



**Press Release,**

**71<sup>st</sup> Cairo Climate Talks**

**November 18, 2020**

On the 18th of November 2020, the 71st Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) took place virtually via Zoom on the topic of: “Businesses and SDGs: How to Continue to Move Towards Sustainable Markets.” Four multidisciplinary experts representing the private sector, academia, international cooperation, and civil society came together to discuss the steps that need to be taken to transform markets.

The talk was opened by Philippe Maupai, Head of the Science Department at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Egypt, and Dr. Ali Abo Sena, Minister Assistant for Projects & Head of Bio Energy Association at the Ministry of Environment of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Dr. Ali emphasized the efforts of the Ministry of Environment to seize the current challenges as an opportunity towards a green and sustainable recovery.

A key to achieving a transition towards a green economy, according to all panelists, is mutual learning and cooperation between sectors and countries. While Dr. Ali’s notion that the political will is present was strongly supported by all panelists, they also identified gaps between the narrative shift and the shift in actual legal frameworks.

Moderator of the evening, Nadeem Abdel-Gawad, highlighted that during the pandemic “we have seen a significant shift in public debate” and Ghada Hammouda, Chief Sustainability & Marketing Officer at Qalaa Holdings, added that also the private sector has gone through a massive shift and proven their agility to react to changing systems. “We need to start asking the question of what is green, and I think we need to find greener solutions from where we are now” she added and continued to stress on the importance of conscious and sustainable capitalism. Jonas Naguib, Cluster Coordinator for Private Sector Development at GIZ, who has for a long time worked on increasing employment through supporting SMEs and Startups in Egypt, seconded that by highlighting how the innovative creative power of the 800,000 Egyptians entering the market each year needs to be part of the solution.

But the panelists were also cautious, between what ambition countries and sectors show, and what legal frameworks and long-standing business practices are hindering us from meeting the needs we have identified. “I think we are all glad to hear these transformational notions and concepts” said Kinda Mohamadieh, Legal Advisor and Senior Researcher at the Third World Network, “but it needs to translate into policy”. Anna Pegels, Research Associate at the German Development Institute, highlighted the importance of facilitating such a paradigm shift by creating incentives for all sectors and consumers. “A global crisis always offers opportunities to think out of the box”, she said, urging governments to use the window of opportunity given to radically change the way we conduct business and approach the economy and reach the transition our planet needs.

**Background Information:**

The Cairo Climate Talks are conceived, organized and hosted as a cooperation between the German Embassy in Cairo, the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).

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