



The Omani Economic Association Sixth Conference on: **Sustainable Development and Equity; Between Planning and Reality**

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Saturday - Sunday 16 – 17 February 2013

Introduction

From the outset of the oil era in the early seventies, economic planners and developers realised that Oman could overcome its oil dependency by diversifying its sources of income. Other development goals including sustaining economic growth, developing human capital, creating job opportunities, developing the private sector, and achieving a sustainable social and environment friendly path of development are dependent on diversifying sources of income away from oil reliance. All consecutive development plans, including the current five-year development plan (2011-2015), have confirmed the importance of diversifying these sources of income. In addition, Oman's Economic Vision: Oman 2020, re-emphasised the importance of achieving a sustainable development path through economic stability and fiscal balance while calling for fundamental change in the productive structure of the national economy to diversify its productive base and strengthen the role of the private sector and human resource development.

However, the initial reading of main economic indicators shows that, in spite of past development efforts to diversify sources of income, the Omani economy is still dependent on oil sector activities and the economy has not moved away from oil dependence to a more sustainable productive base autonomous from oil sector activities. This may suggest that past development policies, including the five-year development plans and government annual fiscal expansion policies, did not induce the development of non-oil sector activities away from oil extraction activities. In other words, the policies failed to strike a balance between infrastructure development



and provision of basic services on one hand, and the development of a productive sector on the other. Hence, after more than forty years of exploitation of oil resources the following main questions need to be answered:

- Can the economy sustain the current level of economic growth and consumption levels when oil resources decline in the short-run and when they are exhausted in the long-run?
- Why have past policies failed to diversify the sources of income economy away from mineral extraction activities?
- What could explain this chronic dependence on oil sector activities? And can the non-oil economy, such as manufacturing or service sectors, sustain economic growth without oil sector activities?
- What could explain the gap between what has been planned and what has been achieved in the five-year development plans and annual budget plans? What are the main obstacles that faced both, namely development plans and annual budgets?
- Why did government investment from oil income and in human and physical capital (as prescribed and recommended by international experts) not result in achieving a sustainable path of development?
- Did past policies succeed in achieving a sustainable social and environment friendly path of development?

To be able to answer the above questions and to examine past policies, deficiencies and imbalances, in light of limited oil reserves, we must review past development programs and the priorities of government development expenditure on investment and consumption. A critical review is required of past economic, social, and environmental development programs including spending on infrastructure and social services (health, education, electricity and water) as well as government civil development, recurrent expenditure and expenditure on research and development. In addition, investigating problems of accountability, transparency and corporate governance is critical in finding answers to the challenges of becoming a non oil-driven economy. We must also draw and benefit from experiences of other countries that have been able to achieve economic growth and move their economies towards a sustainable path of development.



Based on the above, Omani Economic Association is organising its sixth conference on Saturday and Sunday 16 and 17 February 2013 under the title of "Sustainable Development and Social Justice; Between Planning and Reality". The conference aims to identify the most important challenges facing economic planning in the Sultanate and put forward practical ideas on how to overcome these challenges while at the same time, proposing alternatives available in favour of sustainable development, in particular, a path towards sustainable economic growth.

The specific objectives of the conference are the following:

- Promote and bring about awareness of the concept of sustainable development and social justice to planners, policy makers and the public in general.
- Explore different possible scenarios for future development of the Sultanate.
- Discuss several management methodologies that can bring synergy between development planning and sustainable development.
- Identify indicators to measure progress in achieving economic diversification.
- Discuss and review a national agenda towards sustainable development.
- Examine productive sectors that could contribute to the achievement of a sustainable development path.
- Learn from other countries' experiences and international expertise in achieving sustainable development.



Conference themes:

First: The economic dimension theme

1. Five-year Development Plans goals and achievements.
2. Indicators and trends of sustainability.
3. Economic diversification
 - a) How to achieve diversification? Possibility of focusing on specific productive sectors that can bring about and induce sustainable development.
 - b) How to become a knowledge-based driven economy?
4. The role of government and the private sector in development.
5. The UN system of national accounts for the environment and the economy (SEEA).

Second: The social dimension theme

6. Systematic reform of the education system.
7. Social Security and the role of youth in the community.
8. Good governance and development.

Third: The environmental dimension theme

9. The most important environmental issues affecting development in Oman.
10. Green economy, energy alternatives and conservation.

Proposals: The way of the future and an agenda for national sustainable development.

Participating entities :

- Gulf Economic Association
- GCC secretariate General
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Transarancy International
- World Bank
- Arab Planning Institute - Kuwait
- Regional Universities and organisations



Attendants :

- Elite economists from various GCC countries
- Administrative leaders of Ministries and Government Institutions
- Administrative leaders from within the private sector
- Academics from universities, institutes and research centers
- Experts of international and regional organizations

Particulars of Sponsorship

Benefits to the sponsor:-

Advertisement:

- All advertisements in major newspapers in Oman

Opening ceremony:

- Privilege of a brief addressing to the audience at the conference (for distinguished sponsors only)
- One seat reserved in the front row for the sponsor in the opening ceremony

Prints:

- Name and logo of the sponsor shall appear on all conference prints which include:
- Multi-page brochure to be distributed to VIPS
- Register of visitors' comments
- Invitations addressed to VIPS



Speakers' booklet:

- The distinguished sponsor shall be given two advertising pages in the booklet of conference speakers
- Main and associate sponsors shall both be given an internal advertising page in the booklet of conference speakers

Advertisements inside the venue:

- Main board bearing the logo of sponsors placed behind speakers in the main venue of the conference facing the audience
- Number of advertisements and boards repeatedly placed inside the venue

Advertisements at the venue's entrance:

- Board bearing logos of sponsors at the conference venue entrance
- Placement of logos of sponsors beside the logo of the conference at the registration desk for participants
- Distribution of brochures and printed materials of sponsors to all participants at the conference

Internet site:

- The sponsor will have a link on the Association website under the category selected by it

Honoring ceremony:

- Receive an honoring shield of the Association
- Take part in a memorial photo with other sponsors on the podium



Opportunities of sponsorship

Your sponsorship of the conference shall provide you with various benefits, chief among which is the intensive presence within the sponsorship program which in turn will provide you with a wide range of promotion opportunities.

- Distinguished sponsor:
RO10,000/- (ten thousand Omani Rials)
- Main sponsor:
RO7,500/- (seven thousand, five hundred Omani Rials)
- Associate sponsor :
RO5,000/- (five thousand Omani Rials)

The programme is not final and subject to changes for further information contact :-

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