

# **Arab Foundations Forum General Assembly 2017 Minutes of Meeting**

**American University in Beirut  
September 14, 2017  
3:30 - 5:30 PM**

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## OPENING OF THE MEETING

**Sa'ed Karajeh (Representing the AFF Legal Counsel)**, opened the General Assembly meeting officially with confirming the attendance with the quorum of 16 out of 21 full members present at the General Assembly.

### **Naila Farouky (AFF CEO):**

Began with presenting the General Assembly with the AFF 2016 year in review focusing on:

- Presenting the S.W.O.T analysis of the AFF
- The year 2016 by numbers including: number of networking events, capacity building workshops, countries covered, number of current and new members and number of Board of Directors meetings
- Expansion and increasing the membership during 2016 (11 new members)

### **Noura Selim (AFF Treasurer & Representative of Sawiris Foundation for Social Development):**

Presented the AFF Financial Overview of the past year:

- The key financial metrics:
  1. Growth in revenues between 2015-2016 at 256% increase in revenue
  2. G&A vs. Activities continues to decrease with more of AFF's funds being spent on Activities vs. G&A. This is a positive direction for AFF.
  3. Annual closing and opening cash balances show AFF is in a financially sound position
- An overview of the Budget vs. Actuals and explained the reason for the variances that include savings due to a number of events being hosted by AFF members and partners and due to the office move towards a virtual, non-office based network

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## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:

### **Rana Diab (Representative of AFF member Hani Qaddumi Scholarship Foundation):**

- Why does AFF present in English even though it represents the Arab region?
- What are the challenges in securing Arab funding? And what are the efforts made to overcome this challenge?
- What is the number of new members in 2016?
- Need for a reminder on the benefits of membership at the Arab Foundations Forum

## ANSWER/S:

### **Naila Farouky (AFF CEO):**

- To clarify, yes AFF should be presenting in Arabic, but the overall participation in this meeting in particular is English speaking and simultaneous interpretation will be provided in future events such as the AFF Annual meeting and General Assembly meeting. We also provide our training workshops in both Arabic and English depending on the audience needs and requests and produce our materials in both Arabic and English. Also important to note that almost all documents for the AGM this year were prepared in both Arabic and English.

### **Noura Selim (AFF Treasurer & Representative of Sawiris Foundation for Social Development):**

- There is a challenge in securing Arab Funding that is usually focused around activities and specific topics and sub-sectors and not necessarily directed towards core support. But it possible in time and given the growth of the AFF membership, awareness on the role of AFF can help bring in more Arab funding. For now grant support has only been provided by foreign donors and we will continue to try and secure Arab funding in the future

## ACTION POINTS

<b>ACTION POINT #01</b>	AFF will always provide simultaneous interpretations at the AFF Annual Meeting and General Assembly
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## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S::

**Ziad Khalaf (AFF Board Member & Representative of A.M. Qattan Foundation):**

- But what are the efforts that AFF has made to try and approach Arab donors?

## ANSWER/S:

**Noura Selim (AFF Treasurer & Representative of Sawiris Foundation for Social Development):**

- Part of the responsibility of the Board of Directors, Sawiris Foundation included, is we have to participate in raising awareness around the role of AFF. Clare has already done that through networking events and meeting to lure Arab donors and we will continue to do so.

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

The decision two years ago was for AFF to focus on membership expansion and membership retention especially that AFF has already been able to secure foreign grants that cover its budget for two years, therefore, we focused on membership expansion in the Gulf and we studied increasing the membership fees. Since we had already had ongoing grants we wanted to focus on promoting the membership and not fundraising in particular.

## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:

**Tafeeda Jarbawi (Representative of AFF member Taawon):**

- What is the goal of the AFF? Is it to make change in the Arab region? If so, we need to secure Arab funding and for that we need to publish our materials in Arabic.
- Will there be a strategic Arab-Funding plan?
- There needs to be a Map of philanthropic foundations and organizations in the Arab region.
- Funding can be secured through focusing on AFF programs such as the Youth Coalition.
- We care about the sustainability of AFF, therefore funding streams need to be more diversified.

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- Our membership and capacity as the General Assembly is a benefit for AFF to help develop the organization to make sure of its sustainability by bringing new donors and putting a strategy in Arabic language especially in a region that is in need of good governance.
  - We are also in need of more Arabic speaking presenters.
  - A database of Arab foundations and donors needs to be created in order to increase the membership and funding streams.
  - How can we respond systematically to those issues? And how can we assist you in that?

**ANSWER/S:**

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- We have been implementing our fundraising strategy, but now that we have programs that stimulate the need to fundraise, we will seek interested donors in these programs. As for the focus on Arabic language we do produce and publish all AFF material in both Arabic and English. We also need to be realistic about our capacities and expectations.
- We can put together a Strategy and campaign for 2018 and beyond.

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	
<b>ACTION POINT #02</b>	AFF will design a fundraising strategy for 2018 and beyond that includes securing Arab funding and focuses on activity-based funding

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## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S

**Rana Diab (Representative of AFF member Hani Qaddumi Scholarship Foundation):**

- Emphasized the need for a data base of Arab donors AFF can approach for funding

## ANSWER/S:

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- Agreed

ACTION POINTS	
<b>ACTION POINT #03</b>	Make sure all materials produced by AFF will be in both Arabic and English
<b>ACTION POINT #04</b>	Create databases for Arab donors and Foundations
<b>ACTION POINT #05</b>	A fundraising strategy will be designed to approach Arab donors

## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:

**Mohammad Al Mukhaini (Representative of OLNG Foundation):**

- We suggest that we can take advantage of the Oman capacity building workshop in December to try to expand the membership and in my opinion this approach is more effective than fundraising in itself
- Suggests adding a slide to the S.W.O.T analysis to add a mitigating plan to reduce risk and weaknesses

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**Aida Essaid (Board Member & Representative of Information and Research Center - King Hussein Foundation):**

- A suggestion to increase membership through networking events and by engaging existing members to share their membership experience to attract potential members

**ACTION POINTS**

<b>ACTION POINT #06</b>	Increasing the number of networking events with the Board of Directors Engagement for the sake of membership recruitment
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**QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:**

**Samar Haidar (Observer):**

- “I am speaking in my personal capacity and not as a representative of the Arab Human Rights Fund. As the former Vice-Chair of the AFF Board of Directors I would like to thank the AFF team for all their efforts. I have to say that the environment for the non-profit sector at this time is not ideal all over the region. The challenges of funding, banking obstacles cause a focus on foreign funding especially that it offer core support funding”
- AFF needs to focus on program funding from Arab donors, as well as highlighting AFF’s success stories through networking events

**ANSWER/S:**

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- Add to action points

**ACTION POINTS**

<b>ACTION POINT #07</b>	A fundraising strategy that has two different components to split core support funding and activities-based fundraising
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## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:

### **Sallama Namani (AFF Board Member & Representative of Makhzoumi Foundation):**

- We should try to recruit members that have previously withdrawn from AFF
- Increase the number of Board of Directors face to face meetings to have more interactions

## ANSWER/S:

### **Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- Add to action points

ACTION POINTS	
<b>ACTION POINT #08</b>	Specify the number of Board of Directors meetings at the beginning of the year to make sure that everyone can attend and commit to the meetings

## QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:

### **Alissa Amico (Observer):**

- A suggestion to include an honorary board for members who can open doors with banks, to have a broader network and outreach to tap into more resources

### **Lynn Malkawi (Representative of AFF Member Ruwwad):**

- Thanks to the AFF team and a suggestion to make sure that AFF members become ambassadors to recruit more members

### **Amin Nehmeh (Representative of AFF Member the Lebanese Development Network):**

- Emphasized the importance of AFF as a network and as a strong reference in capacity building workshops and noted that AFF has a great reputation in the field
- Suggests having an open day for the public and non-members as part of a campaigning event and awareness around the AFF and its members and its work



- A need for a communication strategy
- LDN commits to share its database for the benefit of AFF's networking expansion

**ANSWER/S:**

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- Add to Action Points

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	
<b>ACTION POINT #09</b>	AFF members such as LDN and Ruwwad will commit their databases and resources to help increase AFF membership
<b>ACTION POINT #10</b>	AFF will send a newly updated brochure of AFF membership benefits and services to be disseminated to all members and partners and published on the AFF website
<b>ACTION POINT #11</b>	AFF will design a communication strategy to attain and attract membership
<b>ACTION POINT #12</b>	AFF will start to plan a sustainability strategy in collaboration with members such as Injaz

**QUESTION/S - COMMENT/S:**

**Tafeeda Jarbawi (Representative of AFF member Taawon):**

- We need to focus on the risk of AFF's sustainability and the number of membership turnover not only the membership expansion
- Membership campaigning through the members themselves is also important
- A need for a consultancy to measure AFF's performance, outcomes, and plan our three year strategy around the consultancy report

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- A need for AFF lessons learned reports
  - A suggestion to create thematic groups within the AFF membership to brainstorm around sub-project for each country

### **ANSWER/S:**

#### **Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- There are not enough internal capacities within AFF to manage the thematic groups

### **QUESTION/S – COMMENT/S:**

#### **Rana Diab (Representative of AFF member Hani Qaddumi Scholarship Foundation):**

Questioned benefits of membership again

### **ANSWER/S:**

#### **Noura Selim (AFF Treasurer & Representative of Sawiris Foundation for Social Development):**

- “We pay 20,000 Euros for our OECD membership and I see a much bigger benefit with our membership of 3,000 USD with AFF in return as we have met this network through AFF, we have also had access to organizations such as Al Waleed bin Talal Philanthropies through AFF networking events. We in Egypt are also able to meet and network due to our membership with AFF. And there is no other available space that provides these benefits.”
- “Of course we care that our member are satisfied with their benefits therefore we encourage completing our periodic satisfaction surveys and conveying your suggestions and thoughts”

### **QUESTION/S – COMMENT/S:**

#### **Ahmad Omar (Representative of AFF Member Injaz):**

- “AFF, like Injaz, should study its sustainability module. I would suggest that AFF deploy its strength in communication to encourage the Board of Directors to support membership expansion, through fundraising and sponsorship plans such as Gala dinners and events and Injaz is committed to put its resources and sustainability modules for AFF’s use”

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**Mohammad Al Mukhaini (Representative of OLANG Foundation)**

- A suggestion to have the AFF website in Arabic
- Social media platforms in Arabic

**Imad Baalbaki (AFF Secretary of the Board of Directors & Representative of AFF member American university in Beirut):**

- We have not applied for Arab donors yet, but we will make the efforts in 2018 and beyond

**Tatyana Sleiman (Observer and Representative of Skoun Lebanon):**

- Expressed gratitude for being included in such an event and to be part of such a diversified network of actors in the philanthropic sector

**Sherine El-Taraboulsi (Observer and Representative of ODI UK):**

- “I witnessed the AFF since its inception and I have been able observe its growth. And I can’t comprehend what this sector would have looked like without an organization such as AFF and whenever I am asked about Arab Philanthropy I always say that your point of reference is the AFF and Naila Farouky as it represents Philanthropy in the Arab region which is a crucial part of global philanthropy. AFF is vital to the Arab region.”

**ANSWER/S:**

**Clare Woodcraft (AFF Chair and Representative of Emirates Foundation):**

- Yes, AFF has positioned itself as a reference to Arab philanthropy for the world to understand this region

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	
<b>ACTION POINT #13</b>	AFF will design and launch its Arabic website in 2018
<b>ACTION POINT #14</b>	AFF will also commit to Arabic language social media posts and updates

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## LEGAL DECISIONS:

### Sa'ed Karajah (Representing the AFF Legal Counsel):

- This engagement highlights how keen the membership is on the advancement of AFF, therefore members can be more engaged on periodic bases and even before the annual meeting and General Assembly event
- Confirmed General Assembly's approval of AFF 2016 budget and financial statements audited by Ernst & Young that was shared with everyone ahead of the meeting

## QUESTION/S – COMMENT/S:

### Tafeeda Jarbawi (Representative of AFF member Taawon):

- The audited reports need to be shared earlier in the year and the whole meeting should be conducted earlier, if possible

### Noura Selim (AFF Treasurer & Representative of Sawiris Foundation for Social Development):

- We will make sure to send the audited reports by May of each year for the General Assembly to look at them

### Naila Farouky (AFF CEO):

- The meeting dates are suggested by the members themselves and voted on each year through a survey. We will send out a survey this year as well to determine 2018 AGM

## ACTION POINTS

<b>ACTION POINT #15</b>	AFF will share the final Audit reports of each year in May for the General Assembly to review them and send any comments and feedback before the GA meeting
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## QUESTION/S – COMMENT/S:

### Tafeeda Jarbawi (Representative of AFF member Taawon):

- Who chooses the Audit company?

### Sa’ed Karajah (Representing the AFF Legal Counsel):

- The General Assembly and this can be delegated to the Board of Directors

## DECISION/S:

DECISION/S	
<b>DECISION #01</b>	AFF General Assembly approves the 2016 Audit reports with no objections
<b>DECISION #02</b>	Board of Directors delegated by the General Assembly to review E&Y contract and study offers from the top four audit companies

## ELECTIONS:

### Nur Steitieh and Sa’ed Karajah (AFF Legal Counsel):

- Read the current Board of Directors names to confirm their commitment for the upcoming year
- Confirming the end of Emirates Foundation’s term

## NOMINATIONS

- Interested full members nominated the following organizations for the open Board of Directors position replacing Emirates Foundation:
  1. OLNQ Foundation
  2. Taawon (nominated by HQSF)
  3. Injaz

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All voted in favor of **OLNG Foundation** as a new member of the AFF Board of Directors and Taawon declined to be elected.

<b>DECISION/S</b>	
<b>DECISION #03</b>	OLNG Foundation elected by the General Assembly as a new member of the AFF Board of Directors

**CLOSING OF THE MEETING WITH THE NEWLY CONFIRMED AND ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS**

**CLOSED MEETING TO SELECT AND CONFIRM ROLES**