



# **4<sup>th</sup> Retreat of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World**

## **Paper one**

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**The role of second Chambers towards assuring social , political and economic justice to secure peace and stability**

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By

Dr. Ahmed Al-Asbahi

Member of Shoora Council of Yemen

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**The role of the second parliamentary chambers in insuring  
social, political and economic justice to achieve peace and stability**

**Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Al-Asbahi**

**Member of Shoor Council of Yemen**

Needless to say that the Association of Senates, Shoor and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world seeks to strengthen ties of cooperation between Member States and to play a more active and effective role in international efforts to eliminate the causes of tension and violence and to contribute to maintaining security and peace in Africa, the Arab world and worldwide.

The Association has adopted consultative approach on tackling political, economic and social issues suffered by people in the region, in cooperation and coordination with the African Union, Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, regional organizations and other international organizations. The Association since the beginning of its establishment attached great importance to political, economic and social issues of member countries and particularly special attention to both the Palestinian case , the resolution of the conflict in the Horn of Africa and Somalia, , or the tense situation in the Great Lakes region, or the developments of the situation in Sudan and the conflicts in the Arab world and Africa.

Moreover ,it has considered with interest the economic situations , the impacts of the financial and economic crisis on the economies of Arab and African countries. It has also deliberated on the problems of food security, poverty, unemployment, financial and administrative corruption, and the crises that led to the breaking out of youth uprisings - the so-called soft or peaceful revolutions, which recently added a new item on the agenda and concerns of this Association, and this requires study and contain it.

This 4<sup>th</sup> retreat is being held to discuss the recent political, economic, and social situations and the role to be played by the second legislative chamber to address these problems . It shall also try to find reasons behind the difficulties faced in the resolution of these crises .

Through the power of the second legislative chamber law making and its coordinated and leading relationship with the executive and civil society organizations, it assumes a historical responsibility in ensuring social justice, democratizations of the political life, and reform economic conditions in order to achieve peace, stability and to liberty for the peoples of the region from injustice , oppression, tyranny and colonial rule in its new form.

The Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world occupies an important position because it is the only framework that brings together Arab and African countries. Its role as a regional parliamentary body is growing in the region. Its works are characterized by a spirit of understanding, cooperation and common keenness to achieve the objectives of the association. Such considerations encourage us to move forward in

strengthening cooperation ties between our peoples and continuing our efforts of coordination and integration of Afro-Arab Parliaments towards the insurance of social, political and economic justice and the achievement of peace and stability.

We need to take a look at the current situation of African and Arab countries in general and for which the Association is always looking for appropriate solutions for their problems.

Despite the efforts and agreements signed for the establishment of peace and stability in the region, conflicts and tensions are still threatening its security and stability; confidence among some governments or between these governments and their peoples are still absent. There are still violations of human rights, political exclusions, marginalization and the emergence of gender inequality, the use of violence to seize power, in addition to the existence of the immunity of certain persons to commit genocide and crimes against humanity, war crimes and the proliferation of illicit arms trade and proliferation of armed groups, organized crime and waste of wealth and natural resources.

Moreover, there are a lot of problems such as civil wars, interstate wars and the problems of displaced persons, refugees, human trafficking, corruption, lack of accountability, social violations, violence against women, abuse of political rights, the excessive use of force, breach of the law in the internal and external conflicts, lack of human resource development. To elaborate more, there is shortcoming in the infrastructure needed to achieve the Global Millennium Development Goals, negative impact of the recession, recent developments in

financial and economic crises , the global food crisis that threaten food security, economic and social security, in addition to the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa, especially in southern Somalia .

Understanding the concept of international partnership by the great powers is limited to the concept of gain and loss and the serious imbalance between the demands of social and military spending, waste of wealth and natural resources and growing indebtedness of states; all of these problems led to increase of risks of external dependency , including the financial and political dependence that may monopolize the production and the sale of food and technology which led to the continuation of poverty and unemployment and the continued dependence to the outside world.

-The weakness of human development in terms of deprivation and inequality in the abilities and opportunities is a heavy burden on the economy and economic growth , as the poor human development limits the potentials of people and countries to use their human and material resources properly. Countries ,then , become poor because of their inability to provide food, drinking water, education, health care and public services to communities, in addition to the continuing exhaustion of their natural resources. Poverty is considered to be a form of social exclusion and marginalization resulting in the violation of certain rights such as: the right to work, adequate income, decent life, social and health security. These economic, social and political rights must be respected in accordance with all international agreements and conventions. In this vein in his fight against poverty, Nelson Mandela said that "poverty is the modern face of slavery".

Studies have shown, during the second half of last century, that the world is moving towards an increase in disparities and inequality of peoples. During this period the economy of globalization is expanding and had an impact on Arab and African communities. One of these impacts is the disappearance of the middle class, because of fiscal and monetary policies that have restricted the purchasing power of the poor people, in addition to inflation, recession, scarcity of natural resources, resource abuse, poor distribution of income that is related to unethical behavior, lack of social solidarity and absence of other positive ethical behaviors.

- All countries reported that the man is the ultimate goal of the development and its main tool at the same time, however the reality of human development is considered to be one of the greatest challenges experienced by our Arab and African countries in varying degrees, particularly lack of employment opportunities, increased unemployment, the continuing difficulties faced by the sectors of education, health and social care that threaten the future of human development.

Problems and crises afflicting Arab and African region are part of the external interference in the affairs of these countries with or without intention, to ensure instability in these countries in order to confiscate the will of these peoples, to control their resources, to plunder their wealth and to steal their power of decision-making. If a state in the region has made progress towards the future, the outside observer tries to emphasize the weaknesses of this country, then use them as a pretext to destabilize the political system, thereby thwarting the

reform efforts .

A country like Tunisia, with an area of 162,155 km and with limited natural resources, occupies a good position in the world in economic sectors. It is the first tourist destination in the south of the Mediterranean with 7.5 million tourists a year. It is also the world's largest exporter of dates, the second largest exporter of olive oil after the European Union and the second largest exporter of phosphoric acid, and triphosphate in addition to the development of mechanical industries , laboratories and continuous growing in service sectors and high technology in this country.

The International Monetary Fund issued a recent report on the growing of economic infrastructure in Tunisia , in addition to its leading position among African countries and advanced position of competitiveness in the world, as shown in the recent report of the Davos Forum. Moreover, Tunisia has consolidated its position at the regional and international activities in terms of promising sectors thanks to positive indicators achieved by the sector of communication technologies. This is emphasized by the international rating agencies that have ranked Tunisia as the first country in Africa and 39th worldwide out of 133 countries and in accordance to the Ninth Report of communication technologies and information. Tunisia had the first rank on electronic management on the level of both the Maghreb and Africa according to the index of the United Nations, and 66th worldwide rank on a list of 193 countries , so it records an advanced position of 58 ranks, compared with 2009, in which its rank was 124.

Tunisia is characterized by a middle-class comprising 75% of the population, rate of enrollment of children is 99.2%, a life expectancy of 74 years, a poverty rate of 3.8% of the population. Tunisia was the first to obtain a resolution of the United Nations for this year called "the year of the Youths" and it held, in this regard, an international symposium under the title: "Youth and the challenges of today" from 2 and 3 November 2010.

Despite of all these achievements in all sectors ( agriculture , industry ,tourism, and education,etc...), this has not prevented the outbreaking of the so-called Jasmine revolution, which has so far failed to establish an alternative system better than the former one .Perhaps it is because it was a revolution of Facebook ,in which youths called for change without studying or pre-planning for that revolution on the ground and they were only concerned with revenge for their suffering, the humiliation of their dignity, the confiscation of their freedoms and unbearable corruption at the political ,financial and administrative areas.

As soon as young people have declared their revolution, the workers' union and opposition forces supported this uprising , despite their differences , that led Tunisia to live in a state of chaos which complicated the situation in the country, causing fear that the country's enemies - from outside African and Arab countries - may seize the situation to make the country unstable. The current regimes in the region has contributed to the interference of other countries to achieve their goals because they do not understand the concepts of change and stability and they thought that stability is the survival of these regimes power without a change in response to the requirements of sustainable



development.

If this was the case of Tunisia, how will it be in other Arab and African countries?! This situation may make a number of countries in the region to be candidates for the contagion of these peaceful revolutions. These uprisings have spread indeed in some Arab countries and their treatment came so late that they were not able to prevent the contagion. It also creates conflicts and disputes in which each party is responsible for hurting the other at the expense of nation building, global development and treatment of points of weaknesses, shortcomings and imbalances that led to uprisings or the peaceful revolutions.

These revolutions were supposed to deal with the assurance of social, political and economic justice to achieve peace and stability. It is not difficult for nations to regain their glory and its role in civilization as they established a remarkable civilization in the Middle Ages, which came from ancient civilizations and they are the founders of modern civilization and development.

Thus, of the second legislative chamber, as a part of a collective efforts of various legislative, executive and judicial institutions in addition to civil society organizations, is responsible for promoting the development of civilization through the mobilization of different abilities and creative potentials in the Arab and African societies to understand the concept of change and the existence of political will to take the decision of change in its right and proper meaning.

It is not strange that the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa, the Arab world play a leading role in this regard. The

capacity of the second legislative chamber is coming from the fact that they, in different countries, have a good experience and expertise in the areas of executive and legislative authorities activities related to peoples' concerns. These people are aware of the requirements of change and together they enjoy the confidence of their political leaders.

Without ignoring or excluding any efforts exerted by others to remedy the situation, the second parliamentary chamber has the great awareness and acceptable decision making roles and impacts upon the different parities as they are trusted by all parties. This political and social responsibility assumes it plays a national, regional and humanitarian role to mobilize the various legislative, executive and judiciary institutions, civil society organizations and the other political, economic and social organizations to an organized system within each state, and within the Arab and African region in order to increase the public awareness regarding the current difficulties and instability facing the people. This situation serves and facilitates the plans of occupying forces which are looking for a chance to control and plunder the resources of nations. This requires a constant effort through the various means of communication to enhance the public awareness and the will of peoples of Arab and African nations including all political forces either those in power or in opposition. They shall fight against all ideologies, policies and practices of racism, genocide, massacres, terrorism, sectarianism, exclusion and all forms of violence and crime. In addition, they shall exert all efforts to combat transnational crime and to strengthen security cooperation. Indeed this will lead to implementation of policies, procedures and mechanisms that strengthen good neighborliness and

cooperation between Arab and African countries.

- The second parliamentary chamber shall ensure that the plans of development, democracy and political actions are inspired by and created from the traditions and ethics of the peoples of the regions and their historical heritage. It shall, also, get benefit from the movement of contemporary history.

- It seeks to promote policies and strategies based on respect of the values and principles of democracy, good governance and respect of human rights.

- It will also strengthen the building of the modern state through the consolidation of the principle of equality of all citizens without discrimination, and the implementation of the principle of transparency and accountability for each person who is appointed in public office, the right of equal citizenship, the right of every citizen to have full access to public job in accordance with his qualifications and his efficiency. It shall protect civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and allow them to enjoy all the rights of citizens, including the right of expression of their views and their political, economic, social and cultural rights through various media and by means of civil action such as demonstrations, marches, various forms of peaceful action without breach of public safety and security of the citizen.

- Prohibition of the use of violence and armed forces to achieve political, economic, social and cultural goals, considering that these means put the perpetrators under penalty of criminal responsibility.

- The second chamber responsible for ensuring the neutrality of security, military and civilian organs of the state and the need to distinguish between state resources and assets of officials who are in senior positions, and criminalization of the abuse of money and public resources of the state in favor

of personal interest.

- The main components of democracy are the realization of social justice and reducing inequality in the distribution of income and its resources. For strengthening the structure of the state, democracy should not be seen in a narrow perspective, but we must implement it in accordance with its main principles, such as freedom, political pluralism, representation of people, the separation of the three powers, the peaceful transfer of power, the Constitution, and the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities that lead to social justice.

- \* Fighting against corruption as it led to the failure of some states whose regimes are corrupted . These countries are classified to be like that based on several criteria ,such as, lack of good governance or democracy or building of civil society, leading to the spread of poverty , misery and emmigration . Corruption has structural features in the nature and composition of the regime. This problem is observed , when the absence of an institutional system, which is not able to eradicate corruption.

We can not ignore the impact of international economic system on the current situation in the Arab and African countries. It is exposed to the phenomenon of corruption, which revealed that some great states suffered from the financial and economic crisis whose consequences are still outstanding in the economies of developed countries. The spread of corruption weakens justice , particularly, in terms of the protection of rights and opportunities of the majority of middle and low income in favor of the minority of those with high incomes, who have formed their wealth within the corrupted economic systems and the absence of good governance. So, we must pay interest to the composition of

civil society, and effective strategy to limit the phenomenon of corruption, especially in the high offices of state which is a necessity for the success of the establishment of a modern state. In addition, the Facebook revolution broke out because of the spread of corruption in the upper classes of some states causing the suffering, poverty and misery of the peoples ruled by these corrupted regimes.

The transition to democracy, political pluralism and assurance of human rights in some countries in the region, has contributed to the emergence of many civil society organizations, associations and unions. These organizations are working in many fields such as development, defense of human rights and democracy.

These organizations are considered to be supporters for the second parliamentary chamber in the performance of its role for the assurance of social, political and economic justice for the achievement of peace and stability. This will be realized when the relationship between these organizations and the second parliamentary chamber is consolidated in one hand, and with their counterparts in the Arab and African region in the other hand.

We must give importance to human resources, if countries want to achieve a remarkable place among developed countries. This shall be based on the education system and research with good quality standards in accordance with international standards to train people. So those people who will be capable of enhancing the development process in a world where there is a place only for those who have the knowledge, high technology and excellent mentality.

This requires that the Second Parliamentary Chamber shall confirm the importance of improving the quality of education for development that includes the development of educational textbooks in accordance with the requirements

of real development , harmonization of the outcomes of the education to the needs of the labor market, to adapt government policies related to youth with development plans and with opportunities to strengthen their role in the overall development and education for girls which is linked to indicators of improvement in the country.

There are imbalances between the demands of social spending and military spending , and the increase of government spending on requirements of protection of the political regimes to ensure its sustainability by excessive military spending and other security requirements. This led to negative impact on the human development that affect the economic and social situation . To correct these imbalances, all must understand that the best solution for regimes is that to ensure social, economic and political justice . And governments must be more sensitive to the nature of the social and economic security in accordance with the changes that the world witnesses now .The public budget, which is a bureaucratic process based on the proposal offered by government institutions , must be modified to take into account the social and economic rights of citizens, particularly , education, health and social services, and the acquisition of knowledge and access to resources that ensure an acceptable standard of living.

Hence, the role of the second parliamentary chamber shall assume its responsibility to build capacity of relevant authorities, including the legislative authorities in the preparation of state budgets taking into account the rights of citizens through the organization of specialized workshops in this area. What is observed in general, is that there is a decline in public spending on economic and social rights of citizens in favor of increased spending on internal security. The reality of allocations on education, health and work in government budgets are not spent practically on technical education, primary health care and family

medicine ,so it does not reduce unemployment and poverty. This require the government to act new legislations to organize expenditures in the budgets of countries.

At the level of the regional activities of the second chambers ,they have a great role in the economy. This role begins by giving advice and consultation to leaders in order to adopt a common policy of food security and cooperation in the creation of an Arab-African economic bloc without limits in light of the geopolitical realities in today's world which is dominated by economic blocs and groupings. It is possible because it has become a global practice where many countries in the world, in spite of their different political and economic systems , have allied in groups, to respond to the needs and circumstances of today's world.

Due to the increasing problem of food , the Arab and African region can no longer be free from external dependence, except by creating a complementary integration of agriculture, which has become a necessity. This integration will be achieved through coordination of efforts , merging of resources or by the establishment of development projects in general which are related to solving the problem of food in particular. The integration among the agricultural workforce in some countries, agricultural land in other countries and the availability of capitals in some other countries can contribute to integration in agricultural development and reducing the unemployment problem , in addition to the realization of food security, independence and reduction of the problems of poverty.

The region needs to integrate their economies by uniting their resources, the elements of production in terms of material and human resources, free trade of goods and products among countries of the region without restrictions or tariffs

and free movement of people to live and work in order to facilitate the transfer of capitals between them. All this requires a common political will of Arab and African countries. These countries must work to establish integration between the development plans in the countries of the Association, to invest the common opportunities in these countries to activate trade, and to take advantage of promising possibilities for mutual investment between the countries and the private sector shall play its part.

The realization of the programs of development is related to the other role of the Arab and African countries. This role, as it is emphasized by the Association, Arab League and African Union, is to work together to resolve the conflicts, either they are internal, regional or international. The process of resolution of conflicts should be among the priority of concerns of countries in the region. If war explodes in both regions, the development and progress will not be realized due to the high cost of wars and its damage includes all sectors, social, political, economic and cultural. These wars facilitates the implementation of strategies aimed at breaking the political unity and national and regional entities in order to empty its contents through the encouragement of conflict and discord among these countries while seeking excuses for the international presence. The result is that the region's lands and its seas become stage for competition of great forces.

Are not enough lessons learned from what last decade of wars (civil and interstate wars) caused of the loss of millions of lives since the mid-twentieth century? That wars caused the destruction of infrastructure in the region which is essentially low. War does not differentiate between military camps or schools, hospitals or public services and housing. In addition to the waste of state resources for spending on war instead of attributing to the development and



reduction of unemployment, increase the number of disabled people because of war and mines, the collapse of production, trade and investment, the proliferation of displaced persons and refugees , and bad influence on the moral and cultural values where the culture of fear , psychological disease and culture of violation and other vices have spread.

There is no doubt that these lessons are enough to put an end to disputes and conflicts causing civil wars and interstate conflicts.

Therefore, the second parliamentary chamber and the wise men of Africa and the Arab world as well as influential institutions in the Arab and African arenas must play a vital role in resolution of conflict by taking advantage of their social status and respect granted to such persons more than that accorded to any country. These legislative chambers must continue their efforts by organizing meetings between the countries in conflict, and in some cases, the power and opposition, while bridging the gap of these conflicts by repairing the damage, reconstruction, compensation in order to erase the effects of wars and conflicts. This helps to keep the dignity of the parties in conflict so that they feel satisfied. In addition, the commitment of the agreements is a priority and the violation of the agreement may cause the offending party to be punished by all States and institutions of the African and Arab countries, official and private, this collective punishment deprive the offending party of any legitimacy and respect, that forces him to respect the signed agreements.

The role of second chambers of parliaments is important in ensuring social, economic and political justice to achieve peace and stability. As it is its need of coordination and complementarity with the second parliamentary chamber, with the executive and civil society organizations and through regional organizations, including the Association of Senates, Shoura and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world, the African Union, Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, there is a need for each country to promote awareness inspired by the historical link between the movement of the struggle against colonialism and racism in various parts of Africa and the Arab world. It assumes the African and Arab intellectuals to take a joint responsibility to coordinate their efforts in order to overcome the disintegration and frustration among many of the peoples of the region who have rich history and their future which is characterized by common interests of these countries. They must use the technological and information revolution and the movement of human resources for the sake of progress and prosperity of the people.

These legislative chambers contribute to the entrenchment of political pluralism, binding of bicameralism, the peaceful transfer of power, social justice, equal citizenship, respect for human rights, genuine partnership of political, economic and social relations between groups and regions of a nation, and the realization of national reconciliation, strengthening the ties of brotherhood, solidarity and tolerance

Finally,

This work paper does not include all topics , so there is a need for discussions and it is still necessary to enrich it with ideas and views on various aspects of this subject. But this paper can generate debate , that will be enriched by comments and observations and it is a chance to assess the views and opinions of the wise participants in this forth retreat. The paper concludes with the words of the leader Nelson Mandela who said: -

\* I want to tell the world that when we are ready to withstand the challenges we will be able to realize all the dreams , including the imaginary dreams .

\* Each time a free man climbs a huge mountain, find other mountains behind.

\* Freedom can not be given repeatedly in doses , man can be free or not.

\* In an article written by Mandela addressed to the Arab peoples titled: "How to deal with the legacy of injustice to replace it by the justice", saying that the administration of justice is much more difficult than the destruction of injustice, destruction is negative action although the building is positive. I do not speak Arabic, but I understand from the translations that I get regarding the details of everyone political debate in Egypt and Tunisia that most of the time is wasted in the insults against everybody who was related to cooperation with former regimes, as if the revolution can not be completed without exclusion and ridicule.

You must remember that the supporters of the former regime are citizens of this country, then it is better to forgive them to be a great gift to the country during this step. It is not possible to throw these people overboard or neutralize them completely, because they have the right of expression. This right should be respected in the post-revolution. I know you'll be embarrassed to see the same faces that was hypocritical of the old regime, speaks today of the glorious revolution ; but instead of making fun of them, it's better to encourage them to be neutralized while having confidence that the society , at the end, will give his vote only for people who have contributed to the birth of its freedom.

In another part of his article, he adds: I think in this way, you can send messages of reassurance to society surrounded by dictatorships, that there is no fear for its future within democracy and revolution. This may encourage people , who were supporters for former regimes , to move towards change, and you may reduce the fear of dictatorial regimes of the vengeance.

Imagine that ,in South Africa, and if they focus on the mockery of whites and exclude them. If that happened in south Africa ,the story of the success of South Africa will not be one of the most human successful stories. I hope you remember the saying of the Prophet Mohammed , who said : (Go away , you are free).