

**Poverty in the Arab World:
The Greatest Challenge for the Arabs in the 3rd Millennium**

In spite of the tremendous progress in economy and production achieved by humanity during the last decades of the twentieth century alongside with the modern scientific and technological revolution represented in the rise of the international gross product to three thousand billion dollars in 1916 and to 40850 billion dollars in 2006, poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor remain among the most complex dilemmas inherited from the elapsed century and which confront humanity with the beginning of this century threatening more conflict and flustering contradictions on all levels.

Combating poverty is now not merely a challenge connected with development, it is also a challenge to human rights. At the onset of this century our world is still the scene of unacceptable levels of deprivation. A survey carried out on an international level showed that, one out of every live persons worldwide lives under the poverty line, i.e. on less than one dollar per day. If the line goes up a little bit more, then the rate of poverty is over one third of the world population. Parallel to this, however, the wealth of a selected few hundred or billionaires exceeds half the gross global income.

There is probably a great defect then in the buildup of the Arab society which is thus endangered from within and threatened with the most grievous perils on the future of the Arab society where talk of the scientific, social and political modernization becomes Mile There- will be no real modernity with the presence of mass poverty and overwhelming illiteracy that hit more than one hundred million Arabs. This was in fact noted by the Human Development Survey for 2006, which indicated that the low incomes in such big numbers largely contribute to the absence of real freedom in the world. In our opinion, however, this defect can be treated by equal distribution of wealth, to start with, where the rich elites in the Arab world take their responsibilities in development and promotion instead of accumulating wealth of approximately a thousand billion dollars in western banks.

Secondly the Arab society should be converted into a productive society, since the revenues of the Arab World reached 32.8 of its gross product, compared with developing countries 30.2 for the year 2002 and the world 23.2 according to the Human Development. Survey of 2006, as well as by increasing productivity in the Arab World at large.

Thirdly, controlling the rapid population explosion which is accompanied by wasting revenues and potentials uselessly since die population growth rate is the highest in the world even in comparison with developing countries (2.8 to 2)

Fourthly, by curbing military expenditure, since the Arab World is the biggest importer of arms 60 billion dollars in 1999.

These are preliminary and essential reforms that are indispensable, in our opinion, in order to rid our Arab society from the phenomenon of poverty and to head for social democracy and active contribution to today's modernity and the prospective scientific revolution.