



Founding Statement: Arab Watch Regional Coalition for Just Development

Since the Arab Spring, international financial institutions have assumed more responsibility for crafting public policy in states in the Arab region while foreign debt in these states has grown. These institutions play a major role in the implementation of a uniform set of policy prescriptions in various countries despite divergent national contexts and economic conditions.

These prescriptions and the programs supported by international institutions disregard our common aspirations for economic, social, and environmental justice and measures to eliminate corruption. Despite the compound crises underway in the Arab region, these institutions have not reconsidered or changed any of their policies, which have spurred rising inequality and have led to widespread impoverishment and marginalization while concentrating wealth in the hands of a small minority.

For this reason, we, the founders of **Arab Watch Regional Coalition for Just Development**, have come together to work to ensure that peoples in the Arab region enjoy their basic human rights and the right of all to prosperity.

Our dream is of **“participatory, equitable, and sustainable development in the Arab region”** as our vision statement sets. This we hope to achieve by monitoring and influencing the activities and policies of international financing institutions and empowering civil society in its broadest sense to achieve our vision and goals. The coalition hopes that individuals and groups that share our vision around the Arab region will join us.



The coalition works toward the achievement of a set of goals. The most important of these are: involving local communities, trade unions and syndicates, and social movements in the articulation of economic and development policies; monitoring the implementation of programs and projects financed by international and regional financing institutions; promoting transparency in the policies and projects of these international institutions; publishing and disseminating information about their projects, programs, and policies in the region; holding such institutions accountable; and influencing decision making within these institutions by empowering civil society and revitalizing its role.

The coalition cooperates with other civic coalitions and entities, local, regional, and international, to achieve these objectives. It also seeks to open channels of communication with international financial institutions in order to influence their agendas using all available peaceful means.

To achieve this, the coalition will organize training seminars, workshops, and academic meetings, supervised by experts in the field, as well as release newsletters, reports, and publications about the coalition's programs and those of other organizations and movements working on the same topics and publish press materials and documents on the projects and policies of international financing institutions.

In coming together and training our gaze on international financing institutions, we are inspired by the words of economist and thinker John K. Galbraith:

“In all life one should comfort the afflicted, but verily, also, one should afflict the comfortable, and especially when they are comfortably, contentedly, even happily wrong.”