

World Art Forum for Development Foundation participated in the 12th session of the World Urban Forum, held at Al-Manara Conference Center, Cairo, under the auspices of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and in collaboration with the United Nations, with wide participation from foreign countries. This event is held for the first time in Egypt and aims to strengthen cooperation between Egypt and foreign countries for sustainable development.

The Foundation's pavilion at the forum witnessed great turnout from individuals, companies, civil society organizations, as well as many local and international visitors interested in sustainable art. They expressed their desire to cooperate with the Foundation and work on exchanging ideas and launching art workshops to promote sustainability in Egypt and globally.

WAFDF made sure to add a distinctive touch to its pavilion at the forum, where it displayed a selected collection of winning artworks from the Sustainable Art and Recycling Competition. The institution also presented a video showcasing its initiatives and previous exhibitions, in addition to the art workshops it has organized since its establishment in 2021.

The World Urban Forum also included a session to honor the winners of the Sustainable Art and Recycling Competition, organized by WAFDF, in the United Nations pavilion. The session was moderated by Ms. Randa Fouad, Founder and President of WAFDF, Dr. Maya Morsi, Minister of Social Solidarity, Dr. Hala El-Said, Economic Advisor to the President and former Minister of Planning and Economic Development, and Mr. Ahmed Rizk, Country Director for UN Habitat Egypt.

Ms Randa Fouad, stated that the foundation is celebrating its fourth year, reflecting the role and importance of art in a country as ancient as the land of civilization. She explained that the field of recycling art is fundamental, as the foundation has organized workshops for youth that combine art and recycling art. The foundation also launched the "Sustainable Art and Human Development" initiative to establish a new generation of young artists aware of the importance of art in serving society, achieving sustainable development goals, and promoting sustainability in various fields.

Fouad pointed out that the foundation includes 80 ambassadors for sustainable art, and launched the first phase of its training workshops under the initiative "Sustainable Art and Human Development" titled "Bank Note" in May of the previous year, aimed at enhancing the economic empowerment of women and youth. This was done in collaboration with the National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, the training arm of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, as well as the Ministries of Environment, Culture, the National Council for Women, and in partnership with the United Nations.

Fouad emphasized that the foundation's goal since its establishment has been to link visual art with sustainable development, based on her belief in the importance of soft power in raising awareness and serving the community. She mentioned that through the foundation's exhibitions, they showcase the works of sustainable art ambassadors, highlighting recycling art from an Egyptian perspective using unique ideas and materials on a global level, in order to present the works of young artists and market modern artistic ideas.

She added that the foundation's current exhibition, "Sustainable Art from Ancient Egyptians to Modern Egypt," is the sixth edition of a series of biannual exhibitions. By 2025, the foundation plans to expand its work in collaboration with developers, state institutions, and the private sector, both inside Egypt and in the Arab region, as well as internationally.

She concluded by stating that the foundation aims to spread the movement and philosophy of sustainable art globally through its works, exhibitions, and initiatives. It also seeks to train young people from Egypt and Arab countries in recycling art, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development goals. She mentioned that these artists aim to raise awareness about the importance of adopting a more sustainable lifestyle by utilizing natural resources that promote sustainability in their artwork, which contributes to reducing the environmental footprint and encourages the community to recognize the positive impact of sustainable art on the environment and the future of the planet.

She ended with a message of gratitude to her team: "I would like to thank the team that has been working with me for several years... Alia

Hany, Dr. Amr Ali, Hadeer Mustafa, and all the girls and boys. I see in them the future and pioneers of art."

Mr. Ahmed Rizk, Country Director for UN Habitat Egypt, began his speech by explaining that during the preparation for the Arab Urban Forum, it was important to highlight Cairo's landmarks and its rich heritage. As a result, "Cairo Urban Week" was organized, which started on October 27 and continued until November 3, the last day before the forum began. The week included a variety of events aimed at emphasizing the value of culture and art in urban development.

In previous editions of the World Urban Forum, the topics discussed varied and covered different aspects of urban development, such as housing, transportation, and services like energy, water, and sewage. However, the cultural and civilizational aspects did not receive enough focus. Therefore, since Cairo is an urban capital rich in history and culture, we made sure that this edition of the forum included a cultural and civilizational dimension, not only because it is the largest edition or because it is held for the first time in a city like Cairo, but also because of the importance of embedding art and culture at the heart of urban development.

The activities of the Urban Week began in collaboration with the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, where a high-level session was organized to discuss sustainability in art and cities. Other events were held at the Grand Egyptian Museum, including interactive activities and tours in downtown Cairo. The week also featured "Urban Cinema," which screened documentaries that discussed Cairo's heritage.

In one of the notable events in downtown Cairo, youth, children, and families were engaged in interactive activities related to art, crafts, and handicrafts to promote community involvement with the concept of sustainable art.

The week concluded with the launch of the "Cairo Urban Week" heritage project in the Asmarat area, in collaboration with the Urban Development Fund and the Cairo Governorate. Public spaces in the area were redesigned in partnership with the children, who participated in workshops to choose colors and games they would like to see. This event aimed to instill a sense of responsibility and ownership in the

children, who expressed their commitment to maintaining and developing the area according to their vision and needs.

These activities represent an early start in instilling cultural and artistic concepts in the minds of future generations. Through this international event, we emphasize the significant role of art in development, and we hope that these efforts will continue through future successful editions, enhancing partnership and cooperation in sustainable urban development.

Dr. Hala El-Said, Advisor to the President for Economic Affairs, began her speech by welcoming the participants and expressing her appreciation for the support provided by her colleagues for this event, which focuses on the importance of art and sustainable development. She emphasized that art not only reflects history and civilization but also plays a fundamental role in building well-rounded personalities. She noted that a well-rounded personality combines scientific knowledge with cultural and artistic growth, leading to comprehensive human development.

Dr. El-Said highlighted the crucial role of civil society organizations in supporting national development plans, stressing that cooperation between the government, private sector, and civil society is essential for the success of initiatives related to art and sustainable development. She emphasized the need to link development goals with art as a means of enhancing public engagement and understanding of these initiatives.

Dr. El-Said focused on the importance of investing in youth and women through training programs that enhance their capabilities. She affirmed that investing in human capital is vital for building the future and that youth are the cornerstone of development and progress.

She praised the encouragement of entrepreneurs and artists to work in the field of waste recycling, pointing out the positive impact of this sector on the Egyptian economy. She mentioned that the term “Junk Art” was first coined in 1961 by British critic Lawrence Alloway, representing an art form based on transforming scrap metal and old machinery into innovative artworks.

Dr. El-Said underscored the importance of the circular economy and recycling waste to create art that benefits society, the economy, and the environment. She commended the International Forum for Plastic Arts for its efforts in promoting a culture of recycling, explaining that this approach contributes to environmental balance and adds aesthetic value that fosters positivity within society.

She expressed her happiness in attending the forum and praised the role of the foundation in supporting young artists and creatives. She shared her personal background, growing up in a home that loved art, with her mother being a plastic artist, which instilled in her the conviction and passion that there is a shared link between art, culture, and development, and that link is awareness. She explained that arts and culture enhance the necessary awareness for development, and that purposeful art contributes to fostering a sense of belonging and citizenship, motivating citizens to participate positively in development efforts. She affirmed that investing in human capital is the foundation of development and construction, which is a goal of the Egyptian state.

Dr. El-Said further explained that art contributes to building communities by creating generations that understand the value of the homeland, where artists translate development challenges into simple, impactful messages, creating a positive effect, especially during times of crisis.

In conclusion, she congratulated all the winners of the competition and expressed her commitment to supporting such initiatives. She also thanked artist Randa Fouad for her role in raising awareness about the importance of sustainable art and supporting entrepreneurship in this field.

In her speech, Dr. Maya Morsy, Minister of Social Solidarity, expressed her happiness in participating in this international event held in Egypt. She pointed out that art is a means to achieve social peace at all levels, and that Egypt is rich in talents across various sectors. The minister explained that Egypt has a continuous history and civilization, highlighting that Egyptians, by nature, have been practicing recycling since the Pharaonic era, making them among the first to adopt this concept. She called for expanding the scope of sustainable art and recycling, especially among the youth, to enhance their creativity.

The Minister of Social Solidarity also mentioned the many talents in the ministry's care homes, explaining that there could be cooperation with the International Forum for Plastic Arts for Development to nurture these talents. She affirmed that the ministry seeks to promote sustainable art in its various projects. She invited artist Randa Fouad to partner with care homes to teach children the art of recycling, as well as to spread this culture in schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

The minister also emphasized the need to establish a sustainable art school in the Asmarat area, with plans to expand this experience to other neighborhoods.

Dr. Morsy confirmed her support for the concept of recycling, referring to her previous experience with the National Council for Women, where they participated in COP27 by organizing an exhibition for the development of the Egyptian family based on recycling, under the patronage and support of Dr. Hala El-Said. This exhibition lasted for seven days and displayed around 45,000 products from various Egyptian governorates, designed by Egyptian women. She highlighted the importance of opening opportunities for marketing and exporting these products in a sustainable manner.

Dr. Maya Morsy added that the recycling idea launched by artist Randa Fouad, through the Sustainable Art Exhibition, demonstrates her pioneering role in this field, which aims to train young talents who will contribute to building the future. She also noted that Egyptians have a natural inclination toward recycling, as it is a practice that extends from ancient times.

Ms. Randa Fouad asked Dr. Hala El-Said: "How can sustainable art contribute to achieving economic growth, creating new job opportunities, and enhancing eco-tourism? What future plans can be proposed to enhance the role of sustainable art as part of Egypt's economic development?"

Dr. Hala El-Said responded that sustainable art is a part of the industry, just like other industries, such as the drama or film industries, as it contributes to increasing the national output through measurable inputs. As an example, Dr. El-Said mentioned the collaboration between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and a number of economists to assess the

impact of youth and sports as part of the components of the gross domestic product, which helped measure the sector's inputs more accurately. She explained that incorporating art as an official industry within the GDP – rather than just as a small part of the media – would allow for a more comprehensive calculation of visual arts and sustainable art.

Dr. El-Said also highlighted the active role of civil society in development plans, emphasizing the need to invest in youth, considering it crucial. She focused on the importance of promoting the waste recycling economy, as it can add value by transforming waste from “zero value” into products with economic benefits. She praised the efforts of the “International Forum for Plastic Arts for Development” in promoting the culture of waste recycling to produce art that carries positive messages of optimism and peace, reaffirming the role of art in supporting society, raising environmental awareness, and enhancing the creative and sustainable economy.

Dr. El-Said noted that sustainable art transforms waste, which was previously of no value, into elements with positive value added to the economy. What was once discarded and deemed worthless can now be sold, even for a small amount, but it contributes a real addition to the national output.

Ms. Randa Fouad asked Dr. Maya Morsi: “How can sustainable art contribute to building more cohesive communities, especially in local areas? What social initiatives can the Ministry of Social Solidarity support in collaboration with sustainable art ambassadors? Are there specific plans for the upcoming year?”

Dr. Maya Morsi responded that one of the most important aspects of sustainable art is its provision of a platform for social expression and community peace, as art gives people the opportunity to express themselves, whether through painting, singing, or recycling clothes to create simple works of art. She emphasized that participating in art workshops helps reduce psychological stress and promotes inner peace.

Dr. Maya explained that she is keen on establishing the principle of art as a therapeutic and social tool, particularly for children who suffer from negative impacts such as displacement. She believes that involving

children in art enhances their sense of color and creativity, which contributes to building inner peace and, ultimately, social peace.

She also noted that Egypt has become a major consumer power, which means raising awareness about recycling and sustainable consumption has become essential. This concept can be introduced to children and youth from an early age through their schools and care centers, leading to a generation that understands the importance of sustainable economics and its role in preserving environmental resources.

Dr. Maya emphasized the importance of working with children from an early age to promote the concept of recycling, such as using water bottles or old clothes in innovative ways, in order to build a generation that is aware of sustainability and reduces the excessive consumption seen in society.

Regarding care homes, Dr. Maya stressed the importance of working with vulnerable groups by offering integrated art activities that help support children and youth in care homes. These activities can foster the concept of social solidarity by involving these individuals in art workshops, improving their quality of life, and providing them with new opportunities for self-expression.

She also highlighted the importance of increasing the coverage of nurseries in Egypt, which is currently only 8%, with the ministry aiming to raise this rate to about 25% or 30%. This would help empower mothers to enter the workforce and increase women's participation in the Egyptian economy.

Finally, she pointed out the joint efforts between the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education, where art competitions can be implemented in schools to encourage children's creativity, promote competition among them, and showcase their artistic achievements periodically. This helps them develop their skills while promoting sustainable art as an essential part of communities.

The session ended with the Awards Ceremony for the Sustainable Art Competition Winners artists by Ms. Randa Fouad, the UN-Habitat office director, Ahmed Rizk, Minister of Social Solidarity, Dr. Maya Morsi, and



Presidential Advisor, Dr. Hala El-Said. A group photo was taken to document the event.

The winners' names were:

Artist Hala Ali Mohammed Al-Rifi

Artist Ahmed Ammar Said Hassan

Artist Mona Allah Ahmed Abdel-Razek Mustafa

Artist Sarah Hussein Ahmed Al-Waseef

Artist Bilal Ahmed Mansour Hassanin

Artist Omnia Mohammed Ibrahim Helal