



**Inauguration Speech by H.E. Mr Amre Moussa  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt  
On the Occasion of the Inauguration of the  
Swedish Institute in Alexandria  
3 October 2000**

Madame Minister,  
Ambassador Pierre Schori,  
Excellencies.  
Honourable guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to take part in celebrating this important occasion, the inauguration of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, especially along side my friend and colleague Her Excellency Ms. Anna Lindh, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs. I welcome her in Egypt on her second trip over this year.

I highly commend and salute the Swedish initiative to establish an institute dedicated to broadening further different forms of interaction between Sweden and Egypt, to address issues of importance to the development of the Middle East, and to contribute to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It is yet another Swedish significant contribution to the world of academia and to the efforts of bringing peoples closer together. Alfred Nobel, Dag Hammarskjold, and Gunnar Myrdal are only a few who gave her fame as a leader in the drive towards peaceful coexistence understanding and tolerance.

The establishment of the Institute, today, comes also as an additional and a solid milestone of Sweden's drive to enlarge the scope of her interests beyond her geographic neighborhood, to include the Mediterranean basin as well as North/South relations. It is commonly accepted, today, that no country, whatever its location, can afford to be isolated from the global economy or go by itself on the path of international politics. Events in one part of the globe wash up on the shores of other parts of the world. The same goes for both sides of the Mediterranean.

Of added significance is the fact that Alexandria is chosen as the seat of the Institute. Known for its long tradition of learning and academia, Alexandria has, for centuries, been the lighthouse of the Mediterranean basin. Its multicultural communities, its Library, and its intellectual effusions have enlightened the world of knowledge. Today, with the inauguration of the Swedish Institute, and the upcoming inauguration of the Biblioteca Alexandrina , and the ten-year-long Senghor University, the city will soon polish its intellectual luster. Together such centers of erudition will bring about

intellectuals from around the world, who will, in turn, elaborate ways and means to face today's challenges.

Madame Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Swedish Institute is well placed to become a forum for extensive brainstorming, exchange of thoughts, and hopefully serve as a birthplace for innovative ideas and initiatives on a wide gamut of issues. At the dawn of a new century, international relations are loaded with new challenges facing humanity in the political, economic, and cultural fields.

Only a few weeks ago, we gathered at the United Nations in New York to celebrate the Millennium Assemble, to ponder over how to face old and new challenges and elaborate on new information order. The interaction between religions and cultures would help bridging all gaps and properly deal with challenges. This institute can....help.

Furthermore, in its focus on Euro-Mediterranean partnership, the institute can certainly give impetus to the Barcelona Process in its social and cultural chapters. A prosperous, stable and secure Euro-Mediterranean partnership cannot only depend on the political and the economic chapters; there is a need to promote cultural interaction among the various countries of the Mediterranean. The Institute can deepen the dialogue among those countries, and deepen further the understanding among the various cultures and religions, thus refuting such fallacies as "the inevitable clash of civilizations" or the "end of history".

Madame Minister,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Among the new challenges that currently face us all, and on which the Institute can delve into. I would like to note, in particular, "the drive towards globalisation" and the "cultural divide". Such phenomena are yet undefined in many of their aspects, but their effects are already overwhelming. Globalisation has often been portrayed as one-sided and negative, but we ought to see the other side of the coin. During the various roundtables held during the United Nations millenium summit, the heads of States and Governments have been candid in acknowledging that both developed and developing nations must find collective solutions to the problems of development. They also agreed that the South must be given help to build up its capacity to benefit from the fruits of globalisation. Leaders of northern countries have also pointed out that the economies of their countries face serious problems that can be attributed to the pressures of this phenomenon. However, there can be no doubt that the problems of the developing world are of a far greater magnitude and deserve far more attention. Domestic problems at home should not give the North any excuse to ignore their important international obligations.

As for the "digital divide", I believe that the Institute can also play an active and constructive role in the realm of information technology. The Internet, to name but one example, has changed many aspects in the interconnectedness among, not only

States, but also among people around the globe. The individual has truly become directly and globally connected to the point that the critical role, of States as an intermediary between their citizens and the rest of the world may change forever. This transition must proceed carefully and wisely, if we are to ensure its positive aspects and avoid its possible participants, exacerbate the gap between the "haves" and "have nots", by adding a gap between the "knows" and the "know nots".

It is in this light, that the institute can formulate ideas and initiatives aimed at narrowing the widening, digital divide and spreading the benefits of this and other new technological developments and innovations.

Finally, Madame Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Egypt, to once again welcome the establishment of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria. I wish its staff all the success and I look forward to participating in some of its upcoming activities and to benefiting from the fruits of its labour.

Thank you.