

**"Egypt A Promising Market" Conference is being held at a very crucial time as it is considered on the one a resumption of the debates that took place in the Cairo economic conference 6 months ago. It also comes following approving the investments guarantees and incentives law that includes new privileges to Egyptian, Arab and foreign investors topped by equal rights among all these investors. The conference also comes after the government had announced major national projects in the Southern Valley and Sinai, which need huge investments and giant companies to implement them.**

### **Egypt the promising market as viewed by presidents of business organizations**

**They stressed the conference came on time and helps market Egypt at investment level.**

Here lies the importance of the conference and time of its convention. Presidents of business organizations in Egypt stressed the importance of that conference in attracting investments and international companies to the Egyptian market as it constitutes a golden chance for marketing Egypt at the investment level.

### **Significant Step**

At the beginning, Mohamed Farid Khamis, chairman of the Federation of Industries said the conference is deemed an important step that came on the heels of the Cairo economic conference as well as the conferences and tours made by the business organizations in Egypt to several countries following the Cairo conference.

It also came in the wake of tours made by the minister of public business sector Dr Atef Ebeid in the company of some ministers and finally the recent tour made by the prime minister in a number of East Asian countries.

These conferences, as viewed by Khamis, are based on the results achieved by presenting the modern Egypt in the Cairo conference and came to follow up the projects that had been probed and review with the foreign investors as well as the international finance houses the available opportunities for investment in Egypt.

These conferences provide more opportunities to present Egypt to the outside world and underline the fact that Egypt began to employ the financial and monetary reform in increasing production and investment.

The conference is also a chance for the international institutions to get acquainted with the improvement and development in the Egyptian economic performance indications since the Cairo economic conference was held and the improvement in the investment climate under the laws and decrees endorsed following its convention.

In addition, these conferences provide an opportunity for putting forward in detail the major national projects including the national project for new Delta, the national project for Sinai urbanization and other projects and investment opportunities.

The least to be done is to present these projects to the outside world. The crucial point is that presenting these projects helps attract finance to them by highlighting the investment opportunities in these projects, particularly in the light of the fact that there are Egyptian businessmen convinced of these projects and who promote for them and search for partners whether in capital or funding.

Dr Khamis also pointed out that in addition to the above-mentioned; we should not get slow in our travels to abroad and holding other seminars and conferences and inviting the different delegations to visit Egypt.

The former conferences have changed view of the foreign business community about Egypt especially the Cairo conference where President Mubarak's address opened new prospects and presented modern Egypt as a hub for civilization, development and investment opportunities in the Middle East.

At the businessmen level, we find that businessmen could exploit this conference by virtue of their interaction with their counterparts including foreign investors and international firms. This interaction also generates interests, the least of which is knowledge and the biggest of which is engagement in joint ventures and getting funds for these projects, he said.

### **Face to Face Meetings**

Head of the Egyptian Businessmen Association Saeed al-Tawil was of the view that the importance of holding these conferences is ascribed to the fact that they bring together a large number of businessmen and foreign economists who get a chance of holding face-to-face meetings with their counterparts. This does not nullify the importance of the Egyptian businessmen's visits to abroad.

Al-Tawil also saw that real projects should be offered in these conferences after Egypt won a good reputation abroad, so "we want the conference to work to promote specific projects.

These conferences would not directly finance the projects, but they could indirectly avail a group of foreign investors who are looking for investments,

thus seeking to provide funds. And because this is a non-governmental conference, businessmen have to advance projects, but the government, through the would-be-speaker ministers, has to shed light on the investment climate in Egypt and the recent measures Egypt has taken, al-Tawil said, calling for this conference to be a forum for the Egyptian and foreign businessmen.

### **The Conference and the New Investment Law**

Captain Redallah Helmi, head of Tenth of Ramdan Investors Association opined that the weight of mounting this conference in Egypt is attributed to the fact that it coincides with the issuance of the new investment law and "we need major investments for the national projects such as Toshka and East Port Said and South Suez projects and the foreign investors should contribute to these projects along with the Egyptians".

Also, businessmen should get familiar with several attitudes including concerns over the multinational companies' domination of the markets and these attitudes should be highlighted and whether the small and medium-sized companies could get themselves adapted to these conditions, he added.

There is an accord between the Egyptian government and investors, so each benefit for the investor would also be a benefit to the state as a whole and the contrary is correct as everybody is working in the same direction.

The conference's throwing light on the proposed projects would open a room for dialogue between the Egyptian and foreign businessmen. Through businessmen's gathering "I as a businessman could look for an investment opportunity or attract new clients and by attending these conferences, we get to know businessmen's way of thinking and their capabilities as well as the prevalent investment thought worldwide, thus keeping abreast of the general attitude all over the world", he said.

## **Equality between Investors**

Regarding benefit drawn from the conference, MP Mohamed Abul-Enein said the mere announcement about the policies and legislations adopted by the government and approved by the People's Assembly in the recent period is considered a good and meaningful indication about the promising state of investment.

It is also good to talk about the new investment law and its success in getting closer to the thought of the serious investor clearly and transparently and how it addressed a defect that has continued for 20 years. Consequently, the Arab and foreign investor no longer gets less guarantees and incentives than his Egyptian counterpart, but they all became equal and it is no longer necessary to obtain approval of projects, which comes after establishing the legal structure.

He voiced hope the government would seize the opportunity provided by the conference to talk about the clear future vision on the Egyptian economy and legislations that protect the right of investor to own and transfer his profits to abroad.

He also expressed wish the government would make use of the conference to talk about the basic foundation of the financial and monetary reform and the achievements accomplished and the three bases for the economic advancement and their axes whether relating to investment and its law or the production and its related legislations.

These legislations include the anti-trust and dumping prevention law and the two laws on cheque and labor. It is hoped the government would also highlight the third axis of the bases for the economic advancement, which is export and how to increase the production lines by the greatest possible capacity in favor

of the local market and export and how far this would help reduce the production cost.

"When we talk about these things in addition to encouraging investment in Southern Valley and the privileges of investment in it, we could thus secure investments in Egypt", he said, adding that the conference would certainly face various problems and when the government talks about the way to resolve them and the reforms it had attained, it would have thus planted reassurance in the hearts of investors.

He also signaled that Egypt could make use of its geographical location by talking about it and featuring its privileges when talking about the vital projects such as the East Port Said and the free zones "which we are supposed to promote".

President of BTM Company Louis Beshara said this conference comes at a very convenient time as it comes to follow up the activities of the Cairo economic conference.

Those who attended the Cairo conference want to listen to more things about Egypt and meet partners after they had become assured there are sound and rapid economic moves taken.

In addition Egypt's stability is very important in this context and because Egypt is the greatest country in the region that has a basic view of economy that it is an approach to policy, without which the foreign policy cannot move forward.

He viewed that the government should play an important role in this conference by transparently making things clear to foreigners in terms of the investor's tax obligations, money transfers, the labor unions and how the

investor could complain and to whom when he faces any trouble and how he could get a plot of land as well as the labor-related problems, wages and their echelons and transportation and getting licenses and other things of the sort.

In addition, investor should know how much it would take for him to have electricity and utilities supplied to his project and the nearest airport to him and when it goes operational. These are matters that could seem to be simple but are very significant so that the investor would know where he stands.

Pertaining to the possibility of funding projects through the conference, he said funding is factually provided if there is a clear project that has features attracting those seeking investment projects and "I believe the world has great surplus of funds and there are operating banks and financing firms in Egypt and we, however, need foreign contributions". He crossed his fingers the conference would succeed in revitalizing the local market.

Meanwhile, Dr Nader Riyad President of Bavaria Egypt and board member of the Holding Company for the Engineering Industries viewed that the conference is a suitable platform to advise of the comprehensive development plans and the ambitious projects to achieve development in the Southern Valley.

This clearly demonstrates the characteristics of Egypt's national personality regarding the integrated approaches towards building and working for peace and the positive contribution to the world economy at a time when many of the region's countries exhaust their energies in working on the negative side involving obstruction of peace and implanting worn-out principles and ideologies.

"If we considered Toshka and development of the Southern valley the national project that Egypt takes as an approach to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century and if

we compared this project to another national one such as the High Dam, we would find there is a wide difference between both.

Though the High Dam project is crucial and has several advantages for Egypt, its benefit at the local and development level would remain limited to what it had achieved and would not add to that amount whether with respect to generating electricity or supplying water", he said.

As for the Toshka project, it is constantly expanding, increasing and giving and it would diminish the economic and humanitarian disparity that stands in the way of the Southern Valley development and all the running active development programs in the north.

The Toshka project would growingly make the best of water, human and economic resources year after year and change the features of the demographic and economic map in this part of the continent. Making clear all these visions would work to attract many investors to that project, he concluded.