



Eng. Mohamed Abdullah Zain
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Arab Fertilizer Association

Honored Attendants

Good Morning

I would like to start by welcoming you all in Egypt and in the opening ceremony of the 23rd AFA International Annual Fertilizer Forum and Exhibition, titled:

“Arab Fertilizer Producers Continue to Shine”

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the Egyptian and Arab companies sponsoring such a remarkable economic event. I would also like to thank the experts from companies, organizations, Arab and foreign research centers specialized in fertilizers industry, trade and transportation for their professional participation in the Forum proceedings. To note, their participation will assist in highlighting the latest developments in our field of concern, thus ensuring the achievement of a sound economic status that will lead to sustainable inter-cooperation.

Arab fertilizer industry plays a pivotal role via providing essential support to the regional and international agricultural sector and supplying the main inputs for the strategic food crops. The abundance of raw materials, which includes natural gas, phosphate rocks, potash and sulfur, has enabled the Arab region to become a hub for international fertilizer industry. Fertilizer producers have been entrenching their related international production shares, during more than forty years.

Taking this in consideration, fertilizer producers' strategic vision in the Arab region set them in an eminent status allowing them to lead the international market in the sectors of nitrogen, phosphate and potash fertilizers.

AFA believes in promoting the approach of coordination, cooperation and exchanging expertise in all fields between AFA member companies. It also considers extending bridges of close contribution between AFA and member companies, seeking the preparation and development of qualified human cadres to move forward with fertilizer industry and requirements sector to the coming decades; to achieve a more pioneering status. Therefore, AFA was not satisfied by communicating with member companies through the senior management and the technical and economic committees only, but also it was keen on raising awareness, spreading knowledge and extending additional bridges of cooperation with member companies via 6 working groups in all professional fields, namely Energy Saving, HSE (health, safety and environment), Operations and Maintenance, Agriculture, Training and Development as well as Communication and Public Affairs. AFA has accomplished, through such groups, remarkable achievements, including the issuance of comprehensive matrix manuals for periodical maintenance process in addition to manuals of more than 60 successful HSE practices, to be followed and incorporated in our culture during the different phases of work, production and manufacturing.

To achieve the balanced relationship in managing natural resources, AFA sought through the Energy Saving Working Group to save energy consumption, being one of the main factors for improving fertilizer factories economies, which in turn is reflected in production cost reduction resulting in increasing profitability that support our factories sustainability.

To reach distinguished capacity building of Arab fertilizer companies personnel and develop member companies' performance in training and qualification field, through communicating and exchanging successful training experiences and practices, AFA pursued to form the Training and Development Working Group. The group has started its activity and held the first fertilizer leaders making workshop, in Aswan, last month, and issued the required training manual for this workshop.

Believing in the importance given, in the contemporary era, to mass media means, for being an effective tool playing a strategic role in developing society and connecting between economy, institutions, consumers and other relevant actors, AFA formed Communication and Public Affairs Working Group. Through this group, a communication network was created between the media and public affairs personnel in fertilizers companies in order to deal effectively with the media means to deliver their message via targeted media means, issue periodicals, launch website, and provide publications, such as corporate identity booklet among others.

Being keen on communicating with member companies, disseminating the culture of optimal fertilizer usage and raising farmers' awareness in this regard, AFA established the Agricultural Working Group. This group targets extending bridges of communication with the real fertilizer consumer, that is the farmer, and provide information directly to farmers without mediators and bureaucratic practices to realize the problems and obstacles facing the ideal fertilizer usage, through launching agricultural caravans. These caravans will be carried out by member companies in cooperation with AFA and the agricultural sector, in accordance with the proceedings of such companies' social responsibility practices. The Agricultural Working Group, through the agricultural caravans and other means, delivers audio visual agricultural information, namely publications and periodicals such as the 4R Booklet and member companies' agricultural periodicals.

Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to confirm that there is no industry that bear a responsibility as huge as fertilizer industry; it is an industry responsible for achieving food security. International food security is one of the most significant challenges faced by the world in the twenty first century. I do recognize the major challenges encountered by Arab fertilizer manufacturers, including the decrease in fertilizers market prices and the increase in production inputs. Despite the previously mentioned Arab fertilizer companies leaders were efficiently capable of moving forward with their companies towards distinctiveness, ensuring their companies sustainability, recording good production growth rates to fulfill the increasing demand on fertilizers and accordingly contributing effectively in achieving food security, combating hunger and guaranteeing sustainable agricultural sustainability.

Therefore, Arab fertilizer manufactures believed in “shooting for the moon, even if you miss you will land among the stars” and here they are continuing to shine.

To conclude, I would like in your name all to thank the Government of Egypt for the generous sponsorship of the Forum and to also thank all the participants for enhancing Arab common work pillars through such a remarkable gathering.

Best wishes for our Forum and the cherished land of Egypt and the Arab nation at large.