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Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr

I want to say, first of all, what a pleasure it is to be back in Egypt and to have had the opportunity to meet with President Morsi and of course with Foreign Minister Amr and with some members of the opposition this morning.

We had interesting and important conversations as always, as we work with the government and the people of Egypt for the future. As ever, I want to wish this country every possible success.

I agree absolutely with the minister that we are supporting what has become known as Geneva II, the process of helping to find a political solution for Syria, which, in the end, is a solution that is going to be necessary if we are going to end the bloodshed, stop the fighting and bring peace.

I've been travelling in the region and I've seen the effects of so many people displaced from their homes. I pay tribute to all the countries, including Egypt, which have looked after people so well, but now we really do need to move forward.

And on the dam, we are following closely the situation. I was delighted that the Minister had good discussions with Ethiopia, and will continue to work to ensure that there is a good solution.

If you look at all of the different ways in which the European Union supports Egypt, there are different aspects of the support we give. First of all we put a lot of emphasis on supporting the poorest people in your population, and that money is coming through our projects and programmes.

We've also tried to encourage investment from industry, which is going to be so vital, and we try to encourage the growth of small and medium size businesses here, which is the backbone of any economy. Some of the money is of course linked to the IMF and linked to the way in which things are going to move forward.

We want to see this country moving forward to see the kind of developments that are going to be so necessary and to back it with our resources.