

Text of speech delivered by Engineer Dr. Nader Riad symposium held under patronage of Minister Supply and Domestic Trade Dr. Ahmed Ahmed Guweili on 22 November 1994 on protecting consumers and national industry

Dr. Nader Riad:

- Board member of Egyptian Federation of Industries – Chamber of Engineering Industries
- Board member of Egyptian Chamber of Commerce – Investors Division
- Board member of the Industrial and Intellectual Property Protection Society
- Board member of the European-Egyptian Society for Economic and Social Development
- Board chairman of Bavaria Egypt

At the very beginning, I would like to start my brief speech by thanking his Excellency the Minister of Supply and Domestic Trade Dr. Ahmed Ahmed Guweili, who hosted this symposium which brought together this excellent group of specialist experts, for his distinguished initiative which brought about tangible positive results in a short time. I would like to highlight the following positive aspects:

- A- He removed the obstacles that surrounded the progressive march of the Egyptian industry and the order-abiding commercial sector and were about to obstruct its movement.
- B- He opened the door to the wind of change to curb many negative aspects whose danger has become widespread, including unregulated practices and random activities that spread in the Egyptian street.
- C- Accepting the challenge and facing the storm to establish the principle that only the right thing will be accepted and that anything else has to adjust its position as there is no alternative solution.
- D- Establishing progressive concepts, mainly including the democracy of participation in the face of negative aspects instead of the democracy of representation.

Based on this, it must be crystal clear that:

Facing the commercial and industrial fraud is the cause of every citizen and that the Ministry of Supply does not stand alone in the face of this but it has complete popular support.

It must also be clear that:

Protecting Egyptian consumers, encouraging the national industry, and supporting the national economy are one cause and indivisible whole.

A look at the current situation of the commercial and industrial activity in Egypt:

There is no doubt that the current stage has positive aspects and big achievements that crystallized an introduction to unprecedented national industrial advancement on which the states pins high hopes for the development of a progressive industrial movement that is able to make the necessary and sufficient changes to deal with international markets and prove itself at the international arena.

One of the positive things is that what is called the legal person of the industrial and economic community which has recently managed to participate positively in making events after it went beyond the stage of participation in opinion.

However, there are several negative aspects that are no less significant than those positive points. They have even become a danger that threatens the positive aspects themselves.

This is represented in the random activities and the negative practices which some people still do whether in the commercial or industrial field in view of the high return turned through the practice of unknown activities, including marketing and producing adulterated or bad goods or re-manufacturing the old and used components.

Professional illiteracy:

The main reason for the spread of these unregulated and random practices is the phenomenon of widespread professional and vocational illiteracy among many manufacturers and traders, not only at the minimum level, but unfortunately the large-sized practices.

This professional illiteracy is not directly related to the educational illiteracy because he who cannot read and write may be successful in the various areas of the activity.

There are many examples of this, but the professional illiteracy has no excuse as it leads the person to deliberately ignore the professional and vocational obligations which should be met for practicing a certain activity.

At the individual level, we see everyday a taxi driver who does not abide by the set fare but he allows himself to accept and refuse to take customers in line with rules he sets for himself.

At the commercial level, we see everyday commercial shops that cost millions of pounds and contain goods worth of other millions, but they do not qualify their staff to be specialized in a way that suits the kind of the sold commodities.

They may not even subscribe on their behalf to the social insurance system. Very often are these huge shops run without a sound cycle of documents, including goods entry and exit permits, or issuing bills that include the description of the goods in a way that determines their sources, type, and brand.

This makes it difficult to provide protection for the rights of consumers in the event of the goods not meeting the specifications or receiving complaint about them. Moreover, this wastes the state's right to follow up these activities and the ensuing taxes and duties.

Regarding the foodstuffs where the crisis in the field of imported meat is still sharp, the talk today is about the percentage of fats, the existence of the separating liquid, and the rate of bacteriological pollution as if anything was of less importance.

This happens at a time when the world talks about the testing the percentage of hormones and antibiotics which were given to the slaughter-purpose animals during their life as a real indicator of their effect on the human health.

Regarding the powder milk, the world today talks about the need to present acceptable certificates that would represent a record of the things that went into the body of the milk-producing animals, including water and fodders. The world also talks about the need for these things to be free from pesticides,

chemicals, and insects. This is to be pointed out in a daily record for every animal in which the daily production of milk is also mentioned.

This happens at a time when newspapers have recently brought to us some news about poisoning cases at children schools because of having cheddar-like cheese that were supplied to these schools through contractors whose only job is this.

This means that at a time when some build schools through self-initiated efforts as a contribution from them to the removal of the effects of the earthquake, these clean white hands are interrupted by other polluted black hands that take them away from their aims and spoil their desired results.

These examples and other cases of commercial and industrial fraud and corruption have become a clear threat to the national economy and the health of Egyptians. They even shake the citizen's confidence about the role of the state in providing the basic needs for citizens away from fraud and exploitation.

This happens at a time when we cannot be anything but part of the world system as we cannot get away from it, but we have to deal with it in the same language and at an equal level.

This outside world makes it incumbent upon our cotton exports not to be previously treated chemically. It also makes it incumbent upon our exports of garments to prove that their printing does not have any harmful effect on the skin of people, particularly the clothes of children and nightwear.

Therefore, the exportation activity will not be able to grow and maximize at the external level unless similar conditions and specifications were applied to the local products because exportation in itself is nothing but an advanced stage of the production development that starts locally at home.

Also, none of us will willingly accept that Egypt becomes a destination for imports that in their countries are goods that do not meet the specifications and are banned from being sold there, and then find no option but to make their way to our country.

The future of Egypt lies in the population activity of its people which basically depends on the ability to bring a real added value to the raw materials accepted by the world as the exportation of raw materials without manufacturing will not make the future of Egypt.

Protecting consumers in Egypt:

It must be known that the formation of societies for protecting consumers that work under the umbrella of a supreme council for protecting consumers is one of three steps that have to be integrated to achieve their goal, which is the necessary and sufficient condition for this:

First: Forming societies for protecting consumers:

There is no reason why we should not allow the formation of societies for the protection of consumers regardless of their structures and orientations as long as they work under a wise umbrella of a supreme council for protecting consumers that would protect this experience from going astray.

The supreme council for protecting consumers should receive the reports of these societies and inspect and scrutinize them and reconsider some of them according to what it sees is right. It may overlook some of them if they are free from some sides in a way that reassures it.

It should be within the jurisdiction of the supreme council for protecting consumers only to take decisions related to publication or issuing magazines or bulletins on the protection of consumers which are related to the announcement of shortage in the quality of commodities or the results of the comparison tests between commodities.

They would also warn about faulty commodities and announce the names of individuals who do fraud or commodities that proved to be adulterated, given that this matter has consequences that can be handled only in line with precise conditions to be set by the supreme council for protecting consumers carefully and with a sense of responsibility.

Second: Charters of honour:

The federations of chambers of commerce and the federations of chambers of industry as well as the professional syndicates should be urged to hurry to set charters of honour that cover the allowed practices and those banned among the people of these professions which constitutes the basic line for dealing in the industrial, commercial, service and professional activities. These charters should include the gradual penalties in the event of violation, which may reach the point of deletion from the activity register.

Third: Lists of activities and businesses:

Lists, including the activities and businesses regardless of their levels, should be issued. They should point out the essential data of these activities and the names of their owners in order to be the main reference point for introducing these activities on the basis that they are legal activities and have a

track record and degrees of experience that explain this. These lists should be updated annually by adding new activities and deleting activities that stopped committed violation.

Although it is a simple thing, it is still finding opposition from some of those who do not accept clarity.

Therefore, we support the opinion that stresses the importance of quickly completing the formation of the three circles in an integrated because the absence of anyone of them will definitely lead to the failure to properly apply the policy of directing the activities to observe order and follow a straight line.

Finally, I would like to repeat my thanks to all the colleagues who enriched the symposium with their ideas, studies, and valuable words. We particularly thank Dr. Ahmad Ahmad Guweili, the minister of supply and domestic trade, and his assistants who gave an opportunity for this symposium to be held in this honourable fashion and to host this excellent group of specialist energies.