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(GCC)  
Secretariat-General**



**GCC  
The Process and Achievements**

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**Their Majesties and Highnesses Leaders of the GCC States**

**Participating in the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the GCC Supreme Council**

**State of Kuwait, December 2013**

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## Foreword

Thanks to the prudent policies of their Majesties and Highnesses Leaders of the GCC States, the GCC process continues to yield many achievements in all fields. This entity has become a model of regional integration featured by a prosperous Common Market, which has opened the doors wide for the free movement of individuals and flow of capital. It enhances the tendency towards diversification of the sources of income by supporting industrial and service sectors in all Member States. Moreover, the Customs Union facilitates the flow of goods and increases the volume of intra-GCC trade.

The GCC addresses the everyday life of the citizens; they can freely move around, reside in the Member States without restrictions, and engage in business activities and professions. They also benefit from free public education opportunities for their children, and receive medical care at all public hospitals, in addition to many other rights acquired within the framework of the GCC economic citizenship.

In the security realm, the GCC States are acknowledging policies and procedures that enhance joint security cooperation. In this respect, the GCC States have taken an important step by adopting the Security Agreement, and establishing the GCC Police, based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This step is expected to enhance coordination among various security agencies, and counter terrorism.

In the military area, the GCC States are building up a joint defense system that would ensure collective security. In this context, their Majesties and Highnesses Leaders of the GCC States agreed, in the recent session of the Supreme Council, to establish a Unified Military Command, which is considered as a vital step towards supporting and enhancing defense capabilities. The GCC States have also endorsed a GCC academy for strategic and security studies which will locate in the United Arab Emirates.

Furthermore, their Highnesses and Excellencies, the Ministers of Defense

in the GCC States have laid down the foundation stone for the Maritime Security Coordination Center in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

However, the human element remains the pivot of the integration process. This has been demonstrated in the great care leaders of the GCC States pay to the youth, who represent a broad percentage of the population. In the GCC summit held in Kuwait, in December 2013, their Majesties and Highnesses Leaders of the GCC Member States underscored the importance to develop the youth capabilities. They instructed the Secretariat General to undertake a study to establish an entrepreneurship fund to help assist the youth in their small and medium scale projects. They also agreed to set up a permanent program for the youth in order to improve their competence, trigger their humanitarian and developmental contributions, develop their leadership potentials, positive values, and promote their GCC sense of identity. The GCC achievements accomplished over the last year are indicative of its vital and extended process. They certify that GCC integration has no bounds and is capable of opening up new horizons for joint action, which contributes to enhancing the welfare of the citizens, economic prosperity and stability of the Member States

**Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani**  
**Secretary General**



# Preamble

The Secretariat General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf is pleased to introduce the Eighth Edition of its annual publication, "GCC: Process and Achievements". This book presents a comprehensive description of the objectives and achievements of the GCC joint action over the past years. It is divided into sections and chapters:

Section (I) addresses the objectives and achievements in foreign policy, defense, internal security and media fields. The GCC has achieved several successes through its methods of consultation, coordination, and unified standpoint, as well as developing common policies and collective actions at times of peace and crises.

Section (II) addresses the economic cooperation in all fields. It explains shifting from the Free Trade Area established in 1983, to the Customs Union in 2003, allowing the GCC States to enter the second phase of economic integration. The Common Market was launched in January 2008 after fulfilling most of its requirements, and the GCC economic citizenship has become a reality.

The steps that have been taken towards the inauguration of the Monetary Union are explained in this section. The remaining chapters review all the aspects of the joint economic action and the achievements in the fields of energy, industry, patents, electricity, water, transportation, communication, telecommunication, agriculture, planning, statistics and development.

Section (III) explains the achievements in the human and environmental fields. These include developing the educational curricula and institutions, supporting scientific research, and cooperation in the labor market. It also includes promoting the status of women, as well as setting out plans for cultural development, enhancing cooperation in the health, municipal and housing fields, and encouraging sport and youth welfare sectors.

Section (IV) deals with the juridical and legal cooperation as the GCC States have sought convergence of laws and regulations, as well as, enhancing coordination among their judicial bodies and unifying their types, levels and procedures. This section also covers the achievements of the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council as it is instructed to study certain important topics in economic, social, educational, scientific, media, and security areas, as well as assessing the GCC joint action progress. This section also includes two chapters; one of them addresses cooperation in the area of auditing, and the other in zakat.

Finally, Section (V) addresses the areas of regional cooperation and economic relations with other countries and groupings. We hope that this book will serve as a comprehensive reference that highlights the objectives and achievements of the GCC.

**Information Affairs Sector  
GCC Secretariat General**

# **SECTION ONE**

**COOPERATION IN THE  
POLITICAL  
MILITARY  
SECURITY AND MEDIA AREAS**



# Chapter (1)

## Cooperation in the Field of Foreign Policy

The similarity among GCC Member States has enabled the GCC to adopt unified positions towards political issues and based on neighborly principles, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect of sovereignty of each state over its territories and resources, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. That has conferred much credibility upon the GCC as an international organization playing an important role in this vital area of the world.

### **The Most Important Political and Strategic Objectives**

Coordination and cooperation in the field of external policy aim at adopting common positions towards political issues that are of common concern to the GCC States within Arab, regional, and international contexts, as well as behaving as a single group vis-à-vis rest of the world within a framework of principles based on mutual respect, non-intervention in internal affairs and the observance of common interests, in such a manner that maintains the common interests of the GCC Member States , enhances their stability and the prosperity of their citizens.

Over the years, the most important political objectives of the GCC can be summed up as follows:

- During the eighties of the twentieth century, the most important GCC political and strategic objectives focused on the GCC stability and security through facing the causes of instability and the sources of threat mainly posed by the Iraq-Iran war, which required collective action by the GCC States to avoid expansion of the war.
- In the nineties, the aggression by the former Iraqi regime against the State of Kuwait and the subsequent occupation of the country, posed the most serious security challenge ever encountered since the establishment of the GCC. Therefore, the liberation of Kuwait was the top priority of the GCC then.
- After the liberation, intensive diplomatic joint action was needed to

force Iraq to implement resolutions of the Security Council related to its aggression on Kuwait.

- Supporting the United Arab Emirates in exercising its right, through all peaceful means, to restore its sovereignty over its three islands: the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, which have been occupied by Iran since 1971 till now .
- Within the Arab framework, the GCC Member States adopted collective action to support Arab issues and causes; the Palestinian issue being first priority. They have supported the peace process in the Middle East, while upholding sticking to Arab rights.
- Supporting and enhancing Islamic causes.

## **The Important Achievements in the Field of External Policy**

### **Contribution to the Containment and Termination of the Iraq-Iran War**

The Iraq-Iran war was at its first year when the GCC was established and was the concern of the Supreme Council since the first Summit that was held in Abu Dhabi. The GCC States used all their political and moral potentials to find a way out of that bloody war, which inflicted substantial human and material losses on both sides and disturbed regional security.

Within the Arab framework, the GCC action came up with the Seven Lateral Committee that was formed for reaching a cease-fire. At the international level, the political efforts of the GCC States contributed to highlighting the war and seeking the means for reaching a solution. Those efforts resulted in the issuance of the Security Council Resolution No.540 in October 1983 that called for the immediate suspension of military operations in the Gulf and avoiding targeting the vessels, economic installations and ports. Security Council Resolution No.552 followed in June 1984, in response to a claim made by the GCC States against the attacks at the commercial vessels navigating from and to the ports of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait. The said resolution stressed the right of navigation in the territorial waters and marine routes from and to the ports and installations of countries that were not parties in the war acts.

Finally, the GCC States effectively contributed to the issuance of the Security Council Resolution No.598 (July 1987), a historical resolution which put an end to that destructive war after being accepted by both parties.

## **Liberation of the State of Kuwait**

When the Iraqi regime invaded and occupied the State of Kuwait on August 2 ,1990, the GCC States hastened, since the very beginning, to take action on the principle that an attack against any Member State is an attack against all other GCC States. The GCC States were the core of political and diplomatic action rejecting the aggression and consequences thereof and calling for unconditional withdrawal. The GCC Foreign Ministers held an exceptional meeting in Cairo on August 3 ,1990 on the sideline of the meetings of the Council of the Arab league. The efforts of the GCC States resulted in convening the extraordinary Arab Summit in Cairo on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1990; two meetings of Arab Foreign Ministers and the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Conference Organization had preceded the summit on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1990 respectively. Moreover, the GCC States effectively contributed to the issuance of a number of Security Council resolutions calling for an unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi troops and restoration of legitimacy. The series of resolutions began with Security Council Resolution No. 660 in August 3 ,1990 denouncing the invasion and calling for immediate and unconditional withdrawal through Resolution No. 678 on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1990 that authorized the use of all necessary means to support and enforce the relevant Security Council resolutions and restore international security and peace to the region. Other relevant resolutions calling for the elimination of the aggression consequences were issued as well.

In this context, the 11<sup>th</sup> GCC Summit held in Doha in December 1990 reaffirmed the GCC States position against the aggression and the determination to resist and eliminate its consequences, on the principle that any aggression on any Member State is an aggression on all, and that the security of the GCC States is integral. The GCC States played a crucial role in the liberation of the State of Kuwait through exploiting their political and diplomatic influence and their military and material capacities for the sake of liberation that was attained in February 1991. Thereafter, the GCC States have called for the implementation of the relevant of Security Council's

resolutions and elimination of the consequences of invasion and occupation.

## **Events in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

The GCC States have asserted that they will stand by each other in case of any danger posed to any Member State. They also have asserted their full support to the Kingdom of Bahrain at political, economic, security and defense fronts, following the events of February and March 2011, based on the principle of preserving collective, integrated and interdependent security and considering the security and stability of the GCC States as an integral whole, and out of their commitment to the pledges and common security and defense agreements and not accepting intervention of any external party in the affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In view of the GCC States responsibility to maintain security and stability which is a collective responsibility, and given the regretful events witnessed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, it requested in its capacity as a GCC member State to invoke the joint defense agreement signed in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000. The GCC States responded to this call by sending the Peninsula Shield forces in the month of March 2011, and asserted that the arrival of these forces in the Kingdom of Bahrain was in line with the principles and rules of international law, and within the framework of honoring collective agreements and conventions.

The GCC States supported the speech of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on the occasion of the submission of the final report to the independent fact-finding committee on the events witnessed by the Kingdom of Bahrain. The GCC States also praised the sound method and national fundamentals adopted by His Majesty, expressing their high regard for the serious steps and comprehensive vision adopted in order to support the foundations of the state of law and institutions, as well as the peaceful co-existence among all the sections of the society.

## **Supporting the Integrity, Stability and Sovereignty of Iraq**

The GCC States supported the pivotal role of the United Nations in the political process in Iraq as stipulated in the Security Council Resolution No. 1546 issued on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004. The GCC States also supported the legislative



elections, the adoption of the constitution and subsequent procedures for completing the political building of the state of Iraq. They called all Iraqi parties to form a national unity government, which represents all ethnic and religious sects of Iraq without discrimination. The GCC States have also sought, through participation in the conferences of the donor countries, the Paris Club, the meetings of Iraq's neighboring countries and bilateral contacts, to accelerate the economic reconstruction of Iraq. The GCC States supported the Document of the International Commitment towards Iraq that was adopted at Sharm El-Sheikh on 4-5 May 2007. The Document contained a five-year-plan for rendering financial, political and technical support to Iraq, provided that the Iraqi government should implement political, security and economic reforms.

The GCC has expressed its deep concern over the acts of violence and the terrorist crimes, including attacks on sacred and worship places, and called all national factions in Iraq to unite in confronting the attempts of partition and sectarian discord. The GCC has affirmed that achieving security and stability in Iraq requires a political and security solution that remedies the causes of the crisis, extracts the roots of sectarian discord and terrorist acts and attains real Iraqi national reconciliation, in support to all efforts being made by the Iraqi government in this connection.

The GCC also has affirmed the respect of the integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq, and pledged to shoulder its responsibilities towards strengthening Iraq's unity, stability and progress, and to activate its role in building bridges of confidence with the neighboring countries on the principles of good neighborliness, and non-interference in the internal affairs of Iraq. The GCC also stressed the importance of exerting efforts by all the parties in of Iraq to achieve permanent and comprehensive political reconciliation that fulfils the aspirations of the Iraqi people and builds a secure and stable country based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, so that Iraq may regain its due role in Arab issues.

## **The Situation between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq**

Following the collapse of the previous Iraqi regime in 2003, the GCC welcomed the cooperation existing between the State of Kuwait

and the Republic of Iraq regarding the sufferings to which both countries were exposed as a result of inhuman practices of the previous Iraqi regime towards both Iraqi and Kuwaiti citizens. The GCC stressed the need for Iraq's implementation of all the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. In this context, the GCC welcomed the commencement of the process of maintaining border marks between the State of Kuwait and Republic of Iraq, and acceleration of eliminating Iraqi transgressions that impede the maintenance of border marks, in accordance with a time schedule prepared for this purpose, in implementation of Security Council Resolution 833. The GCC also stressed the importance of resolving the issue of compensation of Iraqi farmers, in implementation of the Resolution number 899 and knowing the whereabouts of the remaining prisoners and displaced people from the State of Kuwait and citizens of other countries, and restoring the properties and national archive to the State of Kuwait. The GCC urged the United Nations and other relevant authorities to continue their valued efforts to fulfill those obligations.

The GCC also welcomed the agreement signed between the State of Kuwait and Republic of Iraq on regulation of maritime navigation in Khawr Abdullah as well as the agreement signed between them for waiver of the lawsuits and verdicts regarding the Iraqi Airlines.

### **Supporting the Issue of the Three UAE Occupied Islands**

Since 1992, the issue of the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Mousa, belonging to the United Arab Emirates has become a constant item on the agenda of the Supreme Council and the Ministerial Council. The GCC States have supported the UAE stand in this regard and demanded Iran to end its occupation of these three islands and enter into direct negotiations with the UAE on the three islands or refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

Among the important steps in this connection was the resolution of the Ministerial Council at the 71<sup>st</sup> session (Jeddah, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1999) that called for the formation of a ministerial committee composed of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and His Excellency the Secretary General of the GCC with the aim to develop a mechanism for initiating direct negotiations for the settlement of this issue. The GCC States

hoped that Iran would welcome that committee which would have been an important opening to lay the ground for resolving the issue of the three islands. But Iran refused to receive that committee.

In an expanded international effort, the GCC States urged other countries as well as regional and international groupings to convince Iran to accept the peaceful efforts made by the UAE for the settlement of this issue.

## **Relations with Iran**

Iran's occupation of the three UAE islands since November 1971 has been a great source of concern that has impeded the possible expansion of relations between the GCC States and Iran. The GCC has repeatedly denounced Iran's interference into the affairs of some of the GCC States. The GCC States have developed a collective framework for relations with Iran adopting fixed and joint principles for dealing with Iran based on the neighborly principles, noninterference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes and rejecting de facto policies. The GCC States have called upon Iran to respond to the initiative of the GCC and the UAE for the settlement of the issue of the three islands through peaceful means, and that Iran must implement its announced positive political orientations and put them into tangible practice.

## **Iran's Nuclear Program Crisis**

Committed to the GCC firm principles calling for respect of international legality and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, the GCC has emphasized the importance of reaching a peaceful solution of this crisis and has urged Iran to continue the international dialogue and full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and abide by IAEA standards. The GCC has also affirmed that the Iranian nuclear program does not only pose danger to the peace and security of the region but it is also a threat to the international peace and stability. The GCC believes that the responsibility of the safety with regards to the peaceful use of nuclear energy falls on the shoulder of the country that operates any nuclear installation, taking into consideration the preservation of the vast geographical scope in the region and the necessity of full commitment to the criteria of security, safety and danger of proliferation. In this framework, the GCC called on

Iran to observe full transparency with regard to the Iranian Bushehr reactor, to accede to the nuclear safety convention, and to apply the highest nuclear safety criteria in its installations.

The GCC States welcomed the phased agreement reached by 1+5 Group with Iran related to its nuclear program in November 2013. They stressed the importance of executing the pledges contained in the joint action plan under the supervision of International Atomic Energy Agency in a manner that enhances confidence of the international community and dispels the concern over the Iranian nuclear program.

The GCC also has demanded that Israel accede to the Convention on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subject all its nuclear installations to IAEA inspection. The GCC has called on the international community to press Israel to respond to the international community's requirements in this respect. Moreover, the GCC has demanded that the Middle East region, as well as the Gulf region, be free of weapons of mass destruction. The GCC has also affirmed the right of the countries of the region in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, within the context of relevant international agreements. In this connection, the GCC States declared that they would conduct a study on developing a common program for the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with international standards and regulations.

### **Supporting the Palestinian Cause and the Peace Process**

Since its establishment on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1981, the GCC's position towards the Palestinian issue and the peace process have been clear. The GCC has expressed its support to the rights of the Palestinian people; rejecting and denouncing the aggressive policies and acts against the Palestinian people. The GCC also has its efforts with a view to reaching a long-standing, fair and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The declaration of the first session of the Supreme Council (May 1981) reflected full commitment by the GCC States to supporting the peace process in the Middle East. The Supreme Council then declared that sustainable stability in the Gulf is linked to the achieving of peace in the Middle East, and stressed the need for a just solution for the Palestinian issue; a solution that ensures the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return their homeland. and

establish their independent state, and Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands, particularly Holy Jerusalem.

Hence, the GCC States have supported the initiatives aimed at finding a comprehensive fair solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proposed two initiatives for the solution of this conflict in 1981 and later in 2002. Represented by H.E. the Secretary General, the GCC States also participated in the Peace Conference in Madrid, 1991. The GCC States do adhere to the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Arab Summit Conference in Beirut in 2002. The GCC States, as well as the other Arab countries, reiterated at the 20<sup>th</sup> Summit that was held in Doha, in March 2007, that the Arab Peace Initiative depends on Israel's adherence and implementation of its commitments within the framework of international legality for securing peace in the region.

The GCC States also welcomed the “The Road Map” plan that provides for the elimination of the Israeli occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian State, and implementation of the obligations based on Madrid Conference, the “Land for Peace” principle, and the UN resolutions. The GCC States also supported the efforts of the International Quartet Committee sponsoring the peace process and those of the international community for implementation of the “The Road Map” plan based on the Arab peace initiative. Within the same context, the GCC States welcomed the Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution No. 1515 in November 2003 supporting the “The Road Map” for reaching a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through establishing two states that co-exist in peace and security, stressing the need to achieve a permanent and comprehensive peace for all parties including Syria and Lebanon.

The GCC States also supported the Annapolis Conference called for by US President George W. Bush, wherein all parties concerned with the peace process participated. The Conference objective was to launch direct negotiations on all tracks with a view to reaching a comprehensive settlement of the peace process based on the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map, and the relevant Security Council's resolutions and to enter into direct negotiations on various issues of the final solution of the Arab-Israel conflict.

The GCC States regret that Israel has not adhered to its commitments made at Annapolis Conference concerning the acceleration of negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority and the establishment of the Palestinian State within the specified timeframe.

The GCC also has expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the atrocious acts exercised by the Israeli troops against the Palestinian people and the killing and terrifying civilians, women and children in the Palestinian occupied lands. The GCC strongly condemned Israel's raids and aggression on Gaza Strip and called the Security Council and international community, especially the United States, to assume full responsibility for and to take necessary measures to protect the Palestinian people. Moreover the GCC has expressed its dissatisfaction with the acts of destruction and excavation being made by the authorities of the Israeli occupation within the circumference of the Holy Aqsa Mosque, and has called upon the international community and UNESCO to interfere and stop these acts targeting the sacred places, which invoke and insult the feelings of Muslims.

The GCC condemned the statements of the Israeli government officials headed by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that oppose the peace process, the principle of a two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The GCC believes that this exposes the Israeli attitude to foil the efforts and attempts aimed at achieving just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The GCC position is that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will only be achieved by establishing the independent and viable Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan back to the line of demarcation as in June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967 and from Sheb'aa farms south Lebanon. The GCC believes that the absence of a just solution of the Palestinian issue and the continued extreme suffering of the Palestinian people are the real cause of the escalating diverse disputes in the Middle East. The GCC has called upon the international community to give utmost priority to reaching a just solution to that issue in line with the rules of international legality, as the provisional solutions or partial settlements have proved to be inadequate and unacceptable to secure security and stability.

The GCC expressed its regret over the United States' use of veto against the Arab Palestinian draft resolution, submitted to the UN Security Council in February 2011, that condemns Israeli settlement in occupied Palestinian territory. The GCC stressed that this step would not serve the peace process in the region, rather it would encourage Israel to continue its settlement policy and evade peace commitments and resolutions of international legitimacy.

The GCC also welcomed the efforts exerted by the US President Barak Obama to support the peace process in the Middle East, and the US Administration's commitment to establish an independent Palestinian State through any final peace agreement signed between the Palestinian and Israelis.

The GCC also commended the efforts exerted by the US Secretary of State John Kerry to reach a solution for the cause Palestinian. The GCC believes that his statements in Geneva regarding the possibility of an international boycott against Israel is an evidence of the obstruction to his efforts exerted in this regard. The GCC demands the international community, specifically the United States to take constructive stand toward Israel and obligate it to respond to all the international efforts and agreements relating to this issue.

The GCC supported efforts of the Ministerial Committee for Arab Peace Initiative in its meeting held in Doha in 2011, calling upon the UN member states to recognize the Palestinian State based on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It also appreciated United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO's) resolution issued on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011, to grant full membership to Palestine.

The GCC States commended the great interest accorded by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, to defend Al-Quds, in his speech during the inauguration of the international conference to defend Al-Quds (Jerusalem), held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2012, in Doha. It also commended His Highness's demand to submit an application to the UN Security Council seeking issuance of a resolution to form an international committee to investigate into all the Israeli actions carried out in Jerusalem since its occupation in 1967.

In the same context, the GCC condemned continuation of the settlement policies and programs in the occupied Palestinian territory aimed at

changing the geographical features and Judaization of Eastern Jerusalem. The GCC also commended the resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012, concerning the formation of the first International Fact-Finding Mission regarding the repercussions of Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian peoples.

The GCC also commended the positions of a number of countries to recognize the Palestinian State, as well as the positions of the countries that cast their votes in favor of the two resolutions issued by the United National General Assembly relating to the Palestinian people self-determination and sovereignty over their natural resources.

The GCC supported the Palestinian Authority's submission of an application to the United Nations seeking obtainment of the status of a non-member state. In this regard, the GCC congratulated the Palestinian people and their leadership on the award of a non-member observer state status in the United Nations, expressing its the hope that this achievement represents a serious step toward establishment of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The GCC also welcomed the ceasefire reached in Gaza, brokered by the Arab Republic of Egypt, stressing the need to continue efforts to strengthen this agreement and to ensure non-recurrence of such Israeli aggression in the future, and that Israel bears legal responsibility of consequences of this aggression. The GCC demanded the international community to work to provide and deliver urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza Strip.

The GCC commended the efforts and humanitarian aid offered by GCC Member States to the Palestinian people in general and to the Gaza Strip in particular, as well as the humanitarian aid offered by the Royal Charity Organization in the Kingdom Of Bahrain under the directives of His Highness Sheikh Naser bin Hamad AlKhalifa, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Charity Organization, to reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people besieged in Gaza Strip.

Within the framework of GCC support to the efforts of reconstruction of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli aggression, the GCC States in February 2009, established a program the "Gaza Reconstruction Program". They also



participated in the international donors conference for the reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in March 2009, and donated 1.65 billion US Dollars for that purpose.

As for the differences among the Palestinian, the GCC called upon all factions to bury their differences and resort to dialogue instead of division and dissension, and sit at the negotiation table to strengthen the Palestinian national unity, to preserve the gains achieved by the Palestinian people throughout many years of legitimate struggle. The GCC welcomed the Makkah Agreement signed by the Palestinians to end the internal fighting and to form a national unity government. The agreement was reached thanks to the efforts made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to bring together Palestinian factions to reach this important historical agreement. The GCC also welcomed the agreement signed by the two factions of Fateh and Hamas to start the dialogue on the bases of the Yemeni Initiative, commending the efforts exerted by the Yemeni government in this regard, as well as the Egyptian efforts that resulted the signing of a reconciliation agreement in Cairo on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The GCC also commended the efforts exerted by the State of Qatar, which resulted in the signing of the Doha Agreement, on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012 between the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas and the head of the political department of Hamas movement Khalid Mish'al, which resulted in an agreement to form a national unity government and to hold presidential and parliamentary elections.

### **Supporting the Arab Republic of Syria**

Since its establishment in 1981, the GCC has stressed its support to Syrian Arab Republic to restore its legitimate right and put an end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Golan Heights, back to the lines of June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967, on the basis of Madrid Conference reference, “the land for peace” principle and implementation of Security Council Resolutions Nos. 242 and 338, holding Israel responsible for impeding this track.

### **Resolving the Syrian Issue and Fulfilling the Aspirations of the Syrian People**

Since the beginning, the regretful events in the Syrian Arab Republic

have been accorded interest of the GCC States, on all the levels. Calls and appeals continued by the GCC to the Syrian regime to use wisdom and put an end to bloodshed and work to activate serious and prompt reforms, that fulfills aspirations of the brotherly Syrian people. The GCC States have always asserted their keen interest in the security, stability and unity of Syria.

The GCC States have adopted supportive position on the Arab initiative, approved by the Ministerial Council of the Arab League, on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2011, which was a result of the continuation and escalation of the acts of violence and killing against civilians. In this context, the GCC States decided to withdraw their ambassadors from Syria and ordered all the ambassadors of the Syrian regime to depart from their territories.

Their Majesties and Highnesses leaders of the GCC States, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Riyadh, December 2011) called on the Syrian government to implement all the articles of the Arab initiative. The GCC States supported all the decisions issued from the Arab league in this regard. Among them are the Arab Action Plan adopted on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 and the decision of the Arab League on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

In view of the Syrian regime's persistence and continuity in killing and torturing the innocent Syrian people, the GCC States decided on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012, to close their embassies in Damascus. On the same day, the GCC Secretary General called on the international community to take firm and prompt position to stop the killing, torture and flagrant violation of the dignity of the Syrian people and their legitimate rights.

The GCC States welcomed the decision of the Council of the Arab League, at the ministerial level, at its extraordinary session held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 in Doha, in which the Arab League called on the Security Council to take necessary action to ensure full and prompt implementation of the plan of Mr.Kofi Anan, within a specified time frame, including imposition of the six points contained in the plan by resorting to Chapter Seven of the UN Charter.

The GCC States members in the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations also supported the decision of the Third Human Rights Committee at the United Nations General Assembly taken on 21<sup>st</sup>

November 2011, which condemned the Syrian authorities for human rights violation and called to stop the serious violations against the civilians, and to implement the Arab plan promptly. The GCC States also praised the decision of Human Rights Commission of the United Nations issued in Geneva on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 condemning the processes of killings and called on the Independent International Investigation Committee on Syria to initiate a special investigation in the massacre occurred in Al-Houla.

The GCC States participated in the first conference of the Friends of Syria held in Tunis on 24<sup>th</sup> February, and in the second conference held in Istanbul on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. They supported the Geneva Convention on Syria reached by the working group on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012, followed by the American-Russian Agreement calling for holding of the Second Geneva Convention.

### **Supporting the Unity and Stability of Yemen and Its Development Process**

The GCC Initiative and its Executive Mechanism constitute a basic factor in helping the Yemeni brothers to put an end to the bloodshed and free Yemen from problems and chaos. This Initiative worked to achieve peaceful and smooth transition of power over a period of two years. After obtaining approval from all the parties, the Initiative was referred to the Security Council which adopted it unanimously as the foundation stone in its Resolution number 2014.

According to the Initiative and its Implementing Mechanism, a national unity government was formed and the presidential elections were held to gradually restore stability and peace in Yemen. The GCC States participated as observers in the presidential elections held on February 21 ,2012, and President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi was elected. The GCC also welcomed decisions and steps taken by the President to restructure the armed forces and launch national dialogue between parties in order to implement the Initiative and its Mechanism. The GCC States expressed hope that all parties would work together to make the transitional period successful.

The GCC States also welcomed the decision taken by the President of Yemen to launch the comprehensive national dialogue conference on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, and regarded it as an important step towards implementing

the Initiative and its Mechanism. That would help the citizens be united and stable, and establish bases for building a modern Yemen. The GCC States, in their support to this unity, called on all of the Yemenies to participate in the dialogue effectively. They appreciated the statement of the Security Council issued on February 16 ,2013 in this respect. They also acknowledged the role played by the Security Council as well as the regional and international sponsors.

The Secretary General of the GCC participated in the inaugural session of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. The GCC States appreciated the participation of all the political forces and parties in the Yemeni society.

The GCC States welcomed the outcomes of the Conference and the adoption of its National Document. The His Excellency the GCC Secretary General also participated in the closing session and the adoption of the Dialogue Document in January 2014. He expressed his hope that efforts would be exerted to implement these outcomes and translate them into a tangible reality that would lead to change and reform. He also asserted the GCC States' support to the political process in Yemen as well as all the sponsors in the 10-Nation Group and the European Union to promote national consensus and back the legitimate demands of the Yemeni people, while supporting the efforts of the Yemeni leadership represented by President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi aiming to further the process of political and economic reforms in Yemen.

The GCC program for support as well as investment and commercial exchange with Yemen will prove an important step in helping Yemen to address the great challenges of the transitional phase. The book includes a special chapter on cooperation with Yemen.

### **Support of Lebanon**

The GCC leaders have exerted a special attention to Lebanon since the first meeting in 1981. The declaration of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Supreme Council reflects the concern of the GCC States over the integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Lebanon. The GCC continues supporting Lebanon's political, economic, and security, stability.

The GCC condemned Israel's attacks in July 2006 while calling the Lebanese to strengthen and unify their position. The GCC also has welcomed the Security Council's Resolution number 1701, to cease the military operations in Lebanon, and expressed its support to Lebanon in extending its full power and sovereignty over its own land. The GCC has also called for the international support to help restore its full rights, including its compensation for human and financial loss incurred due to the Israeli aggression. The GCC has reaffirmed its support to Lebanon's call for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories to the internationally-recognized borders, including Sheb'aa farms in implementation of the Security Council Resolutions Nos. 425 and 426.

The GCC welcomed the positive conclusions of Paris Conference 3 for support and reconstruct of Lebanon.

Following the events that occurred in Lebanon in 2005, the GCC stressed that the Lebanese need to work together in order to secure unity and enhance security and stability. Moreover, they need to adhere to the legitimate institutions and recourse to reason and dialogue in order to overcome the current situation that prejudices the stability of Lebanon, its national unity and independent political decision.

The GCC appreciated the great efforts made by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, who brought together all the Lebanese parties to the "Doha Agreement" in May 2008, to find a way out of the political crisis. This was a culmination of the efforts of the Arab League and the Arab Committee chaired by His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the State of Qatar.

The GCC States have affirmed their full support to peace, stability, and national unity of Lebanon, and called upon all the Lebanese political parties to address their affairs with wisdom and patience. This is to support the democratic option within the framework of constitutional rules approved by all Lebanese people as declared in the agreements made in Taif and Doha.

### **The Situation in Somalia**

The GCC States have carefully attended to the situation in Somalia. Within the framework of their support to security, stability and unity of

Somalia, they have declared their support of the elected President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and his constitutional government. They have called all Somali parties to cooperate with each other and realize the unity and the political stability of Somalia which can be achieved through the cooperation of all the parties and the support of the international community. The GCC States have welcomed the outcomes of the conference on Somalia, held in London on February 23 ,2012, which stress the importance of supporting the unity and stability of Somalia, and the contribution to the success of the political process as well as the necessity to obtain international community's cooperation in combating terrorism, piracy, and starvation. The GCC States also stress the importance of supporting development in Somalia to elevate the economic and living conditions.

The GCC States offer generous support in various fields. They have called upon the international community to provide support required to help the Somali nationals in distress, as a result of famine and draught that hit the Horn of Africa. They have also called to accelerate efforts and aid the people there.

### **Supporting Libyan People and Their Aspirations**

The GCC States support the aspirations of the Libyan people and the means to develop a modern state that is governed by law where Libyans enjoy security, stability, and prosperity. They also support the National Transitional Council and its Government. The GCC States have supported the Security Council's Resolutions on Libya.

### **Myanmar**

The GCC condemns the brutal repression and massacres carried out against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and the ethnic cleansing and human right violations they face to force them to leave their country. The GCC expresses its solidarity with the Maynmaries and helps them. The GCC Ministerial Council has been mandated to conduct consultation with the nearby countries to find a solution to this problem.

The GCC also have called on the international community, especially the Security Council and regional and international civil organizations to bear their responsibility and find a quick solution to this problem, and provide urgent humanitarian aids.

## **Developed and Modernized Arab World**

The GCC emphasizes its concern to speed the development steps and modernization in the Arab World and the Arab League. It commends the positive results of Tunisia Summit 2004, that adopted accord, solidarity, and the development and modernization instrument. The Council stresses that development and modernization should be inspired by the countries of the region. It should address the uniqueness of each country in terms of political, economic, cultural and religious aspects, and that the gradual development would improve stability, security, and prosperity in the region.

The Manama Declaration issued by the Supreme Council at the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 2004) emphasizes that the GCC States will continue to modernize in all fields in order to cope with civilization requirements within a strategy aiming at fulfilling the aspirations of the GCC States and the people. The Declaration asserts that democracy should not be imported, but rather, it arises within the national entity.

## **Dialogue with Foreign Countries and International Groupings**

The GCC dialogue with other countries and groupings is conducted at all levels, including, inter alia, the important meetings at the level of Foreign Ministers which are held on the sideline of the meetings of the UN General Assembly in New York in September every year. This dialogue is of a great importance in terms of fostering the GCC relations with these countries and international groupings, and asserting their presence at the international arena. This timely dialogue would deepen the mutual understanding of the issues discussed at the UN and its various bodies, and develop regional and international relations.

This dialogue is a unique one to enhance the policy of the GCC States to support Arab and Islamic issues at the international forums. It stresses that the GCC States partake with the world many concepts and civilization values, in addition to many mutual interests that shall be maintained and taken into consideration.

Through political dialogue, the GCC has achieved the following:

- Defending the Arab and Islamic issues at the international level, which has a positive impact on the correction of several negative concepts and

images around the Arab world and Islam. This results in the awareness of the international community about such issues. The GCC States have reiterated their rejection of offending any religion or symbol.

- The GCC States have been able to successfully confront the unjust campaign that link Islam to terrorism. They stress that Islam is a religion that objects all forms of terrorism.
- The GCC States have stressed the importance of peace in the Middle East based on Security Council Resolutions, (242) and (338), in addition to "Land for peace" principle. The GCC States have also highlighted the Israeli racial practices in the occupied Arab lands which violate international laws as well as human rights. They have also stressed the Palestinians' right in their legitimate struggle against occupation, and that the lawful struggle for self-determination should not be confused with terrorism.
- The GCC States have also pointed out in their dialogue to the state-sponsored terrorism that Israel exercises, such as killing people and destroying their houses, targeting civilians and national leaders, as well as the destruction of the infrastructure.
- The GCC States have reiterated the importance of making the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf, free of mass-destruction weapons, and called upon all countries, including Israel, which possesses a huge destructive nuclear base in the region, to sign the relevant international agreements and conventions, and to subject their nuclear installations to international inspection.

## **Strategic Dialogues**

The GCC holds many strategic dialogues with regional countries and organizations aimed at strengthening relations and opening new horizons. A special chapter has been allocated to strategic dialogues in this issue.



# CHAPTER (2)

## JOINT MILITARY ACTION

### **Beginnings and Objectives**

Since the beginning, military cooperation has been a major concern to Their Majesties and Highnesses the Leaders of the GCC States because of their firm belief in the common objective, determination, and aspirations, in addition to the facts of geography and shared history. The Chiefs of General Staff held their first meeting in Riyadh in 1981. Under the directives of the Ministers of Defense in the GCC States, and over a period of three decades, a number of studies, regulations, and strategies regarding the joint military action have been adopted. These resolutions are based on sound methodological and scientific foundations, taking into consideration a number of aspects such as available potentials, defense requirements, source of and volume of threats, and various risks and challenges .

Given below are the most prominent achievements in the joint GCC military action.

### **I. The GCC Joint Defense Agreement**

The GCC Joint Defense Agreement was signed by Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Manama, December 2000). It has marked the start of a new phase in the joint military action. The Agreement implies a switch from the stage of military cooperation, which has lasted over a period of two decades, to the stage of joint defense. The joint military action has achieved many collective gains as the Agreement includes several pillars, principles, and priorities for joint defense.

The contracting parties confirm their adherence to the GCC Charter and their respect of the charters of the Arab League and the UN . They also confirm their intention to defend each other collectively, based on the principle that an attack on any Member State implies an attack against all of them, and that whatever threatens any state will be considered as a common threat.

The Agreement further spells out the intention of the Member States

to enhance military cooperation among them, raise their individual and collective capabilities in order to achieve a high level of coordination. It also asserts the continued development of Al-Jazeera Shield Force, and to continue joint exercises. In addition to that, the Agreement highlights the need to build a base for military industry, and encourages the private sector to invest in this field.

## **II. GCC Defense Strategy**

The approval of the Defense Strategy by the Their Majesties and Highnesses leaders of the GCC States, at the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 2009) constitutes a significant achievement and a fundamental step towards building the joint defense system. The Strategy sets out a clear vision through which, the GCC States may work to coordinate and reinforce their integration and develop their potentials to defend their sovereignty, stability, and interests. They can prevent aggression and face challenges, conflicts, and disasters through self-development and joint action. The Strategy also confirms its foundations and guidelines, and specifies the strategic goals and how to achieve them. It emphasizes the importance of carrying out a comprehensive and periodical strategic assessment of the strategic security environment, strategic threats, challenges, and risks.

## **III. Al-Jazeera Shield Joint Forces**

The existence of the GCC joint military forces is one of the key elements for establishing a joint defense system to protect GCC States, defend their independence and protect their abilities and gains. In 1982, a decision was issued to establish Al-Jazeera Shield Force, followed by other decisions concerning developing that force in line with the changes in the security environment, to become a mechanized infantry with full fire and fighting logistics. It thereafter, was developed in 2006 to become «Al-Jazeera Shield Joint Forces» which was further reinforced by marine and land efficiency based on the operational concepts. This helped in raising its fighting efficiency to execute tasks of consolidation and support to the national armed forces of the GCC States in a full manner. In 2009, «Al-Jazeera Shield Joint Forces» was reinforced with a rapid intervention force.

At the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 2013) «Al-Jazeera Shield Joint Forces» became the unified land command under

the Unified Military Command of the GCC, and its name was changed to «Command of Al-Jazeera Shield Forces». Fulfilling the requirements of workforce and armament is underway.

#### **IV. GCC Unified Military Command**

In order to strengthen the defense capabilities of the GCC States, the Supreme Council, at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) decided to establish a Unified Military Command for the GCC States, in accordance with the detailed study submitted by the Joint Defense Council.

#### **V. Defense Integration**

Exploiting the comprehensive capabilities, and working to coordinate, develop, and integrate them as collective capabilities to face various challenges, risks, and current and future threats, is among the most important strategic goals of the GCC.

The armed forces in the GCC States have taken definite steps towards achieving military integration by signing the Joint Defense Agreement at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Manama, December 2000). This has initiated the defense strategy of the GCC; and schedules a timetable to complete and activate the Joint Defense Action. It has also established the bases, foundation, and key components for that, as well as defining priorities, combining ideas, and seeking mutual benefits from possible capabilities and abilities.

AT the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 2013) the start of the defense integration have been initiated by establishing the GCC Unified Defense Command, and the GCC Academy for Strategic and Security Studies; and also by the Joint Defense Council approval of the axis of the defense integration of the GCC States in December 2013. These decisions have surely attained significant gains, and supported and reinforced the achievements during the past three decades. They have made significant progress towards building an integrated defense system in the GCC States.

#### **VI. The Gulf Academy for Strategic and Security Studies**

The Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) approved the establishment of the Gulf Academy for Strategic and Security Studies for the GCC States in Abu Dhabi, UAE. This resolution was issued

to affirm that the GCC States accord great importance to keep pace with the rapid development in the field of military and security, and that this academy would become one of the significant forts to rely upon in the field of studies, researches, development and sustainable knowledge.

## **VII. Secured Communications**

Providing secured communication among the armed forces of the GCC States has been given a special attention to raise joint capabilities of command and control systems, communications, and exchange of information. At the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 1995) various, studies related to secured communication to link the GCC armed forces systems with a network were approved. The project was officially launched in 2000. A special office was also established to follow up with all the communications, administrative, technical, and financial issues of this project, and to coordinate with the concerned authorities in the member states.

In order to ensure that GCC states keep abreast of the rapid development in the field of digital technology information and secured communication, the Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) decided to execute the complementing route project for the secured communication network. Moreover, the Joint Defense Council, in December 2013, approved the use of satellite communication as an alternate means of transmission to broadcast important data in case of interruption or termination of the service. Both projects highly support the secured communication networks to fulfill the need of ministries of external and interior affairs, as well as security authorities to interconnect with each other and benefit from these important services .

## **VIII. Connecting Operation Centers of Air Forces and Air Defense**

In 1997, Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC approved the «Cooperation Belt» project to connect the operation centers of the air forces and air defense in GCC states' armed forces. The first phase of this project started by the end of 2001. The operation systems of the Cooperation Belt are being continuously developed and updated to keep pace with the rapid development in the field of air force and air defense systems, to

keep them at the highest degree of operational and technical readiness.

## **IX. Medical Services of the GCC Armed Forces**

In light of the decision of the Supreme Council at the 9<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 1988) which stipulated the equality of citizens in treatment, and to establish the foundations and regulations of integration in the armed forces of the GCC States in the field of medical services, the Supreme Council at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Manama, Bahrain, December 2012) ratified the decision of the Joint Defense Council taken at the 11<sup>th</sup> session, to provide medical treatment to members of the armed forces and their families when assigned official tasks, or attend training courses anywhere in the GCC States .

## **X. Joint Exercises**

In order to make the armed forces more harmonized and compatible during joint operations, a number of joint exercises have been planned and executed periodically according to a fixed timetable. They are attended by land and air forces, air defense, navy, medical service units, and the joint Al-Jazeera Shield Force.

## **XI. Management and Human Resources**

A special attention has been awarded to human resources as far as development, training, and qualification. To facilitate the movement of qualified military and civil personnel in the armed forces, and to create a joint work environment, the Supreme Council of the GCC has approved in 2010, a unified system to extend the insurance coverage of the GCC soldiers. It has also agreed to benefit from experienced and qualified retired soldiers and civilians to work in government, semi-government establishments, authorities, and private sectors anywhere in the GCC States.

## **XII. Other Joint Military Action**

In order to make the joint military action more integrated and compatible, a number of steps have been taken. Joint mechanisms are unified to exchange technical support in the field of logistics, maintenance and technical assistance in the armed forces of the GCC States. In addition, in the field of environment, a number of concepts, bases, and policies are set up, and laws and regulations are unified. Moreover, national and regional capabilities

are strengthened, human resources are developed, and the environmental awareness level is raised to preserve the natural resources within the GCC armed forces.

In the field of military training and education, several military books, curricula, and courses have been unified. In addition to that, mechanisms are organized to take mutual benefits from the military training at schools, institutes, and colleges. The field of military sport has been given a great attention over the past three decades in order to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between members of the armed forces. This has been done through holding periodic championships, competitions, and tournaments.

## CHAPTER (3)

# SECURITY COOPERATION

### **Inception and Objectives of the Security Cooperation**

In order to achieve a safe and stable environment in 1981, Their Majesties and Highnesses leaders of the GCC States, instructed the Interior Ministers to hold a meeting to discuss the requirements, and examine the mechanisms of security cooperation. A working group, composed of security experts from the GCC Interior Ministries, was formed. The experts prepared a draft agenda for the first meeting which tackled the expected bases and foundations of security coordination and cooperation among the Member States.

The first meeting was held in Riyadh on February 23-24 ,1982. It marked the beginning of security coordination and cooperation. Several security committees specialized in various fields of security coordination and cooperation were subsequently formed.

The first meeting outlines the principles and objectives of security cooperation and the need for a comprehensive security agreement to be signed by the Member States. The declaration stresses the unity and interconnection of the GCC States as well as the collective security principle that states, «The GCC security is integral, and that any attack on one member state should be considered as an attack on all other states, and that the responsibility to confront the attack is a collective one». The declaration adds, «The interference in the internal affairs of any member state will be regarded as interference in that of all the Member States».

Meetings of the Interior Ministers are periodically (annually) held, and are preceded by meetings of the specialized security committees. A committee composed of the Undersecretaries of Interior prepares for the meetings of the Interior Ministers. Extra ordinary meetings are held during the intervals between meetings to discuss security matters that require coordination and consultation. The Interior Ministers have also agreed to hold a one-day consultative meeting without a specified agenda in the mid of their periodic meetings. An annual meeting of the Undersecretaries of Interior is held to discuss urgent matters prior to the consultative meeting.

## Achievements

The field of security coordination and cooperation has witnessed significant achievements in various areas which affects the life of the GCC citizens, and meets the requirements of other economic, social, and youth aspects of the joint action. The achievements attained in the field of security cooperation reflects the general objectives of cooperation in this field which have generated improvements and enhancements of security coordination and cooperation leading to the integration of GCC security bodies.

### I. The Comprehensive Security Strategy

The Comprehensive Security Strategy of the GCC States was adopted during the 2<sup>nd</sup> exceptional meeting of the Interior Ministers held in Muscat on February 15, 1987, and was approved by the GCC Supreme Council at the 8<sup>th</sup> session in Riyadh. The Strategy is a general framework for comprehensive security cooperation among Member States. It outlines the general objectives, as well as the tools of implementation thereof.

To enhance coordination and cooperation in this field and to update the common security mechanisms and precautions applicable to Member States, in addition to coping with growing crime, the Interior Ministers at their 8<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting held in Riyadh, May 2007, instructed that the GCC Comprehensive Security Strategy be reviewed by a competent committee to update it. The Interior Ministers, at their 9<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting in Doha, May 2008, approved a draft proposal for updating and developing the Comprehensive Security Strategy, which the Supreme Council ( Muscat, December 2008) approved.

In addition, a Strategic Planning Committee has been formed. This Committee holds its meeting annually to follow up the implementation of the Comprehensive Security Strategy. The Interior Ministers have also adopted a mechanism to ensure the commitment of the specialized security committees whose meetings are held within the framework of the GCC. These committees shall present schedules that monitor the achievements of each committee in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategy. Thereafter, those schedules are submitted to the Permanent Committee for Strategic Security Planning. At their 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Interior Ministers, decided to update and develop the Comprehensive Security Strategy and a team was formed for this purpose.



## **II. The Security Agreement**

The GCC Security Agreement incorporates legal articles that address the issues of security cooperation among the GCC States. The Agreement becomes binding to all parties that have ratified it. This is applicable after one month from the date of ratification by two thirds of the Member States, as mentioned in the provisions of its articles. The Interior Ministers of the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar have signed the agreement.

Based on the decision of the Interior Ministers, at their 29<sup>th</sup> meeting in Kuwait, November 2010, the Security Agreement was updated and developed. The amended Agreement was approved initially by the Interior Ministers at their 13<sup>th</sup> consultative meeting in Riyadh, May 2, 2012. It was then referred to the GCC Supreme Council in the Consultative Meeting in Riyadh, May 2012, which authorized the Ministers of Interior for signing. The Agreement was signed in Riyadh, November 2012, and was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Manama, December 2012). This Agreement has been ratified by four Member States. Ratification by other Member States is yet to be done.

## **III. Facilitating Movement and Flow of Goods**

Facilitation of the intra-GCC movement of citizens and goods has been given a special attention since the first meeting of the GCC Interior Ministers to foster the social interconnection among citizens, and support the intra-GCC trade. It is also one of the basic prerequisites for the GCC Common Market. The Member States have taken several resolutions in this vital field, such as:

- Agreement on intra-GCC movement of citizens using their ID documents. This is achieved via bilateral agreements. Citizens currently move using smart IDs through the Member States.
- The agreement on issuing the machine-readable passports of GCC citizens.
- Raising the efficiency of the staff working at the borders to ensure a high level of communication and capabilities through continued training, along with providing the necessary services at the borders to create appropriate conditions for good performance and communication.

- The majority of member states have facilitated the movement of specific categories of residents according to rules and conditions of each state.
- Urging the authorities in charge of borders in Member States to provide and develop technical and technological systems to accelerate procedures.
- Increasing vehicles' lanes at borders' arrival and departure centers to accommodate more vehicles at one time. This would facilitate the flow of entry and exit.
- Granting national truck drivers carrying goods from any GCC States the required entry visas at the borders without requiring a sponsor or local agent at the country of destination.
- Cancelling the stamping of passports of GCC citizens at departure.
- Granting entry visas for the dependents of the GCC citizens at the borders after ensuring the validity of their passports or residence permits.
- Granting entry visas for visiting purposes to foreign wives arriving with their husbands from the GCC States, provided they have valid residence permits in their country of residence.
- Specifying special lanes for GCC citizens with designated signs at all ports, to facilitate their entry and exit procedures.
- Making surprise visits of high officials at Passport and Customs Departments to different ports to improve performance and check the needed requirements to improve it.
- Putting questionnaires at all ports for the transiting passengers to write down their comments and assessment of performance, and how they are treated. Completed questionnaires shall be kept in safe boxes for analysis from time to time, to follow-up and monitor the process, especially in member states that do not have such procedure or experience lack of job opportunities.
- Giving material and moral incentives to the personnel at the ports, and particularly to those member states that do not have such incentives or face lack of job opportunities .
- Enhancing the field visits among the personnel at the ports in order to familiarize themselves with these procedures and facilities applied by each Member State. Such visits serve to exchange experience and expertise, and can be organized through a fixed schedule.
- Due to the importance of following up the implementation of these

recommendations, the immigration and passports department at each Member State shall submit periodic reports on the implementation of these recommendations as well as the performance level at relevant ports, to the undersecretary of the minister of interior. He, in turn, will provide the Secretariat General with a comprehensive report to be examined at the meetings of the preparatory committee to identify difficulties, exchange opinions, and benefit from that experience to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations.

#### **IV. Counter-Terrorism Cooperation**

Considering the urgent need to combat terrorism through regional and international efforts, the GCC States adopted in 2002 the Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism and Radicalism. They issued the Muscat Declaration on Fighting Terrorism in the same year. The GCC States also signed the GCC Counter-Terrorism Agreement in 2004. Moreover, in 2006 a Permanent Anti-Terrorism Committee was formed. The Committee would hold periodic or annual meetings as one of the specialized security committees. To enhance cooperation among member at times of wars or natural disasters, the Interior Ministers approved in 2008 the Joint Plan of Action to Confront the Cases of Emergency Migration.

#### **V. Cooperation in the Field of Civil Defense**

The Interior Ministers in their 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in November ,22-23 1993, approved two draft laws: “The Unified Civil Defense Law” and “The Unified Law for Volunteering and Volunteers”. These laws would serve as a reference. The latter deals with conditions, duties, and rights of civil volunteers during emergencies or disasters.

To enhance cooperation in this respect, an emergency plan for conducting joint simulated exercises was adopted. Moreover, permanent articles were listed on the meeting agenda of the Director Generals of Civil Defense to organize joint training courses and unify standards of safety and precaution.

#### **VI. Cooperation Against Nuclear and Radioactive Risks**

To protect against possible nuclear and radioactive crises, the GCC States have agreed on the following:

- Identifying the requirements of the GCC Common Reference Plan for facing nuclear and radioactive risks.
- Interlinking Special Operation Rooms to deal with emergency cases of radioactive and nuclear risks.
- Unifying the process of dealing with radioactive and nuclear risks.
- Training staff to counter radioactive and nuclear risks.
- Organizing preventive programs to increase awareness, and show ways of protection from radioactive and nuclear risks.
- Forming national emergency committees for radioactive and nuclear accidents.

## **VII. Cooperation to Combat Narcotics**

The Unified Standard Model Legislation to Combat Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances was approved in 1998, to help the governments in updating their legislation. It contains articles that advocate stern penalties on drug smugglers and dealers. In 2005, a decision was made to continue the application of the legislation for the next five years. In 2010, it was further extended for another five years.

In addition, a joint training plan for drug control officers was adopted, and a study on the measures to reduce the demand on narcotics and psychotropic substances was finalized.

To enhance cooperation among the Member States in the field of the narcotics control, psychotropic substances, and chemical precursors, as well as other relevant forms of organized crime, the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 2008) approved the Statute of the GCC Criminal Information Center for Narcotic Control. All Member States have ratified it, and it has entered into force on April 23, 2010. At their 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Ministers of Interior decided to subordinate the center to the GCC Secretariat General financially and administratively.

## **VIII. Cooperation in Investigations and Criminal Detection**

The GCC States have applied the following:

- Adopting the final form of the Common Reference Law on Criminals, Suspects, and Fugitives.
- Training on surveillance, investigation and control of economic crimes, and applying coordination of banking institutions and monetary agencies

with the ministry of interior in each Member State.

- Developing a security database to maintain intra-GCC electronic connection in the field of investigation and criminal detection.
- Exerting efforts to enable the use of the INTERPOL (I 7-24) system among Member States only.
- Seeking to develop and stipulate the best standards to protect the vehicles, and minimize thefts by installing a «chip» to help locate the vehicle.
- Studying the Unified Vehicle Registration project.
- A reference law on e-crime control is to be composed.

## **IX. Cooperation in the Field of Traffic**

### **1. The GCC Common Traffic Law**

At their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in Riyadh on October 31 ,1989, the GCC Interior Ministers adopted the GCC Common Traffic Law as a reference law that was scheduled to be reevaluated after three years from adoption, provided that any state that chose to implement the law as a reference shall notify the GCC Secretariat General accordingly. All the Member States have used that law to issue or amend their traffic laws. In addition, this law was adopted in its final form at the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Interior in Muscat, in October 2009. It is due to be revised every three years of application.

### **2. The GCC Traffic Week**

At their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Riyadh, November 1983, the GCC Interior Ministers approved the organizing of the “GCC Traffic Week” to have all competent Public and private departments and institutions participate.

This week aims at raising traffic awareness, and contributing to reduce the number of traffic accidents. These weeks are observed every year and the Member States submit reports on the activities of the week to the meeting of the Ministers of Interior.

### **3. Facilitating Intra-GCC Movement of Citizens**

At their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Riyadh, November 1983, the Interior Ministers adopted the following resolutions:

- a) Allow GCC citizens to use their local driving licenses in any Member State, and replace the expired license in the state of residence.
- b) Authorize the movement of private and rented vehicles from GCC car-rent companies, as long as they are used by GCC citizens.

- c) Authorize the movement of cargo trucks according to the provisions of the Economic Agreement
- d) Allow the movement of taxis used by GCC citizens from points to be agreed on, provided they are not be used to transport passengers in the state of destination.

#### **4. Car Registration Plates and Damaged Vehicles**

At their third meeting in Riyadh, October 1986, the GCC Interior Ministers adopted the following Resolutions :

- a) Facilitating the movement of private cars owned by GCC citizens with valid registration plates and traffic license.
- b) If a GCC citizen wants to drop his/her plates in any state, the relevant authority shall dispatch them together with ownership documents to the issuing state. Similarly, plates and documents of damaged cars shall be returned to the issuing state.

At their sixth meeting in Abu Dhabi, October 1987, the Interior Ministers also adopted the following Resolutions:

- a) When a car is damaged in any member state, the owner, or his representative, can sell it and file a request for an exemption from customs, provided that the plates be returned by the traffic department to the issuing state.
- b) If the original plates are lost in any state, they will be replaced by temporary ones which are valid for one week, in addition to a certificate to prove that loss. Temporary plates should be returned to the issuing state.

#### **5. Driving Licenses**

At their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Riyadh, November 1983, the Interior Ministers resolved that driving license applicants shall be fully familiar with different kinds of traffic signs and symbols.

At their sixth meeting in Abu Dhabi, October 1987, the Interior Ministers approved the unified data to be included in the driving license application forms, and that each state shall have its own right to add additional data.

At their 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Abu Dhabi, November 1993, the Interior Ministers issued a resolution on the standard legal age for obtaining a driving license to be 18 years for private, and 21 years for public driving license.

## **6. Driving Licenses for People with Special Needs**

At their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting (Riyadh, 1989), the Interior Ministers approved the issuance of driving license for those with special needs, taking into account the following:

- a) The vehicle shall be technically inspected for appropriate specifications that would enable him/her to drive it easily and safely.
- b) Fixing a special mark (internationally approved) on the rear of the vehicle to distinguish it from other vehicle.
- c) A special symbol shall be shown on his/her driving license to indicate his medical state.
- d) Special-need applicants shall pass the relevant medical exam to obtain their driving licenses.

## **7. Ownership Transfer of Vehicles**

At their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in Riyadh, October 1989, the Interior Ministers resolved as follows:

- a) Registration of any vehicle may not be cancelled in any Member State without presenting the original ownership document, a clearance certificate, and plates.
- b) The list of cancelled vehicles shall include plates' number and full description of the vehicle, typical to the ownership certificate .
- c) Standardizing the clearance/discharge certificates that are applicable in the GCC States according to the attached form.

## **8. Right-Hand-Steering Vehicles**

At their 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in Manama, October 2001, the Interior Ministers decided that modified right hand steering vehicles may not be registered and licensed in the GCC States, and that concerned bodies shall be notified accordingly.

## **9. GCC Strategy for Traffic Awareness**

At their 16<sup>th</sup> meeting in Doha, November 1997, the Interior Ministers approved the GCC Strategy for Traffic Awareness to be used as a reference strategy to develop plans and programs for traffic awareness.

## **10. Motorcycles : General Safety Requirements**

The GCC Technical Regulation number (GSO 1798:2007) called

«Motorcycles – General Safety Requirements» was approved by the GSO Board of Directors at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting ( July 5 ,2007).

## **11. Standard Specifications of Motorcycles**

The GCC standards (GSO ECE 1-41) «Motorcycles – Noise Pollution» and (GSO ECE 2-42) «Motorcycles – Methods of Testing Noise Pollution» were approved by the GSO Board of Directors on June 5 ,2007.

## **12. Certificates of Origin for Trailers and Heavy Equipment**

Chassis number, date of make, weight, country of manufacture, and brand name for trailers and equipments manufactured in the GCC States have to be included when issuing certificate of origin or exportation.

## **13. Imported Salvage Vehicles**

It is resolved not to license scrap vehicles imported for licensing.

## **X. Cooperation in the Field of Frontier Guards and Coast Guards**

The Interior Ministers have adopted several resolutions, the most important of which are the following:

- Approving the training plan developed by the General Directorate of Frontier Guards in Saudi Arabia for training frontier and coast guards.
- Designing unified forms to exchange information between the guards' operating rooms.
- Settling the unified rules and procedures, prepared by the GCC Secretariat General, for addressing infringement of territorial waters, by national fishing and picnic boats.
- Applying unified regulations to inspect and surveil wooden vessels.
- Exploiting maritime Search and Rescue Plan as a procedure that ensures coordination and cooperation support and assistance in cases of maritime search and rescue.
- A study on sneaking and how to address that issue, was prepared by the Ministry of Interior in the State of Kuwait.
- Joint bilateral marine exercises were conducted between Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait, between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Qatar and between the UAE and the Sultanate of Oman. Work is underway to implement tripartite joint naval exercises prior to a joint



marine exercise that includes all the GCC countries.

- An awareness week of frontier guard and coast guard was approved.

## **XI. Cooperation in the field of Penal and Corrective Institutions**

The Interior Ministers have adopted several resolutions, the most important of which are the following:

- Adoption of the Uniform Model Law for Penal and Corrective Institutions as a reference law.
- The legislative difficulties related to rehabilitation.
- Imprisonment alternatives.
- After-release care of prisoners.
- Adoption of the “Agreement on Intra-GCC Transfer of Convicts” for humanitarian purposes.
- Adoption of Common Rules of Rehabilitation to be implemented as reference rules for three years
- Appointing an annual week for the prisoner. The title for 2012 was «My family is in your hands».

## **XII. Security Education and Technical Training**

In order to develop plans and programs and to enhance coordination and security cooperation, and to prepare and train security officers, Ministers of Interior, have adopted certain resolutions in this regard. Those resolutions are derived from the meetings of the director generals of security and police colleges, academies, and institutions.

Educational and military guides are approved to serve as reference for education and training institutions in member states. In addition, collective visits of officers and students are organized every year. The first collective field visit of officers and students was to King Fahd Security College. The officials of the security libraries are also allowed to exchange information in order to benefit and enrich the security field.

At their 29<sup>th</sup> meeting in Kuwait, November 2010, the Ministers of Interior decided that direct coordination should be made among security education and training institutions on the topic of transmitting scientific conferences and meetings through CCTV technology. They also decided that security education institutions at the ministries of interior shall contact the unified Arabic Indexing Authority in Saudi Arabia to benefit from that and

contribute to it. In addition, they decided to benefit from the experience of the Royal Police Academy in Bahrain in teaching the curriculum of human trafficking.

### **XIII. The GCC Award of Security Research**

In order to pursue the GCC Charter that supports scientific research, and in appreciation of the efforts of researchers and specialists in security areas, particularly GCC citizens, the Ministers of Interior at the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Doha, 1997, approved the law of the GCC Award of Security Research. The Award was launched in 2000. A sum of sixty thousand Saudi Riyals was primarily allocated to the Award. However, due to the increasing participants from the member states, the GCC Ministers of Interior raised the amount of the Award to two hundred thousand Saudi Riyals. The implementing regulations of the award have been developed in line with the latest scientific and technical development.

The Ministers of Interior at the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Doha, November 6, 2008, also approved the new statute rules of the Award and the respective rules of procedure, and increased the Award amount to 400,000 Saudi Riyals. At the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Interior in Muscat, October 27, 2009, the award titled: «Traffic Accidents: Dimensions, Results, Solutions» was jointly awarded to two winners.

At the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Interior, held on November 2, 2010, the draft for the Unified Regulating Law for Security Research Chairs at GCC universities, and the Amended Award Regulation were adopted.

The GCC security research award for the year 2011, titled: «Population composition and its effect on security in the GCC States» was jointly awarded to two research papers.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Interior in November 2012, the title of the award was amended to become «Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz Award for Security research in the GCC States», in recognition of his Royal Highness Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz for what he offered in this field. In 2013, the Award topic was «Awareness programs in the light of security challenges for the GCC youths».

#### **XIV. Security Media**

Given that there are several technical committees concerned with security awareness, the Ministers of Interior at the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Doha, November 6 ,2008, decided to set up a general committee, to be known as «Security Media Committee», to which awareness and information matters in all security fields shall be referred.

#### **XV. Industrial Security and Protection of Installations**

Due to the importance of protecting national assets, especially oil sites, the Ministers of Interior have set up a security committee known as the «Committee for Industrial Security and Protection of Installations» which holds annual meetings.

#### **XVI. Police Sport**

The Ministers of Interior have set up a security committee, concerned with police sport federations in the GCC States, which holds annual meetings.

#### **XVII. Risk Management**

In view of the keen interest of the Ministers of Interior to deal with natural accidents and disasters, they have decided at their 14<sup>th</sup> consultative meeting, held on April 23 ,2013, in Bahrain, to form a Risk Management Committee.

# Chapter (4)

## Media Cooperation

### I. Preliminary Phases of Media Cooperation

Media cooperation among the GCC States began prior to the founding of the GCC through the periodic meetings of the GCC Ministers of Information, i.e. Ministers of Information of the current GCC States, and Iraq. Such meetings led to the establishment of eight joint media institutions: The Joint TV/Radio Program Production Organization, the Gulf TV, The GCC News Agency, Popular Heritage Center, Radio and TV Training Coordination Center, Media Documentation Center, Coordination and Planning Committee for Petroleum Information, International Media Relations Committee, of which the latter two committees were cancelled by resolution of the GCC Ministers of Information in their 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in April 1988. The Training Coordinating Center, which the GCC Ministers of Information did not approve its bylaw, was suspended.

In 1990, the number of joint media institutions was abridged to five: The Joint TV/Radio Program Production Organization, the Gulf TV, The GCC News Agency, Popular Heritage Center and the Media Documentation Center. After the aggression against the State of Kuwait in 1990, the membership of Iraq in the GCC institutions was discontinued. The GCC States withdrew from the Documentation Center, the Gulf News Agency changed into Bahrain News Agency and the two remaining institutions, i.e. the Joint TV/Radio Program Production Organization and the Gulf TV, have been directly reporting to the GCC. According to a Supreme Council resolution in the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, 2008) the Republic of Yemen joined the Gulf TV and Radio as well as the joint program production establishment based on the resolution of the Supreme Council taken at the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting (Abu Dhabi, December 2010).

### II. Objectives

- Setting up similar systems in media fields that take into account the basic objectives of the GCC in the fields of radio broadcasting, TV, press, news agencies, publications and foreign media.

- Fostering coordination and interconnection among the media agencies to enable them to achieve their objectives and to carry out responsibilities to the GCC nationals and States, and to exploit their efforts and production for the common good.
- Strengthening the belief in the GCC's role among citizens through providing them with fast and accurate information about the joint action process.
- Achieving nationalization in the field of media, either through providing equal employment opportunities for the GCC citizens or the commercial media activity, which is understood to be an economic activity.

### **III. Achievements**

The media cooperation among the GCC States have achieved a number of goals, of which the most prominent achievements are the following:

#### **(1) Media Code of Honor**

The Supreme Council at the 7<sup>th</sup> Session (Abu Dhabi, 1986), adopted the Media Code of Honor that regulates relationship among media in the GCC States and foreign media. The code was further updated at the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Abu Dhabi, 1998).

#### **(2) Media Strategy**

The Supreme Council, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) adopted the Media Strategy. Among the most important objectives of the Strategy are the following:

- Enhancing cooperation and opportunities of unity among the GCC States.
- Consolidating the Gulf, Arab and Islamic identity of the GCC States.
- Deepening the GCC citizenship.
- Raising general social awareness among the citizens and residents.
- Supporting the GCC process.
- Supporting cooperation and integration among the official and non-official establishments in the GCC States.

The Secretariat General, by presenting the Media Strategy to all the media committees, has worked to transform the contents of the Strategy into programs and projects. An Executive Committee for the Media Strategy has been formed which proposes mechanisms to execute the Strategy through

practical programs. The Committee has held three meetings and submitted its recommendations to the specialized media committees to execute them.

### **(3) Cooperation in the Field of External Media**

- The Supreme Council at the 7<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, November 1986) adopted the External Media Controls Document that governs the relationship with external media. This Document has been updated at the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Abu Dhabi, December 1998).
- Preparation and distribution of monthly reports in English, French, Spanish and German addressed to the leaders of public opinion and decision-makers in the field of politics, economy, education and information in the UK, France, Spain and Germany.
- Printing and distributing books on GCC States and their key issues in various languages including Russian, Indonesian and Urdu.
- Organizing a Media Week at Tunisia in 1998.
- Organizing “GCC Days” in various countries including France 2004, Belgium 2005, Germany 2006, Holland 2007, Spain 2008, Italy 2009, Britain 2010, South Korea 2011, and Sweden 2013.
- Holding training courses and workshops for those working in external media. The first workshop was held in Abu Dhabi in June 2009.
- The Secretariat General holds a media exhibition during the meetings of the Supreme Council , in which it displays the most prominent publications and photographs from the GCC States and the Secretariat General.
- Coordination for visits of a number of European journalists to the GCC States.

### **(4) Television Cooperation**

- Production of awareness messages and films recorded in cooperation with the joint program production establishment.
- Periodical Exchange of television programs between televisions of the Member States.
- Introducing the GCC Common Market through producing short television messages.
- Holding a debate session on the benefits of the Media Strategy, in May 2012, in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The televisions of the GCC States continue the production of programs

on media topics that shield the GCC community from all that threatens its coherence, security and stability.

- The televisions of the GCC States prepare programs on the occasions of national days and other official occasions of the Member States.
- Benefiting from the training courses held by the televisions of the GCC States in which the staff at the GCC States televisions are given opportunity to participate in them, as well as holding of joint and specialized training courses through gulf radio and television devices.
- Production of direct public dialogue programs dealing with deepening GCC citizenship.
- Televisions of the GCC States contribute to the activation of the process of joint media action. They also deal with the GCC process through coverage of the meetings, events and activities held in the headquarters of the Secretariat General.
- The GCC national televisions participate in producing programs and symposia that shed light on the GCC process and its achievements, to commemorate the inception of the GCC.
- Production of documentary and cultural programs and films on the process of the GCC.
- Completion of the serial of «Arabian Gulf: Reservoir of World Energy» in both Arabic and English languages.
- Coordinating positions among GCC States within the Arab framework, through participation in the Permanent Committee for Arab Media and meetings of the Ministers of Information of the Arab League.
- Production of films as part of the series of «The Gulf: a civilization and edifice» including tourism facilities in the GCC States, and a film on the efforts of the GCC States in combating human trafficking.
- Production of a social drama serial comprising thirty episodes that focus on the loyalty and belonging and consolidation of the GCC citizenship and dissemination of tolerance and rejection of extremism.
- Production of television programs to introduce the petroleum and gas sector.

#### **(5) Radio Cooperation**

- Continued transmission of the Voice of the GCC during sessions of the Supreme Council. All state radio stations in the GCC establish

- transmission linkage with the voice during its transmission.
- Exchange of radio programs and materials between state radios in the GCC States.
  - Exchange of visits between the officials, anchors, producers and broadcasters.
  - Production of the program entitled «Tourism in the Gulf» comprising thirty episodes.
  - Production of a social drama serial comprising thirty episodes that focuses on the loyalty, belonging and consolidation of the GCC citizenship and dissemination of the spirit tolerance and rejection of extremism.
  - Production of radio programs to introduce the petroleum and gas sector.
  - GCC radios have produced programs containing media topics related to the GCC, and all that threatens its coherence, security and stability.
  - Taking interest to highlight the national days and official occasions of the GCC States and preparing programs for these occasions and referring to it in the radio programs.
  - Studying ways of benefiting from the private radio stations in activation of the media work strategy.
  - Participation in specialized training courses organized by Gulf Radio and Television.
  - Production of programs that deepen GCC citizenship.
  - GCC States radios contribute to production of programs and symposia, highlighting the GCC process.
  - Continued production of episodes of radio programs « Gulf an Energy Reservoir» through joint programs production establishment.
  - Production and transmission of the program «Our Gulf is one» which is aired each Thursday live by GCC radios for a period of one and half an hour. Link is established among radios of the GCC States during the transmission of the program.
  - A seminar was held for the radio stations in the GCC States on the «Activation of the joint work decisions and GCC citizenship, on 26-27<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
  - Supporting joint program production in radio / TV fields.
  - Technical and technological cooperation between the official and unofficial media bodies in the GCC States.
  - The official transmission of the radio «This is the Arabian Gulf» has



started from the Kingdom of Bahrain from January 2014.

- Coordinating of positions among GCC radio stations within the Arab framework.

## **(6) Press Cooperation**

Press cooperation is one of the important aspects of the media cooperation. The press agencies in the GCC States have their own existing programs in the field of press cooperation through the annual meeting of the editors-in-chief and directors of the press agencies. Moreover, a GCC Press Union has been recently established, which holds its regular meetings outside the framework of the GCC Secretariat General.

## **(7) Cooperation in the Field of News Agencies**

- Preparation and transmission of news reports periodically on the GCC and its member states under the title «Cooperation File» concerned with all the development and social aspects of the GCC States. After the end of the «Cooperation File», the agencies continued transmission of weekly reports highlighting the achievements of the GCC, such as GCC Common Market and the Custom Union.
- Continued exchange of visits among officials, editors and technician in the GCC news agencies.
- A number of training courses have been organized by Qatar News Agency and Kuwait News Agency for the employees of the news agencies of the GCC States and the Secretariat General.
- Benefiting from the new media, by creating a unified account of news agencies of the GCC States on Twitter as well as on YouTube.
- Intensification of news materials and media reports, explaining GCC positions and policies.
- Continuity of the obligation of the GCC news agencies to receive and transmit the news related to the Member States from their official sources.
- Rapid exchange of images among the GCC States news agencies during joint occasions, meetings and events held in the Member States.
- Contribution of the GCC news agencies to the GCC joint action through coverage of meetings, events and activities, and continued transmission of the news reports about the GCC process.

- Continued reinforcement of technical and technological cooperation among the GCC news agencies.
- Organizing exhibition of «photographs» synchronous with sessions of the Supreme Council in the summit hosting country.

## **(8) Cooperation in the field of Electronic Media**

The cooperation in the field of electronic media is among the most modern fields of cooperation between the GCC States. Three meetings have been held, which most prominent results are as under:

- Holding a workshop in the field of electronic media.
- Recommending the holding of an electronic media week annually.

## **(9) The GCC Common Market**

- A media campaign to introduce the GCC Common Market have been launched. Implementation of the campaign entails three tracks, including media of the Member States, media of the Secretariat General, and economic institutions of the Member States.
- Preparation and execution of the first debate session on the GCC Common Market was held on 18 and 19 March 2008. The session aimed to introduce the GCC Common Market and GCC citizenship gains.
- The government and private media bodies of the GCC States are working to execute resolution of the Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session ( Kuwait, December 2013) pertaining to the introduction of the joint action resolutions, especially the decisions related to the GCC citizenship.
- A media awareness plan through traditional and modern media have been launched, to execute the resolution of the Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) pertaining to the youth and enhancing their skills.

## **(10) Activation of the Joint Media Action**

A study titled «Activation of the media action of the GCC, was prepared upon the approval of the Ministerial Council at the 121<sup>st</sup> session (Riyadh, November 2011).

## **SECTION TWO**

### **ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

**Joint Economic Action Process**

**Financial and Economic Process**

**Monetary Union and Single Currency**

**Combating Injurious Practices in**

**International Trade**

**Common Market**

**Energy, Electricity, Water**

**Industry, Patents**

**Transportation and Communications**

**Telecommunications**

**Agriculture**

**Planning**

**Statistics and Development**



# Chapter (1)

## Joint Economic Action Process

### Process and Objectives

The GCC Charter, the Economic Agreement, 2001, and the resolutions of the Supreme Council represent the basic reference of the economic joint action. The integration and coherence among the GCC States in the economic field represent one of the basic objectives set forth in the GCC Charter. Article (4) of the Charter identifies the main objectives of the GCC as follows:

1. To effect coordination, integration and inter-connection among the Member States in all areas with a view to reaching their unity.
2. To deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing among their peoples in the various areas.
3. To formulate similar regulations in the various fields, including the following:
  - a. Economic and financial affairs.
  - b. Commerce, customs and communications.
  - c. Education and culture.
  - d. Social and health affairs.
  - e. Information and tourism.
  - f. Legislative and administrative affairs.
4. To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources, and to establish research centers and joint ventures, and to encourage cooperation by the private sector for the good of their peoples.

### The Unified Economic Agreement (1981)

To achieve the objectives of the joint economic action in the economic area, the Supreme Council adopted the Unified Economic Agreement at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session (Riyadh, November 1981). The Agreement draws the plan for the joint economic action and the phases of the economic integration and cooperation among the GCC States. The Agreement constituted the core of the integration programs that was developed in detail over the first twenty years following the establishment of the GCC, which included, in particular:

1. Achieving the GCC economic citizenship.
2. Achieving economic integration among Member States in gradual steps, beginning with the establishment of the Free Trade Area, the Customs Union, the Common Market and ending with the establishment of the Monetary and Economic Union and the necessary common institutions.
3. Convergence and unification of laws, regulations, policies and strategies in the economic, financial and trade areas.
4. Interconnecting the infrastructures in Member States, particularly in areas of communications, electricity and gas and promoting the establishment of joint ventures.

### **The Economic Agreement (2001)**

Coping with the developments of the joint action over the first two decades since the establishment of the GCC and with the international developments and challenges in the economic field, the Supreme Council adopted the Economic Agreement at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session (Muscat, December 2001). The new Agreement has shifted the Joint Action approach from the stage of coordination to the stage of integration according to specific mechanisms and schemes. The Agreement has become more comprehensive in addressing the following topics:

1. The GCC Customs Union.
2. The international economic relations between the GCC and other countries, economic groupings, international and regional organizations, as well as the provision of international and regional aid.
3. The GCC Common Market which specifies the areas of the economic citizenship.
4. The Monetary and Economic Union.
5. Improving the investment climate in Member States.
6. The developmental integration across Member States, including the industrial development, development of oil and gas and the natural resources, agricultural development, environment preservation and joint projects.
7. Development of human resources, including education, eradication of illiteracy, compulsion of basic education, activation of the population strategy, nationalizing and training of labor force and increasing its contribution to the labor market.

8. Scientific and technical research, development of scientific, technological and informatics database and protection of intellectual property rights.
9. Integration in the infrastructure areas, including transportation, telecommunications and e-commerce.

In addition, the Agreement contains mechanisms for implementation, follow-ups and dispute settlement. The Agreement provides for the formation of a judicial commission to adjudicate disputes arising from the implementation of the Agreement and the resolutions for its implementation.

## **Major Achievements**

1. Trade promotion that falls in two stages:
  - a) Establishing a Free Trade Area among Member States as of March 1983: This led to the free movement of national goods across Member States without customs duties and according such goods national treatment according to certain controls.
  - b) Establishing the GCC Customs Union as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2003: The Customs Union provides for a common external tariff and the free movement of goods across member States without tariff or non-tariff barriers.
2. Having completed the main prerequisites, the GCC Common Market was declared in December 2007 to be launched as of January 2008.
3. Establishment of GCC Monetary Council, and entry of the Monetary Union Agreement and the Statute of the Monetary Council into force on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) blessed the ratification by the Member States parties to the Monetary Union Agreement, signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States that are parties to the Monetary Union. i.e. Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait, in June, 2009. The Monetary Council was established in March 2010.
4. Concluding the GCC Economic Agreement (2001) that has been ratified by all Member States.
5. Adopting general strategies and policies that would serve as the basis of national policies in Member States, such as the instruments issued by the Supreme Council in the planning, population, industry, oil and agriculture areas.

6. Unification of laws, regulations and procedures in the economic fields. The Supreme Council has adopted some 40 standard laws, some of which are binding while most of the other laws are for mere reference.
7. Establishing GCC joint institutions with a view to stressing the technical and economic cooperation among Member States and cutting costs. Some of these institutions are the following:
  - Gulf Investment Organization
  - GCC Standardization Organization
  - Commercial Arbitration Center
  - Patents Office
  - Technical Office for Telecommunications
  - The GCC ATM Network
  - The Electric Interconnection Authority.
  - Office of the Technical Secretariat for Anti-Dumping
  - Office of the Secretariat of Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the Inspection and Monitoring of the Vessels at the GCC ports.
  - Statistical Center of the GCC States.
8. Coordination of positions in the international economic arena and the collective negotiation and economic dialogue with other countries and economic groupings, such as the EU, USA, Japan and China
9. Cooperation and coordination in the field of the basic structures such as roads, communications and telecommunications and in the field of joint projects, and the electric interconnection project
10. Cooperation at the various levels and in all economic fields, such as the banking technology, monetary and fiscal matters, statistical surveys, industry and business conferences, forums and studies in the field of oil, gas, petrochemicals and industry.



## Chapter (2)

# Financial and Economic Cooperation

The Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, entrusted with the task of following up the execution of the Economic Agreement, has exerted constant effort to achieve the aspirations and ambitions of Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States and their people and to transform them into a tangible reality. In this context, a number of decisions have been adopted by the Supreme Council in all fields: economic, industrial, trade, transportation, electricity, as well as in the fields of human development and planning, in the following manner:

### **I. GCC Customs Union**

The Supreme Council approved the establishment of a GCC Customs Union as of January 2003. The Customs Union Council has started its work on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012, with the aim of completion of requirements of the establishment of the Customs Union, that includes mechanism of distribution of customs proceeds, customs protection and dealing with American goods imported through the Kingdom of Bahrain and Sultanate of Oman, protection of the local agent, unification of customs procedures and products of national factories in the free zones. The tasks of the Customs Union Council are deemed a timetable for the application of the final status of the Customs Union with its full requirements on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

### **II. Economic Citizenship**

Since the beginning, the GCC States have recognized the importance of the GCC economic citizenship that emanates from the principle of full equality among the citizens of the GCC States without any discrimination in all the economic fields. Rather, they have made it the basic pillar and spinal cord of any joint economic action. The Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee has played an effective and influential role with regards to the economic decisions issued by the Supreme Council in this regard. During the previous period, a number of decisions have been adopted which contribute in the creation and solidifying GCC economic citizenship. Following are some of them by way of example:

1. Allowing GCC States citizens to own real estate in any Member States for various purposes of residence and investment in December 2001: However permitting ownership of real estate in the Member States began with the Unified Economic Agreement in 1981, albeit with some restrictions at that time. The latest regulations of the ownership of the real estate were issued at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Doha, December 2002) doing away with of the majority of those restrictions.
2. Suspending application of restrictions on engaging of GCC States' citizens in the economic activities and professions in the Member States: The Supreme Council at the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007) decided to suspend application of these restrictions, and instead of that it provided for the application of full equality in treatment of the citizens of the GCC States in the practice of professions, crafts and economic, investment and service activities.
3. Extending the insurance protection for the citizens of the GCC States: The Supreme Council, at the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 2004) adopted the mechanism proposed by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee to extend the insurance protection cover for GCC citizens working in other GCC States, in both public and private sectors.
4. Approval of the rules for practicing commercial activity in both wholesale and retail trade: The Supreme Council, at the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007) approved amendment of the rules of practicing commercial activity in both wholesale and retail trade, in line with the requirements of the GCC common market.
5. Allowing GCC companies to open branches in any GCC Member States.

### **III. Cooperation in Banking**

In light of the data and economic achievements realized by the GCC States, the importance of unification of practices of monitoring and supervision over banking work in the Member States has emerged. Work has started to achieve this goal and a specialist consultative authority has been assigned to prepare general framework of the model of joint work, to harmonize and unify the banking system in the GCC States. The preparation of the document «Guiding Criteria for Unified Banking Control of the GCC States» has been completed by the committee for monitoring and supervision

over banking system of the GCC States. The Committee of Governors of the Monetary Agencies and Central banks of the GCC States has approved this document in March 2012, to apply it as a guiding reference for a period of two years in preparation of its review and binding implementation.

The GCC States have also recognized the importance of interconnection of the payment systems to accelerate the movement of trade and investments. A consultative authority has been assigned the task of the preparation of a strategic study to interconnect payment systems in the GCC States. The Technical Committee for Payment Systems of the GCC States is working under supervision of the Committee for Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks of the GCC States, to follow up the execution of the study. Also, the Gulf Network for Interconnection of Automatic Payment Networks of the GCC has been enhanced and developed, and joint criteria for smart card in the Member States have also been agreed upon, in addition to studying the modern methods of contact for the selection of the best option for interconnecting the Gulf Network of Automatic Payment.

In addition, the Committee for Managers of the Banking Institutes is cooperating in the field of training.

#### **IV. Harmonization and Unification of Financial and Economic Policies:**

1. Constant work to harmonize and unify the financial and economic systems in the GCC States.
2. Approval of the criteria of the economic performance which its harmonization is key to success of the Monetary Union. It includes inflation rates, interest rates, extent of sufficiency of reserves of the monetary authority, percentage of annual deficit in government finance to the local gross domestic product and debt – GDP ratio.
3. Approval of the guiding criteria for unified banking controls of the GCC States, by the Committee for the Governors of Monetary agencies and central banks of the GCC (March 2012) and applying them as a guiding reference for a period of two years, in preparation of its review and binding implementation .
4. Building joint GCC institutions with the aim of technical and economic cooperation among the Member States and reducing cost. Among these

institutions are the following:

- GCC Standardization Organization.
  - Commercial Arbitration Center.
  - Gulf Network for Interconnecting Automatic Payment Networks of the GCC.
  - The GCC Interconnection Authority .
5. Coordination of positions in the international economic arena and collective negotiation and economic dialogue with countries and economic groups such as European Union, United States, Japan and China.
  6. Endeavoring to unify laws, regulations and procedures in the economic fields. The Supreme Council has approved about (40) unified laws, some of which are obligatory while some are guiding reference.
  7. Unification of the GCC States policies of trade exchange with external world.

## **V. Integration of Financial Markets of the GCC States**

In light of the achievements made by the GCC States in all fields, especially in the economic field, including the establishment of Free Trade Area in 1983, the Customs Union in January 2003, the GCC Common Market as of January 2008, and entry of the Monetary Union Agreement into force on 27th February 2010, there emerged the importance of integrating GCC States' markets, which was stipulated in the Economic Agreement of the GCC States. This was emphasized by the Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) «To assign the concerned ministerial committees, each within its jurisdiction, to set up the necessary mechanisms to activate article (5) of the Economic Agreement, pertaining to enhancement of the investment environment among the GCC States, and article (12) related to encourage establishment of joint ventures and increasing intra GCC investments that contribute to the achievement of integration among the GCC States in all fields, and propose solutions suitable to overcome the obstacles that come in their way».

In pursuit of the accomplishment of integration of financial markets in line with requirements of the Common Market, the Ministerial Council decided, in May 2010, to form a Permanent Ministerial Committee comprising the chairmen of board of directors of the authorities regulating the financial markets of the GCC States, that would submit its recommendations to the

Ministerial Council. Among its tasks and jurisdictions are the following:

- Unification of policies and regulations related to financial markets in pursuit of their integration, in implementation of the clause (3) of the Article (5) of the Economic Agreement among the GCC States and the resolutions issued or that will issue in this regard.
- Achievement of the requirements of the GCC Common Market, which stipulates that «the natural and juridical GCC citizens will be treated in any of the Member States in same manner as their own citizen without any discrimination or distinction in all the economic fields, including stock trading and formation of companies.

In light of tasks and jurisdictions assigned to it, the Ministerial Committee formed a high level committee comprising chiefs of the financial market authorities, or those equivalent to them, to propose necessary mechanisms to execute those tasks, and propose action plan of the Ministerial Committee within a time table to achieve integration among the financial markets of the GCC States. The Committee has started to execute its tasks. It has decided in the first meeting, June 2010, to form six work teams, as under :

- (1) Working group of listing, disclosure and governance.
- (2) Working Group of initial public offering and subscription in capital markets.
- (3) Working Group of linking and exchanges.
- (4) Working Group of financial instruments.
- (5) Working Group of supervision and monitoring of financial markets.
- (6) Working Group of financial markets establishments.

These teams shall study the topics related to tasks and jurisdictions of the Ministerial Committee and shall raise its recommendations to the Committee for Chiefs of Financial Markets Authorities, or those who are equivalent to them, in preparation of their adoption and recommendation concerning them to the Ministerial Committee of the Chiefs of Boards of Directors of the Authorities Regulating the Financial Markets.

The Ministerial Committee for Financial Markets, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, in Dubai, 16 June 2011, approved unified rules for the listing of the securities i.e. , shares, title deeds and bonds, investment fund units, in the financial markets of the GCC States. At the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh , December 2011)

the Supreme Council in approval of these rules, decided the following:

**(a) Approval of the Unified Rules for Listing of Shares in the financial markets of the GCC States :**

- Unified rules for listing of shares in financial markets of the GCC States.
- Unified rules for listing of bonds and title deeds in financial market of the GCC States.
- Unified rules for listing of investment funds units in financial markets in the GCC States.

**(b) Applying them as a guiding reference for a period of two years in preparation of their review and their binding implementation**

In 2012, the Ministerial Committee of the Chairpersons of the Board of Directors of the Authorities Organizing the Financial Markets of the GCC States reached a number of unified rules and principles related to the integration of financial markets of the GCC States, which were approved by the Supreme Council at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Bahrain, December 2012), as follows:

1. Approval of the Unified Rules for Stock Offering in the Financial Markets of the GCC States and enforcing them as guiding reference for a period of two years in preparation of their review and subsequent obligatory enforcement.
2. Approval of unified disclosure rules of the securities listed in the financial markets of the GCC States, and enforcing them as guiding reference for a period of two years in preparation of their review and subsequent obligatory enforcement .
3. Approval of the unified principles of corporate governance listed in the financial markets of the GCC States, and enforcing them as guiding reference for a period of two years in preparation of their review and subsequent obligatory enforcement .

In 2013, the Ministerial Committee of the Chairpersons of the Board of Directors of the Authorities Organizing Financial Markets of the GCC States reached a number of unified rules and principles related to the integration of financial markets of the GCC States, which were approved by the Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) as a guiding reference for a period of two years, in preparation of their review and subsequent obligatory enforcement :

1. Draft unified rules of issuance and release of investment funds units in the financial markets of the GCC States.
2. Draft unified rules of supervision and monitoring the exchange of shares in the financial markets of the GCC States.
3. Draft unified rules of issuance and release of bonds and deeds in the financial markets of the GCC States.

In addition, the Supreme Council has also approved the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee of the Chairpersons of the Board of Directors of the Authorities Organizing the Financial Markets of the GCC States pertaining to the continuity of the enforcement of the Unified Rules of Listing Securities, Shares, Bonds and Deeds in the GCC States as a guiding reference for an additional period of one year in preparation of their review and their subsequent binding implementation . It also approved continuation of enforcement of the Unified Rules of listing of investment fund units in the financial markets as a guiding reference for an additional period of two years, in preparation of their review and their subsequent binding implementation .

**(c) Participation in the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) :**

The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) was formed under the resolution of Paris Summit of the G7 countries, held in July 1989, with the aim of setting up foundations and rules necessary to combat money laundering. Besides the seven countries, this summit was attended by other industrial countries that were not members of the group. FATF prepared in April 1990 a report that included forty recommendations concerning methods, systems and practical means for combating money laundering and they were approved by the GCC States and their implementation has started.

At Houston Summit of the G7, held in July 1990, the member states of FATF decided to expand their membership to include all the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the countries that represent international financial centers, and regional organizations that include in their membership countries that represent effective financial centers, one of them being the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf. The expansion of membership of FATF aimed to

increase acceptance of the forty recommendations at the international level and the commitment to execute its provisions by a large number of countries.

Accordingly, a representative from the Secretariat General of the GCC participated in FATF's meeting held in Paris, during the period from 19-17 December 1990. At the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, November 1991, the Committee approved that the Secretariat General represents the GCC in all the meetings of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering. Since then, the GCC Secretariat General has taken keen interest in participation in the meetings of the FATF to follow up the common interest of the GCC States and to prepare reports on the issues discussed within the framework of FATF and its working groups.

Since 2002, FATF has held several meetings and its tasks have been expanded. As a result of the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the member countries of FATF agreed to expand its tasks to include combating terror funding. FATF issued nine recommendations pertaining to the subject and added them to the previously recommended forty recommendations. FATF added to its tasks in the last two years the issues of funding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and combating corruption.

In February 2012, FATF approved the amended recommendations reviewed in the meetings of the working groups during the previous two and half years. All the nine recommendations related to combating terror funding were incorporated in the forty recommendations. New recommendations related to combating funding of spread of weapons of mass destruction were also added and the principle of risk assessment was approved. Some previous recommendations were amended and rephrased to make them respond to the new risks and the recommendations were incorporated in each other.

The basic task of the FATF is to carry out the process of joint assessment of all the Member and non-Member states with the aim of ascertaining their compliance with the international criteria and recommendations issued by it. The GCC States underwent joint assessment processes in the second round of joint assessment processes carried out by the FATF during the period from 2004-2001.

In 2004, a regional committee was formed, under the name of Middle



East & North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF). It is one of eight regional committees at the international level that play similar role in supporting FATF with regards to the commitment of the countries of the region to the recommendations of the FATF and international criteria for combating money laundering and terror funding. The Kingdom of Bahrain hosts the headquarters of the secretariat of this group, and the six GCC States are founding members. The GCC Secretariat General, which is an observer in MENAFATF, has played a key role in establishing the group.

In the third round of the joint assessment processes, the GCC States have been assessed as a joint process between the FATF and MENAFATF.

From other aspect, four of the GCC States, United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar are members of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. It is the international group formed from these units concerned with receiving, analyzing and distributing notifications related to issues of money laundering and terror funding. It is hoped that the Sultanate of Oman and State of Kuwait will also join the Egmont Group in the near future. The GCC Secretariat General has participated in the annual meeting of the Egmont Group since the 17th general meeting held in the State of Qatar, in 2009.

Within the framework of preparation for the meetings of the FATF and with the aim of achieving the goals desired from the participation of the GCC, the Secretariat General shall provide the Member States through the national committees for combating money laundering and terror funding all the documents related to the meeting. It shall coordinate before and during the meetings to present the view point of the GCC on the issues put forward and to protect their interests. It is worth mentioning that the FATF holds three general meetings annually, and before each general meeting there are meetings of various work teams, in addition to holding some exceptional meetings if required.

## Chapter (3)

# The Monetary Union and the Unified Currency

### I. Objectives

The idea of having a unified currency began with establishing the GCC. The Unified Economic Agreement, 1981, in Article 22, referred to that issue. Two decades later, the Economic Agreement, 2001, highlighted the importance of completing the GCC economic integration programs. Article 4 of Chapter 3 of the Agreement stated: “The Member States shall undertake, according to a specified timetable, to achieve the requirements of this union. These include the achievement of a high level of harmonization among the Member States in all economic policies, especially fiscal and monetary policies, banking legislations, setting criteria to approximate rates of economic performance as related to fiscal and monetary stability; such as rates of budgetary deficit, indebtedness and prices levels”.

The Monetary Union is the final phase in the economic integration process and upon its completion, the Member States shall become an economic bloc. Given the strategic nature of the project, it is expected to be profitable in the short, medium, and long term. Among the short-term benefits is voiding transfer fees of exchange rates which will reduce the costs of commercial exchange among the Member States. Moreover, it will reduce the cost of trading, raise the level of intra-regional trade, and contribute to the level of competency. This is because the business sector in all the Member States will deal with the GCC States’ markets as one, through accessing these markets or using the unified currency. Among the strategic benefits are that the Monetary Union will interconnect the GCC States with a single monetary policy and a single exchange rate . This will reduce the likelihood of economic divergence of GCC states as a result of inconsistency of their economic policies in the future. In addition, the Monetary Union has possible direct effects on the rates of economic growth, employment, investments and competition to attract foreign investments.

#### (a) Political Gains of Monetary Union

The unified currency will act as an economic identity and a manifest of the values of the citizens. It is a symbol of GCC citizenship. It will increase

the international presence and effect of the Member States on international forums and decision-making institutions.

### **(b) Economic Gains**

The monetary integration may achieve numerous gains at the economic level. Among these are the following:

1. Diversity of monetary policy options and exchange rate policies.
2. Development of institutional structure of the joint economic policies.
3. Strengthening the financial and monetary stability.
4. Reducing costs of currency transfer fees and other banking fees.
5. Attracting foreign investment due to expanding the market and increasing purchasing power of the GCC people as well as availing low economic risks to investors.
6. Increasing the intra-GCC transactions with the absence of currency fluctuation risks and cost of import and export.
7. Stabilizing the inflation rates and pricing.
8. Controlling fiscal policy through monitoring budget deficits and public debt level.
9. Expanding the financial sector to create more opportunities for financiers and beneficiaries.
10. Easy merging and acquisition.

## **II. Requirements of the Monetary Union**

To build a monetary union, the GCC States need to qualify the institutional and legislative system efficiently and effectively. For the monetary system to be successful, the following things should be available:

### **(1) Political Will**

The Monetary Union project has been awarded great attention by GCC leaders. This is shown in the direct follow up and support through issuing a number of decisions that conform to the process of monetary union, and reflect a clear vision and political will towards achieving this project. These decisions were:

- The Supreme Council at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session in Muscat, December 2001, approved the timetable for establishing the Monetary Union and issuing a unified currency and decided to adopt the US Dollar as a common currency peg before the end of 2002. The Member States should agree

on the criteria of financial and monetary convergence approved by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee at the 73rd meeting in May 2007, which was authorized by the Supreme Council at the 27th session in Riyadh, December 2006.

- By the end of 2002, the Member States completed linking of the exchange rates to the common currency peg (US Dollars), as an implementation of the first clause of the Supreme Council resolution. However, in May 2007, due to reasons explained in a letter addressed to the Secretariat General, the State of Kuwait linked its currency to a basket of currencies instead of the US dollar.
- Over the period 2000-2005, the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and Governors' Committee strived to complete the research on the criteria of economic performance related to financial and monetary stability of the Monetary Union, as well as the rates of these criteria, components and method of calculation, and how to reach them. This had to be agreed on prior to the end of 2005.
- At the 26<sup>th</sup> session in Abu Dhabi, December 2005, the Supreme Council approved the criteria of convergence and its components. The Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Governors' Committee at their fifth joint meeting in October 2005, agreed on the tasks of the joint monetary authority to establish the Monetary Union. This authority would be independent, and it would start as a Monetary Council and later transform into a Gulf central bank.
- At the 27<sup>th</sup> session in Riyadh, December 2006, the Supreme Council was informed about the Sultanate of Oman's stand over the timetable of the Monetary Union and its inability to join. However, it would continue to support this project. The Supreme Council would continue the steps needed to establish the Monetary Union and issue the unified currency according to the set timetable. It directed the concerned committees to boost the efforts to elicit agreement on necessary laws and documents.
- In May 2007, to complete what is contained in the second paragraph of the timetable to establish the Monetary Union, the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Governors' Committee at their 73<sup>rd</sup> meeting approved the proposed convergence criteria and calculation method under the Supreme Council's permission at the 27<sup>th</sup>

session in Riyadh, December 2006. This was stated in 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph in the Monetary Union timetable.

- At the 28<sup>th</sup> session in Doha, December 2007, the Supreme Council directed the two committees to «set a detailed timetable to complete the requirements of the monetary union, and discuss them in the 29<sup>th</sup> session». The two committees recommended that the Monetary Council fix the timetable to issue the unified currency and make it available for circulation which was approved by the Supreme Council.
- At the 29<sup>th</sup> session in Kuwait, December 2008, the Supreme Council approved the Monetary Union Agreement and the Statute of the Monetary Council, provided that the member states ratify the Agreement at the earliest time possible to prepare for the establishment of the Monetary Council within a period not exceeding the end of 2009. The Supreme Council also authorized the Ministerial Council to sign the agreement after appointing its permanent headquarters in one of the Member States.
- In March 2009, the Ministerial Council at the 110<sup>th</sup> session discussed the topic of appointing the permanent headquarters of the Monetary Council and signing of the Monetary Union Agreement. It decided to postpone this issue to the 11<sup>th</sup> consultative meeting of the Supreme Council, in order to take a decision in this regard.
- At the 11<sup>th</sup> Consultative Summit of the Supreme Council in May 2009, Riyadh was chosen to host the permanent headquarters of the Monetary Council.
- In June 2009, the Monetary Union Agreement was signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, and the State of Kuwait, at the sidelines of the 111<sup>th</sup> session of the Ministerial Council in June 2009.
- At the 30<sup>th</sup> session in Kuwait, December 2009, the Supreme Council advised to immediately establish the Monetary Council as constituted by the Agreement and the Statute of the Monetary Council. It also authorized the Board of Directors of the Monetary Council to intensify the work to accomplish the assigned duties governed by the Monetary Union agreement, and fix a timetable to issue the unified currency and make it ready for circulation.

- In January 2010, the GCC States ratified the Monetary Union Agreement.
- On February 27, 2010, the Monetary Union Agreement has come into force.
- On February 27, 2010, the statute of the Monetary Council has come into force. The Board of Directors of the Monetary Council held the first meeting on March 3, 2010 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

## **(2) Consistency of Economic Structures**

The Member States are deemed outstanding candidates to achieve the Monetary Union. Therefore, consistency of their economic structure makes them an economic fabric that is capable of dealing with a single economic decision.

## **(3) Financial and Monetary Convergence**

Among the key factors of the Monetary Union, is to emulate economies of each Member State in their fiscal and monetary conduct in order to achieve a single monetary policy. The Member States agreed on a number of variables to achieve a high level of financial and monetary convergence. These are:

- **Inflation Criteria** : The inflation rate in any of member state should not exceed the preferred average (GDP of the inflation rates in the GCC States in excess of (%2)).
- **Interest Rate** : The interest rate in any member state should not exceed the average of three interest rates in a short-term of three months plus %2.
- **Sufficient monetary reserves of foreign currency to cover import of goods** : Monetary authority reserves in each country should be sufficient to cover cost of its imports over a period of at least four months.
- **Annual Deficit**: Proportion of the annual deficit should not exceed %3 of the nominal GDP (as long as the average petrol rate of OPEC is within a reasonable price).
- **General Debt**: Proportion of the General Debt of the general Government should not exceed 60%, and proportion of the general debt of the central government should not exceed 70% of the nominal GDP.

## **(4) Compatibility of Banking Legislations with Monetary Union Agreement**

GCC States' entry into the Monetary Union requires taking a number of procedures that confirm the achievement of a high grade of legislative

convergence and insure the effectiveness of the Monetary Union and the implementation of its policies. The Monetary Union Agreement stipulated in article 17 that the GCC States shall take all measures and procedures to guarantee consistency of their national legislations as well as basic regulations of their central banks with the provisions of this agreement. This should help the GCC Central Bank render its duties and perform its tasks. The national central banks shall be committed to the Central Bank's instructions related to its jurisdictions.

#### **(5) Other Integrative Projects**

To achieve the optimum benefit from the Monetary Union, it is required to complete the execution of the Custom Union and the Common Market. The Member States have taken important steps towards executing these two vital projects.

#### **(6) Preparing the Infrastructure of Payment and Settlement Systems Necessary for the Unified Currency**

A unified currency requires a single payment system to settle financial transactions carried out in this currency as if they were carried out in one country. The Technical Committee for Payments is currently developing the design options for this system. A specialized company has been entrusted to study interconnecting payment systems of the GCC States. This is deemed one of the big strategic projects being executed by the Governors' Committee. A committee comprised of representatives from all member states will supervise this project.

#### **(7) Building a Unified Statistical and Integrated System to Meet the Requirements of the Monetary Union**

This system aims at achieving the following:

- Regular monitoring of statistical data to facilitate conducting analytical studies, and regular statistical comparison.
- Availability of integrated and consistent statistics among the Member States to objectively calculate the convergence criteria of economic performance.
- Effectuate the monetary policy and coordinate the supervisory policies of the Monetary Union institutions in the coming phase, through ascertaining the extent of quality, harmony, and consistency of related statistics and methods of their calculation.

- Avoiding negative consequences resulted from variation in monitoring mechanism of data collection of the monetary union.

### **(8) Adopting Common Banking Legislations to Monitor Banking**

When Member States decided to build a Monetary union, they decide, collectively, to protect the unified currency zone from financial crises. They further pledge to build a safe network in their financial system. Therefore, to unify and coordinate the monitoring system of the banking system is regarded as a key to the Monetary union in the GCC States. As explained in the Monetary Union Agreement, the supervision and monitoring of the banking system is a defense against financial crises. Therefore, the GCC States, should work to build unified rules to supervise the banking sector whether they are members or non-members in the monetary union.

At the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting on the March 19 ,2012, the GCC Committee of Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks approved the application of the «Guiding Criteria of Unified Banking Supervision of the GCC States» as a reference for two years. In addition, this period was extended for another two years to complete non-applied and partially-applied articles, and to review the articles contained in the document to align them with developments of Basel III.

## **III. Legislative Infrastructure of the Monetary Union**

The backbone of the Monetary Union lies in its legislative infrastructure. The Member States have established this infrastructure and set their pillars through its agreement and the Monetary Council's statute, as well as other subsequent legislations.

### **Monetary Union Agreement**

The Agreement includes 28 articles in six chapters that include the following:

- First Chapter: Establishing the Monetary Union, its characteristics and key features, and required coordination in economic policies, building payment systems, adopting common banking legislations, and establishing the Monetary Council that pave the way for establishing a central bank as well as issuing a unified currency to replace local currencies.
- Chapter Two: Establishing a legal and independent monetary council



that carries its own objectives, tasks, and administrative structure. The Member States should consult with the council on issues related to the Monetary Union's legislations.

- Chapter Three: The Monetary Council specifies the name of the currency, its divisions, specifications, security marks, rate of exchange, as well as specifying the exchange value of local currencies against unified currency.
- Chapter Four: Establishing the Central Bank, its autonomy, objectives and tasks. Its statute shall specify its bodies and their jurisdictions.
- Chapter Five: The cooperation bases and rules between the GCC Central Bank and the Member States manifest their commitment to conform their national legislations to the provisions of this agreement. This should allow the Central Bank to render its duties and perform its tasks with the national central banks. This chapter also deals with Central Bank's representation in region as organizations and forums of international financial and monetary cooperation. The Member States should commit to the criteria of economic performance convergence.
- Chapter Six: It includes final provisions, such as privileges, immunities settlement of conflicts, amendments, and making agreement available to any other GCC State to join .
- Enforcement: This agreement came into force on February 27 ,2010.

#### **IV. Institutional Infrastructure of the Monetary Union**

What distinguishes the Monetary Union is the methodology of institutional figure which should establish an infrastructure capable of managing and protecting the unified currency. The Monetary Council constitutes the base for establishing the Monetary Union institutions approved at the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council in Muscat, December 2008, and came into force on March 17 ,2010.

##### **Basic Statute of Monetary Council**

The Statute consists of twenty articles. The first three articles deal with definitions, establishments, headquarters of the Monetary Council and its legal identity. The fourth article spells out the Council's goals and duties, which include coordination of monetary policies and exchange rates, and sets the legal and organizational frame of the central bank. It also develops the statistical systems to ensure the readiness of the payment systems of the

unified currency and prepares for the issuance of notes and metal coins. The Monetary Council shall set a timetable to issue the unified currency and its circulation.

Articles 6-13 deal with the membership of the Monetary Council. It should consist of national central banks of member states, and its board of directors should have the governors of the central banks while its executive body has a full-time executive, as well as senior officials and a number of employees. The articles define the authorities in each body as well as the mechanisms and procedures of the board of directors' meetings which should not be less than six meetings in a year. It also includes the process of employment and the responsibilities of the executive body.

The remaining articles, 14-20 deal with the fiscal year of the Council and the equal contribution of national central banks in the expenses of establishing the council; its annual budget, termination procedures, and replacing it with the central bank. In addition, they deal with final provisions, such as privileges, immunities, and making amendments. The enforcement article stipulates that this law should come into force after the lapse of one month after enforcing the monetary union's agreement during which the Monetary Council would already be established. This law has come into force on March 27 ,2010.

Since the inception of the Monetary Council, and after its Board of Directors' first meeting on March 3 ,2010, these meetings are held at the rate of six meetings in a year to complete its tasks. These tasks include technical and institutional setup and preparation for establishing the Gulf Central Bank which will fix a time to issue the unified currency.

The Board of Directors has so far held twenty six meetings, starting from the first meeting in Riyadh, on March 30 ,2010 till the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting on March 4 ,2014.

The Monetary Council have thus far focused on the institutional form through:

1. Signing contract with one of the international consultancy firms to prepare all the financial and administrative bylaws and strategies to complete the institutional structure of the Gulf Monetary Council.
2. Working with the consultancy firm on establishment phases of the

- Council, organizing a number of workshops to follow up with the consultancy firm. These workshops should be organized by a group from monetary agencies and central banks in member states.
3. Approving Monetary Council's logo.
  4. Signing the headquarters' agreement between Saudi Arabia and the Monetary Council on April 28 ,2013.
  5. Inauguration of the headquarters of the Gulf Monetary Council in Riyadh on October 5 ,2013.
  6. Completing the study outcomes related to institutional structure such as: vision and message of the Council, analysis of the strategic options, execution plan, organizational structure, and a number of required outcomes to build an institution ready to be transformed into a GCC central bank.
  7. Preparation of the required basic infrastructure through studying the technical aspects of the Monetary Union, especially establishing the GCC central bank and ensuring its analytical and operative capabilities.

## **V. Strategic Dimension of the Monetary Union**

The first goal of the Monetary Union is to achieve the highest level of economic integration among the GCC States and the GCC citizenship. As they are considered rising economies, the GCC States are able to achieve large development strides compared with matured economies.

Since, the Monetary Union is a strategic project, the measurement of its gains or costs must be within the strategic perspective. The most prominent strategic gains are embodied in the following:

1. It is expected that the Monetary Union would be a quantum leap in making common economic decisions by relying upon a distinguished legislative and institutional system. The Monetary Union will be a powerful pillar for the GCC.
2. This project will enhance the concept of political and economic fraternity among the GCC States.
3. It will enhance the regional and international presence of the GCC and play a key role in the international economy.
4. The unified currency will subsequently become an international one that contribute to the Member States' economies and become a helping factor in achieving economic diversity.

# Chapter (4)

## Cooperation in Trade

### Objectives

GCC Member States have come a long way in the field of trade cooperation. They have enhanced such cooperation for the benefit of the citizens, which would consequently improve investment and trade.

Under the GCC Common Market that was declared at the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Supreme Council in Doha, December 2007, Member States adopted the principle of equal treatment accorded to GCC citizens by 2003 in various fields, such as engagement in retail and wholesale trade, stock ownership, formation of joint ventures, encouragement of mutual investment and elimination of barriers to intra-GCC trade. In addition, Member States have endeavored to unify trade laws.

The Member States have also sought to improve the environment for foreign investments and ease access conditions to world markets through unifying standards of GCC products. The GCC has adopted a Unified Trade Policy vis-à-vis other countries, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international and regional organizations as a single economic entity with a view to promote trade and investment, expand markets, increase GCC exports, and their competitive capacity. In addition, Member States have also sought to improve the conditions of their exports to world markets, and promote and defend GCC products. The Unified Trade Policy also protects local markets and activates the role of the private sector in promoting GCC exports of goods and services.

Moreover, the GCC Unified Trade Policy also aims at adopting an internal unified trade policy, which facilitates the movement of GCC citizens, goods, services, and means of transportation. This policy takes into account environment preservation and consumer protection.

### Achievements

There have been several achievements in the field of trade cooperation such as adopting several laws and regulations, enhancing economic citizenship,

and setting up mutual commissions. The following are the most important achievements:

- Permitting GCC citizens to engage in retail trade as of March 1, 1987, and wholesale trade as of March 1, 1990, in any Member State and be treated equally, (Resolution of the Supreme Council, 7<sup>th</sup> session, December 1986).
- Allowing the GCC establishments and production plants to open offices for commercial representation in any Member State (Resolution of the Supreme Council, 12<sup>th</sup> session, December 1991), as well as permitting them to import and export national products from and into any Member State without a local agent.
- Establishing the GCC Commercial Arbitration Center and its bylaws thereof, under the Resolution of the Supreme Council at the 14<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, December 1993. The Center which was established in March 1995 is based in Bahrain. It provides an acceptable mechanism to settle commercial disputes. It addresses commercial disputes among GCC citizens or non GCC-nationals, being natural or legal persons. In addition, it addresses commercial disputes arising from implementing the economic agreements and their resolutions. The Center also organizes arbitration symposiums and seminars in all member states.
- Adopting the bylaw of the GCC Accounting and Auditing Commission (AAC), under the Resolution of the Supreme Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, December 1998. The AAC has started its activities after the foundation phase.
- Establishing the GCC Standardization Organization (GSO) under the Resolution of the Supreme Council at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session, Doha, December 2002. The GSO prepares, approves, and publishes GCC products' standards. It also unifies various standardizations and follows its application in cooperation and coordination with the standardization organizations in member states. This should develop production and service sectors, promote intra-GCC trade, protect consumers, environment and public health, and encourage GCC agricultural products and industry. Thus, the GSO supports GCC economy and helps reduce technical barriers on trade in line with the objectives of the GCC Customs Union and Common Market.

- Applying equal treatment to all GCC citizens in the field of stock ownership, company corporation, and elimination of relevant restrictions by 2003, (Resolution of the Supreme Council, 23<sup>rd</sup> session, Doha, December 2002).
- Adopting the document of Common Trade Policy that unifies GCC External Trade Policy, (Resolution of the Supreme Council, 26<sup>th</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, December 2005).
- Adopting the GCC Trademark Law (Resolution of the Supreme Council, 33<sup>rd</sup> session, Manama, December 2012).
- Permitting Gulf companies to have branches in the GCC States, and receive equal treatment similar to local companies according to the Supreme Council's decision at the 31<sup>st</sup> session in Abu Dhabi, December 2010.
- Participation of the Federation of GCC Chambers in the meetings of the technical committees that deal directly with the private sector according to the Supreme Council's decision at the 11<sup>th</sup> Consultative meeting, in Riyadh, May 2009.

Efforts are exerted to turn a number of reference trade laws and regulations into binding GCC laws. Other new draft laws are being concluded such as Common Trade law, Unified law of Commercial Agencies, Common Commercial Registration Law, GCC Commercial Fraud Control, GCC Consumer Protection law, GCC Competition Law, GCC Commercial Secrets Law, Unified Law for Supervision and Control of Insurance Activities, Unified Law of Auditing and Common Electronic Transactions law.

# Chapter (5)

## The Customs Union

### Objectives

Objectives of the trade cooperation among the GCC States are summed up in the elimination of tariff barriers over their products, exempt such products from customs, and accord them equal treatment, coordinate export and import policies, and create a collective bargaining method in this field .

The GCC States have established a Free Trade Area since 1983. As of January 1 ,2003, that area is transformed into a Customs Union which aims, inter alia, at eliminating the tariff and non-tariff barriers in order to facilitate intra-GCC flow of goods, and create a collective bargaining power for the GCC States to liberate trade with other international economic blocs, in addition to coordinating export and import policies.

The GCC seeks to develop cooperation among its members through forming plans, programs, and projects to achieve trade strategy and enhance cooperation with the private sector through the GCC Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation.

### Achievements

The volume of intra-GCC trade has increased tenfold since the establishment of the GCC due to the adopted procedures collectively taken to facilitate the intra-GCC flow of goods through the following three main steps:

- Establishing the Free Trade Area (1983-2002)
- Establishing the Customs Union (since 2003)
- Unification of legislation and procedures related to trade, imports, exports, and customs

#### I. The Free Trade Area (FTA)

Encouragement of trade is one of the most important objectives of any economic grouping, whether in the form of; a free trade area, a Customs Union, or economic union. The trade increase is the first objective of establishing a custom unions. The customs union, according to the

economic theory, increases trade among its members through eliminating or diminishing trade barriers. The increase of trade through the customs union, is the main influencing factor that could accomplish other objectives, such as, increasing specialization, reducing prices, increasing production efficiency, and expanding markets. A number of studies indicate that the customs union of any economic grouping leads to increased trade rates.

The GCC States started to make legal and practical arrangements required for establishing the “GCC Free Trade Area” by signing the Unified Economic Agreement in November 1981. That Agreement contained the main provisions of the GCC Free Trade Area.

The GCC Free Trade Area is distinguished by exempting industrial and agricultural goods, and natural resources from customs . This is attainable through holding a certificate of origin from the exporting country, in addition to the following:

- Allowing importing and exporting of national products throughout the GCC States without requiring a local agent or taking any other procedures except for the certificate of origin and the export manifest.
- In the event duties are levied on any originating goods due to origin misjudgment, those duties shall be reimbursed after ensuring their national origin.
- Immediate release to goods accompanying passengers at borders of member states
- Preparing export declarations of local goods at GCC border offices.
- Assigning special lanes at borders with signs showing “GCC Nationals”.

The GCC Free Trade Area came into effect in March 1983. It lasted for almost twenty years, until the end of 2002.

## **II. Establishment of the GCC Customs Union**

The Supreme Council, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session held in Doha in December 2002, announced the establishment of the GCC Customs Union. This emanated from the goals and objectives set forth in the GCC Charter and Economic Agreement.

This phase has witnessed a significant turning point in the joint economic action of the GCC States. GCC States’ agreement to establish the



Customs Union in 2003 makes them a single entity in front of the world. The customs duties on foreign goods are taken only once at the first entry point. These goods shall freely move around the GCC States without collecting any extra fees. This step is an important one that is applied upon the first day of the inception of the Union. The share of each State of the customs duties during the transitory period is processed through a clearance mechanism. After the transitory period, the final status of the Customs Union will be applied.

The achievements made by the Customs Union are considered to be the fruit of implementing the first article of the Economic Agreement (2001) which stipulates that the Customs Union should be activated within a period not exceeding January 2003, and that it should include at least the following points:

- Uniform customs procedures .
- International unified customs regulations and procedures .
- Single entry point where common duties are levied.
- Intra-GCC movement of goods with or without tariff barriers, taking into account applying the regulations of veterinary and agricultural quarantine, as well as prohibited and restricted goods.
- Applying equal treatment to GCC goods.

The GCC has applied international uniform customs tariff, and the uniform customs law since 2002. This achievement yielded big benefits for customs departments in the Member States. The fact that more than sixty custom ports in the GCC States apply single customs law, and single custom tariff, is an achievement to be proud of. By applying this law, other unified custom regulations and procedures are carried out at all the custom ports .

With regard to the single entry point, all the GCC States have acknowledged it since the inception of the Customs Union in a perfect manner. Custom procedures are applied to foreign goods at the first entry point in any GCC States. The first entry point carries out all the procedures of inspection and investigation, and ensures the compliance with the required documents, and that they are lawful, and it subsequently levies the duties applicable to them. Thereafter, the goods should move to other member states duty free. The intra-GCC movement of national and foreign goods has achieved a considerable growth since establishing the Customs Union in January 2003.

The intra-GCC trade reached 124.7 billion Dollars in 2013, compared to 15 billion Dollars in 2002. The majority of national industries have profited from benefits offered by the Customs Union. It has also been agreed since the establishment of the Customs Union, on a number of important matters related to work at the single entry point.

### **Impact of the Customs Union on Intra-GCC Trade**

In order to identify the actual benefit of the GCC Customs Union in such a short time, it is necessary to measure the growth rate of intra-GCC trade after its formation, and compare that growth rate to the historical growth average of that trade before the Customs Union.

Detailed studies are conducted. Such studies have analyzed the volume of trade over the period 1993-2004 in order to be able to measure it before and after the Customs Union. It is surprising that those studies have indicated a high growth rate in trade after the Customs Union on January 1, 2003. That growth is beyond all expectations because the volume of trade has increased from \$10 billion in 1993 to \$15 billion in 2002, with an average annual growth of 4.6%. After the formation of the Customs Union in January 2003, the volume of trade has increased by an annual growth average of 24%.

### **Transitional Period of the Customs Union**

The transitional period of 2003-2015 allows Member States to adapt with some aspects of the Customs Union in the following areas:

- Import of medicines and medical products.
- Import of food.
- Continue the custom protection for some goods in some member states.
- Continue the protection of local agent.
- Continue some customs functions at border offices.
- Joint collection of duties.

«The Procedures and Steps for Implementation of the Customs Union» document outlines the transitional period provisions. By the end of this period, the role of the former border customs will be valid and the GCC will become a single customs zone according to the resolution of the Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session.

## **Practical Procedures for the Establishment of the GCC Customs Union**

As of January 1 ,2002, Common Customs Law was implemented by all of the member states. On January 1 ,2003, the GCC member states achieved an important step by establishing the Customs Union where a common tariff of 5% was levied on all foreign imports. However, a number of essential commodities are exempted from customs duties as well as the customs exemptions in the Common Customs Law and the WTO tariff bindings of some member states. Duty-free commodities account for some 10% of the imported goods. Custom procedures are applied to all foreign goods at the first point of entry into any of the member states. Accordingly, the first point of entry would inspect and examine the foreign goods imported, ensure their conformity to the required documentation, and that they do not contain any prohibited items, and consequently levy the applicable duties. Hereafter, goods will move freely within member states. That requires aborting intra-GCC transit of foreign goods.

To implement the requirements of the Customs Union, a team from the Secretariat General and member states visited some customs offices at the GCC ports during September 2003, and January 2005, to ensure the implementation of the requirements of the Customs Union. Custom officers from the GCC Customs Administrations were rotated to work at different customs ports of other member states during May 2004 in order to exchange expertise .

The GCC Ministers of Economy and Finance resolved as follows:

1. Agreement on the idea of having a Customs Union which is defined as the area where customs duties “taxes” and trade barriers are excluded; whereas common external tariff, and trade regulations are applied .
2. Agreement on the common external tariff, common customs law, the first point of entry, and the adoption of similar laws and regulations governing the GCC Customs Union.
3. Products manufactured in Member States can freely move across these States under relevant invoices and customs declaration for customs and statistical purposes.
4. Considering local invoices of national goods as an evidence of origin

that's shows manufacturer's name firmly affixed to them, without submitting a certificate of origin. However, goods that can't bear an evidence of origin and manufacturer's name due to their nature may move during the transitional period under certificates of origin plus relevant local invoices, as well as the single customs declaration for customs and statistical purposes.

5. The customs authorities in Member States shall not require national products to meet conditions more than those required from similar foreign products, in respect to type and evidence of origin.
6. The task of border customs offices is a routine matching of goods with their documents. They also ensure that they are free from any prohibited items as requested by the member states.
7. Goods prohibited in one state and allowed in another will be routed directly to the importing State, or to a State that allows their entry provided that such goods shall not trespass a state where they are prohibited.
8. Customs duties and taxes on special goods referred to in clause (4) above will be collected by the State to which such goods are imported. Such revenues will be the right of the State which imports them, and they will be collected outside the joint custom duties of the Customs Union.
9. The Member States importing these goods shall unify the taxes and duties levied on them.
10. Government, special and diplomatic, exemptions will be confined to the provisions of the unified custom law and approved by the Supreme Council. Any other exemptions will be cancelled unless agreed upon unanimously.
11. Upon discussing any bilateral agreements, the GCC States shall take into consideration its consistency with the requirements of the Customs Union and provisions of the Economic Agreement.
12. It is necessary to present key information about the commercial register at the single point of entry with any foreign country for customs clearance in accordance with the mechanism agreed upon.
13. Temporary entry and importation will be treated according to the provisions contained in the Customs Union Law.

14. Pre-obtaining an import license is cancelled when importing common goods to any of the GCC States as it conflicts with the requirements of the Customs Union and the single point entry.
15. Supporting the Palestinian economy and enhancing the abilities of the Palestinian people to encounter the policies of blockade and isolation within the timeframe of the Arab Free Trade Area Agreement, which has started on January 1 ,2005, where all the Arab products will be exempted from custom duties.
16. The items whose documents come through banks will be dealt with according to the provisions of the Common Customs Law.
17. The customs duties levied by insuring the foreign goods in the Customs Union will be recovered according to the mechanism agreed upon.
18. The customs duties levied on foreign goods re-exported outside the GCC will be recovered according to the provisions of article number 16 of the executive regulation of the Common Customs Law.
19. The GCC States in the Customs Union will be recognized as a single economic group that deal with transit with other countries under valid international agreements.
20. There will be no transit of goods among the Member States after the establishment of the Customs Union.
21. Technical conditions and procedures in the Arab transit agreement to which the member states are parties shall be applicable in dealing with transit with the foreign world.
22. The transit status of imported goods shall end at the first customs point (sea, land, or air). Procedures of inspection, investigation and collection of customs duties will be normally completed.
23. The transit exported or re-exported from any State will start from the last customs port (sea, or land or air).
24. The transit goods that come to any GCC State will move after completion of customs procedures without any obstacles.
25. The imported goods that are subject to any restrictions, according to the list of restricted goods agreed upon, will be moved from one State to another according to the agreed-upon movement mechanism which guarantees their arrival in the importing state if their nature requires.
26. Easing the flow of imported vegetarian and animal products as well as

live animals shall be assisted according to the rules agreed upon within the framework of the GCC.

27. Goods prohibited in a Member State and permitted in another will be either imported directly to the importing state, or pass “only” through a Member State that allows their entry. In addition, the customs duties levied on these goods by the importing state will be solely paid to this state, and they will be outside the joint collected custom duties by the Customs Union. The Member States, importing such goods should unify the duties collected on them.
28. Industrial establishments are granted exemption from customs duties on their exports of tools, equipments, spare parts, raw materials, half-manufactured materials, and the necessary packing materials needed for industrial production, according to the rules agreed upon within the framework of the GCC. The custom port in any State shall facilitate their entry into the importing state for which the certificate was issued by the relevant authority.
29. Unified procedures will be applied for importation and permission of medicines and pharmaceutical products at the single entry point. The medicine registration committee shall set up a unified mechanism for customs permits, including unified registration of medicines.
30. Customs duties on means of transportation will be levied and all the customs procedures will be taken at the single entry point. They will move among the GCC States without levying any customs duties similar to other goods.
31. The process of qualifying the industrial installations in the GCC States shall be canceled after the initiating the Customs Union as of January 1 2013.
32. When customs authorities are suspicious over the origin of any goods bearing a removable label of origin, depending on their nature, the customs duties shall be linked to insurance, and the importer will be required to present a proof of origin within a period not exceeding three months.
33. Member States shall provide the Secretariat General with a copy of the instructions given to their customs administrations or offices (ports) about applying resolutions related to the Customs Union. The Secretariat

- General shall then circulate these instructions to other Member States.
34. Customs brokers shall be permitted to engage in the profession of customs clearance in any Member State, and will be accorded equal national treatment.
  35. National products exported within the GCC States shall be excluded from Conformity Certificate, as this certificate applies only to foreign imports.
  36. Custom administrations in Member States shall levy customs duties on exported goods from free zones, duty-free shops, and public or private customs warehouses at member states, and they will be treated as any imported foreign goods.
  37. Member States shall agree on a mechanism to settle customs revenue sharing (clearing mechanism) with members of the Customs Union. This means that the final destination shall retain the customs revenue generated from such goods.
  38. Member States shall agree on a mechanism to address issues of intra-GCC trade.
  39. Member States shall apply the Single Customs Declaration agreed on for the following purposes; importation, exportation, temporary exportation, transit, free zones, for statistical purposes. Member States shall implement the provisions of customs valuation as set out in the GCC Common Customs Law.
  40. The Secretariat General shall prepare a directory, one for the customs officer, and another for the importer, and designate liaison officers at the Customs Administrations to be contacted when necessary to settle any problems related to the intra-GCC movement of goods. The Secretariat has also prepared a directory of procedures and steps related to the implementation of Customs Union which has been circulated to member states and published at the GCC website.
  41. Member States shall agree on a “questionnaire form” to follow up with the implementation of the Customs Union’s steps and procedures by all the Member States.
  42. The Secretariat shall make periodic field visits to land, sea and air customs ports to ensure proper implementation of the procedures and steps of GCC Customs Union. Reports on these visits shall be presented to the

- Customs Union Committee which will report them to the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee (FECC) for instruction.
43. Member Custom Administrations shall exchange customs officers to work for certain periods with share customs expertise.
  44. Custom officers are required to join training programs organized by any member state.
  45. Deleting the prerequisite of obtaining import license needed to import foreign goods.
  46. Agreement on a unified list of perishable goods which shall be given 24 hour priority clearance procedures including official and Eid holidays at the customs ports, or at the places of unloading.
  47. Member States shall facilitate movement of spare parts and materials used in power stations and water desalination plants particularly in emergencies around the clock.
  48. Organize orientation seminars in all Member States in cooperation with the chambers of commerce and industry to explain the procedures and steps of implementing the Customs Union.
  49. The Secretariat General shall prepare a periodic report on the progress of the Customs Union to be submitted to the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee.
  50. Immediate release system to finalize customs procedures of goods that accompany passengers at the border customs offices.
  51. Preparation of export declaration for national goods at the border customs offices.
  52. Terminating the transit system of intra-GCC goods following the creation of the Customs Union. The transit status of foreign goods consigned to any Member State shall be finalized at the first customs port thru which the goods have entered. Transit transportation of the exported or re-exported goods shall commence from the last customs port thru which the goods have left.
  53. Assigning special lanes for GCC nationals showing the sign “GCC Nationals” across the border offices of Member States.
  54. Accord similar treatment to the means of transportation owned by GCC nationals in any Member State.
  55. Accepting the validity certificate of foodstuff exported from any Member



- State and designing a standard form for this purpose.
56. It is not required to validate the certificates of origin and their invoices, as well as foodstuff validity certificates for national products from the GCC embassies and consulates.
  57. Agreement on a calculation method of customs value for used means of transport at the customs ports of member states.
  58. Agreement on common and individual lists of prohibited and restricted goods.
  59. Agreement on a mechanism for electronic clearing of customs revenues.
  60. Agreement on a mechanism for moving restricted goods.
  61. Agreement on the rules for calculation of customs value of imported foreign goods that are consistent with international standards by amending the provisions of article 1 of the rules for implementing the GCC Unified Customs Law.
  62. Launching the GCC Customs Information Center which will provide important information about customs process in the customs administrations that will be provided with relevant unified instructions to follow their application. The Center will also provide the information on the movement of goods within and outside the Customs Union upon requesting that.
  63. Issuance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the GCC Unified Customs Law containing the new mechanism for calculating the value of customs purposes in line with WTO requirements which has been implemented in all GCC customs administrations in January 2008.
  64. Issuance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the GCC Common External tariff listing duty-free goods.
  65. Agreement on a mechanism for intra-GCC movement of goods within the final status of the GCC Customs Union.
  66. Agreement on standard procedures for inspecting and releasing consignments imported via land ports .
  67. Agreement on a mechanism for calculating the customs value of imported used means of transport.
  68. Agreement on a mechanism to treat foreign goods imported without evidence of origin.
  69. Agreement on the exemption of a number of commodities within WTO

tariff bindings with the GCC Member States consistent with ITA.

70. Admitting the GCC Member States to Kyoto Convention for Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures.
71. Accession of GCC Member States to the International Convention on Temporary Admission of Goods.
72. Commencement of the electronic clearing of customs revenues within the customs administrations through GCC Customs Information Center.
73. Establishment of the Customs Union Commission which started its work on June 1 ,2012 and its internal regulation was approved by the Committee of Financial and Economic Cooperation at the 93<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Its tasks include the following:
  - Complete the study on revenue sharing mechanism including the final destination mechanism or distributing the overall revenue output (100%). Distribution of percentages shall be based on the actual net revenue criterion to be calculated according to the moving average for 3 years. The moving average shall annually be adjusted by the addition/ deletion of one year.
  - Study customs protection as well as its application at the first points of entry and include its output to the common revenue output after the revenue sharing mechanism has been agreed upon.
  - Completing the study over the treatment of US goods imported via the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman.
  - Unifying customs procedures and ensuring application of standards, agricultural and veterinary quarantine, and detection of counterfeited and fraudulent goods at first points of entry.
  - Ensure that procedures applied at first points of entry are not repeated at intra-GCC borders for foreign imports. The role of these borders shall be limited to completing the procedures that were not completed at the first point of entry.
  - Review the issue of local agent protection through studying the laws applied at each state in coordination with relevant authorities.
  - Complete the study of national products' factories located at free zones.
74. The tasks of GCC Customs Union Commission executed in an

integrated manner shall constitute a timeframe for the implementation of the final status of the Customs Union with its full requirements.

## **Customs Union in Regional and International Framework**

The Customs Union of the GCC States is one of the successful ideas on both regional and international levels. The GCC States after establishing the Customs Union in 2003, have come under a single customs wall to the foreign world where the customs duties are levied only one time on foreign goods at the first entry point. Thereafter, these goods move around the Member States without levying customs duties on them again. This step is among the most important steps implemented on the first day of the Union. The share of each State in these customs duties is processed through a clearance mechanism. The Arab League, striving to establish an Arab Customs Union has benefited from the GCC Custom Union. It has adopted most of its bases to use in setting bases and steps of the Arab Custom Union. The GCC States have supported the efforts exerted within the framework of the Arab League to complete these requirements. It has offered technical assistance to the concerned committees, through effective participation in the committees' meetings to discuss completing these requirements. The GCC States have also offered their Common Customs Law and tariffs as a base for the Arab Customs Union.

At the international level, the GCC is recognized as a customs union in the World Customs Organization. The GCC Secretariat General participates in a number of the Organization's committees as an observer. These committees include committee for customs tariffs, committee for rules of origin, committee for basis of customs value, committee for combating smuggling, committee for commercial fraud, as well as the committee for international customs agreement, to which the GCC States are parties, such as Kyoto and Istanbul. In addition to that, the Secretariat General participates in annual meetings of the customs directors general, at both regional and international levels.

## Chapter (6)

# Cooperation in the Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade

The GCC Member States, have recognized the importance of taking necessary measures to protect GCC industry from injurious practices in international trade. Such practices are dumping, subsidy and unjustifiable increase in imports that could harm or threaten the GCC industry or retard it.

The Supreme Council, at the 24<sup>th</sup> session, Kuwait, December 2003, approved the GCC Common Law of Anti-dumping, Countervailing Measures and Safeguards. This Law is of special importance for GCC industry since it protects the industry against injurious practices in international trade and provides mechanisms that are consistent with the WTO obligations that bind its members to adopt policies and procedures ensuring freedom of trade among them.

Moreover, on February 11 ,2004, the GCC Ministers of Industry approved the Rules of Implementation of this Law. In March 2006, they decided to commence anti-dumping through the Office of the Anti-dumping Technical Secretariat at the GCC Secretariat-General, which was established on March 6 , 2007 .

### **I.Importance of the Unified Law of Anti-dumping, Countervailing Measures and Safeguards.**

#### **1.Launching (First Phase)**

The GCC Unified Law of Anti-dumping, Countervailing Measures and Safeguards is of special importance for industry in the GCC States, as it provides protection against injurious practices in international trade, such as dumping, subsidy and unjustified increase in imports, which may cause, threaten, or obstruct the establishment of industry in the GCC States. In addition, this Law is the optimal method to protect the GCC industry, in light of GCC States' membership in WTO. The law has been issued in accordance with the requirements of GCC Member States establishment of the Customs Union as of January 2003, as well as those of accessing WTO.

The Law also provides an agreed-upon mechanism to the GCC States and their obligations with the WTO that enables them to protect their economies, and especially their industries, from corrupt practices in international trade. The three WTO agreements related to anti-dumping, subsidy, and increase in imports have become an internationally agreed-upon laws to protect national economies from injurious practices in international trade. The Unified Law of the GCC States is consistent with these agreements. Thus, it stands as an alternative to the GCC States in case they wish to use it to protect their national industries that are prone to corrupt practices in international trade.

## **2. Amendment of the Unified Anti-dumping Law, Countervailing Measures and Safeguards (2<sup>nd</sup> phase)**

After applying the Law, and realizing its positive and negative aspects and seeking the collective GCC interest, the GCC Permanent Committee for Combating Corrupt Practices in International Trade, at the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting held on March 9 and 10 2008, decided to review the Law, especially after the observations from the WTO. A technical committee was formed to study these observations and their consequent effect during the period of application in order to initiate amendments. The Supreme Council, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the amendment of the Unified Anti-dumping Law, Countervailing Measures, and Safeguards.

## **II. Office of the Technical Secretariat for Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade**

The Office follows up applying the GCC Unified Law of Anti-dumping Countervailing Measures and Safeguards and WTO agreements related to anti-dumping, subsidy and increase of imports. The Office thus ensures that all the rules provided for in said legal instruments are adhered to and respected, and that the GCC Member States meet WTO obligations and agreements on anti-dumping, subsidy and increase of imports. It also ensure that the GCC Unified Law on the Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade is consistent with these agreements.

### **1. Objectives of the Technical Secretariat for Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade**

- Protecting GCC industries from injurious practices in international

- trade, so that they can raise their competitiveness and export abilities.
- Disseminating knowledge and raising awareness about the procedures to prevent corrupt practices in international trade among interested entities such as, national industries, exporters, importers, lawyers, accountants etc.
  - Enhancing relationship between the industrialists in the Member States and the Technical Secretariat.
  - Enhancing the relationship among GCC economic entities.
  - Enhancing the relationship with WTO and anti-dumping bodies in regional and international organizations .

## **2.Role of the Office of Technical Secretariat for Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade**

### **a. Receiving and Examining Complaints**

The Office receives and examines complaints submitted by industrialists. The Office has received and examined a number of complaints against injurious practices in international trade submitted by a number of factories, in which they complain against the increase in exports of products similar to those manufactured in the GCC States. The Office coordinates to complete the elements of the complaints required by the Unified Law and WTO regulations. It conducts technical studies and gather statistical data from all of the GCC States, required by such cases, to ascertain the existence of these corrupt practices, and specify the representative percentage of the GCC industry, and study various elements of the damages to that industry.

### **b. Following up Cases and Investigations Filed Against GCC States**

The Office prepares technical memos containing analysis of various legal and practical aspects related to these cases. It communicates with foreign countries that initiate the investigation or the charging fees, or those taking protectionist measures against the GCC States. It also participates in general hearing sessions held by these countries.

### **c. Consultations and Technical Support**

The Office of Technical Secretariat for Prevention of Injurious Practices in International Trade prepares technical memos and reports submitted to the GCC States and technical committees based on the queries received by the Office, especially those related to corrupt practices in international trade.

#### **d. Disseminating the Idea of Protection from Injurious Practices in International Trade**

The Office disseminates the concept of protection from injurious practices in international trade by introducing the Law and the role of the Technical Secretariat, mechanisms, methods, procedures of anti-dumping, subsidy and increase in imports. The Office of Technical Secretariat, in this regard, has held a number of symposia and workshops in all the GCC States. It has communicated with authorities concerned with customs affairs as well as with those responsible for statistical data in the GCC States. This has resulted in holding a number of workshops, and visits, to explain the role of the Office and its relationship with these authorities.

#### **e. Awareness and Media**

Within the efforts of introducing the injurious practices in international trade, the Office has participated in a number of media programs. Officials at the Technical Secretariat have conducted a number of interviews with the press in the Member States. The Office also releases a number of introductory booklets and publications to explain the technical aspects of injurious practices.

#### **f. Cooperation with Regional and International Organizations**

The Office cooperates with international entities, such as Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in executing some events and symposia.

### **III. Achievements of the Office of Technical Secretariat for Prevention of the Injurious Practices in International Trade**

#### **a. Complaints**

1. The Office receives a number of complaints filed by the industry in GCC Member States. These complaints cover a number of sectors, such as processing industries, food industries, building and construction industries, and precision industries. Three complaints were filed in 2014.
2. The Permanent Committee initiated an investigation through the Office over the increase in imports of cardboards and iron angles. The Office took all the measures to initiate both investigations according to the provisions of the Unified Law of Anti-dumping, Countervailing Measures

and Safeguards, and WTO regulations. The Office put an announcement about this in its official publication. It also called all the embassies of the exporting states to notify them to take preventive measures and provide them with relevant documents. Two general hearing sessions were held at the headquarter of the GCC for the cardboard case, and iron angles. Thereafter, the Office prepared two technical reports for these two cases. Reports were handed to the Permanent Committee at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. It decided to close these investigations due to lack of serious harm.

#### **b. Cases and Investigations against the GCC States**

1. The Office has come across a number of cases filed against the GCC States, including cases of dumping, increase in imports, subsidy, in different productive sectors. The petrochemical sector has been the one against which most of the cases filed, followed by sectors of ceramic, iron, plastic and food stuff. These cases have ended in suspension or reduction of fee percentage, or reducing the protectionist measures.
2. The Office presents technical support in the following format:
  - Defending the position of the Sultanate of Oman and succeeding in exempting its exports from protective fees in the polypropylene case filed by Egypt.
  - Defending the position of the Sultanate of Oman in the polypropylene case film filed by Pakistan.
  - Responding to the United States in matters related to the two investigations of prevention.
  - Defending the position of the United Arab Emirates in three cases' subsidy with the European Union, dumping with the Philippines, and prevention with Morocco.
  - Defending the position of the State of Kuwait in a dumping case with Turkey.

#### **c. The Technical Consultancies and Support**

The Office has prepared a number of opinions, explanations and responses to the queries received from the Member States or the Secretariat General.

#### **d. International Cooperation**

The Office has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Commerce in the Peoples Republic of China.



# Chapter (7)

## The GCC Common Market

### **GCC Economic Citizenship**

“Economic citizenship” is the realization of a fully equal treatment among GCC nationals in all economic fields in the Member States. However, the concept of “citizenship” has undergone several developments in the history of the GCC economic joint action. Article (8) of 1981 Agreement provides for only four areas, where economic citizenship or equal treatment shall be achieved:

- Freedom of movement, work and residence.
- The right of ownership, inheritance and will.
- The freedom of engagement in economic activity.
- Free movement of capitals.

During the first two decades of establishing the GCC, the concept of equal treatment among GCC nationals was applied to many areas, as mentioned in the Agreement. In this connection, the GCC States have adopted important resolutions that provide for permitting the GCC nationals to engage in economic activities in any Member State, although this was subject to certain restrictions. That was implemented according to the gradual approach provided for in the Economic Agreement, 1981, and necessitated by the conditions then prevailing. However, in practice, it was found out that some of those controls were difficult to apply, which made the GCC nationals refrain from benefiting from the resolutions of the Supreme Council according them the right of equal treatment in those economic fields. For the joint action to shift from the stage of coordination and cooperation to integration, the trend adopted by the Economic Agreement, 2001, tends to the direct application of the concept of fully equal treatment in all economic fields.

Article (3) of the Economic Agreement, 2001, contains the most important provision concerning the economic citizenship. The said Article provides for direct implementation of the concept of fully equal treatment for all GCC nationals through according the GCC nationals residing in any Member State the same treatment accorded to its nationals without

differentiation or discrimination in all economic fields; that includes natural and legal nationals. To emphasize this concept and eliminate any ambiguity, the Article mentions ten general economic fields, for example but not limited to that, where equal treatment is to be achieved among GCC nationals. These ten fields include the following:

1. Movement and residence.
2. Work in private and government jobs.
3. Pension and social security.
4. Engagement in all professions and crafts.
5. Engagement in all economic, investment and service activities.
6. Real estate ownership.
7. Capital movement.
8. Tax treatment.
9. Stock ownership and formation of corporations.
10. Education, health and social services.

The resolution adopted by the Supreme Council at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002) set a time schedule for the completion of the requirements of the GCC Common Market, as follows:

1. Equal treatment shall be accorded to the GCC citizens by 2003 in the field of employment in the private sector, Stock ownership, formation of corporations and elimination of relevant barriers.
2. Equal treatment shall be accorded to the GCC citizens by 2005 in the field of government jobs, social insurance and pension and elimination of relevant barriers.
3. Competent committees shall complete all requirements to ensure achievement of the GCC Common Market by 2007 at the latest.

This time schedule means going ahead with all the procedures that ensure full equal treatment among GCC citizens in all the fields specified in the Economic Agreement, and elimination of all restrictions and controls that prevent achievement of full equality through updating the resolutions of joint action.

### **Mechanism of Achieving the Common Market**

At the 24<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2003) the Supreme Council adopted a mechanism for following up the progress of the Common Market,

as follows:

1. The competent ministerial committees shall propose necessary mechanisms for implementation of the GCC Common Market according to the time schedule set forth in the resolution of the Supreme Council at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session.
2. Financial and Economic Cooperation Committees shall follow up the progress of the GCC Common Market in light of the Supreme Council's resolutions and the Economic Agreement, and shall evaluate the stage of implementation reached in each aspect thereof, examine the difficulties hindering implementation and propose appropriate mechanisms for solving them.

While the Economic Agreement, 1981, does not contain any downright provision relating to economic citizenship or the Common Market, the Economic Agreement, 2001, provides that the objective of the equal treatment in the said ten fields is to achieve the GCC Common Market. The Agreement indicates further that achievement of economic citizenship is one of its objectives.

The preamble of the Economic Agreement, 2001, includes an indication that it represents a response to the aspirations of the GCC citizens to achieve GCC citizenship, including equal treatment, movement and residence, work, investment, education, health and social services.

## **Steps Towards Economic Citizenship**

### **I. Movement and residence**

#### **(a) Movement and residence of GCC citizens**

The GCC citizens enjoy equal treatment in respect to the right of residence and movement among the GCC States. This is done through an ID issued by all Member States for movement and other purpose. Statistics show that the number of citizens who moved among the Member States increased from about 11 million citizens in 2004 to more than 18 million citizens in 2013.

#### **(b) Movement of Non-GCC Nationals**

To facilitate trade movement as required by the GCC Customs Union, the Supreme Council at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002) decided

that «The competent committees shall develop practical mechanisms, subject to appropriate controls, for facilitation of the movement of certain categories of non-GCC nationals, such as foreign investors, senior executives, marketing managers and truck drivers, provided that such facilitation shall be achieved by 2003, which is in line with the requirements of the Customs Union and facilitating the free movement of the intra-GCC trade.»

The Committee of the Ministers of Interior at the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, held in October 2003, adopted a number of mechanisms to facilitate movement of the abovementioned categories among the GCC States. These mechanisms include the following:

1. Granting owners of establishments and companies and their managers and representatives legally holding residence permit in any of the GCC States, entry visas to any of the GCC Member States from the border ports according to the following rules:
  - The passport of resident should be valid.
  - The resident should hold valid legal residence permit.
  - The resident should submit the proof of his position in the company or his representation of the company.
  - The period of residence granted in such visas should be at least fourteen days.
2. Truck Drivers: Committee of the Ministers of Interior at the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting held in October 2001 approved the principle of granting truck drivers and their assistants entry visas to the Member States through border ports, to facilitate the smooth movement of trade and national goods among the GCC States. The Committee also decided in the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, held in October 2003, that the residence period granted to the truck driver and his assistant in the State to which they arrive should be at least one week. Most States have implemented these decisions according to specific procedures in each of them.
3. Foreign Investors: As for foreign investors not residing in any of the GCC States, they will be treated according to what is decided concerning tourism visas. Due to difference in fees of this type of visas among the GCC States, the Committee of the Ministers of Interior at the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, held in October 2003 directed the Secretariat General to communicate with the concerned authorities concerning visa fees and to unify them.

## **Unified Tourism Visas**

The Committee of the Ministers of Interior at the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting decided to refer the topic to the Committee of Passport Managers to complete the necessary rules to issue this type of visas and set rules for issuance of a unified visa for the businessmen.

## **II. Working at the Government and Private Sectors**

### **a) Equal Treatment at the Private Sector**

Resolution of the Supreme Council (14<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh 1993) accorded the GCC nationals employed in the private sector equal treatment as the nationals of the Member State where they are employed, subject to the «implementation controls» approved by the Council at the same session. Resolution of the Supreme Council in the 23<sup>rd</sup> session, (Doha, December 2002) stressed that «full equal treatment» shall be accorded to the GCC nationals in the field of jobs in the private sector and «elimination of the restrictions preventing that» by 2003 at the latest.

The Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs in the GCC States has adopted work programs for increasing the employment opportunities and facilitating the movement of the GCC labors in the private sector. The Executive Office of the Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs in the GCC States is following up implementation of these programs with member States. The Executive Office, in cooperation with the GCC Secretariat General, submits an independent annual report to the Supreme Council on the recent developments including the steps so far taken , the difficulties encountered and the proposals for overcoming such difficulties.

Statistics show a steady increase in the number of GCC nationals working in private sector in other Member States. The number rose from about 13 thousand employees in 2004 to about 17 thousand employees in 2013.

### **b) Equal Treatment at Governmental Sector**

Resolution of the Supreme Council (21<sup>st</sup> session, Manama 2000) has accorded the GCC nationals employed in the Civil Service in any Member State equal treatment as the nationals of the Member State where they are employed during the service, according to the following:

1. Basic salary.
2. Allowance of work nature.
3. Transport allowance.
4. Remote or harsh area allowance.
5. Periodical (annual) bonus.
6. Housing allowance not linked with citizenship.
7. Deputation allowance to accomplish any task outside the place of work, as per the distance specified in the law.
8. Allowance for assignment of carrying out other job's duties.
9. Overtime allowance for regular days, holidays and festivals.
10. Regular and urgent leaves, sick leave, maternity leave (delivery) and waiting period for a widow.
11. Compensation for death and injuries.

In cases other than the above, they will be dealt with according to the regulations and laws of the each State, taking into consideration that the item pertaining to the allowance for work nature, i.e. , risk allowance or specialization allowance aimed to encourage for the work nature and what falls under this concept.

The Supreme Council at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session Doha, December 2012 decided that «full equal treatment» shall be accorded to the GCC nationals in the field of jobs in the government sectors and social insurance and pension «elimination of the restrictions preventing that» by 2005 at the latest.

The Ministerial Committee of Civil Service has adopted several resolutions for facilitation of the intra-GCC movement and employment of GCC nationals, and substituting the non-GCC labor employed in civil service in the GCC States with the available GCC national labor, including the possibility of non-renewal of the contracts made with the non-GCC nationals employed in administrative, clerical and financial jobs once a GCC national substitute is available, as a first stage, and that Member States shall give priority to employing GCC nationals before contracting with non-GCC nationals.

Statistics show that the number of GCC States nationals working in government sector in other Member States was approximately 18 thousands in 2013, compared to 9 thousand employees in 2004.

### III. Social Insurance and Pension

- The Supreme Council (20<sup>th</sup> session, November 1993) instructed that a comprehensive appropriate Social Insurance Law should be developed in each Member State to provide equal coverage to those GCC nationals working outside their countries, or to establish a Joint Social Insurance Fund that would cover GCC national labor working in Member States.
- The Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs in the GCC States and the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee decided in October 2000 « to extend the insurance coverage applicable in each member States to include GCC nationals working outside their countries, as a transitional stage.»
- The Ministerial Council (77<sup>th</sup> session, November 2000) instructed the Social Insurance and Pension authorities to complete the tasks assigned to them under the Council's resolution at the 20<sup>th</sup> session concerning the end of service rights of the employees working outside their countries to be implemented in five years at the latest.
- The Ministerial Council (23<sup>rd</sup> session, Doha 2002) resolved that «full equal treatment» shall be accorded to the GCC nationals working in the field of social insurance and pension and to «eliminate the restrictions preventing that» by 2005 at the latest.
- The Supreme Council (25<sup>th</sup> session, Manama 2004) adopted the mechanism proposed by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee (64<sup>th</sup> meeting, may 2004) for extending the insurance coverage of the GCC nationals in the public and private sectors working in the other GCC States, in accordance with the following mechanism:
  1. The implementation will be optional for a period of one year, commencing from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, and obligatory from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006.
  2. The employer shall register GCC States nationals working with it in the general organization for social insurance / civil retirement in the State where they work, provided that this establishment notifies the civil retirement establishment / social insurance in the country of the employee of the same, as per the rules and controls agreed upon among the establishments of social insurance and civil retirement.
  3. The subscription will be collected in the following manner:

- a. The worker / employee and employer each shall bear his share in subscription based on the percentage applicable under the law of the country of the worker / employee, provided that the employer's share does not exceed the percentage applicable in the country where he works. In cases in which the contribution of the employer is less than the required percentage, the worker/employee shall cover the difference to ensure full payment of subscription to the civil retirement establishment / social insurance to whose system the worker / employee is subject to unless each State bears the difference instead of its nationals.
- b. The employer shall deduct the share of the worker / employee from the monthly salary and deposit the committed share to a bank account specified by the establishment to whose system the worker/employee is subject to within dates applicable in the country where he works.

In case, the employer fails to pay these subscriptions within their due time limits the concerned civil retirement establishment/ social insurance in the State of the worker shall communicate that to the concerned civil retirement establishment/ social insurance in the State of the worker where he works, which is responsible for following up and taking legal procedures that guarantee collection of these subscriptions in accordance with rules and provisions in force in the country, where he works.

4. The insurance cover of the GCC nationals working in other States will not affect any right and benefits granted to them by civil retirement / social insurance systems and work regulations and laws in the country where he works.
5. Approval of the draft unified law and its explanatory memo to extend the insurance coverage (civil retirement / social insurance ) for the GCC nationals in other GCC Member States and deeming its articles executive mechanism of the decision.

Statistics show the positive impacts of the decisions of the Supreme Council in this regard, represented in benefiting of a large number of GCC nationals from the extension of insurance coverage for the nationals. The number of those covered from among the GCC nationals in retirement in



other Member States rose from 791 nationals in 2004 to 10 thousand nationals in 2013, As for the social insurance, the number of nationals covered in other Member States reached a total of 7362 nationals in 2013, compared with 1285 nationals in 2004.

#### **IV. Engagement in all Professions and Crafts**

With regard to professions, the Supreme Council (4<sup>th</sup> session, November 1983) allowed the GCC professionals to engage their professions in any Member State without exception as of March 1984.

As regards crafts, the Supreme Council's resolution at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (December 2000) allowed the GCC nationals to engage in all crafts (excluding those listed under the economic activities mentioned in (V) below).

#### **V. Engagement in Economic, Investment and Service Activities**

##### **Engagement in Economic Activities**

Effective from the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Supreme Council (November 1982), GCC natural and legal nationals have been permitted to engage in several economic activities. At the 7<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, November 1986, it has been permitted to engage in retail and wholesale trade. At the 8<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 1987), controls were developed for engagement in activities and crafts. The usual procedure then adopted was that every year new crafts and economic activities would be added to the list of permitted activities. However, resolution of the Supreme Council (21<sup>st</sup> session, December 2000) allowed engagement in all economic activities and crafts without limitation, excluding 17 activities, which were then limited to the nationals of the member State, subject to the controls adopted by the Supreme Council at the 8<sup>th</sup> session.

The Resolution of the Supreme Council (23<sup>rd</sup> session, December 2002) reduced the list of the economic activities and professions whose engagement was limited to the nationals of a member State from 17 to 10 activities. The resolution provided, too, that "the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee shall be authorized to take the decisions relating to cutting or abolishing the remaining economic activities and professions whose engagement is limited to the nationals of a Member State".

The Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee has approved

the deletion of certain activities from the said list in the following years; thus reducing the “negative list” to four activities. These are Hajj and Umrah services, foreign workforce recruitment offices, establishing newspapers, magazines and printing press, and commercial agencies.

## **Engagement in Trade Activity**

### **a) Retail Trade**

The Supreme Council (7<sup>th</sup> session, 1986) allowed the GCC nationals to engage in retail trade in any Member State and accorded them equal national treatment in accordance with the rules attached to that resolution, which took effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 1987. These rules were amended at the 13<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 1992), then at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, December 2000). At the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007), the Supreme Council has approved the improved rules of engagement in retail trade, which have eliminated the restrictions governing this activity.

### **b) Wholesale Trade**

The Supreme Council (7<sup>th</sup> session, 1986) allowed the GCC nationals to engage in wholesale trade in any Member State and accorded them equal national treatment in accordance with the controls attached to that resolution, which took effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 1990. Those controls were amended at the 15<sup>th</sup> session (December 1994); the most important of which were the engagement of the natural person in trade by himself and being a resident in the country of activity and condition of a local partner. At the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007), the Supreme Council has permitted abolition of restrictions on engagement in this activity.

### **C) Opening Branches for GCC Companies**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) has permitted the national companies to open branches in other GCC States and implement full equal treatment, dealing with branches of the companies as national companies.

The past years have witnessed a remarkable surge in the number of those benefiting from these decisions. The number of permits granted to the GCC nationals to engage in various economic activities reached 40753 permits till 2013, compared with 11095 permits at the end of 2004.

## **VI. Real Estate Ownership**

Article (8) of the Unified Economic Agreement (1981) provided for permitting the real estate ownership, and Article (3) of the new Economic Agreement (2001) provides for equal national treatment in real estate ownership. However, that was made according to a number of restricting controls, particularly ownership of raw lands. Those controls have been gradually reduced and the last regulation for real estate ownership, issued at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Supreme Council (December 2002), does not contain most of those controls.

The statistical data show that GCC nationals' ownership of real estate in other GCC States reached 20555 cases of real estate ownership in 2013, which rose the cumulative total to 129769 cases of real estate ownership by the end of the same year.

## **VII. Movement of Capitals**

There are no restrictions on the intra-GCC movement of capitals. Therefore, resolutions of the Supreme Council have not addressed this subject in detail. There is an increasing intra-GCC movement of capitals, notwithstanding, increasing and promoting this movement requires fulfillment of the other requirements of the GCC Common Market, through the elimination of the restrictions on engagement of the GCC nationals in economic activities.

## **VIII. Tax Treatment**

The Supreme Council's resolution (December 1988) provided for equal tax treatment of the GCC nationals in all member States when engaged in the economic activities, professions and crafts. The said resolution provided that "with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 1989, equal tax treatment shall be accorded to the GCC nationals engaged in the allowed economic activities, including professions and crafts, in the host Member State pursuant to the provisions of the Economic Agreement and the Supreme Council's resolutions, without prejudice to any better tax benefits accorded to the GCC nationals by any Member State.". All Member States have issued implementing directives to this effect.

## **IX. Stock Ownership and Formation of Companies**

The Supreme Council's resolution (9<sup>th</sup> session, December 1988) allowed GCC nationals to own shares in stock-companies and transfer

ownership. The Supreme Council at the 15<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 1994) approved the amend rules for GCC nationals' stock ownership in joint stock companies, which stipulated that «it is permitted for the GCC nationals to form new joint stock companies and participate in their formation and subscribing in those companies and owning and trading in the shares of existing joint stock companies working in the field of economic fields allowed for the GCC nationals to engage in them based on the decisions of the Supreme Council and provisions of the Unified Economic Agreement between the GCC States. It is also allowed for them to own and trade share of joint companies, in accordance with the rules applicable to the nationals of the GCC Member State where the headquarters of the company is located. The State in which the company is established may put a condition that its nationals shall have right to own percentage not exceeding 51% of the shares of these companies.»

Article three of these rules stipulated the following: «excluding some companies such as insurance companies and banks, it is allowed for the GCC nationals to establish new joint stock companies and participate in their establishment and subscribe in them and own and trade in shares of existing joint stock companies working in the field of other economic activities at a percentage not exceeding 25% of the capital of these companies, in accordance with the rules applicable to the nationals of the GCC Member State where the headquarters of the company is located.»

At the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002), the Supreme Council issued a decision that accorded full equal treatment between the GCC nationals in the field of owning and trading in shares and establishment of companies and removed the restrictions that prevent it, within a period not exceeding end of 2003.

In this context, the Trade Cooperation Committee, at the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2003, recommended the following:

1. Urging the competent authorities of Member States to expedite the issuance of executive decisions necessary to implement the decision of the Supreme Council, to ensure achievement of full equal treatment of GCC nationals in the field of owning and trading in shares and establishment of companies and to remove restrictions that prevent it,

within a period not exceeding end of 2003.

2. As other Member States need more time to execute the decision of the Supreme Council, the Committee proposed to the Supreme Council to give more time to execute the decision during 2004.
3. Inviting the competent heads of the Capital Markets of the GCC States to set appropriate mechanisms that enable the GCC citizens to benefit from application of this decision through reciprocal listing of shares and securities in the GCC Capital Markets and encouraging to create joint companies for brokerage and looking into the possibility of creating a GCC central authority for settlement and clearing.

At the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009), the Supreme Council assigned the concerned ministerial committee, each within its jurisdiction, to set the necessary mechanisms to activate article (5) of the Economic Agreement, pertaining to enhancement of investment environment among the GCC States, and article (12) pertaining to the encouragement of establishment of joint ventures and increasing intra-GCC investments that contribute to achievement of integration among the GCC States in all the fields and proposing the appropriate solutions to overcome the obstacles that come in the way.

Accordingly, the Ministerial Committee at the 115<sup>th</sup> session, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010, decided to form a permanent committee comprising chairpersons of the Board of Directors of the Authorities organizing the Capital Markets of the GCC States that will raise its recommendations to the Ministerial Committee. In light of the tasks assigned to it, the Committee held three meetings, the last being on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012, and reached unified rules and principles for the integration of Capital Markets in the GCC States.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministerial Committee of the Chairpersons of the Board of Directors of the Authorities Regulating the Capital Markets of the GCC States shall sign a memorandum of understanding among the authorities regulating the Capital Markets of the GCC States to create framework of the joint cooperation and facilitate information exchange among the regulating authorities to execute or ensure compliance to their laws (regulations) relating to securities and any law (regulation) or regulatory or supervisory requirement, and enhance protection of investors

and safety of Capital Markets through information exchange and helping in investigation to the extent allowable in the laws (regulations) and practices of the regulating authority; and to enhance cooperation among the regulating authorities in the fields of training and development of human resources and exchange of experience to support and develop Capital Markets .

Statistical data demonstrate the direct positive impacts of the decisions of the Supreme Council with regards to owning of shares and transfer of their ownership. There has been an increase in the percentage of the joint stock companies whose shares are allowed for trading to the GCC nationals from the total joint stock companies from 20% in 1985 to 96% in 2013. Number of companies whose shares are allowed for trading to the GCC nationals reached 659 joint stock companies, with a capital reaching 226 billion dollars. Number of shareholders having GCC nationality in these companies reached about 290 thousand shareholders.

## **X. Education, Health and Social Services**

### **Public Education**

The Supreme Council (6<sup>th</sup> session, Muscat, December 1985) resolved as follows:

- 1.All GCC students in the various education stages (primary, intermediate and secondary) shall be accorded equal treatment in all Member States. All Member States have issued implementing directives to this effect.
- 2.Certificates and academic instruments issued by any official teaching institution in any Member State shall be treated the same as those issued by the Member State itself, and therefore need not be attested by the embassies, cultural attachés and the Foreign Ministries.

The statistics show the volume of big benefit from this decision and other subsequent decisions in the same framework. Number of GCC nationals studying in government schools of other Member States in 2013 reached 42462 students in all stages of public education.

### **Higher Education**

The Supreme Council's resolution (8<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, December 1987) accorded equal treatment to GCC students at higher education

institutions, in respect to admission and treatment in accordance with the following:

- a. Without prejudice to any better treatment, universities and higher education institutions shall accord GCC students, in respect to admission, the same treatment of the students in the Member State of study, according to the following controls:
  1. Applicants from other Member States shall meet the registration and admission requirements approved by the higher education institutions at the host Member State, according to available resources.
  2. Priority of admission shall be given to the GCC nationals having residence in the host Member State, who have obtained the general secondary school certificate or equivalent from the same host country.
- b. Without prejudice to any better treatment, universities and higher education institutions shall accord GCC accepted students the same treatment of the students in the host Member State in respect to the study, requirements, fees, rewards, accommodation and healthcare.”

### **Technical Education**

The Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) issued a decision, according equal treatment to GCC nationals in the field of technical education.

### **Engagement in the Economic Activity in the Educational Fields**

The Supreme Council’s resolution (16<sup>th</sup> session, December, 1995) allowed the GCC nationals, natural and legal persons, to engage in the economic activity in a number of educational fields specified in the decision.

### **Equal Treatment in Healthcare Services**

The Supreme Council’s resolution (9<sup>th</sup> session, Manama, December, 1988) resolved that GCC nationals, who are residents or visitors in any Member State, shall be accorded same treatment accorded to the nationals of the host Member State , in respect to benefiting from the services of health centers, clinics and public hospitals, and that shall be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> March 1989. All Member States have issued implementing directives to this effect.

## **Announcement of the Establishment of the GCC Common Market**

At the 28<sup>th</sup> Session (Doha, December 2007), the Supreme Council declared the launch of the GCC Common Market. For the purpose of finding a reference to the laws and procedures for the GCC Common Market, the «Common Market» Document was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008).

In order to communicate with GCC citizens, liaison officers have been appointed for the GCC Common Market from all Member States and the Secretariat General. A website for the GCC Common Market has also been designed within the website of the Secretariat General on the internet, in addition to publishing a number of publications, booklets, and statistics about the common market and distributed at a large scale to introduce them.

To follow up the progress in implementation and assessment of knowledge about the GCC Common Market, the Secretariat General has prepared questionnaires seeking opinions of the competent authorities in the Member State and chambers of commerce and industry of the GCC States to specify any difficulties faced during the course of implementation and finding solutions to them. Results of those questionnaires have been submitted to the competent committees and approved by the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008), among procedures approved for the implementation of the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to expedite performance and address obstacles faced by the joint action.

The tools enabling GCC citizens to benefit from the resolutions of the Supreme Council are also being completed through the following:

1. Measuring the degree of benefit by the GCC nationals from the Supreme Council's resolutions concerning economic citizenship.
2. Continuing disseminating awareness among GCC nationals on the advantages they would obtain from the GCC Common Market. Media officials in member States have also held several meetings wherein they have approved a number of awareness promoting mechanisms.
3. Developing mechanisms for dispute settlement set forth in the Article (27) of the Economic Agreement, which would provide a viable reference for GCC nationals and business relating to the settlement of disputes arising from the interpretation of economic citizenship.



# Chapter (8)

## Cooperation in the Field of Energy

### Objectives

The Unified Economic Agreement (1981) provided that Member States should harmonize their policies in the field of oil industry, i.e. extraction, refining, marketing, processing, pricing, exploiting of natural gas and development of the energy resources, and that Member States should develop common oil policies and take common positions towards the other world countries and at the international and specialized organizations.

Article (9) of the Economic Agreement (2001) also provides as follows:

“For the purpose of achieving integration between Member States in the fields of petroleum and minerals industry and other natural resources, and for enhancing competitive positions of Member States,

1. Member States shall adopt integrated policies in all phases of oil, gas and minerals industry to achieve optimal exploitation of natural resources, while taking into account environmental considerations and the interests of future generations.
2. Member States shall adopt unified policies for oil and gas and shall take common positions in this regard towards non-Member States and at the international and specialized organizations.
3. Member States and oil and gas companies working within them shall cooperate in supporting and developing research in the fields of oil, gas and natural resources and enhance cooperation with universities in these fields.”

### Achievements

To implement those objectives, Member States have taken several steps to enhance cooperation in the field of energy, such as the following:

#### **(1) The GCC Petroleum Strategy**

The Supreme Council (9<sup>th</sup> session, Manama, 1988) instructed the Petroleum Cooperation Committee to develop a long-term petroleum strategy for the Member States. Developing that strategy was based on the

common features of the Member States, and on the pillars on which the GCC was established; those pillars included achieving coordination, integration and coherence in all fields, and the rules and regulations that followed, in addition to the resolutions, conferences and common GCC agreements as well as the negotiating agreements and policies between Member States and the other international economic groupings and blocs.

It was also taken into account that this objective should be in line with the strategic objectives of the local development plans at Member States and the GCC long-term development strategy, which generally focuses on the development of labor force, improving living standards, diversification of national economic bases, expanding the role of the private sector in the Member States and reducing the dependence on oil as the main source of national income.

This strategy is also based on the political and economic importance of the GCC Member States at the international level and their leading role in the oil industry and their oil weight, as the Member States possess the biggest confirmed oil reserve and form the largest area of oil production and exportation. This confirms the importance of enhancing the political and economic position of the GCC Member States and their worldwide role through enhancing their role and oil weight.

Therefore, the proposed strategy takes into account both the internal and external dimensions of the GCC oil relations. The adoption of a GCC unified petroleum strategy is the best method for exploiting the most important natural resources on which their economies depend on. In this connection, the strategic vision of the GCC Member States seeks to achieve a number of main objectives through the adoption of a number of policies and procedures for achieving these objectives and evaluating the targeted performance according to a crystal-clear implementing mechanism and approved tools for following up and evaluation.

The strategy was reviewed and approved after updating it by the GCC Petroleum Cooperation Committee at the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2011, and approved by the Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Bahrain, December 2012).

## **(2) The Regional Emergency Plan of the Oil Products**

The Supreme Council, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002) adopted “The GCC Regional Emergency Plan of the Oil Products”. The plan aims to devise mechanisms of collective movement among the Member States for dealing optimally with emergency cases, when any Member State is exposed to an emergency as a result of deficiency or complete interruption of local supplies of petroleum products.

## **(3) The Oil Lending System**

The Supreme Council (8<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, December 1987) approved the intra GCC oil lending system. Lending is based on the solidarity of all Member States at the occurrence of any injury that causes breakdown of the structures transporting oil exports to the ports, provided that the injury percentage shall account for 30% of the quantity expected to be exported by the injured State and the expectation that such injury will last for at least one month, subject to the bound shares of OPEC Members.

## **(4) The Common Mining Law**

This Law encourages investors to exploit the available and promising minerals resources in the region. It specifies the conditions, obligations and rights of all the parties engaged in the exploitation, processing and marketing of the various ores in a commercial form in some Member States. The adoption of such a Law will be in line with the formation of the GCC Common Market, which requires unification of laws, regulations and legislations, particularly in the field of investment; where the investor finds similarity among GCC Member States in respect to his rights and obligations. The Supreme Council approved the law at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012).

## **(5) Petroleum Media Strategy**

The GCC Petroleum Media Strategy has been prepared due to the fact that the petroleum is a strategic commodity, main source of energy, and basic driving force of GCC and international economies as well as due to the GCC States' weight and international position with respect to petroleum. These States strive to achieve their petroleum related interests and achieve stability in the international petroleum market, in cooperation with all parties. The GCC Petroleum Media Strategy aims to counter the attempts of reducing the importance of petroleum as the main source of energy, and the media

campaigns directed against the GCC petroleum policies and positions and creating confusion concerning their ability to ensure supplies. It also aims to explain and highlight GCC petroleum policies. The Supreme Council approved this strategy at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012).

## **(6) Correlations between Energy and Environment**

The Supreme Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> session, ( Abu Dhabi, 1998) adopted the following two recommendations concerning the lead-free gasoline and the reduction of sulfur content in diesel:

- The GCC Member States reiterate the importance of Human and Environment protection through offering the lead-free gasoline by the national petroleum companies in the local markets of the GCC Member States. To ensure concurrent implementation of this recommendation among the GCC Member States, due to its relation to the intra-GCC transportation movement, the GCC Member States stress speeding up the production of this product and marketing it locally by 2002 at the latest with an octane number 90-97.
- The GCC Member States reiterate that all measures shall be taken to reduce the sulfur content in the diesel produced by the national refineries to be compatible with the internationally accepted levels for protection of health and environment from the adverse health impacts of the sulfuric products.
- Pursuant to the Supreme Council' resolution, the Ministries of Petroleum and affiliate corporations have implemented that resolution by introducing the lead-free gasoline with the designated octane number during the specified period. They have also adopted projects for producing the low- sulfur content diesel amongst their strategic priorities.

# Chapter (9)

## Cooperation in the Fields of Electricity and Water

### Objectives

The Unified Economic Agreement (1981) provides that Member States shall coordinate and establish infrastructure projects, including electricity generation and water desalination plants to achieve common economic growth and coherence of economic activities. The Economic Agreement (2001) also provides that the Member States shall adopt integrated policies in infrastructure projects and basic services such as electricity, aimed to support productive coherence among the GCC States; and to benefit from the economies of scale; and to achieve economic integration and to enhance distribution of its gains among them.

The cooperation in the field of electricity and water includes many fields, the most important of which are GCC electricity interconnection and the establishment of database of electricity and water information. It also includes adoption of electricity and water benchmarking standards, unification of electricity and water technical specifications, rationalization of electricity and water consumption, development of water and electricity subscribers' services, and conducting study on the use of nuclear energy in production of electricity and water desalination. Cooperation in this field also encompasses representation of the GCC States as a single bloc in regional and international forums and authorities specialized in the field of electricity and water, as well as holding annual meeting of the GCC electricity regulators.

In the field of water, the cooperation includes working to achieve water security in the GCC States through adopting integrated management of water, working to prepare common water policies, issuing common water legislations and regulations, preparation of common water emergency plan, nationalization of water desalination industry, managing joint water resources, maintaining quality of drinking water, and reusing treated sewage water.

### Water Linkage

In implementation of the directive of Their Majesties and Highnesses

leaders of the GCC States in the 14<sup>th</sup> consultative meeting, held on 14 May 2012, in the city of Riyadh, to study GCC water interconnection; and in the light of Supreme Council's resolutions in this regard and valuable studies prepared which suggest that the water source should be the Arabian sea or Sea of Oman. A specialized consultancy company has been assigned the task of preparing an amended study of water interconnection based on the terms of reference, taking into consideration the new developments in the region. This study will be completed and its results will be submitted to the Supreme Council.

### **Drafting of a long-term comprehensive water strategy**

In implementation of the directive of Their Majesties and Highnesses leaders of the GCC States at the 14<sup>th</sup> consultative meeting, held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012, in the city of Riyadh, to study inter-GCC long term comprehensive water strategy; taking into consideration the recommendation of the Abu Dhabi Declaration in this regard, and benefiting from the researches and studies carried out by the universities and national research centers at the GCC States in this regard; one of the national expert offices has been assigned to prepare this strategy.

## **Achievements**

### **I. Electrical Interconnection**

GCC electrical interconnection is one of the most important projects for linking infrastructure approved by the GCC. Among the benefits of the project are reduction of the reserve required in every State and mutual coverage in case of emergency, and benefiting from the surplus and reducing cost of electric power production. In implementation of the decision taken at the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 1997), the GCC States worked to execute the first stage of the project that includes Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait. In 2001, GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) was established to launch the project, operate and maintain it.

In November 2005, a number of contracts were signed to execute the first phase of the project at a price exceeding one billion US dollars. The works of this phase was completed and the actual operation began in July 2009. With this, four Member States have been interconnected electrically

at a historic moment represented by the inauguration of this phase by Their Majesties and Highnesses leaders of the GCC on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009, in the State of Kuwait.

The second phase was completed in 2006 by raising the efficiency of the two electricity networks of the UAE and Sultanate of Oman. As for the third phase, the first part has been completed by linking UAE network with main linkage network on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011. With this the number of GCC States interconnected electrically reached five States.

The second part of the third phase is linking the Sultanate of Oman with the main grid through the UAE. Currently, work is underway to specify linkage points and to study the route of the overhead line and to raise the grid power in the Sultanate of Oman to 400 kV. With the completion of this part which is expected to be completed this year, the electricity linkage project will be completed with all its three phases.

To regulate the relationship among the Member States participating in the electricity interconnection project, the Ministers of Electricity and Water approved in 2009 the General Electricity Interconnection Agreement which entered into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009. This agreement provides for formation of «Consultative and Regulatory Committee for Electricity Interconnection» tasked with organizing the works of Electricity Interconnection Authority, playing the role of consultant for the Electricity and Water Cooperation Committee and following up implementation of its decisions relating to electricity interconnection project.

## **II. Electricity and Water Database**

To facilitate exchange of information among the electricity and water authorities in the Member States, and to benefit from the accumulated expertise at each Member State, preparation of the structures required for establishing a common database for the electricity and water sectors in the Member States have been finalized. The data pertaining to Member States are currently being entered and updated.

## **III. Rationalization of Electric and Water Consumption**

The heat insulation regulation was prepared, and the Supreme Council in 2002 adopted application of the heat insulation to all buildings at Member

States. The Ministerial Committee, concerned with the municipal affairs, was instructed to determine the required heat insulation levels and prepare the relevant controls.

Furthermore, in the field of rationalization awareness, messages of electric and water conservation have been prepared and circulated to the Ministries of Information and TV and Radio Stations at Member States. Joint workshops on rationalization of electric and water consumption are annually organized in one of the Member State, in addition to the joint celebration of the GCC Water Week. The Secretariat General supports and participates in the conferences and exhibitions concerned with rationalization of consumption of electricity and water organized in the GCC States.

#### **IV. Subscribers' Services in Electricity and Water Sector**

The GCC States have achieved great and purposeful achievements to develop subscribers' services through devising programs and systems based on the advanced technology. They have taken keen interest in the quality of service, appraisal of performance level, and enhancement of front desk offices and contact centers. In view of the diverse experiences of the GCC States in methods of striving to develop subscribers' services, workshops are held periodically to exhibit and exchange GCC States' experiences in this field. Booklets containing comprehensive knowledge about subscribers' services in the electricity and water sectors of the GCC States have been compiled.

#### **V. Unification of the Electric and Water Technical Standards**

The Ministers of Electricity and Water at the GCC Member States have adopted a total of ninety six common GCC technical standards. Of these, there are sixty electricity standard specifications, and thirty six water standard specifications. The standards have been posted on a special website on the internet. In addition, the Secretariat General has prepared a manual containing names of approved GCC standards; it is updated every three years.

Following establishment of GCC Standardization Organization in 2008, and to avoid duplicity in work, integration method has been approved between electricity and water technical specification unification committee and GCC Standardization Organization. The Organization adopts technical specifications prepared by the Committee and transforms them into unified GCC standard specifications.



## **VI. Studying the Bases for Calculating the Electricity and Water Tariff in the GCC States**

Mandated by the Ministers of Electricity and Water, a specialized committee prepared a report to determine the bases for calculating the electricity and water tariff with a view to identifying the aspects of similarity and divergence among these bases. This report is being updated to carry out a study of electricity and water tariff at the GCC level which would achieve rationalization of consumption and raise the efficacy of use due to the high growth of demand of these two services.

## **VII. Statistical Booklets and Manuals of Water and Electricity**

A number of manuals and booklets in the field of electricity and water in GCC States have been issued. Among those are the following: Electric Power Stations Manual, Manual for Methods of Operation and Maintenance of Electricity and Water Desalination Facilities, Technical Accidents Manual, Manual of National Companies Manufacturing Materials and Tools Used in Operation and Maintenance of Electricity and Water Desalination Facilities, Thermal Insulation Panel, Statistical Booklet of Water, Booklet of Subscribers' Services in Electricity and Water Sectors, Booklet on Water Desalination Facilities in GCC States, Manual of Electricity and Water Technical Specifications, and Statistical Booklet of Electricity in GCC States.

## **VIII. Water Security and Integrated Management of Water**

The committees specialized in the field of water have drafted a paper titled «Guidelines for the preparation of common GCC water policy» and another paper titled « program of integrated management and sustainable development of water». The program includes a number of projects and common activities such as preparation of common water legislations and laws, nationalization of water desalination, and management of joint water resources, and preparation of GCC water emergency plan, monitoring drinking water quality, reuse of treated sewage water.

The implementation of the abovementioned projects is proceeding according to the specific action plan and program, which are updated continuously as per the conditions and new developments. Given below is a list of the implemented projects:

1. Preparation of Joint water legislations and regulations: These legislations and regulations aim to preserve the water resources of both types: conventional and non-conventional, as well as the rationalization of its use. In this context the following laws have been formulated, which have been approved by the Supreme Council as reference laws for a period of two years which will thereafter be changed to obligatory laws.
  - Surface and Ground Water Preservation Law.
  - Law of Reuse of Treated Sewage Water.
  - Water Desalination Law.
2. Nationalization of desalination industry: Terms of reference have been prepared for the study of manufacturing of spare parts used in desalination plants in the GCC States. Some specialized establishments and authorities are also being contacted to complete this study.
3. Monitoring and managing joint ground water resources: Terms of reference for conducting a comprehensive study on the joint water layers in the GCC States and methods of preserving them and protecting them from depletion, pollution and finding a joint mechanism for their management.
4. Preparation of Common Water Emergency Plans: A joint water emergency plan as a guiding reference for the GCC States to face any emergency in relation to water such as environmental or natural disasters or those resulting from sabotage etc. Review of this plan and feasibility study is underway to make this plan obligatory in the future.
5. Monitoring quality of drinking water: Given the importance of the quality of drinking water and necessity of protection of these waters from various forms of pollution, currently a study is being carried out to know the type and quantity of pollutants in the Arabian Gulf water and to find the best methods to combat these pollutants and reduce their impacts on the drinking water.
6. Reuse of the treated sewage water: The treated sewage water has become a source among sources of water that may replace conventional water resources to use for certain purposes according to specific specifications and criteria. Currently consideration is being made to find the optimum method of dealing with this relatively new source of water and to set rules and criteria for its use.

7. Coordination with the authorities concerned with agriculture and environment within the framework of water and food security: In view of the close link between the water security and food security and their shared impacts on the environment, there is ongoing coordination with the authorities concerned with agriculture and environment in the GCC and Member States to find methods of coordination and cooperation and to avoid duplicity in work.

## **IX. International Cooperation in the Field of Electricity and Water**

A working group has been formed for cooperation with other states and regional groups in the field of electricity and water. Its task is to implement action plan of joint cooperation in this field approved by the joint ministerial councils within the framework of strategic dialogues with these states and groups. The joint subcommittee for cooperation among the GCC and Republic of Turkey in the field of electricity and water has recommended holding a workshop in the field of exploiting investment opportunities for water production in Turkey using energy of available water, and another workshop to study the possibility and method of linking GCC electricity network with Turkish electricity network to reach the European network.

## **X. Using Nuclear Energy in Electricity Generation and Water Desalination**

The Director of the Department of Electricity and Water at the Secretariat General has been named as a member of the team assigned the task to follow up the study on using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, participate in the works of the team and submit an annual report to the Ministers of Electricity and Water.

## **XI. Forum of Electricity Organizers**

The Secretariat General, in coordination with the Member States, organizes a forum of the GCC electricity organizers, every two years in one of the Member State.

## **XII. Private Sector's Support and Participation in Joint Projects**

The Secretariat General has provided moral support to conduct initial and detailed studies for the project of establishment of a «GCC central lab for inspection of electrical equipment of high voltage» which has been done

thanks to the initiative and funding from some private sector companies working in this field. The Secretariat General has been providing this support in its capacity as an observer member in the founding committee of the project, and by inviting the private sector of the GCC States to participate in this vital and important project for the electricity sector of the GCC States.

### **XIII. Specialized GCC Non-Governmental Bodies**

The Secretariat General has provided its support to the non-governmental committees and authorities, in the Member States, specialized in the field of electricity and water, such as the Regional Committee for Electricity Systems in the GCC States, and Water Science and Technology Association in the GCC States. The Secretariat General has contributed in the first phases of establishment of these organizations. It has been providing moral support through participation in its capacity as an observer in the boards of directors of these organizations, and in sponsoring conferences and events organized by them.

# Chapter (10)

## Cooperation in the Field of Industry

### Objectives

The GCC Member States are coordinating their industrial efforts, developing policies and proposing means for the industrial transformation of the GCC Member States on an integral basis, through the unification of their industrial legislation and regulations and expanding industry to include the whole territory of the GCC Member States through promoting the industries ancillary to the basic enterprises distributed among Member States according to their relative privileges.

In this connection, Article (8) of the Economic Agreement (2001) envisaged the objectives of the joint action in the field of industrial development as follows:

1. Member States shall adopt the necessary policies for increasing the contribution of the industrial sector in economy and harmonize the industrial activity on an integral basis, including implementation of the “Unified Strategy for Industrial Development in the GCC Member states”.
2. Member states shall unify their industrial legislation and laws, including the laws for encouragement of industry, anti-dumping and safeguards.

### Achievements

GCC Member States have exerted all efforts to enhance their industrial development, such as:

- Adoption of the Unified Strategy for Industrial Development in the GCC Member states, with a view to achieving an industrial development based on integral bases and increasing the industrial sector’s contribution to national income. At the 6<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, 1985), the Supreme Council approved the Unified Strategy of Industrial Development and approved the revised Strategy at the 9<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, 1988) to keep abreast with the new economic developments.

- GCC citizenship in the field of industry: the Unified Economic Agreement, 1981, has exempted industrial products originating in the GCC Member States from customs duties and duties having a similar effect. Many barriers hindering the intra-GCC flow of industrial products have been eliminated, as stipulated in the Economic Agreement of 2001 to accord goods produced in any of the GCC States as the national products. Since the establishment of the GCC Customs Union in January 2003 all the products produced in the GCC States have been exempted from custom duties.

At the 7<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, November 1986), the Supreme Council allowed GCC investors to obtain loans from the industrial development banks and funds in Member States and accorded them equal national treatment. Number of loans granted in this framework till 2013 reached 133 loans in total, of which value exceeded 1.64 billion dollars.

- Exempting the industry inputs from customs duties: the Supreme Council at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, 2001) decided to exempt the industrial plants in Member States from the customs duties imposed on their imports of machinery, equipment parts, raw and semi-manufactured materials and the packing materials immediately required for industrial production. Necessary controls have also been prepared.
- Unification of industrial laws and rules: Many laws and rules have been drafted. These laws and rules include the Rules for Coordinating and Promoting the establishment of Industrial Enterprises, the Common Law for Industrial Regulation, the Law on Anti-dumping and Countervailing Measures and Safeguards and the Rules for giving Priority to GCC National Products in Government Procurement, Unified Rules for Promoting Establishment of Common Industrial Enterprises in the GCC States, a Law for Promotion and Development of Industry in the GCC States whose implementing requirements are being completed, and a Unified GCC Patent Law. Furthermore, a law for encouraging foreign investments in GCC Member States is currently being drafted.
- Member States have drafted the following documents: (1) «Methods and fields of increasing contribution of national industry in the

national economy of the GCC States, (2) Methods of developing and encouraging investment in common industrial enterprises in the GCC States, (3) Using GCC industrial products as a part of loans and aid provided by the GCC States to other states.

- Member States are drafting a comprehensive strategy for development of non-oil exports. The strategy is to contain long-term and short-term goals and enhances competitiveness of the GCC exports.
- Meetings of industrialists of the GCC States with their counterparts in other states: The GCC Secretariat General have organized several conferences, symposiums and meetings between GCC industrialists and their partners in other countries and economic groupings. These forums included conferences between the GCC States and the EU, India, US, Japan and Russia. Meeting of industrialists with Yemen aim to explore investment opportunities there.

# Chapter (11)

## Cooperation in the Field of Patents

### Outset and Objectives

The Supreme Council at the 13<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 1992) approved the GCC Patent Law and the Statute of the Office, in line with the provisions of the GCC Unified Economic Agreement, especially Article (20) pertaining to the intellectual property, with a view to pushing ahead the scientific and technical advancement, achieving the cooperation objectives and setting up the necessary scientific basis for supporting and promoting research and applied science and technology.

The GCC Patent Law was amended per resolution of the Supreme Council at the 20<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, November 1999). The Rules of Implementation were also amended per resolution of the Ministerial Council (74<sup>th</sup> session, April 2000) to be consistent with international agreements in patent field such as Paris Convention (Industrial Property) and TRIPs Agreement, which address aspects of intellectual property in World Trade Organization. Currently work is underway to amend the Patent Law to be consistent with the international developments and changes in the intellectual property laws.

The GCC Patent Office, was established within the GCC Secretariat, as a regional patent office, having a board of directors comprising representatives from the GCC States and an executive body. The Office has started its activities in October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998, by receiving patent requests and granting patent rights.

The Patent Office aims to contribute to protection of intellectual property rights by granting patent rights at the GCC level. It encourages scientific research, facilitates the flow of technology among Member States, and pushes forward the wheel of economic development. In addition, it contributes to the transfer and adaptation of technology, promotes and develops local technologies in line with the nature of region's need and goals of progress and development therein. It also encourages investment in production field, activates industrial and commercial markets by providing new types of products, contributes to industrial and agricultural development by disseminating the inventions that serve various fields.



## **Work Mechanism**

The Office grants patent certificates to the filed applications if they meet the requirements set forth in the Office's Bylaw and the Implementation Rules thereof. The Patents granted by the Office are valid across all Member States and need not any further procedures at Member States. The Patent Law prohibits infringing any patent issued by the Office. The concerned authorities in each States hear the cases of infringement committed in its territory on the patent rights granted by the Office.

## **Grievances Committee**

The Ministerial Council forms the Grievances Committee at the Patent Office based on Article (28) of GCC Patent Law. The duration period of committee's work has been fixed as three years. The committee is composed of 12 members; each Member State is represented by two members: a legal expert and a technician specialized in a specific scientific field. The Committee members are elected in their personal capacity not in their official capacity. The Committee's jurisdiction is to hear grievances arising from any decision issued from the Patent Office. As for disputes relating to infringement on a patent right or likelihood of its occurrence, such disputes will be heard by the competent authorities in each Member State, in the place of occurrence of the infringement. The decisions issued by the Committee may be challenged in the Board of Grievances of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State wherein the headquarters is based.

In 2013, five grievances were filed to the Grievance Committee. The Committee held two meetings and discussed 61 grievances, and issued 55 decisions, while one grievance was withdrawn.

## **Achievements**

### **I. Requests submitted and Patents Granted:**

The total number of the applications deposited with the Patent Office until the end of 2013 accounted for 26117 patent applications. The number of applications deposited with the Office over the five years: 2009,2010,2011,2012 and 2013, totaled 2460,2439,2623,3001, and 2849 applications respectively. That is an annual increase amounting to 10.8%, 0.9% , 7.5% , 14.4% , 5.1% , respectively.

By the end of 2013, the number of patents granted by the Office totaled

2458 patents. In 2013, the Office granted 424 patents, while the number of applications that were rejected for non-completion of the requirements or the request of the applicants to discontinue the granting procedures amounted to 6436 applications. The Office publishes the «Patent Bulletin» , of which twenty issues have been issued so far, which is currently issued at the rate of two issues in a year. The office also makes this information available at its web site.

## **II. Supporting Innovation and Invention**

### **Highlighting World Intellectual Property Day in the GCC States**

The Office has started implementation of the decision of the Board of Directors pertaining to unification of efforts towards highlighting World Intellectual Property Day, which is observed on April 26<sup>th</sup> of every year, through organizing a workshop at this occasion, in coordination and participation with GCC national patent offices. The workshop is rotated annually among the GCC States. In addition, the Office has prepared common awareness and media publications in order to disseminate the culture of intellectual property. The Office also cooperated with the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology, in organizing the «Third Saudi Intellectual Property Forum» under the title of «The Economies of Intellectual Property».

### **Prize of Patent Office for Support of innovation and invention**

To motivate GCC nationals for innovation and invention, pursuant to the provision of article 20 of the GCC Economic Agreement, stipulating that «the GCC States shall set programs for the encouragement of gifted and supporting innovation and inventions, the Office has started from 2010, presenting cash prize from 50,000 to 100,000 Riyals, in official inventions exhibitions organized by the GCC States on its territories. The Office invites to these exhibitions inventors from all over the GCC States to exhibit their inventions. The prize is awarded to the first three winners from GCC States inventors. In 2013, the prize was awarded in the «6<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition for Inventions in the Middle East « held in the State of Kuwait, and at the exhibition of «Innovation 2013» held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **Participation in Inventions Exhibitions**

The Office participated in 2013 in the wing of «6<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition on Inventions in the Middle East» held in the State of Kuwait, and

in the wing of «Innovation 2013» held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It has also supervised and contributed to cover the participation of two inventors from each GCC State in both abovementioned exhibitions.

Within the framework of international exhibition, the Office participated in the wing of International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva 2013. It also supervised and contributed in covering the cost of participation of six inventors from the GCC States at the rate of one inventor from every State.

### **III. Studies**

The Office's Board of Directors has been assigned the task of conducting some studies that would draw an action plan for the office as a basis for some development decisions. In 2013 the following studies have been implemented:

- Study on the mechanisms of unification and coordination of efforts and exchange of experiences among the GCC Patent Office and the patent offices of the GCC States.
- A study on the technical and business incubators and their role in supporting the start-up projects in the GCC States.

### **IV. Coordination among Member States in the Field of Patents**

Between the period from 2006 to 2011, five coordinative meetings of the Managers of the patent offices of the GCC States have been held. These meetings issued a set of recommendations dealing with common cooperation in the field of patent.

### **V. International Cooperation**

The GCC Patent Office attends the activities organized by patent offices in other states. The Office also signed memorandums of understanding with the Chinese Intellectual Property Office, and Austrian Patent Office with a view to benefit from them in providing training to its employees and to inspect patent requests.

The Patent Office participates in the activities and meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in its capacity as an observer. The Office also implements the memorandum of Understanding signed between the GCC Secretariat General and World Intellectual Property Organization.

The GCC Secretariat General has also been granted a position of observer in the Council of Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The Patent Office participates representing the Secretariat General in the activities of the Council and follows up the outcomes.

## **VI. Media Efforts**

The GCC Patent Office plays a role in media coverage of the activities and events held in the GCC States related to the field of intellectual property, to contribute to increasing dissemination of the culture of intellectual property among GCC States nationals.

# Chapter (12)

## Cooperation in the Field of Transportation

### Objectives

Cooperation in the field of Transportation aims at coordinating infrastructure projects such as seaports, airports and roads, and supporting the existing relevant institutions in charge of these projects in the Member States. It also aims at coordinating policies of intra-GCC aviation. The Committee of the Ministers of Transportation and relevant sub-committees coordinate cooperation in this field. The following is a brief summary of the GCC achievements in this vital field.

### Achievements

#### I. Rail

In implementation of the resolution of the Supreme Council at the 24<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2003) instructing the GCC Secretariat General to conduct a feasibility study on the project of constructing a GCC railway that interconnects all GCC Member States, the GCC Secretariat General completed preparing the study, in coordination with the Member States, and the concerned ministerial committees. The Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) decided to move the project of GCC railways to the phase of preparation of detailed engineering designs. The Council also decided to study the establishment of a GCC railway authority for the supervision of the implementation of the project in an integrated manner, and to coordinate among the Member States to align the GCC railways with the national railways. The Supreme Council also directed to intensify the work to accomplish this vital project as soon as possible, using the best available specifications internationally. In implementation of that directive, a technical and financial committee have been formed of the Ministries of Transportation and Ministries of Finance and Economy in the GCC States, to follow up the implementation of the project in an integrated manner consistent with the national railway networks.

The Secretariat General follows up with the Member States the implementation of the project which has achieved tangible progress. The

project is expected to be fully completed within the specified timeframe in 2018, including the following:

1. The Member States' commitment to implement the action plan and time schedule to finish the preparation of detailed engineering designs of the project within 2013 and 2014. They are committed to implement the project and operate it during 2018.
2. Approval of the Comprehensive Specifications Booklet for the implementation of the GCC railway project during the phase of preparation of the detailed engineering designs of the project. The Booklet has been approved and adopted by the Member States in order to ensure the implementation of the project in an integrated manner consistent with the national railway networks in the GCC States.
3. Completion of determining coordinates of the railway track of the GCC States and points of connection of the route among the neighboring States, and the engineering maps, which will be updated as required.
4. Completion of the semi-final draft of the Booklet of the General Framework of the Project Operation Requirements, including proposing laws and legislations necessary for the requirements of transportation of goods and passengers among the Member States, such as passports, customs, etc. It is expected to be completed in their final form and would be approved by the Member States by the end of 2014.
5. The Secretariat General, a consultant from the World Bank, and King Fahd Causeway Authority are participating in the preparation of a feasibility study to link the Kingdom of Bahrain and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the GCC railway project through a bridge.

## **II. Land Transportation**

- Preparation of common standards for construction of interconnecting road and main roads in Member States.
- Executive and regulatory regulations for the implementation of standard specifications and the unified terminologies and definitions of the project.
- Establishing the GCC Road Engineering Association to improve the levels of the GCC roads engineering and enable the road engineers at Member States to exchange views and expertise in this field.

- Preparation of the Directory of the organizational structures for the Ministries of Communications at Member States with a view to unifying those structures.
- Preparation of the Directory of Traffic Controls
- Preparation of the Directory for Highway fees
- Preparation of the Transport Safety Rules in Member States
- The Supreme Council adopted a resolution permitting GCC Member States' natural and legal nationals to engage in all kinds of transportation activities in the Member States and treat them as nationals of the host Member State.

### **III. Air Transportation**

- Allowing national carriers to sell tickets directly without a national general agent or sponsor in Member States, which would make it easier for GCC nationals and residents to get air tickets from the national carriers directly and would consequently increase the income of national carriers.
- Establishing a joint GCC office at IATA to coordinate GCC positions at the international events, follow up the developments in air transportation and notify Member States of such developments.
- Establishing a joint catering unit at Heathrow Airport, London. That catering unit will supply the aircraft of GCC national carriers with meals conforming to the Islamic teachings. Furthermore, many carriers belonging to Islamic countries will also be supplied with such meals, which will contribute to increasing the income of the national carriers.
- Increasing the number of flights among GCC States with a view to fostering ties and visits among GCC nationals and enhancing intra-GCC trade and tourism.
- Procuring a joint insurance policy for the GCC national carriers, which would cut relevant costs and provide national carriers with better conditions and privileges in this regard.
- Group (joint) purchasing of jet fuel at some stations worldwide.
- Preparing a unified training directory and a security procedures directory for national carriers.
- Creating unified region of aviation information for the GCC States.

- Unified program for assessment of safety in foreign airplanes operating in GCC States.

#### **IV. Sea Transportation**

- Issuance of the Unified Directory of the Port Rules and Regulations at GCC Member States to be binding on all Member States .
- Preparation and adoption of the Standard Model for the GCC Port Statistics.
- Issuance of the GCC Common Maritime Law to be implemented by the ports of the GCC Member States and the GCC Maritime Affairs Departments.
- All Member States have signed the MOU on the inspection and surveillance of vessels in the seaports of Member States (Riyadh MOU), which is an international MOU among some countries belonging to one region at any part of the world. This MOU addresses the safety and protection of marine environment at that region. That MOU was made active by establishing a Secretariat Office and Information Center for the MOU at Muscat where they commenced their tasks. The Office of MOU Secretariat has been given legal, administrative and financial independency, to be independent from the GCC Secretariat General.
- Adoption of safety rules for small-load vessels not subject to international conventions.
- Starting preparation of a study on establishing a GCC company for marine navigation aids, which is expected to be completed in 2014.
- Unified procedure for maritime classification.
- Code of Conduct for Marine Lines federations.
- Code of safety department ISM CODE issued by the International Maritime Organization.
- International Code for vessels and ports safety ISPS-CDE.



# Chapter (13)

## Cooperation in the Field of Telecommunications

### Objectives

In consideration of the increasing importance of telecommunications in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Economic Agreement, 2001, has outlined the objectives of the joint work in this vital field. Article (24) of the Agreement provided that “ Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure integration of their telecommunication policies, including telephone, post and data network services, which would lead to improving their service levels and economic efficiency and to strengthening the ties among GCC citizens as well as private and public institutions.”

### Achievements

Several achievements have been attained in the telecom field over the past years. These achievements can be summed up as follows:

- The Permanent Committee for Telecommunication established in the Gulf region (excluding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) in 1970 has been merged with the GCC Secretariat General. Its internal statute was approved by the Supreme Council in 1985.
- Completing the study on integration among the GCC States in the field of telecommunications
- Interconnecting the GCC States through optical fiber cables
- Expanding the GCC local networks to accommodate the ending and transiting GCC traffic.
- Unification of several training programs in the field of telecommunications and application of such programs at the institutes and colleges.
- Conducting a specialized technical study of the nature of dissemination of waves in the Arabian Gulf region and impacts of the phenomenon of air passages on the dissemination of waves in the Gulf region. The study has relied upon metrological information of the GCC States for a period of ten years which resulted in an arithmetical model of the dissemination of wireless waves in the Arabian Gulf region.
- Organizing several joint courses by the telecom institutes, colleges

- and centers and admitting many GCC trainees into these courses.
- Offering many scholarships to GCC citizens.
  - Establishing the GCC Group within the Board of Directors of the Maritime Satellite Organization.
  - Preparation of a plan for the GCC States for distribution and use of terrestrial digital TV channels and coordinating in this regard with the neighboring States (Iraq, Yemen and Iran). This plan has been approved and registered with the International Telecommunication Union at the Regional Conference on Terrestrial Digital Television Channels in 2006.
  - Formation of the GCC Group at the Governing Council of Intelsat.
  - Adopting the GSM system across all Member States.
  - Adopting a mechanism of operation for second and third generation networks of mobile telephone in border regions among the GCC States, to prevent mutual interference in these networks in border regions among the GCC States.
  - Adopting the Service Restoration Plan (Emergency) in the telecom field among the GCC States
  - Offering discounts in all telecom service rates during night hours, Fridays and official holidays across Member States.
  - Reducing fees and prices of telecom services.
  - Approving mechanism of operating the systems used in broadband in the border areas, among the GCC States.
  - Application of the principle that the sender retains all the revenues (S.K.A) upon accounting.
  - Reducing the inter-calculation rates with such countries that apply high rates, through the working team which has made collective (group) visits to those countries
  - Organizing a number of specialized forums about the effects of the WTO Agreement on Telecommunications and Post.
  - Reducing the inter-calculation rates for the telephone roaming among the GCC States.
  - Formation of a joint team among the competent authorities in the GCC States and representatives of the United States' Department of Defense, and agreeing on the mechanism of operating portable radars

on the American vessels and vessels of the allied forces present in the Arabian Gulf region, together with specifying the ranges within which they may operate, in order to avoid any interference by these radars in the telecommunications services of the GCC States.

- Finalization of the direct interconnection between the Internet networks at the GCC Member States due to the economic benefits thereof, the information security and specification of the names and domains of the GCC Internet scopes, enhancement in the local content of the internet network and making efforts for Arabization of the internet data.
- Adopting the methodology developed by King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, provided that such methodology shall be adopted as a GCC basis for Arabizing the bands and sites.
- Adopting a mechanism to coordinate the use of (FM) radio channels among the GCC States and neighboring States in the Arabian Gulf region, that contain technical specifications that must be adhered to when operating these channels, in order to avoid any interferences among them.
- Coordinating and unification of positions in international forums in posts and telecommunications fields.
- Completing the links among the GCC Member States through optical fiber cables. Such links have now become integral and highly efficient.
- Intensifying the exploitation of the GCC transit centers for passing the intra-GCC surplus movement and that outgoing to other non-GCC countries.
- Adopting commercial and preferential discounts for the intra-GCC transit rates that are conforming to the technical and pricing benefit. The transit prices applied among the GCC States should be consistent with the price and technical feature.
- Agreement on the regulating mechanism for operation of (TETRA) Networks in border regions among the GCC States. It has been agreed upon to unify the ranges designations for these network for commercial and security uses.
- Opening national markets at the GCC Member States for competition and the access of GCC companies in this field.

- Approving the construction of CERTs to address accidents and response thereto at the time of occurrence at various levels, and establishing a cooperative network among the CERTs for the exchange of information and the technologies of information security on the Internet.
- Offering discounts on the rates collected from users, which conforms to the discount on the inter-calculating rates.
- Formation of a team of concerned authorities of the GCC States to crystalize the unified viewpoint toward the topics presented to the international telecommunication conferences, which have direct impact on the telecommunication services in the GCC States.
- Organizing a number of specialized courses and workshops in management, use and monitoring of spectrum and cases of health and environment and their relationship with the telecomm services.
- Agreement on unification of ranges used in the operational communications among the GCC railway network of the GCC State.
- Application of the “CAMEL” feature to the networks in question, taking into account the latest applications of this feature.
- The GCC Member States have become members in some international organizations such as International Telecom Union, Universal Postal Union, as well as the Investment Council of the International Telecom Union.
- Coordination and registration of a number of frequencies required by the GCC for the service of aviation, with International Civil Aviation Organization.
- Setting rules governing the licensing of ground stations on the surface buoys in the GCC States.
- Adopting a plan for the GCC States for mass movement from analogue TV broadcasting to digital broadcasting, together with specifying time schedule and technology to be used.
- Adoption of the MOU on Express Courier among GCC member States
- Organizing the GCC Joint Post Stamps Exhibition in Member States every year according to the alphabetical order
- Offering preferential discount postal rates for all printed matters

published at Member States and a discount postal rate among Member States

- The approval to reduce the compensation amount in case of non-conformity of the postal parcel exchanges of the express post among Member States
- The issuance of a Unified GCC Stamp on the GCC 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Participation of Member States in the International Stamp Exhibition under the name of “ The GCC Postal Group”
- Adopting group purchasing of the post materials and equipment
- Starting to promote and market the new express post product under a new name «GULF EX» and approval of slab system in its tariff.
- Reducing roaming prices among the GCC States by more than %50.
- Finalization of a study on preparation of common law governing the work of companies working in the field of express courier, and parcels in the GCC States and its internal bylaw.
- establishing an express post courier among GCC Member States
- Membership of all the three sectors of International Telecommunication Union i.e., Radio, telecommunication development, telecommunication standardization sector, and participation in conferences organized by these sectors to follow up the interest of GCC States.
- Continuous coordination with the permanent Arab Working Group of spectrum emanating from the Arab World league for unification of positions on the topics presented to the international conferences specialized in telecom.
- Implementation of a number of joint field measurements in border region among the GCC States, to specify percentage of mutual interferences and coverage exceeding borders by mobile phone networks and special broadband network, and setting proper solutions to stop them.
- Coordinating with International Telecommunication Union to define satellite networks which can affect the GCC States when they operated and submitting objection on them to the Union.
- Coordination among the GCC States to stop the mutual interference on the frequencies used by the Member States and wireless services

through holding coordinative meetings.

- Designation of frequencies for the GCC States for fixed and mobile services and coordinating them with other Member States to avoid any interferences.
- Agreeing on the regulating bylaw governing licensing and use of short-range wireless devices.

# Chapter (14)

## Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture

### Objectives

The joint action in the field of agriculture and water aims at unifying Member States policies and laws and adopting joint projects in the field of agriculture, water and fish resources. The GCC Member States seek to achieve food security through the optimal utilization of the available natural resources. Over the past years, significant achievements have been attained in this vital field.

### Achievements

#### I. The GCC Revised Common Agricultural Policy

The Supreme Council (17<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, December 1996) adopted the GCC Revised Common Agricultural Policy with a view to achieving agricultural integration among the Member States according to a common strategy based on the optimal utilization of available water resources, provision of food security from national sources, increasing production and encouraging joint enterprises with private sector contribution.

The GCC Agricultural Policy includes many work programs for joint action:

1. Joint program for coordination of plans and farming policies.
2. Joint programs for surveys, exploitation and maintenance of natural resources.
3. Joint program for food and agricultural production.

The Agricultural Cooperation Committee and the respective technical committees thereof are implementing the programs of this policy. Many relevant programs, projects and studies have been implemented so far.

#### II. Agricultural and Veterinary Quarantines Capacity Development Project

This project aims to raise the technical efficiency and improve skills and capacities to deal with agricultural and livestock consignments to protect GCC citizens, livestock, vegetable and environmental resources from epidemics and diseases.

### **III. Mechanism for Banning or Unbanning Agricultural, Animal and Food Products Consignments**

The Agricultural Cooperation Committee has approved mechanism for banning or unbanning agricultural, animal and food products in implementation of the requirements of custom union.

### **IV. Specifying Size of Commercial Fishes**

It has been decided to apply the provisions for guiding the unification of length suitable for fishing for some fishes in the GCC States as a reference.

### **V. Regulating the Passage of Agricultural Products at GCC Ports**

Phytosanitary certificate has been approved as a GCC unified certificate, with the aim of promoting the intra-GCC exchange of agricultural products, and to promote intra-regional trade. This certificate is also considered an acknowledgement of the unification of inspection procedures conducted on agricultural products and to strengthen the role of laboratories in the GCC States in terms of unification of laboratory inspections mechanism.

### **VI. Allowing the Entry of Pigeon and Pet Birds**

The Agricultural Cooperation Committee has decided to lift the ban imposed on pigeon and pet birds, subject to conditions and procedures complying with conditions and instructions of the World Organization for Animal Health. The GCC States rely on setting up regulating legislations governing cooperation with external world on the international bases approved by international organizations to preserve the national wealth and protect it from epidemics and diseases. It is worth mentioning that all the GCC States are members of the World Organization for Animal Health and the World Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### **VII. Mad-Cow Disease**

The Agricultural Cooperation Committee at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, July 2008) has approved conditions under which it will be allowed to import animals from the countries wherein cases of mad cow disease have been registered, to preserve the health of citizens and residents and to prevent transmission of infection to other animals in the Member States.



## **VIII. Using Geographic Information System (GIS)**

The Agricultural Cooperation Committee has approved the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) in the field livestock, especially in scanning and investigation of diseases and epidemics.

## **IX. Animal Diseases and Epidemics Combating Program**

The GCC States have realized that formulating a unified plan to combat diseases and epidemics is not possible due to variance of diseases and methods of the spreading, preventing them from spreading, and combating them. Hence a general framework for combatting animal diseases whether epidemic or infectious has been approved.

## **X. Reference Manuals**

A number of guiding reference manuals have been adopted to benefit from in drafting legislations and internal regulations in each State:

1. Approval of brief guiding reference manual on the diseases and epidemics among humans and birds.
2. Approval of a list of epidemics, GCC Unified Law for Agricultural Quarantine.
3. Approval of applying the content of the guiding label for unification of lengths suitable for fishing some types of fishes in the GCC States, as a guidance meant specially for the individuals and authorities concerned with dealing with fishes.

## **XI. Study of Food and Water Security in the GCC States**

The Supreme Council, at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008) assigned the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council to conduct a study on food and water security in the GCC States. The Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) adopted the conclusions of the Consultative Commission in this regard, which are being implemented.

## **XII. Study on Increasing Contribution of Agriculture in GDP**

The Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) assigned the Consultative Commission to study the agricultural produce originating in the GCC States and increasing the contribution of agricultural sector in the GDP. This study aims to set forth a general framework to protect agricultural produce originating in the GCC States and to further develop

it to contribute to increasing the income of GCC citizens, especially those who rely on agriculture for their income; and to increase the contribution of agricultural production in the national income.

### **XIII. Joint Ventures**

A number of joint studies have been conducted, which contribute to enhancing GCC joint action in the field of agriculture. The GCC Ministers of Agriculture have approved formation of a permanent working group called Agricultural Research Work Team, consisting of agricultural research officers in the GCC States. Among the most important researches conducted are the following:

- Carrying out comprehensive survey of shrimp fisheries.
- Carrying out comprehensive survey of benthic fish.
- Monitoring King Fish by GIS system
- Specifying entry ports for agricultural products and goods, animals and animal products, in implementation of the GCC Customs Union.
- Implementation of a research project for development of pam, including various axes, among them is biocontrol, marketing, post-harvest treatment, classification, and a gene bank.
- GCC States accession as a single group to the membership of the Group on International Agricultural Research.
- Organizing joint symposia and workshops on a number of agricultural topics such as : symposium on preservation of fisheries and their development; a symposium on agricultural epidemics; a symposium on using various water sources in agriculture; a symposium on meat control; a symposium on genetically modified agricultural products and a symposium on food security in the GCC States.

### **XIV. Laws and Regulations related to Agricultural Cooperation**

The Supreme Council has issued a number of decisions in the agricultural field, with a view to achieve agricultural integration among the GCC States and development of joint action among Member States. These decisions unify the law in light of the goals of the GCC Economic Agreement, including the following:

#### **1. Law of Fertilizers and Agricultural Soil Conditioners 2004**

This Law and the general trend for the protection of the Gulf agricultural

environment are consistent with each other due to their similarity in terms of climatic conditions and nature of soil. This reflects general framework adopted by the Agricultural Cooperation Committee on the activation of cooperation among the GCC States and unifying laws and legislations preserving the agricultural environment encompassing components such as soil, types of produce and climate.

This Law has been implemented in all the GCC States. It's articles are based on international legislations issued in this regard and taken as basic reference, together with adding features peculiar to GCC states. The implementing regulations of the Law of Fertilizers and Agricultural Soil Conditioners were adopted as mandatory at the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Agricultural Cooperation Committee (Muscat, June 2009).

## **2. Law of Pesticides 2004**

In order for the GCC States to be able to prevent misuse of pesticides and to protect the agricultural produce, as well as the citizens and environment from their negative effects, the Supreme Council has adopted this Law to regulate the process of circulation and sale of pesticides in a scientific manner that would achieve goals of agricultural development, and development of produce and products and prevent harmful use of pesticides. The Law regulates the relationship between the importer, producer and consumer of these pesticides.

This law has been implemented in all the GCC States. International legislations issued in this field has been the basic references in preparation of this Law. The Agricultural Cooperation Committee also approved the implementing regulation of this law at the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting held in June 2006.

## **3. Law for Seeds and Seedlings 2008**

This law (regulation) aims to achieve effective development of agricultural produce and to create a sound productive environment. It also codifies suitable legislations that govern the relationship between authorities producing or importing the seeds and seedlings in a manner that that would protect the national produces and prevent entry of low quality and virus-infected produces. The Agricultural Cooperation Committee decided to make this Law mandatory in June 2009.

#### **4. Law for Practicing Profession of Veterinary Medicine**

This Law and its implementing regulations are a result of efforts exerted by the Agricultural Cooperation Committee to preserve livestock and develop them through enhancing abilities of veterinarians, veterinary hospitals, clinics and pharmacies. The Supreme Council approved this law (regulation) at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011).

#### **5. Law of Kindness to Animals**

This Law aims to kindness to animal and to take all precautions to ensure that no harm is inflicted on animals and that they are protected from pain or suffering. This Law is derived from the instructions of Islam. It was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011).

#### **6. Law of Veterinary Products**

The Law of Veterinary Products aims to control registration of veterinary products, their factories and to ensure their adherence to the best practices for medicine manufacturing. This Law was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011).

### **XV. Laws and Legislations under Review**

- Common Law for Exploitation and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources.
- Law of Precautionary Measures for Protection from Infectious and Epidemic Animal Diseases and its Implementing Regulations.
- Joint Purchase of Veterinary Medicine and Vaccines.
- Unified Manual of Procedures Followed in Veterinary Establishments in the GCC States.

### **XVI. Benefiting from GCC Laboratories**

- It has been agreed to benefit from labs of diagnosis of viral diseases and labs of production of veterinary vaccines in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to provide their services to other GCC States.
- An Early Warning Center for Diseases in the State of Kuwait has been approved as the GCC Center for early disease warning.

### **XVII. Cooperation with International Organizations**

- Conversion of the office of United Nations Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) in the United Arab Emirates into a regional office for the Arabian Peninsula.

- Participation of the GCC Secretary General in the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), held in Rome, February 2007, on the occasion of highlighting cooperation between the Fund and GCC. The Secretary General delivered a speech in this meeting.
- Participation in the international food security conference, organized by International Food and Agriculture Organization, (Rome, November 2009), and distribution of GCC Secretary General's statement on the food security in the GCC States.
- Participation in international conferences and meetings organized by the international and regional research organizations.
- Participation in meetings of the International Group on Agricultural Research.
- Participation in meetings of Board of Governors of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),
- Visiting the International agricultural research center in dry region and arid lands in Syria.
- Visiting the Agricultural Research Center in Dry Lands, Syria.
- Signing MOU between the GCC Secretariat General and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

### **XVIII. Joint Research Programs**

A number of joint researches have been completed. These include the following:

- Carrying out comprehensive survey of shrimp fisheries.
- Carrying out comprehensive survey of benthic fish.
- Monitoring King fish by GIS system
- Implementation of a research project on pam in cooperation with The International Center for Agriculture Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

The work is in progress on the implementation of the second phase of the project of monitoring King fish, in addition to the implementation of a number of workshops and symposia in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries.

## **XIX. Cooperation with International Research Centers**

The GCC States have been admitted as one group to the membership of International Group on Agricultural Research. The GCC States are benefiting from this membership in obtaining of results of agricultural, animal and fish research. They also benefit from them in execution of researches that they need through international research centers that fall under this group, amounting to 15 international centers.

## **XX. Organizing Joint Symposia and Workshops**

A number of symposia have been organized. Among those are the following: Symposium on preservation of fisheries and their development, symposium of agricultural epidemics, symposium on using various water resources in agriculture, symposium on monitoring meat, symposium on genetically modified agricultural products. The aim is to keep up with the latest in research, and to train national cadres, in addition to communicating with international and regional organizations and establishment of relations with GCC researchers and their counterparts from other states.

## **XXI. Symposium on GCC Food Security**

Symposium on «GCC Food Security : Challenges and Solutions» was held at the headquarters of the Secretariat General on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008. Senior officers in ministries and authorities concerned with agriculture in the GCC States participated in the activities of this symposium, as well as international organizations and research centers in the Member States. Eleven working papers were discussed, which dealt with basic themes, i.e., diagnosis of crisis of food security and its reasons, roles of public and private sector in providing food, dealing with food deficiency emergencies, social and economic impacts, towards Common GCC policy in the field of food security. The symposium made a number of recommendations: local production, GCC food stuff importation, external investment in the achievement of food security, and common emergency plan to counter food deficiency in GCC States.

## **XXII. Publications**

The Secretariat General has released the following publication in the field of cooperation in agriculture:

- «Agricultural Development in GCC States» .

- Law on Agricultural Quarantine.
- Law on Veterinary Quarantine.
- Joint Agricultural Policy in GCC States.
- Common Law for Exploitation and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources in the GCC States.
- Reference Law of Forests and Pastures in the GCC States.
- Law on Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners.
- Law on Pesticides.
- Leaflet on the General Framework of Combating Diseases and Epidemics in the GCC States.
- Symposium on Food Security in the GCC States: Challenges and Solutions.

### **XXIII. Agricultural Cooperation on the International Information Network**

- A link has been established within the Secretariat General's website for agricultural and fisheries research in the GCC States.
- The creation of a comprehensive website for cooperation, through which information about agricultural and animal consignments are exchanged, which prevent their entry into any Member State, and reasons of prevention thereof. Thus these products are prevented from entering other GCC States, in accordance with procedures followed in the Law on Agricultural Quarantine, and procedures of the Law on Veterinary Quarantine. The website also includes data about technical committees and their minutes of meeting and scientific researches available, as well as adopted laws and their implementing regulations, and decisions taken by the Agricultural Cooperation Committee, and agricultural and fish researches and studies.

# Chapter (15)

## Cooperation in the Field of Planning, Statistics and Development

### Objectives

The joint action in the field of planning and development aims at achieving coordination and harmonization of the development plans of the GCC Member States to reach integration in all fields. To this effect, the GCC Member States are developing strategies, policies and mechanisms for enhancing economic and social integration in the light of reviewing and evaluating the existing integration policies, proposing policies and programs for setting up joint projects that would achieve the GCC economic integration objectives, formulating appropriate policies and programs for increasing the role of the economic development and developing the general frameworks that are in line with the objectives of the comprehensive development in the GCC Member States.

The GCC Member States are also coordinating efforts in the field of information exchange, utilizing the information technology for developing data and statistics and facilitating exchange thereof among Member States, implementing joint programs and enterprises, unifying statistical classifications and directories, and coordinating cooperation of the GCC Member States with regional and international organizations in fields of planning, development and statistics with a view to maximizing benefit among Member States. Member States are also developing programs for the exchange of experience in the field of planning.

### Achievements

#### I. The Document of "Objectives and Policies of the GCC Development Plans"

The Ministerial Council (14<sup>th</sup> session, March 1985) adopted the document entitled "Objectives and Policies of the GCC Development Plans" based on mandate by the Supreme Council at the 5<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, November 1984).



## **II. The GCC Long-Term Comprehensive Development Strategy (2000-2025)**

The Supreme Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, 1998) adopted the GCC Long-Term Comprehensive Development Strategy(2000-2025). All the mechanisms, procedures and programs needed to achieve the goals related to the issues contained in the strategy and measurement of achievement of these goals through calculating the quantitative indicators have been completed.

The adoption of this Strategy have resulted in strengthening the joint action through reaching a mutual understanding on the priorities of development and methods of their accomplishment, and adoption of a large number of agreements, establishments, and joint work systems in all the fields of developmental work, and the establishment of a number of joint projects.

In view of the local, regional and international developments over the past years that led to changes and developments with great impacts on the process of developmental work in every Member State, the Strategy has been reviewed and developed in line with the local, regional and international changes. The Supreme Council, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the revised Strategy, which includes a brief account of achievements, conditions and current challenges faced by the GCC, whether at the level of national efforts of each State, or at the level of join action process.

The core objective of the Development Strategy is to achieve an integrated sustainable development process for the Member States in all fields and to deepen coordination of the activities of national development plans and the necessary resilience with a view to achieving development objectives in each Member State separately and at the collective GCC level.

## **III. The General Framework of the GCC Statistical Strategy**

The Supreme Council, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) adopted the General Framework of the GCC Unified Statistical Strategy. This includes the following:

- Assessment of the position of the statistical work in the GCC States in terms of achievements and challenges.
- Whole and partial objectives, including the following: building and

- strengthening statistical and institutional abilities of the GCC States.
- Strengthening and enhancing the quality and quantity of statistical products.
  - Development and expansion of statistical publishing.
  - Development and enhancement of mechanisms of coordination among statistical bodies.
  - Formulation and harmonization of national statistical strategies in the GCC States, in line with the common GCC statistical requirements and programs.
  - Execution plan.

#### **IV. General Framework of the GCC Population Strategy**

The Supreme Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, 1998) adopted the document entitled «General Framework of the Population Strategy of the GCC States». The objectives of the Strategy have been achieved in light of the mechanisms agreed upon. National committees for population have been formed in the GCC States. Reports on the population status in the GCC States have also been prepared, reflecting the positive aspects achieved by the implementation of population policies and challenges that are to be met with, and unification of data required annually, which reflect population development in the Member States. In addition, GCC States coordinate their positions in international conferences relating to workforce. This Framework was revised and the Supreme Council at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Bahrain, December 2012) approved the revised Framework and directed to apply it as a reference. The revised Framework deals with new axes covering developmental fields having impact on the population, such as education, training, health, environment, and social development, besides the previous axes such as population, workforce etc.

#### **V. Comprehensive Addressing of the Population Issues**

The Supreme Council at the 24<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2003), issued its decision relating to comprehensively addressing population issues and repairing the demographic imbalance to achieve population and social homogeneity. The Supreme Council have issued a number of decisions. Most prominent of which are the following:

- The GCC States issued a number of laws, decisions and regulating

bylaws helping in addressing the imbalance in demographics and labor market and activating the process of nationalization, treatment of unemployment, and rehabilitation of national workforce for the requirements of operation and labor market.

- Benefiting from the economic opinions of the Member States, to achieve balance between the population growth and economic and environmental resources.
- Facilitation of movement among the Member States.
- Encouraging GCC nationals to work in the private sector.
- Development of investments to accommodate those entering labor markets.
- A number of events on population issues in the GCC States, such as conferences, symposia and workshops etc have been organized.

## **VI. Report on the Population Status of the GCC States**

A report on population status is prepared every three years, with a view to give integrated information about population in the GCC States. A questionnaire about the population status agreed upon is filled up annually. The first report for the period from 2002-2004, and the second report for the period from 2005-2007, and the third report for the period from 2008-2010, were issued.

## **VII. Common GCC Identity Card (Smart Card)**

The Supreme Council has directed to implement the Unified GCC Identity Card (smart card) project. All GCC Member States have issued the smart card, which is currently used for intra-GCC movement.

The Supreme Council, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011) issued a decision approving the use of the card as an identity proof for the GCC nationals, in all public and private sector across the Member States. In addition, the health data to be included in the smart card has also been specified.

The issuance of the Unified Identity Card has facilitated intra-GCC movement of GCC nationals, and has reduced the waiting period at the ports, by facilitating their entry through electronic gates. It has also contributed to the smooth movement of the national workforce among the Member States.

## **VIII. General Census of Population, Residences and Establishments**

The Supreme Council, at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, December 2001) decided that it would conduct joint census by 2010, and the time period for census would be unified every ten years, provided that Census shall be conducted in zero years.

The Member States in 2010, jointly conducted general census of population, residences and establishments. Schedule of publishing its data and method of benefiting from its results was agreed upon. This common and comprehensive census is to contribute to support mechanisms of planning in the GCC States and provide decision makers with the bases on which to take decisions related to policy making and prioritizing, and utilization of resources and its fair distribution.

## **IX. Unified Directory for Economic Activities**

The Second version of this directory has been published in 2012, after this directory was revised to the sixth level in accordance with international directory requirements. It is currently being implemented.

## **X. Unified Directory for Statistical Concepts and Terminologies**

The Second version of the Unified Directory for Statistical Concepts and Terminologies in the GCC States was published in 2012. The GCC States have accomplished its development by adding financial concepts and terminologies used in monetary union, in addition to those related to the environment, human development, energy, tourism, foreign investment and services in the GCC States. This directory has been made consistent with the international directory requirements.

## **XI. Unified Directory of Planning and Development Terminologies**

The Unified Directory of Planning and Development Terminologies is currently being updated and developed. It was previously prepared in 1996. It includes the concepts, terminologies and criteria expressing commercial and economic openness of the GCC communities, in addition to concepts and terminologies coined by the regional and international organizations and authorities. The Directory aims to unify terminologies and concepts and

disseminate them among those working in the GCC States and to facilitate collection of data and statistics and include them in GCC States plans and other objectives.

## **XII. The Human Development Indicators Guide**

The GCC States have completed the preparation of Human Development Indicators Guide and applied it, in light of the international directory issued by the United Nations.

## **XIII. The GCC Common Statistical Law**

A draft of the GCC Common Statistical Reference Law has been developed, in preparation for discussing by a team of specialist in law.

## **XIV. Implementation of the UN National Accounts System 93**

The joint training program for qualification of the workers in GCC national accounts has been completed. The GCC States agreed to implement the UN National Accounts System (SNA93) to a large percentage. Currently coordination is being made among the Member States to implement the remaining criteria of the System in a complete manner. The GCC States have also begun implementation of the UN National Accounts System 2008.

## **XV. Calculating Standard Consumer Prices**

GCC Member States have agreed to adopt COICOP for classification of the new basket and that the year 2007 would be the base year. They have agreed to extract price levels using the geometric mean (Laspeyre's formula). The minimum limit of the cycle of price calculation for the agreed upon commodities groups has also been agreed.

In addition, coordination among the statistical bodies and central banks for preparation of core inflation index has also been agreed upon, and that the data of standard consumer prices would be published on a monthly basis according to the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) , and based on the year 2007.

## **XVI. Joint Projects**

A number of joint projects serving the process of joint action in all fields have been executed. Among the most prominent of them are the following:

- Creation of statistical database of the GCC States and linking it with

the internet. Statistical information is being exchanged among the Member States using this database.

- A number of joint surveys have been implemented. Among most important of those are the survey on GCC household expenditure and income, survey of the workforce, survey of foreign investment, survey of the workforce by sample.

## **XVII. Reference Strategy for E-Governance**

In view of the importance of the e-governance as a tool for sustainable development, to achieve the well-being of the GCC nationals, the Supreme Council at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) adopted the E-Governance Strategy for the GCC States and directed to apply it as a reference. The desired objectives in the field of e-governance are summarized in the following vision: «Enhancement of the role of e-governance in sustainable development and raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector and GCC integration».

## **XVIII. Establishment of the GCC Statistical Center**

The Supreme Council, at the 120<sup>th</sup> session issued its decision to establish the Statistical Center for the GCC States, with its headquarters in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The Supreme Council has approved the Statute of the Center at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Bahrain, December 2012) and its board of directors has been formed. The Center has commenced its work on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2014. Duties and functions of the Center are summarized as under:

- Gathering, classification, storage and analysis of the data and statistics.
- Implementation of statistical projects of the GCC States.
- Formulating strategic plans for statistical work of the GCC States in coordination with national statistical centers.
- Representation of the GCC in statistical affairs.
- Concluding international cooperation agreements for development of statistical system in the Member States, in coordination with the competent authorities.
- Application of international standards in all fields and phases of the statistical work.
- Unification of methodologies, criteria, definitions, and classification used in statistical work, in coordination with national statistical centers

in the Member States.

- Setting policies and unifying procedures that ensure quality of statistical work.
- Providing technical support to improve the statistical work of the GCC States.
- Building abilities in the Member States in the field of statistical work.
- Contribution to building statistical culture and raising statistical awareness.

To this end, the Board of Directors of the Center has approved nine goals:

- Building and enhancing statistical and institutional abilities of the GCC States to keep abreast of the statistical requirements on the level of Member States in particular and on the international level in general.
- Strengthening and improving the quality and quantity of statistical products in a sustainable manner.
- Highlighting the GCC as a unified economic and social block.
- Development, expansion and marketing of statistical dissemination.
- Building joint program between national statistical bodies and the Statistical Center.
- Aligning national statistical strategies in the GCC States with the needs of joint statistical programs based on the best international practices.
- Building a statistical culture and raising statistical awareness, and promoting actual and correct use of the statistical data and information in decision making and policymaking in the GCC States.
- Ensuring that the GCC States will have effective presence and participation in international statistical development.
- Ensuring the sustainability of the Statistical Center as a professional establishment in the statistical system of the GCC States.

The Board of Directors of the Statistical Center also approved ten statistical projects within the work program of the Center for the year 2014, including the following:

- (1) Project of application of national accounts system.
- (2) Project of building standard figures indicators.
- (3) Project of enhancement of statistics of goods and service trading.

- (4) Project of common census.
- (5) Project of enhancing labor market statistics.
- (6) Project of framework of data quality and unification of statistical classifications.
- (7) Project of building and development of data based on administrative records.
- (8) Project of statistics of environment and energy.
- (9) Project of measurement of development and development indicators.
- (10) Project of financial and monetary statistics.



## SECTION THREE

### COOPERATION IN THE FIELDS OF HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS

*Education*

*Science and Technology*

*Human Resources*

*Social Field*

*Cultural Field*

*Environment*

*Health*

*Municipalities*

*Youth*

*Sports*



# CHAPTER (1)

## COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

### **Beginnings and objectives**

The joint educational process began prior to the establishment of the GCC through the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States that was established in 1975 under supervision of the Ministers of Education (The General Conference). The development of education in the region in a later stage, the emergence of higher education institutions, which were independent from the Ministries of Education, such as colleges, universities, institutions of technical education and applied training, and the establishment of Ministries of Higher Education have caused the Bureau's projects and programs to focus mainly on public education.

Therefore, the first meeting of the committee of the directors and presidents of universities and the higher education institutions, in the Secretariat General, March, 1986, represented the launch of the organized joint educational work under the auspices of the GCC in the field of higher education. The meeting discussed topics of special importance to the process of cooperation and integration among the GCC States. The topics included resolutions of the Supreme Council on the public education and higher education, objectives, policies and development plans, priorities of the joint action for higher education, equal treatment of students in terms of admission and treatment, coordination of efforts in the field of research, Arabization of higher education and enhancing the GCC trends towards integration and the joint students activities and meetings.

Due to the numerous fields of integration and cooperation among the higher education institutions, the Committee of the Directors and Presidents of Universities and the Higher Education Institutions adopted a plan for joint action (Kuwait, November, 1993). The plan identified the fields and objectives of cooperation among higher education institutions and the mechanism for organizing the meetings, studying the aspects of coordination and integration and addressing matters of mutual interest. According to the plan, committees have been formed, such as committees of the deans of colleges (Arts, Science, Medicine), support deanships (admission and registration, libraries, students,

vice-presidents of universities) and heads of certain scientific departments.

In 1996, with the Ministries of Higher Education being established in most of the GCC States, a Ministerial Committee for Higher Education was formed to supervise the efforts of cooperation and integration between the higher education institutions and bodies. In addition to these two committees, there is a committee composed of the chairpersons of the degree-offset committees, a committee of the officials of technical education and vocational training and a committee of the deans of the technical colleges. Besides, there are many joint action committees as well as committees of support deanships.

Within the framework of Cooperation and integration among the works of the GCC and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), the Ministerial Council, at the 127<sup>th</sup> session (Jeddah, June 2013) directed to hold periodical meetings of the GCC States Ministers of Education to discuss the topics of GCC priority and peculiarity. The GCC Secretariat General will coordinate and make necessary arrangements for holding of meetings of Ministers of Education's Committee.

### **Resolutions of the Supreme Council**

The joint educational action has been accorded keen interest by Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of GCC. This is demonstrated in the several resolutions taken by the Supreme Council in the field of education, the most important of which are the following:

- Adoption of the objectives and means that ensure the role of education in meeting the development needs of the GCC States (Muscat, November 1985).
- According equal treatment to the GCC students at the general education stages same as the students of the State where schooling is provided. (Muscat, November 1985).
- Treating the certificates and degrees issued by any official education institution in the GCC States the same as those issued by the host Member State (Muscat, 1985)
- Allowing GCC citizens to engage in economic activity in the field of education (Muscat, 1995)
- Supporting the Arab Gulf University: Seats at the university have been designated in the names of the GCC leaders; Member States have

financed some scientific and academic programs (Riyadh, December 1993).

- Establishing gulf network for quality assurance in higher education in the GCC States.
- Approving common guiding criteria for equation of certificates issued from the national institutions of higher education in the GCC States.

The joint education process has been furthered by another set of important resolutions taken by the Supreme Council, which had a direct impact on the adoption of several cooperation programs. These resolutions are as under:

## **I. Joint plan for the Development of the General Education Curricula**

The General Conference of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), at the 16<sup>th</sup> session, held in March 2001, approved programs of the joint plan for the development of the general education curricula.

- Re-formulating the general objectives of education
- Preparation of a reference framework for the pre-school education stage
- Developing the common values in social studies
- Improving specifications of the school book and the instructional aids
- Objectives of the school curriculum
- Identification of the basic skills for the first three elementary grades
- Integration of school curriculum
- Utilization of the IT and computer technology
- Placement tests
- Identifying teachers' efficiencies
- Development of thinking skills
- Relative weight of school subjects
- General objectives of education and objectives of the school stages
- Development of thinking skills

In consideration of the importance of the Joint Plan for the Development of the Public Education Curricula, the Supreme Council (23<sup>rd</sup> session, Doha, December, 2002) adopted the plan to be the basis of the Bureau's programs and projects. The Bureau has completed most of the programs of the plan.

## II. Recommendations of the Consultative Commission on Education

The Supreme Council (22<sup>nd</sup> session, Muscat, December, 2001) adopted the recommendations of the Consultative Commission (4<sup>th</sup> session) on education and the development of educational process. The Council decided to refer the proposed joint projects to the competent ministerial committees for developing the necessary implementing mechanisms.

It is worth mentioning that the Consultative Commission has diagnosed the educational process and the challenges encountered, and has developed a set of recommendations falling in four axes: the first is a general one, the second addresses pre-elementary education and education for special need students, the third deals with public education and the fourth deals with higher education. The Commission has also proposed a number of joint projects in the field of education and scientific research.

In implementation of the above, the Committee of the Presidents and Directors of Universities and Higher Education Institutions, in October, 2002, formed a committee of experts to study the proposals of the Higher Education and Research Commission and develop the steps to be taken for implementation. The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in March 2003, decided that the Committee's recommendations are to be circulated to the ministries, universities and national research centers and required them to prepare periodic reports on the programs and steps implemented or to be implemented.

With regard to the joint projects, the Commission proposed to establish an academic accreditation board, a joint commission for scientific and technical development, a regional center for scientific and technical research in the field of energy and a joint center for strategic studies in the field of energy. The Committee of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Kuwait, February 2002) decided that a team from the Ministries of Higher Education is to be instructed to prepare a study on the requirements of establishing the academic accreditation board. A Coordination Committee for Academic Accreditation in the Field of Higher Education was formed, headquartered in the Sultanate of Oman, to become the nucleus for the Gulf Quality Assurance Authority.

### **III. The Educational Aspect in the Document of Opinions of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**

The Document of Opinions submitted by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, at the Consultative Meeting (Jeddah, May, 2002) addressed a number of aspects related to the GCC economic and social process, including education. The Supreme Council (Doha, December, 2002) adopted the recommendations set forth in the summary report, which the Secretariat had prepared in the light of the proposals and comments of Member States on the educational aspect of the Document. The Supreme Council also instructed the ministerial committees to develop the necessary mechanisms and programs for implementing these recommendations. It is worth to mention that the said recommendations were based on four axes: building the educational basis, compatibility between the education outputs and the development requirements, development of curricula and coordination and integration among the educational institutions.

In this connection, the Secretariat-General has taken many following up steps and organized several orientation activities and adopted appropriate steps for implementation through the joint action committees. Resolution of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December, 2003) reiterated the importance of that Document and the adoption of the necessary programs for implementing its contents. In response to this resolution, the Ministers of Education (at the meeting of the General Conference of the Arab Bureau of Education for the GCC States, Kuwait, February, 2005) adopted the Document to be a reference for the Bureau's plans and projects. The General Conference has also adopted a number of relevant educational programs and activities, achieving the directives contained in the document.

The Committee of the Ministers of Education and Scientific Research has also formed a specialist working team to examine the reports received from Member States on the implementation mechanisms. King Abdulaziz University organized, in cooperation with the Secretariat-General, a workshop in February 2005 for submitting proposals about the Document. The findings of the workshop were submitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Higher Education (Riyadh, March, 2005) where a working party was formed

to develop a plan for implementation of the Supreme Council's resolution on the Document of the comprehensive development of education. Directives (Recommendations) concerning Education.

#### **IV. Education Trends**

The Supreme Council (Doha, December, 2002) has issued a resolution on education, which included a number of recommendations that can be summed up as follows:

- Development of Curricula
- Development of the Teacher
- Compatibility between the education outputs and the development requirements
- Organization and Administration
- Integration of Resources and Exchange of Experience
- Improvement of Quality and Quality Control

The Supreme Council has assigned the GCC Secretary General with the task of preparing a report containing specific recommendations to translate these directives into executable work programs. The Secretary General has formed a team of specialists, experienced in educational issues, which has submitted a detailed study (Document on Comprehensive Development of Education) on the trends containing recommendations about programs and projects for their achievement.

#### **V. The Document on the Comprehensive Development of Education**

The Supreme Council (Kuwait, December, 2003) adopted the Document on the Comprehensive Development of Education and instructed the competent ministerial committees to implement the projects and programs contained in it. The resolution of the Supreme Council called for developing an integrated educational plan that takes into account the other resolutions of the Council issued on education. The Document contained several programs and projects for the development of education, such as the following:

- The integral comprehensive perspective for development of education.
- The GCC Project for professionalization of education: A unified vision.



- The quality assurance project for development of the administrative and organizational performance of educational institutions.
- The e-University and e-school project: A reference framework for achieving coordination and integration in the field of virtual education.
- The Project of promoting the education outputs.
- The Partnership between the education institutions and community.

In implementation of the said resolution, the Committee of the Ministers of Higher Education assigned a specialized team to study the programs set forth in the Document for the comprehensive development of education and develop the appropriate implementing plan. Universities are expected to cooperate for implementing some of these programs.

The present stage is marked with quality advancement at the level of each Member State in the field of opening new public and private universities and colleges, the assurance of quality education, scientific research or overseas scholarship. All these steps have been an implementation of the resolutions of the Supreme Council in the area of education.

## **VI. Comprehensive Development of Education**

Within the unified plan of programs and projects suitable for achievement of what is contained in the study entitled " Comprehensive Development of Education" and the Document of Opinions submitted by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and the opinions of the Consultative Commission, the Arab Bureau of Education for the GCC States has executed the project of development of public education, comprising more than thirty programs. The project dealt with five key areas of public education: Curricula and education, professionalization of education, education systems, technology and education and community partnership. The Office is currently working in cooperation with Ministries of Education to apply the outputs of project's programs and employ them in education field.

## **VII. Proposal of Custodian of Two Holy Mosques Concerning Acceleration of Performance**

In implementation of the resolution of the Supreme Council taken at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008), concerning acceleration of performance and removing obstacles, which adopted the proposed solutions for acceleration of performance, the following have been achieved:

## **In the field of Higher Education**

1. Ministries of Higher Education and scientific research in the GCC States have allocated departments concerned with GCC affairs.
2. The Committee of Presidents and Directors of the Universities is striving to execute the joint action administratively and financially.
3. “Jesr” information portal has been developed for network connection among the higher education establishments.
4. A number of common bylaws, procedures and systems in the field of higher education have been completed. Among them are procedures of certification equation in higher education, competition of technical skills, student university activities, contracting with teaching staff, student exchange, admission and registration.
5. The Secretariat General, in coordination with universities and higher education establishments in the GCC States organizes symposia and workshops aimed to promote and disseminate culture of joint action inside each university.
6. The universities and higher education institutions are striving to establish a federation similar to European Universities Federation, as per the feature of GCC. A small committee composed of presidents and directors of universities has been entrusted to submit a concept paper in this regard, so that it may be submitted to the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of universities, to be held in October 2014.

## **In the Field of Public Education**

1. The Executive Council of the Arab Bureau of Education for the GCC States reached a mechanism to ensure application of outputs of the Bureau’s programs and its bodies in the Member States.
2. The Bureau is currently working in coordination with the Member States to make its programs meeting the needs of the Member States, and in line with their developmental projects.
3. The Bureau is following up to organize a meeting with the participation of international expert for preparation of new trends and paths for development of public education and develop a guiding document.

## **VIII. Educational Aspect in the Paper of the State of Kuwait.**

- (a) Regarding the higher education: Coordination will be made with the

Ministry of Higher Education of the State of Kuwait, regarding the activation of economic and developmental dimension of the educational aspect in the Paper of the State of Kuwait. The Committee of Higher Education Ministers, at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (Kuwait, March 2008) agreed on four programs. The Secretariat General, in coordination with the ministries of higher education and scientific research of the GCC States have exerted its efforts to complete implementation of those programs. These are as under:

1. Education for GCC citizen in the institutions of higher education in the GCC States: a proposed concept for general preparation program.
2. Promoting moderation and addressing intellectual extremism: the role assigned to the scientific research centers in universities and establishments of higher education in the GCC States.
3. Scientific and research excellence in higher education institutions of the GCC States: a proposed model.
4. Proposed model of knowledge management in universities and institutions of higher education.

The Member States, represented in Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research, have implemented these programs under various titles and methods.

(b) As far as the cooperation in the field of public education concerned, two programs have been approved. They are strengthening educational values, and media culture. Arab Bureau of Education for the GCC States has implemented these programs within the project of development of public education. They have been assigned to expert offices.

## **IX. Vision of the State of Qatar Pertaining to Investment in the field of Education**

The Supreme Council, at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009) issued a decision concerning joint investment in education and health. A technical committee composed of the ministries of finance and competent authorities in the Member States, i.e. education and health, has been assigned to carry out the following:

- a. Studying the projects proposed by the Ministers of Education and Ministers of Health to select those project which have priority.
- b. Establishment of a GCC body for investment in education.

- c. Promoting benefiting from existing educational projects in the Member States.
- d. Supporting existing joint projects such as Arabian Gulf University.

The assigned committee has held four meetings, through which it has reached the following:

1. A GCC establishment for investment in education: The committee has concluded that this project is not a priority in the current stage, due to a big tendency of the private sector to invest in educational projects.
2. Survey to enumerate and assess GCC States' needs of joint ventures financially and economically feasible in the field of education: The Secretariat General has coordinated with the State of Qatar to prepare the general framework of the study. It has been discussed and approved by the technical committee. Coordination has been made and the necessary procedures have been taken and agreement has been made with the Gulf Research Center to perform the survey.
3. Supporting projects of Arabian Gulf University to establish an endowment fund for the University: The committee did not approve the proposed endowment fund, in implementation of the decision of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee in this regard.

## **X. According equal treatment to GCC students in terms of admission and treatment in public universities and higher education institutions of the GCC States**

Within the framework of activation of the GCC Common Market, the Supreme Council, at the 8<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 1987), issued a resolution concerning according equal treatment GCC students in terms of admission and treatment in government universities and higher education institutions. It directed the Committee of Presidents and Directors of the Universities and Higher Education Institutions of the GCC States and the Committee of Deans of Admission and Registration in the Universities and Higher Education Institutions of the GCC States to devise regulatory mechanisms to activate the decision to give equal treatment to GCC students in admission and treatment. The Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, at their 16<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014, in Riyadh, have

agreed on the proposal submitted in this regard by the presidents and directors of universities and decided to refer it to the Supreme Council.

## **XI. According equal treatment GCC students in terms of admission and treatment in technical education and vocational training**

Within the framework of activation of the GCC Common Market, the Supreme Council, at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009), issued a decision concerning according equal treatment GCC students in terms of admission and treatment in technical education vocational training institutions in the GCC States. The Secretariat General has communicated the decision to the concerned authorities in the Member States seeking issuance of necessary legislations to implement it in each State. It has received responses from all the Member State, stating to implement the decision.

## **Fake and un-licensed Universities and Academic Federations**

The Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the GCC States, at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, January 2012) discussed the topic of eliminating the phenomenon of spread of fake and un-licensed universities and academic federations and methods of putting an end to them. They recommended the following:

- Emphasizing the authorities concerned with employment in public and private sector of the GCC States to ensure the soundness of data of the certificates of the applicants to work in the Member States and have them equated.
- The competent authorities in the Member State shall take the necessary procedures to quickly implement this decision.

The Ministerial Council adopted this recommendation at the 125<sup>th</sup> preparatory session, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2012.

## **Social and Educational Coherence**

In the field of social and cultural communication, a number of educational and youth meetings and activities are periodically organized by GCC universities with participation of higher education students and institutions. These activities include many participants every year, in addition to their indirect impact on all categories of GCC community. The following

are some of the activities that were completed so far:

#### **a) Student Activities**

- Organizing eight educational weeks for the university students at the GCC States: Hundreds of students participate in these weeks with their scientific, educational and social output.
- Organizing seven sport competitions for university students at the GCC States, of which the sixth competition was organized at Kuwait University (March 2005). Hundreds of university students have participated in those Competitions.
- Organizing 26 visits for the distinguished students from the universities of the GCC States. Each visit was made to one of the GCC universities, where students met university staff and students
- Organizing 12 camps for the rover students from the universities of the GCC States. The 13<sup>th</sup> camp will be organized this year.
- Organizing several across-country racing competitions.
- Organizing three university theatre festivals for the students of the universities of the GCC States.
- Organizing the first GCC Competition for vocational skills
- Organizing the 4<sup>th</sup> students external visit for the university students, to France in August 2014.
- Organizing four international visits for the officials of technical education and vocational training.
- Organizing 18 internal visits for competent persons in technical education and vocational training institutions.

#### **b) Forums and Conferences**

Many scientific forums and conferences have been organized at university, college or department level, or at the level of scientific departments specialized in technical and vocational training.

#### **c) Studies and Research**

- Issuing the Arab Accounting magazine (periodical); A concise scientific magazine issued by the accounting departments.
- Basic education; the Ideal and Application
- Compatibility between the higher education outputs and the development requirements of labor force in the GCC States

- Intermediate colleges: The international experience and the efforts of the GCC States in this connection
- Selection of teachers and assessment of their performance
- Admission criteria at the universities of the GCC States
- Guidelines for development of higher education at the GCC States
- Diversification of finance sources of higher education
- Social and financial positions of the GCC students abroad
- Methods and techniques for detecting false degrees (for the officials in charge of offset of degrees at the GCC States)
- Study on comprehensive development of education
- Study on the special-need students at higher education institutions and universities
- Study on the indexes and achievements in higher education.
- The Supreme Council resolutions in the field of education and education excellence.
- Highlights on the higher education process in the Member States: resolutions and accomplishments.

### **Secretariats of Joint Action Committees**

In view of the expansion of joint action in the field of higher education, Presidents and Directors of Universities and Higher Education Institutions adopted a regulation that allows universities and higher education institutions to participate in managing part of the joint action affairs. Accordingly, many secretariats were formed for colleges such as the Secretariat of the Committee of the Deans of Medicine, Education, Science, Engineering, in addition to the committees of support deanships such as the committee of deans of community service and continued education centers, admission and registration, libraries, student affairs, etc. These secretariats were distributed to universities according to the sphere of specialization. These secretariats successfully perform their duties as they have achieved a great deal of coordination and cooperation in various fields such as:

- Teaching methodologies
- Exchange of expertise and potentials
- Joint scientific research
- Scientific conferences and workshops
- Performance development of teaching staff

- Establishing a database "Gulf Research Portal" which is a project that serves scientific research and academic action in the field of higher education at Member States level
- Distant teaching
- Modern applications of technology.
- Creating an award for the excellence in designing and improving electronic curricula.
- Award of excellence and innovation in taking care of special-need students' rights.
- Award of GCC Secretariat for engineering colleges students.
- Organizing a special workshop entitled "Preparation of executive articles for the criteria of international agreement on rights of special needs students in higher education universities and institutions of the GCC States".

These committees have developed five-year plans that include several joint programs and projects. The secretariats of these committees submit annual reports, through the GCC Secretariat General, to the Committee of the Presidents and Directors of Universities and Higher Education Institutions in the Member States.



## Chapter (2)

# Scientific and Technical Cooperation

### Objectives

Cooperation in the fields of scientific and technical research has been accorded special attention, since the very beginning of the GCC process. Article (4) of the GCC Charter provides that Member States shall stimulate scientific research and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources, to establish scientific research centers and to establish joint ventures. Both the Unified Economic Agreement, 1981, and the Economic Agreement, 2001, stress these objectives. The latter provides «Member States shall adopt, as basic priorities for development, policies to support joint scientific and technical research, and develop their own joint scientific, technical, and information technology databases, including the adoption of the following policies:

- Increase the funds allocated to scientific and technical research.
- Encourage and provide the necessary incentives to the private sector to contribute to the funding of specialized scientific and technical research,
- Ensure that international companies operating in the GCC States sponsor specialized programs for scientific and technical research in the Member States.
- Establish a native scientific, technical, and information technology base that fully utilizes the expertise of international and regional organizations.
- Integrate scientific research institutions in the GCC States in order to develop and activate the scientific, technical, and information technology base, and to work jointly to set up common research centers.

The Economic Agreement further provides a number of measures to be taken by the Member States in this framework as a minimum:

- Develop mechanisms for achieving optimal utilization of scientific and technical research in both public and private sectors, and continued coordination between the executive bodies, on the one hand, and the

outputs of the scientific, technical, and information technology base, on the other.

- Support and develop technical information networks, systems and centers in Member States, and adopt programs to facilitate information dissemination and exchange among the institutions of scientific and technical research in the GCC States.

To meet the said objectives, a committee was formed to enhance cooperation among Member States in the field of scientific and technical research. Functions of this committee are coordination, cooperation and unification of positions. The fields through which these functions can be performed include developing policies and programs of scientific and technical research and proposing areas of scientific and technical joint action.

The role of universities and research institutes is crucial for the comprehensive and sustainable development process in Member States. The competent committee enhances partnership and cooperation between scientific and technical research institutions and industrial and production plants through developing interlocking relations between scientific research and development in Member States.

The decision of Supreme Council at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, December 2001) pertaining to adoption of opinions of the Consultative Commission concerning scientific and technical research, and its decision at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006) concerning conducting joint GCC study on use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes according to international criteria, represents the most prominent routes of the joint action in the current decade. The Secretariat General follows up and coordinates among the GCC States and executes some activities and actions. Given below are a summary of what has been executed.

## **Achievements**

### **I. Follow up of Scientific and Research Cooperation**

- Preparation of a Booklet on reports sent by the Member States on their opinions concerning the status of scientific research and future plans.
- Agreeing on the preparation of State of Qatar's preliminary feasibility

study on the creation of a fund to support activities of the joint scientific research among the GCC States.

- Exchange of field visits to researches in the GCC States.
- Making arrangements to hold a meeting for the working group of officials of earthquakes monitoring centers in the GCC aimed to introduce the activities of these centers and study the possibility of linking them.
- Working to follow up the proposals from the authorities concerned with scientific research pertaining to the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques on accelerating the performance and removing the obstacles that come in the way of various aspects of joint process between the GCC States.
- Approving the preparation of a report by the State of Qatar highlighting aspects of joint cooperation between the research centers in the GCC States in the field of environmental activities.

## **II.Promoting the Use of Nuclear Technology for Peaceful Purposes by the GCC States**

Energy consumption rates of electric energy and desalinated water, whose production depends on oil and gas products in GCC Member States, are of the highest rate worldwide, which is attributed to the increased population growth rate, development plans and the volume of projects. Therefore, GCC Member States have decided to seek another source of energy to use it as an additional source beside oil and gas in order to achieve economic development and social welfare. GCC Member States are of the view that nuclear energy could be utilized to achieve this objective along with supporting international efforts for developing other renewable sources of energy.

This trend will certainly provide greater quantities of oil and gas exports to international markets, which will enhance their stability by increasing supply and consequently increase national revenues. This will reduce oil and gas depletion rates and prolong production period in order to preserve this non-renewable resource for future generations. Besides, this will provide additional potentials to the transfer of advanced technology for peaceful purposes.

This strategic trend for utilizing nuclear energy in power generation

and water desalination is encouraged by many factors: Such as the use of this source will help reduce carbon dioxide emission, one of the gases causing global warming phenomenon. Moreover, the high levels of safety and performance of nuclear energy has abated the public concern about the construction of nuclear reactors. In addition, the costs of utilizing nuclear energy depend mainly on the capital costs of the construction of nuclear reactors. This, of course, protects nuclear energy from price fluctuations.

GCC Member States have taken the first step towards this trend when the Supreme Council at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006) decided to conduct a joint study on the uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes according to international standards. In implementation of this decision, GCC Member States agreed that IAEA would conduct a preliminary feasibility study on the use of nuclear energy for power generation and water desalination to be followed by a detail study and implementation work program.

#### **(1) Initial Meeting with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

The GCC Secretary General held a meeting with the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency in February, 2007, in which his Excellency placed for discussion many topics of common interest and methods of cooperation between the GCC Secretariat General and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The two sides discussed the technical bases of constructive cooperation and agreed that the International Atomic Energy Agency shall provide technical support to the GCC States in their quest for the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including expertise and advice required to conduct the joint study in this regard. Accordingly, a close strategic relationship has been established that is based on close cooperation in which International Atomic Energy Agency shall provide the technical support. The GCC, in its process relies on the international legitimacy in this field.

The Supreme Council, in the 9<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting, held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2007, went through the Secretary General's report in this regard and decided to assign the working group to follow up the progress of the preparation of the primary feasibility study by International Atomic Energy Agency, and to provide information and allocate one million dollars to cover the follow up of the study. It also directed the Secretary General to submit a presentation

of what has been achieved and urged to complete GCC States' accession to the IAEA's membership and promote the cooperation between the GCC Secretariat General and the IAEA, and to enhance abilities of the Secretariat General.

## **(2) Joint Ventures Among the GCC States in the field of Peaceful Nuclear Applications**

A working group of the Member States has been formed to follow up the cooperation and implementation of the joint venture among the Member States in the field of peaceful nuclear applications. The team, since its formation in 2007 held a number of meetings to discuss the joint issues in this field and follow up the projects assigned to it by the Ministerial Council. These meetings included scientific discussions, in specialized fields by experts and specialists.

## **(3) Primary Feasibility Study on use of Nuclear Energy for Power Generation and Water Desalination**

In implementation of the Supreme Council's decision at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006) directing to conduct a joint GCC study on the uses of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes according to international criteria, IAEA has prepared the primary feasibility study on use of Nuclear Energy for power generation and water desalination in participation with the working group assigned by the GCC States. Among the most prominent findings of this study are the following:

- Use of nuclear energy for power generation and water desalination in GCC Member States is one of the cost-effective options to meet the increasing demand for electricity and water. They are two basic components on which the process of development, prosperity and growth rely.
- International Atomic Energy Agency emphasized the necessity of enhancing and developing the related infrastructure and institutional requirements and specifying its tasks to use the nuclear energy in each GCC State.
- Complete the detailed studies and submit the joint action plan to fulfill the basic requirements of GCC States' use of this source of energy. The Supreme Council at the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007) was informed of the result of the preliminary feasibility study on uses of

nuclear energy for power generation and desalination.

The Supreme Council took a decision directing to start preparation of the detailed studies and directed a working group composed of specialists from the GCC States and Secretariat General to follow up the progress of preparation of the required studies. It also included an authorization to the Ministerial Council to approve whatever is required by the working group of financial resources to cover the costs of its preparation.

#### **(4) Terms of Reference of the Detailed Studies on Uses of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes**

In implementation of the decision of the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008), pertaining to accelerating the completion of the terms of reference of the detailed studies on uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, IAEA completed draft terms of reference for the studies necessary for development of program of nuclear power for power generation and desalination in the GCC States. The draft terms of reference included seven key areas relating to development of nuclear power program. They are as under:

- legal framework of nuclear power program.
- Nuclear safety infrastructure
- Technical and industrial infrastructure.
- National studies to develop sustainable strategy of electricity and water and possible contribution of nuclear power to the same.
- Specifying locations of nuclear installations.
- Planning the workforce for the program.
- The cycle of nuclear energy: disposal of nuclear waste.

#### **(5) Technical Cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency**

In implementation of the decision of Supreme Council, at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008), pertaining to GCC States benefiting from technical cooperation programs with IAEA, it has been agreed upon between the GCC and IAEA to create three GCC projects, to be designed to meet the common needs of these States within the framework of technical cooperation programs of 2001-2009, including steps of development of institutional infrastructure, legislations, regulatory and supervisory bodies associated with national and regional programs in the fields of safety, peace,

security, research, and development related to nuclear energy. These three projects are as under:

- First Project: Development and strengthening the legislative infrastructure and rules of nuclear safety and security in the GCC States.
- Second Project: Planning and development of uses of nuclear power in the GCC States.
- Third Project: Development of human abilities of GCC States working in the field of nuclear energy through establishing nuclear research and training centers .

The technical cooperation has been completed with IAEA within the three programs, funded by the GCC.

In September 2010, the working group started dealing with IAEA concerning the projects proposed for 2012 and 2013. IAEA was provided with what the working group saw in this regard and IAEA approved it.

The working group formed a small committee composed of three members; a representative from Sultanate of Oman, a representative from the State of Kuwait, a representative from the GCC Secretariat General to work with IAEA to design these projects and hand over them to IAEA within the specified times. This committee met with IAEA in February 2011, and it was agreed upon to design the joint project for the years of 2012 and 2013 under title «Building necessary capabilities to introduce nuclear energy for power generation and water desalination in the Gulf region». This program is to focus on intensified activities and specialized courses to enhance the technical and administrative capabilities of the competent staff of the GCC States based on the result of the strategic study.

#### **(6) Project of Study on Assessment of Regional Cooperation in Development of Civil Programs for Uses of Nuclear Energy for Power Generation and Water Desalination**

Further to the decision of the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2009), pertaining uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, directing to accelerate completion of the terms of reference of the detail studies on uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, with the aim of presenting them to international specialized companies and establishments

to start their preparation; and after completion of these frameworks by IAEA and in implementation of this directive, the Secretariat General contacted many foreign embassies in Riyadh. It has introduced the project and expressed Secretariat General's desire to invite companies and expert offices to conduct the detailed studies to implement this project.

The Secretariat General, during these contacts obtained names and details of a total of thirty international consultancy firms. These firms were requested to submit their proposals to the Secretariat General. Following response from a number of these companies, all the submitted proposals were submitted to the meeting of the permanent committee held at the headquarters of the Secretariat General on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2009. After submitting them to the Ministerial Council at the 111<sup>th</sup> session a decision was issued affirming the importance of the study and development of the necessary infrastructure.

#### **(7) Project of Strategic Study on the Possible Methods of Assessment of Areas of Joint Cooperation among the GCC States**

In implementation of the decision of the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 2010) pertaining to uses of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, approving the project of the strategic study of the possible methods of assessment of cooperation areas between the GCC States in development of uses of nuclear energy, the Secretariat General signed a contract with Light Bridge for the preparation of the strategic study on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010. With close cooperation between the Secretariat General and the assigned team and consultant, the study was completed within the specified time. The most important results of this study were presented to the Ministerial Council at the 120<sup>th</sup> session.

The study results included an assessment of the feasibility of establishment of joint project to build a nuclear power station among the GCC States and requirements and conditions of this project, and challenges and effects entailed. The study concluded that this project is feasible from technical and commercial aspect, because there are suitable locations to establish joint projects initially, with significant institutional and technical obstacles that must be overcome, such as nuclear safety and security and regional cooperation.



The study results also concentrated on the priority of joint cooperation in development of nuclear energy infrastructure according to the following frameworks:

- Legal framework, nuclear accountability and international agreements.
- Nuclear organizing laws
- Assessment of site study.
- Culture of safety and building human abilities, training, infrastructure and development.
- Secure management of consumed fuels and nuclear wastes.
- Action plan to face nuclear emergencies.

In view of the new developments of events in the region and start of operation of the Iranian Bushehr reactor in September 2011, and the reports surfaced stating the possibility of a nuclear disaster as a result of incompatible and old technology used in it. In addition, Iran is the only country in the world that operates a nuclear reactor without joining Nuclear Safety Treaty which obligates the signing parties to adhere to the minimum limit of the nuclear safety plans and systems. This has led to fears about the occurrence of a nuclear disaster in the Arabian Gulf. Therefore, it has become essential to take the necessary action to protect GCC States from any potential disaster, by accomplishing the advice related to the action plan to face nuclear emergencies.

The study included seventeen recommendations which were approved by the Supreme Council at the 120<sup>th</sup> session. The Secretariat General, in coordination with the Presidency of the Council's current session, is devising a practical mechanism to execute the recommendations of the strategic study according to a time schedule in cooperation with IAEA, European Union, and some specialized companies.

Based on the Ministerial Council's decision, at the 125<sup>th</sup> preparatory session approving the proposal submitted by SNC-LAVALIN regarding preparation of nuclear emergency plan for the GCC States and directing the Secretary General to sign the contract, a contract has been signed with the said company in February 2013, according to specifications and technical reference specified by the assigned team.

The assigned working group formed a technical team of competent officials and the Secretariat General to follow up the preparation of the plan with the company and set terms of reference for the duties of the technical team. Within this framework, the Company's experts and the Secretariat General visited the Member States in the months of March and April 2013, to go through the national plans of each State, and installations and preparations available in each of them, as well as the level of quality and method of their merging with the regional plan and the extent of compatibility of those plan with international criteria.

Timing of the implementation of one of the most important objective of the plan's program was agreed upon, i.e. , intensified training for GCC trainees. The plan was prepared, initially, circulated and reviewed. The concerned bodies of the GCC States expressed their remarks on them.

In this framework, field exercises were conducted in three stages, for the competent officials of the Member States. The first exercise was conducted at the headquarters of the Secretariat General in the month of July 2013, for a period of four days, in which 150 competent officials form the Member State participated and learned how to respond and control.

The second stage of the training on confronting nuclear emergencies was held in the State of Qatar, from 14-20 September 2013, which was complementary to the first training.

The third and last stage of the field training was completed at the headquarters of the GCC Secretariat General from 8-12 December 2013. It was a field implementation of the plan, according to field installations and requirements and accident scenario, and method of dealing with the environment according to steps contained in the plan. The plan was completed in the best possible manner, in the presence of experts of IAEA who followed up the field application of the plan practically and monitored all the steps. The plan will be reviewed in its final form at the headquarters of IAEA by its experts, in preparation to raise it to the Ministerial Council for adoption.

## Chapter (3)

# Cooperation in the Field of Labor and Social Services

### I. Labor

#### Objectives

This side of the GCC process focuses on matters related to labor and laborers such as laws and regulations of civil service, social insurance, civil pension, administrative development, employment, expatriate workers, population composition, nationalization of jobs and other matters related to the GCC integration of the labor markets and laws thereof. Joint action in this field began before establishing the GCC; that was through the Executive Office of the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs that was established in February 1978.

#### Achievements

##### **(a) Employment of Citizens and Facilitation of their Intra-GCC Movement**

Resolutions of the Supreme Council concerning employment of national work force and facilitation of their intra-GCC movement have accorded a strategic depth to the concept of GCC citizenship, in implementation of the principles of the Economic Agreement and the requirements of the Common Market. The employment of national work force and facilitation of their intra-GCC movement were the focus of many resolutions taken by the Supreme Council and many ministerial committees, which have contained important recommendations for formulating policies, plans and implementing rules that provide employment opportunities for citizens and facilitate their intra-GCC movement.

In fulfillment of the objectives of the GCC Charter, the provisions of the Economic Agreement and the directives of the Supreme Council, the GCC Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs, have proposed several initiatives and exerted great efforts to ensure the freedom of work, residence, and movement; and surmount the difficulties that prevent achievement of equality among GCC citizens. The most important of these resolutions was

the resolution of the Supreme Council (14<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, December, 1993) concerning equality among the GCC citizens employed by the private sector and the issuance of implementing resolutions at the GCC States level to this effect.

Pursuant to the mandate of the Supreme Council (19<sup>th</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, December, 1998) to conduct a study on the employment of national man power and facilitate their intra-GCC movement, the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council has made recommendations in this connection that have contained some proposals for the employment of nationals. The proposals stress that the GCC government and private agencies should go ahead in implementing the policy of substitution and reducing the number of the expatriate workers, and that private sector should be involved in developing and proposing plans and projects for nationalization of jobs and application of the rules related to granting licenses for employment of non-GCC workers, as well as raising the costs of the non-GCC labor, which would urge employers to employ national labor. The Consultative Commission has stressed the necessity of providing information on labor market in both the government and private sectors and the free business at the GCC States for all GCC nationals. The Consultative Commission has instructed the Executive Office of the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs to collect, compile, exchange, and publish information on the requirements of labor market.

### **(b) Extending the Insurance Protection**

For achieving economic citizenship, and pursuant to the resolutions of the Supreme Council, the Ministerial Council and the ministerial committees concerning employment of citizens and facilitating their movement, it is necessary to consider the possibility of providing retirement insurance protection to the GCC citizens employed by the public and private sectors in other Member States. The GCC States have made great efforts to facilitate the relevant procedures set forth in the civil pension and social insurance laws and develop appropriate mechanisms for extending the umbrella of the insurance protection to cover the GCC citizens working in any Member States. As a result of those efforts, and the efforts made by the Financial and Economic Committee, the Council of the GCC Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs and the Committee of the Heads of Civil Pension and Social Insurance

Departments, a recommendation to that end was submitted to the Supreme Council (25<sup>th</sup> session, Manama, December, 2004). Implementation of that recommendation was to be optional for one year effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2005 and binding as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006. The Supreme Council approved that law and the explanatory note thereof. Then all Member States issued their respective internal directives for implementation of that law.

### **(c) Expatriate Workers**

The GCC States have realized the negative impacts of recruiting great numbers of expatriate workers and the risk of the continued dependence on them, which would cause disorder in the population composition, on the hand, and reduce employment opportunities for citizens, on the other hand. To avoid those impacts, the GCC States have sought to address the problem, at the individual level, by focusing on the nationalization of jobs and intensifying the programs of substituting the expatriate workers with national workers. At the joint level, the ministerial committees and other joint action committees have continued making their recommendations to the Supreme Council. Many resolutions were taken in this respect, the most significant of which was the resolution of the Supreme Council (15<sup>th</sup> session, Bahrain, December, 1994) instructing the agencies, departments and institutions of the public and private sectors to take the implementation measures to limit the numbers of the expatriate workers and substitute them with national workers.

In an endeavor to achieve balance in the population composition and the structure of the work force, the Supreme Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December, 1998) adopted the General Framework of the GCC Population Strategy. The Supreme Council at the 20<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, November, 1999) also agreed to form a joint committee for studying the expatriate labor and the population composition at the GCC States. The said committee developed mechanisms and implementation procedures, such as, inter alia, each Member State should identify percentages representing the maximum allowable limit of the non-GCC citizens in terms to the total population and the total work force, stressing on the activation of the substitution policies at each Member State and maximizing the costs of the expatriate labor. The Supreme Council at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama,

December, 2000) also adopted the mechanisms and implementation procedures developed by the committee.

#### **(d) Civil Service and Administrative Development**

For the purpose of achieving GCC economic citizenship, and in line with the provisions of the Economic Agreement, and in the light of the recommendation of the Civil Service Ministers at the GCC States, the Supreme Council at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, December, 2000) approved according equal treatment to the civil employees at any GCC Member State in respect to the job benefits. All the GCC Member States have issued their respective internal rules for implementation of that resolution.

In the field of development of work at the civil service, GCC Electronic Portal of Civil Service and Human Resources has been established. Moreover, the General Framework of Human Resources Development has been approved. In addition, the GCC States are continuing the exchange of expertise and development of individual skills in the field of civil service through organizing relevant forums and meetings.

In the field of administrative development, and for the purpose of developing the administrative work at the public sector and utilizing the experience and potentials available at the institutes of public administration and administrative development, the officials have held several meetings and organized various training courses and workshops. Many programs are currently being organized, based on the decisions of the Committee of the Directors General of the Institutes of Public Administration and Administrative Development. The most important of these programs are the following:

- Implementation of remote training program among the GCC States.
- The Cooperation and Integration Strategy between the Institutes of Public Administration and Administrative Development (Doha, December, 2003).
- The project of «Information Services in the Field of Documentation and Libraries».
- The project of preparing a trainers' database between institutions.
- Instituting the prize of the Institutes of Public Administrations and Administrative Development in the GCC States for excellent

institutional performance. Its implementation has begun in the second conference of the institutes held in December 2012, in Riyadh.

## **II. Joint Social Work**

The joint social work includes many aspects including the following: Women, children, family, and people with special needs, and cooperation with regional and international organizations. The efforts of cooperation and joint action are exerted in coordination between the GCC Secretariat General and Executive Office of Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs. Given below is a presentation of the most important aspects of joint social work in the framework of the GCC.

### **(a) Promoting Status of Woman**

The Supreme Council, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002) directed the Consultative Commission, to submit its opinion on the means to promote the status of woman in the GCC States, and to highlight their economic, social and family role. The Commission studied the topic and submitted its opinions to the Supreme Council. The study explored many themes, the first of which stresses upon the need for enhancement of women's role and supporting their role to effectively participate in the progress and development of society. It also focused on the achievements of women's wider participation in leading positions and positions of decision making, affirming the Islamic and Arabic values and principles that work to integrate roles of women and men, and need for discussing woman's issues continuously, by encouraging researches and studies that deal with women's issues, as well as by establishing statistical and research database to provide support information for policymaking and plans. The Commission also affirmed the role of national higher councils existing in some GCC States, and inviting Member States to establish similar councils so that all the authorities working in the field of woman and family are represented. Emphasis was on accelerating the formation of a coordinative committee at the level of the GCC States.

As for the economic axis, the Commission articulated the need for enabling women economically to enhance their social and family role, to increase their participation in labor market, to focus on their qualification, training, and development of skills and knowledge needed for that, together with improving the working conditions and terms, and development of

social insurance systems and civil retirement, in a manner that helps increase their economic participation and employs the technology to afford new opportunities for woman's work. The Commission also recommended the establishment of a joint fund to support women related projects.

In the social axis, the Commission emphasized the improvement of poor women's conditions and helping them to merge in social life, protecting them from violence in all its forms, striving to put an end to illiteracy among girls and women through a long-term plan, and development of women related laws and regulations, in line with provisions of Islamic Shariah, and raising awareness of the society in general and women in particular about their rights and the legal and professional duties as ordained by the Islamic Shariah.

As for the family axis, the Consultative Commission articulated the importance of family's role according to the Islamic principles, and improvement of the living status of the family headed by a woman by raising her source of income and guiding her to the best methods to benefit from her income. It has underlined the importance of the media message meant for the family and educating fathers and society concerning the consequences of discrimination among children. It also stressed the importance of facilitating access to modern information and disseminating knowledge and education, and eradication of illiteracy in the family life, and taking care of nursery homes network and kindergarten, and encouraging field researches on the changes that may occur to the family and establishment of suitable database for it.

## **(b) Childhood Development**

The childhood development represents an important aspect in the GCC work. Efforts have been exerted in coordination with UNICEF to specify priorities and work methods of childhood development. The meeting to which the Secretariat General organized in coordination with UNICEF has recommended to establish a specialized coordinating committee in the field of childhood. It is composed of members representing related official authorities and national bodies to provide childhood services.

In addition , in cooperation with the UNICEF's office in the Arabian Gulf region, a study has been conducted on the status of childhood care services in the GCC States and method of elevating these service in



order to take necessary action to further develop them. The GCC States strive to coordinate among each other for the cooperation efforts made in collaboration with the establishments and organizations working in the field of childhood at the GCC level and at the Arab and international levels, and to hold events and activities thereof. In coordination with the management of Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammad Award for Childhood Creativity, the first conference on childhood was held in Dubai (March 2006), under the title of «Childhood is a joint responsibility.»

### **(c) People with Special Needs**

A coordination committee has been formed for the people with special needs in the GCC States, which meets periodically to follow up the efforts of coordination and cooperation among the Member States in this field.

# Chapter (4)

## Joint Cultural Action

### Objectives and Cultural Development Plan

Joint cultural action is based on the objectives set out in the GCC Cultural Development Plan that was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 8<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, 1987) and the Cultural Strategy which was adopted by the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008) in lieu of the said plan. The Strategic Plan entailed several objectives that can be summed up as follows:

- Enriching the citizen's personality and building his capacities and awareness to cope with the human development.
- Developing the infrastructures, given that culture is a crucial element of the nation's solidarity and civilization and developing cultural output.
- Saturation with and preservation of the Arab-Islamic civilization identity, strengthening the national Islamic content and confronting the cultural spoliation attempts.
- Enhancing cultural unity among Member States and fostering the cultural role of women and the civil community institutions with a view to achieving the general objectives of the strategy.

The Strategy includes a set of oriented principles that focus on the role of the Arab Islamic culture in the cultural planning for the communities of the GCC States, the cultural development dimension, the importance of cultural participation and conceiving heritage as a spirit and inspiration, not merely inanimate texts. The principles also stress the role of classical Arabic, the importance of coping with the age and the need for developing dialogue with the other cultures with a view to enhancing human values.

The Strategy stipulates several requirements and methods to achieve it within the general strategic objectives of the comprehensive development; mainly updating the laws and enactment of legislation necessary for enhancing the use of the Arabic language and providing the financial support to ensure success of the strategy and development of the infrastructures of the cultural production represented in constructing public libraries, theatres, cinemas,

museums, publishing houses, cultural research centers and attention to the intra-GCC cultural tourism.

Pursuant to the mechanisms of the Strategy, the General Cultural Committee discussed in April 2009, the activation of this Strategy in accordance with a ten-year timeframe, and this to be achieved through coordination with several relevant committees such as the Committee of Book Fairs, the Committee of Intellectual Property and Copyrights, the Committee of Antiquities and Museums, the Committee of Tourist Cooperation, the Executive Tourist Committee and other permanent or interim committees that follow up relevant resolutions, discuss ideas and initiatives and make recommendations to the Ministerial Committee.

## **Areas of Joint Action in the Field of Culture**

### **I. Cultural activities**

Several joint activities are periodically organized in the GCC States covering creative arts and Arab calligraphy, general culture, literary creation and criticism, child's culture, administrative training the field of activation of the cultural work, theatre activities through the permanent committee of private teams, songs and other activities. The General Cultural Committee, composed of the Directors of the Cultural Departments in the GCC States and the Director of the Culture Department at the Secretariat, schedules and supervises these activities.

### **II. Antiquities, Museums and Folklore**

The Tourism Cooperation Committee coordinates with GCC States in the field of tourism, as well as with GCC Federation of Chambers and International Tourism Organization. Also, in coordination with a number of other states, it organizes tourism symposia and exhibition etc. In addition , the committee proposes and executes joint activities and projects in this field.

The Committee formed of Undersecretaries of the Ministries in charge of antiquities and museums proposes and organizes the joint activities and programs, such as:

- The issuance of a periodical bulletin about antiquities and museums at the GCC States
- Preparation of guides (directories) for museums and specialists at the

#### GCC States

- Participation in the survey and exploration works
- Formation of joint teams for survey and exploration and training activities
- Organizing a periodic joint exhibition for antiquities
- Organizing forums, training courses and workshops
- Utilization from the international organizations and centers concerned with the training of the staff and specialists involved in antiquities and museums
- Exchanging visits of the staff and specialists involved in antiquities and museums at the GCC States
- Preparation of reference laws and regulations in the field of museums and antiquities

### **III. Laws and Legislation**

Achievements in the field of laws and legislation related to cultural cooperation among the GCC States are the following:

- Adoption of the Common Copyright Law as a reference law.
- Adoption of the common model for cooperation foreign between the GCC States and authorities involved in the field of antiquities exploration as a reference agreement.
- Preparation of a model law for antiquities at the GCC States.
- Guiding rules for the joint periodic exhibition for antiquities at the GCC States.
- Execute the concept for exchange of visits of officials working in the field of antiquities and museums.
- Common model for directory of government and private museums.
- Criteria of honoring specialists working in the field of antiquities and museums.
- Future vision for development of joint researchers in the field of antiquities and museums.
- Approved model for directory of government and private museums.

There is coordination among the GCC States with a view to adopting a common position towards accession to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO, as well as joining the International Museum Council.

#### **IV. General Activities**

A number of joint cultural activities are carried out in coordination with specialized bodies and committees in the Member States. Among the most important of them are the following:

- Organizing book fairs in the GCC States in coordination with Member States to ensure convenience and success thereof.
- Organizing official and private participations in book fairs organized within the GCC States as well as coordinating the collective participation of the GCC States in external fairs.
- Development of a joint action model in the field of e-culture and e-publishing.
- Examining the adoption of the joint action formula in the field of electronic culture and e-publishing
- Organizing an annual cultural festival for the GCC States .
- Honoring GCC men of letters , authors ,artists and specialists in museums and antiquities
- Organizing external forums and like events
- Honoring GCC States' museums.

#### **V. Joint Publications**

- Directory of Antiquities and Museums,
- Directory of the Experts in Antiquities and Museums
- Semi-annual periodical on antiquities and museums
- The « Reference Antiquities Law»
- List of Common Cultural Activities
- Cultural Strategy
- Unified model for dealing among the Member States and foreign authorities in the field of antiquities.
- GCC media strategy
- Directory of honored persons in the field of antiquities and museums.
- Joint action regulations in the field of antiquities and museums.
- Directory of the first round of the honored specialists working in the field of antiquities and museums.
- The Directory of Men of Letters and Authors at the GCC States, second edition, 2013.

## List of Joint Cultural Activities

### Folklore Forum

- 1<sup>st</sup> session, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 15-17 November 1993 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Doha, State of Qatar, 20-22 October 1998 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 24-26 December 2001 .

### Poetry Forum

- 1<sup>st</sup> session, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 10-15 October 1992 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Doha, State of Qatar, 22-24 November 1993 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 25-28 October 1997 .
- 4<sup>th</sup> session, Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 21-23 November 1998 .
- 5<sup>th</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 24-26 April 2000 .
- 6<sup>th</sup> session, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 26-30 October 2002 .
- 7<sup>th</sup> session, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 18-21 April 2004 .
- 8<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, State of Qatar, April 2009 .
- 9<sup>th</sup> session, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 11-13 June 2012 .

### Drama Festival

- 1<sup>st</sup> session, Kuwait, 26 March- April 1988 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Doha, 22-28 January 1990 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, 5-15 April 1993 .
- 4<sup>th</sup> session, Manama, 20-27 May 1995 .
- 5<sup>th</sup> session, Kuwait, 27 March- April 1997 .
- 6<sup>th</sup> session, Muscat, 10-17 May 1999 .
- 7<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, 1-8 October 2001 .
- 8<sup>th</sup> session, Abu Dhabi, 21-28 September 2003 .
- 9<sup>th</sup> session , Manama, 4-11 November 2006 .
- 10<sup>th</sup> session, Kuwait, 31/03-08/04/2009 .
- 11<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, 24-28 December 2012 .
- 12<sup>th</sup> session, Salala, 8-15 September 2012 .

### Cultural Activators Course

- 1<sup>st</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 24 September – 3 October 1989 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 31 October – 6 November 1992.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 5 – 14 December 1993.
- 4<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 30 January – 10 February 1999.
- 5<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 29 October – 13 November 2000.
- 6<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 10 - 14 April 2009.
- 7<sup>th</sup> session, Salala, Sultanate of Oman 16-19 July 2011 .
- 8<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, State of Qatar, 9-11 September 2012 .

### **Children's Drawing Exhibition**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Exhibition, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 21-31 December 1991
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 11-17 December 1993
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 10-16 November 1996

### **The Periodic Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts, Riyadh, 1 April 1989 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts, Doha, 1-7 February 1991 .
- 1<sup>st</sup> Exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy, Kuwait, 21 April 1992 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy, Manama, 3 October 1994 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts, Sharjah, 14-19 November 1994 .
- 4<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts, Kuwait, 4-13 December 1996 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy, Muscat, 21-26 September 1996
- 5<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy, Doha, 16-22 November 1999 .
- 6<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy, Muscat, 16-25 June 2001 .
- 7<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy, Kuwait, 17-26 December 2003 .
- 8<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy, Muscat, January 1st 2006 .
- 9<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Creative Arts and Arabic Calligraphy, Manama, 6-26 November 2009 .
- Visual Arts Forum, Jeddah, 9-19 October 2011 .
- Visual Arts Forum, Muscat, 19-25 May 2013 .

## **Literary Forum**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Session “ Short Story”, Kuwait, 16-18 January 1989
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Session “ Radio and TV Drama”, Abu Dhabi, 16-20 December 1991 .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Session “ Poetry”, Muscat, 6-8 August 1994
- 4<sup>th</sup> Session “ Literary Criticism”, Kuwait, 12-14 December 1995
- 5<sup>th</sup> session «Changes in Gulf Society», Abha, 12 August 2009.
- Symposium on cultural development, 13-15 May 2008, Kuwait.
- Gulf Narration forum, Doha, 25-27 September 2012.

## **The Child’s Education Forum**

- 1<sup>st</sup> session, Doha, State of Qatar, 4-7 March 1989 .

## **Intellectual Forum**

- 1<sup>st</sup> session “ The Role of Culture in Development”, Abu Dhabi, 4-8 February 1990 .
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session “Culture and Information” , Kuwait, 11-13 December 1994.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session “ Copyrights and Adjacent Rights”, Abu Dhabi, 1-3 November 1999 .
- 4<sup>th</sup> session “The Internet as Culture”, Manama, 14-15 March 2006.

## **First External Cultural Week**

Organized in Beijing, People Republic of China, 13-17 October 1997 .

## **Song Festival**

- Abu Dhabi, UAE, in November 2005 .
- Kuwait, 15-19 November 2011.
- Doha, 25-29 December 2013 .

## **External Fine Arts Exhibition**

- Organized in Rome, Italy, 1996 .

## **E-Culture Forum**

- Organized in Abu Dhabi, UAE in April 2005 .
- Cultural Communication Forum, Istanbul, 9-10 April 2008.

## **Tourist Identity Forum**

- Organized in UAE in February 2005 .



## **Joint Periodic Exhibition for Museums**

- The first exhibition, Fujairah, UAE 20/11-20/12/2006 .
- The second exhibition , Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 24/01-24/03/2009 .
- Third exhibition, Doha, May 2011 .
- Fourth exhibition, Manama, May 2013 .

## **Honoring Museums and Antiquities Staff**

- First ceremony, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2007 .
- Second ceremony, Doha, State of Qatar in 2008 .
- Third ceremony, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 2009 .
- Fourth ceremony, Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 2010 .
- Fifth ceremony, Dubai, UAE, 2011 .
- Sixth ceremony, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2012 .
- Seventh ceremony, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2013 .

## **Symposium on Gulf Antiquities**

The first symposium was held in the State of Kuwait in 2001, and the second was held in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in 2003, the third was held in Saudi Arabia , and the fourth symposium will be held in Sultanate of Oman in 2014.

## **Honoring Innovators**

- First ceremony, Sharjah, UAE (23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007)
- Second ceremony, Kuwait, State of Kuwait, October 2010 on the sidelines of meeting of the Ministers of culture.
- Third ceremony, Abu Dhabi, UAE, on the sidelines of 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of Ministers of Culture, 6 October 2011.
- Fourth ceremony, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Ministers of Culture, 10 October 2012.
- Fifth ceremony, Manama, on the sidelines of meeting of the Ministers of Culture, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013.

## **Heritage Forum**

- Gulf Heritage Forum, Kuwait, 23-27 April 2012 .

## **Gulf Cinema Festival**

- First Gulf Cinema Festival, the State of Qatar, 23 February – 1<sup>st</sup> March

2012.

- Second Gulf Cinema Festival, State of Kuwait, 5-11 May 2013

## **Gulf Antiquities Symposium**

- First Symposium : State of Kuwait, 2001 .
- Second Symposium: Kingdom of Bahrain, 2003 .
- Third Symposium : Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2012 .
- Fourth Symposium : to be organized in the Sultanate of Oman, 2014.

## **Archeological Survey**

The program of archaeological survey and excavation is organized annually in one of the Member States, with the participation of two experts, as part of the program the specialists in archaeology work at any of the archaeological sites belonging to one of the periods of ancient times and participate in excavation therein and see the discovered antiquities at this site. They also oversee the works of repairing and maintenance of the antiquities. The program has been implemented in the following manner.

State of Kuwait, October 2001, Sultanate of Oman 2003, State of Kuwait, December 2004 - February 2005, United Arab Emirates, March 2005, Kingdom of Bahrain, May 2005, Sultanate of Oman, November - December 2006, State of Kuwait, November - December 2007, State of Qatar 2008, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2009, State of Kuwait 2009, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2010, Kingdom of Bahrain, November 2011, and the State of Qatar, in December 2012.

## **Specialists' Visits**

State of Kuwait, October 2001, Sultanate of Oman 2002, State of Qatar 2003, Kingdom of Bahrain, October 2003, Kingdom of Bahrain, May 2004, State of Kuwait 2007, United Arab Emirate 2008, Sultanate of Oman, February 2010, Kingdom of Bahrain, September 2011, State of Qatar, November 2012, and Saudi Arabia, December 2013.

## **Training**

- Kingdom of Bahrain, museum guidance course, March 2001.
- United Arab Emirate, introduction to the study of museums, 2008
- Sultanate of Oman, preventive maintenance of antiques, October 2010.

- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, preservation of archaeological sites and building, 2010.
- State of Qatar, education and learning in museums, 2011.
- State of Kuwait, preservation of archaeological sites and building, 2012.
- State of Qatar, weapons industry technology in stone age, 2013.

# Chapter (5)

## Environmental Cooperation

### **I. Objectives and General Principles of Environment Protection**

Recognizing the importance of the development and environment, and desiring to develop long-term solutions for the environmental problems emerging from the developments that have occurred in the GCC States, and inspired by the great similarity of the development and environmental conditions at the GCC States, the Supreme Council (6<sup>th</sup> session, Muscat Summit, 1985) adopted the document of “The Policies and General Principles of Environment Protection at the GCC States” to be the basis for developing strategies for the future environmental activities in the GCC States. Those policies contained several principles, the most important of which are the following:

1. Adopting a comprehensive concept of environment, which includes all surrounding media such as water, air, land and all elements therein such as inanimate things, plants, animals, natural systems and processes and human activities, as well as developing a law based on this concept for environment protection.
2. Establishing and completing the legislative and coordinating bodies, supporting the executive bodies in charge of the implementation of the regulations, rules and standards of environment protection and providing the capabilities of observation and surveillance.
3. Taking into account the environmental considerations and making the environmental planning an integral part of the comprehensive planning in all industrial, agricultural and constructional fields, and adopting the environmental assessment of projects and subjecting their licenses to the approval of the authority in charge of environment protection.
4. Developing and unifying rules, legislation and standards required for the protection of environment and rationalizing the utilization of natural resources and conservation of wildlife.
5. Coordinating the efforts made by Member States to prevent the adverse effects of the development and industrialization projects
6. Observing the environmental outcome of the projects set up in other

- countries with foreign aids from the GCC States
7. Promoting the community's awareness of the environmental issues and fostering the sense of individual and collective responsibility for environment conservation.
  8. Proving the Labor Force in charge of the environment affairs and supporting the training plans.
  9. Compilation and exchange of regional and international information on environment and utilizing such information for the planning process.
  10. Encouraging scientific research to identify the environmental problems and preparing a directory of the available expertise in the field of environment protection.

### **First Action Plan**

Pursuant to those policies and principles, the Ministers in charge of environment affairs at the GCC States have adopted the first action plan that included the following:

- Surveying the environment protection bodies in order to identify their structures, organization and powers
- Diagnosing the common and similar environment problems at the GCC States
- Compiling and reviewing the environmental standards, laws and legislation at the GCC States and making recommendations for completing and unifying them
- Surveying the environment awareness programs in the various media and education at school curricula
- Compiling the researches and studies conducted by Member States and regional and international organizations, circulating such researches and studies and proposing translation of some of them.
- Compiling the specialized educational and training programs and the implementing agencies at the GCC States, developing methods for improving such programs and utilizing them by Member States as well as proposing any required new programs.

## **II. Environmental Laws and Legislations**

Furthering to the policies and general principles of the environment

protection adopted by the Supreme Council, and supporting the efforts of the GCC States in enacting environmental laws and legislation that aim at protecting man's health from the adverse effects of water, air and soil pollution, several reference laws have been developed within the framework of the joint environmental action. The most significant of those laws are the following:

1. The General Environment Protection Law : A comprehensive framework incorporating the basic rules for environment conservation and protection. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 1995).
2. The Common Law for the Environmental Assessment of Projects: The Law aims at observing the environmental impact of the various projects to prevent their adverse effects on environment, natural resources and development. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 1995).
3. The Common Law for Protection of Wildlife: The Law aims at developing legislation for the protection of wildlife, both plants and animals, growing them at their habitats and rehabilitation of the environmentally affected areas. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 1997).
4. The Common Law for Handling Radioactive Substances: The Law aims at protecting man's health and environment from the hazards of radiation and radioactive substances and applying the acceptable limits of radiation pollution in foodstuff and animal fodders. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 1997).
5. The Common Law for Waste Management: The Law aims at protecting man's health and the various environmental components from the hazards of the solid and toxic waste through sound management. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Kuwait, December 1997).
6. The Common Law for the Management of Hazardous Chemicals: The Law aims at controlling the practices of the Management of Hazardous Chemicals at the GCC States. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council ( Muscat, December 2001).
7. Coordination of procedures among Member States for trans-border handling of hazardous waste for the purpose of processing, recycling or disposal. These procedures aim at enabling Member States to utilize

the existing facilities at any Member State for processing or recycling of hazardous waste. These procedures were adopted by the Supreme Council ( Kuwait, December 1997).

8. The Common Law for the Management of Healthcare Waste: The law aims at developing an adequate approach for controlling the production, sorting, storage, handling, processing of healthcare waste, and disposing them in a safe manner in the GCC States. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 2001).
9. The environmental criteria and standards for the quality of air and water and the controls thereof; the objective of these criteria and standards is to identify the pollution levels at the internal and external environment in the GCC States. These criteria and standards were adopted by the Supreme Council (Manama, December 2004).
10. The Common Reference Law for Controlling the Ozone Depleting Materials: Objective of the Law is to eliminate the use of Ozone depleting materials and substituting them with safe alternatives according to Montreal Protocol and amendments thereof. The Law was adopted by the Supreme Council (Abu Dhabi, December 2005). The Law has been updated to make it consistent with the requirements of amendment introduced to the Montreal Protocol. The GCC Supreme Council approved the amended Law (Bahrain, December 2012).
11. In the field of protection from radiation, the Supreme Council, at the 30th session (Kuwait, December 2009), approved five reference manuals in the field of protection from radiation in the GCC States. These manuals encompass the minimum limits prescribed by manuals and national legislations in the field of protection from radiation. These are as under:
  - Reference manual to set levels of national response plan to deal with the radiation and nuclear emergencies of the GCC States.
  - Reference manual to set levels of procedures in radionuclides available in goods, water, and crops.
  - Manual of licenses and registration in the field of radiation in the GCC States.
  - Manual of reference inspection to ensure the safety of radiological practices in the field of protection in the GCC States.

- Manual containing training programs for workers in the field of protection from radiation to benefit from it in fields of building abilities and qualification for workers in the field of protection from radiation.

The Regional Plan of Preparedness for and Dealing with Radiological Accidents in the GCC States has also been approved by the Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010).

Recognizing the serious impact on environment and natural resources in GCC Member States resulting from industrial and urban development operations and the need for sustained development without prejudice to the environmental considerations, the Supreme Council (28<sup>th</sup> Session, Doha, December 2007) approved the Green Environment Initiative entailing the GCC Environment Action Pact and implementing plan thereof.

The Secretariat General, in cooperation with Member States, is developing programs and activities for the Green Environment Initiative within a short-term and long-term plan. Thus, the GCC States will have presented a leading integrated model for achieving integration between comprehensive development and environment conservation.

It is worth mentioning that the Final Declaration of the Supreme Council (14<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, December 1993) stressed the importance of the joint environmental action for converging policies, unifying environment laws and legislation, enhancing national and regional capacities, training of Labor Force, raising environmental awareness among citizens and conservation of natural resources. The Final Declaration of Zayed Summit (Manama, December 2004) also reiterated that conservation of environment and its renewing natural resources and the protection of wildlife are essential factors for achieving sustained development that aims at improving the conditions and welfare of citizen at the GCC States. The Declaration has called Member States to adhere to the balanced development action.

### **III. GCC Disaster Control Center**

Like all civil communities, GCC Member States face several dangers that threaten the lives of human beings and environment. These dangers need to be identified and managed in a manner based on modern scientific



methods. Given the increased risks that surround GCC States both internally and externally, and the wars and crises which the region has witnessed over the past three decades, it is imperative for GCC States to adopt a state-of-art administrative technique so as to predict all natural risks such as earthquakes, sand storms as well as industrial risks such as explosions, leakage of hazardous materials into the atmosphere or seawater or even those risks caused by sabotage and pre-planned acts.

Hence is the importance of establishing a center for confronting such disasters and supporting decision-making in GCC States based on the state-of-art technology in this field in addition to the efficient utilization of available material and human potentials and capacities and creating appropriate tools for risk management. Therefore, the Ministerial Council, at its session held in Jeddah on 5 July 2007, decided to establish the GCC Disaster Control Center.

The Center aims at establishing a base of researchers and specialists in the field of pre-planning for dealing with disasters (Emergency Plan) and providing the decision-maker with the scientific facts prior, during and after the occurrence of these events in the light of which appropriate actions will be taken at the least costs and most efficient potentials then available. The elements and components which the center depends on are as follows:

- Compilation and gathering available information on the history of past risks and the way they were treated
- Identification of risks threatening the country which may not occur within international limits such as accidents of nuclear plants, power generation plants, leakage of chemicals and hazardous materials and oil
- Assessment of potential risks of natural disasters such as rainstorms, sandstorms and regional and international wars
- Analysis of the risks that may result from pre-planning through application of mathematic modeling of simulated disasters

The Ministerial Council decided that the State of Kuwait would host the Center and that the Kingdom of Bahrain would take up presidency of this Center.

#### **IV. GCC Environmental Monitoring Center**

Based on the decision of the Ministerial Council at the 121<sup>st</sup>

preparatory session (Riyadh, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011), concerning creation of GCC environmental monitoring center, an expert from the GCC States has been assigned the task of preparation of initial concept about the center. The concept includes a short-term plan (2-4) years based on possibilities available in the GCC States and another long-term (4-10) years, which will be independent with its establishments. The work is underway to select an expert office which will establish the center according to a tender document prepared in this regard.

## **V. The GCC Award for the Best Environmental Work and Wildlife**

Inspired by the «General Policies and Principles of the Environment Protection» adopted by the Supreme Council (6<sup>th</sup> session, Muscat, 1985), the Ministers in charge of Environment Affairs (1994) assigned a periodical Environmental Award for encouraging environmental works and individual and collective initiatives that contribute to the environment protection and conservation of its components. The Award also promotes creativity and invention, at individuals and institutions level, in the field of environment protection and development, and dissemination of education and environmental awareness among the GCC citizens. The Award includes these parts:

1. The best environmental research, which includes the following:
  - The best research award in the field of environment
  - The best research award in the field of wildlife.
2. The best media work award:
  - Print Media – Environmental journalism
  - The best documentary film
  - The best press report.
  - The best photograph (Two awards; one for the male and female students of higher secondary and another for above 18 years of age).
  - The best article (Two awards; one for the male and female students of higher secondary and another for above 18 years of age).
3. Award for the best protected area in the GCC States.
4. Award for the best voluntary works of individuals working in the fields of environment and wildlife.
5. Environmental Awareness Award

6. Environment and wildlife personality award
7. Award for the best industrial institution that adheres to the environmental standards and criteria

## **VI. Environmental Awareness**

In integration with the efforts the GCC States are making in the field of developing awareness programs, introducing environmental education at all education stages; including organizing forums, workshops, panels and other meetings at the national and regional levels, the Ministers in charge of environment affairs decided to form a specialized committee that would take care of environmental media and awareness. It defined a set of objectives, programs and activities.

The GCC, in cooperation with the Joint Program Production Corporation for the GCC States and with private sector funding, has produced 30 TV episodes about various environmental topics and the environmental hazards threatening the environment of the GCC States. It's worth mentioning that the GCC States have benefited from celebrating the various Environment Days, such as the Regional Environment Day, the Arab Environment Day, the International Environment Day, the International Day for Protecting the Ozone Layer and the International Day for Biologic Diversity, in developing special programs for promoting environmental awareness. The GCC States have also included many environmental concepts in the education curricula that help individuals acquire the values, trends, skills and facts needed for understanding the complicated relationships between Man and Environment and urge individuals and society to conserve the natural resources and utilize such resources for the good of mankind, which would consequently preserve man's life and improve his living level.

Given the importance of promoting environmental awareness and education, the ministers in charge of environment affairs have agreed on a five-year plan for the environmental media and awareness for the period of 2010-2015, which included a number of programs, events and activities. The programs executed by the environmental media and awareness committee are centered around three areas: Environmental media, environmental awareness, environmental education.

### **a. In the Field of Environmental Media**

1. A journal has been published titled «Our Gulf Environment».
2. The first training course has been conducted to qualify media persons to deal with environmental issues, Kuwait, April 2008. This course was participated by more than (30) media persons.
3. An «environmental idea forum» was organized in Abu Dhabi – May 2008. This forum was attended by more than (40) persons working in the field of environmental media.
4. Environmental media workshop was organized for the graduates of radio and television programs producers «Jeddah, 3-5 June 2012». Work is underway to prepare the electronic environmental magazine of the GCC States.

### **b. In the Field of Environmental Awareness**

1. An «Environment Week» is organized annually since 2008, in February every year, under a specific theme in line with the highest priorities of joint environmental work.
2. In 2010 Sultanate of Oman hosted a working session of individuals in charge of and specialists in environmental media and awareness in case of occurrence of environmental disasters and crises.
3. Work is going on to benefit from the Gulf Cup Football tournaments to merge the environmental dimension in sport activities. The proposal has been applied in the 19<sup>th</sup> football cup tournament, organized in Sultanate of Oman, and discussion of the environmental issues in sport programs and other activities.
4. A workshop was organized on «Enhancement of Family's role to raise environmental awareness» in the State of Qatar, during 25-26 December 2012.

### **c. In the Field of Environmental Education**

1. Since 2006 an annual environmental forum for youth is organized. Five students are selected from each Member State. Each forum has a specific theme in line with the highest priorities of joint environmental work. Till now more than 200 students have been trained.
2. The first environmental conference for students of the GCC States universities held in the State of Qatar in March 2009. The second

conference held in the city of Jeddah in 2013.

3. The GCC Secretariat General, in coordination with the Regional Commission for Protection of Maritime Environment of Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, held a regional workshop to provide training in the field of environment education in the city of Jeddah, in June 2009.

## **VII. Cooperation with Organizations and Economic Groupings**

The GCC States cooperate with all organizations concerned with the protection of environment and the maintenance of its natural resources. The most important organizations are: the Regional Organization for Protection of Maritime Environment, the EU, the Regional Office of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) for Western Asia, the Executive Council of the Arab Ministers in charge of environment affairs, ESCWA and the secretariats of certain international agreements. There is also a continuous coordination with the Regional Organization for Protection of Maritime Environment in the activities and projects related to the protection of maritime environment, mainly cooperation and coordination in the field of constructing facilities for receiving the equilibrium waters in the GCC States and participation in the ministerial and technical meetings of the Organization.

In addition, there is cooperation with International Bank. The Ministers in charge of the environmental affairs have agreed on the project of study on the work program and environmental partnership of the Gulf region executed by the International Bank.

As to the EU, many cooperation programs have been completed during the first phase of the EU-GCC Joint Work Program (1996-2000), such as establishing a wildlife conservatory at the city of Jubail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, exchange of experts' visits, organizing joint workshops in the field of oil polluted sea environment, management of hazardous waste and air pollution, in addition to the EU contribution to the financing of the advisory study on setting up reception centers for ships remnants in the GCC States and funding the drafting of the Protocol on Biologic Diversity of Sea Life in the region. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, three meetings for the GCC-EU climate experts were convened in preparation for subsequent meetings to be held in various environmental fields pursuant to the decisions of the joint ministerial council. A joint forum held with EU on the environment in Muscat on 15<sup>th</sup>

and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011. In addition, a delegation of officers of environmental bodies of the GCC States visited EU in May 2011, to go through EU's experiment in the field of protection of environment and preservation of natural resources.

Also, there is joint cooperation in the field of environment with ASEAN, Republic of China, India, Japan, USA, Pakistan, Russia, Morocco, Turkey, Jordan and other countries and groupings.

### **VIII. Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements**

The GCC States have signed or accepted more than 33 regional and international agreements and conventions in the field of environment and the protection of wildlife and natural resources. The agreements on biological diversity, protection of the ozone layer, climatic change, drought control and international trafficking in endangered species are among the agreements that have drawn the attention of the GCC States and in which the GCC States have achieved considerable success in the application of some of them. Given the importance of these agreements, the GCC States have formed a working team for each agreement to follow up the relevant developments with a view to maintaining the interests of the GCC States at both the regional and international levels.

The most important agreements that were signed or accepted by the GCC States are the following:

1. Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and Montreal Protocol and amendments thereof
2. The Agreement on Conservation of Immigrating Wildlife Species
3. The Convention on International Trafficking in Endangered Species
4. Basel Convention on Hazardous Materials and Trans-border Movement thereof
5. UN Convention on Biological Diversity
6. UN Framework Agreement on Climatic Change and Kyoto Protocol
7. UN Drought Control Convention
8. Kuwait Regional Convention on Protection of Maritime Environment and protocols thereof (1987)
9. Convention on Control of Vessel-related Pollution
10. Convention on Control of Sea Pollution (London Convention

- 1972)
11. International Convention on Overseas Intervention (1969) and protocols thereof (1972)
  12. Agreement on Civil Liability in Maritime Claims 1976
  13. UN Convention on Maritime Law
  14. Agreement on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damages
  15. International Agreement on Establishing an International Fund for Compensation of Oil Pollution Damages
  16. PIC Agreement
  17. Convention on Prohibition of Production, Use and Storage of Chemical Weapons and Destruction thereof
  18. International Agreement on Whales
  19. International Agreement On Plant Protection
  20. Agreement on Permanent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
  21. International Agreement on Wet Lands (Ramseur Agreement)
  22. Agreement on the Protection of International Heritage
  23. Regional Agreement on Conservation of Wildlife and Habitat thereof in the GCC States

## **IX. Meteorology and Climate**

The Ministerial Council, at the 120<sup>th</sup> session held on 11 September 2011, decided to form a permanent committee for meteorology and climate, specialized in the following:

- Coordinate GCC States' efforts in the field of meteorology, including development of research and training programs in various meteorology departments and its applications.
- Work to raise the level of technical and human abilities of the GCC meteorology.
- Work to develop systems, processes and exchange of meteorology and climate information.
- Work to exchange experiences and technology transfer among the GCC States in the field of meteorology and climate.
- Work to promote coordination among the GCC States in the field of expectations and warnings from extreme weather and climate phenomena.
- Propose the necessary mechanism of integration of meteorology

facilities in the GCC States with the Centers related to climate, disasters and early warning.

- Coordination and cooperation with the related regional and international organization, authorities and centers to serve the goals and interests of the GCC States.

The Ministerial Council, at the 126<sup>th</sup> session held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013, decided to approve the Action Plan of the Permanent Committee for Meteorology and Climate, which holds two regular meetings every year.

## **X. Honoring Human and Environment Sector at the Secretariat General**

Recognizing the efforts made by the Secretariat General in the field of joint environment action, it has been honored by the following awards:

1. Award of His Majesty Sultan Qabus bin Said, the Sultan of Oman, as a token from His Majesty in appreciation of efforts exerted in joint environmental work. The award was given at the 29<sup>th</sup> session of Supreme Council (Muscat, December 2008).
2. Award of US Environment Protection Agency for protection of ozone layer for the year 2006.



# Chapter (6)

## Cooperation in the Field of Health

### Beginnings and Objectives

Cooperation in the health field among the GCC States began in the mid-seventies of the twentieth century when the GCC Health Ministers held informal meetings such as the one held in Geneva (16 May 1975) on the sidelines of the meetings of the General Assembly of World Health Organization. Such cooperation developed, after consultation among the concerned States, into the establishment of the «Conference of the Health Ministers of the Arab Countries in the Gulf» which held the first meeting in February 1976, and was later called «the Council of the Health Ministers of the Arab Countries in the Gulf» as of 1981 and then « The Council of the GCC Health Ministers» since 1991.

More recently, the Ministerial Council, at the 127<sup>th</sup> session (Jeddah, June 2013), decided to form a Committee of GCC Ministers of Health, similar to the ministerial committees functioning within the GCC. The Committee held the first meeting in January 2014, in the State of Kuwait.

Considering the field of health as an important sector in GCC activities, and recognizing the steps that the joint health action has achieved within the framework of coordination and cooperation, the subsequent efforts have completed achievements of the Office, benefiting from the comprehensive perspective and the political support provided by working within the framework of the GCC. In this connection, the objectives set forth in the GCC Charter and in the Economic Agreement are the basic grounds for the efforts of coordination and cooperation among the bodies concerned with health affairs in the GCC States, with a view to achieving the following objectives:

- Development of coordination and cooperation among Member States in the preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative health fields.
- Identifying the concepts of the various health affairs and the endeavor to unify them, arrange their priorities and adopt common programs.
- Opening new channels of convergence with the international experience and enhancing cooperation with the Arab and

- international health organizations.
- Procurement of high quality, safe and effective medicaments at appropriate prices through the program of group purchasing of medicaments and medical supplies.

## **Achievements in the Health Field**

The joint action in the health field has attained several achievements, which are the following:

1. According equal national treatment to GCC citizens, in respect to the provision of health services, in all Member States: That was achieved by the issuance of the Supreme Council's resolution providing for same national treatment of GCC citizens at public hospitals, clinics and health centers.
2. Facilitation of the movement of organ implantation teams across GCC States: An agreement was reached between the Ministries of Health, Customs Departments and Passport Departments on a common form for entry of medical teams and on the common card borne by mobile medical teams. The Supreme Council (Kuwait, December, 1997) approved the mechanisms and procedures related to facilitation of movement and exchange of organ implantation teams among GCC States.
3. Increasing customs tariff on tobacco products from 50% to 100%: This resolution has come into force in all Member States. The GCC Member States are considering to further increasing tobacco tariff to be 150%.
4. Proper disposal of medical wastes at hospitals and health centers: The Supreme Council (Riyadh, November, 1999) adopted the «Unified Law for Management of Healthcare Wastes». The Law provides for developing an effective mechanism for coordination between relevant ministries and agencies at each Member State concerning application of proper measures for the disposal of medical wastes.
5. Establishing societies for the GCC physicians and registering them at the GCC States, such as the Society of Doctors of Nose, Ear and Throat (Kingdom of Bahrain), Society of Cosmetologists (UAE), Society of Orthopedists (Kingdom of Bahrain) and Society of Ophthalmologists (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

6. A GCC Committee for Pharmaceutical Control to ensure protection of individuals and development of the control bodies has been formed for the following purposes:
  - Procurement of good high-quality medicaments, conforming to the technical conditions and the requirements of drug registration.
  - Ensure that all imported drugs are accompanied with the required certificates, and complying with international specifications.
  - Supervising the destruction of drugs.

To that end, «A Guide for unification of the procedures and restrictions related to the medicaments imported via the GCC ports» has been prepared. The Supreme Council approved that Guide at the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007).

7. The Supreme Council, at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006) decided to unify the price of import of medicine to the GCC States in one currency.
8. The Supreme Council, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011) adopted the GCC plan for combatting non-infectious diseases.
9. The Supreme Council, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011) adopted the Saudi Standards for approval of health installations as GCC reference criteria.

# Chapter (7)

## Joint Municipal Action

With a view to achieving the GCC objectives through integration and coordination among Member States and unification of laws and rules in all areas of cooperation, namely the joint municipal action, the Ministerial Committee has identified several objectives of the joint action in this connection. Many of these objectives were actually attained as shown below:

### I. Strategic Urban Planning

General framework for GCC Joint Strategic Urban Planning approved by the Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) was prepared to achieve the following:

- Interconnecting urban strategies and policies in the GCC States and streamlining the development territorially, in line with objectives of the GCC States.
- Protecting the cultural and natural heritage of the GCC States.
- Balanced geographical distribution of the activities, services and investments.
- Reducing negative environmental impacts by sustainable use of resources.
- Enhancement of means of transportation and communication using sustainable method.
- Promoting joint GCC action in the field of urban planning.

General framework of urban strategy is being executed according to the executive steps drawn by the expert team, as under :

- (1) Provision of territorial framework of regional planning.
- (2) Converting general objectives of urban planning to executive plans and programs.
- (3) Setting integration options.
- (4) Creating additional developmental opportunities among the GCC States.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the team concerned with urban planning, held in January 2014, it was approved to hold six workshops to implement the common GCC urban strategy.

## **II. Urban Environment**

Cooperation among the GCC States in this field includes the following:

- Laws, regulations and technical specifications related to this field.
- Joint cooperation in preparation for conferences and specialized workshops in the field of urban environment.
- Benefiting from experiments of the Member States in the field of urban environment and information exchange in the field of urban transport engineering.
- Integrated management of wastes, backfilling location, Landfill sites, and benefiting from treated sewage water, and cooperating with the related civil society organizations.
- Laying down legislative and institutional framework in development of urban environment, in line with the modern technology advancements in the field of electronic services.

A team of specialists prepared a reference guide for the management of solid municipal wastes of the GCC States, including all the landfill sites, methods of filling, and collection and distribution of municipal wastes, and methods of processing of closed and current landfill sites. The Guide has been approved at the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers in Charge of the Municipalities Affairs (Riyadh, October 2012). Work is underway to fulfill the remaining goals that would contribute to the development of infrastructure and urban environment. In addition, in the month of March 2014 a field visit was organized to Japan in which specialists from the Member States in the field of urban environment and development participated, to go through its experiment in the field of filling of wastes and exploiting the landfill sites in projects of development of urban environment in the GCC States.

## **III. Preparation of Common Strategy for Municipal Work**

- A unified mission for the municipal work has been set out which provides for excellent municipal services, in order to achieve balanced comprehensive development, which will contribute towards improving the living standard of the population, through effective participation of citizens and real partnership with private sector for planning and management of municipal facilities, in accordance with the highest quality criteria and professional performance.

- General vision of the municipal work has been prepared according to the following statement «excellence in municipal services, in order to achieve balanced and sustainable development that exceeds the best international practices».
- The work of the specialist team is going on to prepare common strategy for municipal work, which is practical, executable, and measurable.

The time period for the common strategy of municipal work has been agreed to 2015. The values upon which the common strategy of the municipal work will be based has also been agreed upon, with emphasis on the Gulf nationality, knowledge transfer among municipalities, promoting joint Gulf interest.

#### **IV. Service Facilities on Highways Interconnecting the GCC States**

As for as the development of service facilities on the highways interconnecting the GCC States, the following have been achieved:

- Assessment of the current status of the service facilities on the highways and specifying their needs and ways of enhancing those services.
- Unification of planning standards for selection of service facilities locations.
- Unification of guiding signboards showing locations of the facilities.
- Outlining the necessary concept to provide restrooms on highways for trucks.
- Preparation of a reference guide for the standards of development of service facilities on highways in the GCC States, adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ministers in charge of municipalities' affairs (Riyadh, October 2012), and adopted by the Supreme Council at its 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012). Work is underway to review the implementation of these criteria adopted in the guide and to convert it from a reference guide to an obligatory procedures guide.

#### **V. Developing National Cadres in the Field of Municipal Work**

The Member States are making efforts to develop the national cadres in the field of municipal works by establishing a unified municipal training center headquartered in the State of Kuwait and by benefiting from the municipal training center in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The work is going on in

this framework according to the following :

- Working to prepare an integrated concept for activation of the training center headquartered in the State of Kuwait.
- Setting general goals and areas of joint cooperation in the field of municipal training.
- Working to prepare unified training rule for the GCC States.

The training center in the State of Kuwait has organized a set of programs, among them are programs specialized in waste management. In addition another set of specialized programs have been executed. Among them are the following:

- Organizing a workshop on electronic services in the field of municipal work, September 2012.
- Organizing a workshop on humanization of cities, in Riyadh, October 2012.
- Health services and spoiled food, November 2012.
- Developing service facilities on expressways, February 2013
- Organizing workshop on quality labs in construction projects, April 2013.
- Organizing workshop on municipal wastes in Sultanate of Oman, In July 2013.
- Organizing a workshop on cleaning contracts in municipalities of GCC States, in March 2014.
- Organizing workshop on strategy of municipal work in March 2014.
- Organizing workshop of survey works in November 2014.
- Organizing a workshop of recycling of hard municipal wastes, in December 2014.
- Holding a workshop of electronic wastes, in May 2014.

## **VI.Reference Guides**

In the field of preparation of reference guides that will contribute to harmonizing the laws and regulations governing the municipal work, in order to unify the laws and regulations governing the municipal work in the GCC States, the following have been achieved:

1. A Reference Guide for the Preservation of the GCC Architectural Heritage prepared by the State of Qatar: This guide was approved by

the Supreme Council at the 29<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008). The Guide defines the urban heritage and cities and villages having historical or heritage dimensions, together with developing constant policies that ensure preservation of the unique GCC architectural and historic heritage, documenting all antique and historic buildings, developing uniform mechanisms and plans for the works of maintenance and reconstruction of the antique and historic buildings. The Guide also identifies criteria for registration, classification and preservation of the architectural heritage, and bases and criteria of their preservation.

2. A Reference Guide for the Construction Works and Systems, prepared by Sultanate of Oman: The Guide was approved by the Supreme Council at the 12<sup>th</sup> session (Muscat, December 2008). The guide is of great importance in unification of laws and regulations governing construction works in the GCC States, and in provision of information and data to private sector. This is because of what it contains of architectural and technical requirements of buildings and those related to the uses by the individuals of special needs. It also includes requirements and procedures of monitoring of implementation of buildings.
3. A Reference Guide for Municipal Fees and Methods of their Collection prepared by the Kingdom of Bahrain: It was approved by the Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009). The guide contributes to unify the fees imposed on residential and commercial building and fees of licenses on building, demolition, reconstruction, fees of occupancies of public roads. It also contributes to setting municipal fees in each Member State and identifying mechanism of assessment of municipal fees, and specifying laws and regulations of municipal fees and methods of their collection.
4. A Reference Guide for Creation of Urban Observatories, prepared by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: This guide was approved by the Supreme Council at the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009). The directory is of great importance in identifying the indicators of urban observatories and general goals of creation of urban observatories; the desired goals of urban observatories; and setting indicators and



land uses; and annual increase of population; and economic and social development indicators; and specifying indicators of infrastructure, transfer and environment, and local indicators. The guide also includes indicators related to knowledge cities society relating to number of internet, mobile phone and newspaper users.

5. A Reference Guide for Criteria and Specifications of Advertisement Boards, prepared by the State of Qatar: This guide was approved by the Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010). It includes criteria contributing to preserving general security and safety and not interrupting traffic movement, and improving general look of the roads.

The work is going on in coordination with the liaison officer in the field of municipal work, to convert the reference guides to obligatory work guide contributing to development of municipal work.

## **VII. Joint Projects**

The work is going on to create new goals of the municipal joint action following achievement of a number of previous goals. Among them is Saudi construction code as a reference guide till the preparation of a GCC construction code is completed and approval of Saudi construction code as a basis of GCC construction code.

## **VIII. Beautification of GCC Cities**

The committee formed of specialists from the Member States in the field of beautification of cities, held three meetings. In these meetings a group of specified goals were set according to time schedule and work phases. Among the most important of which are the following : specifying role of municipal work in the field of beautification of cities, increasing the area of green land, planting trees on the international road among the GCC States. In addition, the initial draft of the Reference Guide for Beautification of Cities has also been completed at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the committee specialized in beautification of cities, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain in March 2014, in preparation of approving the guide at the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers concerned with municipalities' affairs at their meeting scheduled to be held in Kuwait, in September 2014.

## **IX. Municipal Databases**

The website of the municipal databases in the GCC States has been completed, to serve as a place for documentation of decisions and achievements in the field of municipal joint action, and documentation of all the works of the technical committees. The work is in progress, in cooperation with the private sector, to develop the site so that it may become a unified electronic portal for joint municipal action.

# Chapter (8)

## Joint Action in the Field of Housing

### Objectives

A committee composed of the ministers in charge of housing affairs undertakes planning of the joint cooperation efforts in this field. The Committee held its first meeting at the premises of the Secretariat General in 1983. At that meeting the Committee instructed the competent authorities and the joint working groups to undertake the following:

- Unification of standards of the construction sector and building materials.
- Training and exchange of experience.
- Unification of the methods of classification of standards and the registration and licensing procedures for engineers.
- Developing housing databases.
- Maintaining the traditional architectural heritage in designing residential projects.
- Giving priority in housing projects to the materials classified at the GCC States.
- Organizing visits between the GCC States for various housing projects and exchanging all the information in the field of joint housing work and housing policies applied in the Member States.
- Organizing a number of joint workshops during the period -2011 2013.

### Achievements

Over the past years, and in the light of the above, the GCC States have achieved several steps in the field of housing, the most important of which are:

- The fourth phase of the housing database has been executed according to the specified work phases.
- Benefiting from the experiences of the consultancy and engineering companies and Gulf contractors, and seeking their help in housing projects in the GCC States: This has been achieved by setting up unified systems and procedures in the field of classification of engineering and

- consultancy offices and contractors.
- GCC States experience has been solicited in the field of preparation of housing databases in the Arab League.
  - Working to expand the scope of an encouraging award for the best studies and researches so that its scope includes the best designing of a model city or a region and the best housing project of the GCC nationals. A specialist committee has been formed of the representatives of the Member States to follow up the activation of work regarding the award.
  - Addition of a number of fields contained in the visit programs of the housing projects among the States so that it may include policies of encouraging frameworks of cooperation between the private and government sectors. A time schedule has been set for the field visit programs. Preparation is being made to organize a field visit of the housing projects in UAE and State of Qatar.
  - Work is underway to prepare an integrated concept according to developed international trends regarding housing care system in the GCC States.
  - Addition of a number of items in the housing database. Among them are items related to joint projects between public and private sector, addition of a base for key housing indicators, making specific criteria for distinguished projects. Those criteria have been circulated on the Member states in preparation for selection of the best housing project to benefit from those experiments.
  - Work is underway to approve a group of specialized programs in the field of housing to qualify Gulf cadres in this field as per the work need.
  - A set of joint action goals in housing have been approved, benefiting from the experiments of the GCC States in these fields:
    - a. Preparation of a reference guide for classification and registration of consultancy offices.
    - b. Activation and participation of the private sector in housing projects.
    - c. Unification of efforts of scientific research in universities and research centers.
  - Work is underway to prepare and review housing strategy and

sustainable urban development and setting strategic goals of joint housing work.

- A reference guide is being prepared for classification of contracting companies in the field of housing. It is expected to submit the guide to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Housing, scheduled to be held in September 2014, in the State of Kuwait.

# Chapter (9)

## Joint Youth Action

### Objectives

The Joint Youth Action within the framework of the GCC aims at achieving specific objectives such as:

- Achieving close relationship between the GCC citizens through organizing joint meetings and electronic communication.
- Achieving equality between GCC citizens.
- Coordination of GCC positions at the international forums.
- Encouraging studies and research in the field of youth and sports.
- Cooperation with the regional and international organizations and groups.
- Developing joint frameworks in the field of youth, sports and scouts.
- Unification of the designations, frameworks, structures and specializations.
- Setting unified common work regulations.
- Unification of titles, frameworks, structures and specializations in youth and sport departments, bodies and institutions.
- Developing a strategy for common action.
- Encouraging youth to participate in taking decisions through execution of youth care strategy and conducting activities and programs.
- Executing specialized activities to assess and develop programs and activities of the GCC youths.

### Fields of the Joint Youth and Scout Activities

Joint activities in youth and scout fields occupy a significant position in the GCC process towards integration and cooperation. These activities include three main areas: Youth activities, scout activities and female Guide activities. The following GCC committees run these activities:

1. Committee of the Ministers of Youth and Sport: Five subcommittees branch of this committee: the Committee of Deputy Ministers and the following technical committees: The Youth Committee, the Leaders Training Committee, the Sport for all Committee and the Youth Hostels Committee.

2. The Committee of the Heads of Scout Societies and Organizations: two subcommittees branch of this committee: the Technical Committee and the Training, Programs and Community Development Committee.
3. The Female Guides Committee: a training and programs committee has branched out of it.

## **Achievements in the Field of Joint Youth Activities**

In line with the GCC objectives in the field of joint youth activities, the following achievements have been attained over the past years:

### **(1) Joint Framework**

The Joint Sport and Youth Framework that outlines the principles and grounds envisaging youth activities has been adopted. The Joint Scout Framework sets out the implementing prospects of the common activities and the rules governing the relations between the scout societies and organizations. Scout curricula have also been adopted in all scout stages. The principle of equal treatment of all GCC citizens, which enables GCC citizens of utilizing the youth and sport services at any Member State, has also been adopted.

### **(2) Programs and Activities**

Many meetings, festivals, exhibitions, work camps and social, scientific, scout, information and educational meetings as well as several courses, studies, research and forums are organized every year. These programs and activities are organized among GCC States on an alternative basis; some sixty activities are organized every year. Many external joint camps, exhibitions, educational festivals, scout and scientific trips and hostels trips as well as external sport participations are organized at the external representation level, in addition to the cooperation with the regional and international organizations and groups for organizing many joint activities.

Completion and unification of the designations, frameworks, structures and specializations at the youth and sport administrations and institutions is currently underway, in addition to developing youth welfare strategy within the framework of the GCC Comprehensive Development Strategy.

In implementation of the Supreme Council's decision taken at its 33<sup>rd</sup>

session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012) pertaining to taking care of youth and polishing their skills and developing their abilities, the Secretariat General organized the first youth conference «Growth and Development», on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013, which included the following axes:

- GCC and youths' ambitions.
- Health, sport and entertainment industry
- Community building and youth initiatives.
- Security through the eyes of the youth.
- Policies of education, training and creativity.
- Employment and skills development.

The conference was attended by officials of ministries and bodies concerned with youths, ministries of education, higher education, health, labor, social affairs, and interior. The conference was also attended by more than 800 youths of both sexes from all the Member States between age groups of 18-30 years. The efforts exerted by the ministries and bodies concerned with youth had great impact in the conference's achievement of its desired goals. The conference adopted a number of important recommendations, as under :

1. Creation of a council for youth initiatives at the GCC level, consisting of a group of youth from the Member States, under the patronage of GCC.
2. Emphasizing the importance of generalizing benefit from successful youth experiments at the GCC level and benefiting from successful international experiments. Among them the experiment of ship of world's youth and translating it to a GCC experiment with participation of youth from Member States.
3. Importance of creating a community environment that achieves moral support for GCC youth initiative and documenting those initiatives at the official and community level, and preserving rights of initiative from GCC youth.
4. Importance of setting a roadmap for youth projects and initiative, as per specified phases, starting from selection of ideas and creating an environment suitable for generation of many ideas in the field of youth projects and initiatives. Importance of setting action plan that contributes to crystalizing and executing the suitable ideas, taking



benefit from youth energies at the level of schools and universities. Thereafter, selection of the successful project or initiative, with the importance of the necessary honoring for the successful initiatives and their documentation.

The Secretariat General presented the report and recommendations to the Supreme Council, at its 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013), which issued the following :

- The Supreme Council blessed the efforts exerted by the Secretariat General to follow up the implementation of the decision of the Council pertaining to taking care of the youth and polishing their skills and developing their abilities.
- Authorizing the ministerial committees in the GCC to consider the preliminary recommendations and opinions for the youth, each within his capacity. Each committee shall set executive mechanisms of what may be applied within the GCC framework.
- Emphasizing the bodies concerned with youth affairs in the GCC States to intensify joint youth activities and events, concentrating on selection of programs and activities according to the youth priorities and interests.
- Studying the creation of a fund to support entrepreneurship for small and medium size youth projects in the GCC States, and contracting with a specialized organization to devise work mechanism of the fund; and submitting it to the Ministerial Council.
- Creation of a comprehensive interactive website that addresses the GCC youth, which will serve as a permanent communication channel between the youth and GCC Secretariat General. It shall include an electronic database for monitoring leading GCC youth projects and initiatives.
- The Secretariat General shall continuously organize periodical conferences and workshops dealing with youths' interests and their aspirations.
- Establishing a permanent program for the GCC youth, with the aim of developing their abilities and promoting positive values and sprit of leadership and contribution in aid and humanitarian work.

- The Secretariat General supervises the follow up of implementation of that in coordination with the concerned authorities in the GCC States.

### **(3) Laws and Legislation**

In the field of laws and regulations, principles of the youth and sport activities in the GCC States (1983) were identified. The GCC has also adopted the Framework of the Joint Youth Activities in 1996, as well as the Implementing Frameworks of the Joint Youth Activities. Moreover, many designations, frameworks, structures and specializations at the youth and sport administrations and institutions have been unified. In addition to the legislation for encouragement of creative, inventive and gifted youth by granting them relevant patents and incentives.

### **(4) GCC Educational and Social Relationships**

In the field of cultural and social communication among the GCC States, many meetings, festivals, work camps and social, scientific, scout, information and educational meetings have been organized. Thousands of participants have joined in these activities that have an indirect influence on all categories of the GCC community.

### **(5) Relationships with the Arab and International Societies**

In the field of communication with international communities, GCC States have Participated in many meetings and educational and scientific festivals such as Tokyo Educational Festival (1986), Scientific Inventions Exhibition (France, 1995), Educational Festival (France, 1998), the scientific visit to China, and the meeting of the GCC youth with their counterparts from other countries (Hungary, Oct. 2008), business camp in Finland (2011), GCC youth meeting with their counterparts from world's countries, in the Republic of Turkey in June 2013.

The interest in organizing working camps and environment and community services in the Arab countries has increased; six camps were organized in Somalia (1985), Sudan (1986), Syria (1993), Egypt (1995), Lebanon (1999) and Jordan (2001). Many projects have been completed through those camps, such as afforestation, leveling of agricultural lands, building study chambers, installation of water pipelines, girls' training centers

for sewing and embroidery and reconstitution of schools, scientific centers and youth facilities.

All international and regional organizations working in youth fields have been urged to go through their experiences and the youth activities and programs of those organizations. A social media website of Ministers of youth and sports of the GCC States has been launched.

### **(6) Training of Cadres and Expertise**

In this connection, participation in the training courses organized by the Training, Seminars and Workshops Committee during which youth activities are organized has been increased. Qualified members possessing required experience and skills have been appointed at the technical committees.

# Chapter (10)

## Joint Sports Action

### Beginnings, Principles and Objectives

The joint sport action has been the concern of the GCC States since the first years of establishing the GCC, where the Chairmen of the Olympic Committees in the GCC States held their first meeting at the headquarter of the Secretariat General ( Riyadh, 24-25 December 1983). Chairpersons of the Olympic Committees have laid down the foundations for this activity and the objectives of supporting the joint action and promoting the sport sector at the GCC States. These principles include the following:

1. Role of sport in enhancing participation and instilling nationality and awareness.
2. Importance of sport activities and youth sport events in achieving objectives for which the GCC was established.
3. Role of sport media in achieving the said goals.
4. Role of educational institutions, in unifying school and university leaves for intensifying sport events among GCC youths and taking interest in sports at schools and universities.
5. Group sport action at the GCC States.

### Objectives

- Contribution to the achievement of the GCC basic objectives through the Olympic activities
- Achieving coordination , cooperation and coherence between the GCC States in the sport field based on the objectives of the joint action at the GCC States
- Developing a general strategy for the development of sport at the GCC States
- Coordination of the efforts and unification of positions among the GCC States at the continental and international conferences and meetings
- Raising the technical level of these games within the framework of the rules developed by the International Olympic Committee and the international federations for the various sport games

- Encouraging the exercise of sports in the GCC States, raising their performance level and the development of these games within the rules of the GCC, the International Olympic Committee and the international federations for the various sport games and this regulation
- Promoting the Olympic principles , inspiring the sportsmanship and maintaining the GCC sport identity
- Supervising the organization of sport contests, competitions, championships, tournaments and conferences between Member States
- Issuing publications and booklets on the development of sport games and distributing such publications, at largest scale, among the GCC States, and organizing conferences and forums at the GCC States for the purpose of modernization and development
- Encouraging sport-related scientific research
- Developing information policies, marketing in the sport field and development of financial resources
- Making benefit from the specialized sport centers and medical labs and creating an effective partnership with the sports media for the purpose of developing the sport activity at the GCC States
- Making benefit from the sport training centers in the fields of training, arbitration, administration, information, marketing and the like

## **Organizing the Joint Sport Action**

### **I.The Board of the Chairmen of the Olympic Committees**

The Board is composed of the Chairpersons of the Olympic Committees in Member States or their representatives. The Board is chaired by the chairman of the Olympic committee who is the president of latest ordinary session of the Supreme Council. The Board is the supreme authority of the GCC joint sport action. There is a coordinative relationship between the Board and the government institutions in charge of youth and sport affairs. Functions of the Board are as follows:

- Implement the relevant resolutions of the Supreme Council and the Ministerial Council .
- Examine matters of the GCC sport joint action .
- Develop strategies and policies of the GCC sport joint action .

- Approve the recommendations, reports, studies and rules of the GCC sport joint action submitted by the Executive Office and the Secretariat-General .
- Adopt principles of cooperation with the other sport organizations .
- Authorize the Executive Office to formulate necessary rules and regulations for implementation of the provisions of the Joint Action Statute in Sport Filed .

## **II.Executive Office of the Council of Chairpersons of the Olympic Committees**

The Executive Office is composed of permanent members representing the Olympic Committees in the GCC States. The Office meets twice a year in preparation for the meetings of Chairmen of the Olympic Committees. The Office also holds a joint meeting with the heads of the organizing committees once every two years for coordination relating to the scheduling of the annual championships and the development of the sport activities. Functions of the committee includes: following up implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Chairmen of the GCC Olympic Committees, identification of the Olympic principles, spreading sportsmanship, maintaining the GCC sport identity, proposing incentives for encouraging sport leaders, developing qualifying criteria, approval of the balance sheets and final accounts of the organizing committees and approving transfer of the venues of the organizing committees.

## **III. The Organizing Committee of Athletic Games**

Desiring to develop a mechanism for organizing the various sports at the GCC States and adopt a rule for honest competition and cooperation between Member States that ensures continuation and development of such games, twenty-six committees for athletic games have been formed. These committees are as follows:

The Organizing Committee of Squash, the Organizing Committee of Golf, the Organizing Committee of Athletics, the Organizing Committee of Bowling, the Organizing Committee of Bicycles, the Organizing Committee of Karate, the Organizing Committee of Taekwondo, the Organizing Committee of Shooting, the Organizing Committee of Dueling, the Organizing Committee of Tennis, the Organizing Committee of

Swimming, the Organizing Committee of Handicapped, the Organizing Committee of Gymnastics, the Organizing Committee of Snooker, the Organizing Committee of Weight-lifting, the Organizing Committee of Judo, the Organizing Committee of Basketball, the Organizing Committee of Volleyball, the Organizing Committee of Football, the Organizing Committee of Woman's Sport, the Organizing Committee of Baseball, the Organizing Committee of Handball, the Organizing Committee of Chivalry and Racing, the Organizing Committee of Boxing, the Organizing Committee for Sailing, the Organizing Committee for Jockeys, the Organizing Committee for Sports for all, and the Organizing Committee for Air Sports.

An organizing committee is usually composed of one representative from each federation or supervising agency at the GCC States and is accredited by the Olympic Committee at that State. The representative of the host federation chairs this committee. The GCC Secretariat General participates in the meetings of the committee. These committees endeavor to contribute to the achievement of GCC objectives in the fields of Olympic sports, rearing generations and strengthening the brotherly relationships between the federations of the game at the GCC States, promoting the level of the game and supporting the positions of the Member Federations in the Arab, regional, continental and international fields. These committees also seek to foster the sport ties and relations between Member Federations and the various sport federations and institutions at the Arab, regional, continental and international levels, coordinate with the federations concerned with the programs and activities of that committee. They also compose and prepare the GCC joint sport teams and achieve the objectives of the relevant Arab, continental and international federations as well as implement their rules and strengthen inter-relations.

Objectives of the organizing committee include proposing general plans for promotion and spread of the game in the GCC States, developing programs for the friendly and competitive contests, supervising the championships and contests, forming subcommittees or interim committees and formulating their regulations and identification of their functions, proposing and amending relevant rules and regulations of the game according to the applicable international laws, examining the complaints, protests

and objections submitted by Member Federations and Clubs, settlement of disputes in addition to organizing championships, conferences, forums and training and arbitration courses, conducting studies and exchanging information and expertise between Member Federations in the various fields of the game. The committee also examines the proposals received from Member Federations for appropriate action, discusses and approves the administrative, technical and financial reports and the final statement for the preceding year and proposes the draft budget for the next year, in addition to other functions as set out in the committee's Rules of Procedures.

Over sixty sport activities are organized through these committees where the GCC athletes meet in the Olympic sports activities. In addition to parallel sport activities are organized at the Arabian Gulf Football Cup tournament.

A number of tournaments have been organized as under:

1. First beach sport tournament in the GCC States (Bahrain, October 2010).
2. First sport games of the GCC States (Bahrain, October 2011).
3. First women sport tournament in the GCC States, (Kuwait, March 2008).
4. Second women sport tournament in the GCC States, (Abu Dhabi, March 2011).
5. Third women sport tournament in the GCC States, (Bahrain, March 2013).

### **Stimulants Control in Sports**

- The competent authorities Member States completed all necessary arrangements for accession to UNESCO International Convention on Sport Stimulants Control .
- Encouraging joint action among Member States especially in the field of awareness, unification of procedures and training and appropriate controls to prevent trafficking and movement of stimulants within or outside GCC Member States.
- Establishing an internationally accredited lab, hosted by State of Qatar, for detecting stimulants among athletes.



## **SECTION FOUR**

**JUDICIAL AND LEGAL COOPERATION**

**THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION  
OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL**

**COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF  
AUDIT AND ZAKAT**



# Chapter (1)

## Legal and Judicial Cooperation

### Objectives

In fulfilling one of the important objectives set forth in the GCC Charter, i.e. developing similar laws in various fields, the GCC States have sought convergence among their laws and regulations in all fields aiming to unify such laws. They have also sought more convergence and similarity among them in the legislative and legal fields, such as in drafting common laws, strengthening coordination between the judicial and the legal bodies and the unification of their types, levels and procedures.

The judicial and legal cooperation process was launched at the first meeting of the Ministers of Justice of the GCC States, that was held in Riyadh, 12-13 December 1982, where the Ministers instructed an expert committee to prepare draft common laws in the civil, commercial, personal status and penal fields based on the provisions of the Islamic law (Shariah). The Ministers approved, in principle, the proposal submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain for setting up the Commercial Arbitration Center and authorized an expert committee to develop terms of reference for the GCC agreements on the execution of rulings, and the request of legal assistance, instructing the Secretariat General to prepare a legal periodical, develop programs for legal visits and requesting Member States to provide the Information Sector at the Secretariat with the judicial and legal documents, studies and periodicals, stressing the need to benefit from the experiences acquired within the framework of the Arab League in the judicial and legal fields.

### Achievements

The following are the most important achievements in this field over the past years:

#### **The Agreement on the Execution of Rulings, Requests of Legal Assistance and Judicial Notices**

In the event a legal judgment is issued at any Member State, the Agreement provides that such judgment shall be considered as if it were issued at the requested Member State. Its execution shall be final and

binding at all Member States according to the simplified procedures set out in the Agreement. The same applies to the judgments of arbitrators and the execution of legal assistance such as witness hearing, receiving experts' reports, conducting inspection and taking the oath.

The Agreement was approved by the Ministers of Justice in the GCC States, and then adopted by the Supreme Council (16<sup>th</sup> session, Oman, December, 1995). All Member States have ratified the Agreement and thus it has come into force. This agreement has contributed to the enhancement of joint efforts in the legal and judicial field.

### **Muscat Document on the GCC Common Law of Personal Status**

This law is one of the basic legislations to codify the Islamic Law. It deals with matters relating to family, guardianship, will and inheritance in 282 Articles. The Supreme Council adopted the Document (17<sup>th</sup> session, Doha, December 1996). Implementation of the Document as a reference law was extended for four years by a resolution of the Supreme Council (21<sup>st</sup> session, Manama, December 2000). Implementation of the Document as a reference law was also extended for another four years by a resolution of the Supreme Council (Bahrain, 20-21 December 2000) to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. Some Member States have used this law in preparing their own laws.

### **Kuwait Document on the GCC Common Civil Law**

This law is one of the basic legislations of the Islamic Law. The Law incorporates jurisprudence rules, provisions and sources of obligations, contracts, ownership and the rights thereof in 1242 Articles.

The Ministers of Justice approved this Law at their 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Then the Supreme Council adopted the Law (Kuwait, December 1997) as a reference law for four years. Implementation of the Law as a reference law was extended for four years by a resolution of the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 2001). Implementation of the Law as a reference law was also extended for other four years by a resolution of the Supreme Council (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme

Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Doha Document on the GCC Common Penal Law**

This law is also one of the basic legislations of the Islamic Law. The Law incorporates the general rules for punishments, precautions, castigation, blood money, and chastisements in 556 Articles.

The Ministers of Justice approved this Law at their 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, and was then sanctioned by the competent Jurisprudent Committee. The Supreme Council also adopted the Law (Kuwait, December 1997) as a reference law for four years. Implementation of the Law as a reference law was extended for four years by resolution of the Supreme Council (Muscat, December 2001). Implementation of the Law as a reference law was also extended for another four years by resolution of the Supreme Council (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Riyadh Document on the GCC Common Law of Penal Procedures**

This law consists of 351 Articles incorporating all rules of penal procedures, including the conditions of prosecuting and expiry of the action, pursuit and investigation of crimes and collection of evidence, determining the role of the authorities in charge of investigation, arrest and prosecution, duties of the legal officers, and public prosecutor, arrest of the accused persons, initiating investigation and trial procedures, the issuance of judgments, appeal and execution of judgments.

The Ministers of Justice approved the Law at their 12<sup>th</sup> meeting (Riyadh, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2000). The Supreme Council adopted it at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, December 2000) as a reference law for four years. Then the Supreme Council decided at the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 2004) that implementation of the Law as a reference law would continue pending

revision and adoption of the final version of the law. An expert committee was instructed to re-examine the document in the light of the comments of Member States. The committee made several changes and additions to that document. The new revised version was submitted to the Ministers of Justice and then to the Supreme Council that adopted it at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) as a reference law for four years. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Abu Dhabi Document on the GCC Common Juvenile Law**

The Law deals with issues of corrupted or corruptible juveniles and prescribes the necessary measures for reforming and taking care of them. The law also specifies the judicial entity responsible for trying their issues, and the punishments to be issued in the committed crimes that are different from those committed by adults.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, 23-24 October 2001). Then the Supreme Council adopted that document/ Law at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session ( Muscat, December 2001) as a reference law for four years. Thereafter, the Supreme Council decided at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) that implementation of the Law as a reference law would be extended for another four years to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Manama Document on the Attorneys' Law**

This Law regulates the practicing of law at the GCC States based on convergence or unification. The Law incorporates the conditions for attorney registration, description of the rights and duties of attorneys, the relevant discipline rules and other general provisions for practicing this profession.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Document at their 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, 23-24 October 2001). Then the Supreme Council adopted it at

the 22<sup>nd</sup> session ( Muscat, December 2001) as a reference law for four years. Thereafter, the Supreme Council decided at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) that implementation of the Document as a reference law would be extended for another four years to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Manama Document on the Common Law of Civil Procedure**

This Law incorporates the general provisions of procedure, prosecuting procedures in civil and commercial actions, including the manners for bringing a claim, attendance/absence of opponents, rules of the session, defense, admission and intervention, contingent claims, methods of appeal, arbitration and execution of court judgments.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, 23-24 October 2001). Then the Supreme Council adopted that Law at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, December 2001) as a reference law for four years. Thereafter, the Supreme Council decided at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) that implementation of the Document, as a reference law would continue pending revision based on comments received from Member States. At the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006), the Supreme Council approved the document in its final text as a reference law for a period of four years. Thereafter, the Supreme Council, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

### **Muscat Document on the Common Evidence Law**

This Law incorporates the rules of evidence in civil claims, including written proof, witness testimonies, oath, evidence, authenticity of the decided matter, acknowledging , questioning of opponents, inspection and expert reports.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, 23-24 October 2001). Then the Supreme Council adopted that Law at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, December 2001) as a reference law for four

years. Thereafter, the Supreme Council decided at its 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) that implementation of the Document as a reference law would be extended for another four years to allow Member States more time to benefit from the Law. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Muscat Document on the Common Law of Corporeal Estate Registration**

This Law aims at convergence and unification of the applicable rules for registration of corporeal estates at the GCC States, through the adoption of the corporeal basis for a real estate unit in authentication and registration in lieu of the personal basis related to the owner of the real estate unit.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 14<sup>th</sup> meeting (Manama, 15-16 October 2002). The Supreme Council adopted at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session (Doha, December 2002) as a reference law for four years. Pursuant to the decision of the Supreme Council at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006) the said document was revised. At the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2009), the Supreme Council decided to implement this document and its explanatory memo in its amended form as a reference law for a period of four years.

### **Doha Document on the Common Law of Public Notary**

The Law consists of 23 Articles dealing with the establishment of Notary Public Departments, the conditions for appointment of a notary public, designation of his functions and duties as well as definition of the terminology and general provisions.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, 30 September - 1 October 2003). Then the Supreme Council adopted the Law at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2003) as a reference law for four years. The Supreme Council (Doha, December 2007), then decided to extend the implementation of the document for reference so as to allow Member States more time to use it. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a



reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the Member States.

### **Abu Dhabi Document on the Common Reconciliation Law**

The Law aims at approximating laws and regulations of the GCC States in the field of reconciliation for unification. The Law incorporates two chapters; one chapter for the general provisions of reconciliation and conditions thereof, and the second chapter for establishing reconciliation committees.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, 30 September -1 October 2003). The Supreme Council adopted it at the 24<sup>th</sup> Session (Kuwait, December 2003) as a reference law for four years. The Supreme Council (Doha, 28<sup>th</sup> session, December 2007), then agreed to continue implementing this Law as a reference one pending its revision and final approval. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the GCC States.

### **Kuwait Document on the Common Law for the Management of Minors' Property**

The Law consists of 68 Articles and incorporates provisions relating to guardianship and management of the underage (juniors) property and provisions of revocation of legal competence, absence and loss. The Ministers of Justice approved that Law at their 16<sup>th</sup> meeting (Kuwait, 5 October 2004). The Supreme Council adopted that document, at the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 2004), as a reference law for four years. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the Member States.

### **Abu Dhabi Document on the Common Law for Control of Trafficking in Individuals**

The Law consists of 17 Articles. It elucidates the concept of trafficking in individuals and the applicable punishments imposed on the persons

involved, being natural or legal ones. The Supreme Council adopted that document, at the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006), as a reference law for four years. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010), the Supreme Council decided to extend implementation of the document as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed concerning them from the Member States.

## **Reference Model for the Agreements on Legal and Judicial Cooperation**

This Model consists of 87 Articles covering all aspects of legal and judicial cooperation which are subject of bilateral agreements between countries, such as the right to litigation, judicial assistance, notification of judicial and non-judicial documents and papers, judicial proofs, presence of witnesses and experts, recognition and execution of the court judgments and official contracts, judicial reconciliation, judgments of arbitrators and their execution, settlement of zakat, handover of the convicts and those against whom judgments have been issued, transfer of the those against whom judgments related to deprivation of liberty have been issued.

The Ministers of Justice approved that Model at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, 30 September -1 October 2003). Then the Supreme Council adopted that Model, at the 24<sup>th</sup> session ( Kuwait, December 2003), as a reference Model for the agreements made by Member States on legal and judicial cooperation.

## **Kuwait Document on the GCC Common Law for International Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the GCC Common Law for International Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

This document is a complementary to a series of reference laws developed within the framework of judicial process among the GCC States. It consists of 71 articles, which include procedures of legal and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, including requests for legal and judicial

assistance addressed to a state's authorities and requests for legal assistance addressed to a foreign judicial authority, extradition of persons to foreign countries for interrogation or for criminal trial or for the implementation of verdicts issued against them, and addressing the authorities in a foreign country to extradite people against whom judgments have been issued to punish them by restricting their freedom, and handing over and recovery of things collected from the crime scene or those used in committing crimes, and monitored handover, and transferring the sentenced persons to a foreign country and transferring the sentenced persons from a foreign country.

### **Kuwait Document on GCC Common Law for Judicial Investigation**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Kuwait Document on GCC Common Law for Judicial Investigation as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks expressed on it by the Member States.

The law consists of 33 Articles, including formation of general department of judicial investigation, its jurisdictions, works of investigation in judges, investigation in cases heard by the judge concerned with investigation, complaints filed in the general department of investigation by judges or against them or those that are referred to them by any authority, and investigating with the judge which required approval of the Supreme Judicial Council and method of investigation with the judge.

### **Kuwait Document on Common Law for Works of Expertise before the GCC Courts**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Kuwait Document on Common Law for Works of Expertise before the GCC Courts as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks expressed on it by the Member States.

The Law consists of 63 articles, including the procedures related to works of expertise before the judiciary, which the division experts working in the experts division such as employees of the Ministry of Justice and Experts listed in the experts schedule of various specialties are required to perform

before courts and Public Prosecution, as well as the experts of government authorities from among State's employees who have been deputed to provide expertise in a specific topic.

The Law has detailed the conditions that must be met by one who is appointed in jobs of expertise as well as prohibitions that must be avoided, and disciplinary actions that may be taken against him. It also included the conditions that must be fulfilled by the person who is listed in experts schedule and method of seeing help from the authority's experts.

### **Kuwait Document on Common Law for Judicial Assistants**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Common Law for Judicial Assistants as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

This Law consists of 18 articles, including definition of judicial assistants, classification of their jobs, the condition that must be met by anyone who is appointed to the position of Judicial Assistant, duties that they must perform, prohibitions that he must avoid and disciplinary actions that may be imposed against him.

### **Kuwait Document on Common GCC Law for Execution of judicial verdicts**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Common GCC Law for Execution of Judicial Verdicts as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

The Law consists of 125 articles dealing with topics such as formation of general department for execution of civil verdicts and their branches and jurisdictions. In addition, the articles of this law also deal with executive bond and its types without which execution is not possible. It also deals with verdicts that may be executable and prompt execution, execution of sponsorship conditions, execution of foreign verdicts, orders and instruments, announcement of executive bond, procedures of execution and its problems. It also includes procedures of provisional attachment, withholding of the entitlements of the debtor with a third party, withholding what has been

transferred to the debtor, withholding the property and its sale, withholding vouchers, revenues and shares and distribution of the outcome of execution. It also includes procedure of practical implementation, procedures of imprisoning of the debtor and preventing him from journey and procedure of presentation and depositing.

### **Riyadh Document on Common Law for Combatting IT Crimes**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Common Law for Combatting IT Crimes, as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

This Law is a complementary to a series of reference laws developed within the framework of GCC judicial process. It consists of 39 Articles, which includes forms of IT crimes and punishment of those who committed them with the aim of preventing misuse of IT and means of deception and criminalizing them.

### **Riyadh Document on Common Law for Family Courts**

The Supreme Council at its 31<sup>st</sup> Session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Common Law for Family Courts, as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

This Law complements a series of reference laws developed within the framework of GCC judicial process. It consists of 19 articles, including establishment of family courts, their compositions and jurisdictions and creation of offices for committees of guidance and family reconciliation, offices jurisdictions and methods of resorting to those offices.

### **Manama Document on Common Law for Judicial Authority**

The Supreme Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010) approved the Common law for Judicial Authority, as a reference law for a period of four years, to be renewed automatically in case no remarks are expressed on it by the Member States.

This law is a complementary to a series of reference laws developed within the framework of GCC judicial process. It consists of 74 articles,

including general provisions about the judicial authority, supreme judicial council, sequence of courts and their organization, sessions and verdict, general assemblies of courts and temporary committees, appointment, promotion and seniority of judges, their deputation, secondment and leaves, duties of judges, lawsuits related to judges affairs and their accountability and method of termination of judges tenure and about assistant judges (judicial officials).

### **Manual of Executive Rules and Mechanisms for Practicing Legal Profession for GCC Nationals**

The Ministers of Justice, at their 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011, approved the Manual of Executive Rules and Mechanisms for Practicing Legal Profession for the GCC nationals as a reference manual. Member States shall inform the Secretariat General of the obstacles faced by them during application of those rules and mechanism.

The Manual includes a number of rules for practicing the legal profession by the GCC nationals. The lawyer should be a national of any GCC State and he must be licensed to practice the legal profession. His entry should be valid and he must have an office or practices the profession through an existing office. In case the lawyer desires to practice the profession in any GCC State, he must abide by the legislations in force in that State. In case the lawyer licensed to practice the profession is found in breach of some rule in any GCC State, the competent authority in that State wherein the violation was committed, will impose penalty against him, provided that he shall notify other Member State of those decisions and provide them with the relevant documents.

The Manual also includes a number of executive mechanisms which in brief lead to direct and integrated coordination among the competent authorities in the Member States concerning lawyers in the GCC States.

### **Model Reference Law for Continuing Legal Education for Lawyers in the GCC States**

The Ministers of Justice, at their 25<sup>th</sup> meeting held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 1-2 October 2013, approved the Model Reference Law for Continuing Legal Education for Lawyers in the GCC States, and its explanatory memo. The Manual consists of seven articles, including definitions of lawyer,

continuous legal education, competent authority in-charge of issuing license for practicing legal profession, the training institution that will organize continued legal education programs and the approved hours that the lawyer will get which will be deemed continued legal education.

The Manual provides that the continuing legal education shall be applied on all the lawyers of the GCC States. It also includes the number of hours that the lawyer must be committed to and the legal training courses the lawyer has to attend. In addition the Manual also specifies method of ascertaining by the authority that the lawyer is abiding by the requirements of continued legal education, and that in case the lawyer does not abide by that education, it will be deemed as violation of the requirements and duties of the profession.

### **Activation of Cooperation among the Departments of International Cooperation and International Relations**

The Ministers of Justice, at their 24<sup>th</sup> meeting held in October 2012, approved the procedural action plan for activation of cooperation among the departments of international cooperation and international relations in the Ministries of the GCC States. The plan includes a number of axes related to interoperability between departments of international cooperation and international relations in the ministries of the GCC States, and cooperation and coordination among these department at the regional and international levels, and in the field of work organization in those departments.

The Ministers of Justice, at their 25<sup>th</sup> meeting held in October 2013, approved to send employees of the departments of international cooperation and international relations in the Ministries of Justice in the GCC States for field work in legal affairs sector of the Secretariat General for five days.

### **Project of the Unified E-Network of the GCC Laws and Regulations**

At their 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Ministers of Justice decided to establish a unified E-network of the laws and regulations of the GCC States, to be based at the Ministry of Justice in the State of Kuwait, with terminals at the GCC Ministries of Justice. The Ministry of Justice in Kuwait has completed all of phases of this project which is now available to all Member States.

## Visits of Judicial Delegations

At their first meeting held at the headquarter of the Secretariat General (Riyadh, 12-13 December 1982), the Ministers of Justice adopted several programs for intra- GCC bilateral and collective visits of judicial delegations. These programs include members of the judicial authority, assistant judges and the staff of the Ministries of Justice. All these programs have been implemented according to the scheduled time phases and programs of judicial visits have also been developed. A new program incorporating 30 bilateral visits, for the three years, 2007 ,2006, and 2008, was implemented completely.

Thereafter, the visits among the GCC States became optional, provided that the Secretariat General receives reports on each visit so that it may prepare an integrated report on them.

## Specialized Seminars

In implementation of the resolution of The Ministers of Justice at their 9<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, October 1997), pertaining to holding specialized seminars in legal an judicial fields, a number of seminars and conferences have been held:

- A seminar was organized in the State of Kuwait in 1999, on legal and judicial information.
- Two seminars organized in the State of Kuwait about the legal aspects of E-communication; one in November 2001 and the other in October 2002.
- A seminar was also organized in the State of Kuwait (May 2005) about the "Execution of Judgments".
- A seminar entitled "Perspective in the Legal Aspects of the Integration among the GCC States" was organized in the State of Qatar (May 2006).
- A conference about family guidance in the Member States was organized in the State of Kuwait (March 2007).
- An international conference titled "The Role of Arbitration in Promotion of Investment" was also organized in the State of Kuwait (March 2008).
- A seminar entitled "European Arrest Warrant" was organized in the United Arab Emirates (June, 2008).



- The United Arab Emirates also organized a convention about the alternatives in solving conflicts and restorative justice during October, 2008.
- Imam Mohammad bin Saud Islamic University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented in the High Judicial Institute organized a scientific seminar titled "Common Regulations in the GCC States" in 2011.
- The Ministry of Justice of the State of Qatar in conjunction with the Hague Conference on Private International Law, organized the first Gulf conference on the trans-border legal cooperation in civil and commercial issues, during the period 20-22 June 2011. The GCC Secretariat General and representatives of Ministries of Justice of the Member States participated in this conference.
- The Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Islamic Affairs and endowment of the Kingdom of Bahrain organized the second conference of heads of Supreme courts (Appeals Courts) of the GCC States, on 9 and 10 April 2013.
- The Ministry of Justice of the State of Kuwait organized a seminar on "Judicial Arbitration and Development" (Partnership and Future), on 26 and 27 April 2013.
- The Ministry of Justice of UAE organized a seminar titled "Role of legal affairs sector of the GCC Secretariat General", on 23 September 2013, with participation of the legal affairs sector.

These seminars, in which participants from the competent authorities at the GCC States participate, increase exchange of expertise and information and contribute to the development of judicial cooperation.

### **Follow up and Development of Legal and Judicial Cooperation**

The promotion of joint action in the judicial and jurisdictive field is continuing. Among them are completion of common laws system, and developing the laws that have been approved and benefiting from them.

Desiring to know about the obstacles to the joint action in judicial and jurisdictive field, and to overcome those obstacles in order to push forward the joint process in this area and to accomplish further successes in this field, The Ministers of Justice their 20<sup>th</sup> meeting (Doha, November 2008) directed undersecretaries of the Ministries of Justice to hold an extraordinary meeting

to discuss this topic and to devise mechanisms and methodologies that may develop the work.

The said meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009, in which the undersecretaries adopted the working mechanisms of the committee of experts mandated by the Ministries of Justice of the GCC Member States. They decided that it should be applied promptly and this mechanism, according to an integrated methodology, should organize all aspects of the work of the technical committees. These aspects include scheduling dates and places of holding these meetings, formation of participating delegates, specifying timeframe for expression of opinions, nominating the representatives, in addition to the method of making recommendations, along with eliminating all the causes that may result in the delay of achievement, to discuss them and to overcome those obstacles.

At their 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting held in UAE on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011, the Ministers of Justice decided to form a committee of the officials of departments of international cooperation and international relations at the Ministries of Justice in the Member States. The said committee shall be tasked to find an effective mechanism of cooperation among the departments of international cooperation and international relations to activate judicial and jurisdictive cooperation among the Ministries of Justice at the Member States and it shall propose any draft laws, regulations or action plans for governing cooperation among the Ministries of justice at the GCC States. The committee holds its meeting once every year or whenever required to execute the duties assigned to it.

### **Cooperation among Supreme Courts (Appeal Courts)**

The Ministerial Council, at the 127<sup>th</sup> session, approved the holding of a periodical meeting of The Heads of High Courts and Appeals Courts in the GCC States to activate coordination and cooperation among the high and supreme courts, similar to the ministerial council's working within the framework of GCC.

### **Cooperation in the Field of Endowment**

The Ministerial Council, at the 122<sup>nd</sup> session, approved the holding of periodical meetings of the Ministers in-charge of endowment affairs

at the GCC States. This decision was made on the basis of the proposal made by His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to complete the tributaries of joint action, through the activation of cooperation among the bodies concerned with endowment affairs at the GCC States, and through the creation of communication channels among them to exchange information, experiences and experiments, consistent with other economic, social, security and judicial areas of cooperation etc.

The Ministers in-charge of endowment affairs in the GCC States held their first meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014, in the State of Kuwait. They discussed a number of topics and proposals submitted by the Member States and referred them to the specialized committees to study them and prepare suitable projects and recommendations, in preparation for discussing them in the next meeting. They also decided to hold a preparatory meeting at the level of undersecretaries or assistants or their representatives prior to the meetings of Ministers, to prepare an agenda of the periodical meeting of the Ministers. Moreover, they decided to create a permanent committee of specialists from the Member States to be mandated to study the topics referred to it from the Ministers.

### **Cooperation among Legislation Departments**

The Ministerial Council at the 114<sup>th</sup> session, held in March 2010, approved the establishment of a Permanent Committee of the Officials of Legislation Departments in the GCC States, which would submit its results of the works to the Ministerial Council. It shall hold periodical meeting with the aim of strengthening and deepening legislative cooperation among legislation departments at the GCC States; exchange legislative experiences by holding joint legislative seminars; exchange visits among the officials and members of legislative departments; participate with the authorities concerned and specialized in legislation to coordinate positions and opinions of the GCC States in legislative field in international and Arab forums and organizations; and exchange legislative documents among the Member States.

The Permanent Committee held the first meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in which it submitted a recommendation to the Ministerial Council on the participation of the authorities concerned with legislation in the Member

States, in the meetings of the technical committees held within the framework of GCC and prepares and reviews the draft regulations, laws and agreements. The Ministerial Council, at the 115<sup>th</sup> session, held in May 2010 decided to adopt this recommendation.

At the second meeting of the Committee, held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2010, it approved the visits program in the form of group among legislation departments, and holding of workshops and training courses in the fields related to legislation. It also approved to execute the decision of the Ministerial Council pertaining to participation in the activities of the technical committees concerned with preparation and review of the projects of laws, regulations and agreements.

The Committee held the third meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011, and prepared the system of the consultative body of the Supreme Council of the GCC States and its internal bylaw in its amended form. It also discussed many topics relating to the field of work of the authorities concerned with legislation and areas of cooperation among them. Also direct communication between legislation departments of the GCC States have been approved.

At the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee, held in Abu Dhabi during the period 3-4 October 2011, it reviewed the proposals of the Secretariat General concerning unification of legislative terminologies in the GCC States, and the GCC legislative encyclopedia. The Committee decided to submit a recommendation in this regard to the Ministerial Council, so that it may be assigned to prepare the project of unification and harmonization of the legislative terminologies of the Member States and to issue a GCC legislative encyclopedia which will be the basic legislative reference of the GCC. The Committee also went through the experience of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the share point system, in addition to discussing a number of topics related to legislation. It also looked into the list of legal advisors and experts working in legislation departments of the GCC States.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Permanent Committee authorized the Committee of the Competent Officials in Legislation Departments of the GCC to enumerate all the reference regulations and laws issued within the GCC framework during the past period; and to classify them according to the provisions contained in the decisions relating thereto; and to state the reasons

and obstacles that come in the way of converting the reference regulations and laws to mandatory; and to propose suitable mechanisms to accelerate approval of these laws in a binding manner. The Permanent Committee also authorized it to prepare a common draft of legislation terminologies, as well as the legislative encyclopedia, in implementation of the decision of the Ministerial Council in this regard.

The Permanent Committee at the 6th meeting, held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013, stressed the importance of application of the Ministerial Council's decision taken at the 115<sup>th</sup> session, concerning participation of the departments concerned with legislation in the Member States, in the works of the technical committee that prepares and review the draft regulations and draft laws. It also gave the Permanent Committee the right to follow up the implementation of this decision. It stressed the importance of submitting all the projects of common laws and regulations to the Permanent Committee of the officials of legislation departments to enable them to review the drafts prior to their submission to the Ministerial Council.

The Committee, at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 approved the Action Strategy for the years 2014-2016. It also recommended the approval of the implementation of the Strategy from the beginning of 2014, and authorized the specialist committee to agree on the details relating to the conferences and workshops proposed in the strategy.

In implementation of the decision of the Ministerial Council, taken at the 127<sup>th</sup> session, concerning the common regulations and laws of the GCC States, Procedures of Follow up and Mechanisms of Implementation, the committee recommended the formation of a working group of experts in legislation departments, which will be assigned the task of reviewing the drafts of common laws. The team will hold its meeting when required and as soon as it is invited by the Secretariat General to hold a meeting. It will submit its recommendations to the Permanent Committee of the Officials of Legislation Departments.

## **Cooperation in the Field of Protection of Integrity and Combating Corruption**

In pursuit of completing the tributaries of the joint action through

activation of cooperation among the bodies concerned with protection of integrity and combating corruption in the GCC States, and establishing communication channels among them to exchange information, experiences and experiments consistent with other areas of cooperation, the Ministerial Council, at the 127<sup>th</sup> session issued a decision (Jeddah 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2013) approving the formation of a Committee of Heads of the Bodies Concerned with Protection of Integrity and Combating Corruption in the GCC States, similar to the Ministerial committees working within the GCC framework.

The Heads of the Bodies Concerned with Protection of Integrity and Combating Corruption in the GCC States held their first meeting in the State of Kuwait on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The meeting issued a number of resolutions among them are the following : Authorizing a committee of specialists from the Member States and Secretariat General to prepare the draft GCC agreement to deal with combatting corruption among the GCC States together with stating justifications of concluding the agreement; and studying the topic of accession of the GCC in its capacity of a regional organization to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAS), according to the provisions of the agreement and decisions issued concerning them and opinions of the Member States to develop a comprehensive concept of GCC's accession to the Convention. It was authorized to submit the results to the next meeting of The Heads of the Bodies Concerned with Protection of Integrity and Combating Corruption; and to invite the GCC States which have not yet joined the convention to accede to the convention to establish the International Academy Against Corruption, with the aim of promoting international cooperation, exchange of opinions, experiences, knowledge and technical help, building abilities in the field of combatting corruption, and to organize annual training courses in which the officials of the authorities and bodies will participate.

The Heads of the Bodies also agreed to hold a meeting at the level of undersecretaries or assistants or their representatives, prior to the meeting of the Heads, to prepare the agenda of the meeting of the Heads of Bodies Concerned with Protection of Integrity and Combating Corruption. They also authorized the GCC Secretariat General to coordinate with the concerned authorities and bodies concerning the suitable mechanisms to disseminate

and highlight the effort and achieved accomplishments; and raising awareness among citizens about the risks of corruption; and to establishing a website of the committee of bodies concerned with protection of integrity and combating corruption, within the website of the Secretariat General. The website should include a database containing all the information, legislations and agreements relating to the protection of integrity and combating corruption.

## **Cooperation among Public Prosecution and Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution**

The Ministerial Council, at the 99<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, June 2006), issued a decision approving the holding of annual periodical meetings of the Attorneys General, Public Prosecutors and Heads of Bureau of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States, beginning 2007. The results of these meetings shall be submitted to the Ministerial Council. The Attorneys General, Public Prosecutors and Heads of Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States have so far held seven meetings, from which came out technical committees that conduct research and study all that may help achieve more harmony and promote coordination among these bodies and their works, to achieve unification of regulations and procedures in this field.

In this framework, various achievements have been made. Among them are the following : approval of the Common Judicial Instructions for the Members of Public Prosecutors and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution to apply them as a reference; as well as approval of the application of Common International Judicial Cooperation Models which include international arrest warrant, request for judicial assistance, request for recovery; and approval of direct contact authorities among the Bodies of Public Prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution; and approval of the creation of a website of public prosecutions; and approval of programs of visits of Public Prosecutors to the Member States. In addition, the program of bilateral visits of the members of Public Prosecutions, and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution among the GCC States, organizing specialized seminars, devising a mechanism of coordination among the Member States for participation in regional and international forums and benefiting from training programs organized in the specialized centers, were approved. It was agreed to hold

a joint meeting between committee of specialists from Public Prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution and officials concerned with information technology annually, to review new developments in this field in order to achieve the desired goals.

In addition, among the most important achievements are the rules of joint cooperation among the Public Prosecutors and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States, agreed upon by the Attorneys General, Public Prosecutors and Heads of Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution and approved by the Ministerial Council at the 114<sup>th</sup> meeting held in March 2010. Other achievements include the adoption of the Common Reference Law for Inspection of the Works of Public Prosecutors and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States and Rules of Protection of Child During the Stage of Investigation approved by the Attorneys General, Public Prosecutors and Heads of Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution at their 6<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Riyadh, on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

At the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012) the Supreme Council approved the mechanisms of supporting bodies of Public Prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council, at the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013) issued its decision approving the secondment of the members of Public Prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution to work with public prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution of the GCC States, according to provisions of national regulations and laws.

In addition, the Ministerial Council at the 130<sup>th</sup> session held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014, approved the project of excellence award for the members of Public Prosecutions and Bureaus of Investigation and Prosecution.

## **Human Rights in the GCC States**

Since the GCC States accord great interest to the promotion of human rights guaranteed by the Islamic Shari'ah and international conventions, the Ministerial Council at its special meeting held to discuss the vision of the Kingdom of Bahrain to develop the GCC (Manama, June 2010), decided to establish an office within the Secretariat General, which to be concerned



with highlighting GCC States' achievements in the field of human rights in coordination with the concerned authorities in the Member States. In light of this decision, the Secretary General issued a decision, on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010, establishing the "Human Rights Office of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf" at the Secretariat General.

Within the framework of joint action in the field of human rights, the Heads of the Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States have held many meetings in implementation of the decision of the Ministerial Council taken at the 118<sup>th</sup> session held in March 2011, in Abu Dhabi. The first meeting issued many decisions, among them are the following: formation of a committee of experts specialized in studying of the work mechanism of the Human Rights Office at the Secretariat General, mandating the Office to create a website, approving mechanism of meetings of the Officials of Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States.

At their second meeting, held on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, the Head of Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States approved the working mechanism of the Human Rights Office at the Secretariat General and referred it to the Ministerial Council for adoption. They also approved the proposal submitted by the Secretariat General pertaining to exchange of visits among the delegates of the Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States and welcomed the proposal submitted by the State of Qatar concerning organizing a specialized training course in the field of human rights in coordination with the Office.

The Heads of Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States, at their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held during the period 5-7 March 2012, took a decision to coordinate in regional and international forums. They also approved the time schedule proposed for visits among delegations of the government bodies concerned with human rights in the GCC States, as well as training and qualification of national cadres in the field of human rights. The website of the Office was also inaugurated during the meeting marking the start of its operation.

The Heads of Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States, held their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting on 5-7 March 2012 and decided

to include in the draft of "the Declaration of Human Rights of the GCC States" a text relating to honoring all religion and not insulting their figures and emphasizing on what the international customs and conventions call to criminalize insulting prophets and disrespecting religions. They also decided to provide the Secretariat General with the reports that they prepare in the field of human right to circulate them over the Member States to benefit from experiments and experience of each State in this field, and to understand through these reports about the best method adopted in preparation and writing of these reports. They also directed to provide the Secretariat General with news and accomplishments in Arabic, English and French languages, whenever possible, which it may deem appropriate to publish on the social networking media of the Secretariat General (Twitter) and highlight the achievements of the Member States in the field of human rights.

The Heads of the Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States, at their 5<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 submitted the draft GCC Human Rights Declaration to the Ministerial Council, with recommendation to approve it. A committee of specialists from the Member States and the Secretariat General was also formed to propose a mechanism of interaction with international human rights organizations.

The Heads of the Governmental Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States, at their 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, decided to develop a database of legal advisors and experts of the GCC States in the field of human rights.

At their 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014, they authorized the Permanent Committee of Specialists from the Member States and Secretariat General to prepare a common law for protection from offending.

Within the framework of introducing the achievements of the GCC States in the field of human rights, the Secretariat General, on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014, organized a seminar titled "GCC States' Achievements in the Field of Human Rights". The seminar called for highlighting positive works carried out by the GCC States in this regard, which reflect true desire of Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States to support and promote human rights and preserve human dignity, taking inspiration from the Islamic Shari'ah. It has submitted the seminar's recommendation to the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Government Bodies Concerned with Human Rights in the GCC States.

## Cooperation among Legislative Councils

Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States, at their 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006), agreed to create a mechanism for holding periodical meetings of the Heads of the Legislative Councils; Shura Councils, Council of Deputies, National Council and Umma Councils, under the umbrella of Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. This mechanism as a whole represents a positive indication towards wider and more comprehensive steps for participation in the process of joint action, and creating a real GCC unity, based on real integration which is linked basically to the issue of development in general, and to the issue of political development in particular. This helps to create a free and wide space that accommodates all the components and sections of the society in the GCC States, achieving the goals stipulated in Article 4 of the GCC Charter aimed at achieving coordination and coherence among the GCC States and deepening and strengthening links, connections and aspects of cooperation existing in various fields. This is achieved by establishing a system representing the works of legislative and shura authorities in the GCC States, so that with it the mechanisms of cooperation and unity may be completed to achieve more successes that meet the aspirations of Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States for their citizens.

The Heads of Legislative Councils; Shura Councils, Councils of Representatives, National Councils and Umma Councils, held their first meeting in Doha on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2007. They set forth bases and foundations on which the joint action in this field will be built. They also held their second periodical meeting in Muscat on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December 2008, and decided to form a parliamentary coordination and foreign affairs committee to prepare the methods that would achieve goals of their annual periodical meeting. Moreover, they decided to exert their effort to coordinate works in the fields of parliamentary diplomacy among the legislative councils and to strengthen joint GCC parliamentary positions towards parliaments of other States, and parliamentary organizations concerning strategic issues in order to reinforce the achievements made and to achieve more steps of coordination among the Member States to reach the desired integration.

The third meeting of the Heads of Legislative Councils, held in Kuwait on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009, adopted regulatory rules of the work

of parliamentary coordination and foreign affairs committee, in whose jurisdictions falls the representation of the Member States in all Arabian, regional, Islamic and international parliamentary forums.

The fourth meeting, held in Abu Dhabi on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 approved the annual coordination plan aimed to achieve effectiveness through dealing with key problems faced in coordination among legislative councils in the Member States.

The fifth meeting, held in Jeddah on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2011 issued a number of decisions. Among them is the approval of a visit of a delegation of members of legislative councils to the European Parliament on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012, presided over by the Chairman of Shura Council and two members of the legislative councils. The visit was undertaken in the specified time.

The Heads of the Legislative Councils, at their sixth meeting held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012, approved the establishment of specialized GCC parliamentary groups in both legislative and economic fields. They also approved the GCC parliamentary network project. At their seventh meeting, held in the State of Kuwait on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013, they approved the organization of a conference or seminar in the country of presidency on the topic of economic integration among the GCC States, as well as on formation of a specialized parliamentary committee in the legislative field.

### **Legal Bulletin**

For the purpose of codifying the laws and legislation of the GCC Member States, the Legal Affairs Sector at the Secretariat General issues a quarterly bulletin since 1982. The "Legal Bulletin" compiles the laws and legislations of Member States. The Information Sector at the Secretariat prepared a comprehensive index for access to the quarterly.

### **Official Gazette**

With the aim of publishing decisions of the joint action of the GCC, the Secretariat General started releasing its publication "Official Magazine". The first issue was published on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

## Chapter (2)

# Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council

### **Establishment, Membership and Competence**

The Consultative Commission of the GCC Supreme Council was established by resolution of the Supreme Council at the 18<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 1997), due to the conviction in the need to expand the consultation ground and intensify contacts among member States. The resolution was originally based on a proposal by His Highness, late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait at the 17<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Supreme Council (Doha, December 1996) for establishing a Consultative Commission to the GCC Supreme Council. The Consultative Commission is composed of members from GCC Member States that will help the Council and provide advice on matters relating to supporting the GCC process and facing the future challenges.

The ceremonial meeting for announcing the establishment of the Consultative Commission was held at the State of Kuwait (November 1998) under the auspices of His Highness, late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait.

The Commission is composed of 30 members, five members from each State. Every year, the Commission elects a chairperson from the representatives of the State that preside the Supreme Council's session, and a vice-chairperson from the representatives of the State that comes next in order. The Commission examines matters referred to it by the Supreme Council only. An administrative staff reporting to the Secretariat, i.e. Office of the Consultative Commission Affairs- Muscat assists the Consultative Commission.

### **Directives and Achievements**

Starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> session, the Supreme Council instructed the Consultative Commission to examine the following topics:

1. At the 19<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 1998): To study the employment of national labor force and facilitation of their intra-GCC

movement.

2. At the 20<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 1999): To evaluate economic cooperation among the GCC States and submit proposals for activating the Comprehensive Development Strategy of the GCC States (2000-2025), with focus on dealing with economic and international blocs.
3. At the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, 2000): To examine the following topics in detail:
  - Education and development of curricula
  - Energy and environment
  - Water strategies
  - Scientific and technical research
4. At the 22<sup>nd</sup> session (Muscat, December 2001): To examine and develop proposals for activating the Comprehensive Development Strategy of the GCC States, giving priority to the social matters, particularly those relating to youth and their welfare and the media issues set out in the strategy.
5. At the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002): To study two topics: woman and her economic, social and household role, and the correction of the imbalance in the population composition.
6. At the 24<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2003): To evaluate the GCC process over the past 23 years, the role of private sector in enhancing the relationships among the GCC citizens and the intra-GCC trade barriers.
7. At the 25<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 2004): To study the phenomenon of terrorism and complete the study on evaluating the GCC process.
8. At the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005): To study two topics: Economic citizenship and its impact on fostering GCC citizenship and the importance of economic partnership in supporting the relations of the GCC States with their neighbors.
9. At the 27<sup>th</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2006): To study the enhancement of the appropriate work environment of the private sector in such a way that ensures according national treatment to the companies and investments in the GCC Member States.
10. At the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007): To study the phenomenon of inflation and high prices and its social impact on GCC citizens and

economies, in addition to the problem of unemployment; its reasons, effects and solution.

11. At the 29<sup>th</sup> session ( Muscat, December 2008 ): To study the international financial crisis and its effect on the GCC Member States and measures that could be taken, in addition to the issue of the food and water security.
12. At the 30<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait , December 2009): To study three topics : Development of produce of native agricultural products of high economic value, such as dates, and raising the contribution of agricultural, animal and fish products to the GDP, global warming and climate change, and taking care of people of special needs , and putting an end to disability.
13. At the 31<sup>st</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2010): To study two topics: Alternative Energy and development of its resources, unification of Member States> efforts in the field of translation, Arabization and taking care of Arabic language.
14. At the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011): To study the following topics:
  - A strategy for youth and promotion of sprit of citizenship.
  - Employment Strategy of the GCC States in government and public sectors.
  - Establishment of a common GCC authority for the GCC civil aviation.
  - Non-communicable health diseases in the GCC States.
  - Necessity for a GCC confederation in light of the GCC Charter .
15. At the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2012): To study the following topics:
  - Establishment of a general authority for food and drug of the GCC States.
  - Establishment of a joint specialized GCC center for general and preventive health.
  - Evaluative study of the media strategy of the GCC States and their relationship with the values system.
  - Assessment of the current status and programs of the child's culture, and how to develop them.

16. At the 34<sup>th</sup> session (Kuwait, December 2013): To study the following topics:

- Common GCC tourist visa.
- Human development in the GCC States.
- Assessment of the GCC joint process.

At the various sessions, the Supreme Council adopted all recommendations of the Consultative Commission and referred them to the competent ministerial committees.

### **The Commission`s By-laws and Work Mechanism**

The Consultative Commission exercises its functions according to a mechanism compatible with its by-law and the nature of the topics assigned to it by the Supreme Council. The Consultative Commission holds a meeting wherein it elects its chairman and vice-chairman for the new session in presence of the GCC Secretary General who conveys the Supreme Council's instruction to the Commission. Then the Commission conducts a general discussion of the topics to be examined based on the notes and information provided by the Secretariat and the members' comments. Thereafter, ad hoc committees are formed from the Commission's members; each committee examines in detail a specific topic. Committees' members prepare studies and working paper for each one topic; in certain cases assistance of experts may be sought. Then each committee drafts the Commission's comments on that topic. Some committees may need more than one meeting.

After all committees have completed the draft comments, the Commission holds a general meeting for examining those comments with a view to reaching a common formula of its comments on the topics referred to it, which will then be submitted to the Supreme Council.

For the purpose of enhancing the role of the Consultative Commission to efficiently contribute to enhancing the joint action, the Supreme Council in the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, December 2000) decided to invite the chairman of the Commission to attend meetings of the Supreme Council and reply to the Council's enquiries about the Commission's comments on the topics referred to it by the Council.

Beginning from the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Consultative Commission, the President of the Ministerial Council holds a meeting with the Commission's



members in order to update them about recent developments and answer questions. Representatives of the Commission also hold a joint annual meeting with the Ministerial Council for reviewing the Commission's comments before submitting them to the Supreme Council.

For the purpose of evaluating and improving its performance on a constant basis, the Commission has formed a Presidency Committee; this committee coordinates the work of the Commission, examines the possibility of improving the Commission's performance and submits relevant proposals. The Presidency Committee plays an important role in following up implementation of the Commission's recommendations and making relevant proposals in this connection. The Presidency Committee also participates in the annual joint meeting of the Ministerial Council for examining comments of the Consultative Commission.

Their Majesties and Highnesses, leaders of the GCC States, have showed a great deal of interest in the Consultative Commission and supported its process. Convinced in the role of the Consultative Commission and its experience as well as its professional and objective comments and studies, The Supreme Council in the 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Doha, December 2002) resolved as follows:

1. Set up a committee composed of Member States and the Secretariat to prepare a report on improving the current system of the Consultative Commission's work to incorporate views of the Commission and proposals of member States in this respect.
2. Approve the Headquarter of the Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council to be based in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

The Office of the Consultative Commission Affairs has officially commenced its duties at its permanent headquarter in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003. The Sultanate of Oman has provided the building and furnished it, too.

At the 28<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, December 2007), the Supreme Council approved that three periodic meetings of the Commission are to be held every year. The Council further approved the Commission's initiative concerning matters of varied opinions or subject of controversy among Member States within the framework of the GCC joint action.

## Chapter (3)

# Cooperation in the Fields of Auditing and Financial Control

### Objectives

The present section of the joint action process addresses the fields related to the control of the public property in the Member States. Such control is conducted by the auditing and accounting institutions in the Member States. This includes coordination of positions among the auditing and accounting institutions in the international organizations in which these institutions are full members, such as INTOSAI, ASOSAI and ARBOSAI. Since the establishment of the GCC, the authorities in charge of financial control and auditing have held meetings at the level of the heads of these institutions as well as the specialist technical committees. However, meetings at the level of heads of Accounting and Auditing Institutions have been suspended after the second meeting which was held in April 1984. The meeting resumed in 2003, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of heads of institutions and committee of undersecretaries held in May of the same year in the State of Qatar. The meetings, thereafter continued regularly, and the 12th meeting held in September 2013 in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

### Achievements

#### I. Draft Rules of the Supreme Audit Institutions in the GCC States

The heads of Accounting and Auditing Institutions, at their seventh meeting held in 2008, adopted rules of the Supreme Audit Institutions. The draft rules were prepared by a technical working team specialized in audit and legal aspects. The rules contained various sections and chapters that define the basic principles of auditing, objectives, kinds and scope thereof. The draft rules also outline the functions of the audit institutions and the agencies subject to audit, definition of the general auditing rules in respect to independence, qualification and professionalism, as well as the rules of the field work, planning of the audit operations, proofs and evidences. The Draft Rules concludes with the reports in respect to the kinds of such reports, the

methods of preparation, follow up, confidentiality and the opinion contained in the report. Two topics concerning monitoring of environment and money laundering have been added to the rules. The monitoring rules for higher bodies have been printed and circulated over Institutions in the GCC States to refer to them, each as required.

## **II. Joint Training**

The Common strategic plan for training the staff of the audit institutions was adopted in year 2000. The plan includes the methodology and fields of joint training through the annual training courses organized by such institutions. The plan focuses on the specialist programs in the newest fields such as environmental control, corruption control, money laundering, E-commerce, computerization, privatization, performance control, general debt, disclosing methods of cheating and deception, and the like. A permanent committee for training and development was formed. The committee approves, in the beginning of each year, the annual training plan incorporating three courses in the fields set out in the common strategy. Fifty five training programs have been conducted during the period from 1997 to 2012.

In addition, during 2005 ,2004 a program for preparation of approved training specialists was implemented, in cooperation with The International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), as well as a program for preparation of approved training specialists. Twenty people working in these institutions benefited from this program, and became approved training specialists. The program for training of trainers will be re-implemented in 2014.

## **III. Professional Fellowship in the Field of Accounts and Auditing**

The Heads of GCC Audit Institutions, at their 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in November 2007, approved the strategic plan for qualification of officials working in GCC Audit Institutions to obtain certificates of professional fellowship to enhance their performance in a manner that reflects positively on the role of GCC Audit Institutions in performing their tasks and powers, and achieving their goals. The steps and procedures taken by the GCC Audit Institutions in obtaining the certificates of professional fellowship to take benefit from the experience of GCC Audit Institutions in this field were circulated.

## **IV. The GCC Competition for the Research and Studies in the Field of Auditing**

Desiring to support the efforts contributing to development of methods of work and enhancing them through polishing and developing abilities of officials working in GCC Audit Institutions in various fields and to support scientific research, the heads of GCC Audit Institutions, at their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Kuwait in 2004 approved GCC competition for research and studies in the field of auditing and accounting for the officials of GCC Audit Institutions. It also approved competition rules and announced for the first competition in 2006, in the following fields:

1. Financial control on money laundering
2. The challenges encountering the GCC Audit Institutions in the field of audit based on the electronic systems.
3. The role of the Audit Institutions in the control of privatization and post privatization

The Heads of the GCC Audit Institutions in the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting (November 2007) announced the results of the competition and winners of the Award were honored. The GCC Secretariat publishes winning researches, to circulate them on the Institutions to benefit from them. The second competition was in 2009, in the following fields:

1. The role of the higher audit institution in evaluating methods of investing and managing public funds.
2. The role of audit on auditing quality in improving the performance of the higher audit institutions.
3. Measurement and evaluation of institutional performance in government.

The results of the second competition were announced at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of GCC Audit Institutions, held in December 2011, and the winners were honored with awards.

The third competition was announced in 2012 in the following fields:

1. Risk management in control work.
2. Effect of application of international standard (40) related to quality of controlling tasks in higher bodies of financial control and accounting.
3. Role of GCC Audit Institutions in activation of governance in the bodies covered in monitoring.

Results of the third meeting will be announced in the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of GCC Audit Institutions, to be held in November 2014, in the State of Kuwait.

## **V. Technical Studies**

Two studies have been conducted; A study on money laundering from the audit perspective and the second A study on environmental control from the audit perspective. The above studies were prepared by the Audit Bureau in the State of Kuwait and the General Auditing Bureau in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia respectively. These two studies contain several recommendations that enhance the role of audit institutions in controlling the adverse impacts of money laundering and the environmental implications thereof. The studies have been added to rules of controlling of higher bodies of control and accounting.

## **VI.Measurement of Financial Effects of Institutions` Recommendations**

The heads of GCC Audit Institutions, at their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in 2009, approved the reference manual for measurement of financial effects of the recommendations of GCC Audit Institutions as a reference. They called for holding a seminar on this topic, in which specialists from institutions would participate. The General Auditing Bureau in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted that seminar in April 2010.

## **VII.Anti-Corruption Strategy**

The heads of the Audit Institutions approved in their 7<sup>th</sup> session (October, 2008) the paper prepared by Audit Bureau the State of Qatar in «The Role of audit institutions in the field of anti- corruption».

## **VIII.Strategy of Contact and Communication with External Parties**

Considering the importance of role of Institutions in consolidation of the principles of accountability, transparency and disclosure and desiring to benefit from the experiences of the parties with which communication is established, the heads the Institutions approved the strategy of contact and communication among controlling bodies and external parties. A discussion forum was also organized on this topic, hosted by the State Audit Bureau in

the State of Qatar in May 2010.

## **IX. Manual of Work Quality Guarantee and Audit Reports System**

Within the framework of cooperation and coordination among the GCC Audit Institutions, aimed at sharing and benefiting from Institutions' experiences, the Secretariat General has printed manual entitled «Work Quality and Audit Reports System», prepared by State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and reviewed by a rules review working group composed of members from GCC Audit Institutions.

## **X. Common Professional Audit Manuals**

The Heads of the Audit Institutions in the GCC States adopted nine common professional auditing directories based on the experience available, the directories in force in the Audit Institutions, and in accordance with the international financial auditing criteria. These are as under:

1. Financial Control Manual (General Manual)
2. Petroleum and Gas Monitoring Manual
3. Early Monitoring Manual
4. Performance Monitoring Manual
5. Revenues of Zakat and Taxes Monitoring Manual
6. Governance Monitoring Manual
7. Privatization Monitoring Manual
8. Information Technology Monitoring Manual
9. Projects Monitoring Manual

## **XI. Documentary Book**

The financial and administrative monitoring body of the Sultanate of Oman shall prepare a documentation book titled " Set of legislative Framework and Bylaws Governing Monitoring Work in the Audit Institutions in the GCC States".

## **XII. Strategic Training Plan**

The State Audit Bureau in the State of Qatar shall prepare an integrated concept about the status of strategic training plan for the institutions of audit and financial control in the GCC States.

## Chapter 4

# Cooperation in the Field of Zakat

Based on the decision of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee at the 47<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1998, pertaining to formation of a committee of authorities concerned with zakat and taxes in the GCC States to conduct research in matters that will likely support the joint action in this regard, and based on the invitation extended by the Secretariat General, the Committee of officials concerned with zakat and taxes in the GCC States held the first meeting at the headquarters of the Secretariat General, in Riyadh on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1998, in the attendance of representatives from all the Member States. They recommended the formation of a working group concerned with zakat. Accordingly, the working group held the first meeting at the headquarters of the Secretariat General on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2000.

The concerned working group recommended the following:

- Importance of media awareness on the obligatory payment of zakat and its religious and worldly effects on those who pay it and those who benefit from it, and using all the media and platforms to achieve this target. Among them are holding of seminars and meetings for raising awareness about the obligatory duty of zakat payment .
- Importance of independence of zakat authorities and governments' support to them to earn zakat payers' trust, so that the authorities may be able to render its duties.
- Issuance of periodical annual reports showing activities of the zakat authorities and aspects of payment of zakat amounts to increase trust of zakat payers in the zakat authorities.
- Exchanging information and experiences among the zakat authorities in the GCC States in the field of obligatory zakat in terms of zakat payers and its lawful beneficiaries and all the information that may help the authorities to render their duties in the best possible manner.
- Necessity of developing a comprehensive plan for providing training to the workers in zakat authorities in the GCC States to exchange information among them and acquire new knowledge and skills that would help them render their duties in the best possible manner, and

intensifying exchange of visits of in-charge of zakat among the GCC States.

- Qualification of some beneficiaries or those who are entitled to receive zakat on some works to convert them from consumers to producers.
- Urging the Member States which do not have independent government authorities concerned with zakat affairs to establish such bodies as soon as possible.
- Cooperation and coordination among government and national bodies working in the field of zakat inside one country.
- Preparation of economic and social studies and researches by the Member States on the level of poverty in the society.
- Necessity of assigning some tasks to the authorities specialized in administrative and technical fields of zakat bodies in a manner that helps to activate their role.
- Seeking codification of legislations and regulations of obligatory nature of zakat payment, in a manner suitable to each State, in a quest to reduce big zakat deficiency witnessed currently.
- Benefiting from the modern technology to develop zakat authorities and to raise their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Paying zakat to the lawful beneficiaries it in the State in which it is collected.
- Holding an annual meeting of the working group of zakat to exchange experiences and share experiments of the GCC States and benefiting from the new developments on this front.

The authorities concerned with zakat have started their meeting on the level of heads of zakat and income authorities since 2002, to achieve the goals specified by the GCC Statute. The recommendations of the specialist working group mentioned above have been deemed a roadmap for action.

## **Achievements**

### **I. Review of Experiences of Zakat Authorities**

The Zakat authorities reviewed their experiences in using modern devices, such as mobile, internet to serve zakat payers and donors in addition to exchanging experience gained and go through the distinguished experiences and models of the bodies, to generalize the benefit on the bodies concerned with zakat in the GCC States.



## **II. Study of the Problem of Poverty**

The Heads of Zakat Bodies of the GCC States agreed to conduct a study on the problem of poverty in the local community of each State. They also agreed that each body shall cooperate with the concerned authorities in the Member States to study reasons of the problem in the local community of each State, and thereafter they shall submit results of those studies with their recommendations in the coming meetings, in addition to exchange approved strategies and plans in each State to address this problem.

## **III. Media Awareness Campaign**

The Heads of Zakat Authorities of the GCC States decided at their fourth meeting held in November 2006, that the Zakat authorities would prepare a media awareness program on zakat, showing the role of the bodies in-charge of zakat. The joint program production establishment of the GCC States has been selected to produce programs of this media campaign, which was successfully implemented.

## **IV. Training**

The Heads of Zakat Authorities of the GCC States agreed at their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting on the general framework of joint training plan for the employees working in them. Training programs have been executed for the employees of these bodies according to the first joint training plan prepared by the training committee of the zakat bodies of the GCC States for years 2007-2009. The plan included the following programs:

1. Skills of serving deserving people and preparing rules and regulations for payment of aid.
2. Services to Zakat payers.
3. Simplification and development of work systems and procedures.
4. Skills of marketing charitable projects and obtaining new donors and preserving them.
5. Audit system using computer.
6. Modern technologies in advertisement and methods of measurement of effects.

The second joint training plan for the years 2010-2012 was executed. It included six programs as under:

1. Excellence in skills of convincing, effectiveness and communication.
2. Designing training programs for zakat authorities.
3. Development of skills of social research.
4. Strategic planning in zakat authorities.
5. Development of skills of accountant in zakat bodies.
6. Management of media campaigns and public relations.

The third joint training program for the years 2013-2015 has started. It includes the following :

1. Speech on zakat through social media
2. Marketing for charitable projects targeting big donors.
3. Development of work methods and simplification of procedures.
4. Smart leadership in risks management.
5. Applications of total quality management in government and zakat authorities.
6. Skills of delegating tasks for preparation and development of the second grade.

Two hundred and sixty four participants of both sexes have benefitted from these courses from zakat bodies in the GCC States.

### **Zakat Diploma Program**

Within the framework of developing competencies and abilities of employees working with Zakat and income tax authorities in the GCC States, the Heads of Zakat Authorities, at their ninth meeting, held in May 2012, decided to authorize the GCC Accounting and Auditing Organization to prepare a study on creating a study program at the advanced diploma level in zakat.

Islamic Development Bank has agreed to contribute in financing the study costs by bearing 50% of the cost. The remaining costs will be borne by zakat bodies in the Member States equally. H.E Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, the GCC Secretary General, signed the study contract of the zakat diploma program in the GCC States between the Secretariat General and the GCC Accounting and Auditing Organization.

The draft final report of the study has been prepared and circulated on the competent bodies in the Member States to express their opinions in preparation to finalize the study.

## **V. Innovation Award for Employees in Zakat Authorities**

The Heads of Zakat Authorities in the GCC States, at their eighth meeting, held in January 2011, approved an Award of Innovation for the employees working in zakat bodies of the GCC States titled «GCC competition for researches and innovative works in the field of zakat». At their ninth meeting, held in May 2012, they decided to authorize training committee to select topics, and amend the competition rules. At their tenth meeting, held in December 2013, the committee approved selection of the topics of the competition according to the proposals of the training committee and to increase budget of the competition as per the proposal of the training and committee and to amend competition rule. The first competition was announced in 2013, as follows:

1. Research competition «Creating image of zakat authorities in the Public Mind».
2. Innovative works competition «Using technology in zakat establishments works». For this competition two awards of equal value have been selected as per the amended competition rules.

## **VI. Documentary Study on Customs of zakat collection in the GCC**

The Heads of Zakat Authorities of the GCC States, at their tenth meeting, on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013, authorized the Zakat Fund in the Sultanate of Oman to submit an integrated proposal about a documentation book on «Customs of zakat collection in the GCC States», in coordination with the Secretariat General. The Research and Training Institute of Islamic Development Bank was also requested to present its proposal on the same.

## **VII. Documentation Book on Zakat Authorities in the GCC**

The Heads of Zakat Bodies in the GCC States, at their tenth meeting, held in December 2013, approved the proposal of the training committee, pertaining to preparation of a documentation book on the Zakat Authorities in the GCC Member States.



## **SECTION FIVE**

**REGIONAL COOPERATION  
AND  
ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH  
OTHER COUNTRIES  
AND GROUPINGS**



# Chapter (1)

## Cooperation with the Republic of Yemen

### **I. Accession of Yemen to GCC Institutions**

The Supreme Council approved the accession of Yemen to ten specialized bodies working within the framework of GCC. These are:

- The Arab Bureau of Education for the GCC Member States
- Council of the GCC Ministers of Health
- Council of the GCC Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs
- The GCC Football Cup Tournament
- Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting
- GCC Standardization Organization
- GCC Accounting and Auditing Organization
- Gulf Radio and Television Authority
- Committee of Heads of Post in the GCC States
- Gulf Cooperation Council for Joint Programs Production Institution

### **II. Meeting with the Yemeni Side to Specify Development Needs**

Since March 2006, ministerial meetings have been held between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the GCC States and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, to exchange views and to coordinate in all fields. The First Joint Ministerial Meeting authorized the Joint Technical Committee of the GCC States and Republic of Yemen to conduct a study on the development needs of Yemen for the period of 2006-2015. The Committee completed its task for the period from 2006-2010 and for this purpose it made preparation for donors conferences and followed up the implementation of the projects for which funds were pledged. The Committee holds its meetings periodically, of which the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in Riyadh on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014.

Many regional and international bodies participate in the activities of the Committee and working group emanating from it. Besides the GCC States, regional development funds, such as Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Islamic Development Bank, OPEC Fund for International Development, World Bank, United Nations Organizations working in Yemen, European Commission, and the Department for International Development

(DFID), UK, participate in its activities.

The Joint committee, in coordination with the competent authorities in the Republic of Yemen follows up the following tasks:

- Specifying development needs of Yemen for the period 2011-2015, and discussing the suitable means for their funding.
- Proposing suitable solutions to strengthen Yemen's ability to accommodate external aid and accelerating the pace of disbursing the aid agreed upon, by amending financial and administrative procedures followed, in line with the requirements of donor authorities.
- Urging donors from outside the GCC to increase the aid provided to Yemen, to a level comparable to what is being provided by the GCC States, whose assistance accounts for more than 70% of the total aid.
- Encouraging other States to invest in Yemen, similar to what is done by the private sector in GCC, whose investments account for 80% of the total foreign investment in Yemen.

### **III. Aid Pledged by the GCC States to Fund the Investment Program of the Third Development Plan (2006-2010)**

Total financial undertakings allocated for funding the projects of the Third Development Plan (2006-2010) amounted to about 6.25\$ billion, of which about 3.8\$ billion are from the GCC States and regional funds. i.e. Arab Fund, Islamic Bank, OPEC fund, including 1.1\$ billion from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The said undertakings of the GCC States have been allocated to fund more than 80 development projects and programs in various regions of the Republic of Yemen. In this framework, the Secretariat General received a letter from Abu Dhabi Development Fund, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009, regarding UAE's decision to convert its aid provided to Yemen in the form of soft loans of 500\$ million to a grant, in addition to 150\$ million that it had previously pledged to provide, which was also converted to a grant.

### **IV. Aid Pledged to Finance the Phased Program of Stability and Development (2012-2014)**

The Government of Yemen, in cooperation with the World Bank and United Nations prepared a phased program for stability and development for the transitory period 2012-2014 and the donor countries pledged to finance this program with an amount of 6.4\$ billion at the Donors' Conference in



Riyadh, held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and an additional amount of 1.4\$ billion at the Friends of Yemen Conference held in New York, on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Total pledge have amounted to 7.9\$ billion to finance this program. An additional amount have been pledged after these two conferences with which the total pledged amount reached more than 8\$ billion, out of which 3.25\$ billion are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## **V. Friends of Yemen**

The initiative of Friends of Yemen was announced at the Ministerial meeting held in London in 2010, in which all the GCC States and Secretariat General participated, in addition to about 20 countries and international organizations. Two working groups were approved at the said meeting:

1. "Economy and Governance" Working Group, under the joint chairmanship of UAE and Federal Republic of Germany. It held a meeting in March 2010 in Abu Dhabi and another in June 2010 in Berlin.
2. "Justice and the Rule of Law" Working Group, under the joint chairmanship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Holland. It held its first meeting in the Hague in April 2010, and another in Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in July 2010.

A meeting was held between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the GCC States and Republic of Yemen, in the city of New York on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010, in which meetings of Yemen's friends were discussed and positions in that context were coordinated.

Then the Second Ministerial Meeting of the "Friends of Yemen" was held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010 in New York on the sidelines of the meetings of General Assembly of the United Nations. In this meeting all the GCC States and GCC Secretariat General participated, in addition to about twenty other countries and organizations, in which reports of the working groups were discussed. The meeting approved a number of proposals and heads of diplomatic missions in Sana'a were authorized to follow up the implementation of those proposals.

The Third Ministerial Meeting was held in May 2012 in Riyadh under joint chairmanship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and United

Kingdom, and the Fourth Ministerial meeting was held in September 2012 in New York. In both meetings support was expressed for the efforts exerted by the Republic of Yemen to restore the peace, stability and economic activity in Yemen.

The Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of Yemen held in London on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, under joint chairmanship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Yemen and United Kingdom, issued a presidential statement which included political, security, economic and reconstruction aspects. The Sixth Ministerial Meeting was held in September 2013 in the city of New York on the sidelines of meetings of United Nations General Assembly.

A meeting of senior officials of the group of "Friends of Yemen" was held in the city of London on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014, after coordination among the members of tripartite presidency of the joint group of Friends of Yemen, i.e. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Yemen and United Kingdom.

## **VI. Inauguration of the Office of the GCC Secretariat General in Yemen**

The Ministerial Council at the 121<sup>st</sup> session held in November 2011, approved opening of an Office in Yemen under the GCC Secretariat. It was officially inaugurated in October 2012. Among the tasks of this office were the following:

- Following up the implementation of GCC Initiative and its Executive Mechanism.
- Following up implementation of the decisions of Supreme Council and Ministerial Council, and the committees working within the framework of the GCC related to aspects of cooperation with Yemen.

## **VII. The Creation of an Executive Body to Accelerate Accommodation of Donors' Pledges**

At the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Technical Committee to specify the development needs of the Republic of Yemen, the Yemeni side submitted a proposal for creation of an executive body to accelerate accommodation of donors' pledges, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The body would be composed of the executive department under which three units would work, i.e. projects unit, monitoring, follow up and communication

unit, unit of follow up of commitment to policies and implementation of reforms.

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Yemen, issued his decision number 22 of the year 2013, directing to create the Executive Body to Accelerate Accommodation of Donors' Pledges, aimed at the following:

- To prepare a clear vision and general framework to accelerate accommodation of donors' pledges in line with national priorities.
- To support implementation of joint framework of shared responsibilities between the government and donors.
- To contribute to the enhancement of coordination and cooperation between all the government authorities concerned and to overcome the obstacles.
- To develop human abilities in crystalizing the policies and programs and to prepare and execute the project with the concerned government authorities.
- To enforce the process of follow up and monitoring of the execution of projects and their compliance with criteria.
- To build a common and documented database of projects and external finances.

The executive body started its work.

## **VIII. Islamic Development Bank's Study on the Obstacles Faced in Project Implementation**

Based on the request of the joint technical committee for specifying the development needs of the Republic of Yemen, the Islamic Development Bank has prepared a study on the mechanisms of financing, execution, supervision, and assessment of the work progress. It includes discussing the obstacles faced by the Republic of Yemen in implementation of the projects and using the finances offered by the donor authorities. The study has presented an action plan to overcome those obstacle.

## Chapter ( 2 )

### Cooperation with Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco

Based on the resolution of the Supreme Council in the thirteenth consultative meeting held in May 2011, relating to the strengthening of cooperation between the GCC, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco, a number of meetings were held in 2011 between the representatives of the GCC and the two countries, including meeting of the Ministerial Council of the GCC with the foreign ministers of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco in September 2011, to discuss areas of cooperation and dimensions of the desired partnership.

In light of those meetings, the Supreme Council of the GCC in the 32<sup>nd</sup> session (Riyadh, December 2011), issued a decision to provide financial support for development projects in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco. It also stated to form a joint committee of senior officials in the GCC Member States, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco, from which specialized committees will emanate.

As for the development aid, it has been agreed upon in May 2012 that they would be provided in the form of grants of five billions Dollars to finance development projects in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for a period of five years. It has also been agreed to provide a grant of similar amount to finance development projects in the Kingdom of Morocco, for a period of five years. This aid will be provided with equal contribution by four countries i.e. United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait.

#### **Dimension of the Partnership with Jordan and Morocco**

Based on the above-mentioned two decisions of the Supreme Council, a draft action plan for cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the coming period of (2017-2012) has been prepared. Similarly, another action plan for cooperation with Kingdom of Morocco has also been prepared.

The action plans specifies proposed areas of cooperation, the desired goals to be achieved during the abovementioned period, the proposed mechanisms, work programs to be achieved, and the targeted time schedules.

The main areas of joint cooperation between the GCC and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Morocco include the following:

- Trade, investment, economic, financial and industrial cooperation.
- Political cooperation.
- Legal and judicial cooperation.
- Cooperation in the fields of higher education and scientific research.
- Information and cultural cooperation.
- Cooperation in the fields of transport, communication and information technology.
- Cooperation in the fields of tourism and antiquities.
- Cooperation in the fields of electricity and water.
- Cooperation in the field of sports.

While preparing these two plans, the following criteria have been taken into consideration.

- Striving to achieve deeper partnership between the GCC and the two countries in all the above mentioned fields, in a manner that serves the joint interests of the two parties.
- Working to overcome obstacles that obstruct trade and investment and to coordinate in this regard with the program to support development projects.
- Promoting interconnection and linkage among the peoples.
- Introducing shared culture and history.

In implementation of the above, the Joint Committee of Senior Officials of the GCC member states and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012, in which the Committee decided about the mechanisms of the Joint Committee of the GCC and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and agreed on the draft of joint action plan . At the Joint Ministerial Meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the GCC States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012, the Joint Action Plan between the GCC and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was adopted for the period of (2012-2017).

In implementation of the above, joint working groups have been formed, and the detailed action plans approved at the meeting of the Joint Committee between the GCC and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the implementation has started.

The Joint Committee of the Senior Officials of the GCC States and the Kingdom of Morocco also held a meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012, in which the Committee approved the mechanism of the Joint Committee between the GCC and the Kingdom of Morocco, and the draft joint action plan was agreed.

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012 the Joint Action Plan between the GCC and the Kingdom of Morocco was adopted for the period of (2012-2017), at the Joint Ministerial meeting between Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the GCC States and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Morocco.

In implementation of the above, a Joint Working Group has been formed, and the detailed Action Plan has been approved in the joint meeting between the GCC and the Kingdom of Morocco, and its implementation has started.

## Chapter (3)

# Economic Relations with Other Countries and Economic Groupings

### Objectives and Beginnings

One of the GCC main objectives is to achieve coordination and integration among Member States in all fields, including coordination of their policies and trade relations with the other countries and regional and international blocs and groupings with a view to enhance their negotiating positions and competitive power in the world markets as set out in the GCC Economic Agreement.

To achieve this objective, the Economic Agreement outlines some means such as, inter alia, concluding collective economic agreements in the cases that achieve shared benefits to the Member States, and creating a collective negotiating power that supports the GCC negotiating position with other partners in the field of the importation and exportation of main products. To that end:

- The Ministerial Council (11<sup>th</sup> session, June 1984) approved the principle of direct negotiations between the GCC States, as a single group, and other countries and economic groupings beginning with the European Community, Japan and USA.
- The Ministerial Council also decided to form an expert team, i.e., a negotiating team, to assist the Secretariat General in its contacts with other countries and economic groupings on behalf of the Member States. The Coordinator General of negotiations heads the team.
- The Supreme Council at the 7<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, November 1986) authorized the Ministerial Council to adopt the objectives and policies of cooperation with the other countries and economic groupings.

To cope with the global trend towards establishing economic blocs, given the increasing globalization and liberalization of trade and investment, the GCC States had to adopt a common GCC strategy governing their relations with other countries and regional and international economic groupings and organizations.

Therefore, The Supreme Council at the 21<sup>st</sup> session (Manama, December 2000) approved the long term strategy of the GCC State in their relations and negotiations with other countries and economic groupings. Based on these principles, contacts have been initiated between the GCC States and a number of countries and international groupings with a view to adopt means for developing economic and trade relations with those countries and groups. Achievements in the field of economic cooperation with those countries and international groupings can be summed up as follows:

## **I. Negotiations with Arab Countries**

After the GCC States have agreed to implement a Common External Tariff (CET), set a deadline for the launch of the Customs Union and affirmed the desire to behave as a single group with a view to fostering cooperation ties with other Arab countries, which represent the strategic depth of the GCC States vis-à-vis the international blocs, the Ministerial Council (78<sup>th</sup> session, March 2001), upon the recommendation of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, agreed, in principle, on concluding direct negotiations between the GCC States and the major Arab trading partners leading to reciprocal tariff exemption of all goods and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers and other taxes of similar effect.

In implementation of the above, all GCC States signed Greater Arab Free Trade Area agreement (GAFTA), which entered into force in 2005. In addition, another agreement was signed in 2004 for establishing a free trade area between the GCC and the Republic of Lebanon; another similar agreement was also signed in initials with the Republic of Syria which has not been signed till now. In addition, contacts are currently underway between the GCC and a number of other Arab countries for developing an appropriate mechanism for enhancing and developing economic cooperation.

## **II. Negotiations with the EU**

In December 1987, the Supreme Council of the GCC States in the 8<sup>th</sup> session, agreed to initiate formal negotiations with the European Community with a view to concluding an initial framework agreement on the cooperation between the two sides. The Supreme Council mandated the Ministerial Council to negotiate with the Community and sign the initial agreement. Later, the Framework Agreement between the GCC States and the European



Community was signed on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1988, approved by the Supreme Council at the 9<sup>th</sup> session (Manama, December 1988), and came into force in January 1990.

The Supreme Council also mandated the Ministerial Council to issue the necessary mandate to the Negotiating Team to conclude formal negotiations with the European Community leading to a trade agreement between the two sides. The Ministerial Council (35<sup>th</sup> session, June 1990) adopted the resolution on initiating formal trade negotiations with the Community and mandating the Negotiating Team to initiate these negotiations according to certain relevant directives.

Having signed the Framework Agreement, relations between the GCC and the European side took two tracks:

### **(a) Implementation of the Framework Agreement**

The Framework Cooperation Agreement between the GCC States and the EU provides for setting up a joint council composed of the Foreign Ministers of both sides, which holds annual periodical meetings. The Joint Ministerial Council held twenty three meetings, the first of which was in Muscat on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1990, and the last was in Manama on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The Joint Ministerial Council did not meet in 1995, instead, a brief ministerial meeting at the troika level was held wherein the two sides agreed to increase cooperation between them. In addition, the two sides hold an annual meeting in New York during the meetings of the UN General Assembly.

The Framework Agreement also provides for establishing a Joint Cooperation Committee that would assist the Joint Ministerial Council in performing its functions. The Agreement entitled the Joint Ministerial Council to set up any subcommittees, to assist the Council in performing its functions. The Joint Ministerial Council, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Luxembourg (May 1991), decided to form three working teams for cooperation in the fields of industry, environment and energy.

In activation of the Framework Agreement of Economic Cooperation, an extensive meeting of experts and senior officials of both sides was held at the headquarters of the Secretariat General on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010. At the said meeting a draft joint action program for the activation of cooperation for the period 2013-2010 was agreed upon.

The joint GCC-EU Ministerial Council, at the 20<sup>th</sup> session held In Luxemburg on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010, adopted the joint action program for the period (2013-2010). Within the framework of execution of the program, a number of joint events have been organized in the fields of finance, economy, monetary, trade, industry, investment, energy, nuclear safety, electricity, water, transport, environment, combating money laundering, funding terrorism, patent, protection of intellectual property, higher education and scientific research etc. Seminars, meetings and workshop are periodically organized. Among these events are the following:

- Joint environment seminar between European Union and GCC, held in the Sultanate of Oman on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011, which resulted in the visit of the officials of GCC States environment bodies to European Union on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
- Workshop on commerce and investment, held in Brussels, in October 2012.
- Workshop on electricity and water, held in Brussels, in November 2012.
- A lecture titled " European Union establishments and process of decision-making following execution of the Treaty of Lisbon" , held at the headquarters of the Secretariat General, in November 2012, in coordination with the Institute of International Affairs in Rome.
- Workshop on cooperation in research and innovation, held in Brussels, in December 2012.
- Establishment of European Union and GCC network for clean energy.
- Striving to sign Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurostat and the GCC in statistical field.
- Accession of a number of GCC Secretariat General's affiliates to the program of diplomatic sccondment in the European External Relationships Directorate, in April 2012, February 2013 and March 2014.

In the economic field, economic dialogue is held between the two sides periodically. The last round of the economic dialogue, the 4<sup>th</sup> in the series, was held in Brussels on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013. This dialogue gathered together experts and specialists from both sides to discuss topics of common interest. In addition, periodical meetings were held between governors of monetary

agencies and central banks in the GCC States and their counterparts in European Union. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was held in January 2012 in Abu Dhabi. Also, a workshop on combating money laundering and terror funding is also held periodically. The 7<sup>th</sup> workshop was held in November 2011 in Poland.

The Joint Cooperation Committee between the GCC and European Union held the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting in April 2014 at the GCC Secretariat General. The meeting discussed developments in GCC and European Union, as well as the progress in areas of cooperation within the Framework of Joint Cooperation Agreement between the GCC and European Union and other areas of cooperation, including existing activities such as trade relations and facilitation of business. In addition, coordination is being made to hold the following:

- 5<sup>th</sup> economic dialogue in May 2014 at the headquarters of the GCC Secretariat General.
- A joint seminar between the GCC and European Union in the field of food security, health of animals, and importation of food and live animals, during the month of June 2014, at the headquarters of the Secretariat General.
- Civil aviation dialogue, during the month of June 2014, in Brussels.

## **(b) Trade Negotiations**

Trade and economic interests of both sides require joint action to enhance their mutual relations. The GCC States possess vast oil reserves, which is crucial for the EU and the entire world. In addition, the GCC States are developing countries that are in dire need of technology, experiences, and various industrial products of the EU; a situation that requires both sides to increase trade between them and eliminate all trade barriers.

Therefore, Article (11) of the EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement (June 1988) provides that the objective is to encourage, develop and diversify trade between the two contracting parties to the highest possible level, and that the two sides will initiate negotiations leading to an agreement on expanding trade according to the provisions of the Joint Declaration attached to that Agreement, and that, pending the conclusion of such trade agreement, the two contracting parties would implement the MFN principle. The Joint Declaration clarified that the objective of the trade agreement was to expand

trade through taking appropriate measures for improving access of the products of either party to the other party's markets and liberate bilateral trade.

Having signed the Cooperation Agreement, trade negotiations took a track that was independent from the other areas of cooperation. The political decision by the Joint Council indicated that the objective of those negotiations was to conclude an FTA agreement. Negotiations were initiated in 1991, but were not conducted in a smooth manner due to certain difficulties existed then. Following the establishment of the GCC Customs Union and unification of tariff for the GCC States, the negotiations were intensified and many rounds of talks conducted in which many topics were finalized and some points remained in need of more discussion.

However in 2008, due to the absence of any progress in the negotiations, and the European side maintaining their previous positions, the GCC suspended negotiations, but approved the European demand to continue consultations between the two parties, until a common ground for resuming negotiations is reached.

### **III. The People's Republic of China (PRC)**

Within the framework of the meetings held between the two sides during the UN General Assembly (New York), a meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2001 between a GCC delegation headed by H.E. Sheikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al-Khalifah, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, President of the session of the GCC Ministerial Council, and a delegation of PRC headed by H.E. the Chinese Foreign Minister. During that meeting, the two sides discussed a number of topics of mutual interest, affirmed the deep relations between them, the need to develop such relations, and increase trade and investment between them. In this connection, the Ministerial Council (89<sup>th</sup> session, December 2003) agreed to launch FTA negotiations between the GCC States and P.R.C.

At the end of the visit made to PRC by the GCC Ministers of Finance and GCC the Secretary General on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004, the two sides signed a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation that provided for initiating FTA negotiations.

The first round of negotiations was launched at the headquarter of the GCC Secretariat General on 23-24 April 2005, then followed by other rounds of negotiations and technical meetings. The last round was held in July 2009.

#### **IV. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

The GCC Ministerial Council (91<sup>st</sup> session, June 2004) agreed to consider the possibility of concluding a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the GCC States and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and FTA negotiations. The Framework Agreement was signed in Islamabad in August 2004.

So far two rounds of negotiation between the GCC States and Islamic Republic of Pakistan have been held to establish a free trade area. In these rounds of negotiations a number of topics related to this agreement have been finalized. The two sides look forward to concluding and signing this agreement at earliest possible time.

#### **V. The Republic of India**

The GCC Ministerial Council (89<sup>th</sup> session, December 2004) agreed to launch the FTA negotiations between the GCC and the Republic of India. In August 2004, the two parties signed a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between them that included their approval of initiating the FTA negotiations.

Two rounds of negotiations have been held between the GCC States and Republic of India, in which many topics related to this agreement were discussed.

#### **VI. Republic of Turkey**

The GCC Ministerial Council (91<sup>st</sup> session, June 2004) agreed to conclude a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the GCC States and the Republic of Turkey in preparation for initiating FTA negotiations.

The Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the GCC States and Turkey was signed in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2005, then followed by the FTA negotiations. In this connection, so far four rounds of negotiations have been held between the two sides, in which topics related to this agreement were discussed.

## **VII. MERCOSUR Countries**

The GCC Ministerial Council (89<sup>th</sup> session, December 2003) decided to authorize the GCC Coordinator General of Negotiations to make contacts with the MERCOSUR countries with a view to launching an economic dialogue with the group and developing a mechanism for this dialogue through a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation. The Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the GCC States and the MERCOSUR group was signed at Brasilia on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005, on the sidelines of the meetings of the Arab-South American Summit.

Negotiations to conclude an agreement establishing a free trade zone between the GCC and the MERCOSUR began at a meeting between experts from both sides held at the headquarters of the Secretariat on 9-10 October 2006. Other meetings have been held and some of the issues concerning the FTA accomplished.

## **VIII. EFTA Countries**

In a meeting held between officials from the GCC Secretariat General and the EFTA Secretariat, the EFTA countries i.e., Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, expressed their interest to develop a declaration of principles for cooperation between the GCC and EFTA. The GCC Ministerial Council (70<sup>th</sup> session, March 1999) agreed to initiate negotiations on the aforementioned declaration of principles. The GCC Ministerial Council approved the final draft of the Declaration at the 72<sup>nd</sup> session, September 1999.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2000, the GCC States and the EFTA countries signed the Document of Joint Cooperation that provides for establishing a Joint Cooperation Committee. The GCC Supreme Council approved that Document at the 21<sup>st</sup> session, (Manama, December 2000).

The Joint Cooperation Committee held two meetings wherein it examined the areas of cooperation set out in the Declaration of Principles and the means of implementation. In February 2006, experts from both sides held a meeting at the headquarters of the GCC Secretariat General and discussed the mechanism for initiating FTA negotiations. The FTA negotiations commenced with a meeting of experts from both sides that was held in Geneva in June 2006. The two sides have also held other rounds and

technical meetings thereafter.

The two parties signed a Free Trade Agreement in Hamar, Norway in June 2009.

## **IX. Japan**

The GCC Ministerial Council (11<sup>th</sup> session, June 1984) approved the principle of initiating direct negotiations between the GCC and other countries and international economic groupings. Japan was one of the countries with which the GCC States wanted to develop relations. The first round of exploratory talks was organized in Tokyo, 1987, to be followed by other rounds, of which the fourth was organized in Riyadh, January 1995. During these rounds, various areas of cooperation were discussed; these included investment, trade, technology transfer, training, energy and standards. These topics were discussed in general without proposing specific recommendations. However, pursuant to the desire of the GCC States, the Japanese side agreed, in principle, to form a working team for trade and investment, provided that the two sides should agree later on its composition and program. However, no action has been taken regarding this team.

After the economic dialogue between the two sides ceased for many years, Japan expressed its interest, in February 2006, to develop its economic, trade and investment relations with the GCC States and set up an FTA between the two sides. The two sides agreed to consider the possibility of concluding an FTA agreement, and experts held a meeting to discuss the mechanism to initiate the negotiations leading to such an agreement.

The GCC Japan FTA negotiations began with launching the first round in Tokyo, in September 2006, and then the last round was in Riyadh in March 2009, in which topics related to this agreement were discussed.

## **X. Korea**

Korea submitted its request for entering into negotiations to conclude an FTA with the GCC States. The GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee approved this request on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Three rounds of talks were held. The first round was held in July 2008 and the last was in July 2009, during which a number of topics related to the FTA were agreed.

## **XI. Singapore**

In implementation of the Resolution of the Supreme Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) concerning studying the Agreement signed with initials between the State of Qatar and Singapore, specialists of GCC Member States and Singapore held four rounds of negotiations to reach a free trade agreement between the two sides, which started at the GCC Secretariat General, Riyadh, on 17-18 January 2007, and ended in Singapore on 28 – 31 January 2008. The Free Trade Agreement was signed in Doha, in November 2008.

## **XII. Australia**

The Supreme Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> session (Abu Dhabi, December 2005) authorized the GCC Negotiating Team to study the results of the negotiations between UAE and Australia for establishing a Free Trade Area, and to initiate negotiations with Australia, in the light of this study and feedback from the GCC Member States, with a view to transforming it into a collective agreement between the GCC Member States and Australia.

A preliminary meeting between the GCC Member States and Australia was held at the Headquarter of the Secretariat General in May 2007 to discuss topics related to this agreement. Several rounds of negotiations have been held, which made a significant progress towards reaching an agreement.

## **XIII. New Zealand**

In view of the growing economic relations between the GCC Member States and New Zealand, and the desire of the government of New Zealand to develop such relations, the government of New Zealand requested to enter into FTA negotiations with the GCC. New Zealand's request was welcomed and approved by the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee in June 2006.

This was followed by two preparatory meetings between experts from the GCC and New Zealand held in Riyadh, December 2006 and April 2007, wherein the two sides discussed a mechanism for launching the GCC-New Zealand FTA negotiations and the headlines of the provisions to be incorporated in this agreement. Several rounds of negotiations were held. Negotiations were completed and the agreement was signed with initials on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009. The two parties are to review this agreement and prepare it in its final form in preparation to sign it.



## **XIV. ASEAN**

The GCC Ministerial Council (18<sup>th</sup> session, March 1986) agreed to make initial contacts with some Far East countries, particularly ASEAN and the Republic of Korea for considering the possibility of conducting exploratory contacts with these countries. At the 66<sup>th</sup> session, the GCC Ministerial Council, upon the recommendation of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, agreed to begin economic dialogues with South East Asian Nations.

To that end, the GCC Coordinator General of Negotiations made a visit, in February 2000, to the ASEAN headquarters in Indonesia, where he met the ASEAN Secretary General and discussed cooperation between the GCC and ASEAN.

HE Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General of ASEAN, visited the GCC Secretariat General on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007, in which he met with the HE GCC Secretary General to discuss means of development of relations, and to exchange viewpoints about the issues of mutual interest and to benefit from the GCC experience in joint economic action.

## **XV. Malaysia**

The Government of Malaysia submitted a proposal to conclude a framework agreement for economic cooperation with the GCC States. The Ministerial Council, at the 116<sup>th</sup> session (September 2010) approved signing of the Framework Agreement for Economic, Technical and Investment Cooperation between the GCC States and Malaysia. The Framework Agreement was signed between the two sides in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2011, which stipulated to form a Joint Committee for Economic, Trade, Investment and Technical Cooperation.

The Secretariat General prepared a draft joint action plan between the two sides for the period of 2012-2015, in light of the areas of cooperation contained in the Framework Agreement. It was approved by the GCC side on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012, in preparation of submitting it to the meeting of the Joint Committee.

In addition, the Ministerial Council also agreed to hold an exploratory meeting between the GCC Secretariat General and the Government of Malaysia. This meeting was held at the headquarters of the GCC Secretariat General on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2011, in which the possibility of signing this

agreement was discussed. It was agreed to complete the discussions in this topic once the GCC states complete the study of free trade agreements which they are negotiating with other countries and international economic groupings.

## Chapter (4)

# Strategic Dialogues with Countries and Groupings

### Objectives

Strategic dialogue aims to develop relations between the GCC States and other countries and groupings in an integrated manner. It includes topics and issues of joint interest: political, economic, developmental fields and other areas that the two parties may agree to include in the dialogue.

### Mechanism of Strategic Dialogue

Based on the decision of the Ministerial Council, at the 110<sup>th</sup> session, on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009, directing the Secretariat General to prepare a vision and on the extent of benefit of strategic dialogues between the GCC States and other countries and economic groupings, as well as on the level of representation in joint meetings, the Secretariat General prepared a vision of the mechanism of strategic dialogue with other countries and economic groupings, as under: Whenever a request is submitted by any country or economic grouping for a strategic dialogue with the GCC, the request is circulated to the Member States. At the same time an initial assessment of relations with the concerned party is prepared to know the feasibility of holding strategic dialogue and to draft primary goals paper, which is then circulated to the Member States. In light of the opinions of the Member States, the Secretariat General prepares an integrated assessment of the proposed dialogue, which is circulated to get final remarks, in preparation of its submission to the Ministerial Council to take suitable decision.

After the Ministerial Council's approval of holding strategic dialogue with a country or regional grouping, the concerned party is communicated about the decision and coordinated concerning specifying a date for holding the dialogue. A memorandum of understanding is also prepared which specifies the objectives and mechanism of the dialogue. The MoU also includes opinions of the Member States concerning the draft memo and proposed topics. The MoU is discussed at a joint meeting in order to agree on a format. After specifying the date of a strategic dialogue, a meeting among

the representatives of the Member States is held to agree on issues and to coordinate positions. This is followed by a joint preparatory meeting of senior officials of the two parties in preparation in the joint ministerial meeting for strategic dialogue.

## **Paths of Strategic Dialogue**

The GCC States have started conducting strategic dialogues with a number of countries and regional groupings. Preparations are also made to hold other dialogues. The strategic dialogues started in 2008 with the Republic of Turkey, followed by a similar request for dialogue submitted by the People's Republic of China and other countries and regional groupings. Given below is a brief account of these dialogues:

### **I.Strategic Dialogue with Republic of Turkey**

The first Joint Ministerial Meeting for strategic dialogue between the GCC and Republic of Turkey was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 in Jeddah. In this meeting a MoU was signed to hold a strategic dialogue and to devise mechanisms of dialogue with the aim of developing relations between the two parties in all fields. The MoU was signed on behalf of the GCC by HE Shaikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Head of the Ministerial Council session, and HE Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al Attiyah, the GCC Secretary General. From the Turkish side the MoU was signed by HE Ali Babajan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The MoU includes an annual Joint Ministerial and a meeting of senior officials for preparation for the Joint Ministerial meeting. The second Joint Ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between the GCC and Republic of Turkey was held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009 in the city of Istanbul. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010 the first meeting of the Joint Committee of Economic Cooperation was held between the two parties at the headquarters of the Secretariat General in Riyadh. The 3<sup>rd</sup> joint Ministerial meeting held in the State of Kuwait on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010 approved the Joint Action Plan of Cooperation for the years 2011 and 2012, which included areas of trade, investment , energy, transport, agriculture, food security, culture, media, health and education.

The Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011 in Ankara, reviewed the results arrived at by the

subcommittees in the fields of trade, investment , energy, tourism, health, water and electricity, environment, agriculture and food security and recommended their adoption and formation a sub joint committee concerned with economic, financial and monetary issues.

As for the 4<sup>th</sup> joint Ministerial meeting for strategic dialogue between the GCC States and Republic of Turkey, it was held in Istanbul on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2012. It adopted the recommendations made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation. It also approved the recommendations made by the joint meetings of the senior officials, held on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012, pertaining to results of the joint working group of culture and joint working group of education, in addition to approving the results and recommendations of the joint subcommittee of transport.

## **II. Strategic Dialogue with ASEAN Countries**

The First Joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and ASEAN was held in the city of Manama in May 2009, in which a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between the two Secretariats was signed on the sidelines of the meeting. The Second Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC States and ASEAN countries was held on 31<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010 in Singapore. The meeting approved action the plan that included economic and cultural fields. In implementation of the plan six specialized working groups were formed in the fields of economy, trade, agricultural investment and food security, education, tourism, energy, culture and media.

The ambassadors of the GCC States accredited in Jakarta have been accredited with the Secretariat General of ASEAN in accordance with what was agreed upon in the Second Joint Ministerial meeting of the GCC States and ASEAN held in Singapore, June 2010. As for as the accreditation of the Ambassadors of ASEAN in Riyadh with the GCC, the Secretariat General has created a mechanism for accreditation which has been agreed upon by the GCC Member States.

## **III. Strategic Dialogue with the People's Republic of China**

The First Joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and People's Republic of China was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in Beijing at

the troika level which includes from the GCC sides both presidencies; current and coming and the Secretariat General. A Memorandum of Understanding concerning strategic dialogue between the GCC States and Peoples Republic of China has been signed which includes cooperation in various fields, the most prominent among them is consultation about political issues and regional and international issues of joint interest, and commercial, investment, energy, culture, education and scientific research, environment and health fields.

The two sides, at the Second Joint Ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 agreed to develop mechanisms of consultation, coordination and cooperation in all fields and to set work mechanisms and specific time schedule for their implementation. In this context, the GCC side has prepared two plans for joint action:

- Joint Action Plan for Economic, Commercial, Investment and Technical Cooperation for the years 2012-2015. This plan was approved at the first meeting of the Joint Committee for Economic, Commercial, Investment and Technical Cooperation, held in March 2012.
- Joint Action Plan for Strategic Dialogue, 2013-2016, which was approved at the Third Joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue, held in January 2014, in Beijing.

#### **IV. Strategic Dialogue with Russia**

The First Joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and Russia, was held in Abu Dhabi on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011. In this meeting a Memorandum of Understanding governing the mechanisms of strategic dialogue was signed between the two sides. It includes the following:

- Strategic dialogue and political coordination.
- Economic, commercial and investment cooperation.
- Energy
- Education, scientific research, environment and health.

The ministers authorized the officials from both sides to formulate a joint action plan for the years 2013-2015 that includes cooperation and consultation in political areas and regional and international areas of mutual interest and commercial, investment, tourism, sustainable energy, environment, health, culture, sports, education and scientific research fields.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> strategic dialogue between the GCC States and Russia was held in Kuwait on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

## **V. Strategic Dialogue with Australia**

A Memorandum of Understanding for Strategic Dialogue between the GCC States and Australia was signed at the 1<sup>st</sup> Joint Ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue, held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 in Abu Dhabi. At the said meeting topics of dialogue were agreed upon, the most prominent of them were as under: regional and international issues, cooperation in commerce, economy, energy, environment and education.

To achieve the goals of strategic dialogue between the two sides, the Secretariat General prepared a draft action plan for strategic dialogue between the GCC and Australia for the years 2012-2015 in light of areas of cooperation contained in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two sides. All the areas of cooperation contained in the action plan have been adopted at the meetings of Joint Committee of Senior Officials between the GCC States and Australia, held on June 13, 2012. The Joint Plan have been approved and entered into force.

## **VI. Strategic Dialogue with Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

A Memorandum of Understanding for Strategic Dialogue was signed at the 1<sup>st</sup> joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

The Secretariat General prepared draft Joint Action Plan of Strategic Dialogue between the GCC and Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the years 2012-2015, in light of areas of cooperation contained in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in March 2011 and the Framework Agreement of Economic Cooperation reached in August 2004 between the two sides. The draft Joint Action Plan was approved at a GCC coordinative meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The Plan will be submitted to the Joint Meeting of Senior Officials of both sides, in preparation of its adoption at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Joint Ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

## **VII. Strategic Dialogue with Japan**

A Memorandum of Cooperation and Strategic Dialogue was signed at the headquarters of the Saudi Foreign Ministry in Riyadh in January 2012.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the GCC by His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah Al-Saud, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. HE Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, the Secretary General of the GCC, also participated in signing, and from the Japanese side H.E. Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The Memorandum of Cooperation and Strategic Dialogue aims to strengthen relations between the GCC and Japan in political, economic, commercial, investment, energy, environment, health, culture, education and scientific research areas. According to this Memorandum, regular meetings are to be held between The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the GCC States and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Likewise, meetings on the level of senior officials from both sides will be held to specify areas of joint cooperation, and joint working groups specialized in the areas contained in the Memorandum of Cooperation and Strategic Dialogue will be formed. The Secretariat General has prepared a draft joint action plan of strategic dialogue between the GCC States and Japan for the period 2012-2015, in light of areas of cooperation contained in the Memorandum signed between the two sides.

A joint meeting of senior officials was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 at the headquarters of the Secretariat General, in which the outlines of the joint action plan were agreed upon for the period 2012-2015. The two sides have agreed on the joint action plan in its final form and it has come into force.

### **VIII. Strategic Dialogue with the United Kingdom**

The first meeting of strategic dialogue between the GCC and the United Kingdom was held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2010 in London. The two sides agreed in principle on the majority of topics listed in the action plan. The ministerial meeting of strategic dialogue between the two sides was held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012 in New York. It has been decided to hold the next joint ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue in October 2014.

### **IX. Strategic Dialogue with Malaysia**

The Framework Agreement on Economic, Commercial, Investment and technical cooperation between the GCC States and Malaysia was signed in Abu Dhabi in January 2014. The Framework Agreement contained a



provision to form a joint committee for economic, commercial, investment and technical cooperation between the GCC States and Malaysia.

The Secretariat General has prepared a draft joint action plan between the two sides for the period 2012-2015 in light of areas of cooperation contained in the Framework Agreement. The draft plan was approved by the GCC side at a coordinative meeting of the GCC States held on 12th June 2012, in preparation of submitting it to the meeting of the Joint Committee for Economic, Commercial, Investment and Technical cooperation between the GCC States and Malaysia.

## **X. Strategic Dialogue with the United States of America**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the GCC States and the US Secretary of State held a meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 to launch the Strategic Cooperation Forum of the GCC and United States, which aims to lay down an official framework for strategic cooperation in political, military, security and economic issues. Among the decisions of the ministerial meeting are the following: the establishment of strategic Cooperation Forum between the GCC and United States, holding regular ministerial meetings between the two sides, in addition to meetings of the senior officials and experts from both sides, to lay down an official framework for strategic cooperation in all the fields of mutual interest, and the formation of joint committees for economic, political, security and military cooperation.

It has been recommended to form joint committees and working groups within the framework of Strategic Cooperation Forum between the two sides in the security field, such as combatting terrorism, border monitoring, combatting piracy and military, political, economic areas, regional challenges such as general health, natural resources management, scientific and technological research, aid in human and environment disasters.

The Second Ministerial meeting of the strategic cooperation was held in September 2012 in New York on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly. In the meeting, the Framework Agreement of Commercial, Economic, Investment and Technical cooperation between the GCC and the United States of America was signed.

In this context, the GCC-American Dialogue Forum on Trade and

Investment was held in June 2013, in which the topics of promoting trade exchange and GCC-American cooperation within the framework of World Trade Organization, customs, enhancing abilities in the field of intellectual property and patents, were discussed. It has been decided to hold the next Forum in Washington on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

## **XI. Strategic Dialogue with Peru**

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASPA summit held in Lima, Peru on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012, the Framework Agreement for Economic, Commercial, Investment and Technical Cooperation between the GCC and Peru was signed.

The most important points in this Agreement are the following: Encouraging economic, commercial, investment and technical cooperation in various fields, encouraging exchange of information and technical expertise in those fields, and that both sides shall find method and means to expand and ease their commercial relations, including negotiation to conclude a free trade agreement, preparation of suitable environment for expansion of commercial exchange through a number of mechanisms. The Agreement also includes making arrangements to encourage capital flow between them, and establishing joint investment projects, facilitating investment of establishments and companies, scientific and technical cooperation in various economic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, tourism and energy fields, encouraging exchange of visits of economic and commercial representatives, and delegates, as well as technical missions. It also includes organizing temporary exhibitions and providing facilities and assistance necessary to achieve that .

## **XII. Azerbaijan**

The Ministerial Council of the GCC States, at the 120<sup>th</sup> session, held in September 2011, decided to authorize the GCC Secretary General to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the GCC Secretariat General and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan. The Memorandum of Understanding was approved at the meeting of senior officials of the ministries of foreign affairs in the Member States on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011, and it was adopted by the Ministerial Council. The Memorandum of Understanding between the GCC Secretariat General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan was signed on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

This MoU between the two sides has been signed out of desire of both sides in strengthening and developing friendly relations and cooperation between them, in a manner that contributes to opening wider areas of cooperation in issues of mutual interest, and out of their recognition of the shared benefits gained from establishing this dialogue with the aim of expanding cooperation and consultation in all the fields, through regular consultations among them. Meetings are to be held once or more annually on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly or at any place agreed upon, presided over by the GCC Secretary General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In addition, meetings of the working groups or experts from both sides are also held to discuss the topics agreed upon between the two sides.

### **XIII. Romania**

The economic cooperation conference between Romania and GCC was held in Bucharest in 2010. Romania submitted its request to sign a memorandum of understanding with the GCC. This memorandum will be signed in 2014.

### **XIV. New Zealand**

New Zealand submitted its request to establish a strategic dialogue with the GCC provided that the first step of the dialogue shall include political, security, economic, commercial and cultural topics. The Ministerial Council, at the 124<sup>th</sup> session, held in September 2012 agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand. This memorandum was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

### **XV. Mexico**

Mexico submitted its request to sign a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in all the fields of mutual interest. The memorandum was signed on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

### **XVI. Georgia**

Georgia submitted its request to sign a framework agreement for economic, investment and technical cooperation as a step toward entering into negotiations relating to a free trade agreement with the GCC. Coordination

is still underway to explore fields of cooperation between the two sides.

## **XVII. Ukraine**

Ukraine submitted its request for signing of an agreement on enhancing cooperation with the GCC in areas of mutual interest. The GCC States agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the mechanism of consultations between the GCC Secretariat General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ukraine, through regular consultations between them held once or more annually on the sidelines of UN General Assembly or at any place agreed upon, under the chairmanship of the GCC Secretary General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ukraine to explore areas of cooperation and dialogue, and propose suitable mechanisms for that. Meetings of working groups and experts from both sides are also held to discuss the topics of mutual interest agreed upon.