

## Amman-Baghdad-Cairo (ABC) Agreement: A new path for economic integration

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

11:00 am – 12:00 pm ET

Virtual Event

### Keynote Panelist Biography



**Hamid Mamdouh**

*Senior Counsel, King & Spalding LLP*

Hamid Mamdouh is a senior counsel at King & Spalding LLP and former director of the Trade in Services and Investment Division of the WTO. Prior to that he was a senior counsellor in the Services Division and was the Secretary of the WTO Council for Trade in Services since the establishment of the WTO in 1995. During that time, he was also responsible for legal affairs in the area of Trade in Services. During the Uruguay Round negotiations his responsibilities included legal matters relating to the negotiation and the drafting of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). His previous positions in the GATT include: assistant to the deputy director-general of the GATT and legal advisor on GATT dispute settlement. Prior to that he was a trade negotiator with the diplomatic service of Egypt.

### Author Biographies



**Racha Helwa**

*Director, empowerME Initiative, Atlantic Council*

Racha Helwa is the director of the empowerME Initiative at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Helwa is a senior economist with twenty-two years of professional experience in economic-and financial-policy analysis and implementation. She has held roles in the private sector, government, and academia in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Egypt. She specializes in public-policy design and implementation, sustainable development, impact investing, and private-sector development. Helwa holds a PhD in economic policy from the University of Cambridge, an MSc in international political economics from the London School of Economics, and an MSc in banking, finance, and risk management from the University of Paris. She was formerly an assistant professor of public policy at the American University in Cairo, senior researcher at the University of Cambridge, and senior economist in the Office of Egypt's Minister of Investment. Helwa also has collaborated with various international institutions including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Development Programme, and the US Agency for Development. She is fully fluent in English, French, and Arabic.



### **Ibrahim Saif**

*Chief Executive Officer, Jordan Strategy Forum*

Ibrahim Saif is the CEO of Jordan Strategy Forum, a leading economic development think tank in Jordan. Previously, he served as Jordan's minister of energy and mineral resources from March 2015 to June 2017, and as minister of planning and international cooperation from March 2013 until March 2015. Prior to his appointment as a minister, Saif was a senior scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center, and served as a consultant to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other international organizations. Saif earlier served as director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan and as the secretary-general of the Economic and Social Council in Jordan. He has taught at both the University of London and Yale University on the economies of the Middle East.



### **Barik Schuber**

*Founder & Coordinator, Iraqi Economists Network*

Barik Schuber holds a master's degree and PhD in economics, sociology, and political science from the Universities of Frankfurt/Main and Marburg/Lahn in Germany. He specializes in macroeconomic management and development planning as well as sector analysis and project management. He worked for seven years as a research fellow at the Department of Social Sciences at Philipps University of Marburg. From 1980 to 1985 he was engaged in private-sector trading and consulting activities. In 1985 he joined the German Agency for International Co-operation (GIZ, formerly GTZ) and was seconded to the Ministry of Planning in Saudi Arabia as economic adviser to the deputy minister. He was responsible for advising him in the preparation and follow-up of the Five Years National Development Plans. In 1996 he started a new position as project planning and management officer at the Department of Energy and Transport in the headquarters of GIZ in Eschborn, Germany, where he was responsible for planning and management of energy efficiency and renewable projects in various developing countries. In 2004 he was appointed acting head of the Department of Economic and Social Studies at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi. In 2005 he was engaged in supporting private-sector organizations and served as secretary-general of the Iraqi Business Council in Abu Dhabi. During 2006 and 2007 he worked as an international expert for a European Union-funded project in Egypt, with responsibility for planning, implementing, and coordinating a study on the macroeconomic framework for reforming the national technical and vocational education and training system. Since 2007 he has been working as a consultant on international development cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly with Iraq. He is founder and coordinator of the Iraqi Economists Network, a nongovernmental organization.

## Moderator Biography



### **Amjad Ahmad**

*Chairman, empowerME, Atlantic Council*

Amjad Ahmad is chairman of empowerME at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Amjad is also managing partner of the venture capital firm Precinct Partners and serves on the boards of Homzmart, Tapal Tea, RSA Global, Mr. Usta, and The Luxury Closet. He was recently appointed to the board of Amideast, a leading US nonprofit organization engaged in international education, training, and development activities in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as building cross-cultural understanding between the United States and the region. Based in the United Arab Emirates for fifteen years prior to moving to Washington, DC, Amjad has collaborated with business leaders and entrepreneurs to build leading companies in the Middle East. Through his work as a venture capital and growth investor, Amjad established two investment firms in the region that provided over \$1 billion in funding to over fifty companies in sectors ranging from technology and education to healthcare and finance. During the past five years, Amjad has focused his investments on entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology. Amjad holds a master's degree in international affairs with a concentration in international finance and economics from Columbia University and is a graduate of the general management program at Harvard Business School.