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**About Gheit's address at the opening of the fifth  
Arab Sustainable Development Week at the  
General Secretariat headquarters  
24 November 2024**



**Your Excellency Dr. Rania Al-Mashat,  
Minister of Planning, Economic Development, and  
International Cooperation, Arab Republic of Egypt,**

**Ms. Elena Panova,  
Resident Representative of the United Nations in the Arab  
Republic of Egypt,**

**Mr. Youssef Al-Khalawi,  
Secretary-General of the Al-Baraka Islamic Economic Forum,**

**Mr. Stefan Gimbert,  
Regional Director for Egypt, Yemen, and Djibouti, Middle East  
and North Africa, World Bank Group,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is my distinct honour to welcome you all to the House of  
Arabs and to express my gratitude for your valued  
participation in the inauguration of the fifth edition of the Arab  
Sustainable Development Week.**

**On this occasion, I extend my deepest appreciation to Dr. Rania  
Al-Mashat, Minister of Planning, Economic Development, and  
International Cooperation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as  
well as to our esteemed partners—the United Nations, the  
World Bank, the European Union, and the Al-Baraka Islamic  
Economic Forum—for their dedicated efforts and significant  
contributions that have made the organisation of this vital  
event a reality in its most exemplary form.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**The theme chosen for the fifth edition of the Arab Sustainable  
Development Week, “Sustainable Solutions for a Better Future:  
Resilience and Adaptability in an Evolving Arab World,”**



**carries profound significance. A substantial portion of the timeframe allocated for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has already elapsed. Yet, our current progress within the Arab region still falls short of our shared aspirations.**

**The narrowing window of opportunity compels us to intensify our efforts with renewed vigour, embracing the principles of resilience and adaptability to confront challenges that may seek to undermine our determination. However, such obstacles must not weaken our resolve nor diminish our unwavering commitment to realising the goals we have set forth.**

**We must undoubtedly accelerate the pace of action and enhance our capacity to adapt to a reality that, in many respects, stands in stark contradiction to the goals of sustainability and the conditions necessary for its realisation. It is evident that the actions of the Israeli occupation in Gaza have far surpassed the concepts of revenge and collective punishment, amounting to genocide and the systematic destruction of Palestinian society—its people, its infrastructure, its present, and its future. The scale of devastation renders normal life unattainable, leaving displacement, aggressively pursued by Israel, as the only forced alternative.**

**The brutal wars waged by Israel in the region, particularly against Lebanon and its people, strip the region's populations of their right to development and sustainability. Despite its allegations that others harbour projects of destruction and sabotage, the reality of the Israeli agenda offers the region nothing but a bleak and lifeless horizon—marked by stunted development, declining growth rates, depleted resources, and lost opportunities. The Israeli project, at its core, is one of systematic sabotage and weakening, driven by an illusory aspiration for Israeli dominance—a hegemony that exists only in the minds of occupation leaders.**



**We cannot turn a blind eye to other hotspots and unhealed wounds in the Arab region, where conflict has severely undermined development prospects. In Sudan, a catastrophic war continues to devastate with unbearable human costs. In Yemen, civil strife persists, extreme poverty rises, and all development indicators sharply decline, echoing similar conditions in Libya and Syria.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**These profound challenges in the Arab region unfold alongside unfavorable global dynamics. The geopolitical climate is increasingly turbulent, dominated by wars, potential confrontations between major powers, and a resurgence of economic protectionism. Inflation and mounting debt are stifling economies—both advanced and those belonging to the Global South. Adding to this is the looming crisis of climate change, which exacerbates migration phenomena and fuels disputes over natural resources. Together, these interconnected risks present a deeply unsettling and complex matrix of challenges for our region and the world at large.**

**Despair is not an option, nor is retreating from confrontation a viable alternative. These challenges compel us to explore uncharted paths and to conceive innovative and unconventional solutions for achieving the goals of sustainable development. This demands continuous adaptation to shifting realities, coupled with the necessary flexibility to adjust plans and priorities without losing sight of our fundamental goals and primary objectives. It also requires the courage to present self-driven visions and creative solutions rooted in our realities and the challenges we face.**

**I would like to highlight the convening of the third Al-Baraka Regional Conference under the theme “Innovative Strategies**



**for Poverty Alleviation.” This initiative draws inspiration from the principles of our rich Islamic heritage and its comprehensive humanitarian approach in addressing the enduring phenomenon of poverty, which continues to hinder societal progress across all times and places.**

**Another pivotal event is set to take place, which aligns with the imperative of strengthening the role of the Arab private sector in fostering Arab integration and sustainable development across the region. This event—the inaugural high-level Arab Regional Forum on Investment and Sustainability—will be the first of its kind. It aims to address the challenges and opportunities surrounding investment and sustainability in the Arab region, considering global economic trends, climate change, and regional fragility. It will also serve as an interactive platform for dialogue between governments and investors, designed to advance sustainable investment strategies.**

**Moreover, I would like to draw special attention to an event that holds particular significance for me, as it pertains to a demographic central to achieving sustainable development: the youth. The third Arab Youth Summit, to be held during this week, will serve as a vibrant incubator for the aspirations and ambitions of Arab youth. Through various initiatives and programmes, the summit aims to enhance their contributions, nurture their potential, and inspire them to innovate and lead.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**The convening of the Arab Sustainable Development Week 2024 offers us a valuable opportunity to collaborate in charting a roadmap for practical, flexible solutions that accelerate the implementation of sustainable development in our Arab region. This effort is crucial for achieving tangible improvements in the living standards of Arab citizens and enhancing the overall**



**quality of life across our countries.**

**I conclude by reaffirming our unwavering optimism. No matter the magnitude of the challenges or the complexity of the problems, we will never lose hope, nor will we falter in our determination to transform our reality for the better.**

**Thank you.**