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Good Governance

Obstacles, Keys and Desired Results

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Introduction:

Since Allah created mankind, they have been continually trying to develop their social life; and whenever people's interests were interconnected and intertwined, they worked hard to find out what would organize their social life in a way that would achieve their interests.

Humanity has known many types of governance, from tribal systems, to the feudal systems, to empires, to the nation-state, in addition to several types of the government systems such as monarchy, the republican system, and various means of succession of power, such as the religious theocratic system, the absolute hereditary monarchy, the constitutional hereditary monarchy, the democratic system with all its varieties: parliamentary, presidential and complex.

In all these stages and systems, the history of mankind has known wise rulers who served their people, and other unjust rulers, who were a burden on them. Therefore, the contemporary trend of the concepts of good governance has come to talk about good governance in terms of its supports and obstacles, its keys and mechanisms, and in terms of its effects and results, and based on that, ruling systems are judged, regardless of their cultural and civilizational backgrounds.

Praise be to Allah that we, as Muslims, have a strong approach to good governance in terms of peremptory texts in the Coran and the Sunnah, and the bright experience of the rightly-guided caliphate (Koulafa Rachidoune), and in many periods in our Islamic history, that can be used and mixed with human good experiences in term of governance to correct our delicate situations and achieve our hopes for good governance in Our countries.

I will tackle this topic through the following three axes:

- The reasons preventing the establishment of good governance in our countries:
- Good governance action keys.
- The desired results.

I will elaborate only on the first point due to the limited time.

And my allocution concern especially the Arab World wich I know better.

First - The reasons preventing the establishment of good governance in our countries:

Before talking about the keys to implement good governance, its effects and consequences, I will touch upon the main reasons that prevent it from being achieved through 6 points:

Point 1 - The prevailing public values and culture:

Nothing changes people's conditions like their deep convictions in the necessity of change. And nothing is more beneficial and robust and sustainable in forming convictions such as the values that people believe in. Those values implanted in Mankind 's instinct that we call "universal values"

which Islam came to awaken and develop, like what was mentioned in the hadith of the prophet Mohamed, may God bless him and grant him: (((I am only sent to complete the high morals)).

Then when values are established and spread, they become general culture in societies. Then building laws and necessary regulations to achieve the strict level of good governance will become easier. After that these laws and regulations are themselves transformed into feeding the prevailing culture and those established values.

When we talk about the features and standards of good governance, we are talking about higher values that are elevated by all the religions and cultures and civilizations, such as justice, honesty, responsibility, accountability, transparency, the common good and so on. If these values are available in any society, people will preserve the good governance if it exists in their countries, and they will continue to improve it, until it becomes a complete reality in their countries.

On the other hand, if these values are absent and replaced by other bad values, such as injustice, betrayal, fraud, slander, selfishness and corruption, then the path to establishing good governance will be difficult, and any model established under such environment will be unstable and fragile.

If we look at the situation of most of our Muslim countries, we will find that both faces are present, struggling against each other to survive and grow. We find virtuous values rooted in the people, created and preserved by the Islamic religion. We also find the opposite as well, created by deviant environments and fed by authoritarian regimes. Due to this complex situation within our societies, politicians and scholars reformers found themselves struggling into two major paths: Leading societies to adopt the values of good

governance, and pressuring governments to implement the standards of good governance.

In this context, the Kuala Lumpur Forum has devoted itself to serve the values of good governance and spread them through its conferences, seminars, workshops held in various countries and through the intellectual contributions of its members, and through its various media activities.

Point 2 - Not understanding the importance of good governance theoretically:

The fundamental rule says: “Judging a thing is a branch of its perception.” and The famous proverb says: “Man is an enemy of what he does not know.” It is not possible to implement good governance in our countries without knowing it, knowing its foundations by the elites, understanding its standards, seeing its effects in societies where good governance is established, and being sure of its compatibility with our Islamic beliefs and general principles of Sharia, and how they are compatible with the deep rooted experiences in our Islamic history.

The more this theoretical knowledge about good governance are extended and spread in our societies, the more the resistance against political and social transformation toward good governance will be minimal and their impacts will be limited.

Unfortunately, only few groups of elites know the theoretical truth of good governance, and many of these elites do not explain properly its foundations and dimensions to the public. Some of them confuse people by introducing some frightening aspects that shake their social believes and political balances, and make them scared and skeptical.

For this purpose, the Kuala Lumpur Forum is working on drafting broad programs to convert its declaration on democratic transformation and its declaration on good governance into training programs that consolidate values, spread knowledge and build skills. These programs will benefit large numbers of Muslims, and will be supervised and facilitated by trainers who work for the Forum as well as other contributors who cooperate with it.

Point 3 - Lack of skills and knowledges about the successful experiences in good governance among officials and official institutions, parties and organizations:

The Arab world does not know successful experiences in good governance. Therefore, political officials have not experienced its tools and standards. As a result, there is no recognized related skills to be learned in our countries.

As we all know, the most difficult types of resistance in political and social transformations is the fear of untested new ideas, programs, and mechanisms, especially among those who are required to use it and they don't know how to. On this elementary basis, many politicians in countries without transparency, and where they do not adopt clear legal procedures in governance, they consider the standards of good governance as intellectual luxury that has nothing to do with reality.

For this reason, the Kuala Lumpur Forum, in cooperation with Omran Foundation, has established an international institute for remote education and training. This institute will offer various programs in the development field, and the specializations of various government sectors in accordance with the standards of good governance. Registration will begin in the fall of this year.

Point 4- Lack of direct personal benefit from the positive effects of good governance:

However the values of good governance in societies are prevailed, and however the common knowledge about good governance among elites is, and however big the efforts of education and rehabilitation to embody it not seeing concrete benefits of good governance in the real lives of people does not provide good governments, good rulers, a broad base that supports them and protects them.

By saying this, it is important to remind everybody that what made doctor Mahathir a respectable and celebrated leader among his people and internationally, and what made him a pivotal figure in Malaysia is his enormous success in achieving development and improving the daily good lives of his citizens.

Also, the Turkish people would have not stood up together to protect the legitimacy of President Erdogan from the coup if it was not for his good governance that raised the standard of living of the Turkish people, and transformed Turkey into a strong, developed and prosperous country.

In this context, The Kuala Lumpur Summit is putting an effort to gather successful governance experiences in the Islamic world, and to initiate cooperation projects between them in the service of their peoples and the civilized resumption of the Islamic Ummah.

Point 5 - the resistance of political, economic and social forces, who benefit from the current irrational status quo.

The main responsible for the state of backwardness, poverty, poor educational and health care systems, and other bad conditions lived in the Arab world are the authoritarian rulers who have monopolized wealth, power and prestige.

These privileges became a reason for their attachment to power, and preventing their people from their rights to choose their rulers and hold them accountable. Some of them do not hesitate to oppress their people, and plot with foreigners against them to stay in power.

However, experiences and history have shown that the continuation of these conditions does not last, and things may suddenly turn against these rulers, which can result in losing their privileges, and even, their lives. Unfortunately, they may lose their countries with them as they plunge into agitations and struggles over power, from which neither the rulers nor the ruled will survive.

For this reason, the Kuala Lumpur Forum has worked hard, through its conferences, seminars, and announcements, and various activities to explain the benefits of democratic transition on both, rulers and the citizens, and the broad prospects for good governance that accommodate everybody. The forum is also working to form delegations of prominent leaders to some countries, after the end of the Corona Pandemic, to conduct Dialogues in this regard with influential leaders in Arab and Islamic countries at various levels, and an attempt to create practical paths for the transition to good governance.

6 - the obstruction of the dominant international powers, to establishing good governance in the Arab world, because of their fear for losing their interests in the region.

The existing international system does not help to establish good governance in our countries, contrary to its hypocrite claims and despite the large number of declarations and agreements issued by international organizations, especially the United Nations organizations. The international system is dominated by the realistic international policy of the great powers that operate only for their own interests, even at the expense of People's interests. Because of that, the good governance have got a little chance to be implemented seriously and effectively everywhere in the world.

There is no doubt that there are established traditions of good governance in Western democratic countries; however, these countries deal effectively with the standards of good governance only in their own countries and with their own people. While they impede them in our countries through their support for repressive regimes that continue to rule outside of transparency and democratic standards.

When the theories of idealism in international relations retreated lately, in favor of realistic theories; international organizations like the UN institutions became useless, and their efforts to enable good governance did not become feasible.

With the dominance of neoliberal trends nowadays, good governance is no longer at its best days. The crises of poverty have increased, and many groups were deprived of basic services, such as education and health care. Environment became exposed to serious attacks that expose all the inhabitants of the globe to great dangers. Even in developed countries the poor are getting poorer and the rich getting richer, and many peoples in those developed countries do not longer consider their rulers as good rulers, and we are seeing regular protests and demonstrations expanding more and more in the capitals of those countries.

In order to contribute in correcting this situation, the KL forum is looking, as a think tank institution among other functions, to propose some new ideas that bring humanity together, for a new better world, with more justice and more dignity.

That was one of the main messages of the previous Kuala Lumpur summit, which was held in Kuala Lumpur in Dec 2019, with the presence of prominent Muslim leaders and rulers.

Second - Keys to good governance work:

I will just quote the titles of this second axes:

What are the keys that make good governance established and work: there is at least 6 keys:

- promoting values, knowledge and skills in the societies.
- Changing the balance of power.
- Well organizing Democratic transition.
- A national contract between the essential actors.
- Building institutions in accordance with international standards of good governance.
- Building a new international order in support of good governance.

Third – Desired results:

What is the consequences of the good governance

- Stability
- Justice and equality.
- Freedom and human dignity.
- Development and well-being such as: education, health care, employment, and good services.
- The renaissance of our countries and our Oumma.