

From an idea of partnership to a growing reality, the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative represents genuine co-operation between the G8 and European nations and the governments, business and civil society of the region, in order to strengthen freedom, democracy and prosperity for all. The leaders of the G8 industrialized nations and countries of the BMENA region launched the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future - a blueprint for how G8 and BMENA countries could best work together to support indigenous calls for reform - at the G8 Sea Island, Georgia, summit in June 2004. Since then, a number of supportive nations and international financial institutions have offered to support and lead various initiatives elaborated at Sea Island, and the role of civil society has become increasingly significant.

Governments and people of the BMENA region expressed their wish to see democracy and freedoms expanded. The inaugural Forum for the Future in Rabat in December 2004 established a process of dialogue among G8 and regional governments in pursuit of these aims and under wrote seven ambitious initiatives formulated at the Sea Island summit. Since Sea Island, eight Forums for the Future have been held, during which, civil society groups and lead partner countries have made significant advances in this agenda and focused on transparency of governance, women in the workplace, legal reform and human rights. The 9<sup>th</sup> Forum for the Future will be held in Tunisia in 2012.

The yearly Forum for the Future is a centerpiece of the BMENA Initiative and provides an international venue to support reform voices in the region. The Forum permits the partners and other supportive countries and organizations to engage on political, economic and social reform on a regular basis.