I. External Threats to Arab States and Regional Economies

The Arab world is central to the global economy and its commodity market. The strategic location costs the Arab world to be involved in various conflicts. External threats to members of the League of Arab States are highly related to the dependency of most Arab states on natural resources as their ultimate economic sources. Republic of Tunisia expresses deep concern of the rising threats to Arab states and their economies. Being a strategically important trade partner to the European Union, Tunisia is committed to protect the economic situation of the Arab world. Tunisia views external threats to any member-states of LAS as a direct threat to Tunisia. Although Tunisia supports the right of all countries in the region to develop nuclear program for peaceful purposes, Tunisia strongly opposes any development or possession of nuclear weapons in the region. Iran's nuclear program, Iranian threats to shut the Strait of Hormuz, and the Israeli threats to attack Iran are major concerns for Tunisia. Republic of Tunisia believes the security of territorial and trans-boundary waters of the Arab world are highly significant to protect Arab states and regional economies from external threats.

During the 16th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran in August 2012 in which Republic of Tunisia was elected as a vice president, the Tunisian foreign minister Dr. Rafiq Abdulssalam argued Iran to play a "positive role" in the region. In his speech, Dr. Abdulssalam also called for Israel to "give in to IAEA demand for nuclear inspection." Tunisia takes all necessary measures to secure its territorial waters and the surrounding international waters. Tunisia participated with over thirty countries in the largest naval exercise in the Middle East in the Arabian Gulf in September 2012 which aimed to simulate the closure of Strait of Hormuz². Tunisia also works closely with its allies in North Africa and Europe to achieve the goal of securing international waters. The Tunisian navy conducted anti- mine and anti-piracy exercises with the naval forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in February 2012³. Also, joint naval exercises with member-states of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) are regularly conducted by Tunisia's naval forces.

Because of the regional instability and the rising threats to Arab states, Republic of Tunisia recommends the restructure and activation of the Arab Peace and Security Council⁴. Tunisia strongly encourages intensifying military cooperation among LAS members to achieve a balanced Arab response to external threats. Also, Tunisia urges the League of Arab States to advance its meditation efforts between LAS members and non-member states in the region in order to prevent disputes from turning into regional conflicts.

II. The Coming Resource Wars

Not only Arab states share a common language and historical heritage but they also share common risks of natural disasters. Different parts of the Arab world regularly face geological threats like earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis in addition to threats of climate change such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, sand-storms, and forest-fires. Morocco's floods in 2009, Guno Hurricane in Oman in 2007, and Algeria's earthquake in 2003 are all indicators of the rising risks in the Middle East and North Africa⁵. Climate Change in the region is expected to multiple risks of rising the sea-level, prolonged droughts, and desertification⁶. Furthermore, water is a fundamental right for all human beings and the lack of it leads to disasters. The Middle East is considered one of the most water-stressed regions in the world⁷. Some LAS member-states are expected to face water disasters by 2020. Despite the economic advantage of the Arab world's oil reserve, recent wars in the region were correlated at least partly with these oil reserves. The Arab world controls over more than half of the world's oil reserves. LAS members which

¹ "Tunisian FM from the NAM Summit: Israel Should Give in to IAEA Demand for Inspection." *Tunisian FM from the NAM Summit: Israel Should Give in to IAEA Demand for Inspection*. Islamic Invitaion Turkey, 31 Aug. 2012. Web. 04 Oct. 2012. http://www.islamicinvitationturkey.com/2012/08/31/tunisian-fm-from-the-nam-summit-israel-should-give-in-to-iaea-demand-for-inspection/

³ "NATO Task Force In Tunisia." 11 Feb. 2012. Turkish Navy. http://turkishnavy.net/2012/02/11/nato-task-force-in-tunisia/

⁴ "Baghdad Declaration" Mar. 2012: n. pag. League of Arab States.

http://lasportal.org/wps/wcm/connect/22d652004abff4f5939b9f526698d42c/%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86+%D8%A8%D8%BA%D

8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

⁵ "Regional Workshop on Urban Risk Reduction in Arab States" UNISDR 2009. www.unisdr.org/archive/11676

⁶ "Mapping Climate Change Threats and Human Developments" UNISDR 2010. http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/paper02-en.pdf

[&]quot;Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World." HDR 2007/2008. UNPD. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR 2007/2008 EN_Overview.pdf

are members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) control 56% of the world' crude oil reserves while non-OPEC members within the LAS control 2%; the rest of the world controls 42% of the world's reserves⁸. Mineral resources are also vital resources to the Arab world.

As one of the world's largest producers of Phosphate, the Tunisian Republic is highly concerned with mitigating conflicts over natural resources in the region. The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020, which was adopted by LAS's council of ministers of environment and ratified by Tunisia, aims to deal with such natural disasters⁹. As a part of its duty of natural resource transparency, Tunisia is the first Arab states emerging from the Arab Spring to decide to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the global transparency standard. Tunisia is currently working on establishing a National Platform for Risk Reduction which supports the implementation of priorities of Hyogo Framework for Action. As Tunisia's Minister of Environment, Mamia Zayani explains, "the Government of Tunisia is mobilizing local civil society organizations to ensure that they play their crucial role in disaster risk reduction."

Republic of Tunisia urges the development of The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 to include a mechanism for conflict resolution. Tunisia encourages OPEC-members of LAS to work with non-OPEC members in the League in order to achieve common goals. Tunisia further encourages the LAS to intensify its cooperation with Africa through Arab-African summits in order to help some African members of the LAS to deal with mismanagement of natural resources.

III. LAS Response to Recent Regime Changes in Arab States

People in states which face regime changes along with people across the Arab world raise their level of expectations in the Arab League; therefore, the League has a historic role to play in the developing Arab world. Before 2011, regime changes were not concerns to the League of Arab States. The League now considers these historic transformations in the region and eventually welcomes them. Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen witnessed regime changes in the past year and half; however, the LAS's response is still below expectations of Arabs.

Republic of Tunisia is the birthplace of the Arab Spring. Since the departure of Zain AlAbiden Ben Ali out of Tunisia in 14 January, 2011, Tunisia has been taking all efforts to restructure the Tunisian regime which was forced on Tunisians since the independence in 1956. The National Constituent Assembly and the interim government in Tunisia take all necessary measures to build the new Tunisian state and write a constitution which reflect all aspects of the Tunisian society. The Tunisian NCA also allows citizens to make suggestions on the new constitution through a consultation mechanism on its website 10. Efforts of Tunisia's interim government on writing the constitution function as the cornerstone of the country's new democratic regime and they serve as an example for other countries emerging from the Arab Spring. On the regional level, Tunisia works closely with new governments of Libya and Egypt to achieve common goals in the region. Tunisia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Rafiq Abdulssalam, expresses that "Tunisia and Egypt share the goal of preserving national unity, security, and stability in Libva." 11 Tunisia also welcomes the transition of power in Yemen and views the Yemeni solution as the most suitable solution for the Syrian crisis.

In the words of President Moncef Marzouki in LAS Baghdad Summit in March 2012," a revolution in the Arab League is needed in order for this body to keep up with the new spirit of Arab people and their demands." Republic of Tunisia encourages the League of Arab States to make serious reforms. In its state-building efforts, the Arab League should provide all possible assistance for countries which face recent regime changes to help pass the transition period. Tunisia urges the LAS to perform its duties more effectively in Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, and more urgently in Syria. Tunisia encourages intensifying the League's cooperation with international, regional, and sub-regional organizations.

^{. 2011.} Web States, 2011. Web الـ ثالث الـ عدد - ومؤ شرات ارقام الـ عرب ية الـ دول" ⁸

^{2012.}pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=b8d02b8049993e998d13ffcde376ffea

^{9&}quot;Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 UNISDR http://www.unisdr.org/files/17934_asdrrfinalenglishjanuary2011.pdf

10 "Consultations on the New Constitution." Tunisian National Constituent Counil. www.anc.tn/site/main/AR/contribution/contribution_citoyen_constit.jsp

^{11 &}quot;Neighbors Want a United Libya, Tunisian Foreign Minister Says " AlArabyia News, 11 Mar. 2012. Web. http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/03/11/199964.html

^{12 &}quot;Tunisian President's Speech at Baghdad Summit 2012" League of Arab States