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G-8 Support for a Tunisian Plan

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The Tunisian people have sparked the current democratic movements in the Arab world, giving a chance to the entire Middle East-North Africa region to reshape itself with the same order of magnitude as the fall of the Berlin Wall in Europe. A Tunisian failure is not an option and would be a victory for all dictatorships in the region and lead to an export of extremism and a continued flow of refugees out of the region.

As nations, we have the collective responsibility to make the Tunisian democratic transition successful: the recent upheaval has already cost \$2 billion to the economy. The year will end with negative economic growth for 2011.

As economists, we know that investments pay off over the long-term. The new Tunisia has the potential to be one of the most attractive and fastest growing economic centers of the Mediterranean.

We call upon the political leaders gathered at the G-8 meeting to support a road map that would be proposed and led by Tunisia itself.

More precisely, we call for:

- Immediate help for food and energy subsidies.
- G-8 support in the amount of \$20 billion to \$30 billion over the next 5 to 10 years to open up the country and the inland.
- A clear statement detailing the timeframe in which financial institutions can act and partner with the development of the Tunisian economy.
- A specific financial institution for the area. This would be a strong political signal as well as a guarantee of efficiency and transparency in the efforts of coordination.
- A clear statement from the European countries that they will support Tunisia by obtaining the status of associate partner.
- Mechanisms that will permit a better access to knowledge and more interactions between young people all around the Mediterranean Sea and beyond.

The plan we call for will insure that this grand experiment can succeed: its small size makes Tunisia the perfect experiment for democracy and a unique opportunity to prove that democracy can flourish harmoniously in the region. Its total cost is around

2 or 3 percent of the amounts raised by the former Federal Republic of Germany for German reunification, or less than the cost of two months of war in Iraq. The international community cannot afford not to act.

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http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/opinion/19iht-edletters19.html?_r=2&scp=5&sq