Middle East and North Africa Region: Post-2015 Development Agenda
March 16 - 18, 2015
Call for Papers
(Abstract Submission Deadline Extended to November 23, 2014)

The 21st Annual Research Conference
March 16-18th, 2015
The American University in Cairo, New Cairo, Egypt

MENA REGION: POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Conference Website: http://conf.aucegypt.edu/AUC2015
Conference Email: auc.conf2015@aucegypt.edu

Introduction

The American University in Cairo (AUC) is hosting its annual conference on the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region post-2015 development agenda. AUC is the region's premier English-language university connecting the region and the world and one of its priorities is to apply research reflecting innovation and impact to the analysis of policy oriented themes and to contribute to the regional and international community in diverse topics. Research related to the MENA region covers topics ranging from corporate governance, SMEs and youth employment to water and energy. AUC School of Business together with the Center for Sustainable Development, the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and the Graduate School of Education have collaborated in organizing this conference in association with key regional and international players.

The Conference Framework

The conference will combine both plenary sessions targeting an audience of policy makers, the business community and civil society, as well as parallel academic sessions targeting researchers and students. The range of themes to be covered in the conference includes topics related to the post-2015 agenda and elements of MENA research. International and regional ‘thought leaders’ will be invited to write short papers framing the topics of the conference. Conference proceedings will be published including framing documents and academic papers presented in the conference.

Conference Aim and Objectives

The aim of this conference is to provide an exchange platform for relevant, inter-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder research and policy debates on the region’s current development efforts, in addition to addressing visionary post-2015 agenda policies. The conference seeks to scale up
MENA’s existing successes, identify appropriate best practices, and elicit innovative solutions that solve critical challenges facing the region. The conference will bring together academics, policy makers, thought leaders, business community and civil society in a structured array of academic discussions and policy debates relevant to the themes of the conference.

**Submission and Themes**

Authors are invited to contribute to the conference by submitting abstracts that contain sound research results in the form of full papers, case studies, or survey work that propose evidence-based policy recommendations, or suggest research avenues to tackle problems related to the following four major themes of the conference:

1. **Social Inclusion**

   Social inclusion is a process that seeks to open ways for improving opportunities for vulnerable groups. Inequality of opportunity, voice and well-being excludes many groups and leaves them facing myriad vulnerabilities. In the MENA region, axes of exclusion are commonly structured along lines of gender, income and class, age, ethno-religious identity, geographic location, access to resources, disability status, or nationality. Social inclusion seeks to address those excluded along these axes and others. The intrinsic and instrumental values of social inclusion are development and social cohesion, human well-being, social, political and economic equity.

   This theme is open to policy oriented papers on eradicating poverty, reducing income inequality and ensuring decent work and productive employment in MENA. Focal areas of research include but are not limited to: youth, gender, informality, empowerment, poverty, inequality, unemployment, disability and migration, entrepreneurship, micro and small enterprises, and social innovations.

2. **Human Development**

   Human development is commonly described as the stock of competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes central in the ability of citizens to undertake value added activities. Education, training, and health are the most important investments in human development for any society. The MENA region, however, faces daunting human development challenges. Despite much progress in many countries, successes need to be scaled up in terms of education, health, and quality of life in general. In addition, the adaptation of international best practices to the specific needs of the region should be addressed. For example, in education, and despite an almost universal primary education enrollment in most MENA countries, concerns about adequate learning and quality of education are paramount. Opportunities for secondary and tertiary education need to be carefully studied.

   This theme is open to policy oriented papers applied to the MENA region including, but not limited to, the following focal areas of research: education, human capital, life-long learning, health and livelihood, social insurance, quality of life and human well-being, social security and protection.
(3) Sustainability and Governance

Sustainability and governance are key determinants to MENA's environmental, institutional and socio-economic future. The focus here is on aspects of sustainability that relate to natural resource use and its policy implications, in addition to sustainable cities, institutions and corporations. The MENA region is known to have a large base of natural resource endowments whereas sustainable resource management of such endowments needs to be addressed. Energy, water and agriculture are key natural resources which need to be deeply studied based on critical sustainability fronts. In addition, the advent of sustainable real-estate enterprises and landscape regions, as well as, corporate and institutional sustainability are additional key drivers for the region's uncertain future.

This theme is open to policy-oriented papers that include, but are not limited to, the following focal areas of research: energy, water, agriculture, natural resources, sustainable cities and regions, pollution and environmental degradation, corruption, transparency and accountability, institutional governance, shared value and corporate social responsibility.

(4) Regional and Global Integration

Regional and global integration of MENA includes all aspects and factors that contribute towards more intensive integration within the region as a bloc and between MENA and the rest of the world. This includes regional and global value chains, economic activities, and modern transportation networks and infrastructure, in addition to cross-regional integration mechanisms. It should be noted that regional and global integration of MENA entails challenges and opportunities at a myriad of localized issues and settings. Although integration may create ties across geographical boundaries and in many ways transform the way people envision the world around them, yet for all the increased connections, inequalities of life opportunities can persist and remain largely localized.

This theme is open to policy-oriented papers which span MENA's regional and global integration within the domains of science, business, culture, economy, and demography. Covered areas in this theme include regional and international efforts and studies within the focal areas of: trade, tourism, infrastructure, finance, R&D, science and technology policy, information technology, multinational enterprises (MNEs), foreign direct investment, and mergers and acquisitions.

Submission Guidelines:

Submissions are welcomed based on the above four themes of the conference. Authors should note that the audience will include policy makers, business community, civil society, international and regional thought leaders, as well as, academics and researchers.

All submissions must be in English and sent as word documents. Please do not send PDF files.
Abstracts should have a limit of 350 word count and submitted to the conference email: auc.conf2015@aucegypt.edu by 23rd of November 2014. Your abstract should include a specific research question (aims and objectives), methodological approach, concrete results and must exhibit policy relevance to any of the four conference themes outlined above. All abstracts submitted will undergo a double-blind refereed review process. All accepted abstracts will be published in the conference proceedings in electronic format.

Full paper submissions are optional. If you wish to submit a full paper, its length should not exceed 15 pages including figures, tables, references and appendices. All papers must include an introduction section and policy implication /recommendations section. Please use one and a half line spacing and Times New Roman font 11 or 12 and paragraphs should be justified at both ends. Please use black and white and their shades and no colors even for charts and diagrams. A blank line between paragraphs should be left without indent. References should follow the Harvard system (http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/infoservices/learning_support/refzone/harvard/).

Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and included at the end of the paper. Endnotes should be numbered consecutively in the text and typed in plain text at the end of the paper (not as footnotes on text pages).

**Submission Deadlines**

Abstract Submission Deadline is **23rd of November, 2014**.

All authors should receive notification of acceptance by 15th of December 2014.

**Benefits of Attending the Conference**

**Connections and Networking:**
Participants will have the opportunity to connect and network with policy makers, thought leaders, business community, civil society, as well as, researchers and academics in a structured array of discussions and policy debates.

**Policy Impact:**
Participants will have an opportunity to show case their research output and evidence-based policy recommendations to different policy makers in the region.

**Research Skills:**
Participating in the conference will enhance the research skills of authors and act as an eye opener to other research methods. This includes exposure to a diverse set of topics which will act on widening the scope of practical and theoretical knowledge to all attendees.

**Certificate of Participation:**
Conference attendees who have paid registration fees will receive a certificate of attendance and participation.

**Pre-Conference Activities**
Pre-Conference activities will be announced on the conference webpage.
Important Dates

Deadline for Abstract Submission: **November 23rd, 2014**
Notification of Acceptance: December 15th, 2014
Early Bird Registration: September 1st, 2014 until January 15th, 2015
Regular Registration: After January 15th, 2015
Deadline for receiving Full Papers (optional): January 30th, 2015
Pre-Conference Activities: March 16th, 2015
Conference Begins: March 17th, 2015
Conference Ends: March 18th, 2015

Registration

All participants are requested to register ahead of the conference and participants who wish to attend the conference but are not submitting any paper must also register. Registration fees are as follows:

- Early bird registration 150 USD
- Regular registration 200 USD
- Registration includes benefits of attending conference activities such as conference materials, refreshments, lunch and pre-conference activities.
- Please follow the conference webpage for the latest registration updates.

Cultural Evening

There will be an optional cultural evening including dinner at the Pyramids for an additional 50 USD per person, which includes:

- Sound and Light show at the Pyramids
- Dinner at the historic Mena House Oberoi hotel
- Folklore show
- Transportation

To register for this cultural event, please follow updates on the conference webpage.

Contact Us

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