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## Press Release

# SEKEM publishes Report on Sustainable Development 2016

*„The 2016 Sustainability Report does not only show that we could overcome the challenging past years in post-revolutionary Egypt, it also reflects that we were able to adhere to our holistic approach without neglecting the important areas of education, culture and social issues, despite many obstacles.“ Helmy Abouleish, CEO of SEKEM Initiative*

For the tenth time SEKEM Initiative has published a comprehensive integrated annual report, which presents its efforts to sustainable development in four dimensions: economy, ecology, cultural and societal life.

This year, SEKEM has specifically targeted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were published by the United Nations at the beginning of 2016 as a global target for 2030. SEKEM shows how the initiative has been working on all 17 targets already for 40 years and is actively promoting many of them.

Further significant developments in 2016 have been:

**Growth despite difficult conditions in the country:** Despite the difficult economic situation in Egypt, the SEKEM Group of Companies was able to achieve a consolidated growth of 29% and continue to assign 10% of the revenues to the SEKEM Development Foundation, which runs various cultural institutions. Contrary to the country's increasing unemployment rate, SEKEM Initiative was able to employ 61 more co-workers in 2016 than in the previous year.

**Organic agriculture is growing:** Also SEKEMs agricultural activities could achieve a growth of 38%, although no new investments had been made in 2016. The number of supplying farmers has grown, which shows that the biodynamic cultivated land in Egypt is increasing. As a result, more products have been certified by Demeter.

**Less water, lower CO2 emissions:** Despite the economic growth in 2016, the overall CO2 balance of SEKEM was 3,017,332 tCO2e compared with 3,237,623 in the previous year. Although the overall water consumption increased, the groundwater use in agriculture was reduced by 16%. 100% of the water is continuously reused by SEKEM.

**Strengthening community development:** In 2016, SEKEM has focused on promoting community development among its contracted farmers. Additional trainings, monthly meetings and social events had been held. This shall not only contribute to a stronger social development in Egypt, but

at the same time supports the food safety issue, which is promoted by a more comprehensive understanding of the farmers to their activities.

**Education in focus:** SEKEMs cultural activities, including various educational institutions, have been further promoted in 2016. In addition, SEKEM has been committed to education for sustainable development outside the initiative`s internal activities, for instance by providing training courses to teachers from governmental Egyptian schools. More than 1000 students are studying at Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development and the first year of students of the Business Faculty graduated in 2016.

As already started last year, SEKEM has tried to design the Sustainability Report as lively as possible, in order to provide **detailed insights into the everyday life** of the initiative. In addition to the most important figures, various people who support SEKEM are quoted. References to articles from SEKEM newsletter provide further and more personal information.

The 2016 Sustainability Report of SEKEM Initiative shows that sustainability is an ongoing process with always new arising targets. In 2016 38% of the targets have been achieved. SEKEM expects the coming years to fully achieve these targets and to add new ones again, despite the still challenging conditions in Egypt, for instance the ongoing devaluation of the Egyptian pound that started at the end of the year 2016.

The SEKEM Sustainability Report 2016 can be read and downloaded as PDF via the following link: <http://www.sekem.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/rsd2016en.pdf>

### **About SEKEM:**

The SEKEM Group of Companies is a part of the SEKEM Initiative founded in 1977 by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish to strengthen Sustainable Development in Egypt by producing, processing, and marketing Organic and Biodynamic foodstuff, textiles, and phyto-pharmaceuticals in Egypt, the Arab World, and on international markets. SEKEM has been widely praised as an “Egyptian organic pioneer” and has received the 2003 Right Livelihood Award (“Alternative Nobel Prize”) as a „Business Model for the 21th Century” and an “economy of love”. With part of their profits the SEKEM companies co-finance the social and cultural activities of the SEKEM Development Foundation that runs, among others, schools and a Medical Centre. In 2012 Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development has been opened under the umbrella of SEKEM Initiative.

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