Guide

The Second Arab Forum for Development and Employment
(Towards Social Protection and Sustainable Development)

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
24-26 February 2014
Under the kind auspices of
the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince
Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz
Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister
Introduction

The Second Arab Forum for Development and Employment (Towards Social Protection and Sustainable Development) is convened amid critical conditions the Arab region goes through, which cast a shadow on the issues of employment and unemployment in general, which had negative reflections on social conditions as they roared remarkably to threaten social peace and stability. In this framework, with a generous hosting of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the kind auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, in light of Saudi chairmanship of the third Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, held in Riyadh in 2013, the Arab Labor Organization in cooperation and coordination with the World Bank and the Saudi Labor ministry decided to hold this Forum to reach an integrated common vision that would balance between the requirements of social protection and achieving sustainable economic development based on a comprehensive information system.

The Forum aims at reaching a full agreement between economic and social partners on strategies that support more job creation and social protection in the Arab region through a development model that focuses on achieving the desired development, and therefore this wide-scale official participation would be crowned with Riyadh Declaration). This Declaration ensures the common understanding to achieve sustainable development that keeps into consideration the comprehensive concept of social protection as a principal element in development.

All parties wish all success to this Forum through enriching its sessions with valuable opinions and suggestions of all participants, i.e., ministers of finance, economy, planning and labor, as well as prominent figures in the fields of education, vocational training, social security institutions, socio-economic councils, union of the chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, a distinguished group of leaders and representatives of relevant Arab, regional and international organizations, as well as intellectual figures, researchers and representatives of successful pioneering experiences in this field. All parties hope that the outcomes of the Forum would meet our expectations in tackling the issues and concerns of Arab citizens and achieve the noble goals of the Arab nation.

Thank you.

Eng. Adel M. Faqih
Minister of Labor
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ahmed M. Luqman
Director General
Arab Labor Organization

Inger Andersen
World Bank Vice President
for MENA region
Reasons and Goals of the Forum

The problem of unemployment is one of the main challenges to the world today, as the existence of a high level of unemployment means the existence of a group of people who suffer major social and economic problems, which are reflected, negatively, on social peace, societal cohesion and its ability to develop and flourish. The Arab region is not an exception in challenging this problem, as unemployment is at the door of almost all the countries in the region. Current political conditions in several Arab countries put immense pressures on economic growth, and therefore these countries' ability to face the problem. As the number of the unemployed increased and unemployment rates soar to dangerous levels, the whole region has certain characteristics that double the problem on the one hand, and increase the need to adopt unconventional frameworks to confront the problem, on the other.

The Arab Labor Organization has gathered pace to support and develop advanced strategies to tackle the challenges of employment and curb unemployment on the national and Arab levels during the current decade. It is worth noting that several conferences and specialized seminars were convened to discuss the problems and challenges, as well as to exchange views and experiences on perfect solution and most successful experiences. This led to raise the issues of employment and curbing unemployment to the highest decision makers, as the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, held in Kuwait in January 2009 adopted Doha Declaration, which was the fruit of the First Arab Forum for Development and Employment (November 2008), and adopted the integrated program to support employment and curb unemployment as well as its affiliated projects; this is further stressed in Sharm El-Sheikh summit in January 2011 and Riyadh Summit in 2013. The Third Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, held in Riyadh in 2013 and chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stressed in its declaration the importance of commitment to achieve the millennium development goals, especially the issues relevant to the unemployment of youth and people with special needs, creation of decent job opportunities, and to enable youth to participate in sustainable development efforts, get their capabilities enhanced, and to make available the supporting environment to enable them through provision of quality education, making available information, advanced training, and integrated health care. This can be achieved through adopting multi-dimensional strategies and policies but within a unified and integrated vision that would accept youth as partners, not just users.

As the practical experiences of development strategies, which were launched based on only economic dimensions, could have been succeeded in some countries in changing its economic form through figures that express growth rates or average per capita income, there are serious economic problems that started to jeopardize social peace in these countries. Several segments of societies suffer from high living costs and escalating poverty as well as the sharp increase of the problems of unemployment, housing, health care and appropriate nutrition. Specialized studies confirmed that the issue of youth unemployment and delay in achieving the sustainable development are the most difficult challenges for states and governments, regardless the availability of required financial resources to deal with the consequences of this problem. The solution must be based on the establishment of an integrated strategy that would put into consideration the social and economic status, and then it would come out with integrated and balanced policies and plans that would guarantee tackling all challenges emerged from the problem to reach a sustainable development that would eradicate unemployment, and so that the society would benefit from the inputs of development in the economic dimension, and duly creating employment opportunities to
secure the social dimension, which is concerned with realizing a decent life for every citizen, based on an appropriate institutional framework to be applied through this strategy.

In this framework, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the kind auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the Arab Labor Organization, in cooperation and coordination with the World Bank and the Saudi Labor Ministry, is holding the Second Arab Forum for Development and Employment (Towards Social Protection and Sustainable Development) in Riyadh, the period from 24 to 26 February 2014.

The main theme of the Forum is to reach a complete understanding between economic and social partners on the general strategies that support both the creation of more job opportunities and social protection in the Arab region through adopting a development model that is based on achieving sustainable development.

Participants in the Forum include ministers of economy, finance, planning, labor and technical education, as well as leading figures in education, social security institutions and vocational training, leaders of the unions of chambers of commerce and industries, trade unions and regional and international organizations, as well as an elite group of regional and international figures of intellectuals, researchers and representatives of successful experiences in this field so as to merge both theory and application.

The Forum shall issue "Riyadh Declaration for Sustainable Development and Employment". The declaration would include the principles of common understanding to achieve the development that would guarantee boosting employment and curbing unemployment and poverty, while setting the aspects of cooperation Arab and international organizations in this domain.

**Objective of the Forum:**

**The general objective:** To agree on a general framework to support development and employment in light of the current variables and the agreement of economic and social players based on a comprehensive and integrated common vision that would balance between social protection and realize sustainable economic development based on a comprehensive information system.

**Secondary objectives:**

- To develop labor market systems to generate more job opportunities to employ the youth, women & graduates and reduce unemployment rates.
- To support programs and policies of social protection and social protection networks to achieve decent work and social peace and more opportunities to programs of development and social reform.
- To review the matching programs between education and training outputs on the one hand, and development needs on the other, while highlighting successful practices.
- To maximize the role for the private sector in supporting education and training institutions, and to develop their programs according to labor market needs.
- To determine regional priorities in developing employment and supporting partnerships with regional and international institutions to enact economic and social resolutions of the Arab development summit regarding employment, especially within the framework of the Arab decade for employment and in light of the ambitions of the Arab citizen.
Tentative Agenda of the Forum

Day One: Monday 24 February 2014

09.00    Registration
20.00    Opening Session
          Group photo for Excellencies the Ministers, chairs of Employers’ & Workers’ Organizations, and honor guests.
21.00    Official dinner in honor of Excellencies the Ministers, heads and members of participating delegates

Day Two: Tuesday 25 February 2014

09.00 : 11.00    First Plenary Session on "Prospects of Employment"
11.00 : 11.30    Coffee Break
11.30 : 13.30    Second Plenary Session on "Balanced development and support of investment climate to generate job opportunities"
13.30 : 15.00    Prayers and Lunch
15.00 : 17.00    Parallel meetings of working groups:

First Working Group: (Employment Hall)
   - Employment support policies and mechanisms
   - Matching education outputs with labor market needs

Second Working Group: (Development Hall)
   - Balanced economic development
   - Investment climate to support generating job opportunities

Third Working Group: (Social protection Hall)
   - Towards comprehensive social protection systems
   - Role of social dialogue in employment policies and programs

17.00 : 18.30    Drafting Committee meeting
19.30    Dinner Banquet
Day Three: Wednesday 26 February 2014

09.00 : 11.00  Third Plenary Session on "Social dialogue and social protection systems to realize sustainable development"

11.00 : 11.30  Coffee Break

11.30 : 13.00  Parallel meetings of working groups:

**First Working Group: (Employment Hall)**
- Employment support policies and mechanisms
- Matching education outputs with labor market needs

**Second Working Group: (Development Hall)**
- Balanced economic development
- Investment climate to support generating job opportunities

**Third Working Group: (Social protection Hall)**
- Towards comprehensive social protection systems
- Role of social dialogue in employment policies and programs

13.30 : 15.00  Prayers and Lunch

15.00 : 16.00  Drafting Committee meeting

16.30 : 18.00  Fourth Plenary Session: Reviewing the outcomes of the working groups and the Drafting Committee

18.30 : 19.30  Closing Session
Results of Arab development programs demonstrate that although some of them succeeded in realizing a level of overall economic growth, they have not contributed sufficiently in facing the problems of poverty and unemployment, which hinder fair economic growth; there have not been enough and adequate job opportunities for the unemployed, which increased the severity of poverty.

The Arab region witness huge development challenges as human development indicators retreat in several countries in the region: life expectancy averages decrease, compared to other world regions, opportunities of schooling period decline and all types and forms of poverty levels soar. In the shade of all these challenges, focusing on economic development as a solution for all the problems is not an applicable hypothesis due to all these conditions. This dictates the reconsideration of existing policies and strategies to open the door for a more fair and humanitarian justice.

Social protection programs in the region face different challenges including low human development levels, high poverty rates, decrease of national spending on education and health, high dependency rates, low per capita income, soaring unemployment, fragility in a huge percentage of jobs, increasing need to overcome consequences of global financial and economic crises and their reflections on the Poor, challenging consequences of the economic reform programs and the need for an economic restructuring on the Arab level. All this leads to the increase of the burdens of social protection measures.

On the other hand, social protection is an opportunity for the consequences of what it can achieve due to the utilization of reserves of social security programs, achieving social justice, facing emergency economic crises, alleviating high unemployment, increasing success rates of poverty reduction programs by developing the ability to earn, increasing the opportunities of employment of women, and fighting marginalization of people with special needs. In addition, social protection is a basic element in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of small and micro enterprises.
Dr. Raafat Radwan  
The Arab Republic of Egypt

- Secretary General of the Arab Federation for Information Technology, consultant expert in joint Arab labor action institutions and international institutions, visiting professor at the American University in Cairo, former chairman of the Center of Information and Decision Support in the Egyptian cabinet,
- Expert and consultant of administrative, institutional and information development and information technology employment in accelerating development,
- A former member of the Shoura Council, a former member of the board of directors of the Social Fund for Development, a former member in the Board of Trustees in the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, a representative of Egypt at the UN-ICT Taskforce, a representative of Egypt in G8-Digital Opportunity Taskforce : DOTForce,
- Decorated with the Order of Science and Arts, First Class, for his contributions in developing information technology in Egypt (1999),
- Author of 15 books in different management fields, author of more than 1000 articles and studies in public and specialized journals and magazines, and a participant in more than 300 conferences,
- Ph.D. holder in management from Claremont Graduate University, USA,
- Approved expert at the Arab Labor Organization
Abstract of the Concept Paper on:
'Creating job opportunities and Social Protection: Exploring Opportunities and Barriers'
Inger Andersen

Work is essential to ensure a decent life for individuals; it secures means of livelihood and dignity, and it is of equal importance. Employment is also essential for community welfare and economic development. However, prevailing regulations and incentives in the labor market in the Middle East and North Africa led to ineffective and unfair outcomes on the individual and collective levels, in addition to inefficiency of the old social safety networks that do not participate in improving the lives of the Poor in the Middle East and North Africa region, and their ability to cope, and thus making it difficult to the vulnerable classes to break out of the poverty circle and achieve high levels of human capital. This paper investigates the most pressing barriers of exclusion, which produced unemployment, and also discusses risks associated with the weakness of social security systems and mechanisms of safety networks. The paper concludes with recommendations to the region's countries to overcome these barriers.
• Ms. Andersen is World Bank Vice President for Middle East and North Africa region, and she is responsible for the Bank strategy and operations in the whole region. Before her assignment, she worked as the Deputy for Sustainable Development where she led the Bank’s efforts with the developing countries to provide sector leadership in agriculture, water, environment, climate change, and infrastructure sectors.

• Ms. Andersen joined the World Bank in 1999 in a range of capacities in the sustainable development sectors, including as Sector Manager and Director in Africa and as Director in the Middle East and North Africa. Before joining the World Bank, Ms. Andersen has worked in the United Nations for 12 years, including the Regional Bureau of the Arab States and in the UNDP Drought and Desertification Office.

• Ms. Andersen’s country experience is extensive, including five years in Sudan, where she also became a student of Arabic. Ms. Andersen received her Master’s Degree in Development Economics and African Politics from the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Policies and Mechanisms of supporting employment and developing human resources'
Dr. Ali Hamdi, Tunisia

The most significant methodological elements and assumptions

1. Preliminary introduction to highlight challenges of unemployment in its different dimensions and the urgent need to win the bet of employment in light of the public interactions in most Arab countries,
2. A reminder of the approved employment policies and mechanisms and highlighting their limited impact on society and on curbing unemployment,
3. The need to adopt a renewed approach to development policies that should be linked to centrality of local development and employment. In this connection, the following points shall be discussed:
   - Reviewing social and economic development policies by adopting fair development models that would balance between different regions and categories,
   - Adopting human resources policies that qualify individuals to labor market needs in light of the needs of different economic sectors in terms of potentials and skills, and promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship,
   - Adopting active employment policies that would be complementary to the general economic policies through rationalization of employment programs and mechanisms, while increasing their performance,
   - The need for more governance in the labor market through developing tasks and interventions of employment agencies, and developing information systems on the labor market,
   - Adopting new and creative mechanisms that boost employment based on foreign experiences, such as:
     - Project Launch Funds,
     - Loan Funds to find new fields to launch projects.
   - Supporting micro loans
   - Regulating and developing the informal sector and gradually transforming it to the formal sector, while maintaining its dynamics,
   - Adopting cultural policies that establish the culture of work and the culture of the institution,
4. Suggestions and recommendations.
Dr. Ali Hamdi
Tunisia

Academic record:

- Ph.D. in Sociology (Paris VII), with general grade 'Very Good", 1981.
- Professor of Development Sociology, Algerian University 1982-1986.
- Researcher at the National Center of Economic and Social Researches in Paris from 1987 to 1990.
- Back to Tunisia and held several posts in the field of human resources.
- Professor of the Higher Institute of Employment Sciences and Social Studies (Tunisia 1991 – 1992)
- Joined the ministry of vocational training and employment since 1991 and held several capacities.
- Director General of promoting vocational training and employment.
- Director General of studies, planning and supervision.
- Director General of the National Agency for independent work and employment, a public body affiliated to the ministry.
- He has several published studies and researches.
- An approved expert at the Arab labor Organization.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Matching Education Outputs with labor Market Needs'
Dr. Dina Abu Ghaida

Equipping the labor force with relevant labor skills is a prime priority and a major challenge to several economies all over the world. The Middle East and North Africa region has a large proportion of unexploited human resources. Meanwhile, more than a third of employers in MENA region describe lack of skills as a major barrier to business operations and development of companies.

Though MENA countries seek to expand rapidly in the access of education, especially higher education, quality of education is still low according to international standards, although the big numbers of students enrolled in schools. In addition, the public sector is still the major client of education and training in the region, and therefore it constitutes the main element of students' options and expectations. There is a need to put in place systems, institutions and policies that aim at the support of developing the appropriately qualified labor power. In several cases, there are policy options that have been tried and tested so that policy makers would choose from them what is appropriate for each country.
Dr. Dina Abu Ghaida

- Dina Abu Ghaida is a Ph.D. holder in economics. She worked in the World Bank since 2000, especially in Education Sector. She worked on analytical reports and projects in several countries in Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and more recently in the Middle East.
- Her work focused on education funding, including the review of spending on education in several countries, and the funding granted to each student in the economies in transition. In recent years, she worked on analytical reports and projects on the transition from education to work. She was the leader of the team working on the regional report on labor development in MENA region. She has a Bachelor of Science from Harvard University, the Masters degree in Arab studies and she is a Ph.D. holder in economics from Georgetown University.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Financial Policies and Provision Job Opportunities in MENA Region'
Mr. Nadir Mohammed

This paper discusses the domestic macro economy policies in regard of development and job opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa region. The paper investigates the main features of these policies and linking them to creation of job opportunities, as well as the limits of these policies regarding the provision of job opportunities in the region.
Mr. Nadir Mohammed
GCC Regional Director for M ENA region at the World Bank

- Nadir Mohammed, a Sudanese national, is the Gulf Cooperation Council countries regional manager for Middle East and North Africa region at the World Bank. Prior to this, Mr. Mohammed held several positions at the World Bank, including the Economic Adviser in poverty fighting and economic management, Strategies and Operations Director, and Senior Economist in several regional offices of the World Bank.

- Mr. Mohammed is equipped with more than 20 years of experience in different fields of economic development in the government sector, academic milieu, financial development institutions and multilateral institutions.

- This includes working with the office of the Kuwaiti prime minister, the Sudanese National Council for Research, Khartoum University in the Sudan, Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, Cambridge University (UK), and Oxford University (UK). His has more than 18 years of experience in the field of research, economic policies, designing and formulating strategies, economic work, development loans operations, as well as consultation in the domain of policies and dialogue in three multilateral development banks.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Investment Climate Supportive of Creating Job Opportunities'
Mr. Peter Mousley

This short paper on investment climate and job opportunities is based on the analysis of recent main reports prepared by the World Bank, in addition to the academic works and data extracted from the database of the World Bank survey on institutions and business activities. This paper offers a general outlook on basic issues in investment climate and the role these elements play in regulating projects, the life cycle of companies and the demand on labor. In addition, the paper shed the light on some current recommendations derived from the analysis of the main reports in regard of priorities of policies that should be tackled in the Middle East and North Africa region, if governments decide to help in the increase of the private sector’s participation in generating new job opportunities. This includes the significance of promoting equal completion opportunities for companies, enhancing legal reforms and policies required for the climate of investment that have been undertaken in the region, while giving more attention to the issue of accountability and its fair implementation, as well as the complementary initiatives to support companies, such as 'Ghazal', which create the biggest bulk of new and sustainable job opportunities.
Peter Mousley is a lead PSD specialist in the World Bank. Currently, he lives in Beirut, Lebanon, and he is responsible for funding and private sector initiatives that are supported by the World Bank in the region. Previously, he worked in Africa and Latin America in the field of investment climate, Small and medium enterprises, privatization, partnership between the public and private sectors, investment operations and consultations. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Victoria in Canada and completed post graduate studies in the United Kingdom, at the London School of Economics.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Social Safety Network in MENA Region'
Mr. Yasse El Gammal

Although the countries of the Middle East and North Africa region have achieved significant progress in economic growth and development, many of them still face an increasing percentage of poverty rates, economic, social and geographic difference, social exclusion of certain groups, and differences in the outcomes of human development that commensurate with their economic development. As a contribution to the Second Arab Forum for Development and Employment, this paper offers an overview of the status of the social safety network systems in the region, and the design features and their effectiveness in poverty reduction and human development.

This paper aims at contributing on the ongoing debate and discussions on recent economic and social transformations, the role of the well-designed safety network in promoting social integration, means of livelihoods, and means to rapidly overcome the problems. This paper highlights an unparalleled opportunity for the Middle East and North Africa region in order to improve the systems the social safety network, and emphasizing the increasing international consensus on the significant role that can be played by the well-designed social safety network in elimination of poverty and promoting common prosperity in the region.
Yasser El Gammal joined the World Bank in 1996. He worked in the Middle East and North Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and Africa regions on human development issues while leading key operations in social protection. His current task is social protection and leading labor sector in the human development group in the Middle East region.

In the past, he worked as a member in the World Bank social safety network (SSN), and Global Experts Team (GET). He worked extensively on social protection and labor issues in the past 17 years in more than 15 countries. Prior to joining the World Bank, Mr. El Gammal worked with an international non-governmental organization, and the Social Development Fund in Egypt. He has his masters degree in national development and project design in Bradford University, UK.
Abstract of the working paper on:
'Rerole of Social Dialogue in Employment Policies and Programs'
Dr. Mazen Ouda, Jordan

Social dialogue is one of the issues that have become more popular for most countries and decision makers. The significance of social dialogue stems from its ability to achieve economic and social stability, and realize social peace. Reviewing the literature and charter of the International Labor Organization and the Arab Labor Organization, one finds that they stress that social dialogue could be one of the best mechanisms that may provide effective solutions for the challenges that most world countries face, especially the challenges that are relevant to the issues of employment and unemployment, stability of labor relations, investment, help in achieving social peace and harmony, which in turn help in achieving political stability for any of these countries. However, one should put into consideration that social dialogue should not be employed only at times of crises but at times of economic prosperity in order to disseminate revenues of development on all social partners.

It has become clear that achieving sustainable development is closely associated with democracy and how far progress has been achieved in this path. Such an equation cannot be achieved without establishing permanent and effective social dialogue with the participation of most social partners (government, employers, workers and civil society institutions) based on recognized democratic and representation principles. In addition, the government commitment to provide the appropriate climate and legal guarantees to the continuity of this dialogue is of vital importance to guarantee its success. This contributes in the constructive participation in economic and social decision making, and provision of consultancy to the government in most relevant issues in a cooperative manner, which participates in the stability of economic and social condition.

The success of social dialogue in achieving its above-mentioned objectives needs a number of prerequisites, atop of them are the adoption of international and Arab agreements regulating social dialogue, availability of higher political will to legally establish social dialogue institutions and erecting workers' and employers' organizations based on democratic, representation and credibility criteria, in addition to a strong management.

It is almost certain that social dialogue plays a key role in achieving economic development and reduction of the challenges that face the economies of most countries, especially at crisis time. It has been proved that countries with weak social dialogue traditions are the most vulnerable countries to economic and social problems. No one denies the significance of the social dialogue in creating job opportunities and provision of decent work for workers, as the issue of making economic and social policies have not been the responsibility of governments solely, but rather the responsibility of social partners. Without social dialogue that enables partners to express their views freely, it would be difficult to reach practical solution for the problems that face our countries.
Mr. Mazen Ouda Nasser  
Jordan

- Born in 1959, he has a Masters degree from the Jordanian University in economics.
- He is currently the Secretary General of the Jordanian Economic and Social Council since 2011.
- He worked as of secretary general of the labor ministry from 2009 to 2011.
- The national coordinator for the social dialogue project with the Arab labor Organization the period from 2004 to 2009.
- He is currently a member of an Arab teamwork tasked with setting the internal system of the Arab union of economic and social councils, copying the European model.
- He has several researches, papers and studies in the fields of labor market, social dialogue and employment, including:
  - Role of social dialogue in employment policies and programs
  - Supply and demand in the Jordanian labor market
  - Self-employment
  - Career woman in Qualified Industrial Zones
  - Unemployment in the Arab world
  - Globalization and challenges of union movement
  - Role of economic and social councils in supporting social dialogue
  - Role of media in promoting the declaration of principles for social dialogue
- He works as a consultant for several relevant Arab and international organizations
- An approved expert at the Arab labor Organization.
An Outlook on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Geography:
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula. The Kingdom consists of narrow plains on the coast of the Red Sea (Tihama Plain), and then eastward there are mountain ranges stretching along the country (Hijaz and Asir mountains that their heights exceed 2000 meters), then deserts and rocky plateaus in the middle, representing 90% of the total space, as the biggest desert is Al-Nofouz desert to the north and Al-Rub' al Khali desert in the South. To the east, and along the Arabian Gulf, vast coastal plains extend.

Location:
Saudi Arabia lies in the far South West of the continent of Asia. To the West, the Kingdom borders the Red Sea and to the East it borders the Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. To the North, the Kingdom borders Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan, and to the South it borders Yemen and Oman.

Area:
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies 80% of the Arabian Peninsula, with an area of more than 2,250,000 square meters.

Population:
The population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is 27,173 millions.

Population Density:
7.9 person per square kilometer.

Capital:
Riyadh (4.700 million people).

Important Cities:
Jeddah, Mecca

Language:
Arabic (official)

Currency:
Saudi Riyal

Climate:
The climate of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia varies from region to region, due to the difference in geography. The Kingdom climate is generally marked by desert climate, with high temperatures during the summer and low temperatures during the winter. It rains in the winter and the weather is usually mild in the western and south western plateaus. The central part of the Kingdom is marked by hot and dry summer and cold and dry winter. On coasts, the temperatures and humidity increase and it rains in winter and spring, although scarce, except the southwestern plateaus as it rains seasonally in summer heavier than other areas of the Kingdom. Humidity is relatively high in the coasts of Saudi Arabia and the Western plateaus most of the year, but decreases inward.
World Rank:
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is ranked the first worldwide in oil production and reserves, the fifth in natural gas reserves, and the ninth in the production of natural gas. The Kingdom is the destination of millions of pilgrims every year (in Mecca and Medina) and this prompted the Kingdom to secure housing, food and medical care to accommodate all of them.

National Day:
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrates the national day in the 23rd of September every year, in the memory of the unification date of the Kingdom at the hands of King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, may his soul rest in peace, when he announced the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

Flag:
The flag of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is rectangular. Its width equals two thirds of its length. The flag is green and in the middle the statement 'There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah', written in classical 'tholoth' Arabic font, under which there is an Arabian sword whose grip is directed to the flagpole, drawn in white. The flag is prohibited to be lowered, or touch the ground or water in respect of the statement written on it.

Logo:
The logo of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia consists of two Arabian swords crossed and bent, topped by a palm tree. The two swords are the symbol of power, stamina and sacrifice, whereas the palm tree is the symbol of vitality, growth and prosperity.

Important Cities:

- **Mecca**
The city of Mecca lies at latitude 21.27 north and longitude 39.49 east. It is the headquarters of Emirate of Mecca. In Mecca lies the Holy Kaaba and the Grand Holy Mosque, as it is the prayers direction for Moslems. Mecca is also the place of Abraham's standing, holy rituals places (Mena, Arafat and Mozdalefa), Umm al Qura University and the headquarters of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

- **Medina**
Medina is in the north west of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It lies at latitude 24.28 north and longitude 36.39 east. It is the headquarters of Emirate of Medina. The city hosts the Prophet (PBUH) mosque, the tomb of Prophet Mohammed, the Islamic University and King Fahd Complex for Quran printing.

- **Riyadh**
Riyadh lies in the center of the Arabian Peninsula at latitude 24.42 north and longitude 46.42 east. It is the headquarters of Emirate of Riyadh. It is the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and it hosts all the ministries, embassies, consular services, Yamama palace, Shoura Council, Conference Palace, King Khaled International Airport, King Fahd International Stadium, Television Complex, the Diplomatic Quarer, King Saud University, Imam Mohamed bin Saud Islamic University, Ruling Palace, King Fahd Security College, King Abdul Aziz Military College, King Faisal Air College, the Specialized Hospital, King Khaled University Hospital, King Khaled Eye Hospital, and King Fahd National Guard Hospital.
• **Jeddah**
Jeddah lies in the Red Sea eastern coast, which is a natural extension of Tihama coastal plain between latitudes 21.25 and 21.45 north and between longitudes 29.50 and 39.20 east.
Jeddah is a major sea port, and its basic and historical role was to be a port and an entrance to the sacred land, as well as a transit point for commercial traffic. This makes Jeddah today the most important center for imports and distribution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and therefore the city controls most economic activities in the country due to the sea and air ports.

• **Dammam**
The city of Dammam is in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia at latitude 26.30 north and at longitudes 50.6 east. Dammam is the headquarters of Emirate of Ash-sharkia region. It is best known for oil wells, and it hosts the headquarters of Saudi Aramco Oil Company. In Dammam, one finds Jubail industrial city, King Abdul Aziz marine port, the public Saudi railway institution, King Fahd park, King Fahd international airport, Dammam corniche, King Fahd Oil and Minerals University, King Faisal University and Air Force Institute.

**Important Historical and Tourist Attractions:**

• **Medain Saleh**
Monuments of Thamoud tribes, and it has several caves and tombs carved in wonderful forms. It lies in the north west of Medina.

• **Al-Ula**
It lies to the north of Medina and features a number of carved tombs and inscriptions from the era of Thamoud. It also features the place of milking the camel.

• **Tayma**
It features old monuments that go back to 800 BC. The place has several old palaces from the era of Babylonians and the old water well of Hudaj.

• **Al-Qarya (The Village)**
It lies in the north east of the Kingdom, and features very old monuments of a big city with towers, walls, tombs and caves.

• **Roafa**
South of Tabuk, Roafa features wrecks of a Roman Nabatean temple that goes back to the second century AD.

• **Samalaki Dam**
It lies at the top of Leih valley in the outskirts of Taif. This is an old dam built before Islam.

• **Okaz Market**
It was the biggest Arab market before Islam. It lies in Alhowya in the outskirts of Taif. There are also some old buildings in Okaz.
• **Alkharaba Pond**
  It is a famous pond on Zubaida road between Iraq and the holy land. This 6-meter deep pond is round shaped and was a water station for pilgrims on this road.

• **The Groove and Old Village**
  These are old places in Najran. There are wrecks of the groove wall, some palaces and inscriptions that go back to the 7th century BC.

• **Jerash Monuments**
  Situated near Khamis Mushait, these monuments date back to the pre Islamic era. They feature old stones, inscriptions and drawings on Hamouma Mountain.

• **Tarot Island**
  Located on the Arabian Gulf near the city of Qatif, the historic city of Tarot lies in the heart of the island, which has monuments that date back to 5000 years BC.

• **Thaj**
  It is located 80 kilometers west of Jubail and it dates back to the Greco era.

• **Joatha**
  Located 20 kilometers north east of Al Hofuf, Joatha has a mosque believed to be the first mosque built in the east of the Peninsula in the first Hijri century. In Al-Ihsaa, there are several monuments like Ibrahim Palace and Khuzam Palace, among others.

• **Berma Cave**
  Located near Riyadh, the cave has inscriptions that date back to 2400 years BC. There are also Thamudian inscriptions found east of Khurais road.

• **Dereaya**
  Located north of Riyadh and it dates back to the mid 9th Hijri century. Tarif district is in the center of old Dereaya, which was the ruling house of Al-Saud.

• **Duwademi**
  It has old wrecks of monuments and Thamoudian inscriptions, as well as some ancient pottery.

• **Al Baydatayn Mount**
  Located in Duwademi area, traces of old settlements and Thamoudian inscriptions were found at the mount foot.

• **Buraka and Khanouka Mount**
  This mount is located north of Duwademi, and it has traces of shrines and houses that date back to more than 2000 years.
• **Faw**
  An ancient village in the center of the Arabian peninsula, located 700 kilometers southwest of Riyadh on the northwestern border of Al-Rub' al Khali desert.

• **Qasr Marid (Marid Palace)**
  Located in Asiah 70 kilometers northwest of Buraida, the palace dates back to the 12th Hijri century.

• **Hail Monuments**
  The area has Aja and Salma Mount, and in Vid village 120 kilometers southeast of Hail there is Khurash Palace, which was the place of an old city before the Islamic era. There is also Al Maliha Mount 40 kilometers east of Hail, whose rocks are decorated with old inscriptions and drawings. At the foot of Aja Mount Northwest of Hail, there is a site called Al-Sofon (ships), where it is brimful of old monuments such as old water basins and canals. The palace of Hatem Al-Taey, the iconic Arab figure for generosity, is located at the foot of Aja Mount, in Touran village. In Hail also, there is Ibn Rashid Palace, a historic palace built in the last Hijri century and it is full of decorations, wood doors and drawings.

• **Dumat Al Jundal (currently Al Jauf)**
  Dumat Al Jundal was the ruling place of Adoumi people, and it it has Marid palace inside the famous Fort. Next to the Fort, there is a small mosque attributed to the Orthodox Caliph Omar bin Al Khattab.

• **Sakaka Monuments**
  Located in Al Jauf, there is the 120 year old Zaabal Palace at the top of a plateau. West to the palace, Prince Mount has Nabataean-like inscriptions mixed with Arabic inscriptions.

• **Lajab Valley**
  This gorgeous scenery valley is dressed in green, as trees give the valley an attractive beauty as it is full of perennial green trees. The valley is well known for running streams, warm water springs, and the old city of Al Khasouf. The valley is located in Al Harth, south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
Prominent Markets and Tourist Attractions in Riyadh:

I. Markets

- Sahara Complex, King Abdullah Road
- Hayat Mall, King Abdul Aziz Road
- Giant and Carrefour Markets, East of Riyadh
- Othaim Mall, East of Riyadh, Ring Road (East)
- Granada Markets, East of Riyadh, Ring Road (East)
- Al Faisaleya Tower Markets, King Fahd Road
- Al Mamlaka Tower Markets, King Fahd Road
- Muaikaleya Markets, Downtown Riyadh
- Riyadh Gallery, Olaya Road
- Paris Gallery, King Abdul Aziz Road

II. Attractions

- Al Mamlaka Tower
- Al Faisaleya Tower
- Zoo at Malaz
- King Abdul Aziz Historic Center, Downtown
- Masmak palace and Ruling Palace area, Downtown
- Dereea old city
- Sakr Aljazeera Flight Museum
Arab Embassies in Riyadh

Arab Embassies in the Kingdom:

1. Embassy of Iraq
   - Address: Elsefarat district, Abdullah al Sahmy st., number 11
   - Telephone: 4806514  Fax.: 4816671
   - Working Hours: 08.30 : 15.00
   - P. O.: 94345, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: rydemb@mofaml.gov.iq

2. Embassy of Yemen
   - Address: Elsefarat district, Omar bin Omaya Al Zamiri Rd.
   - Telephone: 4881731 – 4826750 – 4881769
   - Fax.: 4481562
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
   - P. O.: 94356, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: yemen@yemenembassy-ryh.org

3. Embassy of Lebanon
   - Address: Elsefarat district, Abu Bakr El Karkhy st.
   - Telephone: 4807227 – 4804070 – 4804060
   - Fax.: 4800402 – 4804703
   - Working Hours: 09.00 : 15.00
   - P. O.: 94350, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: gcjlebanon@gmail.com

4. Embassy of Kuwait
   - Address: Elsefarat district
   - Telephone: 4883201 – 4883500
   - Fax.: 4821284 – 4883682
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 15.00
   - P. O.: 94304, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: k.c.j@windowslive.com

5. Embassy of Qatar
   - Address: Diplomatic district, Abul Wafa Al Buzjani area
   - Telephone: 4825685 – 4825544
   - Fax.: 4825694
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
   - P. O.: 94353, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: Jeddah@mofa.gov.qa
6. Embassy of Palestine
   - Address: King Khaled Rd., close to GCC building
   - Telephone: 4880744 – 4880739 – 4880738 - 4887018
   - Fax.: 4480721
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
   - P. O.: 3589, Riyadh 11481
   - E-mail: eshaath@yahoo.com

7. Embassy of Oman
   - Address: Al Raed district, opposite to King Saud University
   - Telephone: 4823120 (3 lines)
   - Fax.: 4823738
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
   - P. O.: 94381, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: omanemb-ksa@hotmail.com

8. Embassy of Syria
   - Address: Diplomatic district, close to the French embassy, Amr bin Omaya Al Damary Rd.
   - Telephone: 4887481 (6 lines)
   - Fax.: 4826196
   - P. O.: 94323, Riyadh 11693

9. Embassy of Bahrain
   - Address: Diplomatic district
   - Telephone: 4801748 – 4880013 – 4880019 – 4880044
   - Fax.: 4880208
   - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
   - P. O.: 94371, Riyadh 11693
   - E-mail: jeddah.mission@mofa.gov.bh

10. Embassy of United Arab Emirates
    - Address: Diplomatic district. Abu Bakr El Karkhy area, Amr bin Omaya st.
    - Telephone: 4826803 - 4828402 - 4829652 - 4827366 – 4881227
    - Fax.: 4827504
    - Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00
    - P. O.: 94385, Riyadh 11693
    - E-mail: uaer@cyberia.net.sa
11. Embassy of Jordan
- Address: Diplomatic district, Al Dawwar Althalath
- Telephone: 4880051 – 4880071 – 4880039
- Fax.: 4880072
- Working Hours: 08.00 : 15.00
- P. O.: 94316, Riyadh 11693
- Telex: 406955
- E-mail: jordanconsulate@sps.net.sa

12. Embassy of Morocco
- Address: Elsefarat district, Abdullah bin Hozafa Al Tohamy st., behind the Cultural Palace
- Telephone: 4828941 - 4826382 - 4811858
- Fax.: 4827016
- Working Hours: 09.00 : 15.00
- P. O.: 94392, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: meombassy@awalnet.net.sa - meombassy@hotmail.com

13. Embassy of Egypt
- Address: Elsefarat district, Abdullah bin Hozafa Al Sahmy st.
- Telephone: 4810464
- Fax.: 4810463
- Working Hours: 08.30 : 16.00
- P. O.: 94333, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: egypt.cons.jeddah@mfa.gov.eg

14. Embassy of Libya
- Address: Al Sulaimaneya district, Abdul Hamid Al Kateb st., no. 42
- Telephone: 4658320 / 4654310 / 4610684
- Fax.: 4063391
- Working Hours: 08.30 : 14.30
- P. O.: 94365, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: libyanconsulate@yahoo.com

15. Embassy of Somalia
- Address: Al Woroud district, Ali bin Farhoun st.
- Telephone: 4632774 - 4643456
- Fax.: 4649705
- Working Hours: 08.00 : 15.00
- P. O.: 94372, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: scgjeddah@gmail.com
16. Embassy of Sudan
- Address: Elsefarat district, Abul Wafaa area
- Telephone: 4887979 - 4887388 - 4887396 – 4828857 – 4887139 - 4887478
- Fax.: 4887729 – 4829464
- Working Hours: 08.30 : 15.00
- P. O.: 94337, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: Info@sudanemasyryd.org.sa

17. Embassy of Djibouti
- Address: Salah Uddin district, behind Salah Uddin Hotel, King Abdul Aziz Rd.
- Telephone: 4543583 – 4543182
- Fax.: 4569168
- Working Hours: 08.00 : 15.00
- P. O.: 94340, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: dya_bamakhram@hotmail.com

18. Embassy of Comoros Islands
- Address: Al Olaya, Youssef Ghassany St., behind Al Babtain complex
- Telephone: 2934697 - 2936002
- Fax.: 2934797
- Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.00

19. Embassy of Algeria
- Address: Diplomatic district
- Telephone: 4887171 (3 lines)
- Fax.: 4821703
- Working Hours: 08.00 : 14.30
- P. O.: 94388, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: consul@consalg-jeddah.org

20. Embassy of Tunisia
- Address: Diplomatic district
- Telephone: 4887900
- Fax.: 4887641
- Working Hours: 09.00 : 15.30
- P. O.: 94368, Riyadh 11693
- E-mail: a_riyadh@digi.net.sa
Addresses of Arab and International Organizations in Riyadh

World Bank Branch
• Riyadh, Diplomatic District, UN building
• Telephone: + 966 11 4834956
• Fax.: + 966 11 4885311

UN Office
• Riyadh, Diplomatic District
• Telephone: + 966 11 4885301 – + 966 11 4885302
• Fax.: + 966 11 4885309

General Secretariat of GCC
• Riyadh, Diplomatic District, Mecca-Jeddah Road
• Telephone: + 966 11 4827777
• Fax.: + 966 11 4828008

Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States
• Riyadh, El Sefarat District
• P. O.: 94693 Riyadh, 11615
• Telephone: + 966 11 4800555
• Fax.: + 966 11 4802839
• E-mail: abegs@abegs.org

GCC Executive Board of the Health Ministers' Council
• Riyadh, El Sefarat District, before Saudi Authority for Health Affairs
• Telephone: + 966 1 4885270
• Fax.: + 966 1 4885266
• P. O.: 7431 Riyadh, 11615
• E-mail: sgh@sgh.org.sa
GCC Standardization Organization
- Riyadh, El Ghadeer District, Olaya St.
- P. O.: 85245 Riyadh, 11691
- Telephone: + 966 11 2746655
- Fax.: + 966 11 2105391
- E-mail: csc@gso.org.sa

Gulf Radio and Television Organization
- Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- P. O.: 6802 Riyadh, 11452
- Telephone: + 966 11 4659774
- Fax.: + 966 11 4634297
- E-mail: a.alqeht@gulfvision.org.sa
Sketchy map of the halls that host the Forum at Riyadh Ritz Carlton Hotel
## Prayers Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Fajr</th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Duhr</th>
<th>Asr</th>
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### Weather Forecast

Weather conditions at the time of the Forum shall relatively cold.