High Level IIA Conference

25 October · 15:45 – 18:00 ·

Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel · Doha, Qatar.

At the outset, I would like to thank UNCTAD for the kind invitation to be part of this important gathering and for its efforts in organizing this conference. I would also like to thank the Government of the State of Qatar for hosting us and for its warm hospitality and valuable support in making this event a success.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Let me start by welcoming the launch of the UNCTAD Guiding Principles on IIA Reform.

I believe the timing could not be better,

and I would like to explain why through Egypt's own experience.

Egypt has one of the largest networks of bilateral investment treaties in our region.

Most of them, however, belong to the old generation.

They were signed with good faith, to attract investment.

But they were written in very broad terms, and they do not strike the balance we need between the State's right to regulate and the investor's right to protection.

We have learned this the hard way.

These treaties have exposed Egypt to a large number of investment disputes, and those disputes place a heavy financial, legal and administrative burden on the State.

So for us, the question was never *whether* to reform,

but *how*. Our answer came in 2022. Together with UNCTAD, we adopted a new Model Bilateral Investment Treaty. It is balanced, it provides legal certainty, and it puts sustainable development at its heart.

But as we realize that reform is not a destination; it is a journey.

The landscape keeps moving, and today investment facilitation has become the new trend in treaty-making.

That is why we are now updating our Model, again with UNCTAD. We want it to become our roadmap, both for modernizing our old treaties and for negotiating new ones.

This is exactly where the Guiding Principles come in. Egypt welcomes them and fully supports them. What we value most about them comes down to three pillars.

The first is **national coordination**. The Principles remind us that reform begins at home. It needs a clear political mandate,

a lead institution,

and real coordination across ministries.

For developing countries, where expertise is often scattered and staff move on, this is not a detail. It is the foundation.

Once the house is in order, the second pillar is **the content of the treaties themselves**. What I appreciate here is the flexibility rather than a one-size-fits-all model. The Principles do not impose one model on everyone. Instead, they give us benchmarks on regulatory space, on facilitation, on dispute prevention, and on how to handle old sunset clauses when we replace treaties.

Of course, a good treaty on paper is not enough.

That brings me to the third pillar, **implementation**. Joint committees, capacity-building and periodic review

are what make sure reform actually changes things on the ground.

So how do we put all this into practice? For Egypt, the answer is very concrete, because we are working on several fronts at once: the New Arab Investment Agreement;

- the OIC investment agreement;
- the Annex on Dispute Settlement of the AfCFTA Investment Protocol;
- the COMESA Investment Agreement.

Having one common reference across all these processes

will help us bring positions closer,

avoid overlapping commitments,

and move faster.

Let me close with a clear message of support and a call. Egypt strongly supports these Principles and their role in advancing investment treaty reform. We will draw on them in updating our Model and in our negotiations. We also invite UNCTAD and our partners to continue supporting this work through technical assistance, peer learning, and an open door to renegotiating old treaties.

Thank you.