



IX CEMOFPS CONFERENCE
"The Arab Spring: The Post-2015 Agenda and
the Spanish Cooperation for Development"

Spanish Cooperation. Masar Program

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Good morning everybody.

Starting from a very practical point of view, I have to say that I am not going to talk about the Arabic spring as in terms of theory, but only in terms of practice.

The roundtable has been named "Success stories", and I really don't know if I'm going to talk about any success story because the project that I am going to explain to you is very young. It started in 2012 and we are just beginning with the management of this program. So, I think we are being very optimistic when we say that this is a success story. And I am going to explain it to you, from a very practical point of view.

Basically, this program, which is called Masar, and maybe some of you already know it, started in 2012 under the title of Program for the Accompaniment of Democratic Governance Process in Northern Africa and the Middle East. It was a Commitment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Cooperation Agency in contributing to the success of some of the democratic movements that in that moment were starting. And in that moment we didn't know where they were going. This initiative was an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Spanish Cooperation Agency, the Arab House in Madrid and the Mediterranean House.

The approach was very clear; we wanted to help in building this democratic process. How to do it? We will respect how each country has started into this process, how the development of this process is going on, without a clear model. I mean in that moment, there was no consensus of what to do, so we just asked our potential partners how they consider we can help them in order to strengthen the democratic process and institutions.

So, from that point of view, there are two legs in this Massar program. One of the legs was the strength of public institutions, and the second leg was Civil Society, strengthen civil society organizations.

What we want to say by “strengthening public institutions” is assisting public institutions to lead and design policies that ensure democratic governance, social and economic development, human rights and mainly gender equality.

What we do with the civil society, basically we help them to increase their capacity to make hear their voice high, in order to make them participate at the decision-making policies. And we support them in this process. And this, mainly with two kinds of organizations: women organizations and youth organizations.

And these are the basic terms of this Masar program, it’s very simple. We work with public institutions, we work with the governments, civil society, and we work to help them participate in the democratic movements and in the public decisions making process. What have been done in the Middle East? Until now and since 2012, we have been doing projects in gender equality and fighting violence against women, in Jordan, Egypt, Libya, and Palestine.

We have been working with prison institutions, in Libya, and Tunisia. We have been working with the justice system, from the public point of view, in Egypt and Jordan. And, in terms of civil society, the strength of civil society, we have been working until know in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. And talking about Middle East, I am not talking about Morocco, and all the Mediterranean area.

Something that I forgot to say before is that in this process, there is a clear commitment also from the Spanish Agency and the ministry to make public institutions participate in this process. And we have been collaborating until now with the Spanish Parliament, with the Senate, with the Constitutional Court, with the General Council of the Judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Public Treasure, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of the Presidency, the Ministry of Health, Social Service and Equality, the Ombudsman office, Arab House, Mediterranean House (Casa Árabe, Casa Mediterráneo), and Trade Unions. This is to say that this participation that we want to include in the Masar is kind of this strengthening of public institutions. This shows, in a certain way, in which the Spanish model of the public institutions can help.

Now we are trying to identify an action with the Spanish police in terms of fighting violence against women and strengthening the Palestinian police. What do we do? We put a police here, they show them what we do in Spain, the success stories that we have been doing in Spain, with the police, with the prosecutors, with the court, and we try to help



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them not to make the same model, but to get from us what they can use for them. For the success of their own model. And this is mainly how Masar is working.

Masar obviously has funds. This is the opportunity to say that we are trying now to identify projects in the framework of Masar, and Jesus Tomé and myself are right now identifying these projects. And now my colleague Mr. Tomé will explain to you what we are doing in Masar, here in Palestine.