Aboul Gheit's address at the Arab-Italian Business Forum

28 January 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to join you today at the opening of the Arab-Italian Business Forum. Allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Republic of Italy—its government and its people—for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. I also extend my sincere thanks to the Joint Italian Arab Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Arab Chambers, and all those who contributed to the meticulous preparation of this forum, presenting it in such an honourable and distinguished manner.

Today’s forum serves as a vital platform and an invaluable opportunity to advance the relationship between the Arab world and Italy toward a genuine strategic partnership. This comes at a particularly significant time, coinciding with the re-launch of the Joint Italian Arab Chamber of Commerce. This renewed momentum paves the way for an enriched exchange of expertise and best practices, while unlocking new horizons for cooperation and investment in diverse economic and developmental sectors that align with the aspirations of both sides.

It is no secret that we are entering a period of heightened global economic uncertainty, as challenges and complexities continue to emerge. I firmly believe that forging robust partnerships across all levels will prove essential to addressing these challenges and shaping a more resilient and prosperous future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The relationship between the Arab countries and Italy is one of profound historical depth, enriched by its multidimensional nature across politics, economics, and culture. Yet, despite this depth and proximity, various challenges have hindered the full realisation of its potential to build a transformative phase of partnership. I am confident that this forum presents a unique opportunity to explore how best to harness the latent potential of the Arab world in a manner that also serves the interests of Italy.

While the Arab region seeks to gain expertise in advanced technologies, Italy undoubtedly requires fresh dynamism to revitalise its economy, following years of global economic strain—first due to the COVID-19 pandemic and later compounded by geopolitical tensions within Europe. In this context, the promising Arab market emerges as an ideal partner for Italy—not merely as a vast consumer market, but more importantly as a destination for investment, partnership, and employment across a wide array of emerging industries and promising sectors.

These include energy—both hydrocarbon and renewable—information technology, traditional industries, and more. By leveraging our shared strengths and embracing a spirit of partnership, I am confident that we can collectively chart a path towards mutual prosperity and sustainable growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The topics under discussion in this forum—agriculture, food security, energy, infrastructure, and tourism—undoubtedly form the cornerstone of sustainable economic growth. These fields are of vital importance to both the Arab and Italian sides, and it is clear that positive engagement and cooperation in these areas will yield the greatest possible mutual benefits. Arab societies possess a significant advantage: they are youthful in their demographic composition, with a large segment of higher education graduates driven by ambition and a strong desire to contribute to the advancement of their communities.

It is essential to recognise that stability is a prerequisite for economic prosperity and investment. I have consistently emphasised that the path to stability in the Arab region requires addressing ongoing crises, foremost among them the Palestinian cause, which has reached a critical juncture. This issue can only be resolved through the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders. Similarly, other pressing crises in Sudan, Libya, and Syria must also be addressed as a fundamental condition for achieving stability across the region. I am confident that your country has the potential to play a constructive and impactful role in resolving these challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The League of Arab States remains fully committed to supporting this forum and the initiatives that will arise from it, grounded in our belief in the importance of fostering cooperation and interconnectedness between the Arab world and Italy for a better and more sustainable future. I sincerely hope that this forum will serve as a platform for generating innovative ideas, dynamic mechanisms, and actionable recommendations. The potential for Arab-Italian cooperation is vast, and I am confident that the nature of this partnership will evolve and deepen significantly in the years to come.

Thank you.