

**ASBAR
Council**

Annual Report

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Introduction:

The following is the annual report on political, economic, social, developmental and other issues of national, regional and international significance.

Every week (all the year round), Asbar Council addresses a developmental issue that is debated by a number of Saudi intellectuals, thinkers, researchers and experts.

According to Asbar Council's articles of association, the issues are presented and debated by delivering a synopsis and an introduction to the issue. Then, the main paper is presented with comments, contributions, discussions, and finally the recommendations.

In 2018, the Council discussed a number of important topics and issues which were released in 12 monthly reports. The issues discussed were 48 and they were written by 32 members. They covered various disciplines including economy, culture, society, politics, technology, industry, media, environment, education, health and agriculture.



Words by Chairman of the Council

Readers of this report can certainly see the great effort made all the year round in picking up, addressing and discussing the topics according to a systematic methodology that ensures the required level of objectivity and depth.

The topics are selected according to the objectives set by the Council. In other words, they are strategic, developmental and national and they are inspired by Vision 2030, which is supported by the Saudi people who can read their future through its lines. This future is so promising with a lot of ambition and development, and transcendence of mind and spirit to have the optimal level of life quality.

The topics are addressed by 90 Saudi intellectuals with various majors and experience. They also belong to different intellectual and cultural backgrounds, and they tactfully and skillfully handled their debates to reach conclusions and recommendation they see beneficial to support the blessed progress that is being achieved by their country.

Readers of the report will appreciate the unique experience that promises the transfer of the "Think-Tank" houses to the virtual world for the first time, which is a purely Saudi experience. This process is taking strides on a road that has been promising since recently of transferring many human activities to the innovation and creativity in the new digital world. Education is only one manifestation, and then banks is another.

Our experience still needs more time to mature, and we are so glad to present to you some of its fruits to have your feedback and contributions.

Dr. Fahad Al-Orabi Al-Harthi

Words by chairman of the supervisory commission / Board 6



I take this opportunity to express my feelings and happiness about having this excellent material by the end of the year. This represents the great national intellectual production by the men and women of Asbar Council in various developmental issues which are of high interest to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

There is no doubt that taking the time and effort by every member of the Council to contribute an opinion or a comment on matters and issues of interest to the development and advancement of the community is a practical manifestation of the national and social responsibility. In the meantime, our eyes are focused on our country that is so determined to go forward to achieving the highest ranks of excellence and the goals of Vision 2030.

It is noticeable the issues addressed this year by the Council covered many developmental areas of interest to the society. They shed the light on many plans and programs with priority to the people's lives, besides keeping pace with the economic, political, social and cultural events which the country experienced during the year.

I extend my warm thanks to the so kind Asbarians for their extraordinary effort over the past year. I also express my sincere thanks to the Supervisory Commission, the Committee of Weekly Issue and the Committee of Monthly Reports. Great thanks are also due to Asbar Center for support and for harnessing all resources for the Council.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the leader of the Asbarian journey, the responsible man, Dr. Fahad Al-Orabi Al-Harhi, who is an excellent role model in effective engagement in the intellectual, cultural and development services to the community.

Dr. Al-Jazi Al-Shubayki

Issues discussed through the year

Since March 2018 up to April 2019, Asbar Council discussed many important issues and topics, which were put forward for discussion during the year. These covered 48 issues written by 32 members. They included the following:

1. **Economy:**

9 issues were presented, 9 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 19 members, and debated by 54 members.

2. **Culture:**

8 issues were presented, 8 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 12 members, and debated by 49 members.

3. **Development:**

7 issues were presented, 7 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 15 members, and debated by 57 members.

4. **Society:**

7 issues were presented, 7 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 18 members, and debated by 51 members.

5. **Politics:**

5 issues were presented, 5 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 13 members, and debated by 53 members.

6. **Technology:**

3 issues were presented, 3 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 6 members, and debated by 27 members.

7. **Industry:**

2 issues were presented, 2 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 4 members, and debated by 19 members.

8. Media:

2 issues were presented, 2 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 4 members, and debated by 17 members.

9. Environment:

2 issues were presented, 2 working papers were prepared on them, they were commented on by 4 members, and debated by 22 members.

10. Education:

1 issue was presented, 1 working paper was prepared on them, it was commented on by 2 members, and debated by 19 members.

11. Health:

1 issue was presented, 1 working paper was prepared on them, it was commented on by 2 members, and debated by 14 members.

12. Agriculture:

1 issue was presented, 1 working paper was prepared on them, it was commented on by 2 members, and debated by 13 members.

Forums of Intellectual Dialogue and Their Role in Development .. Asbar Council as a Model

The main paper was presented by Dr. Ibrahim Al-Bayez, commented on by Dr. Mansour Al-Mutairi, Ms. Amaal Al-Moallimi and Dr. Abdullah Al-Assaf, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Abdullah Ibn Saleh Al-Hamoud. The paper shed light on Asbar Council as a model where the dialogue is adopted as a human feature and an important need of modern man. There is no doubt that the seminal dialogue experience at Asbar Council contributed to the formation of a civilized national view on how to realize the present and the future so that this national view would play a critical role in the Saudi Vision 2030.

The paper examined the model of Asbar Council that started in 2015 with the idea of a discussion group, and as a pioneering experience in investing in WhatsApp to create a forum for intellectual dialogue on public affairs. That idea evolved and was organized, to transform from a traditional group into a project characterized by an institutionalized work based on organization, and continued administrative follow-up. The paper posed a key question about the developmental role of this project and reviewed what was achieved during the three years of the forum's life (April 2015 - April 2018), in an attempt to answer this question.

The comments made on this paper added more dimension to the paper, as they dealt with an important aspect; the State's pursuit of having more societal participation in the dialogue on national issues, as well as talking about individual literary salons and entities, then



moving on to global experiences, indicating that such experiences unanimously agree on the importance of community dialogue and its impact on handling the economic, cultural and social issues.

Commentators on the issue discussed the importance of dialogue in society, stressing that there is a dialectical relationship between dialogue and development, where they mutually influence each other. There are people who see that dialogue is part of social development; others see that dialogue is a basis for development if there is a mechanism to operationalize the results of dialogue. This entails that dialogue needs to be transparent, equal, purposeful, non-exclusionary, nonprescriptive, or biased. However, there are those who see that dialogue does not create development, but rather establish a suitable ground for development.

The contributors argued that Asbar Council is a harmoniously-woven fabric, combining virtual and real forums. On many occasions, the Council joins the affiliates in a real meeting on a topic often presented by a person from abroad, then it publishes the outcomes in printed and electronic forms. The contributors also agreed on the need for the Council to be a societal partner in presenting juxtaposed opinions in order to have a more fruitful dialogue.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- To propose to the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue to develop legislation, drafting supporting dialogue bases for building a culture of dialogue in society.

- Raising the ceiling of the culture of dialogue and spreading it socially, to support the country's development.
- The contribution of the Ministry of Culture in encouraging the establishment of councils and forums of intellectual and cultural dimensions.
- Providing channels and tools that contribute to the presence of rich information that serves the professionals, and gives them the opportunity to meet, document and publish opinions.
- Asbar Council should take the initiative to pinpoint the most urgent and useful development issues, and host workshops on them after they are discussed at the session of the weekend issue.
- Quoting and converting some statements into infographics and videos, in addition to the presenter and the commentators capture some messages from their papers, and convert them into audio and video messages for two minutes, through social media platforms.

Future Careers (Jobs)



The main paper was presented by Dr. Nouf Al-Ghamdi, commented on by Dr. Hamed Al-Sharari and Mr. Walid Al-Harithi, and the debate was moderated by Mr. Abdullah Al-Dhwaihi. The paper explained that the gap between the requirements of the labor market and education began to narrow somewhat through profession programs. Dr. Nouf noted that in the past there was no future map before high school graduates. Therefore, the students used to pick up disciplines just randomly. However, the matter now is that it has become different in light of the Saudi Vision 2030. There are clear future plans, and there are potential requirements for the labor market. Dr. Nouf considered that it we would not find a student who is not familiar with the Saudi Vision 2030, the plans of government and private sectors and their future functions.

The paper emphasized that modern technology has a huge impact on the overall scenario of the future careers, from businesses that focus on sustainability to the occupations that manage future technologies. It also expected that with Vision 2030 there would be important careers that open the way to potential future jobs such as specialized law, cybersecurity, accounting, insurance, alternative energy, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, e-business management, and other disciplines.

The comments went on to say that we are heading into new specialties in the coming years that would emerge in the job market, and depend on programming; such as artificial intelligence and

robotics. We must keep abreast and catch up with these developments, while at the same time we must not forget that there are traditional specializations that the market still needs. Therefore, we still care about how to build future specialties in our educational institutions, to be presented according to the actual need of the future labor market based on correct data and information.

The comments also emphasized that we need to go very far in the application of knowledge, education and professional programs that achieve these advanced specialties, and most importantly, that are closely related to our national need in all fields. For example, it is no longer strange to hear such future specialties: improved drone traffic, robot psychologist, space traffic man, or virtual teacher.

The contributions made on this paper indicated that it is imperative to find an equation for a balance between the development of technical specialties and human specialties. The human specialties are directed towards developing human skills in dealing with the circumstances of the time, the skills of thinking, planning, responsibility, initiative, and developing the scientific research methodology and tools in these sciences, to diagnose the human reality and support it intellectually, emotionally and socially.

The contributors indicated that there is a gap between education and the labor market, and that this gap will not shrink with a single meeting or program. This is an ongoing and participatory process between the two sides, and needs constant updating. In addition, most future jobs are centered around technology and the traditional

specialties only support them superficially. In practice, traditional careers varied according to the requirements of the time, and here comes the role of educational institutions in updating the curricula and creating the required specializations in the labor market.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Modernizing the educational system, training and qualifying the educational staff to deal with modern technology, and working on a strong scientific foundation in the fields related to technology.
- Restructuring some colleges and merging some majors to be in one department, dispensing with specializations that society no longer needs, and introducing new majors.
- Focusing on the humanities in our universities and developing them in a way that suits the spirit of the times, as it is a source of civil strength and cultural understanding.
- Introducing the Saudi Vision 2030 as a course of study in the preparatory year for universities, and organizing visits for students to NEOM, major and specialized companies, such as: Aramco, SABIC, telecommunications, and others; to see future opportunities and determine their scientific and professional path.
- Offering of future specializations in universities or colleges that has to be gradual through paths in the study plans. Then they will be detailed as independent specializations later, according to the need of the labor market and increasing demand.
- Accelerating the issuance and implementation of the new university law.

- Providing accurate statistics on the number of workers and the percentage of nationalization in various professions and specialties to form an integrated image on the labor market, to build an economic model that calibrates the economy with existing job opportunities.
- Establishing independent and other digital universities and colleges affiliated with each university in different tracks according to the requirements of the labor market.

Gulf Development Forum: Forty Years of Development Dialogue



The main paper was presented by Dr. Ibrahim Al-Bayez, commented on by Dr. Maha Al-Munif and Dr. Fouzia Al-Bakr, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Aisha Hijazi. The paper stated that, since its inception, the Gulf Development Forum has sought to become a platform that provides an intellectual atmosphere that would strengthen the relationship and interaction among the people of the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council on development issues and the difficulties they face. To achieve this mission, a series of annual meetings have been organized to present research papers written by people of states of the Gulf Cooperation Council who are members or non-members of the Forum. The Executive Committee of the Forum collects these papers with the discussions and comments that have taken place on them. Then, they publish a hard copy of the book and a soft PDF copy that is made accessible to the interested people.

The comments emphasized that the establishment of the Forum, which is non-governmental, and its continuity for forty years is an achievement in itself, is a credit for the first generation, especially since many non-government initiatives in the region usually have a short history. Perhaps the initiative taken by the Forum to honor the first generation, among them late Dr. Ahmed Al-Rabi'y, who was honored by naming the 39th conference after him, is an initiative that deserves all due respect.

The comments also indicated that what is special about this Forum is the highly professional proposals and handling issues that may be thorny. Among such issues are the democracy and constitutional life, the Gulf legislator, the Gulf citizenship, the civil society organizations, and other local issues that are concerned with development. This is very evident from the resumes and careers of its members who belong to all States of the Gulf region. Therefore, the Forum has witnessed since its inception major figures in the Gulf region including Dr. Al-Rumaihi, Dr. Usamah Abdulrahman, Turki Al-Hamad Al-Nifaisi, Dr. Abdullah Al-Guaiz, Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Jalal, and many other figures who have reputation and esteem in the Gulf States.

In addition, the Forum takes the matter very seriously in discussing all issues despite the absence of an official umbrella that can adopt some of the proposals. It boldly records what it sees as vital issues, and tries to make its voice reach the decision-maker.

The contributions made on the main paper indicated that one of the most prominent contributions of the Gulf Development Forum was organizing 39 conferences and publishing more than 30 books on development issues. It also contributed to communication between those interested in development issues in the Cooperation Council.

The contributions made it clear that the forum was able during its relatively long years to provide an umbrella through which Gulf intellectuals found an outlet to express their opinions freely that public climates do not provide in their countries. The topics addressed by the forum varied under the framework of development in its

comprehensive concept. The forefront of these issues are the economic issues. They also include public finance, and the water dilemma, youth issues, development management ... and others.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- That Gulf Development Forum should have working teams in each Gulf country. Such teams should be tasked with monitoring the most important issues of their State, collecting them from the other countries and presenting them to the main Forum to choose common issues to be addressed each year.
- Participation should be expanded and diversified in the Forum.
- The Forum outcomes, including studies and research papers, should be provided to the Gulf States' governments so that they can be used as references.
- The Forum outcomes should be printed and distributed, and made accessible to researchers and interested people.
- Daily messages should be sent about the opinions and recommendations offered during the Forum. They should be articulated in a clear and direct language that can be understood by all people.

Health Transformation Programs ... Roadmap Towards Vision 2030

The main paper was presented by Dr. Khaled Al-Fuhaid, commented on by Dr. Fahad Al-Yahya and Dr. Al-Jazi Al-Shubiki, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Abeer Barhamin. The paper indicated that the transformation programs in the health sector is a long-term roadmap aimed at raising the quality of healthcare in Saudi Arabia. These programs will be part of the institutional transformation and the healthcare model, private sector participation, governance, workforce, and e-health.

The paper revealed that there is hope that these programs would raise the efficiency of healthcare services, and that they would be accompanied by strengthening the preventive aspect through enhancing health education, attention to healthy food and sports in society, and early detection of chronic diseases.

The comments made on the paper emphasized that the national transformation program in the health sector is ambitious and provides a fundamental change. It also aspires to achieve its goals through privatization by establishing government services and insurance companies on the one hand and by involving the private sector on the other hand, and turning the role of the Ministry to planning, supervision and governance ... etc.

The comments also indicated that this shift would focus on the Ministry of Health as an organization, on companies as service providers and on national insurance companies as a financier. The



citizen would ultimately be the first beneficiary of the quality of health services; but the success of this major qualitative shift in the health sector requires the provision of many logistic requirements, legislation and administrative organizations with all relevant parties. This requires those in charge to focus on strategic thinking that establishes a strong, long-term, robust system.

The contributors referred to the biggest challenge facing health transformation programs which is change management. This task among the staff working in the health sector is much more difficult than change management for service recipients, especially since health transformation programs drive several agencies and sectors out of the safety circle by re-establishing roles and powers according to a new philosophy other than what has been followed for years. Among the important challenges is the extent to which citizens accept new health service mechanisms. Other challenges include the conflict between the efforts of the Ministry of Health and other parties. The Ministry of Health would be transformed from a provider and service organizer to an organizer only.

The contributors also indicated that the health transformation program is one of the most important programs of the Saudi Vision 2030. The transformation program seeks to raise the efficiency of the health services provided, as it focuses on the imbalance in the growing demand for health services, and addresses them to reduce the need of citizens and residents of these services, so that they would live a higher quality of life without going to hospitals.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Strengthening the preventive aspect by raising the level of health education, paying attention to healthy nutrition and sports, and early detection of chronic diseases.
- Emphasizing the necessary legislation and administrative regulations that regulate the relationship between the parties involved in the health transformation programs, and the need to clearly detail the services covered by health insurance and the service delivery mechanism.
- Having a clear governance of the health insurance system and explaining the terms of compensation and litigation provided for the beneficiary, the service provider and the health insurance companies.
- Introducing artificial intelligence to health services to diagnose a disease remotely and provide primary healthcare.
- Bridging the gap between education curricula and the practical application to keep pace with the desired aspirations.
- Making transformation in gradual stages to ensure high quality program implementation.
- Providing completely free private healthcare for some groups not covered by health insurance, such as pensioners, the unemployed, children and the elderly.
- Providing accurate technical statistics to help the legislator know the available health services.

- The preparation of prevention programs should be within the jurisdiction of the Ministry, and implemented through primary clinics.

Humanized cities ...

The paper was presented by Dr. Mishari Al-Naeem, commented on by Eng. Mohammed Al-Shehri and Eng. Khaled Al-Othman, and the debate was moderated Eng. Walid Al-Harithi. The paper talked about the idea that the term "humanized cities" is more meaningful than "human cities", and that there are characteristics for humanizing cities. Such characteristics include encouraging a healthy mental and physical life, allowing walking, exercising, and practicing public life appropriately, and being economical, linked to its heritage and history and considers it an important source. Such cities encourage multiculturalism and they are inclusive and do not discriminate against its population at the level of race, sect and gender. They are open to public space for people with special needs, as well as encourage innovation and creativity. They create opportunities for social and cultural harmony. They are assumed to be smart cities that assist their dwellers. The realization of these characteristics has major economic ramifications related to urban regeneration, and has cultural and educational ramifications associated with rebuilding the moral system in society.

The paper acknowledged that the challenge is huge and costly, and requires an urban democracy that is not available, not even partially. Thus, talking about humanization is a kind of effective criticism of all current urbanization mechanisms and decision-making approaches. The paper added that humanization of cities can take place gradually,



which is happening now in Riyadh, and the city does not necessarily turn at once into a humanized city.

The comments made on this paper indicated that the concept of humanization and effective planning to achieve the concept of life quality must take into account the different levels of planning and development in cities and urban areas. The appropriate spatial environment is the incubator for any urban and human development. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to have the environmental elements in the city, and the appropriate planning and service elements, so that the person can exercise his/ her activity and the matters of his/ her daily life in a civilized and safe manner, and thus becomes a productive and effective element in the performance of his/ her human and developmental roles.

In addition to the fact that the real problem that Saudi cities suffer from is the management of local development in cities. Therefore, humanizing cities must be the main theme on which the concepts of managing local development of cities are based, including their quality. The role of civil society and community public opinion in urban planning issues must also be activated if we really want to reach humanized cities and achieve the concept of life quality.

The contributions made on the issue discussed that the goal of humanization must start with the culture of people before the place in which they reside. Humanizing cities as an idea is based on human behavior, but at the same time sees that there are better physical solutions than others that feed the positive behavior in the city.

The contributors discussed the importance of taking into account the customs and traditions of the population, and the pattern of their being close and their requirements, as it is not enough to entrust humanization to engineers despite the importance of their role. Rather, it is necessary to have social workers to benefit from their inputs in the humanization process. The issue of humanizing cities also needs unconventional solutions to harmonize the requirements of modern times with the requirements of a healthy human life. Therefore, architects have a very big role in this process, and in building cities in general.

On the economic returns for humanizing cities, the contributors indicated that the existence of good infrastructure in the city and the abundance of facilities would make the city more attractive. The city would appear to be a suitable place for a large number of investments promoted by legislation. Its flexibility would make it possible to work away from the bureaucracy of cities in the Arab world.

The contributors indicated that part of the change is the sense of responsibility when designing structures. An important aspect of humanizing cities relates to the behavior of the population, the extent to which they follow traffic and municipal systems, and the preservation of the spatial environment; therefore, one of the obstacles that stand in the way of humanizing cities is the general culture, values, customs, traditions, and organizational, administrative and social practices they contain, as well as the terrain, weather conditions of cities.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Attending to appropriate urban planning, and suggesting environmentally friendly urban models in new housing that enhance the concept of humanization.
- Establishing local committees for the friends of the city, through civil society institutions, under the name of "Friends of the City", and they have local branches in cities and villages.
- Civil society institutions should be involved in city humanization projects, to ensure the sustainability of these projects and their link to local community.
- Launching initiatives to improve and decorate cities in partnership with the private the sectors, aimed at reviving these places.
- Creating a long-term strategy that aims at building environments whose output is due to the emergence of environmental data in the sense of human and real humanization.
- Including city humanization in the concepts of some textbooks, and involving the faculties of architecture and planning in Saudi universities, to build environmental projects that contribute to building a humanization and institutionalization system.
- Activating the concept of integrated local management in cities to improve the life quality, and achieving the highest levels of integration for the social and spatial development of the dwellers of these cities.

Local Content ...Business and Businesses Localization

The main paper was presented by Mr. Muhammad Al-Dandani, elaborated on by Mr. Khaled Al-Othman and Dr. Nouf Al-Ghamdi, and the debate was moderated Dr. Mishari Al-Naeem. The paper addressed the issue of local content and its role in building any society that wants to invest and take advantage of its natural and human resources to advance and join today's civilization. This is in addition to the society's role as a national project forming the pillar of stability in a country seeking modernization and transformation. Equally important, the society is a critical element that reflects foreign policy, helps in shaping it, reflects self-sufficiency; thus, strengthening sovereignty locally, regionally, and internationally.

The main paper went on to say that the term "local content" in the Saudi Vision 2030 is a dominant one, thus we see the debate and policies on the multiple sources of income.

The paper identified a number of obstacles to local content, including the quality of academic, technical and vocational education; nonaligned plans with all types of education outputs; prevalence of norms and traditions that reject technical work and dwarf the value of professional work, and the absence of coordination between state ministries and institutions and the private sector.

The comments made on this paper concentrated on that the issue of developing local content was adopted by the Saudi Vision 2030 as one of the most important themes of this vision, and one of the most important keys to diversification of sources of income and



comprehensive national transformation. The paper, however, neglected the competition side which national institutions face from foreign entities. It is stated that attracting investments and production centers in Saudi Arabia is not sufficient to realize local content, without real localization of knowledge and intellectual and technical properties associated with these facilities. In addition, the employment of Saudi men and women in these facilities is not sufficient if it is not accompanied by a real empowerment to acquire deep knowledge and applied sciences associated with these businesses.

The comments made on the topic raised some issues related to the problems of local content, its relationship to human resources and technical education, localization of industries, and the Saudi Vision and others.

The comments considered that the major problem regarding the local content is the lack of qualification of the human element. The biggest imbalance lies in the vocational workforce, as the technical education system did not provide any sizeable contribution. Also, the experience of training centers and institutes was unsuccessful, and they turned into superficial centers because they were not directed to specific areas.

Some commentators went on to say that an important procedure followed is the localization of some industries and businesses, because this aims to reduce dependence on external sources and

achieve economic returns locally, in addition to creating employment opportunities.

Views varied on the importance of implementing the income tax and its relationship to supporting local content. While some considered it a source of development and spending on infrastructure, others argued that it is not a real-time solution, and avoiding it is the best for a stable society like the Kingdom.

The members also discussed the appropriate mechanisms possible for the income tax, with the development of an integrated system of organizational, legislative, political and strategic frameworks, whether through training or external scholarship, as well as benefiting from some international experiences, such as copying or localization, to save time and effort, with the need to know the obstacles and difficulties that other countries faced in order to avoid it as in Malaysia, India, South Korea, Singapore, Norway, Germany, Turkey and Brazil.

Regarding the relationship between the Saudi Vision 2030 and local content, the contributors agreed that there is harmony between them. There are economic measures that have been taken and applied to achieve the local content. However, this requires time for the results to mature so that we can judge the process.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Giving technical and vocational education the top priority.
- Attempting to link technology colleges with existing and upcoming companies to ensure alignment of outputs with the nature of work, as well as ensuring optimal training during study.

- Developing test and examination standards for all industrial, service and commercial establishments to ensure the quality of the product and service, and to ensure the productivity of the individual and the facility.
- Protecting the national product internally as well as externally, especially with countries that have commercial relations and interests with the Kingdom, as it guarantees access to the Saudi product.
- Unifying existing local content programs under one umbrella, and making it a sovereign body or ministry, because of the importance of the project as a national project under Vision 2030.
- Activating the tax returns in the sectors of industry, trade and services, because of its benefit in spending on infrastructure and services such as education and hospitals ... etc.
- Developing legislation that stimulates investment in the local content, the most important of which are the mechanisms of pre-purchase in the government competition system, in addition to other exemptive and incentive legislation.
- Sensitizing the society in a scientific and convincing way to the feasibility of the national content and the national products, in terms of quality, price and avoiding emotional advertising.

NEOM: The Future Destination:

The main paper was presented by Dr. Ihsan Bu Haleeqa, commented on by Eng. Osama Kurdi and Mr. Muhammad Al-Dandani, and the debate was moderated by Mr. Abdullah Al-Dhwaihi. The paper stressed that the Saudi Vision 2030 brought about what was missing in the previous five-year plans, which was aimed at diversifying sources of income. It set a timeline for achieving economic diversification. This means that there is full awareness now that the plans do not come true by themselves. Therefore, the announcement of the vision was followed by launching realization programs. The point here is to make the "Saudi Vision 2030" a tangible reality on the ground, through achieving a set of goals.

The paper added that NEOM is an investment project aimed at diversifying the Saudi economy by enriching its structure with new activities. Also, "NEOM" has already started to become a city that establishes a new civilization, where the number of robots supported by artificial intelligence exceeds the number of people. Under the umbrella of natural and artificial intelligence, NEOM will embrace an economic network: energy and water, transportation and mobility, biotechnology, food industries, technical and digital sciences, advanced manufacturing, media production, entertainment and living with a high quality of life.

Commentators indicated that NEOM is one of the mega projects through which many of the Saudi Vision 2030's goals are achieved. There is no doubt about what the city of NEOM can contribute as a



source of income to the State; either through direct investment, taxes, and most importantly attracting investments that contribute to the Kingdom treasury through fees and taxes as well. The city also accommodates local and foreign labor force whose income will have a significant impact on the local economy. Also, NEOM is a first-class technical project, focusing on many of the technical aspects that the Kingdom needs.

The commentators stated that it is noticed that there was no special interest in the role of the Saudi private sector investments in the project, as all indicators refer to focusing on foreign investments in in NEOM.

The contributions made on this paper indicated that NEOM would provide new investment opportunities in sectors that will be created from scratch. In addition, the investors in NEOM would benefit from natural resources such as wind and solar energy.

The contributors argued that NEOM would take decades. In other words, the entry of multiple economic activities will not take place if there is no effective global response. From an investment point of view, the safety valve is the foreign investments, and the investment by the Public Investment Fund is merely the seed.

Regarding on the extent of the possibility that the project will affect the businessmen, and agents of some companies that import the goods that will be produced in NEOM, the contributors emphasized that there would be no impact in the near and medium future, and the

probability of the impact in the long term will be little. The reason is the nature of the product in City, as it is not as traditional.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Providing the climate and environment suitable for the success of investment in the project.
- Attention to Saudi cadres and youth leaders.
- Attention to local content as one of the most important measures for the success of NEOM projects.
- Working hard to make NEOM a financial capital for investments, research and technology, whether in the field of discovery, production or services.
- Working to establish a huge data center (database) to support global cloud computing as an investment tool.
- Emphasizing the necessity of encouraging foreign investors to use the Kingdom's natural resources mainly in the projects of NEOM.
- Linking NEOM (King Salman Bridge) with Jeddah, through the industrial city of Yanbu, with the city of Wa'ad al-Shamal and Hazm Al-Jalameed by railways and highways.
- Increasing the green sceneries and developing wildlife in the mountainous areas, and preserving the archaeological sites and investing them in tourism. Preserving the environment and the nature of the area from erosion, and to be open to the public.
- A strong public relations agency shall be established to follow the project.

Saudi Women and the Shadow Economy:



The main paper was presented by Dr. Maha Al-Aidan, commented on by Dr. Wafa Al-Rasheed and Dr. Nora Al-Suoyan, and the debate was moderated by Alia Al-Bazei. The paper addressed the topic of the Saudi women and the shadow economy being an informal activity, and an important tributary of the economy of any society. The economic studies indicate that the shadow economy is growing at greater rates than the formal sector, and that there are economic factors standing behind its growth, particularly the economic failure by the local economy to create jobs that accommodate the workforce.

The paper also tackled the components of this sector, and concluded that the first sector includes small projects, while the shadow economy is represented by random work. Among the most important advantages of this kind of economy is that it accommodates increasing numbers of manpower. This creates many opportunities for businesses that help employment, reduces differences in income distribution and narrows the gap in the economic levels.

This type of economy is characterized by the economic effects represented by lacking accurate statistics on its real potentials, and the difficulty in controlling it economically, or through laws and regulations, or even social standards.

The comments that were made on this paper stated that most of the reasons for women joining work in this sector are poverty, family support, high share payable by women in social security and insurance, low material wages and moral incentives, and complex administrative and organizational procedures for women's work.

The comments also indicated that the shadow economy is a manifestation of the backwardness of societies, as it leads to waste and misuse of human resources. The individuals resort to hidden

economic activities that are not clean, and the slow pace of adjusting economic and social policies and fighting corruption is a major reason for the emergence and spread of this economy.

The comments on the issue discussed that the shadow economy cannot be eliminated, but its volume can be reduced, and that the nationalization of some commercial sectors has not been entirely successful, because of the shadow economy that affects the movement of buying and selling.

The contributors also saw that the shadow economy is partially related to poverty, and that it has to do with the culture and values of individuals. This economy is a result of economic and management conditions that reflect a defect in the distribution of financial and human resources and their management.

The contributors had different views about whether or not e-commerce is part of the shadow economy; some suggested that it does not fall within the shadow economy, while others have argued that it is. Every action that does not fall within the formal laws and regulations, it falls within the informal sector.

The contributions mentioned the negative aspects of this sector, while some stated that this sector would have many positive aspects if it undergoes organization. The risks and negative aspects of this type of economy are reduced without excluding or fighting it. The presence of the shadow economy is necessary in order to provide job opportunities for some social groups.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Studying the circumstances and reasons that drive individuals to work in hidden economy activities.
- Establishing or organizing cooperative societies, with every society including different professions, organizing each profession, and

setting the regulating rules under the supervision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development.

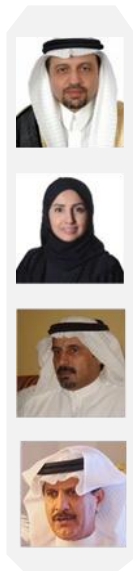
- Building unified service platforms to issue licenses.
- Creating a regulation to allow women to do business such as preparing home-made food and drinks, provided that they comply with the health requirements.
- Requesting the ministries of commerce, labor and social development to prepare an executive regulation to facilitate licensing procedures and practice work in the symbiotic economy institutions.
- Emphasizing the necessity to employ legitimate hidden economy activities in the formal economy, by facilitating administrative procedures and restrictions.
- Awareness that containment, empowerment, training, institutionalizing work, investing in the local product and protecting it from unfair competition with foreign products can make some progress in employing this economy as a primary source for the individual and society.

Scientific and Professional Societies and their Role in Development

The main paper was presented by Dr. Riyad Nejem, commented on by Eng. Salem Al-Marri and Dr. Reem Al-Furayan, and the debate was moderated by Mr. Abdullah Al-Dhwaihi. The paper noted that the terms of scientific societies and professional societies are overlapping, and that both terms are used interchangeably depending on the field and the country. Dr. Riyad believed that the scientific society is mostly a non-profit organization, established to advance the progress of a field, profession or the like. It adopts policies that serve this field or profession and its employees, in a way that achieves its interests in a balanced manner without looking at the material returns. Then the paper addressed in some detail the activities of these societies, and the law of scientific societies issued in 1421, which allows Saudi universities to establish scientific societies operating under their direct supervision.

The paper also identified the problem that these societies face with low subscriptions. Dr. Riyad talked extensively on this, whether in relation to the numbers or the mechanism, in addition to the geographical distribution of the societies, calling for reconsidering this situation, so that professionals all over the Kingdom can benefit from them.

The comments made on this paper stated that the scientific and professional societies are an important entity in civil society



institutions. It is difficult to talk about them without examining their reality in the Kingdom.

However, the scientific societies in the Kingdom face many problems, the most prominent of which are related to subscriptions, and they lack the governance that gives them credibility and professionalism to enhance the confidence of the target group of members and the bodies that provide financial support for their activities. In addition, the activities of many scientific societies are far from reaching the aspirations of Vision 2030, and there is a gap in the relationship and partnership between many scientific societies, the reality of the market needs, and promising opportunities in the private sector.

The comments made on the paper reiterated some of the problems experienced by the scientific societies, including low subscriptions, their inability to reach their audience and weak resources.

The opinions varied regarding the independence of scientific societies from universities, where some advocated the need to make them independent. Others, however, saw that there is difficulty in this process. The societies are an essential part of the universities' social responsibility, and the making them independent may weaken them.

The opinions also varied regarding the merger of societies that are similar in scope. Others advocated their necessity to serve the theoretical and practical aspects in an integrative way. Still others considered that merging eliminates scientific competition and diversity.

At the end of the discussion, a number of recommendations were provided. They aimed at supporting and developing scientific and professional societies in order to fulfill their role to contribute to achieving the Saudi Vision 2030, the most important of which are:

- Reconsidering the law of scientific and professional societies, setting a clear and defined system for their tasks and subscriptions, and reviewing the geographical distribution of the Saudi scientific and professional societies for the benefit of professionals.
- Similar societies need to be merged together, or at least reduced to raise their efficiency and the comprehensiveness of their scope.
- Scientific and professional societies are invited to study the Saudi Vision 2030 to invest in the development aspects.
- Considering separating the scientific and professional societies and their laws for the different tasks and their respective roles, and accordingly the different challenges they face.
- Searching for funding sources to support these societies, whether by the private sector, the State, or through universities.
- Giving young men and women the opportunity to make a shift in work methodology, improve the quality of life, and get them involved in their goals to keep pace with the aspirations and goals of the Saudi Vision 2030.



Social Responsibility of the Private Sector

The main paper was presented by Dr. Al-Jazi Al-Shubiki, commented on by Dr. Hussein Al-Hakami, Dr. Yousef Al-Hazeem and Mona Abu Suleiman, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Khaled Al-Radiaan. The paper indicated that the social responsibility of the private sector means the commitment of companies, institutions and commercial centers to contribute to sustainable development to improve the standard of living of people in a manner that serves the goals of trade and achieves the interests of society. Among the benefits of social responsibility in the private sector is that the companies that achieve social responsibility have a higher profitability rate of 18% than those without social responsibility programs.

The paper pointed out that among the challenges facing social responsibility in the private sector are lacking a unified framework or reference, lacking information and data, weak coordination, follow-up and evaluation.

The paper also emphasized that one of the priorities of social responsibility for companies and profit institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to focus on the qualification and training programs. This is to bridge the gap between education and labor market outcomes, support small and medium enterprises, and research centers and coordinate with charitable institutions to implement charitable and social projects.

The comments explained that social responsibility is the responsibility of every individual working in the institution and not the responsibility

of senior management, as sometimes happens when blame is put on a certain department by some staff believing that they have nothing to do with social responsibility.

Some contributors argued that the concept of social responsibility jumped to the surface in the last ten years and made good achievements. Social responsibility needs a strategic government intervention represented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, chambers of commerce, the Capital Market Authority, and the Zakat and Tax Authority.

The contributors also confirmed that Vision 2030 contributed to changing the perception of social responsibility and set some standards, but the economic situation may not allow the comprehensive change that we need.

The contributions made on the main paper indicated that the private sector must work with the government relevant authorities to confront a number of many social and thorny problems that affect in one way or another the course of economic and developmental life in the Kingdom, and attempt to find solutions.

The contributions also indicated that many officials in the chambers of commerce prevented the private sector from carrying out its social responsibility in the past decades. This was justified by saying that the government does not need (their alms). This situation continued until the interest in social responsibility in the private sector disappeared in its broad sense, and the private sector continued to disburse sums of money as charitable donations.

Some contributors also saw that the issue of social responsibility is suffering from a significant ignorance, not from the private sector but even from the government itself, which did not create the legislative and practical environment so that the companies and bank can compete for providing services to the society.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- There is an urgent need for conducting specialized studies that define the concept of social responsibility in order to avoid overlapping with the concept of "charity work."
- There is a need to measure the volume of actual participation by the companies and determine the volume of expected participation.
- It is necessary to create the legislative, regulatory and practical environment that guarantees the competition of all private sector companies to provide their services by reformulating all laws and regulations related to social responsibility.
- Providing all administrative, legal and incentive facilities for companies that have made strides in their social contribution, which can motivate them to increase and maintain their participation.
- Appreciating anyone who contributes their experience and time to social responsibility, with directing and managing all volunteers in social responsibility programs, to prevent them from being used in the name of volunteering in programs that are not related to social participation.

- Urging companies to improve the quality of their primary work by being in accordance with a self-driven social responsibility, by not failing to perform their original duties towards society.
- The necessity of playing the expected role by the chambers of commerce, by establishing modern legislations that are compatible with the social, economic and cultural aspects of the Saudi society. This effort has to be in line with the directions of the Saudi Vision 2030 in building a high-level approach for social responsibility.

Supporting the Non-profit Sector and Vision 2030



The main paper was presented by Dr. Nouf Al-Ghamdi, commented on by Dr. Khaled Al-Rudyaan and Mr. Muhammad Al-Dandani, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Mohammad Al-Mulhim. The paper examined the concept of this sector, discussed the cooperatives sector, sustainable development, civil society institutions, social investment, the relationship between civil work and national development, and the relationship of the Ministry of Labor to social development. The paper also discussed some problems facing the non-profit sector, particularly the bureaucracy of social affairs. In addition, it reviewed some models of international organizations in the development of the non-profit sector, the importance of facilitating procedures, and proposing a set of development insights for the non-profit sector.

The paper argued that the non-profit sector is an integral part of the government sector, integrated with the private sector, and supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development. All these features are not sufficient to push it forward, as it needs a discrete activity that is separate from the Ministry. It also needs a public body to which it is linked, with regulations and legislations enacted that enable it to perform its functions, face challenges, and change the stereotypical idea about such institutions that they are just a provider of financial aid.

The paper called for raising the pace of interest and care in the non-profit sector through support for the technical environment, training,

and bridging the gap with government institutions, especially endowments, identification with national plans, measurement, monitoring, creation of competencies, and integration of volunteerism. The paper demanded to activate this sector in the most important areas affecting education, health and housing, while investing in the Hajj season as a field of implementation seminal with opportunities.

The comments made on this paper stated that the experience of this sector is unsuccessful, although it is a very promising one, and an important factor in reducing the burden on the average-income citizen, who can contribute to it, and benefit from the goods and services which it provides at lower prices than the private sector. Not only that, but cooperatives can create a large number of jobs for Saudis.

Likewise, government bureaucracy, management corruption in some cooperatives, and protecting the interests of some groups - restricted this sector and rendered it useless. This is evidenced by the existence of Saudi cooperative societies that are over fifty years old. These cooperatives are still faltering, have little impact, and have not expanded their activities.

In addition, governance is not very reliable in its structure, but rather in application. Also, labeling the sector with aid and donation only is unfair, and it is necessary to amend the stereotypical concept of the non-profit sector, with focus on awareness of this sector, working to develop it, and applying the employment system instead of volunteering, increasing its resources, coordinating among the

projects, and establishing a union of associations. In addition to benefiting from the international experience, there shall be promotion for this field outside the Kingdom as an opportunity for international reputation.

Remarks made on the topic were made by some commentators on the necessity of caring for the cooperative sector, as it is an accumulation of the efforts of the people in creative economic activities, and a key factor in providing goods and services of various kinds, given that profit is not the basis in the cooperative.

The idea of social investment was put forward because it reduces social and administrative risks, and the State should encourage and support investment based on social impact in order to confront negative societal phenomena.

Some argued that the non-profit sector should be made independent from the Ministry of Labor, which will contribute to the flexibility and speed of its development. There is also a need for specialized work of charitable institutions as is the case in the U.S. charities. There are many areas which these institutions are interested in, such as education, culture, and health, humanitarian relief, civil rights, religion etc.

Different opinions expressed about the benefit of international organizations in building research and development centers. There are those who believe that these organizations target the needy countries, because they are international organizations. Therefore, their role in local development may be limited.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Paving the way for the establishment of cooperatives, and ease the conditions for their establishment.
- Expanding consumer cooperatives in residential neighborhoods so that neighborhood residents can contribute to their establishment.
- Emphasizing the importance of separating social development from the Ministry of Labor, or establishing an independent body for social development, while simplifying procedures for establishing civil society institutions.
- Establishing a system of civil work that defines this work, its governance, and the mechanisms for achieving the flexibility needed to liberate it from bureaucracy.
- Conducting studies and providing information on global models for the work of civil work institutions.
- Conducting awareness-raising programs to introduce civil work, its components and its importance, and stimulate volunteer work.
- Interest in lifting restrictions on investments in some civil society and non-profit institutions to cover their costs so that they do not need state support.



Technology and the Future of Man

The main paper was presented by Dr. Nora Al-Suoyan, commented on by Mr. Sami Al-Hussain, Dr. Wafa Taybah and Dr. Abdul Salam Wail, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Humoud. Dr Nora indicated that by entering the fourth industrial revolution, the world began to witness the emergence of innovations that have a fundamental role in reducing the human role in favor of the machine, through what is now known as "artificial intelligence." Under these conditions, there are legitimate fears of the expansion of unemployment, with a global position on the outputs of artificial intelligence and the nature of its role in the future. The controversy remains unresolved about these aspects.

Dr. Nora added that the position of uncertainty towards the technology boom manifested in "artificial intelligence" addresses its effect on unemployment, social inequality, and the breakdown of social relations as a result of the deteriorating economic situation. As for those who support the technology boom, they see "artificial intelligence" as a breakthrough in science and technology. Therefore, the paper sees that laws and legislations must be issued to regulate the development of "artificial intelligence". It also advocates programs to preserve the sovereignty of the human element and the security of the planet, and to control the course of scientific research. It calls for setting the priorities for investment in this sector in favor of improving the quality of human life.

The comments made on the paper indicated that the presence of modern technology and its rapid development has a negative and positive impacts on all walks of human life. For instance, modern technology affected the psychological side including learning and the speed of communication among people. It also facilitated some mental processes, and made them accessible, especially to individuals with special needs. The technology replaced human observation with the machine observation, in addition to its contributions to the development of scientific research in psychology. As for the negative sides, the first losses included the loss of patience, as modern technology meets our demands quickly and creates a pleasure that we get used to, which makes us so demanding. Likewise, the great progress in technology has resulted in empowering the individual in a way difficult to imagine.

Finally, the comments stated that we have the option to inevitably resist the change that follows, or to be part of it so that we direct it in a way that maximizes the benefit of humanity and reduces the risks of its misuse.

The contributions on the main paper indicated that man is able to absorb all the developments in his/ her life, adapt to it and find solutions, and those technologies cannot be held fully responsible.

The discussions also confirmed that the technical revolutions and rapid change in the fields of technology and innovation are unavoidable. The changes brought about by these revolutions include multiple positive consequences for humanity. Therefore, we need

ethical and legal controls that refine and direct this change so that it would serve humanity, and keep pace with the changes that will take place in the society because of technology.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- Digital transformation is the current and upcoming challenge in which we must transform from being recipients and users to creators and entrepreneurs, and from spectators to key players.
- The importance of reviving technical activities and digitization at the age of childhood, and promoting digitization and making it visible in the media, with officially honored personalities, to serve as models.
- Humanizing the technology products through the consensus reached by the governments, so that the machine would be at the service of man, not the other way round.
- Seeking to pass legislations and laws that regulate the course of the development of artificial intelligence, in order to avoid negative repercussions on man.
- Striving to harness the capabilities and efficiency of artificial intelligence data for the benefit of humanity, and to warn of any negativity affecting human development.
- Technology governance should have a wider scope, in a way that serves the good of artificial intelligence, and neutralizes the negative effects that may arise when using technical activities to accomplish businesses.

- Promoting and encouraging the path of technical learning in its modern fields and developing its strategy; promoting innovation in the educational environment, and adopting this as a basic approach in education, which enhances local digital, and reduces dependency on imported products.
- Identifying the desired goals of artificial intelligence technologies facing social, cultural and political challenges.

The Future of e-Commerce in the Kingdom



The main paper was presented by Mr. Osama Kurdi, commented on by Dr. Zuhair Radwan and Mr. Khaled Al-Othman, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Nouf Al-Ghamdi. The paper purported that the importance of e-commerce in the national economy emerges from a set of advantages, including diversification of the economy, support for local product, creation of job opportunities, and attracting investments. This goes alongside supporting entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises. These advantages may extend to the e-commerce becoming supportive to local industries. There are also several attempts to provide the services of e-commerce locally in a manner similar to Amazon.

Mr. Kurdi also indicated that the new e-commerce system, which includes new licenses for this trade, entails protecting consumer information and details of the service provider, and it aims, among other things, to enhance confidence between the e-shop and the consumer.

The comments made on this paper indicated that e-commerce is one of the most important outcomes of information technology. The IT application in commercial transactions has led to economic, social, and psychological changes, and has produced a new pattern of shopping and new job opportunities, and changed the traditional work environment. So, the Kingdom has much to do in the field of e-commerce, especially since the Saudi Vision 2030 included among its goals the revitalization of e-commerce. Vision 2030 also has a

number of points that could contribute to achieving this goal, including infrastructure development for logistic services, and the development of the communications and financial service sector.

The contributions made on the paper discussed the themes of major companies in the field of e-commerce in the Kingdom, the prospects of e-commerce for large companies, the e-commerce market in the Kingdom, the impact of e-commerce on the local trade and the labor market, the reasons for consumers' tendency to use electronic transactions, and the extent of local benefit from e-commerce.

The contributions also mentioned the statistics on the volume of e-commerce in the Kingdom, and how Saudi companies are not yet getting their share in the market, as global companies capture the largest proportion.

Some contributors have argued that e-commerce - with its development in the Kingdom - will affect job opportunities. Therefore, focus must be placed on how to secure a share for the Saudi economy, including job opportunities. Focus shall also be on increasing the local content in terms of work and production, not leaving the market overwhelmed by imports.

The contributions also addressed the impact of e-commerce on local trade, and the reasons that drive the Saudi consumer to go to the electronic market instead of the local market, including high prices, lack of confidence in the quality of the local products, and saving effort, time and money.

The contributors emphasized the importance of catching up with the electronic market, because it is the future market. With overcoming the obstacles, this market can be active locally. The producer, vender, dealer and local consumers will all reap the benefits.

At the end of the discussion, a number of recommendations reached with the aim of extrapolating the future of e-commerce in the Kingdom, and the extent of its support and effectiveness in achieving the Kingdom's vision and aspirations, the most important of these recommendations were as follows:

- Making e-commerce a supporting tool for local industries by creating job opportunities and attracting investments, while supporting entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises.
- Opening the borders and removing the barriers before advanced companies in the field of electronic commerce to transfer their technologies and systems and localizing them in the Kingdom. This effort has to go along with ensuring that the space is available for small and medium national institutions to retain their role in the overall system.
- Developing the infrastructure for logistic services, and developing the telecommunications and financial services sector, in a manner that contributes to the revitalization of e-commerce, in order to achieve the goals of the Saudi Vision 2030.
- Focusing on increasing the local content in e-commerce in terms of work and production.

- Introducing the necessary regulations and implementing rules for this business.
- Developing statutes related to e-commerce.
- Establishing an economic offset program for the major foreign companies that have plans to work in the Kingdom in the field of e-commerce, for the purpose of transferring technology and knowledge in this field, and training Saudi cadres.
- Establishing a scientific association for e-commerce, as well as a chamber of commerce specializing in this business or national committees in the existing chambers of commerce.



The Impact of Women's Driving on Sustainable Development and Road Safety in Saudi Arabia

The main paper was presented by Dr. Najah bint Muqbel Al-Qarawi, commented on by Dr. Nouf Al-Ghamdi and Dr. Aisha Al-Ahmadi, and the debate was moderated by Dr. Reem Al-Furyan. The paper coincided with the announcement - for the first time - of allowing women to drive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research was conducted by a team at Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University in cooperation with a specialized team from the General Directorate of Traffic in the Kingdom.

The importance of this research is that it is a national study carried out at the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It coincided with an important development event in its history, which is the announcement of allowing women in the Kingdom to drive a car. This gave the researcher a unique opportunity of tracing and documenting the shift between the ban and allowing women to drive, and closely following the consequences of announcing that resolution and the measures taken in preparation for its implementation. This also allowed studying the tangible effects on sustainable development in three dimensions: (economy, environment, and society), traffic safety before and after lifting the ban, and comparing the Kingdom with the other states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The comments that made on this paper focused on the part related to sustainable development, especially the economic aspect. They addressed the potential effects such as increasing demand for cars

and then supporting the service sector and associated permanent goods, the most prominent of which are: car sales and spare parts, maintenance, finance, insurance, and fuel.

In addition, some social and environmental impacts were addressed, such as empowering women and facilitating their access to work and education. On the other hand, more pressure would be on roads and parking areas, drivers training schools, and traffic department supplies, as well as increasing fuel consumption, which would negatively affect the environment due to the increase in car emissions.

The contributors went on to say that women's driving necessarily meant huge social changes in lifestyle in terms of expanding their social presence and role and prepares society to accept more changes.

Positive social outcomes may be a driving factor towards persuading the more conservative sectors with the resolution and reducing some of the criminal threats, such as kidnapping, and violence against children, that may result from some foreign drivers.

The commentators indicated that it is expected that there would be social impacts, such as increasing the independence of women in mobility. It is also expected that there would be an impact on the relationship of men to women, as the resolution would contribute to a qualitative change in the family relationship.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- One of the potential economic impacts of women's driving is increasing the demand for cars. There is no doubt that the growth in demand for cars will increase their imports, which burdens the balance of payments, but it will increase the feasibility of the emergence of the local car industry and will lead to an increase in the number of vehicles to support the services sector and related support goods.
- The resolution will enhance the investment of women in training and education, and thus increases human capital, which will boost the productivity of women and society as a whole.
- Banks are also expected to benefit from increased demand for cars by increasing the volume of financing. The revenues of insurance companies will increase due to the requirements of compulsory insurance.
- Regarding the infrastructure, an increase in the number of cars and an increase in the total distance covered will raise pressure on roads and parking areas. The increase in the number of vehicles will increase the demand for fuel, which will reduce or cancel the effect of canceling fuel subsidies and raising prices, and an increase in fuel consumption will negatively affect the environment unless the fuel and vehicle specifications improve environmentally.
- Likewise, permitting women to drive will increase the empowerment of women, especially those who support themselves or their families, and facilitate their access to work and

education. The long-term delivery companies and taxis will be affected by the decline in women's demand for their services.

- In addition, the resolution to allow women to drive a car should be considered as an enabler, meaning that its effects are paramount. This means a departure from previously suppressed skills and goals. It also means an impact on the value system, including the position of segments of society.



The Opportunities of the Mining Sector in the Kingdom

The main paper was presented by the keynote speaker of Asbar Forum, consultant Dr. Ibrahim Nazer, commented on by Mr. Mohammed Al-Dandani and Mr. Hussam Al-Beheiri, and the debate was moderated by Mr. Jamal Malaika. The paper addressed the challenges which this sector is suffering from, and what it can contribute to development in terms of providing employment opportunities, and contributing to the gross domestic product as a source of national income. It addressed the reasons for its meager contribution to the national economy, the most important of these reasons is that the current mining system does not keep pace with local and global economic developments.

Regarding the present and future of mining industry, the comments stated that mining now receives special care of the Ministry of Energy, Mining and Industry. This goes in line with the vision and directions of country's leadership. Work is under way to change the administrative composition of the Survey Authority, with a CEO has been appointed.

The comments emphasized that although there are very many mineral resources, the sector still suffers from disorganization and significant bureaucratic restrictions. A number of mining experts agree that more organizational changes must be made in order for the Kingdom to take full advantage of its mineral reserves that have not been utilized as required. It has to be kept in mind that this sector

is the third source of the Kingdom's economy after the oil and petrochemical sectors according to Vision 2030.

The contributions made on this paper indicated that this sector is still not being used in an optimal and correct manner. Based on the latest figures of the agency of the Ministry of Mineral Resources, the contribution of the mining sector to GDP is S.R. 64 billion per annum. This share is expected to jump to S.R. 97 billion riyals in 2020, and the number of jobs is currently 65 thousand jobs, and expected to reach 90 thousand jobs in 2020, while the amount of investments is estimated at S.R. 250 billion.

The contributors argued that an obstacle that prevents investing in the mining sector is that there are currently no attempts to eliminate the existing obstacles and facilitate access to the sector. There is also no adequate funding or large funds being injected into this sector to succeed, as well as the very expensive exploration process.

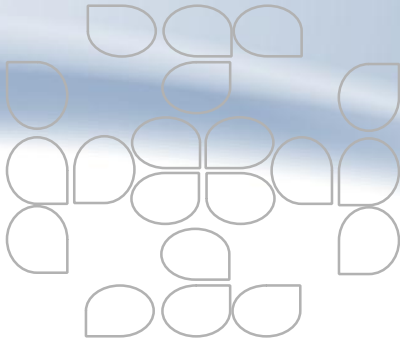
The contributors added that the mining industry is primarily an extractive industry according to the fourth version of the International Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities (ISIC4), as well as the Saudi Directory of Economic Activities and the Ministry of Commerce and Investment, which requires large capitals, especially precious metals, such as gold, silver, platinum, and metallic minerals in general, as well as advanced technologies.

Among the most important recommendations were the following:

- The government has to stop competing with the private sector, especially in the stages of transformational industries, while

encouraging the private sector to enter the metallic and non-metallic minerals industry.

- Increasing exports of mineral products and replacing imported mineral ores with local ores.
- Encouraging the University of Petroleum and Minerals to establish specialized departments and institutes geared to all phases of the mining industry.
- Establishing a specialized bank to finance mining projects in the Kingdom with capital appropriate to the needs of the sector.
- Integrating the various legislative and organizational departments under an independent body, with full powers to manage mining activity.
- Prohibiting land ownerships on a tribal basis, so that land will be owned by the State.
- Focusing on training and education to prepare the required national cadres in the mining sector.



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