



# AMR MOUSSA

## Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States

Thank you very much for the very rich introduction. Let me start by challenging the term 'Arab Spring'. I tend to agree with President Gül that it is 'Arab Revival' rather than Arab Spring, which we have not reached yet. The term 'revival' does not mean that we were asleep, as you described it, but that the people were cornered and oppressed and the era of military rule was still there, which started in the 1950s in the last century. It was really a revolution.

You stressed the differences between countries in the Arab world. I want you to go deeper into this issue. Once a tragic, but small incident took place in a remote village in Tunisia the whole Arab world started to revolt and reject. This showed that it is not a matter of difference between the Arab societies; the difference was between the Arab rulers, or at least several of them. They did not see eye to eye. Perhaps the chemistry did not work or there may have been several other reasons. However, among the people you can see how all of us were affected by what happened in a remote village in Tunisia, which then moved in a matter of days to Egypt and then beyond Egypt within the Middle East.

I would like you to reconsider the importance of the differences within the Arab world and see the elements of unity in the Arab world and that the revolution – as you say, the Arab Spring – is a revival in the Arab world. I believe that this has to be looked at from a different angle.

A big change is taking place. We are going through a serious and historic process of change. It is not a question of five or six years; it will be much less than that. We are moving quickly, not slowly, to install democracy, change the landscape and link up with the 21st Century. In Egypt, we succeeded in the last couple of weeks to agree on a roadmap and timeframe that by the end of June next year all elections should come to an end and the President should be elected and sitting in his office by 1st July. At the same time, we are talking about the possibility of drafting the constitution in the next three or four months, which could happen because there is a consensus on many if not the majority of stipulations of articles apart from three or four points that should not take a long time to agree on – the presidential or parliamentary system and the basic article that the general principles of Sharia constitute the basic principles of laws. The church, Al-Azhar and the political forces have all accepted this and it is now undergoing final wording. In addition, there is the constitution of the Parliament and whether farmers and workers should have 50%, as stipulated in Mubarak's constitution, as well as the role of the Army. Many of us do not think that this should take more than a month or two. We will see, but in any case there is a timeframe and roadmap and the situation is now much better than it was.

Elections are taking place. As you all know, only the first stage has finished and there are two other stages coming up. The final constitution of the Parliament has therefore not yet been decided. Nevertheless, it is clear that what can be called the Islamic parties have the majority so far. However, a number of liberal figures have also been elected and I predict that the next Parliament will be an arena of real, serious discussion among different currents and ideologies, which is something that we have not had for the last 60 years. In my opinion, this is a positive point because what will emanate from that will be either a consensus or a serious discussion, with decisions to be taken not only by majority in the Parliament but which will also translate the mood in the country – and the mood in the country is that Egypt will have to play its role as a member of the international community in the 21st Century.

As regards the macroeconomic outlook, in fact what happened in Egypt caused a very serious effect in almost all files, from education to healthcare, environment and the village, the city, services and the farmer – you name it. We will therefore need to rebuild our country, not starting from scratch, but we will have to do everything that we can under the banner 'Rebuilding Egypt'. There will be three major items, as I see them: democracy, reform and economic and social development.



We are now aware that democracy is not a question of a glass box, a camera, a queue and a big photo in the international newspapers that democracy has entered the country; we take it more seriously than that. By democracy, we mean all the tenets of democracy – human rights, fundamental freedoms, the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary etc. – and we will be serious about attaining them. I am one of those who believe in that and I believe that we need to go directly to ensure that the basic meaning of democracy is being pursued.

Given what I am saying about the defects that have been the result of the mismanagement of the last regime, reform will have to take place from day one in terms of reforming the laws that have been enacted incorrectly to promote corruption and cronyism and so on. Reform is a priority item for the next regime, the Second Republic of Egypt, and when I say 'Second Republic' this is a serious term. It is not a continuation of the previous republic and has nothing to do with it. It is a new republic based on electing the President, clean elections and moving forward on the basis of the basic principles that we all agree on.

Economic and social development have to go together because of the very dangerous and serious social situation and any economic plan will have to take into consideration the poverty that there is in Egypt which now accounts for a large percentage after what I call the total mismanagement of those files for the last 10 years at least and the accumulation of mistakes over the previous decades.

Finally, there is change. I agree that this will affect all countries. There will be different processes. The change in republics will be much deeper than the change in monarchies, especially the Gulf countries where the ordinary citizen does not have the difficulties that the ordinary citizen in the republics is suffering. However, they all feel that all Arab people of different generations have one task to perform. We want to move together and have interaction so that our world can live in a better way and with more connections.

I would like to say here that in the last couple of years or so the Arab League as tried – in fact, successfully – to discuss and adopt –

**Volker PERTHES, Chairman and Director of *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)***

I would like to leave the Arab League for the second round of discussions and I will come back to you on that later.

**Amr MOUSSA, Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States**

In a way, we agreed on certain regional plans that would benefit all of us.

Therefore, change from Morocco or Mauritania to the Gulf is now taking place and no country will avoid this process. In my opinion, Syria and Yemen will be a matter of time and the other changes will come, where there matter of time will be short, not long.