The IAF supports the establishment of the Middle East and North Africa forum (MENA) as a new network of authors and poets in the region. This network will be a means to respect the importance of enabling the writing voices of people in MENA. Literature has the power to build bridges, it has done so throughout human history and it is now more necessary than ever that this is not hindered in this region.

The MENA author’s forum can offer valuable support to creators in this region; it can enable the communication of their work both inside and beyond the Middle East and outside, it can promote literature and writers living in the area, it can ensure MENA authors perspectives are represented within relevant international law and policy-making bodies, and it can offer support to authors at risk. To enable authors to deal with challenges they are facing nationally, especially where they may be limited in the means to do so, the MENA Forum will be able to support and advise them about forming associations and unions. It will also offer the support, as the IAF does to ensure that authors are aware of or able to create the systems that will ensure their copyright is respected and remunerated. It is because of these shared values and this mission that the IAF endorses the MENA Forum and will support their work.

I am pleased to welcome the MENA Forum to the International Authors Forum. By providing virtual space for authors from the Middle East and North Africa to network and engage with each other on global issues about authorship and cultural work, MENA contributes to IAF’s core goal of connecting the world’s authors for our mutual benefit.

John Degen, Chair of the International Authors Forum

In these very difficult conditions for all creators, of globalisation and digitisation, and this is as true for writers as for visual artists and musicians, we can all be helped by networks of our fellow creators and their organisations which may be trades unions or professional associations around the world, to put our case jointly, and with maximum effect, to governments and the international bodies responsible for the laws and regulations that affect our work and livelihoods, and also to provide information and mutual support.

This is the ethos behind the International Authors Forum, so I am delighted to welcome the MENA Forum, which is expanding our reach into new areas, and to offer authors in the Middle East and North Africa, the support of and a place in the IAF family.

Maureen Duffy, Honorary President of the International Authors Forum

For more information please contact Vered Cohen Barzilay, MENA Forum co-ordinator at mena.info@internationalauthors.org.