News Release

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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Turkey ' s Stable Democracy and Strong Economic Growth Offer Inspiration to Others

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Türkçe

- Democracy in Egypt is still a work in progress
- Turkey has become an inspiration for others, but needs to improve its record on gender issues
- More information about the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia is available at http://www.weforum.org/eumena12

Istanbul, Turkey, 6 June 2012 – Government and business leaders lauded Turkey ' s stable democracy and strong economic growth as an inspiration to others in the region and beyond, but warned it would be wrong to talk of a Turkish " model " because all must find their own path to progress.

" Turkey has become a country for inspiration for others recently. We are not only a source of inspiration to the East, but also to the West, "**Egemen Ba ğ ış** Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator of Turkey, told participants in the closing plenary of the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia. But he told the gathering that he prefers to avoid referring to his country as a model. " The phrase ' source of inspiration ' fits better, " he said.

His view was echoed by **Ahmad Aiyad**, Founder and Managing Director of Tycho, Egypt, a Global Shaper, who said that while others had much to learn from Turkey, every country is different and needs to create its own model. " You cannot impose one thing and make it work. It has to come from within, " he said.

Güler Sabanci, Chairman and Managing Director of Haci Ömer Sabanci Holding, Turkey, cautioned that while there is much to be proud of in Turkey, the country still needs to do more in areas such as the gender gap. " Of course we are very proud of what it has achieved, but there is always room for improvement, " she said.

Muna AbuSulayman, Partner, Directions Consultancy, Saudi Arabia, a Young Global Leader, said that gender and women ' s rights remain significant challenges across the Arab world and beyond. " It is not about reformation of the system; it is about changing the system, " she said, adding that when women are appointed to positions of responsibility it is often just a token gesture.

Egypt and other countries caught up in the Arab Spring are still waiting for democracy a year after the movement saw the overthrow of authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. " We still have a long way to go. Democracy is not just about elections, " said Aiyad. But the young businessman said that he is optimistic about the future. " For the first time in recent history, we are seeing the people taking charge. We can be proud, " he said.

Held under the theme Bridging Regions in Transformation, the meeting was the first World Economic Forum gathering to involve countries from three different regions. It tackled a host of issues, including the Arab Spring, the crisis in the European Union, Syria and unemployment.

Do ğ u ş Group and Do ğ an TV Holding are the host broadcasters of the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia.

Notes to Editors

- Follow the **World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia**: http://wef.ch/EUME12
- **Flickr photos** from the event are available here: http://wef.ch/eumepix
- Watch participants respond to **questions from the public**: http://wef.ch/socialmediacorner (hashtag #WEFASK)
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