



## Press Release

### MAS Yusuf Sayegh Development Lecture

#### Economic Development: Lessons from the Post-Cold War Era

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December 2, 2018 Ramallah: The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) held last Wednesday its tenth annual development lecture in memory of the late distinguished Palestinian economist, Dr. Yusuf Abdulla Sayigh. The lecture was entitled: "Economic Development: Lessons from the Post-Cold War Era", and was delivered by Dr. Erik Reinert, Professor of Technology Governance and Development Strategies at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia) and the Executive *Chairman* of The *Other Canon Foundation* (Norway). Dr. Nabeel Kassis, MAS General Director, welcomed the invitees and gave an outline and the underlying idea of the Yusuf Sayegh lecture series— a tradition, he said, running for ten years in a row in recognition of this prominent Palestinian economist and his contributions to economic



theory and practice. In his welcoming statement, Dr. Kassis thanked Jawwal Mobile Company for sponsoring this year's lecture.

Drawing on Ibn Khaldun's conception of cyclical interpretation of history, Dr. Reinert reflected on the evolution of economic theories, speaking in particular of the role of trade in development. Dr. Reinert briefly recapped the seminal economic and trade philosophies since the emergence of economic thought in Europe back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and until the recent transformations in US trade policy under President Trump. Dr. Reinert also diagnosed Europe's economic unity challenge, which shows signs of declining support for the free trade doctrine that has dominated economic thought throughout history, though recently losing ground in response to global socioeconomic pressures.

Contemplating on the rise and fall of economic ideologies, Dr. Reinert explained that the free trade doctrine, too, faces a multitude of challenges, and as in history, also the current political and economic systems can collapse, along with the underlying theories which cease to be relevant to the global economic landscape as they become increasingly abstract. Today's ideological confusion over trade, he observed, arises from the fundamental gaps and shortcomings of dominant economic theories that rest on increasingly abstract scientific method to the extent of losing their rudimentary real-world premises. Such approaches will neither hold up to scientific scrutiny nor help in understanding the real economy or addressing development issues, he said.

Exemplifying his views of the future, Dr. Reinert referred back to the economic crisis under the pressures of globalization and liberalization that started in the developing world from where it spread to the developed countries, entailing the decline in manufacturing and real wages, the erosion of the middle class in America, and the emergence of skeptic voices now threatening



European economic unity. Recently, he said, some economists have engaged in a discourse that can be described as a rediscovery of the vital role of manufacturing in generating wealth and in rendering development more inclusive by tying in wider segments of the society— a theory that has been long-overlooked in the post-Cold War era.

The lecture was attended by invitees from official and non-official bodies, experts and other interested parties, such as university students. The feedback from the audience dealt mainly with the criticism of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical conception of history; the true role of the government in economic development and protecting local industries; the rise of the service economy; and, the role of central bank intervention in the economy.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yusuf Sayegh Lecture Series, MAS has re-printed Professor Yusuf Sayegh's *Bread with Dignity*, which was first published in 1961 and copies of which were distributed to the participants.

To download a copy of the Presentation ([English](#))