



## **Cairo Climate Talks: Climate Action Theater and Playback Performance by Khoyout**

3/12/2017, DAAD premises, Zamalek, Cairo

On 3 December 2017 the German Embassy organized the final Cairo Climate Talks event of 2017 at the premises of the DAAD and invited the audience to experience a unique interactive mode of climate and playback theatre performed by talented theatre troupe Khoyout. The event was opened by Mr. Simon Brombeiss, head of the Cultural and Educational Section at the German Embassy. In his opening remarks, Mr. Brombeiss highlighted the importance of local communities and their role in climate action. "Prevention of climate change starts at home: by saving water and electricity; minimizing trash; unplugging devices; or by reducing the consumption of meat." He continued: "The effects of Climate Change are irreversible. But the actions taken to stop it are irreversible as well. While the government's role is key, so is the role of the business community, academia, and civil society. Tonight we are adding artists to this list!"

Next, Khoyout troupe, a troupe with a passion for performance and social theatre, was welcomed by CCT project manager Ms. Maryam Gamal. Khoyout performed readings of five plays written by climate activists from around the world. Each one of the plays highlighted a different aspect of climate change and its effects on local communities. The plays emerged from a global climate action theater movement, which was launched in November in parallel to the COP 25 climate conference in Bonn. Among the plays performed were: "' Bare Spaces'" from Uganda, "'You Should Know Better'" from Brazil, "'399'" from India, "'Un-Curse'" from Kenya and "'Gods of the Land'" from Uganda. The stories covered some of the most pressing climate change issues for local communities such as extreme weather events, natural disasters, self-resilience, water-scarcity, and displacement.

The readings were followed by a playback performance in which the audience shared their own experiences with climate change. The audience's stories were then turned into a performance by the troupe. Most notably, the audience stories channeled similar problems to the problems highlighted in the readings. One of the audience members talked about the rising sea levels on coastal lines, specifically in the Mediterranean, which has resulted in



displacement of communities and destruction of property. Another audience member talked about the spreading of dengue fever all around the world including in North Africa, which is caused by mosquitoes and amplified by extreme weather. Pest control in poultry farms was another problem raised by one of the audience members, affecting the number of the chicken and their productivity, hence affecting their owner's ability to adequately earn a living. All the stories shed light on the suffering of local communities, their struggle to make ends meet, but also their resilience and the contribution of research and science to find solutions. The similarities between the stories prompted the audience to take a stance in the global climate debate. The troupe's performance was an important testimonial to the invaluable contribution of art to help raise awareness of the climate crisis and the urgent need to act in order to save mankind's livelihood.

**Background:**

*The Cairo Climate Talks - or CCT - are a series of monthly events launched in 2011 by the German Embassy in Cairo in close cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Environment and several German organizations, among them the DAAD and the GIZ. They bring together political and economic decision makers, consultants, scientists, and civil society representatives to exchange their ideas on current climate change related issues and discuss them with a broader audience.*