- Following the meeting, a draft memorandum of understanding on cooperation between ECFA and CCCPA was submitted to Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif to consider the possibility of signing it at a later time. He was also invited to attend ECFA's annual conference on February 11, 2023.

Visit to ECFA by the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Parliament

On March 2, 2023, the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Parliament, Mr. Giedrius Surplys, visited ECFA, accompanied by the Ambassador of Lithuania in Cairo, Mr. Artūras Gailiūnas, to discuss means to enhance Egypt-Lithuania cooperation, in light of the delicate conditions that Europe and the world are currently witnessing. The two guests were received by Ambassadors/ Mohamed Al-Orabi and Ezzat Saad, ECFA Chairman, and ECFA Director, respectively.

The Lithuanian official indicated that his visit to ECFA is the second, after a previous visit in 2008, after which he called on his country's officials to establish a think tank corresponding to the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, which was already done, but soon its presence gradually diminished. However, the Eastern Europe Studies Centre was established and deals with all international and regional issues.

The meeting also tackled bilateral relations between the two countries, and opportunities to enhance economic cooperation and trade exchanges between them, in particular, especially since Lithuania is technologically advanced in the fields of laser and cyberspace. The meeting also addressed the developments of the conflict in Ukraine, and the chances of settling it as soon as possible. In addition, the two sides discussed the developments in occupied Palestine, whereby ECFA expressed the need for an effective and active European role to put an end to the Israeli violations and racist practices against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories, similar to the European response to support and aid the Ukrainians in their ongoing crisis.

Visit to ECFA by a delegation of the European Union Mission in Cairo

On March 6, 2023, ECFA received a delegation from the European Union mission to Cairo, whereby the meeting focused on developments in the Ethiopian dam and the Nile waters in general. The meeting was attended by Ambassadors Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, Salah Halima, and Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris.

The meeting tackled the developments in this file and the difficulties it faces, as ECFA members reviewed the relevant legal mechanisms and the rights they guarantee to all Basin countries, explaining the share of these countries in the Nile waters, and stressing Egypt's urgent need to ensure the provision of water, given its location in one of the world's most water-scarce regions. ECFA members also mentioned the issue of the clear Ethiopian intransigence against concluding a binding agreement for the dam filling and operation, which would achieve the interests of the three countries (i.e. Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia) without harming any of them, noting that the Ethiopian stance only reflects a strong Ethiopian desire to eliminate the Egyptian state, stressing that Egypt will not give up its Nile River water rights.

In this context, ECFA members expressed the necessity of dealing with this file with a future vision, and the necessity of having a political will based on good intentions and taking into account the rights and interests of all the Nile Basin countries and peoples, calling on the European Union to endeavor towards informing Ethiopia of the political and environmental risks that its unilateral behavior entails, and convince it of the necessity of abandoning such behavior.

Moreover, the meeting addressed opportunities to implement joint projects with the Nile Basin countries to advance the development process within the framework of a partnership with international parties such as the European Union and the World Bank, which may contribute to creating a favorable atmosphere for overcoming crises and any outstanding issues.

Visit by the Ambassador of Vietnam in Cairo to ECFA

On March 7, 2023, by Mr. Nguyen Huy Dung - Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the Arab Republic of Egypt, visited ECFA, accompanied by Mr. Tran Tam Anh - Deputy Head of Mission, in the presence of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, and Ambassador Reda Al-Taifi, ECFA Member.

The meeting tackled means of cooperation between the two countries, increasing the volume of trade exchange and strengthening their economic cooperation relations. In this context, the meeting addressed the upcoming session of the Joint Commission for economic, scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries, and the regular political consultations between the two Foreign Ministries on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

ECFA also proposed convening a conference on economic and investment cooperation between the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Egypt, under the auspices of EFCA and the ASEAN Committee in Cairo, similar to the conference organized by the two sides in 2016, while the Vietnamese side eagerly welcomed this proposal.

Visits to ECFA by the Head of the Office for the Protection of the Interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Cairo

On March 29, 2023, the Head of the Office for the Protection of the Interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Cairo, Ambassador Mohammad Hossein Soltani Fard, visited ECFA at his request, where he was received by ECFA Chairman, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, and ECFA Director, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad.

The guest addressed the issue of the return of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh under Chinese auspices, describing the resumption of relations between the two countries as a good step which puts an end to the competition and differences between the two countries, while preparations are being made for President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Riyadh. Tehran also extended an invitation to King Salman to visit Iran. He explained that his country is determined to develop its relations with all Arab countries, and in this context meetings took place between Iranian and Bahraini parliamentarians, and it was also agreed with Jordan to raise the level of diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level. The Iranian Foreign Minister also recently held a phone call with his Libyan counterpart, as he invited her to visit Tehran, expressing his hope to open an embassy in Libya, noting that their ambassador in Tunisia is an accredited non-resident in Libya. He added that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation conference, which was held in Nouakchott recently, witnessed close coordination and consultation between the Iranian and Saudi delegations.

In this context, the guest expressed his country's keenness for its relations with Egypt to witness similar positive developments, noting - in this regard- Iran's participation in the inauguration ceremony of President El-Sisi. He added that he met with the Minister of Tourism recently, and expressed to him the importance of visits by Iranian tourists not being limited to South Sinai only, but rather to the historical and religious monuments and sites that foreign tourists are generally interested in.

He also indicated that they highly appreciate the Egyptian position on many issues of concern to Iran, such as the position on the question of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This is while he indicated their discomfort with what he called "the Zionist presence in Azerbaijan" and in the entire region. He explained that despite this, Iran seeks to de-escalate tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, adding that the situation in Afghanistan poses a security challenge for them, as does Russia, and that they are coordinating in this regard with Moscow. In response to an inquiry about the limits of coordination and political consultation between Iran and Turkey regarding regional problems, the guest stated that this consultation is only limited to the situations in Syria and Iraq. In addition, he pointed out that there is nothing new about the negotiations to revive the nuclear agreement signed in 2015, explaining that the negotiations in this regard were largely affected by the war in Ukraine.

On the other hand, ECFA received Mr. Fard again on 16 November 2023. The meeting addressed the vision of the head of Iranian Interests Department for the current situation in the Middle East, and the possible scenarios for the future, In addition to, the perception of Egyptian Iranian relations, and the normalization between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the vision of Iran towards Gaza after the war.

The guest said that the situations in the Middle East will not lead to the expansion of the war in the region. But, he mentioned that the relations in the region will differ after the ongoing war in Gaza, in the light of the competition among USA, China, and Russia, with the decline of the American role in the region.

Regarding the Egyptian-Iranian relations, he said that the track for normalization between the two countries is in the process, as there's coordination on the ministerial level. This coordination includes the formation of ministerial economic committee for the purpose of economic cooperation and coordination. Also, there was meetings between the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran and Minister of Finance of Egypt, on the sidelines of the annual meetings of Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank. This is in addition to phone calls between the Egyptian Foreign Minister and his Iranian counterpart. Adding that, the next period will witness flourish on the economic level in the light of preparations for Iranian investments in the Egyptian Market.

For the Egyptian leadership, The Iranian guest praised the meeting that brought President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and President Ibrahim Raisi, on the sideline of the Arabic Islamic summit which took place on the 11th of November 2023. This meeting revolved around the Palestinian Issue and security. In this regard, he said that, President Al-Sisi has a vision and knowledge of strategies in the region in addition to his Excellency's intelligence. In a related a context, he said that Iran supports Egypt in its position regarding the Palestinian issue.

For the Iranian assistance to Gaza, he indicated that around 3 thousand tons of assistance is presented to Gaza from the Egyptian market through Rafah crossing, in addition to its willingness to provide Gaza strip with electrical generators. And for the situation in Gaza, he said that Iran have a political solution for Gaza which has been recorded in the United Nations, to have a political solution for Palestine as a whole including Wes Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

Concerning the normalization between KSA and Iran, he said that it's proceeding despite the ongoing competition between both countries, referring to the last meeting between Iranian President and Saudi Crown Prince which revealed the political will of Saudi Crown Prince for developing the relations between both countries.

Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Hungary to Cairo

On April 3, 2023, ECFA hosted the Ambassador of Hungary to Cairo, Mr. Andras Kovacs, where he was received by Ambassadors Mohamed Al Orabi and Ezzat Saad, ECFA Chairman and ECFA Director, respectively. The meeting mainly addressed arrangements for the scheduled visit by ECFA delegation to the Hungarian capital, Budapest, from 5 to 7 July 2023, as the delegation is scheduled to visit the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. ECFA affirmed that it might be useful to meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, as well as some parliamentarians and diplomatic attachés of the Hungarian Diplomatic Academy, and to visit some of the scientific and cultural institutions in Budapest.

Regarding the topics that could be discussed during the visit, Ambassador Saad indicated that the focus will be on bilateral relations and current global and regional issues, especially Middle East issues and developments related to the Renaissance Dam, the regional and international impacts of the Ukrainian crisis, Hungary's vision of various European policies, and Egyptian relations with the "Visegrad" group. The Ambassador commented that they are interested in learning about the Egyptian experience in countering terrorism. In this context, ECFA Director promised to provide the Hungarian side with a detailed agenda on the topics and issues that will be included in the discussions. The meeting also tackled the proposed Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between ECFA and the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, as the two sides expressed their agreement on its content and provisions, and confirmed their intention to sign it during the upcoming meeting.

ECFA also invited the Hungarian Ambassador to meet with ECFA members, during which he would talk about bilateral relations between Egypt and Hungary, Hungarian foreign policy and its visions regarding issues in the Middle East region, which the Hungarian Ambassador welcomed.

Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Australia to Cairo

On April 3, 2023, ECFA hosted Mr. Axel Wabenhorst, Ambassador of Australia to Cairo, where he was received by Ambassador Mohamed El Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director. The meeting focused on Egypt-Australia relations and means to enhance them, in addition to a number of regional and international issues. The guest indicated that his country witnessed parliamentary elections in 2022, which resulted in a new government led by the Labor Party, focusing much of its efforts on combating climate change and its widespread negative impacts on Australia. The meeting also discussed the recent changes in Australian foreign policy compared to the past, such as involvement in the “AUKUS” alliance and the deal for American nuclear-powered submarines, which are planned to be delivered to Australia. The guest stated that this deal had received the support of various actors in the country, and was the result of developments in the region, and the risks they entail.

Regarding the economic relations between Egypt and Australia, and related investments, the guest pointed out that there are difficulties in this regard, given the concentration of most Australian companies’ operations in the mining sector. However, there are some companies operating in a number of major national projects in Egypt, one of which is “Worley” company, which provides consulting services to the Egyptian government. He also indicated that a bilateral cooperation project is being implemented, according to which Egyptian fruit will be exported to Australia for canning, which would help increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries and open more joint investment horizons.

In addition, the meeting discussed the issue of normalizing Arab relations with Syria and the latter’s return to the Arab League, as well as the recent Egypt-Türkiye rapprochement, as the Egyptian side indicated that this is a normal result of the recent changes witnessed in the regional arena. In addition, the recent earthquake that struck both Türkiye and Syria in February 2023 also contributed to further paving the way. Regarding Libya, ECFA stated that the Libyan crisis suffers from extreme complexity due to the involvement of many international parties, with different agendas. In this context, in response to an inquiry regarding Australia’s view of the Ukrainian crisis, the guest indicated that the general feeling in his country is similar to the European feeling, as the Australian people support Ukraine in its “just” war against Russian “aggression,” stressing that the issue of settlement depends on the decision of both Russia and Ukraine alone,

adding that Ukraine will not give up defending its territory no matter how long the war lasts, and that Russia's actions would bring it more rivalry and hostility, as a result of the many negative repercussions it has had on peoples' lives, the least of which are food shortages and high energy prices.

On the other hand, and in connection with the Palestinian cause and its developments, as Israel continues to expand its settlements in the occupied territories, ECFA denounced the flagrant Western double standards towards Israel and its actions against the Palestinian people, compared to the rapid Western mobilization of all forms of support to help Ukraine and its people in its crisis, based on the fact that Russia is an aggressor and occupier of Ukrainian territories. ECFA invited the guest to deliver a lecture to ECFA members about Australia's foreign policy, its relations with Egypt, and its position and visions regarding current international issues, which was welcomed by the Australian Ambassador.

ECFA received the Australian Ambassador again on 22 November 2023. The meeting discussed regional and international issues of common interest, including developments in the situation in the Middle East region, especially the events taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories since October 7, 2023, and their repercussions on the future and security of the region and the world, in light of the increasing global interest in this issue at the present time.

Visit to ECFA by a Palestinian Delegation to Introduce the Campaign of “For Palestine”

On May 10, 2023, ECFA hosted a delegation from the sisterly State of Palestine to introduce the International Academic Campaign Against Israeli Occupation and Apartheid “For Palestine,” which seeks to inform the international community of the violations committed by the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories, and to support the Palestinian statement at the United Nations in September 2023. The delegation consisted of: Prof. Dr. Alaa Hamouda, Professor of Political Science and Campaign Coordinator in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Ramzi Odeh, Secretary-General of the Campaign, Dr. Qasim Awad, Director General of the Human Rights and Civil Society Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Dr. Anis Suwaidan, Director General of External Relations at the PLO, and Dr. Samia Abu Hussein from the Human Rights Department in the Gaza Strip. The delegation was received by the Ambassadors: Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Salah Halima, Youssef Al-Sharqawi, Atef Sayed Al-Ahl, Maged Refaat, and Dr. Sadeq Abdel-Aal.

The delegation indicated that the “For Palestine” campaign was launched following the speech of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, in which he addressed the crimes of the Occupation against the Palestinian people, double international standards, and a number of states that abstained from voting in favor of the Palestinian cause. The campaign aims to create a global movement, mainly through cooperation with non-governmental civil society organizations, which in turn put pressure on their governments and collect signatures to support the Palestinian President’s speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, scheduled to be held in September 2023, and to demand that it adopt the call of the free world, issue its resolutions to halt the repeated Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people, and declare an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, to be a free, independent state and a full member of the United Nations. Various Palestinian institutions are participating in the campaign, from the Palestine Liberation Organization’s departments and factions, the National Council, the Commission of Detainees' Affairs, the Prime Minister’s Office, and others.

The campaign’s speech won the support of the Arab Parliament, which adopted the campaign on May 4, 2023. The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States also expressed on May 10 its appreciation for the campaign’s efforts, affirming its support for

it to achieve its goals, and working to provide legal, political and media support, and translating the international will to implement the two-state solution by implementing the international law and relevant resolutions to put an end to the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Likewise, the “Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organization” decided to adopt the campaign, to defend the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people against the continuing Israeli aggression, in all international platforms and organizations. In turn, the members of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs expressed their adoption of the campaign’s speech and their full support for our Palestinian brothers, stressing the centrality of the Palestinian cause and its priority for the Arab and Islamic worlds, and affirming Egypt’s steadfast stance regarding the Palestinian cause, and its constant striving to reach a just and comprehensive solution that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of its independent state in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions.

Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Japan to Cairo Mr. Oka Hiroshi

On May 29, 2023, at the invitation of ECFA, Mr. Oka Hiroshi, the Ambassador of Japan to Cairo, visited ECFA, where he was welcomed by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, who hailed the existing cooperation between Japan and Egypt in various fields, while a number of ECFA members and researchers concerned with Asian affairs participated in the meeting. The Japanese Ambassador indicated that his country's relations with Egypt are based on peace, mutual trust, and friendship, and that their interest in relations with Egypt is primarily focused on human development, economic development, and the development process in a comprehensive sense, while commending the existing Egypt-Japan relations, and the existing cooperation between the two countries in many fields. He also appreciated the assistance provided by Egypt to evacuate Japanese nationals from Sudan.

The Ambassador reviewed the visit held by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to Egypt in early May 2023, noting that it came at the beginning of his first tour in Africa since he assumed his post as Prime Minister, given Egypt's regional weight and being a meeting point binding Asia, Africa and Europe, adding that it resulted in important outcomes towards enhancing aspects of distinguished and deep-rooted bilateral relations in various fields, the most prominent of which was the announcement by the two countries' leaders the upgrade of bilateral relations between Cairo and Tokyo to the level of a "strategic partnership", in addition to the signing of a number of memorandums of understanding between the two sides in several fields, including transportation, judicial cooperation, communications and information technology, as well as financing development projects.

The Ambassador reviewed the support that Japan provides to some projects in Egypt through soft loans and bonds purchase, such as health insurance, agriculture, water, and fish farming policies. He indicated in this context the financing of the first phase project of the fourth line of the Greater Cairo Metro, in line with the government's plan to reduce emissions and provide environmentally friendly transportation, and financing the Borg El Arab International Airport development project, through the construction of a new passenger terminal at the airport with an annual capacity of up to 4 million passengers, as well as the construction project of the Grand Egyptian Museum, which Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly was keen to inform his Japanese counterpart of the completion rates related to its construction, and its inspection during Kishida's visit to Egypt.

The Ambassador also presented some aspects of cooperation between his country and a number of countries of the region, referring to the tripartite Japan-Jordan-Israel cooperation for the benefit of the Palestinian people (the Agro-Industrial Park project near Jericho), and the Japan-Jordan-Iraq cooperation in the fields of electricity and energy, in addition to the "Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology" project in Borg El Arab, which is a successful model of tripartite cooperation between Egypt and Japan with African countries.

Visits by a Delegation of the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Sudan

On June 5, 2023, ECFA hosted a delegation of the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Sudan, at its request, to discuss the latest developments in Sudan, and to explore possible means to settle this file. Ambassadors Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, Mohamed Al-Noqaly, and Farouk Mabrouk participated in the meeting on the part of ECFA.

The delegation indicated that it is keen to investigate the situation in Sudan, in order to attempt to find a solution to the existing problems there, and that it is - to this end - trying to strengthen communication with all actors in the neighboring countries of Sudan, including Egypt, emphasizing the extreme complexity that characterizes the situation in Sudan. ECFA members agreed on the difficulty of the Sudanese scene and the chaos prevailing in it as a result of the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces, noting that this scene was expected to occur, and is similar in its general framework to its Syrian counterpart, in which internal, regional and international actors with varying goals and interests were involved. In addition, the efforts of regional and international organizations to heal the Sudanese rift have not succeeded, due to their weakness. IGAD, the Arab League, the African Union, or the United Nations are no exception.

The meeting also raised the issue of the displacement of Sudanese refugees to neighboring countries, as ECFA indicated that these countries cannot tolerate their presence for a long period, especially under the difficult economic conditions that each of them suffers from. This is in addition to security concerns. In a related context, ECFA members pointed out the difficulty of distinguishing between Darfurians, Libyans and Chadians, and that southern Libya has become a region for all illegal activities, as it has become a safe haven for terrorists and outlaws, and there is a criminal alliance among these groups despite their significant differences.

On the other hand, ECFA affirmed the importance of paying more attention to the necessity of combating the military militias present in the region, because with their mere presence they support each other, making it difficult to control the reins of security in the countries of the region, especially since the conditions in those countries are quite fragile. The importance of dealing seriously with the Libyan crisis, and the necessity of resolving it as soon as possible, was also stressed, as it is almost directly linked to the state of instability in Darfur. There is also a need to deal seriously with the dilemma of certain Arab countries financing some rebel movements in Sudan and Chad. Finally, ECFA warned of its concern regarding a disintegration of the Sudanese state and its regions, which would lead to the loss of the territorial integrity of the State of Sudan, and add more complexity to addressing internal Sudanese and other regional issues.

On the other hand, ECFA welcomed, on 14 September 2023, Mr. Andrei Kolmakov, the Russian Expert and member of UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan. The UN expert mentioned that the two other members of the panel who are Vincent Varracq (French), Thomas W. Bifwoli (Kenyan), have meetings in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as meetings with the Sudanese

community in Cairo. The other two members from Columbia and Sweden didn't join the meeting. The meeting was held with the participation of Ambassadors: Mounir Zahran, Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, and Youssef El Sharkawy. The Russian expert discussed four tracks for the settlement of the Sudanese conflict, these tracks as follow:

- 1- **Jeddah Track:** This track is the first one to bring parties on the table, but there's doubts concerning this track due to the failure of negotiation and failure of ceasefire agreement. This track didn't lead to positive outcomes.
- 2- **African Union Track:** Most of Sudanese described this track as the one with no results due to the conflicting interests and polarization. The Sudanese divided, between those who see positive role and those who see negative role of the African Union.
- 3- **IGAD Track:** The Sudanese look positively to this track, because the organization is aware of the situation and the origins of the conflict.
- 4- **Egyptian Track:** The Russian Expert described this track as promising, as this track is directed to the Sudanese conflict and include states that need to end the conflict. The most important achievements of this track are establishing a committee of foreign ministries of neighboring countries, and conducting two meetings in Cairo and Chad. This initiative is more effective as it include governing elite of neighboring countries, and there's possibility of establishing a humanitarian corridor.

Most of the Sudanese pointed out that it's important to unify all regional and international efforts , in addition to efforts of neighboring countries in order to reach a solution that resolve the conflict. In addition to the four tracks, the Russian expert pointed out two points as follow:

- There's no changes in the military action, and it appears that the parties need to end the conflict with the military force. Also, he indicated that the regional tour of Abdelfatah El Bourhan is a sign of weakness after the failure of mobilization in east Sudan, but the council said that it's normal to seek support and this is not a sign of weakness.
- In light of the historical background of secession attempts by some regions in Sudan, such as the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile region, and the Darfur region, it is assumed that the government will seek to unify the state, but most of southern and western Sudan is under the control of the Rapid Support Forces, The Sudanese army also controls the northern and eastern sides.

In the End, the UN experts said that they visited number of neighboring countries, and asked for a permission form Sudanese government to visit Khartoum and Port Sudan, and there's a visit to Port Sudan in 10th of October. The UN Panel is following the ongoing conflict according to their delegation to Darfur, and they are trying to understand the reality as it is.

Visit to ECFA by Mr. Thomas Volk, Regional Program Director at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation

On June 18, 2023, Dr. Thomas Volk, Director of the Regional Program at the German Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation, visited ECFA, where he was received by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director.

Mr. Volk stated that he is in the process of completing the necessary legal procedures to reopen the Foundation's office in Cairo, indicating that he is in contact with the Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Non-Governmental Organizations, and the Consular Department at the Foreign Ministry, to complete these procedures.

He added that they are interested in dealing with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs as being a civil non-governmental organization, and that he heard a lot from the foreign diplomatic community, especially the German ambassador in Cairo, about ECFA's diversified activities, noting that the issues that will be the focus of their support are those related to geopolitics and relations with the European Union and its member states, especially Germany, as well as energy issues and cultural exchanges.

Accordingly, the guest pointed out that, unlike the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms do not fall within their scope. He added that, by virtue of the Foundation's affiliation with the Christian Democratic Party, they report their activities to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and they also request a prior plan and list of speakers in the activities they support to submit them to the Ministry.

ECFA's representatives explained to the German guest that ECFA had never received any support from any foreign institution, whether European or other, as ECFA is keen on its independence as a think-tank. However, cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation can be discussed on a case-by-case basis, without prejudice to ECFA's independence and its absolute right to adopt an agenda that serves Egypt's interests and foreign policy-related issues.

The guest also indicated that he expects to complete the procedures for establishing the Foundation's branch and begin its activity in Egypt next October, noting that His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry, promised to attend the opening ceremony.

Upon his request, the guest received a number of the ECFA publications, including its annual report for the past five years, and a summary of each of them in English, as well as various other publications that reflect ECFA's activities.

Visit by ECFA Delegation to Belgrade

On July 2-5, 2023, a delegation from ECFA, represented by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassadors Dr. Abdel-Rahman Salah and Dr. Mohamed Edris, members of the Board of Directors, visited the Serbian capital, Belgrade, where a joint symposium was held with the Serbian Institute of International Politics and Economics and the Egyptian Embassy in Serbia, entitled “Serbia and Egypt - Through Historical Ties to a Stable Future and Partnership,” on the occasion of the 115th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Serbia, as well as holding a number of meetings with Serbian figures.

The symposium included the participation of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, and a recorded speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as a speech by Ambassador Bassel Salah, the Egyptian Ambassador to Serbia, along with a number of ambassadors, members of diplomatic missions in Serbia, and a number of researchers. The participants’ speeches praised the extended historical cooperation between Egypt and Serbia at the bilateral and multilateral levels, which contributed to increasing the friendship ties between the two friendly countries, and hailing the historic visit by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to Serbia in July 2022, which witnessed the declaration of the strategic partnership between the two countries and the holding of the first Egyptian-Serbian business forum, including the ongoing progress in the two countries’ relations, most notably the negotiation of a free trade agreement, mutual visits, and meetings between religious, political, tourism, and business leaders, which have contributed and continue to contribute to enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Serbian side also commended the Egyptian position on preserving Serbia’s territorial integrity with regard to Kosovo, based on the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter, adding that Serbia also appreciates Egypt’s support for the city of Belgrade to host the specialized international exposition EXPO 27, highlighting the importance of Egypt as Serbia’s link to the African continent, being one of the most important actors in various international issues, most notably European energy security and the issue of illegal immigration.

The Egyptian side also reviewed the current situation in the Middle East region and the challenges facing Egypt with regard to water security, mainly the Renaissance Dam issue. It also indicated the potentials available to increase bilateral relations between the two countries in the economic fields through joint industrialization, especially in Egypt in light of the existing free trade agreements linking Egypt with many geographical regions

and countries around the world, with the possibility of Egypt becoming a hub for exporting Serbian products manufactured in Egypt to countries in Africa and the Middle East, including in the fields of military manufacturing. The participants also affirmed the importance of coordination and cooperation among various countries, including Egypt and Serbia, to confront the current international challenges, and to benefit from both countries' converging views regarding various international and regional issues, with the importance of working to achieve communication between academics, diplomats and citizens of the two countries.

On the other hand, ECFA delegation met with the Director of the Institute of International Politics and Economics, who expressed his aspiration for continued communication with ECFA in order to agree on future steps to activate the Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides during 2024, proposing to hold the next event in Cairo during March or April 2024, and that an annual conference be held alternately between the two countries. He also noted the importance of agreeing on the scheduled date for the conference and the themes that will be covered by a maximum of December 2023, proposing to hold a videoconference between ECFA and the Institute in this regard in November 2023.

On his part, ECFA Chairman welcomed the proposals of the Director of the Institute, highlighting the importance of achieving a boost in cooperation between the two sides in conjunction with the proposed visit of the Serbian President to Cairo at the end of 2023. El-Oraby also proposed holding a tripartite meeting among ECFA and the Institute with the participation of representatives of the "India" Foundation, so that this framework is to be agreed upon based on Memorandums of Understanding linking both sides with Indian research institutions. In this context, the delegation held a meeting with the State Secretary of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Goran Aleksić, as the two sides stressed the importance of moving ahead with strengthening bilateral and tripartite cooperation in Africa, including the possibility of organizing a visit for one or two ambassadors in the Serbian Foreign Ministry to give lectures at the Egyptian Institute for Diplomatic Studies, expressing aspiration to organizing a similar visit from Egypt to Serbia. Finally, the delegation requested Serbia's support in backing Egypt's water rights with regard to the Ethiopian dam, and supporting the nomination of Dr. Khaled Al-Anani for the post of UNESCO Director-General, which was welcomed by the Serbian side.

Seminar on "Developments of the Economic and Financial Conditions in Libya"

On July 18, 2023, at the invitation of Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Badr al-Din Zayed, coordinator of ECFA's Permanent Committee on Arab Affairs, ECFA held a seminar in which Mr. Fawzy Ammar Hassan Al-Lulki, a Libyan writer specialized in the field of investment and international cooperation, and member of the economic team of the Berlin Conference on Libya, spoke about "Developments of the Economic and Financial Conditions in Libya," and the ongoing debate in this regard inside Libya and abroad. Ambassadors Ahmed Abdel Meguid, Director of the Libya Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, and Youssef El-Sharqawy, ECFA member, participated in the meeting.

In this regard, Mr. Al-Lulki gave a comprehensive presentation of the Libyan scene and its developments since the outbreak of the February 2011 revolution, describing this scene as fragile and involving a high degree of chaos, amidst the intense political rivalry and armed conflict between the governments of eastern and western Libya, as well as regional and international foreign interventions in Libyan affairs, which made the matter only get worse, starting with the NATO intervention in 2011, which led to the disintegration of many state institutions, especially the military institution, in exchange for the growing role of military militias, and the spread of weapons in the Libyan streets until they have now reached about 20 million pieces. In general, Libya can now be called Libyan society, because it is a pre-state stage, especially under the absence of a constitution to date, and the United Nations support mission for Libya is in fact devoid of the mechanisms necessary to activate it. Hence, it is noted that the United Nations always insists that the conflict in Libya is primarily a political conflict between the Libyan factions, and not a legal dispute that is easy to resolve.

On the economic level, the guest indicated that cooperation in this field may be an impetus towards resolving the crisis, in light of the awareness of all Libyan parties that military warfare will not lead to a solution, and there is now talk about the possibility of implementing a market economy in the country. However, it can be said that this type of economy will not solve the crisis of how to distribute oil revenues in a fair manner that satisfies all parties. Therefore, some advocate a mixed economy in which the official authorities play a relatively large role in managing economic affairs in the country, and this may in fact be the first option. In a related context, the guest noted that the West, led

by Washington, is primarily concerned, in connection with Libya, with Libyan oil; to compensate for the lack of Russian energy resources, and to combat the presence of elements of the Russian Wagner company in Libya. On its part, Russia will never accept the exit of these elements without obtaining guarantees that achieve its interests, such as reviving its partnerships that it had previously concluded with the Gaddafi regime.

On the other hand, the guest called for the necessity of Egyptian-Libyan cooperation in the fields of infrastructure and others, and bringing additional Egyptian companies and workers into Libyan territories, as well as tripartite cooperation in Africa, given that Libya is a crossing point for many goods and merchandise to neighboring countries in the Sahel and Sahara region. He also proposed that Egypt, Russia, and Libya cooperate in extending the railway line from the Ain Sokhna area along the northern coast of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, to enhance trade exchange in these countries. This is in addition to development cooperation between Egypt and Turkey in Libya, which will be welcomed by all Libyan parties.

Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Singapore in Cairo

On July 30, 2023, Mr. Dominic Goh, the Ambassador of Singapore in Cairo, visited ECFA, along with the First Secretary, Mr. Jeremy Low, where he was received by: ECFA Chairman Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby and ECFA Director Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad. The guest expressed his interest in ECFA's organization of a joint event with the Ambassadors of the ASEAN Committee in Cairo, indicating the positive developments witnessed in the cooperation relations between Egypt and the ten ASEAN countries at all levels. ECFA Chairman welcomed the guest's proposal, noting that ECFA had previously organized a successful symposium in this regard, on "Economic and Investment Cooperation between Egypt and ASEAN Countries," in June 2016, in which senior officials from various ministries and concerned authorities participated, in cooperation with Singapore. The Ambassador also hailed the developments in Egypt's relations with Singapore, noting their great interest in transferring Singapore's successful experience in the field of port management and attracting tourists. In this context, he referred to a visit that Lieutenant General Mohamed Abbas, Egyptian Minister of Civil Aviation, intends to hold soon to Singapore for this purpose.

The discussion tackled developments in the Southeast Asian region and the position of ASEAN countries regarding the US-China competition. This is while the guest asked to get acquainted with ECFA's assessment of the Africa-Russia Summit and its outcomes, which was held on July 27-28, 2023. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, who attended the opening and closing sessions of the summit in St. Petersburg, explained that the Russian side has adopted an economic approach in this regard, not only with regard to the venue of the summit (the largest fairground in the city) in the city of St. Petersburg, the old capital of Russia, which was held under the slogan "Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum," but also in terms of the participants in the opening session, alongside President Putin and the current African Union Chair (the Union of Comoros). Dilma Rousseff, President of the BRICS New Development Bank, former President of Brazil, and President of the African Export-Import Bank, also participated. The participation of Patriarch Kirill, "Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia" in the opening session, came to emphasize Russia's interest in highlighting the cultural and religious commonalities with Africa in terms of its adherence to traditional values versus "Western liberal values", and that the Russian value system is consistent with its African counterpart, which is based on respecting religious and cultural diversity and preserving

family values as the nucleus of societies. It also aimed to strengthen relations between Russia and African countries, especially in the areas of politics, security, economic development, science and technology, infrastructure, education and culture. The Summit's agenda included more than 30 debate sessions on the main issues of Africa-Russia cooperation, during which face-to-face interactions took place between politicians, businessmen, experts and the media. In general, it can be said that the Summit achieved its goals, and that holding it in itself represents a success from the perspective of the Russian side in light of the enormous Western pressure exercised on African countries to refrain from participating in the Summit.

In this context, the meeting discussed the outcomes of the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting, and the subsequent conferences of ministers of other relevant regional meetings held in Jakarta in mid-July. The guest concluded by noting that Middle Eastern countries should draw some lessons from the ASEAN experience in order to benefit from it. It was agreed that the ASEAN Ambassadors Committee would form a committee of three ambassadors to communicate with ECFA Director with the aim of developing an agenda for a joint symposium - to be held later at ECFA's headquarters - on economic and investment cooperation between Egypt and the ASEAN countries.

Visit of ECFA's Delegation to Budapest, Hungary (26 – 29 September)

In the period from 26th to 29th of September 2023, a delegation from the council visited Hungary, based on invitation from Hungarian Institute for international Affairs. The delegation constitutes of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby, the chief of the council, and Ambassador Ali Al-Hefny, secretary general of the council.

The program of the visit includes meetings with researchers from the Institute, the director of foreign affairs office of the president, the director of research institute for immigration. Attended the meeting Ambassador Mohamed Al-Shenawy, Ambassador of Egypt to Budapest, and a dinner was held in his honor at the residence.

In the visit, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby presented a lecture on the Egyptian vision and position regarding Middle East issues. The Hungarian side including officials and researchers expressed their interest and passion for knowing about the estimates of the best Egyptian think tanks, especially in the subjects of mutual interests. Also, they discussed the bilateral relations and European situations including the Russian military operation in Ukraine and the impacts of it on the economy of both countries and on the global economy. In addition, the Hungarian side pointed out that the importance of thinking to limit the sanctions on Russia as a tool to resolve the Ukrainian crisis. Also, they tackled the Palestinian issue and implications of it. Besides, they discussed the situations in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon after the Arab Spring.

As well, they discussed the increasing interest of international powers in Africa, in addition to the increasing frequency of terror, violence, extremism in the African continent and lately the coups in West Africa. In this regard, the Hungarian side expressed their fears concerning the detonation of the situation in the region, asking who will take the place France after its withdrawal as Russia and China will not be able to do that, and USA has no interest in the region. Adding, it's important to leave forming democratic systems to Africans without international interfere.

In a related context, Egypt suggested to have tripartite cooperation between Egypt and Hungary in Africa, and the Hungarian side welcomed this. Moreover, The Hungarian side expressed their interest to have further cooperation with Egypt in the security field benefiting from the success of Egypt in containing terror, and controlling illegal

immigration. In this regard, the chairman of the council suggested on the Hungarian side to receive a number of Egyptians in a form of legal immigration and they welcomed that.

The Hungarian side referred to the importance of supporting the European programs to increase the attracting factor which lead to encouraging Africans to stay in their countries. The Hungarian side expressed their agreement with the council regarding the American Policy towards china, and said that china can add value to the international economy, as we prefer a multipolar system that achieve balance in the international relations.

Furthermore, the Hungarian side paid attention to know more about the developments regarding the Ethiopian dam. They suggested to make use of successful experiences of Europe and Asia in resolving water conflicts, and said we can learn from the experience of “Danube River Water Council”, DANUB COMMISSION. The council welcomed this suggestion after presenting the current and future situation of the issue which indicates risks for Egypt.

In the visit, the meetings showed rapprochement in views and estimates of both Egyptian and Hungarian sides. This is in addition to feeling proud of what has been achieved on the bilateral relations from progress and diversity in the last years. This is affirmed by the repeated meetings of both Egyptian and Hungarian leadership. Also, this will be enhanced by the visit of the Hungarian president in late November 2023.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the council and Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. The chairman of the council expressed the interest in establishing mutual research programs with the Hungarian Institute, and invited the chef of the institute to visit Egypt. Also, he suggested cooperation between the two countries in the field of exchanging and training diplomats from the two countries, and exchanging visions on global crises.

On the other hand, the chief of the council said that it’s important to have the chairman of Hungarian Research Institute for immigration in Egypt to resumption discussions with the council, also, to visit the Grand Egyptian Museum and maybe attending the opening of it. In addition, he promised to make Dr. Zahy Hawas visit Hungary to meet with experts from Hungary who have interest in Egyptian monuments and Pharaonic civilization.

Meeting with Dr. Mariam Sadek Al-Mahdy Former Foreign Minister of Sudan and Vice President of Umma National Party for Political Communication and Foreign Relations

On the 6th of November 2023, the council hosted Dr. Mariam Al-Sadek Al-Mahdy, Former Foreign Minister of Sudan, and vice president of Umma National Party for Political Communication and Foreign Relations. This meeting was about the latest developments in Sudan, opportunities for restoring stability, and the future prospects.

Started the meeting Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby, the chief of the council, and moderated it Ambassador Salah Halima. Participated in the meeting Sudanese Political Figures and representatives from the Sudanese civil society, including Ambassador Ali Youssef, Dr. Adel Abdel Aziz, Dr. Othman Merghany, Dr. Amira Al-Fadel, in addition to Ambassadors: Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, Mohamed Al-Nakly, Abdel Moneam Omar, Youssef Zada, and Dr. Sayed Flefl, and Dr. Mohamed Abdallah.

In the Meeting Dr. Mariam Al-Mahdy tackled the latest developments in Sudan which revealed the negative implications of destroying the capabilities of Sudan, as the situation is becoming worse, as long as the conflict between the Sudanese Military and Rapid Support Forces is ongoing. Furthermore, she said that the political actors didn't manage to prevent the war. This conflict is a result of fragmentation and exclusion of parties from the political process. As By this way there's no common ground among the different Sudanese actors to surpass this conflict.

In this context, Dr. Mariam referred to its efforts to unify Umma Sudanese party, as it has a long history rooted in the regions in Sudan. Adding that, the party is known by its national intentions and endeavor to find middle ground among the Sudanese actors, stressing on not excluding any actor as this have a negative impact on the stability of Sudan.

In a related context, Dr. Mariam called Egypt , as a government and people, to play a vital role in the recent events in Sudan, as Egypt is able to lead the rapprochement among the Sudanese actors by its initiatives, and to find a comprehensive solution for the Sudanese conflict.

Visit of the Delegation of the Central Institute of the History and Literature of the Chinese Communist Party

On the 8th of November 2023, Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Ambassador Ali Al-Hefny, Ambassador Abdelfatah Ezz El-Din, welcomed a delegation from the Central Institute of Party History and Literature of the Chinese Communist Party. The delegation is headed by Mrs. Zhang Peng, the director of planning research department in the institute. The aim of this visit is to enhance cooperation between the department and the council, consequently, enhancing cooperation between Egypt and China.

The Chinese delegation included:

- LIU Minru - Director of the Office of the Think Tank Work, Research Planning Department, the Central Institute of Party History and Literature.
- GUO Rucai - Chief of the 7th Compilation and Research Division, the First Research Department, the Central Institute of Party History and Literature.
- SUN Xianhui - Deputy Chief of the 3rd English Translation Division, the 6th Research Department, the Central Institute of Party History and Literature.
- YU Shuaibiao - Level I Principal Staff Member at the Planning and Management Division, Research Planning Department, Central Institute of Party History and Literature.
- SANG Tian - Level II Principal Staff Member at the Office of the Think Tank Work, Research Planning Department, Central Institute of Party History and Literature.

Mrs. Peng started by thanking the council for the warm welcome to the delegation. Then, she presented an overview of the Central Institute of Party History and Literature of the Chinese Communist Party. Pointing out that the Institute is the main source of research for the party including documents and research papers.

On the other hand, based on the interest of the delegation to know more about the council and its activities, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad gave a brief about the council and its activities, as follow: The council is non-governmental organization that doesn't seek profits. Adding, the council is one of the leading civil society organizations in the field of Egyptian foreign policy. It is established by a group of elite that have interest in regional and international foreign policy. The members in the council include diplomats,

academics, military personnel, businessmen, writers, and public figures. The next year, it will mark a quarter of a century for the establishment of the council.

Regarding the partnerships of the council, it has partnerships with around 40 institutions and think tanks from all over the world, including 5 influential centers of People's Republic of China. Concerning the support for the council, Ambassador Saad said that the council doesn't receive any financial support or donation from any institution except the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, in spite of that the council has its independent Agenda. And the council only accepted a sort of support from the Chinese Embassy in Cairo, expressing the appreciation of the council for this support.

Taking the chance to affirm that the Chinese Communist Party is respected and appreciated from Egyptians and the leadership as well. On the level of leadership, President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi sent a congratulations letter for his counterpart in the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party, indicating the vital role of the party in the current renaissance of China in the fields of economy, politics, and strategy.

Moreover, Mrs. Peng asked about the process to have a cooperation between the council and the institute in research. Ambassador Saad explained that there are Momentum of Understandings (MoU) between the council and different partners, adding that this is not the only form for cooperation between the council and the Chinese think tanks. Furthermore, Egypt and China have a comprehensive strategic partnership and have the same vision for the regional and international issues, hence, the cooperation between the council and the institute is important in a world full of different challenges in different aspects.

Meeting with the Russian Professor Aleksey Vaselev

On the 15th of November 2023, the council hosted the Professor and orientalist Aleksey Vaselev, the former special envoy of President Vladimir Putin to Africa, and the former director of Africa Institute which is affiliated to Russian Academy for Science, to talk about “Egyptian-Russian relations and prospects of African-Russian cooperation”. Started the meeting Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby, then Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad introduced Professor Vaselev to the members of the council.

In the meeting, Professor Vaselev presented his view concerning the situation in Gaza strip since “Toofan Al-Aqsa” operation which is operated by Hamas movement, also, tackling the latest development in the strip after the counter operation by Israel. In addition to that he talked about Hamas movement and reasons of establishing it and the role of Israel in this regard, mentioning the relation between Hamas, Palestine, and Israel, also, speaking about the effect of internal issues of Israel on its foreign policy.

In a related context, Professor Vaselev affirms that Russia is calling for the implementation of two states solution according to the borders of 1967 in addition to East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. In this regard, he added that Russia admits that Palestine is an independent state has its sovereignty, this since the era of Soviet Union

Regarding Russian policy towards the Middle East, he indicated that the core of it is openness towards all countries without interfere in the internal affairs of the countries. Pointing out that, the Russian role in Syria doesn't seek confrontation with other actors in Syria like Turkiye and United States of America. Also, Russia aims for cooperation with the gulf and African countries in development field.

Concerning the Egyptian-Russian relations, the professor said that it's a long historical relations since the era of Soviet Union. In this regard, Russia seeks cooperation with Egypt in different fields. Besides, he indicated that Egypt has a workforce and chances for development and this can only be achieved through internal stability, resolving the issue of the Blue Nile, and the increase in population, in addition to achieve stability in the region, as these factors will guarantee a bright future for Egypt.

Visit to ECFA by a delegation from the International Crisis Group

As part of the visit held to Egypt by a delegation from the International Crisis Group Foundation during the period from 20 to 23 November 2023, to hold meetings with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerned with files of common interest in the context of the Foundation's upcoming publications, and based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' request for ECFA to hold a consultative session with the visiting delegation, being one of the active Egyptian think tanks, ECFA hosted on November 22, 2023, Mr. Alan Boswel, Director of the Horn of Africa Program, and Ms. Claudia Gazzini, Director of the North Africa Program. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, and attended by ambassadors: Marwan Badr, Ezzat Saad, Ali El-Hefny, Ayman Mousharrafa, Mohamed Al-Noqali, Mohamed Anis Salem, Mohamed Hegazy, and businessman Mohamed Kassem.

The visiting delegation provided a detailed introduction of the International Crisis Group, its structure, and its working mechanisms, while Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, presented a comprehensive overview of the Council, its areas of interest, its committees, how it works, and its partners. The meeting also reviewed the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, Sudan, Libya, and the Horn of Africa and Ethiopian policies there, in addition to the Ethiopian dam file and its harmful impact on Egyptian national security, unless a binding legal agreement is reached regarding the management and operation of the dam. In this regard, it was pointed out that the level of division in regional and international positions regarding the existing crises in the region makes them protracted and exacerbate into more overlaps and discrepancies in interests, which makes the possibility of reaching a solution extremely difficult.

Accordingly, the Egyptian side indicated that the ongoing events in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in Gaza, will undoubtedly contribute to altering the security situation in the region, while emphasizing that the normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states will not lead in any way to resolving the crisis, since they have not addressed the essence of the Palestinian cause. He also pointed out that the instability of the Horn of Africa region is due to Ethiopia's practices and its adoption of expansionist policies there, at the expense of neighboring countries. This is in addition to the prevailing belief that the last round of negotiations between the Egyptian and Ethiopian sides, in respect of the Ethiopian dam, will not result in anything positive, in light of Ethiopia's keenness to negotiate specific points, and completely disavow any

binding agreement that restricts its freedom in the present or in the future, in association with the Blue Nile waters, which it sees as a cross-border river that must be exploited within its borders to achieve its alleged development goals.

In this context, the Egyptian side refuted Ethiopia's allegations, stressing that Ethiopia's goals behind the dam construction are purely political, through which it seeks to influence Egypt and its regional weight. It was also emphasized that the Nile River must be dealt with as an integrated environmental system, which must have integrated management among the upstream and downstream countries, especially since this facilitates the coordination process among the Basin countries regarding the regulation of water through the dams existing on it, and paves the way to talk about cooperation in the agricultural, electrical, and other fields, for the benefit of the concerned countries.

On the other hand, the Egyptian side warned of the dangers of escalation in both Sudan and Libya, calling for the necessity of striving to strengthen efforts aimed at reaching a solution, stressing that the current events in both states affect the security of the entire region, in addition to being in line with the noticeable developments in the Sahel and Sahara region which is witnessing an escalation in the field of terrorism, security, displacement, and illegal immigration, which in turn affects Europe and its security in one way or another. In this context, the Egyptian side proposed establishing an early warning mechanism, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the countries of the region, in order to prevent the outbreak of conflicts or at least mitigate their gravity.

Visit of the German Military Delegation to ECFA

On the 23rd of November 2023, ECFA received a high level delegation from the Leaders Academy, department of high level courses, which is affiliated to the German Armed Forces. The delegation is led by Former General Dr. Anskar Rieks (Three stars). This visit was in the light of “Capstone Course 2023”, which is considered from the highest level trainings of the German Leadership Academy. The topic of the visit was “Africa a continent on the move – challenges, opportunities and potentials”. Started the meeting ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby, the chief of the council, and participated in the meeting number of members of the council.

Ambassador Mohamed Al-Oraby welcomed the German delegation, and gave an overview about the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, and based on the willingness of the delegation, the visit addressed the Egyptian vision for the German role in Africa and what’s expected from Germany in Africa, in addition to discussing the situation in Libya, Sudan, Israel, and Palestine, referring to the Egyptian view and concerns regarding what’s happening in the Middle East and Africa and the effect of that on its interests.

Ambassador Al-Oraby pointed out the Egyptian position regarding the Palestinian issue, clarifying the efforts of Egypt in providing assistance to Palestinians through Rafah crossing, in addition to having calls with Israel and Hamas, and conducting meetings in Ramallah, and holding “Cairo Summit for peace”, to find a solution and prevent escalation of war in Gaza in the light of interference of non-state actors in the conflict, affirming on the Egyptian refusal of Palestinian displacement from Gaza to Sinai.

Regarding the management of the strip after the war, it’s said we cannot predict the future as the region is full of conflicts and this could last for months. In this regard, Egypt is predicting a European support to preserve stability in Egypt in light of these conflicts. Adding that Palestinians should speak about themselves, and it’s important to contain the resistance movement (Hamas). Referring to the possibility of cooperation between USA and Germany in resolving the Palestinian issue as a third party mediator.

Concerning the African Continent, the council affirmed on the importance of the African continent as there is the Blue Nile that passes through 11 African countries, in addition to the red sea which represents the entrance of the horn of Africa. In this context, he referred to the Egyptian concerns regarding the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and the effect of that on the share of downstream countries, including Egypt, from the Blue Nile, explaining how this will lead to drought because of the shortage of the reserves of high dam water.

In a related context, it’s referred to the possibility of tripartite coalition among Egypt, Germany, and the Arabic Organization for industrialization – which has a role in Africa – to find a solution for situations in Sahel Region in Africa. Adding that, it’s important to have initiatives for Africa and horn of Africa especially with the expansion ambitions of Ethiopia in the region.

Also, it’s important for the international community to pay attention to the situation in Libya, in the light of the existence of non-state actors and militias and different tribes in Libya, as this needs cooperation and assessment for the situation. Therefore, it’s important to have cooperation between Egypt and Germany to prevent escalation in the region.

Visit to ECFA by the Ambassador of Belgium to Cairo

On November 26, 2023, the Ambassador of Belgium to Cairo, François Cornet d'Elzius, visited ECFA, whereby the meeting discussed Egypt-Belgium relations and means to enhance them, as well as regional and international issues of common interest, including developments of the situation in the Middle East region, in particular what is taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories since October 7, 2023, and its repercussions on the future and security of the region, including European positions regarding this protracted conflict.

Chapter III

Field visits

ECFA Members' Visit to the New Administrative Capital

On June 22, 2023, ECFA organized a trip to the New Administrative Capital, during which the members of ECFA learned about the ongoing achievements in the Capital, and visited the monuments: the People's Square, the Parliament and Council of Ministers buildings (from the outside), the Cathedral, Al-Fattah Al-Alim Mosque, the Islamic Cultural Center, and The City of Arts and Culture.

Chapter IV

Members' Participations

ECFA Participation in Launching the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace)

On February 8, 2023, at the invitation of Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, represented by Ambassadors: Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, and Marwan Badr, Rapporteur of ECFA's Committee on African Affairs, participated in launching the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace).

The initiative aims to strengthen the long-term institutional partnership between the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (DPAPS) of the AU Commission and all African think tanks concerned with the fields of security, peace and consolidating governance, in order to exchange experiences and achieve best practices in this regard at the level of the African continent, in accordance with Agenda 2063, which contributes to enriching relevant mutual knowledge and enhancing the African collective fight against the threats to the security and stability of the continent.

ECFA Participation in the Activities of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures

On February 5, 2023, at the invitation of the head of the Egyptian National Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures, of which the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs is a member, ECFA participated in an event organized by the Network; to introduce the latter and its importance in achieving communication between think tanks and research institutions in Euro-Mediterranean countries, as well as to transfer expertise and opportunities to members of the Egyptian National Network from most Egyptian governorates, in the presence of representatives from civil society organizations that are members of the Egyptian Network and from non-members, as well as from the Egyptian press, and from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The event was opened by Professor Merna Shalash, Head of the Egyptian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation, and Executive Director of the Partners for Transparency Foundation, who emphasized the role of the Egyptian Network in building bridges of dialogue with other networks in the North and South Mediterranean, expressing her gratitude for the presence of the headquarters of the Anna Lindh Foundation in Egypt. While Mr. Ayman Akil, former head of the Egyptian network of the Anna Lindh Foundation and president of the Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights, pointed out that the Foundation is the oldest institution for cultural dialogue in the Mediterranean basin, and includes 41 Mediterranean countries, stressing the Foundation's role in bringing together the largest number of civil society institutions in the region. On his part, Mr. Ahmed Shabib, member of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Network and President of the Arab Center for Human Rights, explained the conditions for joining the Egyptian Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation in accordance with the internal statute.

In this context, ECFA also participated in the annual meeting of the Egyptian Network on February 19, 2023, which discussed means to support the needs of the Network's members, introducing its specific committees, in addition to discussing its internal statute, in addition to highlighting the elements of the financing proposals, as well as the various financing bodies and means to reach them, as Mr. Maged Hosny, member of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Network and President of the Watan Daaem Foundation, discussed in this regard the problems related to the financing process, such as the difference in visions and goals, the large number of competitors in light of the scarce funding, and the weak community awareness of effective participation to support development projects...etc.

Ambassador Ezzat Saad's Participation in the XXIV International Academic Conference of the Higher School of Economics

Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, participated in the XXIV Yasin (April) International Academic Conference of the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, which was held on April 5-13, 2023, and which addressed five main issues:

1. National Strategies for Women: Investing in Economic Empowerment.
2. Africa in a changing world.
3. BRICS development strategy "Equal opportunities in an unequal world".
4. The global majority and the new global order.
5. The Eurasian Economic Union in the New Global Framework: Opportunities for a Greater Eurasian Partnership.

Ambassador Saad delivered a speech at the plenary session that dealt with the second topic, on April 6, in which he addressed the following points in particular:

- Divergent views on the future of the African continent, and the predominance of an optimistic vision of a promising future for the continent and the reasons behind this.
- The international competition for Africa, which began decades ago. Noting that the year 2022 alone witnessed the convening of African partnership summits with the European Union, **Türkiye**, Japan, and the United States. In July 2023, the second "Russia-Africa" summit will be held, and an India-Africa summit will also be held.
- The strategic transformations in Africa following the war in Ukraine, the lessons learned from the African position on the war, and what was revealed about Africa's desire to reshape and formulate the continent's role on the international stage in the coming period, in light of the growing international interest in obtaining its wealth on the one hand, considering that the current global order does not take into account its interests, and that what is happening in Ukraine is not its battle, on the other hand.

It goes without saying that the rush of international powers to form broad alliances with African countries with the aim of ensuring the loyalty of the African voting bloc within the United Nations, which exceeds 25% of the total number of member states, enhances the strategic value of the continent and grants its countries a political weight that prompted the major powers to attempt to attract it.

On the other hand, the continent has emerged as a strategic arena for international competition with the aim of gaining more political, economic and security influence there. It also represents the broad geopolitical theater that contributes to easing and breaking the Western blockade against some powers such as Russia.

Participation by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi in a Conference on “the Non-Aligned Movement in a Changing World”

On May 16, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, Chairman of ECFA, participated in the first panel discussion titled "Global security and economic challenges: the role of the Non-Aligned Movement" of the event organized by the Azeri Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center), which was held in Baku under the slogan "From Bandung to Baku: The Non-Aligned Movement in a Complex and Changing Global Context." In this regard, ECFA Chairman, on behalf of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Center of Analysis of International Relations and its Chairman, Dr. Farid Shafiyev, for organizing this important event, for the kind invitation to participate in it, and for the warm hospitality. He also expressed delight at the convening of such great forum, and the participation of the brothers, ladies and gentlemen, from the various countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressing his confidence that the conference will be an additional important link on the path of constructive cooperation and fruitful ties between the members of the Movement, especially at this critical stage the entire world is witnessing.

Ambassador Al-Orabi added that today's world is full of enormous and unprecedented challenges and threats at all levels. Within a few years, the world witnessed a sharp conflict among the major powers, on the commercial level, as well as between the United States and China, or that geopolitical one, as between Russia and the West, which culminated in the outbreak of the ongoing armed confrontation in the Ukrainian territories since February 2022, whose repercussions led to increasing the already existing fears linked to issues of disarmament, terrorism, extremism, climate change, scarcity of resources, as well as the gap between developed and developing countries, increasing rates of poverty and social marginalization, forced displacement, exacerbation of asylum and migration, the increase in organized crime, and disparity in access to basic economic and social benefits around the world. There is no doubt that the importance of these issues has increased in the past few years, taking into account the successive international changes and challenges, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The summit meeting of the Contact Group of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was held in early March 2023 in Baku, sought to deal with it and address it as much as possible.

In this context, these crises revealed the feeling of many countries, especially the developing ones, that their interest requires them to adopt positions that are not biased

towards any of the parties to the ongoing conflicts and to move away from the position of any of them completely. Hence, the members of the Movement must intensify their efforts to rebuild and strengthen their capabilities in order to defend a fair, peaceful and cooperative multilateral global order. Rather, the current circumstances, despite their bleakness, provide space for reviving the Movement as a soft balancing mechanism against powerful states, by attempting to delegitimize the threatening behavior of the major powers, especially through its activity in the United Nations and other international forums such as the Disarmament Committee and the numerous resolutions issued by International Organization. Perhaps it is necessary now to consider transforming the Movement into an international organization, established on the basis of an international document, with a permanent structure and institutional mechanisms that enhance the ability of member states to adapt to changing conditions in international relations, benefiting in this from their huge capabilities and enormous political weight on the international arena.

Visit by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad to the Russian Federation

On May 15-21, 2023, ECFA Director, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, visited the Russian Federation to participate as a speaker in the following events:

1- A symposium - on May 16, 2023 - on Russia in a changing world, organized by the National Research Institute for the Development of Communication in Moscow. Ambassador Saad spoke about the developments in Russia's relations with the Arab region and the Middle East in general, following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and its repercussions on these relations (the directors of the relevant geographical departments of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and some members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma (the lower chamber of Parliament) participated in the symposium).

Ambassador Saad held a meeting with Mr. Gasumyanov Vladislav Ivanovich, Director of the Institute, and his assistants at the Institute's headquarters in Moscow the day after the symposium, who gave a brief presentation of the Institute's activities, adding that they have a partnership with 26 countries in the field of media communication, and they have 3 periodical publications in the field of cultural diplomacy. He added that they are interested in spreading Russian culture and language abroad. In this context, he suggested the possibility of cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs in this regard, which was welcomed by ECFA Director.

2- Delivering a speech before the Arab and Russian trainees (20 trainees) at the Yevgeny Primakov Center, on May 18, 2023, about Egypt-Russia relations on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of their establishment. Ms. Victoria Karslieva, Director of the Center, raised the possibility of cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, in the field of holding joint seminars, conferences, and other activities directed primarily to

youth. Ambassador Saad expressed ECFA's welcoming to cooperate with the Center on a case-by-case basis, especially since it bears the name of one of the senior Russian politicians and academics who was known for his openness to the Arab world, his interest in its issues, and seeking to strengthen Russia's relations with its countries.

3- Participation in the annual meeting of the Strategic Vision Group: Russia - Islamic World, at the invitation of Mr. Rustam Minnikhanov, President of the Russian Republic of Tatarstan, on May 19, 2023, whereby Ambassador Saad delivered a speech before the main session - which was attended by ambassadors of Arab and Islamic states accredited to Russia, including Ambassador Nazih El Naggary, Egypt's Ambassador to Russia - on "Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values as a Basis for Interreligious Cooperation," in which he discussed the new concept of the Russian foreign policy strategy and the stature of the Islamic world in this strategy, as well as the commonalities between Russia and the Islamic world with regard to respect for traditional values and the concept of the family as a sacred social entity and recognizing religious and cultural diversity and protecting it.

4- A symposium on the evening of May 19, 2023, at the headquarters of the Exhibition Authority in Kazan, on "Egypt-Russia relations on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of their establishment," in which Ambassador Nazih El Naggary and a group of Russian experts and specialists participated, including a representative of Rosatom company, which is implementing Al-Dabaa project, as well as a representative of the Russian Central Bank, and another from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, in addition to other Russian experts and officials. The developments of these relations in their various fields, and the challenges they face in connection with the war in Ukraine and its regional and international repercussions, were discussed.

Lecture by Ambassador Ezzat Saad on "International Economic Relations and Economic Diplomacy"

On May 25, 2023, Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, gave a lecture on "International Economic Relations and Economic Diplomacy," which was organized by the Scientific Research Office IMCT, in which he indicated that it can be argued that international economic relations are the communications, interactions, and activities of an economic nature that take place between states or even between multinational companies. International economic relations include institutions that serve these relations and provide tools for their advancement, such as international financial institutions, monetary and credit institutions, etc. As for economic diplomacy, it simply means the states' efforts aimed at crystallizing and formulating economic policies adopted by states, whether bilaterally or in a multilateral framework, to enhance their economic relations, including stimulating trade exchanges and other aspects of cooperation of an economic nature.

It can be argued that the global economic system has developed since the end of World War II in the direction of greater cooperation at times and further competition at other times. It is noted here that developed countries seem to be more cooperative among each other to consolidate their control and achieve their interests, which is embodied, for example, in the G7 versus the G77+China. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development constituted an arena for this conflict, a trend that relapsed and failed.

Developed countries have returned to their hegemony over the global economic system, as embodied in the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995. Therefore, at the level of international economic groupings that emerged in the post-World War II period, we find: the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Trade Organization.

Ambassador Saad also tackled the concept of international economic organizations, their mission and importance, indicating that they are an entity or institution established by a group of states under an international treaty, aiming to achieve certain purposes and having an independent legal personality separate from the states participating in it and which have established it. The organization may be international (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) or regional (the European Union - the African Economic Community). In this context, Ambassador Saad discussed the issue of economic integration, and the special importance it has enjoyed since the end of World War II, after the devastation it caused. He also addressed a number of economic concepts and definitions, such as the law of supply and demand, financial and monetary policies, economic systems and their types, international trade policies, inflation rate, financial inclusion, economic recession, and the balance of payments. He also presented the sustainable development strategy (Egypt's Vision 2030) in its three dimensions (The economic dimension - the social dimension - the environmental dimension).

Participation of Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi in a Symposium Entitled “Dialogue between the Great Wall of China and the Pyramids”

On June 4, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Orabi, ECFA Chairman, participated in a symposium entitled “Dialogue between the Great Wall of China and the Pyramids,” at the St. Regis Hotel, on the sidelines of the visit of the Communist Party of China delegation headed by Mr. Qu Qingshan, Member of the CPC Central Committee and president of the Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee. ECFA Chairman extended his gratitude to Mr. Qingshan, his accompanying delegation, and to Mr. Liao Liqiang, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Cairo, affirming that this visit adds more vitality and further momentum to the strong relations binding Egypt and China for thousands of years.

El-Orabi also expressed his deep satisfaction with the internal and external policies of the Communist Party of China, and its positions on many issues of a regional and international nature, as well as its valuable initiatives, especially what was announced by His Excellency President Xi Jinping, over the last decade, and also over the decades that preceded that. He indicated in this regard that Egypt has joined and interacted with many of these initiatives, which reflects the similar and sometimes identical Egypt and China positions. Egypt also joined the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation in 2000, and even co-chaired that forum alongside China in 2006 for a few years. Egypt welcomed the establishment of the China–Arab States Cooperation Forum, which was launched in Cairo, the headquarters of the League of Arab States, in 2004. Egypt became a member of the Belt and Road Initiative, immediately after its launch by President Xi Jinping.

In fact, China's standpoints in supporting these and other initiatives, which emanate from the CPC and its prominent leaders, are the same as Egypt's standpoints. The two countries always seek to maintain and enhance internal, regional and international stability, since it is the pillar of development, and a basic condition for achieving the well-

being society that peoples aspire to. Among the important Chinese initiatives are: the Global Security Initiative launched by the Chinese President at the Boao Forum for Asia in April 2022, which is based on six principles supported by Egypt; The Global Development Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping to strengthen international cooperation on development at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, which then gained the support of more than a hundred states, including Egypt, and more than twenty international organizations. This is in addition to President Xi Jinping's Global Civilization Initiative launched during the high-level meeting of the Communist Party of China's dialogue with global political parties in March 2023, which upholds the values of peace, development, democratic justice, freedom, and equity for all peoples of the world.

Moreover, there is also the “Chinese Modernization and the World” initiative, which was launched by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang in April 2023. Modernization is considered an inevitable option for the development process in China, which has lasted for a hundred years, and its steps have accelerated since the 18th CPC National Congress, especially under the leadership of its Central Committee. There is no doubt that this initiative, which reflects the Chinese experience throughout the twentieth century until present, is an inspiring initiative for all our developing countries and economies, including Egypt, which has benefited from the accumulation of Chinese experiences and expertise in shaping the features of our national plans to achieve sustainable development.

Participation of Amb. Ezzat Saad in a forum of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on “Combating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals”

On July 5, 2023, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad presented a paper entitled “Development Challenges in a Changing Global Environment,” at the forum organized by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Network of think tanks on “Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, under the slogan “Combating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals.” Ambassador Saad indicated that it is no secret that today's world faces enormous and unprecedented challenges and threats at all levels. Within a few years, the world witnessed a state of international competition, on the commercial and geopolitical levels, the repercussions of which led to an increase in already existing fears related to the issues of disarmament, terrorism, extremism, climate change, scarcity of resources, as well as the gap between developed and developing countries, and increasing rates of poverty, social marginalization, and forced displacement, worsening asylum and migration, increasing organized crime, and disparities in access to basic economic and social benefits around the world.

There is also no doubt that the current global international environment, which is based on competition among major powers as previously mentioned, constitutes a major obstacle to any sustainable growth that would allow fighting poverty in many regions. The Covid-19 pandemic has also exacerbated this competition and multiplied the protectionist pressures in the global economy, at the expense of global and regional economic integration, and the right of countries to choose sustainable growth models that are compatible with their value system and interests.

In this context, it is in no way possible for any country to work alone to confront such complex and intertwined repercussions. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation among international units at all levels and in all fields in order for these crises to be overcome, in a manner that achieves security, stability and prosperity for the international community. Perhaps among the most prominent global initiatives that have been put forward to achieve this, and which must be supported, are: the Global Development Initiative (GDI), which was proposed by His Excellency Chinese President Xi Jinping at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021.

As for the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron to formulate "A New Global Financing Pact", the summit of which Paris hosted on June 22 and 23, 2023, it is still too early to judge the extent to which developing countries will benefit from it to confront the effects of climate change and combat poverty.

Visit by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad to the Republic of Uzbekistan

At the invitation of the Uzbek government, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad visited the Republic of Uzbekistan on the period from 8 to 11 July 2023, to participate in monitoring the early presidential elections, along with a team of international observers, amounting to about (940) international observers, who were invited on an individual basis, or by regional and international organizations of which Uzbekistan is a member. The incumbent president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, won a third presidential term for a period of 7 years, after amending the constitution and extending the presidential term from 5 to 7 years, by obtaining 87.1% of the votes. The voter turnout rate was 79.8%, as 4 candidates ran in the electoral race: the winning president from the Liberal Democratic Party, Ulugbek Inoyatov from the People's Democratic Party, Robakhon Makhmudova from the Adolat Social Democratic Party, and Abdushukur Khamzaev from the Uzbek "Ecological Party".

Ambassador Saad conducted a number of interviews, on the sidelines of the visit, arranged by the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs: a meeting at the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies, under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as he met with Mr. Alisher Kadirov, Head of the Institute. The conversation discussed future cooperation between the Institute and the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. The meeting also tackled regional developments in both the Central Asian region and the Middle East, with a particular focus on the foreign policy of both Uzbekistan and Egypt. He also held a meeting at the Institute for Advanced International Studies at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, whereby he met with Mr. Sherzod Abdullayev, Director of the Institute, who presented the Institute's activities since its establishment a year ago. Ambassador Saad gave a presentation of ECFA's activities, its organizational structure, and its publications. The director of the Uzbek Institute requested to conclude a cooperation agreement with ECFA, which was welcomed.

In addition, during his visit, Ambassador Saad met with Ms. Ambassador Amira Fahmy, Egyptian Ambassador to Uzbekistan, who presented the significant opportunities available to Egypt to enhance economic cooperation and trade exchanges with Uzbekistan, noting that a delegation from Hassan Allam Holding Company operating in the fields of energy and infrastructure, El Sewedy Electric Cables Company, and ACDIMA Pharmaceuticals Company are planning to visit Uzbekistan before the end of July 2023, and there are daily charter flights from Uzbekistan to the tourist resorts in Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada, as Egypt has become the number one tourist destination for Uzbekistan.

Participation of Ambassador Ezzat Saad a Symposium on "The June 2013 Revolution and Egyptian Foreign Policy .. Challenges and Achievements" at the Supreme Council of Culture

On July 12, 2023, Ambassador Ezzat Saad participated in a symposium on "The June 2013 Revolution and Egyptian Foreign Policy .. Challenges and Achievements" within the framework of a series of seminars held by the Supreme Council of Culture on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the June 2013 Revolution, with the participation of: Prof. Dr. Ali El-Din Hilal, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Youssef Ahmed, Professor of Political Science at Cairo University, and Prof. Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Morsi, Deputy Rapporteur of the Political Science Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture, while the symposium was moderated by Prof. Dr. Hussein Hosny, media anchor, Professor of Journalism at the 6th of October University, and member of the Youth Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture.

In this context, Ambassador Saad indicated that those concerned with studying Egyptian foreign policy have come to distinguish a number of circles of external action (the Arab - the African - the international circle), and within the latter the circle of the Islamic world, and the American and European circles. He added that the division is flexible and the circles are overlapping by the nature of foreign policy itself. In addition, there are new action circles that have been created, namely the Asian Circle (East - South - Southeast - Central - Central Asia and the Caucasus), the East Mediterranean Circle, and the Levant Circle (Egypt, Iraq and Jordan).

In this context, it is noted that Egypt's relative weight within the global order has increased, and it is the result of a number of comparative advantages that Egypt has succeeded in accumulating over the last eight years, starting with its pioneering experience in the field of the war on terrorism, passing by development experiences in the field of energy and infrastructure, and Egypt's active diplomatic role within multilateral institutions, whether regional or international, especially in issues of global trade, energy, climate change, and global security. With the invitations that Egypt receives from these forums, whether official or informal (BRICS - Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)), it has been able to put forward many ideas or initiatives, as happened at the Climate Summit held in Egypt in November 2022.

In terms of contents, President El-Sisi often emphasizes the intrinsic link between the internal stability of the state and the stability of the region in which it is located. The path to achieving sustainable and secure peace in a region like the Middle East does not lie in imported foreign solutions and connection to the global economy, or even the establishment of a regional collective security system, as suggested by the major powers from time to time. The solution, from President El-Sisi's perspective, lies in enhancing the internal stability of the countries of the region and allowing them to rebuild economically, politically, and militarily, without dictates from abroad. Strengthening national systems and empowering the state would help the state contribute to the stability, security and economic development of the entire region.

In general, the features of foreign policy during the era of the June Revolution include: equality, mutual respect, and non-interference in internal affairs in order to achieve and sustain common interests, partnership, independent national decision-making, preservation of the nation-state, and respect for its sovereignty, as well as cautiousness, strategic self-restraint, avoiding clash, careful reading of Egyptian priorities and interests, and recognition of the interests of other partners. This is clear, for example, in the Egyptian approach to the Ethiopian dam crisis and the Libyan crisis. This is while there are new trends in Egyptian foreign policy, including: the Egypt-Greece-Cyprus tripartite cooperation mechanism, the Egyptian orientation towards the Arab Mashreq, and the new orientation towards the Red Sea region and the Horn of Africa.

However, there are a number of related challenges: internal challenges, which are the most dangerous and most important (economic conditions - population growth and its repercussions on the development process), external challenges: crises in the immediate neighborhood (Libya - Sudan - Palestine), and changes in the regional and international environment.

Ambassador Ezzat Saad's participation in the second "Africa - Russia" Summit

In the period from 25 to 29 July 2023, Ambassador Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, visited the Russian Federation, upon a personal invitation to participate in the Second Africa-Russia Summit, which was hosted by the city of Saint Petersburg, the old capital of Russia, and which was held under the slogan "Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Summit", which aimed to strengthen relations between Russia and African countries, especially in the areas of politics, security, economic development, science and technology, infrastructure, education and culture. The summit's agenda included more than 30 discussion sessions on the main issues of Africa-Russia cooperation, during which face-to-face interactions took place between politicians, businessmen, experts and the media. The summit issued a final statement and a joint action plan until 2026, as well as a plan for cooperation in the field of counterterrorism and another to activate coordination between the two sides in foreign policy.

While Russia seemed determined to hold the summit, after postponing it in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine, despite the intense pressure exerted by the United States and its European allies, especially Germany and France, the countries of the continent saw it as an opportunity to adopt pragmatic approaches that would allow them to benefit from the potentials and opportunities provided by the Russian market, despite the harsh Western sanctions imposed on it. Unlike other major powers competing in Africa, which have announced a clearly defined strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, such as the United States, France, and the European Union, Russia has no such strategy. In this context, the final statement issued by the first summit - which was launched in October 2019 under the co-chairmanship of Egypt, the then-Chair of the African Union, and Russia, under the slogan "Peace, Security and Development" - is seen as the initial basis for the Africa-Russia partnership, or rather, Russia's African strategy.

It could be argued that the Russian side has adopted a clear economic approach to the summit, which is evident not only from its venue in the city's largest exhibition halls, where some of Russia's latest weapons production was displayed, including drones, but also in terms of the participants in the opening session, alongside President Putin, and the current chair of the African Union (Comoros). Dilma Rousseff, President of the BRICS New Development Bank, former President of Brazil, as well as the President of the African Export-Import Bank, participated. The participation of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All

Russia in the opening session came to emphasize Russia's interest in highlighting the cultural and religious commonalities with Africa in terms of its adherence to traditional values versus "Western liberal values."

At the conclusion of his presentation, President Putin announced that Russia would provide between 25,000 and 50,000 tons of grain free of charge to Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and Eritrea in the coming months, and that Russia would bear the cost of delivering these shipments.

We estimate that holding the summit in itself represents a significant success for Russia. Russian analysts have confirmed that their country has great capabilities to establish mutually beneficial cooperation for both sides in the future, especially in the fields of energy, health, education, information and communications technology, food security, as well as technical, economic, and trade cooperation, in addition to security and military cooperation.

ECFA Participation in the Conference of “Egypt and Russia .. Eighty Years of Strategic Partnership”

On the 19th of August 2023, Ambassadors Mohamed Al Oraby and Dr. Ezzat saad, the chairman of the board and the director respectively, participated in “Egypt and Russia ... Eighty Years of Strategic Partnership” conference. This conference is organized by Dialogue Center for Political and Media Studies, in cooperation with Russian House in Egypt and Egyptian Russian Institution for Culture and Science. Participated in the conference number of officials, diplomats, and academics.

The conference addressed the topics that focus on different aspects of the relations between Egypt and Russia on bilateral and international levels. The first topic of the conference is “Egypt and Russia ... a Rich History and a Well-Established Strategic Track”. The second topic is “Egypt and Russia ... Effective Economic Partnership”, and the third topic is “Egyptian Russian Cooperation ... Promising Prospects”.

The participants agreed that the relation between the two countries goes back to centuries before the establishment of the diplomatic relations between both countries in 1943. In the latest years, Egypt and Russia started to build a new era of effective strategic relations in a framework of bilateral relations. These relations based on consultation and coordination in different issues of mutual interest, as both countries have shared a close visions on the internal and external levels. The strategic partnership agreement between both countries, which entered into force in 2021, affirms the relations between the two countries in this regard.

In this regard, the participants stressed that there are many promising chances to enhance cooperation and partnership between both countries, in a way that achieves mutual interests of both countries in the challenging world, and this cooperation needs to be done without delay.

Participation of Dr. Yousry Abo Shady in the 67th Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency

In the period from 25th to 29th of September 2023, Dr. Yousry Abo Shady, member of the council, participated in the 67th conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

Invited to the conference the 177 member states of the Agency, including Gambia and Cabo Verde, the latest countries from Africa to join the Agency. This is in addition to the participation of high level delegation, including the vice-president of the Republic of Iran Mohamed Islam, and number of ministers of Energy, Science, Environment, and Foreign Affairs, as some of them spoke with recorded video. The Ambassador of Thailand Ms. Vilawan Mngklaten is the first women to chair the conference since the origins of the Agency in 1957, succeeding the Italian Ambassador Alexandro Cortese.

In this year, The Egyptian delegation which attended the conference included heads of atomic energy authority, nuclear stations, nuclear materials, and nuclear censorship. The speech of Egypt is delivered by the Egyptian Minister of Electricity Dr. Mohamed Shaker through a recorded video. The Egyptian delegation is chaired by Egyptian Ambassador to Vienna Mr. Mohamed Al Mulla.

In the beginning of the conference, it was approved to extend the period of the general director of the Agency, Rafael Grocy, for four years. Dr. Ghada Wali, the representative of United Nations in Vienna, delivered the speech of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and she praised the role of the agency and its importance in combating climate change and its mission in Ukraine.

Representatives of 136 country spoke in the conference except Hungary. The speeches are published on the official website of the conference. Hungary didn't deliver a speech, this year and the last year, as an objection and refusal to implement energy sanctions on Russia, and refusing European Union pressures. On the other hand, Hungary is continuing the construction of the Russian Reactor in Bakish in Hungary.

The budget of the Agency for the next year is approved and reached 370 million euro (with increase 23 million), in addition to 60 million dollar (31 million less) from voluntary participation. China is in the second place of participation in Agency's budget with share of 14.7%, but the share of United States of America is 25%, and shares of Japan 7.7%, Germany 5.9%, United Kingdom 4.2%, France 4.1%, Russia 1.8%, and Egypt 0.134%.

In his speech, Minister Dr. Mohamed Shaker thanked the agency for its participation in COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, and for the hope initiative of curing Cancer in seven African countries. Also, he requested lifting the unjustified restrictions that is imposed in nuclear technology. Adding that the importance of helping developing countries in the nuclear field, and to increase the budget of technical cooperation. Dr. Shaker referred to the rejection of Egypt on the condition of additional protocol for cooperation with the

agency. As this rejection is valid until to achieve the universality of the treaty of non-proliferation nuclear weapons.

In a related context, the minister said that the permission has been issued for the construction of four reactors in Dabaa, and the construction already begun, and Egypt ratified on the agreement of nuclear security.

In the agenda of the agency and for the first time, there was a request from Palestine and the Arab countries to change the status of Palestine in the agency from observer member to a member that have the rights of membership. In this regard, Egypt presented a suggestion to change the membership status of Palestine to participate in its activities. This suggestion is faced by objection from Israel, and the support of USA to Israel, hence, voting is conducted and got approval of 92 countries, rejection of 5 countries, and 21 countries didn't vote. By this way, the official decision was changing the status of Palestine from observer to participant country in the activities of the agency, following that the Palestinian ambassador talked for the first time in the conference.

In this conference as well, Egypt suggested a resolution for the implementation of the agency safeguarding system and the evacuation of the Middle East from nuclear and mass destruction weapons. Egypt is used to submit this resolution every year and to put it for direct vote since 2006. This is always gets approval without ways to implement it. The reason for the acceptance of the resolution is the absence of direct mention of Israel in it.

Regarding this resolution, Israel, as usual, objected on the second point in the resolution which is related to joining the non-proliferation treaty. Egypt requested to vote on this point and on the whole resolution as a whole. The voting results as follow:

The second point gets approval of 114 countries, rejection of Israel, and abstaining on voting from 14 countries (USA, Canada, Bahama, India, Albania, Rwanda, Togo, Angola, Uganda, Democratic Congo, and Tanzania). India justifies that it didn't vote because it sees the agency is not politically responsible for inviting to this treaty.

The voting for the resolution as a whole has got the approval of 115 country, zero rejection, and abstaining of 8 countries of voting (USA, Israel, Canada, Bahama, Rwanda, Togo, Uganda, and Tanzania).

In a different context in the conference, 11 countries has been chosen as new members in the conservative council, which constitutes of 35 countries. These countries are Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Indonesia, Korea, Holland, Paraguay, Spain, and Ukraine. Three Arab countries became members in the council which are Algeria, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Four African countries became members in the council, these countries are South Arica, Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Namibia.

On the other hand, there were several exhibitions from the participating countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Germany, Brazil, Canada, Bangladesh, and USA.

Participation of Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in the Ceremony of Launching the Arabic Edition of Mr. Xi Jinping Book "Respecting and Guaranteeing Human Rights"

On 27th of September 2023, and upon invitation from Chinese Embassy in Cairo, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of ECFA, participated in the ceremony of launching the Arabic Edition of "Xi Jinping book: Respecting and Guaranteeing Human Rights", and a symposium on "Enhancing Human Rights through Development ... A Chinese-Arabic Vision", at Nile Ritz Carlton Hotel, Cairo.

He pointed out that it is not an exaggeration to assert that President Xi Jinping's political discourse mainly revolves around the topic of development, preparing the internal and international environment for a comprehensive and sustainable development that benefits all countries specially the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As well, if we look at the initiatives by President Xi Jinping, since his inauguration, we will find that it's mainly for serving development. These initiatives include the initiative that related to establishing Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank, Belt and Road Initiative with all its components, Global Security Initiative and others.

In this regard, it's normal for People's Republic of China to be in the front for the comprehensive development, as it succeeded to duplicate its GDP for more than ten times, and to eradicate poverty. The success of Chinese model of development is due to the commitment of the political elite to establish peace and stability in the country, as a prerequisite for the desired development on the long run. In this context, at many occasions, the Chinese president stressed on avoiding causes of conflict, instability, and international competition, as this affects negatively the process of political and economic decision making, which are important for the process of development.

The pioneering Chinese experience in growth and development fields, affirms that the economic, and development changes are done in the framework of internal context in each country, as there's no one clear recipe for success to be copied and implemented in other countries. From the Chinese experience in achieving development, we see the limited role of international assistance in this regard, as the Chinese experience proved the vital role of the elite in the success of development based on internal factors. Stressing on the right to development as the core of human rights, and

underdevelopment is a serious restriction on human rights in general. There's no doubt that the book of President Xi Jinping "Respecting and Guaranteeing Human Rights", as a result of the pioneering Chinese experience in growth and development, will be a huge addition to understand the right in development as one of the human rights.

As the political thought of President Xi Jinping reflects development, the studies of the United Nations asserted about the relation between human rights as general and the responsibilities of the international community in creating opportunities to benefit from all these rights. These studies, as well, clarify the difficulty to separate the internal and international dimensions of development. Likewise, it should deal with human rights issues as a one unit, away from the western vision that is based on the priority of civil and political rights at the expense of economic, social, cultural rights.

China believes – as the majority of the developing countries – that it's necessary to find balance between the interests of the group and interests of the individual, in addition to participation in taking decisions that allow achieving this balance. In this regard, there's no doubt that those who benefit from the right of development could be countries, people, minorities, or individuals. The commitments of development will be included among the obligations that borne by the international community, international organizations, states, societies, and individuals.

Participation of Dr. Yousry Abo Shady in the International Forum of Primakov Center

In the period from 28th to 29th of September 2023, Dr. Yousry Abo Shady, member of the council, participated in the International Forum of Primakov Center in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The International forum, in seven sessions, focused on the discussion of the problems of the Middle East region, and the expected Russian role in this regard. In addition to discussing the problems of nuclear non-proliferation and how to achieve the goal of having the Middle East without nuclear and mass destruction weapons. Invitations to the conference has been presented to 25 specialists (experts and researchers) in these affairs from 13 countries including 11 Arab countries, which are: Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. This is in addition to invitations to Iran and Turkiye and to number of Russian experts and researchers.

In this forum, one of the important sessions is the one that is about how to evacuate the Middle East region from the nuclear and mass destruction weapons. But, it is said that this will not be useful as long as Israel have nuclear weapons, and the solution is to have another country in the region to possess a nuclear weapon, and the qualified country to that is Egypt. In comments on this point, Dr. Yousry stated that Iran already have a nuclear program that could be transferred to weapon, but Egypt don't have the same capabilities of the Iranian program, and its program is peaceful one.

On the other hand, in his speech, Dr. Yousry Abo Shady referred to 3 suggestions that may make Israel leave its nuclear weapons, these suggestions as follow:

- Collective decision from the countries of the region to threaten that it will withdraw from the non-proliferation treaty based on the decision of 1995, which is the evacuation of the Middle East from the nuclear weapons. This decision didn't take place, therefore, this treaty is illegal to proceed wih it.
- Learning from the experience of South Africa in leaving its nuclear weapons in 1991, before the end of raciast policies. In the Middle East, This needs the integration of all Palestinians and to have a one country in which all have the same rights and duties.
- Thinking of joint procedures among the countries of the region including Israel to increase the trust of not using nuclear or mass destruction weapons by any country. This could be done through forming a regional body of all countries of the region that similar to regional organizations like EURATOM in Europe and ABACC in Latin America, and to

be its goal to build trust in the sector of nuclear weapons and to support the mission of International Atomic Energy Agency, and for Israel to declare its peaceful nuclear program and to ratify on the treaty of banning nuclear tests and to have initial signing on the agreements of preventing weapons of mass destruction. This regional bod could be called MEATOM.

In the discussions, there's an Iranian suggestion about having balance among the nuclear powers in the region, which is to have another nuclear state in the region.

In the discussions, as well, there are talks about the wanted and expected Russian role in the problems of the region and in the economic crises. In addition to that, there was a question from one of the Russian officials at the symposium about inquiries from Russians about the benefits of Russia's cooperation with the countries of the region and for its support to them in the past. Dr. Abo Shady said that there is cooperation among Egyptians and Russians since the Soviet Union in different sectors along the history. Also, these relations is appreciated by Egyptians and they don't forget that. Besides, they have empathy regarding its special military operation in Ukraine.

Participation of Ambassador Ezzat Saad in the Third Forum of Silk Road Network for Civil Society Organizations (SIRONET) Entitled “People – To – People Bonds”

In the period from 16 to 22 October 2023, with invitation from Silk Road Network for Civil Society Organizations (SIRONET), Dr. Ezzat Saad visited Beijing to participate in the events of the third Belt and Road Forum of the Network under the title of “People – To – People Bonds” on 19 – 21 October. In his speech, Dr. Ezzat Saad expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to Silk Road Network for Civil Society Organizations (SIRONET) and to its leadership for the kind invitation to participate in this important international event, which is held to address the topic “Bonds among People” as one of the important aspects that should be enhanced in the international relations.

Dr. Ezzat Saad pointed out that the modern Chinese strategic thought is aiming to ensure positive and interacting relations with its neighboring countries. As China sought to enhance comprehensive and interactive development with the developing countries as a key to build a new type of international relations. In order to achieve this, it was necessary for China to be opened up to other countries with its diversified culture and civilization, and to participate in building comprehensive economic and geopolitical environment as a priority for Chinese strategy. In this context, Belt and Road initiative, which celebrates its 10th anniversary of the launch by President Xi Jinping, is an important component to build a group that shares the future of humanity. This is in addition to many other initiatives like Global Security Initiative and Global Development initiative.

Since the 18th conference of the Chinese Communist Party in 2018, China has paid a big attention to the cooperation with the developing countries. As, his excellency president Xi Jinping mentioned that “A large number of developing countries are natural allies to China in the international affairs, and we should adhere to justice when sharing interests, and to be cooperative and in solidarity with the developing countries”.

This cooperation appears in Belt and Road Initiative in a framework of cooperation with different regional groups in Africa, Arabic region, and Latin America and others. This is in addition to bilateral and multilateral cooperation among China and many other countries. The Chinese leadership has given attention to the principle of “Solidarity” which appears in the report of his Excellency President Xi Jinping in the 20th conference of Chinese Communist Party, as the president described it by the “Power” and this is the only thing that leads to victory to serve people with honesty and sincerity, and to adhere to the principle “Everything we do, is for the people, and by depending on them”, in addition to the principle “From and to the masses”.

In the framework of cooperation among China and the other countries, China signed more than 200 cooperation agreements under Belt and Road initiative with 152 countries and 32 international organizations. The joint action initiative for building a Silk Road community implemented more than 300 cooperation projects in the entertainment field, and partnerships with nearly 600 non-governmental organizations between China and the world. Today, the membership of International Silk Road reached more than 500 member. Until the end of 2021, China launched a scientific and technological cooperation with 84 countries, and supported 1118 joint research projects with total investment of 2.99 Billion yuan (418.92 million dollar).

It's noteworthy that at the first Chinese/Arabic summit, which is held in December 2022, China promised to work on enhancing cooperation between 500 Chinese and Arabic cultural and tourism institutions, and to train 1000 cultural and tourism talents from the Arab world, and to work with the Arab side to implement a mutual translation projects for 100 classical works, as well as a cooperation project for 50 audio-visual projects. In this regard, it's noted that the Chinese plans and regulations has added to the world in which civilizations learn, appreciate, and cooperate with each other.

In a related context, Amb/Saad asserted on the important role of civil society organizations in enhancing relations among people through activating and maximizing cooperation among different think tanks to constitute the continental cooperation, in order to achieve common good for all humanity and solve the various problems that prevent prosperity. In this regard, he appreciated the role and efforts of Silk Road Network of Civil Society Organizations (SIRONET), as it characterized by its openness, inclusiveness, equality and mutual respect. And It is aim to foster cooperation, coexistence, and common benefits among countries and achieve sustainable development.

Also, he expressed his happiness for the flourishing relations among ECFA and number of Chinese research centers and Chinses thought centers, as it developed over the years. These relations flourished through many meetings that held between ECFA and Chinese centers either in Egypt or China. These centers include SIRONET, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), China Center for Contemporary World Studies (CCCWS), China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), and Egyptian Chinese Friendship Association.

Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaity's participation in the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaity, ECFA member, participated in the activities of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, which was held in the Chinese capital, Beijing, last October, whereby he delivered a speech, on October 17, 2023, in the session entitled "New Space for BRI Cooperation: Green, Digital & Innovation," during which he indicated that the Health Silk Road aims to enhance public health and enhance international cooperation in the healthcare sector by strengthening and expanding global healthcare infrastructure, which includes direct assistance such as medical supplies and equipment, infrastructure projects such as hospitals and research centers, and cooperative initiatives such as training programs and research cooperation, noting that Egypt and China stood together to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, culminating in the establishment of vaccine storage and manufacturing in Egypt as a hub to serve local and African needs.

In addition, the Digital Silk Road is a vital field of cooperation between the two countries, as many digital projects are currently being established in Egypt, and are being implemented in partnership with Chinese companies to enhance communication within Egyptian territories and with China and the countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. In this context, achieving sustainable, green and flexible connectivity between the city, ports and industry is vital. As of October 2023, all Egyptian ports have become green. So instead of entering ports, boats arrive by tugboats, and thus do not generate exhaust when they enter without running their engines.

On the other hand, Ambassador Al-Zimaity delivered a speech, on October 18, 2023, in a session entitled "Common Opportunities, Shared Future"; in which he noted that in the context of confronting the climate crisis, an increasing number of governments and companies appear committed to initiatives designed to reduce carbon emissions, promote sustainable development, and achieve the transition to renewable energy, circular economy, and sustainable agricultural practices.

He also added that aid has become the next battlefield in the competition for global influence, referring to the burden of debt borne by developing countries, which has reached alarming levels, in the wake of the 'triple shock' of the Covid-19 pandemic, which delayed growth and sparked a rise in healthcare expenditure, the rise in U.S. interest rates, which hit developing markets' currencies and increased debt servicing costs, and finally the Russia-Ukraine war, which fueled rising commodity prices, thus inflating import bills in developing countries, pointing out that the 91 poorest countries in the world spend nearly 20% on average of their revenues on debt servicing, which is almost three times more than in 2013. Therefore, efforts must be strengthened to confront these

challenges, adding that it is necessary to invest in high-quality, affordable education in developing countries, as China has done, and cooperation in localizing industries and exchanging expertise and knowledge in the field of high technology must be part of global supply chains to promote development and achieve common benefits.

Ensuring the best practices in agricultural and irrigation techniques to combat desertification and water shortages, and growing climate-resistant crops and increasing productivity, will help enhance food security, which is vital, especially in Africa, in addition to focusing on green sustainable development, and working towards overcoming the influential geopolitical differences taking place on the international scene.

Participation by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in the Event of the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, on “The Middle East in a Changing World Order”

On October 30, 2023, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad participated in an event organized by the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, on “The Middle East in a Changing World Order”, with a paper entitled “The Future of Security in the Middle East after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.” He expressed his gratitude for the kind invitation to participate in this important event on the Middle East region, which is being held in a very delicate circumstance that is shaking the foundations of the Middle East countries and all countries that love peace, justice and equality. In this context, Ambassador Saad focused his speech on the Palestinian cause, which represents the most pressing cause for the countries of the region and the world, and whose recent developments have shown a high degree of risks and threats that are being out of control.

He pointed out that what has been happening in Palestine since October 7 confirms two certain facts: The first is that the occupation is completely rejected, no matter how long it lasts, and normalization will not help anything, just as the occupation generates a military or violent reaction from the occupied party, even if the military balance is not in its favour. This is an important lesson from the hideous history of European colonialism, especially for the countries of the Middle East. As for the second fact, it is that in a country where a racist, murderous criminal is in charge of the Ministry of National Security, it is normal for the Palestinian people to reach a state of despair and a sense of injustice, which prompts them to do what they did on October 7.

In this regard, Ambassador Saad denounced the criminal practices of the racist ruling coalition in Israel under the strange American-European silence that completely undermines the West’s false moral slogans against Russia, in connection with the Ukrainian crisis. All the slogans that the West raised in connection with Ukraine - such as protecting civilians, rejecting occupation, and respecting international laws of war - were completely absent when talking about Israel, despite the brutality of its actions. Indeed, leaders of the corrupt ruling elite in the West have flocked to Israel since October 7 to bless its barbaric actions in Palestine. It is ironic in this context that the United States is still trying to frame the Ukrainian crisis, not as a geopolitical conflict between the West and Russia, but as a defense of the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Visit by Ambassador Ayman Mousharafa to Belgrade

During November 2023, Ambassador Ayman Mousharafa, ECFA Member, visited the Serbian capital, Belgrade, within the framework of academic cooperation between Egypt and Serbia. He gave a lecture at the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to diplomats and those interested in Middle East and North African affairs. He also gave two lectures at two Serbian think tanks, in the presence of the Egyptian Ambassador to Belgrade, Bassel Salah. Ambassador Mousharafa reviewed the historical developments of the Palestinian cause since the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace agreement and the successive Egyptian mediations to move the peace process forward based on the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the two-state solution, with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

He also reviewed the Egyptian mediation efforts to halt the bloodshed of the Palestinians following the successive Israeli attacks against Gaza and its success in achieving a ceasefire after each attack, as well as the Egyptian efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering and mitigating the effects of the siege on the Palestinian people through the Rafah crossing, in addition to its reconstruction efforts after each attack. He also tackled the developments in the Ethiopian dam crisis and Egypt's continued negotiations for nearly a decade to reach an agreement with the Ethiopian side on the management of the dam, since the Nile is an international river subject to binding legal agreements that cannot be amended unilaterally, with reference to the ambiguity imposed by the Ethiopian side on the management of the dam and its failure to consider environmental studies and its cross-border impacts on the two downstream countries. He also explained that Egypt depends on the Nile River for 96% of its water needs, and has entered the category of countries with water poverty.

On the other hand, Ambassador Mousharafa addressed the continued fluidity of the situation in Libya and its negative impact on Egyptian national security, with the fragmentation of the government's ability in Libya to control its borders, explaining the successive Egyptian efforts to find a solution to the Libyan crisis, and Cairo's hosting of many tribal, political and military events in an attempt to find common ground between them on the basis of which a national reconciliation is launched with a national unity government that would pave the way for presidential and parliamentary elections. He also discussed developments of the situation in Sudan, reviewing the roots of the current crisis and its causes, the importance of Sudan for Egypt and the historical relationship between the two peoples, concluding with a review of the Egyptian diplomacy efforts to mediate among the political factions in Sudan.

AVirtual Lecture by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi on “Egypt in the Contemporary International Relations” to the Serbian International Institute of Politics and Economics

On the 28th of November 2023, Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi presented a virtual lecture entitled “Egypt in the Contemporary International Relations”, this is based on a suggestion from the Serbian International Institute of Politics and Economics (IIPE). This lecture came in the light of cooperation between the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and the Serbian International Institute of Politics and Economics.

In the lecture, the ambassador affirmed on the importance of enhancing relations between Egypt and Serbia in the time of dangerous developments in the Middle East and the world as a whole. In this regard, it’s important intensify the efforts of both countries to confront the anarchy of the world. Also, it could be a chance for reapplying the non-alignment movement with edits upon it to cope with the changes in the international community.

Hence, the lecture included the situation in the Middle East and the role of Egypt in this regard. Therefore, the ambassador referred to the situation in the region, saying that it is full of conflicts, and Egypt is surrounded by different ones. So there’s need for new policies to deal with the transboundary crises in order to protect the country and its national security. Also, he pointed out that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the prominent one as Palestinians are suffering a lot, and the escalation in Gaza could lead to threats to the region with the possibility of extension of its effect to the western countries and USA. As well, this conflict witnessed the existence of state and non-state actors, so it’s important to find a solution for this conflict to prevent the escalation of the situation.

In this context, ambassador Al-Oraby said that Hamas movement gained popularity and support after its operation “Toofan Al-Aqsa”, as this lead to preventing the plans of New Middle East, and affected negatively the Abraham Accords, as well, the credibility of Israel in front of the international community.

Regarding the situation in Gaza, the ambassador added that there could be a possibility of extending the humanitarian truce and the continuity of exchanging the prisoners, and it’s expected that Israel will continue its operation after the truce. In this regard, the role of public opinion is important to perform pressure on Israel to not escalate the situation. As well, Israel should realize that it’s dealing with a new and trained generation of Hamas movement which is different from the past. Moreover, the nature of the Palestinian issue, and the future of it, will be determined after the next presidential elections of USA.

In a related context, the ambassador pointed out the role of Egypt in the Palestinian issue and the conflict, as saying that Egypt played the role of mediator, in addition to its efforts to pass humanitarian assistance through Rafah crossing, and to reach a humanitarian truce, alongside its attempts to reach a permanent ceasefire.

Regarding the Egyptian leadership, the ambassador said that President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has a vision for the Palestinian issue and for the future scenarios, as he suggested to have a demilitarized Palestinian state with the presence of international forces to guarantee security for both states Palestine and Israel, and for East Jerusalem to be the capital of Palestine.

In this context, the ambassador referred to the Iranian role in this conflict, and how Iran is trying to position itself as a regional power, hence this will lead to changes in the region. Therefore it's important to deal with this situation.

Concerning the situation in Sudan, ambassador Al-Oraby mentioned that Sudan is important for Egypt as it's trying to reach a ceasefire in Sudan to prevent escalation or attempts of dividing the state.

In the end, ambassador said that we cannot rely on the BRICS for changing the situation in the Middle East, as it's mainly an economic coalition not a political one that is concerned with these issues.

Other Contributions by ECFA Chairman, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby

In addition to the above-mentioned meetings, visits and events in which Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, ECFA Chairman, participated, His Excellency's participation included many activities during 2023, most notably:

- At the invitation of Mrs. Maryam Khalifa Al Kaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Cairo, Ambassador Mohammed El Oraby participated in a training workshop held by the Emirati Embassy during the period from May 1 to May 2, 2023, at the Nile Ritz Carlton Hotel, within the framework of the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy program entitled "Generations Diplomacy," which aims to exchange best diplomatic practices, knowledge, and skills, in addition to building the capabilities of Emirati and international diplomats.
- On May 8, 2023, Mostaqbal Watan Party hosted Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby, as part of the activities of the training forum to enhance the capabilities of the leaders and cadres of Mostaqbal Watan Party, on its second day, in a session entitled "Foreign Policy and National Security." The meeting covered an in-depth explanation of foreign policy, regional developments and the extent of their connection to the Egyptian interior. The session also discussed efforts to overcome obstacles facing Egyptian students in various countries around the world and the Egyptian role in welcoming our Sudanese brothers.
- On May 22, 2023, at the invitation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the first meeting of the Advisory Council of the Egypt Center for Youth Diplomacy, which His Excellency Dr. Ashraf Sobhy, Minister of Youth and Sports, issued a decision nominating Ambassador El-Oraby as its Chairman (Decision No. 576 of 2023 dated May 8, 2023).
- On May 29, 2023, and at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the Egyptian House of Representatives, Counsellor Ahmed Ezzat Manna, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the meeting of the African Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, to introduce the role of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and the tasks entrusted to it, as well as its efforts and future plans to strengthen Egypt-Africa relations.
- On June 17, 2023, at the invitation of the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in a panel discussion entitled "International and Regional Initiatives for Peace and Relief in Sudan: Priorities and Guarantees of Effectiveness," in the presence of Mr. Malik Agar, Vice President the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, and the accompanying high-level delegation from the Sudanese Foreign Ministry and the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.

- On July 13, 2023, on the occasion of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the glorious Throne Day, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the international symposium organized by the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences, Mohammed V University in Rabat, under the slogan: “His Majesty King Mohammed VI: The Royal Will to Make Morocco a Rising Country.”
- On July 18, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the graduation ceremony of the “seventh batch” of students of the University’s Faculty of Economics and Political Science for the year 2022/2023.
- On July 31, 2023, at the invitation of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated as a speaker in the opening session of the symposium held by the Association in cooperation with the Association of Arab Universities, under the slogan “Role of the Media in Enriching Dialogue Among Civilizations.”
- On October 18, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the training course on training a number of African journalists in the Egyptian Television building. His Excellency also participated in the celebration held by the Center for Middle East Research and Future Studies on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the glorious October War victories.
- On October 30, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the symposium organized by the Military Academy for Postgraduate and Strategic Studies, entitled “The October War and National Security Challenges.”
- On November 1, 2023, at the invitation of the Al-Hewar Center for Political and Media Studies, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the symposium organized by the Center, under the slogan “Egypt and Leadership for Peace in the Middle East.”
- On November 6, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in the graduation ceremony of the new diplomatic attaches, batch (55), at the invitation of Lieutenant General Ashraf Salem Zaher, Director of the Egyptian Military Academy.
- On November 22, 2023, at the request of the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated, as a speaker, in the roundtable organized by the Embassy, under the title: “The Non-Aligned Movement: Its Roles and Importance in Today’s World.”
- On November 28, 2023, Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in a symposium organized by the Rotary Club of Cairo, on “Analyzing the Consequences of the Heinous War against Gaza and Palestine, the Global Position, and Prospects for the Future.”
- ECFA Chairman also participated in the twenty-first edition of the “Doha Forum”, which was held in the Qatari capital on December 10 and 11, 2023, under the slogan “Building Shared Futures”, which witnessed in-depth discussions and dialogues between senior diplomats and prominent experts, opinion leaders and changemakers in the world about a number of pressing challenges and issues facing the world.

- Ambassador Mohamed El-Oraby participated in discussing a number of scientific theses over the course of 2023, including:
 - Master's thesis on "Yemeni Relations with the European Union: 2011 – 2022", dated June 17, 2023, at the Institute of Arab Research and Studies.
 - Master's thesis on "The Impact of Political Culture on the Democratic Transition Process: Egypt as a Model... from 2011 to 2019," dated June 22, 2023, at the Faculty of Commerce, Damanhour University.
 - Doctoral thesis on "The impact of China's foreign policy as an active force in the global order during the period 2011-2020", dated July 26, 2023, at the Asian Studies and Research Institute, Zagazig University.
 - Doctoral thesis on "Strategies of regional powers in the Middle East and their impact on Egyptian national security since 2011", dated July 31, 2023, at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University.
 - Master's thesis on "The role of the external factor on the hydro-strategic behavior of Ethiopia since 2011," dated September 15, 2023, at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University.
 - Master's thesis on "The Impact of the Arab Spring Revolutions on the Democratic Transition in the Arab Region: A Case Study of Tunisia...from 2011 to 2018," dated November 8, 2023, at the Faculty of Commerce, Damanhour University.

Chapter V

Press Statements

ECFA Statement Commenting on the 2021 Country Reports on Terrorism issued by the U.S. State Department (2 March 2023)

Commenting on the 2021 Country Reports on Terrorism issued by the U.S. State Department, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) would like to clarify the following in particular:

- 1- The report did not objectively address Egypt's relentless efforts to counter terrorism and extremism via a comprehensive approach that includes legal procedures and economic, social, religious, cultural and developmental policies that address all factors and unfavorable conditions that cause the existence of an incubator environment for terrorism.
- 2- The report neglected to refer to many oversight mechanisms guaranteed by the Egyptian constitution and relevant laws to deal with any possible violations of rights and freedoms, and to verify their guarantee within a full framework of independence and transparency under the rule of law.
- 3- ECFA affirms that such reports lack authenticity, as they depend on unsubstantiated data and reports provided by non-governmental organizations and entities, usually motivated by hostile political stances promoted by such organizations and entities, through groundless and illusory data and reports that are far from objectivity and credibility.

ECFA Statement on the Occasion of "Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Nakba" (15 May 2023)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) appreciates United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. A/77/L.24 issued in 2022 and stipulating - for the first time - to commemorate the anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, and to consider May 15 of each

year as a day to commemorate this anniversary, including establishing a high-level event marking the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, in the UN General Assembly Hall in New York on May 15, 2023, as evidence of the injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation authorities.

In this regard, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs affirms its absolute and complete support for international legitimacy resolutions regarding the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of its independent state on all the territories occupied by Israel since June 5, 1967, including East Jerusalem, demanding the complete withdrawal of the occupying authorities from these lands, the return of Palestinian refugees to their usurped lands, and their compensation in accordance with General Assembly Resolution No. 194 of 1949.

ECFA condemns the Israeli practices that violate the provisions and principles of international law, including the United Nations Charter. It also condemns the policies of demolishing houses, intimidating and displacing civilians, confiscating property, and other practices that violate the provisions of international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. ECFA also condemns the illegal processes of judaization, annexation and settlements of Palestinian lands, as well as the recent brutal military operation, which claimed the lives of many Palestinian civilians, and which coincides with the anniversary of the Nakba.

In this context, ECFA supports Palestinian and Arab efforts to restore Palestinian rights, welcoming the “For Palestine” campaign aimed at achieving this purpose and exposing racist Israeli violations in the occupied territories, which was adopted by the League of Arab States on May 10. It also supports the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and the civilian population under occupation, and to call on donor states to provide the necessary contributions to enable it to carry out its humanitarian missions.

ECFA reaffirms that the Palestinian people’s restoration of its full rights to establish its independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital is the pillar of the return of security, stability and prosperity to the peoples of the Middle East region. Therefore, ECFA calls on the international community - especially the major powers that continue to provide protection to exempt Israel from accountability - to assume their responsibilities in this regard in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international legitimacy resolutions in a manner that ensures the restoration of these rights and puts an end to the long-standing humanitarian tragedy, as soon as possible.

ECFA Statement on the Occasion of “Africa Day” (25 May 2023)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs proudly marks Africa Day, which falls on May 25 of each year, as the peoples and countries of the African continent celebrate this historic day, which coincides with the anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity sixty years ago. In 1963, the will and hopes of the peoples of the continent were embodied through close cooperation in establishing the Organization of African Unity in order to achieve independence and political liberation, and invest natural wealth and human resources to achieve economic development, leading to integration and unity among the peoples and countries of the continent.

On its part, Egypt has played a pioneering role in supporting many African sisterly states in obtaining independence and liberation from ancient and modern colonialism, and contributing to economic and social development processes. This role continued in light of the development of the African Union. The past years have witnessed strong and growing momentum in Egypt-Africa relations, whether at the bilateral or multilateral levels, to encompass all fields, whether security, through efforts to counter terrorism, organized crime, and human trafficking, or political, via consolidating peace through coordination and consultation on regional and international issues, and playing a positive and constructive role in resolving regional conflicts, and contributing to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as post-conflict reconstruction.

On the economic level, Egypt has pushed forward the wheel of sustainable development in the African Union 2063 Program, which includes approximately 18 sectors, in addition to maximizing intra-trade by establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, and revitalizing it by working to pump regional and international investments into infrastructure and production sectors. Likewise, Egypt has played - and continues to play - a pioneering role on the social level, in confronting the challenges and repercussions of the triad (Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and the Ukrainian crisis) on the economies of those countries, whether in terms of energy, food security, or water security. It also contributed to strengthening health systems and equitable vaccine production, as well as building cadres and increasing training courses. It also paid special attention to women and youth empowerment .

As ECFA celebrates this great occasion, confident of the strategic priority of Egypt’s African relations, and achieving integration among the countries of the continent on the basis of common interests and mutual benefits, it expresses its sincere hopes for strengthening further independence of African decision-making, in accordance with the interests and security of all the peoples of the continent, in addition to advancing steps

towards construction and peace, and strengthening African ties in all fields, in order to achieve greater progress and prosperity.

ECFA Statement of Solidarity with the Libyan People As a Result of Storm Daniel (13 September 2023)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs extends its deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to the brotherly Libyan people and to the families of the victims who died as a result of Storm “Daniel” and the floods that some Libyan regions witnessed and which resulted in heavy damage.

ECFA expresses its full solidarity with our Libyan brothers, wishing survival for the missing and a speedy recovery for the injured.

ECFA is following with sorrow what happened in Libya, and calls on all concerned international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, and at various levels, to lend a helping hand in relief efforts and mitigate the disastrous effects left by the storm, praying God Almighty to bless our brothers there, and in all countries, with security and safety.

ECFA appreciates the sympathy and humanitarian support shown by the political leadership in the Arab Republic of Egypt to our Libyan brothers, including declaring mourning in Egypt for three days.

ECFA Statement of Solidarity with the Moroccan People As a Result of the Earthquake (13 September 2023)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs extends its deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to the brotherly people of Morocco, and to the families of the victims who died as a result of the earthquake that hit a number of areas and resulted in heavy damage.

ECFA expresses its full solidarity with our brothers in Morocco, wishing survival for the missing and a speedy recovery for the injured.

ECFA is following with sorrow what happened in Morocco, and calls on all relevant international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, and at various levels, to lend a helping hand in relief efforts and mitigate the disastrous effects left by the earthquake, wishing our brothers there security and safety.

ECFA appreciates the sympathy and humanitarian support shown by the political leadership in the Arab Republic of Egypt to our brothers in Morocco, including declaring mourning in Egypt for three days.

**ECFA statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people, and
condemnation of the Israeli attacks series on Palestinian cities since
the dawn of October 7th 2023
(8 October 2023)**

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs affirms that the “Al-Aqsa Flood” operation is a logical consequence of the illegal Israeli presence in the occupied Palestinian territories, and its policies that included blatant racial discrimination, unjustified land usurpation, and unjust settlement encroachment, which deprived Palestinians of their basic rights amid extremely difficult living conditions, which no human being can bear.

The Council expresses its deep dissatisfaction with the policy of double standards of America adopted by Western countries, in particular the United States, and their inaction and silence in the face of Israeli practices and violations of Palestinian rights, their unequivocal support for the occupying Power and the obstruction of any efforts aimed at admitting Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. This has entrenched the chronic failure to comply with the relevant United Nations and Security Council resolutions and deprived the Palestinian people of any serious political prospect for settling the protracted conflict. Unfortunately, instead of dealing fairly with legitimate Palestinian rights, the United States has devoted its priority to the normalization process with Israel, ignoring successive Palestinian intifadas, most recently yesterday’s, which included warning messages of the repercussions of the continuation of the status quo.

In this regard, the Council strongly condemns the series of Israeli attacks on Palestinian cities since the dawn of Saturday, the seventh of October, which resulted in hundreds of victims and injuries, including the massive destruction caused to the property of Palestinian civilians, stressing its full solidarity with the proud Palestinian people in their just cause, and their right to defend themselves.

The Council once again warns of the need to work towards a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of the two-State solution and to activate the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people

by establishing their independent State within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. In this context, the Council calls on the international community, in particular the UN Security Council, to assume its responsibilities, stop the ongoing violence, provide protection for the Palestinian people, and end the racist and settlement practices of the occupation authorities, in order to avoid new levels of tension and instability in the whole region.

ECFA statement from the Council condemning the Israeli escalation and massacres in the Palestinian territories (2 November 2023)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) condemns, in the strongest terms, the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity committed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially the Gaza Strip, where the bombing of hospitals, Islamic and Christian houses of worship and camps has caused the death of more than 9,000 Palestinian civilians and 22,500 injured, 70 % of them are women and children, as of the first day of November, and the displacement of more than one million Palestinians inside the besieged Strip since October 7. The Council once again holds full responsibility for the Israeli occupation force and its supporting forces, led by the United States of America, which has strengthened its intransigent position towards the unarmed Palestinians.

In this regard, the Council reiterates its full solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just cause and their legitimate right to defend themselves, stressing that the Operation “Al-Aqsa Toufan” was only a logical and inevitable consequence of the illegal Israeli presence in the occupied Palestinian territories and its blatant racist policies, amid a chronic failure to comply with relevant United Nations resolutions and to deprive the Palestinian people of any serious political horizon for the settlement of the protracted conflict.

The council demands an immediate ceasefire and a humanitarian truce, in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on October 27, while stressing that a brutal occupying force is in no way entitled, in accordance with international law, to claim the right of self-defense.

The Council categorically rejects any attempts to liquidate the Palestinian issue or to uproot the Palestinian people outside its territory in any way, as a grave violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime. In this context, the Council recalls, on November 2, the one-hundred-and-six-year anniversary of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, with its odious legacy, which is strongly present in the collective memory of the Arabs, which today embodies the racist “apartheid” State in Palestine as a flagrant form of colonialism, which Britain continues to defend in alliance with world Zionism, refusing even to apologize for. The Council reiterates the need to work towards a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue on the basis of a two-State, within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In this context, the Council urges the conscience of the world and renews its call to the international community, in particular the United Nations Security Council in particular its members, who claim to lead the “free world” and the “rules-based international order”, to carry out their responsibilities with conscience and civility, to stop the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people, which calls to mind what the Nazis did to the Jews of Europe in the last century.

ECFA Statement on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2023)

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which falls on 29 November every year, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs affirms its full and unequivocal support for the resolutions of international legitimacy on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on all the territories occupied by Israel since 5 June 1967, including East Jerusalem, the complete withdrawal of the occupying Power from those territories, the return of Palestinian refugees to their usurped lands and their compensation in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution 194 of 1949.

Regretting that this year’s observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People coincides with a painful reality involving unjust aggression in the Palestinian territories, the Council affirms that the war of genocide and collective punishment waged by Israel against the Gaza Strip since October 7th 2023, which has claimed the lives of more than 15,000 innocent civilians, mostly women and children, and thousands of missing persons, has demonstrated the urgent need to move forward towards an urgent solution to the Palestinian issue and to put an end to the Israeli occupation, which has shed blood and violated all international laws and norms, including

the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international humanitarian law and, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention.

While condemning the aggressive Israeli practices, the silence of some Western States and even their complicity with Israel in its criminal behavior, whether through providing political or military support, the Council stresses that the occupying Power is in no way entitled, in accordance with international law, to claim the right of self-defense. It called upon the peoples of the world, at this critical juncture, to support the people of Palestine, who are being subjected to genocide, displacement and war crimes, such as the bombardment of homes, hospitals, schools, houses of worship, shelters, as well as targeting children, women, the elderly, ambulance crews, the press and civil defense, in addition to a deadly siege that includes cutting off water, electricity, medicine, fuel and food .

On that occasion, the Council calls upon the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in this regard in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international legitimacy resolutions, in order to ensure the restoration of these rights as soon as possible. In this context, the Council commends the Egyptian position towards the Palestinian cause, the Government and the people, which is based on solid principles, and that Egypt's commitment to its responsibility towards the Palestinian cause is genuine, and it is making every effort to ensure that the brotherly Palestinian people attain their legitimate rights to establish their independent State.

Chapter VI

ECFA Memoranda of Understanding & Cooperation with New Partners

ECFA has Memoranda of Understanding & Cooperation with 38 Partners, of which 27 are from abroad. In 2023, a memorandum of understanding for cooperation was signed with the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (September 2023), and another memorandum was signed with the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (July 2023).

Additionally, coordination is underway to sign a memorandum of understanding with each of the following: Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA); The Palestinian Center for Research and Strategic Studies; The International Academic Campaign Against Occupation and Apartheid; The Institute of Advanced International Studies (IAIS) of Uzbekistan; the Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research (BISR); Primakov Russian Center; University of Portland, USA; The Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR); Center for Middle East and Africa (CMEA) of the Islamabad Strategic Studies Institute (ISSI); Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI); Council of Albanian Ambassadors (CAA); Helsinki Crisis Management Initiative (CMI); Association of Former Ambassadors of Nepal (AFCAN); And University of the Future.

Chapter VII

ECFA Publications in 2023

1. ECFA Annual Report (2023).
2. ECFA Annual Conference (2023).