Plastic Factories Sans Insurance
VISION
To develop the Omani private sector and make it a key partner in sustainable economic development.

MISSION
OCCI is the official representative of the Omani private sector inside and outside the Sultanate. It is also its active tool in taking decisions of interest for the sector. It seeks to develop the sector through the available tools and programs for enhancing economic growth in the Sultanate.
Subscribe now on WhatsApp
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

90915551

To subscribe, add the Chamber number (+968 9155551 909)
To the list of names in your phone and then send
The word subscription on the number via WhatsApp
Seminar on Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries Insurance 34

Oman Post: Linking businesses 50

Desired Economic Benefits from Dubai 2020 54

Hamed Al Sharji Elected OCAC Chairman 56
OCCI Board of Directors (2018–2022)

H.E Qais Mohammed Moosa Al Yousuf
Chairman

Dr. Salem Sulayem Saleh Al-Junaibi
Vice Chairman & Chairman of the Chamber Branch in Al-Wusta Governorate

Mr. Rashid Amer Mohammed Al-Mesailhi
Vice Chairman
Administrative and Financial Affairs

Dr. Ahmed Abdulkarim Hussein Al-Houti
Member of the Board of Directors

Mr. Anwar Hamad Said Al-Sinani
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in South A’Sharqia Governorate

Eng. Hussain Hathith Mayoof Al-Batahari
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in Dhofar Governorate

Engineer Hamed Said Nasser Al-Rubkhi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in A’Dakhiliyah Governorate

Engineer Hamoud Salem Mohammed Al-Saadi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in South Batinah Governorate

Mr. Raed Mohammed Abdullah Al Shehhi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in Musandam Governorate

Mr. Redha Juma Mohammed Ali Al Saleh
Member of the Board of Directors

Mr. Zaher Mohammed Zaher Al Kaabi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in Al Buraimi Governorate

Mr. Saeid Said Rashid Al Badi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in Al-Dhahirah Governorate

Mr. Abdullah Ali Khalifa Al Shafi
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in North Al Batinah Governorate

Mr. Ali Hamdan Hassan Al Ajmi
Member of the Board of Directors

Mr. Ali Salem Said Al Hajri
Member of the Board of Directors
Chairman of the Chamber Branch in North A’Sharqiya Governorate
The Sultanate is moving towards diversifying sources of income and enhancing the contribution of a number of important economic sectors in the Sultanate to be a resource to the national economy, as it seeks to achieve this goal through real and effective partnership between the government sector and private sector institutions. The focus is on five main and vital sectors: logistics, mining, food security, tourism and petrochemical.

To achieve these development objectives, the Sultanate is striving hard to overcome obstacles and specify difficulties and challenges by improving the business environment that contributes greatly to attracting investments and capital to contribute to the establishment of joint projects in these sectors in cooperation with the Omani private sector or foreign investments by 100%. This requires cooperation, solidarity and unifying efforts to reach a diversified broad-based economy.

Being the official umbrella of the private sector, OCCI works according to studied plans and programs in cooperation and coordination with the competent authorities to determine and study challenges through specialised committees, which include in its membership a number of business owners, specialists and experts in various economic sectors, so that these committees submit their recommendations and proposals including solutions and opinions for the challenges facing their sectors.

Al Ghorfa sheds light on the desired economic sectors and monitors the views of the various parties related to those sectors to determine the challenges and the suggested solutions to them. The main topic (cover story) of this issue focuses on the insurance sector in general and the insurance of plastic factories, examining it through a number of different aspects in order to know its challenges and finding ways to reach solutions to them.
Plastic Factories Sans Insurance:

Who is Responsible?

Investigation: Ibrahim bin Said Al Julandani
Al Maamari: We obligated insurance companies to submit a full report to enterprises’ owners including the justifications based on which the insurance companies refuse to provide insurance coverage.

Plastic factory owners in the Sultanate complain of the effects of the insurance companies refusal to provide insurance coverage for their factories, wondering about the reasons behind this despite the fact that insurance coverage is available for most companies, institutions and factories -- other than plastic factories -- which has made them face many financial, administrative and financing challenges. Al Ghorfa is trying to find out the reasons of this issue, which represents a great importance because there are 40 factories with investments exceeding RO. 150 million. We invite you to participate in clarifying the reasons.

Providing a Safe Environment for Investment

Regarding this issue, Ahmed bin Ali Al Maamari, Vice President, Insurance Sector, Capital Market Authority, said: “It is a wonderful gesture from OCCI to raise the issue of the insurance of industrial enterprises, which is a basic requirement for these enterprises as being important economic entities in the industrial market in particular and the national economy system in general. We support the discussion of this issue because of its importance regarding enterprise owners’ awareness and at the same time the issue includes an affirmation of the importance of providing a safe investment environment for these enterprises. Providing insurance coverage is one of the cornerstones of creating a safe investment environment because it is considered one of the important tools in risk management, which contributes to enhancing the confidence of capital owners and supports the operational processes since insurance provides contentment and confidence in the ability of the industrial enterprise, whether it is a plastic products factory or another, to face potential risks and reduce their impacts.

Exerted Efforts

He added: First, we confirm that Capital Market Authority (CMA) is keen to follow up this issue with the relevant authorities in order to find appropriate solutions. With regard to the efforts made by CMA to address this challenge, the Authority formed a working team to implement the recommendations of the seminar held on March 23, 2016 about Security and Safety Requirements in the industrial enterprises, to decide the appropriate solutions and proposals.

The team members included the Public Establishment for Industrial Enterprises, Public Authority for Civil Defence & Ambulance and Omani Insurance Association. A number of awareness seminars on the requirements of enterprises security and safety were held in more than one governorate to
discuss the challenges facing industrial enterprises and find out the criteria for providing insurance coverage, as well as highlighting the most important security and safety requirements.

In response to the questions raised about the refusal of insurance companies to provide coverage for plastic factories, he said that insurance companies cannot refrain from providing coverage for any industrial enterprise without justifications, because insurance companies are primarily concerned with the purchase of a potential risk and companies are looking to expand the services of their insurance umbrella to include a larger base of customers so as to achieve the insurance philosophy of gathering risks and sharing the material damage that may occur to any member in the group.

Insurance companies behave in a high level of professionalism when providing the service, considering a set of underwriting standards that help the company determine the cost of the risk before embarking on the process of purchasing the insurance coverage. Their association with reinsurance operations makes it more stringent in adherence to internationally accepted underwriting standards, including provision of the minimum requirements for security and
safety in industrial enterprises. Therefore, before concluding the insurance contract, insurance companies inspect the enterprise, through specialised engineers, to specify weak and strength points in relation to security and safety. After examining the risk, the cost of the insurance coverage is decided. According to our knowledge and our follow-up to this topic, there are many cases in which insurance companies discover the non-compliance of industrial enterprises with the adequate requirements of security and safety even though they have licences from the concerned authorities.

He also added: As for us, we obligated the insurance companies to submit a full report to the owners of the enterprises including the justifications on the basis according to which the company refuses to provide insurance coverage. To address this problem, there are several proposals that will be put forward to the relevant committee. The issue needs unifying all efforts to provide appropriate insurance coverage for this type of factories.

When looking at this issue from another angle, we realise that insurance companies refusal to provide insurance coverage for any industrial enterprise and the existence of justifications for this refusal, this matter warns the employers of such enterprises that there is a measurement indicator of the existence of a risk facing the enterprise and therefore the risk areas must be addressed, and requirements of adequate security and safety must be provided.

Factory Owners’ Views

The owners of factories and business owners who are investing in this sector have another opinion. Al Khalil bin Ahmed Al Rahbi, owner of Al Rahbi Plastics Factory, said: From an economic point of view, we, as factories’ owners, are afraid of any danger that may happen at any time as well as losing initiative spirit for development or expansion, but if we have insurance coverage, we can develop our capital and our business grows.

He added: In terms of insurance companies’ refusal, I see, from my point of view, that insurance companies started to refrain from doing insurance coverage for our factories only after one factory was burnt several years ago.

Prerequisite

Zebian bin Mohammed Al Jabri, the owner of Majan Plastic Industries Factory, said: Insurance coverage is necessary for any industrial enterprise, because absence of insurance is considered a problem and a risk since the businessman can lose all his money in an incident or for any reason.

He added: It is necessary to have annual insurance for these factories, as the system applied by all companies is that they have to have annual insurance, and the banks also require insurance to ensure the continuity of the factories and the risk exists in case of no insurance, and the permit of the factory establishment maybe cancelled.

He also said: We do not find an explanation for the refusal of insurance companies to provide insurance services to factories, and what we know, even in the Gulf region, is that plastic factories get insurance coverage, and here in the Sultanate there are factories and enterprises which are more dangerous than plastic factories, such as oil installations and refineries which are insured but we do not know why the insurance companies refrain from insuring our plastic factories! If we refer to the statistics, we will find out that the number of accidents that have occurred in the plastic factories have been very simple and limited and does not exceed 2%.
Insurance Companies

Ali bin Mohammad Abdel Azim, CEO, Capital Insurance Services (Insurance Brokers), said: The problem of not providing insurance coverage for plastic factories is an existing problem not only in Oman, but also in many other countries, and the coverage is not completely absent, as there are factories that have insurance. The main problem is not caused by the local insurance companies, but it originates from global reinsurance companies.

He added: Plastic factories have a high risk because they are likely to come under fire, and they are classified as having higher risk than wood, furniture and paper factories. Somebody may object by saying that no plastic factory in the Sultanate has been burnt for many years! Our response is that reinsurance companies are international companies and cover factories around the world, so they rely on general statistics about the plastic factory fires worldwide.

He also added: When international reinsurance companies refuse to insure plastic factories, the local companies cannot do anything to compel these companies to accept the insurance. The only thing which the local companies can do is to inspect the plastic factory through specialists and if the inspection report shows that the factory is professionally managed and includes all safety and security measures and requirements, they can try to convince reinsurance companies to accept insurance of such a factory.

Solutions and Proposals

As for the solutions, the CEO of the Capital Insurance Brokerage Company said: One of the trade principles in general is that if the deal is large, the parties try to make the deal a success and give the matter enough time. From this standpoint, OCCI can get in touch with the owners of the 150 factories to collect their data and, with the assistance of an insurance broker expert, prepare the data of all these factories in a technical manner, and then find a single insurance policy that covers all factories annually and each factory pays its share of the insurance premium.

Murtada Al Jamalani, Chairman of OCCI Financial and Insurance Sector Committee said: The protection of property, assets and liabilities resulting from various commercial, industrial and service activities, is the responsibility of the individual, family, society and state.

He added: In the Financial and Insurance Sector Committee, we unify efforts with the public and private sectors to provide insurance protection for all parties in the country against accidents and various dangers.

Being petrochemical derivatives “which are considered value-added products”, plastic factories have properties such as fast ignition and explosiveness, and with the increase in demand for oil and gas derivatives and the continued expansion in the volume of expected investments in the country, the demand for insurance will increase significantly to protect these investments. Since the nature of the dangers of petrochemical derivatives is characterised by the severity of risk, in addition to its negative effect on the environment, it is necessary that the government -- represented by the supervision, surveillance and legislation authorities -- prepare the necessary legislation, laws, civil defence systems, first aid and hospitals, in other words, “creating an integrated risk
management system.”

He stressed that issuing permits to investors without conditions and obligations is considered an expected, not sudden, risk, and insurance companies do not insure expected risks, and when the owner or investor takes all security and safety precautions into account and adheres to environmental, technical, and other requirements, and despite that, the risks and losses occur, this is considered an unexpected risk and insurance companies are prepared to compensate in such cases.

It is the duty and responsibility of the private sector institutions, namely insurance and finance companies and banks, to meet the needs of the oil, non-oil and petrochemical industries sectors in order to achieve development goals and contribute to the national economic diversification in the Sultanate.

Everyone knows that the higher the risk rate, the more expensive the insurance premium, and this is not considered an obstacle for the investor because he knows that the project requires large insurance coverage and its risk rates are high, adding that the investors do not mind to pay a high value or price to insurance companies provided that the concerned insurance company pays the claim or compensation for losses if they occur.

He also added: If the insurance companies want to increase their financial returns, they must keep abreast of the constant technological development and economic and legal changes that accompany the petroleum and petrochemical industries and their derivatives, and find new forms and methods of innovation to meet the needs of the insured, in the sense of contributing to training and educating the insured institutions’ investors, workers and supervisors on how to manage the risks.

“The Chamber’s mission is that it is the official representative of the Omani private sector, locally and internationally, and the sector’s effective tool in the participation in taking all decisions that concern the sector. OCCI is keen to support and develop the private sector through the available tools and programs to drive the wheel of the economic development march in the Sultanate,” Al Jamalani said.

The Chairman of OCCI Financial and Insurance Sector Committee also said that the the Committee strives to:

- Diversify the sources of national non-oil income by improving the performance of the insurance and reinsurance industry.
- Find insurance products to protect the various sectors, society and the national economy.
- Identify ways for joint investments between the insurance and government sectors.
- Create job opportunities and on-the-job training to qualify national cadres to occupy technical and leadership positions in coordination with the CMA.
Nama Holding Group signed a privatisation agreement with Chinese State Grid Company, whereby the latter invests in 49% of the shares of Oman Electricity Transmission Company, and the privatisation procedures are expected to be completed in early 2020 after the conditional approval of the Authority for Electricity Regulation.

The agreement was signed for Nama Group by HE Hassan bin Mohammed Al Lawati, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the group, while it was signed for the Chinese State Grid Company by HE Yuhai Huiyu, Chairman of the Company.

HE Darwish bin Ismail Al Balushi, Minister Responsible for Financial Affairs, explained that the privatisation of Oman Electricity Transmission Company is a part of the program designed to allocate some government companies with the aim of enhancing the role of the private sector, expanding the ownership base, improving operational efficiency and financial results in addition to improving service by these companies.

HE Saud bin Nasser Al Shukaili, Chairman of the Privatisation Supervisory Committee, stated that the Chinese State Grid Company is the largest operator of electricity transmission networks in the world with a total asset size of about 41.2 billion US dollars and investments in Australia, Italy, Greece, Brazil, Portugal, Philippines and Hong Kong.

He added that the privatisation program for the electricity sector includes five companies, namely Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Muscat Electricity Distribution Company, Mazoon Electricity Company, Majan Electricity Company and Dhofar Power Company.

He also clarified that in addition to the privatisation agreement signed with the Oman Electricity Transmission Company, privatisation agreements will be signed with the rest of the companies at rates not exceeding 70%, noting that the privatisation agreements will not affect the quality and prices of the services provided.

Through this privatisation program, Nama Holding will support the Government’s objectives of attracting foreign direct investments into the Sultanate and promoting private sector participation in building the elements of the national economy, as well as aiming to bring to these companies the best state of the art technologies and technical and administrative expertise, which will result in human resources development, improved customer satisfaction, ensuring the best use of energy resources and reducing costs per unit of electricity supplied over time.
Al Tasnim Company has started its activities as a trading company 43 years ago, and today it has become one of the largest business groups in the Sultanate. The company includes many divisions in the field of contracting and has extensive experience in providing services under Al Tasnim Group. The company endeavours to enhance the aesthetic values of its various projects to turn them into architectural icons by focusing on providing superior quality products and services as well as playing a vital role in promoting its businesses.

S.K. Borse, Building Finishes Manager, who has been working with the company for more than 28 years, says: Thanks to our highly skilled professionals and our long experience, we are requested to implement many sophisticated and luxurious projects outside the Sultanate. We have been competing in Oman’s market for more than 30 years, and we have been keen to make the interior design division a one-stop solution for anyone seeking for our services.

The Interior Fit-out Division believes that innovation is the fundamental aspect in enhancing growth opportunities and constantly strives to search for new and innovative methods to deliver projects on time and in a way to ensure that implementation exceeds customers’ expectations. The Division has a factory of the highest standard for the implementation of woodwork, marble, stone and GRC work, as well as having aluminium and steel manufacturing units, and this means that we provide complete solutions that meet the needs of interior fit-out requirements. The Interior Fit-out Division endeavours to reach new horizons by providing innovative solutions and pioneering and creative ideas in the implementation of various projects. The Division provides fit-out and refurbishment services and adheres to the highest standards of quality, health, safety and environment, as well as boosting the local value of the implemented projects.

The Interior Fit-out Division has been granted its first interior finishes project, “Hotel Citadine” located in the heart of Ghubrah area. The project includes the implementation of a number of hotel apartments that provide many options for guests such as a fitness room, a large restaurant and a reception hall. Interior fit-out work has successfully been completed and the ceilings have been made in the studio, and one-room, hall and kitchen apartments. The project owner has appreciated the quality and the implementation done by our work team. Currently, the team is working on implementing all dimensions of the project area, such as floors, wall treatment and false ceiling work. The scope of work also includes all fixed and movable furniture, including kitchen furniture, beds, cabins, wardrobes, chairs, sofas, decorative lamps and curtains, as well as electronic devices such as microwaves.
CCI Innovation Award 2019 in its second season witnessed competition at the levels of the participating teams and evaluation centres, so the celebration of honouring the winners came amid great anticipation among the competitors.

The celebration ceremony of awards distributions was held under the patronage of HH Sayyid Taimur bin Asaad Al Said, Assistant Secretary General for Communications at the Research Council. Dr. Zahid bin Abdullah Al Muntheri, won the first position for “Smart solutions to address medical errors.” Shihab bin Hamad Al Shafii won the second place for “Rubber Dragon” project. The idea of this innovative project is about transforming the damaged tyres to sound, heat and water insulation for buildings. As for the third place, it was won by project “Nano-filtration in catheter tube, for innovator Fares bin Abdullah Al Farsi, a product that reduces bacterial infections in the urinary tract by using nanotechnology to make a new urinary catheter immune to this kind of infections.

The Higher College of Technology won the first position in the category of the best evaluation centres of OCCI 2019 Innovation Award, and the prize was received by Dr. Ali bin Saif Al Harthy, the Dean of the College, while Al Musanna College of Technology won the second place in the category of the best organisation centres, and the prize was received by Dr. Issa bin Saif Al Tupi, the Dean of the College.

HE Qais bin Muhammad Al Yousuf, Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors, said: The previous OCCI Innovation Award witnessed many developments in the field of innovation, and day after day the system of innovation in the Sultanate will be completed, especially the Research Council has launched the national strategy for innovation to be in line with the vision of Oman 2040, so that the Sultanate becomes among the 20 best countries in the field of innovation by 2040. The Award is one of the tools aimed at the development of the innovation system in the Sultanate, expressing his hope that the winning projects will have priority with the specialised finance institutions as they are pioneering and innovative youth projects.

OCCI Chairman also called on companies and institutions in the private sector to give the aspect of scientific research and development the appropriate attention by supporting the budgets of scientific research, cooperation with the specialised research centres, adoption of creators and innovators, according to the specialisation fields of each of the following projects.
Zahid Al Muntheri: Innovation stems from the need to find solutions to the problems we face.

Shihab Al Shafii: Winning the second position is an encouragement to continue and form a company that can serve national economy.

In an interview with the winner of the first place in OCCI Innovation Award, Dr. Zahid bin Abdullah Al Muntheri, the owner of the project “smart solutions to eliminate the errors of medication” said: “OCCI Innovation Award is concerned with encouraging innovators to show their ideas and develop them to become a product through which they can serve the society and solve significant problems and suffering. The innovation always stems from the need. The suffering and problems that our societies face are sometimes our own problems and we cannot find solutions to them from imported international products. Hence, the importance of innovation comes, and we may find solutions to problems that not only we ourselves suffer from but may also solve international problems. Innovation starts with an idea, but the real success of the idea lies in the formation of a company that employs job seekers and contributes to increasing the national income of the country. There are companies having greater annual income than that of some countries. The commodity of the future is not oil or gold but the idea and innovation.

As for my project “smart solutions to eliminate medication errors”, the idea started from a problem that we all suffer from, and it affects human's health and life, as the idea of the project focus on finding a system that gives the physician medical information about the patient accurately and easily. After my father’s illness with lung inflammation, I found him unable to distinguish new drugs from temporary inflammatory ones, or from those drugs related to diabetes, pressure, and heart treatment, as there was no easy mechanism to know which medicines he was taking from the health centre and how to take them with those given by the reference hospital. Of course, this suffering occurs to many patients, especially aged people, and knowing medications well is an important and essential point because the doctor needs to know the medications used by the patient as well as allergies to any medication. Without this information, the doctor can harm the patient by giving a drug that conflicts with previous medications or leads to increasing the dose, (global statistics indicate that more than 1.5 million patients are annually exposed to medication errors in the United States only.) My idea solves this problem, because through a cloud platform the doctor can accurately and quickly access the information about the drugs used by the patient, while keeping the patient’s privacy. The proposed system will reduce medication errors, and the idea of the production is Omani and the supporting team is also Omani seeking for solving a local and global problem.”

Shihab Hamad Al Shafii, the winner of the second place about “dragon rubber project” said: “The rubber dragon is one of the products of Oman Recycling Company, which is the first innovation of its kind in the region and the world. This project is about recycling the damaged tyres and transforming them to sound, heat and water insulation for buildings. The tyre consists of three main components: fibre threads, steel wires and rubber granules. In our project, we separate these materials from each other and grind the rubber granules and add chemicals in certain temperatures and pressure to be turned into sound, heat, and water insulation for buildings.

OCCI Innovation Award has had a prominent role in developing the product from an idea to a product that can be launched in the market with financial support at every stage of the competition, and our second place is a kind of encouragement to continue making more efforts to make the company a reality and an economic source.
OCCI organised a trade delegation to participate in Entrepreneurship Forum and Exhibition – RAD 2019 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was organised by the Eastern Chamber of the Kingdom and held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, Governor of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

Around 300 projects and initiatives of entrepreneurs from Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as entrepreneurs and a number of sponsoring and supportive institutions from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took part. RAD, which displays projects containing youth commercial and industrial initiatives that have been able to continue to develop ideas and adapt to market conditions, aims to create a vibrant community where the producers and owners of new ideas of young men and women meet with big companies, businessmen and finance enterprises supporting funding for youth projects.

**OCCI participation**

The participation of OCCI delegation at RAD 2019 was in a number of commercial and industrial sectors such as building materials products, environmental consultations, safety requirements, luxurious craft industries, designing toys and gifts, natural products for the skin, and production of stations and desalination equipment.

Abdul Hakim bin Hamad Al Ammar Al Khaldi, Chairman of the Eastern Chamber’s Board of Directors, indicated that the Chamber holds this forum every two years. Its importance is in the business and economic activities presented by young businessmen and women, and their contributions to develop the economic sector and providing it with new ideas that break traditionality in the Saudi market and keep pace with the development in the business sector in the world, and attracting the most prominent global achievements to benefit from their results, to develop the sector in line with the Kingdom’s 2030 vision. This forum is the largest event of its kind in the Middle East and witnesses broad Gulf participation.

**Omani multiple participations**

Zainab Khaki, from Khaki Company, explained that the forum and exhibition was a golden opportunity to display her activities in the field of safety requirements and equipment, and to be acquainted with the available opportunities.
Zainab Khaki: The Forum and Exhibition was a golden opportunity to display the company’s activities in the field of safety requirements and equipment.

Ammar Al Ghassani: The Forum and Exhibition gave us opportunities to see Saudi market activities.

and the most important commercial participations with entrepreneurs in the forum. Ammar bin Salem Al Ghassani, owner of the Sixth Ocean International Enterprise for Environmental Studies and Consultation, spoke about his participation: “We offer certified consultations and studies in marine sciences, fish and fish farming, agriculture, environmental geology, biophysics and others, and our participation in this exhibition gave us opportunities to see Saudi market activities as well as holding a number of bilateral meetings with business owners from various Gulf countries.”

Ali Bin Rashid Alehsani, owner of Nafais Factory, said: “We are a factory specialised in carving and designing names and logos, making shields, office sets, incense burners, hospitality sets and luxury gifts in various types and shapes.”

Zaima Bint Saif Al Salamiya displayed the products of grandmother’s mixes consisting of natural materials and used for hair and skin care, including natural hair dyes as an alternative to chemical dyes. She spoke about the participation: “Participation in the Entrepreneurship Forum and Exhibition ‘RAD 2019’ was good and useful, whether personally, practically or socially. I will not hesitate to participate in it, or in a similar one, again. I hope that I will have the opportunity once again and I am greatly thankful to OCCI for giving me the opportunity to be a member of this delegation with its diverse works and activity and good dealing. We were honoured to exchange the most important commercial opportunities and skills with the members of the delegation. The participation also gave us opportunities to get acquainted with the Saudi market and its elements and the extent of its acceptance of our products, in addition to exchanging experiences between members of the delegation and Saudi entrepreneurs and introducing our capabilities and openness to the ideas of the Saudi side, whether in the field of our business or in other areas, to develop our business with new creative ideas. Saudi side, whether officials, organisers, entrepreneurs, exhibition visitors or even society, with whom we talked, knew about the interest of Omanis and their openness to the world of entrepreneurship and their love to compete or participate in business and their desire to open areas of cooperation in various fields.”

Ismail bin Mohammed Al Rawahi, owner of Ibdaa Skill Company, said: “Our participation in the exhibition came to display our products, which include innovative gifts and educational toys designed and prepared by the company.”

Ahmed bin Nasser Al Mafraji, owner of Nada Al Rabea Company for the production and sale of desalination plants and equipment, reviewed the company’s activities in converting salty water into clean water suitable for drinking and agricultural use.

Hamoud Bin Sulaiman Al Amri, owner of Oman Honey Shop Enterprise, spoke about participation, saying: “We participated in Entrepreneurs Forum and Exhibition RAD 2019 to display our products of Omani honey and frankincense, which were prepared in innovative ways that suit all categories. We introduced our Omani products to the visitors of the exhibition and our corner was very popular. The exhibition was well organised, and pavilions had a significant role in attracting visitors.”
In a festival celebrating emerging and aspiring enterprises in the field of entrepreneurship, the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada) has recently organised “Ebdaat Omania” Exhibition, under the patronage of HE Dr. Hamed bin Said Al Aufi, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), the voice of the private sector, participated as one of the supporters of the exhibition. About 200 participants, most of them small and medium enterprises (SMEs), attended the exhibition.

The exhibition witnessed large number of visitors and its seventh edition came under the theme of “Shopping and Enjoyment” with the aim of developing the capabilities and skills of entrepreneurs to display their products and find new marketing outlets and exchange experiences between the participating entrepreneurs in various fields such as marketing, display, packaging and Promotion, etc. It aimed at highlighting local Omani products, increasing sales volume of the participating enterprises, and providing temporary or permanent job opportunities to Omanis by entrepreneurs. The exhibition also granted an opportunity to the general public to shop from the products of the participating SMEs, and benefit from the services provided by them as well as enjoying the accompanying events and the available corners so that the exhibition was an ideal place that brought families under one roof.

More than 200 SMEs from various vital sectors participated which is deemed to be an evidence of the diversity and multiplicity of entrepreneurial skills, as participation included sectors such as oil and gas, food products, logistics, tourism projects, innovative industries, renewable energy, information technology and smart technologies, in addition to projects of innovative craft products, innovative students’ projects, scientific innovation and associations of Omani women. The exhibition was accompanied by many events such as theatre performances, children’s corner, smart rest corner and others.

Fruitful Agreements
In its last version, “Ebdaat Omania” witnessed the signing of several commercial agreements: Madayn National Business Centre signed three memoranda of cooperation and support with a number of SMEs to benefit from the services they provide. Oman Oil Group and Orpic signed a cooperation agreement with Navon enterprise to provide wall pipe fixing services for wells, while Haya Water, Oman Wastewater Services Company, managed to sign various agreements with 10 SMEs to benefit from the services it provides in the field of connecting homes to sewage network. These agreements were signed on the sidelines of the events of “Ebdaat Omania” Exhibition.

Expected Opportunities
In an interview conducted by Al Ghorfa with participating companies in Ebdaat Omania exhibition, they explained...
the importance of participating in this exhibition because it achieves many goals that serve SMEs such as studying the Omani market, the needs of customers, displaying Omani products, introducing companies to the largest number of visitors and marketing them, attracting concerned and interested parties, developing direct marketing skills, meeting similar projects, and the possibility of holding partnerships and commercial agreements.

Moaaz Al Subhi, the owner of Resin Company, explained that his participation aims to show the company’s products of the fodder industry for pet animals like cats and dogs. The importance of this participation lies in introducing the factory and its products and creating a database for customers in order to obtain new business opportunities. Younis Al Farei said: Ono Educational Company is participating in the exhibition to showcase the Ono educational products innovated by an Omani student who has obtained an intellectual property, which aims to provide an entertainment game for students to facilitate their understanding of basic maths operations.

Khalid Technology Company displayed an innovative and unique product of its kind, a smart incense burner, and participation aimed to show the added value of the product and marketing to the company’s products. The Scientific Club Talents Company is specialised in providing and selling educational robots, astronomy products, educational aids and electronic sensors, also organises educational workshops in robots, programming, engineering and some basic technologies related to the fourth industrial revolution and three-dimensional printing.

The distinguished Ishhar company is specialised in marketing activities of providing effective marketing services to the largest number of owners of SMEs through programs of social media platforms. Mohammed Al Saadi from Afaq Statistical Company said: Our participation in Ebdaat Omania exhibition comes in the context of defining the company’s activities in research, studies and data science in order to study the market closely and offering some educational products for children.

On the other hand, Aisha Al Ruqaishiya of Ayres Natural and Cosmetic Products Company stated: Our company is specialised in natural and cosmetic products that are organic, chemical-free, and care in skin, hair, and body. We wanted to introduce company and products to consumers, and it is an opportunity to meet similar projects owners and the possibility of participating with them in joint projects and find institutions for funding the project at the private and public levels.

Asrar Enterprises displayed products of the company’s factory in the manufacturing industries, as it is the first Omani factory specialised in recycling all wood waste to benefit from it in producing various types of natural coal with high quality using technology that has been created and manufactured in Oman to provide an environmentally friendly product.

One of the technological companies participating in the exhibition was Dawam platform which aimed, through participation, to introduce the platform’s business in providing all types of jobs (partial, permanent or part-time jobs) for Omani so that the communication between the job seeker and the employer is made through the platform. Sidra’s participation comes to offer products inspired from nature, that are organic and plant products provided through an electronic platform for a distinct purchasing experience that mimics the real experience, products that are free from harmful chemicals and gluten.

Among the participating companies, which specialises in interior design, was MD Design, a company that specialises in designing furniture, graphic panels, design and printing on fabrics and leather in an artistic and heritage-inspired manner. The participation aimed to introduce visitors to unique patterns of interior decoration.

As for the Helix Skin Care Centre, it participated to display a unique mechanism for skin care using helix. It introduced the exhibition visitors to the project idea and how to use this style in skin care.

Orange Group offered its services to the exhibition in commercial mediation with China. The company was established in 2007 and aims to provide solutions and commercial products with China and provide an effective and enriching experience for customers in the Arab world and is compatible and consistent with modern era.

Electronic Souq Marketx has provided the company’s activities in selling goods and services through the electronic payment gateway and delivering them to customers within 120 minutes in the Governorate of Muscat. It also provides services to business owners through Market Xtraders.
Nizwa Industrial Estate (NIE) was opened on November 27, 1994 during the country’s celebrations of the twenty-fourth national day and it is considered one of the active industrial cities operating under the umbrella of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates, Madayn.

NIE has currently an area of 3,111,295 square meters, and the current occupancy rate is about 80% of the total land allocated for investment, and that area is divided into plots of different sizes, according to the projects’ need.

In this issue, Al Ghorfa meets with Engineer Saleh Al Abri, the Director General of Nizwa Industrial Estate, to talk about the City and its vital role in the national economy, existing projects in the Estate and employment opportunities, in addition to the available investment opportunities.

A Pivotal Role

Eng. Saleh Al Abri, Director General of Nizwa Industrial Estate confirmed that since its establishment the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has been establishing industrial cities in the various Governorates of the Sultanate providing them with the necessary services to establish industrial projects. The industrial estates in most of the main cities in the Sultanate have appropriate environments seeking to develop the industrial sector, which has become an important resource of the national economy.

NIE has a pivotal role in accelerating development in Al Dakhiliya Governorate and surrounding regions, especially with the existence of a road network linking it with other regions.
Existing Projects

Al Abri pointed out that the industrial estate has attracted many investors from inside and outside the Sultanate, so the diversity of investments has created a diversity of products, and a diversity of job opportunities provided by these projects for young people. Through its investment projects, the City adds a lot to the local economy, whether through providing direct job opportunities or indirect opportunities to the local community through the services provided to the investors, in addition to utilising local raw materials in production processes in the factories of the Estate.

By the end of the first quarter of 2019, the number of projects in NIE reached 141 projects including various activities in several industrial, service and commercial areas, with a total investment of RO 245,695,761.

The Director General also explained the most important of these activities, including logistic services and technical support for oil and gas projects, catering services for foodstuff, cutting and forming steel, furniture and wood manufacturing, plastic industries (pipes and tanks), building materials (tiles, bricks, marble, ceramic, etc.), and liquefied gas products, as well as manufacturing glass, food and other products.

Job Opportunities

About job opportunities, Al Abri said: NIE has contributed to providing job opportunities for the national job seekers. The number of workers in the factories has reached 5,300 employees and technicians in various administrative and technical specialisations, in which Omanisation rate has reached 36% of the total employees, estimated as 1,865 Omanis, both males and females.

Infrastructure

Al Abri pointed out that NIE management is implementing two projects in the Estate, with a total cost exceeding 5.390 million Omani rials. The first project, which will take 18 months to be implemented, is to expand the third and fourth stages on an area of one million square meters, in addition to a second entrance to the area. As for the second project, it is a complementary work for the second and third stages and the sewage station in the Estate.

Interest in Investors

Al Abri also said: The role of NIE is not limited to providing the ideal location for the project and providing different infrastructure services, but it is rather a constant communication relationship that begins before localising the project and continues thereafter with the aim of creating an ideal business environment that grants the investor opportunities for success and growth.

The management, in coordination with the various government bodies, also supports the needs of the factories and investors in the Estate in various related fields to facilitate the procedure for the factories on request, as well as implementing industrial security and occupational safety measures. We also work hard to achieve the national objectives of the industrial sector in general through contributing to attract foreign capital for investment in the Sultanate, as well as localising the national capital, stimulating the private sector to contribute to the achievement of sustainable and comprehensive economic and social development, introducing modern technologies, providing employees with technical skills needed to develop their production, and creating new jobs and investments.
Farmers Forum Discusses Food Security

Coverage: Ibtisam Saadia

With the purpose of being acquainted with agricultural experiences, expertise and modern production methods and seeking to inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship in order to draw attention for establishing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in various areas of food security, the first Agricultural Forum for farmers and livestock breeders was held at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) branch in North Al Sharqiya Governorate under the patronage of Dr. Abdulaziz bin Mansour Bin Ghaleb Al Shanfari, Director General of Agriculture and Livestock in North and South Al Sharqiya Governorates, in the presence of Ali bin Salim Al Hajri, Chairman of the Chamber’s Branch in North Al Sharqiya Governorate, General directors of all government institutions and business owners.

Agricultural experiences and expertise

Rashid bin Said Al Sudairy, Chairman of the Food Security Committee in the Chamber’s Branch in North Al Sharqiya Governorate, delivered a speech during the opening ceremony of the forum, in which he clarified that the forum seeks to develop the agricultural sector in North Al Sharqiya Governorate and identify its challenges and obstacles to find appropriate solutions and involve farmers and livestock breeders in the plans and programs of the food security sector. He praised the success stories achieved by local farmers through their adoption of modern agricultural technologies funded and supported by the financing institutions in the Sultanate, and their efforts to expand them and access regional markets with their products. He also said: We look forward to seeing new agricultural projects managed by Omanis working to crystallise promising investment opportunities in the agricultural and animal sectors and contribute to the emergence of new marketing activities and the establishment of other activities related to storage, packaging, refrigeration and transportation, because they are feasible activities that help increase the self-sufficiency ratios of agricultural products and improve its display methods and opening up external export markets for them in a way that enhances the food security system in the Sultanate.

Omani Agricultural Association

During the first agricultural forum for farmers and livestock breeders, Mohammed bin Ali Al Duwaqi, head of Omani Agricultural Association in North Al Sharqiya Governorate, said: In the Omani Agricultural Association, we seek to find constructive cooperation with government authorities to solve and overcome the obstacles and problems facing the member farmers affiliated to the Association, adopt advanced agricultural technologies, guide farmers and livestock breeders towards the use of advanced modern equipment and technologies in their farms and agricultural holdings, and the transfer and exchange of expertise and technical information about proper production methods as well as encouraging farmers to use environment-friendly pesticides and non-damaging components of nature and water wealth.

Agricultural products marketing

Al Duwaqi also explained the most important work that the farmers association is seeking in the coming period, encourage young job seekers to enter the field of marketing Omani agricultural products and add real value to them through sorting, packaging and designing one brand for Omani agricultural products so that they are known to the consumer as well as benefiting from the field of agricultural guides implemented by the agricultural development departments.

Economic feasibility study

Eng. Khater bin Mohammed Al Alawi, Director of the Agricultural and Animal Marketing Department at the General Directorate of Agricultural and Animal Marketing, presented two workshops. The first one clarified preparation of the economic feasibility study of agricultural projects and how to study the market and focus on technical, executive and financial plans for the project, and presented a model for
establishing greenhouses and how to take into account various aspects in this regard, such as design, areas, type of product and crop to be harvested, indicating the importance of specifying product characteristics, target market and suppliers, requirements for retail processes, manufacturing tools, marketing costs, revenue, and expected net profits and losses. He also pointed out to the financing institutions in the Sultanate from which the owners of agricultural projects can benefit.

Sheep production project
The second workshop dealt with initiating the establishment of agricultural and animal projects and presented a model that represented sheep production on the outputs of the plant project and the importance of supplying it with data on the volume of consumption, import, export, production, forecasting demand for future project products, the production capacity of the project, the infrastructure factors needed for the total investment cost of the project and capital account.

Investing in the animal sector
Dr. Al-Moataz Billah Mohammed Al Mursi, a veterinarian at the Animal Resources Department, presented a workshop on the second day of the forum, which came under the title of the poultry industry between reality and aspiration, in which he dealt with the great development witnessed in poultry industry. He reviewed the most important investment projects in the poultry sector and related services. He indicated to the needs and requirements for establishing poultry projects of various kinds and those of producing eggs, the land areas needed, the tools and equipment that increase production and maintain the proper growth of poultry and provide them with an environment that prevents disease and epidemics.

Dr. Al Moataz Billah referred to immunisation and its importance in preserving animal wealth, saying that immunisation is a preventive project to preserve animal wealth and increase its productive capacity. He presented some guidance on how to deal with some diseases that affect animal pens and how to treat them, and the efforts of the General Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock in North and South Al Sharqiya Governorates in the field of immunization and preserving animal wealth.

Camel milk production
Mubarak Al Musallami from Ibra Technological College presented a workshop on investment opportunities in the animal sector and gave a model for camel milk production and how to contribute to raising self-sufficiency ratios of animal products, and reviewed some efforts made by government and private institutions to encourage and motivate companies and institutions to invest in animal projects.

Specialised agricultural exhibition
The forum included an exhibition that contained small and medium agricultural projects that produce different types of agricultural crops in addition to the participation of some veterinary clinics. The General Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock in North and South Al Sharqiya Governorates distributed publications and guidebooks on ways to get rid of agricultural pests. The General Directorate also presented examples of types of wheat cultivated in some Wilayats of the Sultanate. The Quality Control Laboratory for Food Technology also participated in the exhibition and distributed publications on the technologies it uses and its efficiency in carrying out analytical tests for honey products.
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Education in Al Dhahirah Governorate represented by Vocational Guidance Division, organised the opening ceremony of the Student Companies Exhibition in Al Dhahirah.

The ceremony was sponsored by Dr. Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Mantheri, Dean of Ibri Technological College, and in the presence of Saif bin Said Al Badi, member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate, and Zuwaina Bint Saif Al Mazroui, Director General of Education in Al Dhahirah, and a number of government and private sector officials, members of the board of directors of the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah, and a number of business owners. Held for two days at Wadi Mall in Ibri, the exhibition included more than 30 student companies from various schools in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

The exhibition aimed to encourage students to establish and develop student companies and to provide students with an opportunity to open outlets to sell their products in addition to introducing the student companies to various categories of the society.

Abdullah bin Khalfan Al Maqbali, Head of the Vocational Guidance Division, delivered a speech in which he said: The organisation of this exhibition comes with the aim of highlighting the ideas and initiatives of students in the field of entrepreneurship, as well as promoting the culture of entrepreneurship in the hearts of students and encouraging them to distinguish, compete and innovate, adding that the participation of 30 student companies from different schools in the Governorate is an achievement and a gain of finding a new generation of entrepreneurs. The exhibition was accompanied by competitions for the public. Participating student companies were evaluated to choose the three best companies to honour them.

Saif bin Said Al Badi, member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate said: “The organisation of this forum comes within the framework of the keenness of the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate to enhance aspects of cooperation in the field of entrepreneurship and encourage students to establish small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and practise self-employment, stressing the importance of developing the skills and capabilities of students to be able to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

Training Workshops

The exhibition was accompanied by a workshop entitled “E-Marketing and Economic Feasibility Study”, which aimed to familiarise school students with the importance of preparing economic feasibility study for the project to be implemented, in accordance with the capabilities and skills of the project owner and the goals sought from establishing the commercial activity, in addition to providing students with the basics and principles of the arts of e-marketing and consolidating the
concept of commercial marketing in light of the development of communication methods and modern technologies. Around 150 students from various schools in Al Dhahirah governorate participated. The seminar included a set of themes, the most prominent of which were how to choose the project idea and prepare a work plan, how to prepare a feasibility study, the entities that finance projects, how to turn the idea into a real project, team building, and methods of self-motivation. E-marketing topic included modern concepts in marketing and methods of using social media in promotion.

Yahya Al Qasimi, trainer and investment consultant, said: “This course is an integrated package on how to establish any commercial project, which contributed to enriching the economic thought of school students in Al Dhahirah Governorate. Also, the topics of economic feasibility study and e-marketing are important entry to enter the entrepreneurship world, through which students will acquire the necessary skills to prepare the business plan for the project and focus on the benefits and advantages of the project idea.

Students’ Opinions
Amjad bin Ahmed Al Shukaili, one of the students participated in the e-marketing and economic feasibility study workshop, said: “We have learned things we did not know before in the field of marketing, as we got acquainted with the methods used in the promotion and marketing of products. We are pleased to extend our sincere thanks to the Chamber branch in the governorate for organising this distinguished workshop”.

Maryam Bint Said Al Balushi said: “I participated in the economic feasibility study training course and I am able to draw some ideas that can be used in preparing the economic feasibility study for my project. I extend my sincere thanks to Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch in Al Dhahirah governorate for the best organisation of the workshop.”

Participating Student Companies
Madrasati product project is a school project that works in the field of greenhouses. The project uses the technology of agriculture without soil, leaf crops (lettuce, basil, and strawberries) are grown. The project aimed to instilling the culture of self-employment among school students to enable them to meet the needs of the market. The number of participants in the project is 22 students, and the project was established in 2017.

Al Torath Al Khalid Company was established in 2014 and it works in the field of ceramics and pottery. The company was established with the aim of preserving the heritage of parents and grandparents, as well as making ceramics and pottery in modern ways to suit all desires, using high quality materials. The company consists of five students and has many participations in the exhibitions, the most prominent of which is “Fingertips love art” in the Chamber branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate, the exhibition of productive enterprises and Salalah Tourism Festival.

Nawaem Al Tolabiya Company for the manufacture and formation of soap manufactures raw glycerine soap. There is a raw medical glycerine soap that is not widely spread on the market because of its higher price, which is considered a moisturiser and rich in useful medicinal ingredients. The company also set several goals, most notably encouraging the community to use natural herbs to preserve the skin and preserve the ancient heritage and to enhance the culture of female entrepreneurship and develop female students’ skills and enable their creative and leadership capabilities to create their own companies, and training them to find appropriate solutions and plans for the establishment of successful student companies. The company consists of seven students.

Mr phone is a student company working in the field of repair of all electronics, but the project specialises in “Apple” products in general (phones, tablets, iPads, computers) and one of the company’s main goals is to strive to develop the project and add new services according to the interests of customers, and open an independent shop to provide services related to this project to the community at competitive prices.

Closing Ceremony
Zuwaina bint Salf Al Mazrouei, Director General of Education in Al Dhahirah Governorate, sponsored the closing ceremony of the Student Companies Exhibition. The celebration included honouring the top three student companies: Nawaem Student Company for soap making got the first position and Mr phone got the second position and Beautycare company won the third position.
National Training Fund Signs Agreement to Qualify 400 Job Seekers

In cooperation with Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in North Al Batinah Governorate, National Training Fund (NTF) and Oman Educational and Training Investment Co. (OETI) signed an Agreement to build capabilities for Omani job seekers.

The Agreement includes enhancing joint cooperation between the two institutions with the aim of training, qualifying and building the capabilities of 400 job seekers to increase their employability in the industrial sector within a complete qualification program coupled with employment. The Agreement was signed within the activities of Oman Forum for Partnership and Social Responsibility.

Sharifah bint Taher Aideed, the Fund’s CEO, and Anis bin Mohammad bin Marhoon Al-Ma’amari, CEO of OETI signed the Agreement.

Abdullah bin Ali Shafi’i, Chairman, North Al Batinah OCCI, said: “As the official representative of the private sector in the Sultanate, the Chamber is keen to enhance cooperation with all parties to find a common formula that contributes to the development of national cadres and specifically targets the category of job seekers. It aims to qualify 400 job seekers in the industrial field to be a national source in production and development and increasing proportion of Omanisation in the private sector, to achieve economic development goals laid down by the wise government by giving young people the confidence to develop the private sector in the Sultanate.”

Anis bin Mohammed bin Marhoon Al-Ma’amari, CEO of OETI, said: “The signing of the Agreement and the partnership with the NTF, in cooperation with OCCI in North Al Batinah Governorate, aims to complement the Company’s march in the field of education and training, because the University of Sohar is the most prominent investment of the company in higher education and now comes the industrial vocational training that would provide the Sultanate’s sector with qualified personnel for the advancement of this vital sector, and this, in turn, is in harmony with the “Tanfeeth” initiatives that have supported two industrial projects with the value of RO 5 million at Sohar University campus.”
Seminar on Investments in Sohar

Coverage: Hamoud Al Baraiki

Under the patronage of HE Sheikh Ali bin Ahmed Al Shamsi, Wali of Sohar, and Acting Governor of North Al Batinah, and in the presence of Abdullah bin Ali Shafi’i, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chamber’s Branch in North Al Batinah, the General Directorate of Commerce and Industry in North Al Batinah Governorate has recently organised a seminar on stimulating and encouraging investment. The seminar was in cooperation with OCCI, the Government Communication Centre at the Council of Ministers and the Public Authority for Privatisation and Partnership.

Abdullah bin Ali Shafi’i, Chairman of OCCI branch in North Al Batinah, said: “The laws related to investment, such as foreign capital investment law, the privatisation law, the partnership law, the bankruptcy law and commercial companies law, mainly help in developing the investment climate in the Sultanate, improving the business environment, and granting more confidence to foreign investors.”

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Badi, Director of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, presented two working papers on the Foreign Capital Investment Law and the Commercial Companies Law.

Khalid bin Khamis Al Masrouri, Director of the Department of Audit and Control of Commercial Establishments at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reviewed a working paper on bankruptcy law, in which he said: The bankruptcy law came in implementation of the recommendations of the seminar on the development of small and medium enterprises held in Saih Al Shamekh, with regard to commercial business, and the need for an independent law on bankruptcy by seeking guidance from the laws issued in some countries, especially the modern ones, which represent developed provisions in the organisation of bankruptcy and the precautionary stages which precede it that would help the merchant to get out of the stage of financial and administrative turmoil after paying off his debts according to the repayment plan. He also reviewed the most important contents of the law, restructuring and protective conciliation.

Shereen Al Balushiya, a legal specialist in the Public Authority for Privatisation and Partnership, presented two working papers: the first one dealt with the Law of Partnership and the second discussed the Privatisation Law in which she addressed the most important goals of the Authority, which include: Encouraging partnership between the public and private sectors, expanding the role of the private sector in investing in the Authority’s projects, contributing to the development of the national economy, enhancing the local added value, diversifying the sources of income, contributing to building the capabilities of citizens and increasing job opportunities for them, contributing to increasing market and competitive strength and developing the capital market.

Al Balushiya also reviewed a number of themes, the most prominent of them are the general competencies of the Authority, projects and programs that the Authority is specialised in implementing them, the importance of partnership between the public and private sectors, the concept of partnership, the benefits of the law and the procedures for partnership between the public and private sectors, the benefits granted to the path of private initiatives, the steps of offering and awarding procedures, the concept of privatisation and the advantages of the law in it. The objectives of the Privatisation Law which have expanded the role of the private sector in owning and managing various economic projects, encouraging investments, attracting different technical and administrative expertise, and transferring ownership or management of government organisations to the private sector and increasing effectiveness of operating resources, developing quality services, creating good job opportunities, and strengthening the Omani capital market were also discussed.
Development Visions of GCC Reviewed

by: Rabeea bint Saeed Al Harthiya

Within the activities of “The Days of GCC”, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) organised a seminar entitled “The arch of economic cooperation: Success stories and development visions”, with the aim of introducing economic joint business decisions through presenting Omani economic experiences provided by Omani businessmen and entrepreneurs, to increase awareness of joint Gulf business decisions among economists and owners of large, medium and small enterprises, start-ups and students’ companies in the Sultanate.

HE Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors, delivered a speech in which he said: “On behalf of myself and my brothers the members of OCCI Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome you in the Sultanate which embraces these blessed days from GCC days, that are organised by OCCI in partnership and coordination with many government and private entities and institutions in the Sultanate and from the brotherly GCC. We sincerely hope that the noble and supreme goals of such meetings will be carried out by achieving more cooperation and partnership between our national economies and enhancing the movement of trade and investment, which lead us to the adoption of economic initiatives in all productive and service sectors.

Al Yousef added: Despite the geopolitical circumstances surrounding it, the Gulf Cooperation Council has remained among the most important regional institutions that have managed over the past years to form a solid base and foundations of joint Gulf economic work. This great Gulf institution (GCC) has taken many initiatives and made a lot of achievements that have maintained and strengthened the Gulf relationship, and we as a private sector, have great confidence in the concerned authorities and officials of this institution to continue the joint Gulf economic work.

HE continued: We all agree on the importance of supporting national products through the added Gulf value, by adopting a clear program and criteria to give them preference in various projects, especially major government projects, as well as the importance of supporting entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises owned by GCC citizens. OCCI is ready to adopt an initiative to support these enterprises through Secretariat General of GCC and in cooperation the Federation of GCC Chambers.

Within the activities of the seminar a discussion session was organised, in which HE Khalifa Al Abri, Assistant Secretary General for Economic and Development Affairs at Secretariat General of GCC, discussed the efforts made by all to achieve economic integration. The GCC Chambers of Commerce, the representative of GCC private sector, has been working hard
to find marketing outlets and markets for the products, not only on the Gulf level, but also on the world market, to enhance its competitiveness.

Mutlaq bin Saad Al Mutlaq, Director of GCC Customs Affairs Department at Secretariat General of GCC, explained that foreign imports that harm the industry in the Gulf market are being considered to stop them, and this is what happened in battery, cement and paper industries and others. HE stressed that the GCC Customs Union has established the concept of the unified market in the GCC, which reflected positively on both the merchants and the consumers.

Badr Al Aufi, an economic consultant at OCCI, said: “We need more structured legislations that facilitate the process of trade exchange among GCC countries, as well as economic feasibility studies for companies that consider the Gulf market in an integrated manner.”

Ibrahim Al Amri, from Oman Flour Mills, stressed that integration between companies in GCC Countries helps to achieve self-sufficiency in the Gulf market, pointing out that there are some global challenges outside the scope of the GCC countries represented in dumping management.

Discussions drew the attention employers who wish to establish factories to consider the law of the GCC Customs Union, and from this perspective the Customs Union decided to establish a federal authority.

GCC countries have achieved accelerated steps in the field of economic cooperation between the public and private sectors, and on the humanitarian level, development, legislation, regulations and laws related to the organisation of the economic sector to reach joint Gulf economic integration. The GCC countries are working hard to activate the role of the economic sectors and to support the development process in member countries to reach a comprehensive economic development vision and sustainable economic stability.
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has recently inaugurated the Omani-Egyptian Joint Business Council. The Omani side was represented by HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidi, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, while HE Eng. Amr Nassar, the Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry, represented the Egyptian side, in the presence of HE Mohamed Ghoneim, the ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate, and HE Qais bin Mohammad Al Youssef, OCCI Board of Directors’ Chairman, and the members of OCCI Board of Directors.

Promoting Trade Relations
HE Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidi said: The inauguration of the council comes as a culmination of the joint brotherly relations between the two countries and in implementation of the desire of the leaders of the two countries. We count on this council in strengthening the relationship between the two countries with regard to investments and direct import and export.

HE explained that there were an expansion and increase in the import and export processes between the two brotherly countries during the past two years in addition to an exchange of commercial operations between them, stressing that the Sultanate has introduced many regulations and legislations that would contribute to facilitate investment and trade exchanges.

HE also indicated that the commercial relationship between the two countries has become wider and faster than before, as both the ports of Salalah and Sohar have become links between the two countries through shipping, affirming the Sultanate’s willingness to enter into partnerships with Egyptian companies and find large warehouses for both sides in the Special Economic Zone in Duqm.

Commercial Movement Activation
HE Eng. Amr Nassar, the Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry, delivered a speech in which he expressed his pleasure to be in the Sultanate for attending the first meeting of the Council, which reflects the true desire of the governments of the two brotherly countries and the business community in the two countries to strengthen the ties of economic cooperation between them.

HE also said that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries increased from $200 million in 2015 to reach $412 million in 2018, expressing his confidence that this volume does not reflect the capabilities of the two countries, and it can be doubled.

HE also expressed his aspiration for setting up an exhibition and festival for Egyptian products in the Sultanate, accompanied by a number of Egyptian cultural and heritage events, adding that on the strategic level, it is important to review the opportunities of strategic cooperation in the logistical field to stimulate trade movement in the Gulf region, some
Asian countries and East Africa through Omani ports, such as Salalah, Sohar and Duqm, as well as discussing direct export opportunities between Egyptian and Omani ports.

HE the Egyptian Minister invited the Omani side to the second meeting of the Omani-Egyptian Business Council in Egypt during the first half of 2020, pointing out to holding a forum for trade and investment opportunities between the Sultanate and Egypt on the side-lines of that visit.

Hoping that the meeting comes out with serious and effective recommendations that can be applied on the ground between the business communities of the two brotherly countries, HE stressed that the Egyptian government will not hesitate to support various endeavours that would enhance economic cooperation between both countries.

**Economic Partnership**

Sheikh Nasr bin Amer Al Hosni, chairman of the Omani side of the Omani-Egyptian Joint Business Council, said: “We are happy to start a new phase of joint economic work between the private sector in the Sultanate and the brotherly Arab Republic of Egypt through the inauguration of the Omani-Egyptian joint business council, and we affirm the keenness of OCCI and the Omani private sector, with all its sectors and institutions, to establish commercial and economic partnerships and cooperation with partners in the Egyptian private sector and work together to take advantage of investment opportunities and facilities in both the Sultanate and the Arab Republic of Egypt as well as the desire to exchange experiences and partnerships regarding anything that can serve the interests and benefits of our two brotherly countries.”

He added: “The brotherly and historical ties between the Sultanate and the Arab Republic of Egypt are strong and deep and are worthy of establishing a broad base of commercial and economic dealings and exchanges during the current stage. Therefore, it is important to continue working on building more effective trade cooperation, and this requires more work, especially in activating the Omani-Egyptian Business Council as it represents the axis of trade relations and a centre through which the real economic partnership and the achievement of better cooperation are kicked off.

In conclusion, he said: “We look forward to see economic and commercial initiatives from both Omani and Egyptian sides during the coming stage, and in our role we, in OCCI, reaffirm our support to such initiatives that we never doubt they will be successful, and will lead the relations between the Sultanate and the Republic Arab of Egypt to greater levels in terms of trade and joint investment.”

**Business Sector Development**

The inauguration of the Council comes as a reinforcement of the bilateral trade relations between the two brotherly countries, the development of the business sector, and the mapping of strategies to contribute to developing commercial activities and enhancing investment opportunities.

The meeting discussed the possibility of linking the ports of Sohar and Suez and establishing an industrial complex at Sohar Free Zone. The two parties reviewed the volume of trade exchange and cooperation between the two sides, aspiring to raise levels of cooperation in various fields, including transit transport, taking advantage of the available capabilities at the ports of the two countries, and holding exhibitions in both countries to promote national products.

The meeting also discussed the mechanisms of developing trade exchange. Statistics indicate that the total imports from the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate amounted to approximately RO 27 million in 2017, and Omani exports during the same year amounted to more than RO 37 million, while the volume of Egyptian investments registered in the Sultanate till 2016 amounted to more than RO 48 million, and the Egyptian contribution amounted to more than RO 23 million till 2016 at a rate of approximately 48.6%, and with a contribution of 250 investment companies.
Seminar on Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries Insurance

The necessity for issuing a law to regulate agricultural insurance independently and in detail and to enact a comprehensive legislation regulating relations between the banking sector and insurance companies as well as preserving the rights of the parties.

By: Rabeea bint Saeed Al Harthiya

Under the patronage of HE Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and in the presence of HE Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, Chairman of OCCI, and members of the Board of Directors, in addition to officials and stakeholders from agricultural, livestock and fisheries insurance sector, OCCI, represented by the Chamber’s Committees of Finance and Insurance, and Food Security, organised a Seminar on “Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries Insurance”. The seminar recommended the necessity of issuing a law to regulate agricultural insurance independently and in detail and formulate a comprehensive legislation regulating relations between the banking sector and insurance companies while preserving the rights of the parties, as well as the commitment of insurance companies in front of its customers through compensating the beneficiary of the insurance policy. There is need to reduce and simplify the number of documents, reports and data required to be filled out by the client while registering the application form or claim of compensation, as well as facilitating procedures.

It also recommended the importance of performing comprehensive insurance coverage for all economic sectors, including the agriculture and fisheries sector, the importance of reliability by customers while filling out the insurance application form to preserve rights, and pondering the establishment of a national fund for providing assistance, intervention and support to farmers and fishermen in times of disasters, and a portion from the sector’s income can be taken to finance this fund, and also activating the role of Omani Insurance Association.

Another recommendation is the importance of establishing a company to market agricultural, fisheries and livestock products to contribute to reducing the burden on farmers and fishermen in marketing their products, and the establishment of a department concerned with insurance in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The functions of the department would include dealing with the farmers’ association and with insurance companies, resolving problems that may arise between the parties, and cooperation and coordination with the Omani Insurance Association and insurance companies operating in the Sultanate on agricultural and fisheries insurance. Spreading insurance awareness to farmers, livestock owners and fishermen, in addition to introducing the insurance system for fishing boats and fishing vessels according to the Law of Fisheries and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources, amending the registration form for fishing boats and fishing vessels and fishermen, implementing agricultural and fisheries insurance in phased manner as well as publishing and promoting it shall also include its responsibilities. It is also necessary to complete the work team formed by the Capital Market Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and agricultural associations by continuing the work to cover all aspects of agricultural insurance, as well as the importance of concluding an agricultural and fisheries insurance policy before obtaining financing for an agricultural or fisheries project. A comprehensive review of insurance costs is necessary to ensure that they are attractive and marketable to all parties. It is also essential to develop a comprehensive database that takes into account the need for accurate information for the insurance sector, and the inclusion of agricultural and fisheries insurance in the strategic plans for food security in the Sultanate. The Seminar aimed to discuss another aspect of the economy represented in insurance for the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sector, and to make them more sustainable sources that enrich the national economy.

Vital Activity

Eng. Saleh bin Mohammed Al Shanfari, Chairman of the Chamber’s Food Security Committee, indicated in his speech that the Sultanate’s efforts in these sectors play an
important role towards significantly enhancing the comprehensive development of the country.

The Seminar identified the main axes of discussion which come in the area of credit insurance facilities provided to fishermen and farmers, and the importance of agricultural insurance in agricultural development, through securing agricultural crops using a unified document and the extent of benefiting from them. It discussed the importance of insurance for the fisheries sector (blue economy), and fishing activity throughout the Sultanate, reviewed the results and recommendations of the agricultural insurance seminars that were held previously in the governorates during the past year and current year, in addition to discussing the document of agricultural insurance, fishing boats and fishing vessels and fishermen activities at sea (blue economy) and the country’s benefit from these experiences and the reality of insurance in the Sultanate.

Agricultural Insurance

Suleiman bin Mahfouz Al Toubi, Director General of Agricultural and Livestock Marketing at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Vice Chairman of the work team for introducing agricultural insurance products in the Sultanate, said in his speech: The seminar highlighted a very important topic, it is the agricultural insurance as it is known that agricultural production with its animal and plant parts is exposed to damages and risks that are mostly due to natural factors outside the human will, such as natural disasters. Here lies the importance of introducing agricultural insurance in order to contribute to reducing the damages that these dangers may cause and trying to reduce its consequences to the minimum levels through the fragmentation of such damages by using insurance channels and its products, which has become an urgent need due to such disasters.

Dialogue Sessions

The first session of the Seminar was managed by Dr. Khalid bin Mansour Al Zadjali, CEO of Oman Fisheries Company, member of the Chamber’s Food Security Committee. Isa bin Saleh Al Naabi, Director of Credit Department of Oman Development Bank, participated in the session and spoke about the credit financing facilities for fishermen and farmers, and future plans to expand the provision of insurance services to bank customers, in addition to the challenges and difficulties in facilitating the provision of insurance services.

He pointed to the role of agricultural insurance in protecting the farmer and the fisherman. In the event of damage, insurance companies compensate farmers and fishermen who have already insured their equipment against damages resulting from those risks, in full or in part, according to the contract between the two parties, indicating the role of agricultural insurance in the stability and development of the sector, and the importance of agricultural insurance in agricultural development and food security.

Dr. Hussein Al Muscati, Director General of Fish Resources Development at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries discussed a working paper on the importance of insurance for fisheries sector (blue economy), fishing activity across the Sultanate, maritime laws and customs.

The second dialogue session was managed by Salim bin Saif Al Abdali, member of the Chamber’s Food Security Committee. Baqir Bin Shaaban Al Lawati, Director of Marketing Information Department, reviewed the recommendations and results of the agricultural insurance seminars held in the governorates during the last period.

Mahdi bin Salim Al Harthy, Director General of Retail at Dhofar Insurance Company, reviewed the insurance policy of agriculture and fishing boats, and the session concluded with a working paper delivered by Khalid Al Nowairi, CEO for operations at Oman Reinsurance Company, in which he touched on the agricultural and livestock insurance plan and success requirements, and the paper recommended the inclusion of agricultural insurance in the strategic plans of the Sultanate and the issuance of rules and regulations.
Meeting with Ambassadors

OCCI branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate organised an open meeting that included the ambassadors of Southeast Asian countries.

HE Soleeni Said, the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, HE Mustafa Tawfiq Abdul Latif, of the Republic of Indonesia, HE Swat Kyawsuk, the ambassador of Thailand, HE Dr. Endmund Chia, Consul General of the Republic of Singapore, HE Mohammed Azmi Abdullah of Malaysia, and many business owners and officials, were present along with HE Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, Chairman of OCCI Board Of Directors. This meeting was aimed at introducing ambassadors of these countries to the investment opportunities available in the governorate, as well as introducing business owners in Al Dhahirah Governorate to investment opportunities in Southeast Asian countries.

by: Muhammad bin Salem Al-Kalbani
Saif bin Said Al Badi, Chairman of the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate, gave a welcome speech in which he said: “The Chamber branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate always seeks to create partnerships with many entities and institutions to serve the economic sector and investment fields, whether local or external. This meeting is considered one of the forms of those partnerships that aim to increase economic cooperation between the Sultanate and the countries of Southeast Asia.

Swat Kyausok, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand, Chairman of the ASEAN Committee, delivered a speech in which he said: The ambassadors of Southeast Asian countries were keen to participate in this open meeting with business owners in Al Dhahirah Governorate. We invite the Omani investors to enter the markets of Southeast Asian countries that enjoy steady growth.

Nayef bin Salem Al Abri made a visual presentation about the available investment opportunities in the Governorate. Each of the Southeast Asian ambassadors present in the meeting gave visual presentations on investment opportunities in their countries, in which they summarised the most important opportunities, advantages and incentives offered by those countries for investment. A dialogue session was held to discuss what was presented.

HE Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, said: “We are pleased to hold this meeting that brought together the ambassadors of Southeast Asian countries with the business owners of Al Dhahirah Governorate. It is a good step by the ambassadors of these countries to see the investment elements in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

Salem bin Salim Al Junabi, Vice chairman of Economic Affairs, Branches and chairman of the Chamber’s Branch in Al Wusta Governorate, said: “We thank the business owners of Al Dhahirah Governorate for their positive interaction in this meeting, as well as the Chamber’s branch in Al Dhahirah Governorate for organising such activities which in turn will open broader horizons for investment in southeast Asian countries, and thus contribute to the process of trade exchange.”

HE Mustafa Tawfiq Abdul Latif, the ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, said: “The investment factors in Indonesia are numerous due to the multiplicity of economic sectors, the most prominent of which are the oil and gas sector, tourism, infrastructure, etc. We also hope that the new legislations recently issued in the Sultanate will benefit everyone, and the embassy will inform the Indonesian investors about these laws.”
Population growth is one of the most prominent demographic phenomena that the world has witnessed after the industrial revolution that appeared in the eighteenth century. Perhaps what distinguishes it more is that the developing countries have witnessed a faster population growth rate compared to the developed countries; this high population growth has been due to the care for mothers and children's health, and to the development of health services, especially in the field of the family and children's health, in addition to the development in lifestyle in terms of the use of technology in all aspects of life, which have resulted in a significant contribution to reducing mortality and increasing birth rates, as well as increasing life expectancy; all these factors have led to a rapid increase of the population at huge rates and over a short period of time, compared to earlier decades.

Second: The importance of the study:
Accordingly, and considering that Oman is one of the developing countries that have witnessed remarkable increases and fluctuations in its population growth...
during different time periods the most important of which were the nineties of the last century and the first decade of the current century. This study is only an attempt to study the type and trends of the relationship between population growth and economic growth in Oman during the period 1990-2018 to come up with a set of results and recommendations that may help in drawing future policies related to demographic growth and its impact on economic growth in the Sultanate.

Third: The problem of the study:
The problem of the study lies in the existence of ambiguity stemming from the dialectic known as the hypothesis that population growth has devoured (consumed- absorbed) economic growth, which stems from the contradiction of opinions and ideas about whether the overall population growth has a positive impact on economic growth in Oman, and the problem of the study also lies in the lack of information to reveal if there is any aspect of causal relationship between population growth and economic growth in the short and long terms in the sultanate.

Because of these different opinions, answering of the following questions are essential in this study:

• Did population growth guttle economic growth, or does it have a positive impact on economic growth in Oman?
• Is there a causal relationship between population growth and economic growth in the Sultanate? And if yes, what are its trends?
• Is the relationship between population growth and economic growth a short or long term phenomenon in Oman?

Fourth: Hypotheses of the Study:
1. Population growth has devoured (absorbed/ excluded) economic growth, ie population growth has a negative impact on economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman.
3. There is no causal relationship between population growth and economic growth in Oman.

Fifth: The Objectives of the Study:
1. The main objective of this study is to test the hypothesis saying that population growth has eaten economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman by conducting a standard experimental exploration of the relationship and its trends between population growth and economic growth in the short and long term.
2. This study also aims to measure the impact of population growth on economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman.

3. This study aims to try to come up with a set of explanatory and explained results and recommendations for the aforesaid relationship, which can help to provide guidance for economic decision makers and partners in economic development in Oman.

Sixth: Methodology of the Study:

This study is based on the adoption and use of annual data of GDP growth rate as an indicator or criterion for economic growth and Population Growth Rate for the period 1990-2017, with the aim of studying the determination of relationship trends between population growth and economic growth in the short and long terms in the Sultanate of Oman, through the use of time series analysis approach, represented in: causality testing, co-integration test, in addition to vectorial autoregressive model (VAR) and error correction model (ECM).

This paper contains four main topics: The first topic deals with the theoretical framework of the study, including a brief presentation of the most important previous studies on the relationship between economic growth and population growth, while the second topic is dedicated to highlight the reality of population growth indicators in Oman, and the third topic is dedicated to the practical aspect of this study, through which the relationship between population growth and economic growth in the Sultanate was measured. Finally, the most important results of this study and its recommendations are included in the fourth topic.

Seventh: Summary of the most important previous studies:

In the beginning, it should be noted that the topic of the relationship between population growth and economic growth had a great debate among many researchers and thinkers about the effect of population growth on economic growth. This controversy emerged mainly according to the ideas and opinions of researchers in three schools of thought, the most important of which can be reviewed as follows:

The school of thinker “Robert Malts”, The philosophy of this school is based on the pessimistic view of population growth as a factor that leads to increased consumption and the emergence of new requirements that may be difficult for governments to meet due to the limited economic resources. Malts believes that natural resources increase according to an individual engineering progression, but the population variable increases according to an even engineering sequence- a consequence which results in a gap in natural resources, and hence societies of high population growth will experience problems of poverty, unemployment, increased government spending, a decrease in saving rates, and then in investment. Thus, he classified population growth as a hindrance in the way of economic development. (Muhammad Afzal 2009), (Gideon Kegor, 2013).

But on the other side, we find that the second school, whose supporters see that the increase in population numbers, creates an increase in the growth of the countries’ output of goods and services as a result of the increase in the workforce, increasing opportunities of creativity, skills and competencies. Among the most important thinkers of this school is John Bowden, who said these famous and optimistic words: “There is no wealth or power without men”, through which he emphasises the strict positive impact of the growing population on the economy, and several thinkers, such as “Jon Batiste Colbert”, philosopher Batiste Duvobon, and the British economist Richard Cantilion, took after him, and this movement calling for the encouragement of population growth was called “Populist”, which finds its roots in the “Mercantile” thought. (Masouda Moisi, 2015, P.27.)

The defenders who argue in favour of population growth are also related to what is called neoclassic, which is indirectly related to Karl Marx’s thought (Marxist), which sees that the argument of the developed countries advocating the need to restrict population growth, because of having negative effects on economic and social development, is only an attempt to monopolise the development of the developing countries and to maintain the international status quo that serves their self-interest. Muhammad Afzal (2009)

Thinkers of the third school - (Felmingham 2004; Bloom, 1986; Solow, 1956) - have neutral ideas- which means that demographic growth is a neutral and completely independent from the factor of economic growth, saying that the rate of population growth has no significant effect on economic growth. Therefore, the supporters of this school see that the population growth factor is an external variable in the standard models related to economic growth. They also see that population growth is not a basic problem but the backwardness is the real problem that impedes the progress of the developing countries. Zuhair Tafer, 2010, Pgs.70-72.

On the other hand, the issue of population growth and its impact on economic and social growth received the attention of many researchers and thinkers in developing and developed countries alike. The results of the studies carried out by the researchers were dissimilar, as some of them emphasise the optimistic trend regarding the positive impact of population growth on economic growth, while others emphasise the pessimistic trend that says that population growth is a dilemma that impedes sustainable development in some countries. Below we are going to review some of those studies that were aimed at studying the interrelationship between population growth and economic growth in some developing countries:

In the study of Nadia Sayyed Ali Muhammad, 2003, on population and development in the Arab Gulf countries (Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait as a model), high population
growth rates in the Gulf countries will increase the demand for public services, and thus will require increased public spending within a short period of time. Moreover, these growth rates, in the current social and economic context, can lead to increased unemployment. Under these circumstances, it is expected that lower levels will result from the formation of human capital and this will slow the progress towards future development.

Emmanuel Anouro, 2003, studied the long-term relationship between economic and population growth in Botswana. In his study, he specifically used common integration models and a correction model to extract short and long term information simultaneously. The findings of the study do not support traditional beliefs, which state that population growth has a negative impact on economic growth, but the results indicated a long-term relationship between economic growth and population growth in Botswana. In addition, a causal relationship was found between population growth and economic growth in one direction from population growth to economic growth. Consequently, the study recommended that if there is a carefully and meticulously designed population growth strategy alongside institutional changes, it is possible to generate economic growth, especially in a country with an emerging economy, such as Botswana.

Muhammad Refaat Al-Miqdad, 2004, studied the effect of population growth on the workforce in Syria during the period 1960-2004 with the aim of identifying the elements of population growth represented by natural increase and clarifying the role of women in it and the requirements of the work environment from a workforce. The study recommended reducing the problem of unemployment, creating enough job opportunities, involving women in various activities, and adopting clear and balanced population policies and strategies (Tafir Zuhair 2010).

In the study of Dureid Fatima, 2007, in which she tried to highlight the demographic growth and its impact on economic and social development in Algeria, as well as the obstacles that hinder it, one of the most important results reached in this study was that the country succeeded in introducing the idea of applying family planning methods to Algerian families, after it was forbidden even if only talking about it, by establishing maternity and child protection centres all over Algeria, in addition to the contribution of the family organisation in reducing demographic growth.

Ali Tobin’s study: In his study, Ali Tobin tried to highlight the impact of demographic growth on economic development, through his problem that was presented as follows: What is the reality of demographic growth and what are its effects on economic development? And among the most important results of the study, the net effect of rapid demographic growth on economic development is negative in the short term, but this does not mask the positive effects that appear in the long term.

Muhammad Afzal (2009) studied the relationship between population growth and economic development in Pakistan between 1950 and 2001. He used a simple multiple regression model which expresses the relationship between real GDP growth (as an indicator of economic growth), and important macroeconomic variables that influence economic growth (population growth, export growth, domestic and foreign investment, and the market size represented by private consumption spending as a percentage of GDP). After analysis, it became clear that there is an important and negative relationship between population growth and indicators of economic development. More precisely, the results indicate that rapid population growth is a real problem in Pakistan because it contributes to the reduction of investment growth as well as lessening saving rate. The study recommended that policymakers can address these serious economic consequences of rapid population growth by investing in family planning services, and the development of independent media and liberal education in educational institutions will help at the appropriate time by encouraging the size of the smaller family.

Gideon Kegor, Jashan Paul, and Apri Al-Mady, 2013 studied the impact of population change on economic growth in Kenya. At the beginning of their study they provided a review of the ongoing and persistent discussion about the relationship between population growth and economic growth. They used the technology of Vectorial Autoregressive (VAR) and annual time series data for the period from 1963 to 2009. Their study reached a set of results, perhaps the most important of them are that population growth and economic growth are positively linked and that the increase in population will positively affect economic growth in Kenya. The study also concluded that population growth in Kenya boosts economic growth and hence economic development.

Walid Khasam, 2014, studied the relationship between social and economic development and population growth in Algeria by highlighting the relationship between demographic and economic and social development, and through the mutual impact of growth and development. The problem of the research centred on the problem of population and development in the developing countries, and this was evident in the problem presented in his research: Is slowing the population growth rate a prerequisite for social and economic development? One of the most important results reached in the study is that development cannot be linked to rates of economic growth only, but there are other factors (social and human) that must be taken into account during the development policy planning, and that
the relationship between demographic and economic variables is a dialectic and reciprocal relationship, that is, the elements of these variables cannot be isolated from other elements, whether demographic or economic, and that the demographic data for the community contribute to the development of the development situation.

Bhanu Fhani, Krishna Koduru, and Archana Tatafarthy (2016) studied the impact of population growth on economic development in India during the period 1988 to 1998. They used the variance analysis model ANOVA, and their model contained six elements: population growth, GDP growth, unemployment rate, foreign investment, financial corruption index and resource depletion index. In their results, they concluded that India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, due primarily to high population growth, which creates a positive impact on its economic growth in the long run. This is reinforced by the fact that India ranks first among the major producers in the field of agriculture, and it is the first country in terms of GDP in developing countries. The study also confirms the view that population growth has a positive impact on the economic growth of the nation. Indeed, economists may say, “If it is not for its high population, India will still be a developing country suffering.”

According to Friedberg and Hunt (1995), population growth and urban development go in the same direction, and economic development is closely related to urbanisation. Population growth leads to an increase in population density, and with the increase in rural-urban migration, this will lead to more urbanised communities. This is most important to achieving sustainable growth because large urban centres allow innovation and increase economies of scale. Companies can produce goods in greater numbers and at lower cost, serving more low-income customers. So, there are many companies that have benefited from increased population growth and intensity in targeting large numbers of low and middle incomes.

The Second Topic: The Reality of Population Growth Indicators in the Sultanate

First: Population growth index in the Sultanate:
The population clock indicates that in 2019 the increase in the number of Omanis in the Sultanate was more than it was in the number of non-Omanis, by 78,000 Omanis compared to 68,000 non-Omanis- which means that every hour the population of the Sultanate increased by 9 Omanis compared to 8 non-Omanis, (Population Statistics, Issue: 7, p.7- 2018). According to the data presented in the following figure, the population size in the Sultanate, Omanis and non-Omanis, was growing at a positive rate of 3.4% during the period 1990-2018. The total population number of the Sultanate in 2018 reached about 4.602 million people, showing an increase of about 443 thousand more than it was in 2015.

On the other hand, available data indicate that the percentage of non-Omanis increased from 43.6% in 2015 to about 43.91% in 2018, while Omani change rate was about 9.9%, and about 11.4% for non-Omanis, with an increase of 208,000 non-Omanis during the period 2015-2018. Non-Omanis growth rate witnessed a positive change, to reach about 10%. On the other side, the results indicate that Omani growth variable rate reached 2.4%. These results indicate the positive rise over time from one year to the next, and it can be said that it is a high rate with regard to the development of the number of non-Omanis, which indicates a clear imbalance in the population structure in Omani society, and this may have happened as a result of the growth and development requirements experienced by the Sultanate, but it remains unhealthy in the long run. Hence, comes the importance of having a law regulating the residence process of non-Omanis coming to the Sultanate for the purpose of work, which allows the competent authorities to control and organise the large numbers of non-Omanis entering the Sultanate for work, otherwise a state of chaos may be caused as a result of the inability to track the rapid transfer of expatriate labourers in a volatile and changing labour market.
In 2018, the number of live births in the Sultanate was (89071), of whom (82,941) were Omanis and (6,130) were non-Omanis. The male birth rate of the total live births was approximately 51.5% (ie 456,125). The population clock data indicated that the number of live births increased by (248) live births per day in 2017, up from 2016 by about 6 live births daily, while the average live births per hour reached about (10) live births for 2017.

On the other hand, the number of deaths in the Sultanate for 2018 reached (8979) deaths, of whom (7,314) were Omanis and (1,665) were non-Omanis. The data also indicated that (81.4%) of the deaths in the Sultanate were Omanis, and the males represented 46.89%, ie (4209) deaths.

Second: Population density index in the Sultanate:

As for the population density index, the data indicate that Muscat Governorate is the highest in terms of population density in the Sultanate, at a rate of 365 people per square km, followed by North and South Al Batinah and South Al Sharqiyyah Governorates by about 94, 78 and 26 people per square km respectively in 2017.

On the other hand, the data indicate that the population pyramid is almost equal in the Sultanate by gender in 2017, since the percentage of males reached 50.4% and the percentage of females 49.6%. However, it is worth noting here that Omani society is a young one, where the percentage of children and youth groups under the age of 29 are estimated to be the largest segment in the Omani society at a percentage of 65%, and the percentage of children under five years of age is estimated at 15%. Accordingly, 80% of the Omani community represents the young society.
ENTREPRENEUR Mohammed bin Humeid bin Masoud Al Badi pointed out that entrepreneurship needs two main principles -- patience and persistence -- through which the entrepreneur achieves success and ensures a comfortable economic life, which reflects positively on society as a whole.

Al Badi is the owner of Sanad Services Office (Abeer Al Tayebat Trading) located in North Al Batinah Governorate in the Wilayat of Saham. During his 30-year career, he employed many job seekers and provided them with some basic skills in the field of clearing transactions, certifying documents, and others.

To shed more light on his Sanad services office project, Mohammed Al Badi says: “The office was established in 1990 with personal efforts amid competition at that time by expatriate workers who were officially allowed to practise this activity. The project has achieved great success and continued to develop until it has now become one of the best offices of its kind in North Al Batinah Governorate. I indicate here that the wise government has spared no effort in supporting and granting us absolute care since that time, and I have become among the owners of small and medium enterprises projects.”

SUCCESS FACTORS
Al Badi pointed out that the most important factors of success that help any entrepreneur in overcoming difficulties are patience and persistence. “From the beginning, we have practised our work in full swing and today we are in our thirtieth year of hard work achieving success because of our insistence to succeed with the help of the wise government that has assisted us to overcome all the difficulties we have faced. We hope that the concerned authorities design more development programs to Sanad offices in the light of the rapid development of electronic services provided by government institutions.

Al Badi also pointed out that providing high-quality services to clients is one of the main factors for the success of the entrepreneur, in addition to being acquainted with the necessary knowledge in the field of his business and follow-up the latest updates. He added that he has not sought to expand the project by opening more branches due to his belief in the importance of providing quality services. So, he prefers to concentrate on one branch through which he delivers high quality service rather than opening more than one branch that may be of low quality.

PAST CHALLENGES
Al Badi touched on the most important challenges that he faced in the past especially at the beginning of the project. Expatriate workers were officially allowed to practise this activity (which is being prohibited now) and that affected his business negatively. Another challenge was the difficulty
to get devices, such as typewriters, photocopiers, computers and printers, and if he got such devices, they needed repair or maintenance which was not available in Saham. He had to go to far regions, like Muscat, to have them repaired/maintained, which reflected negatively on his business, because he had to close the office until the completion of repair/maintenance work, but now this has become easier and available in Saham.

**Spreading Entrepreneurship Culture**

Al Badi also pointed out to the importance of entrepreneurship in improving individual’s income and achieving a satisfactory standard of living. He says: entrepreneurial business has given me confidence and strength in facing the challenges of life. I have made it a source of income for me and my family, and it has been a very wonderful source of income through which I have achieved life full of success and good living.

Al Badi stressed the importance of promoting and spreading the culture of entrepreneurship, as it contributes to improving the economy and creating job opportunities. There is need to change the stereotype of working at the private sector. He also recommended job seekers to move towards establishing their own projects, as it has become more accessible in light of the presence of the internet with its modern programs and media, particularly its social networking programs that allow any entrepreneur to market his/her products, trademark, achieving fame and reaching a multiple and diverse society. Al Badi concluded: Entrepreneurship leads to making a lot of money when the entrepreneur makes efforts and insists on overcoming challenges and ignore the discouraging opinions.
We strive with serious steps to achieve a Qualitative Development and Economic Mobility in Al Buraimi Governorate

Within its series of interviews with the Chairmen of OCCI branches, Al Ghorfa had a distinguished and realistic meeting with Zahir bin Mohammed Al Kaabi, Chairman of OCCI Al Buraimi branch, who stressed that the current stage with its multiple challenges and difficulties has imposed on everyone, especially those concerned with economic affairs, the responsibility of dealing with a more clear and realistic methodology. This is to serve the public interest and contribute to providing the economic sector with various investment projects capable of achieving profitable returns and enhance the abundance and quality of national product in local and global markets. They should also be able to provide employment opportunities, training and development to national cadres.

Al Kaabi also stressed about the existence of investment facilities and advantages and the problem of regulatory procedures in various sectors of investment, so that the investor is not engaged in clearing a series of routine procedures that may continue for months, which may cause the reluctance of major investors, not only small ones, in many cases.
The following are the details of the interview:

Can you tell us about Al Buraimi Governorate, its potentials and economic conditions?

Al Buraimi Governorate, as you know, is located in the north-western part of the Sultanate, and it is the Oman’s gateway to United Arab Emirates. It is distinguished by the diversity of its geography, including the agricultural plains and the urban, desert and mountainous environment. In the past, it was known as the crossing of commercial caravans and it was an active commercial market. It is also distinguished by its strategic location near important ports including Sohar Industrial Port and its free zone and Port of Jebel Ali in Emirate of Dubai and its free zone and other growing markets in the region as well as the availability of infrastructure in Buraimi Industrial City and the existence of many industrial plans in the Wilayats of the Governorate, the most important of them is the project of Niyabat Al Roudha plan in Wilayat Mahdha which will hopefully be of economic value in logistics sector in the future.

The level of economic conditions in the Governorate reflects only the simplest possible exploitation of the many available elements. Opportunities are still great and varied in various sectors, but challenges are numerous and require an adjustment in economic policies so that the necessary facilities are provided to encourage investment and narrow gaps between merchants and services provided by government authorities. It is noteworthy that the speciality of border Governorates should be taken into consideration in terms of several important economic factors, including external competition, the size of the local market, the extent of diversity in goods and products, and the level of prices, which require a priority system that provides advantages and facilities attractive to investors, as well as focusing on the elements that drive the investor to prefer setting up a specific project or opening an industrial enterprise in Al Buraimi, and not anywhere else.

Does this mean that the economic situation in the Governorate is bad?

Not bad, economic conditions are good despite the challenges, but in the business and economy sectors, we always look for productivity and proceeds that come through the optimal exploitation of available resources, which is required specifically in this Governorate that really represents a storehouse of commercial, industrial, logistical
and archaeological resources awaiting serious investors and facilitated procedures.

**What is the role of the Chamber’s branch in Al Buraimi Governorate?**

OCCI branch in Al Buraimi Governorate seeks seriously to achieve a qualitative development and economic movement in the Governorate. We seek, through the efforts of the members of the branch’s board of directors and the executive body, in permanent integration and cooperation with our partners in government departments and bodies and private sector establishments, to enhance the areas of economic development and to provide a stimulating and attractive environment to investment, so that the Governorate becomes a real attraction for projects of economic importance. It will undoubtedly provide new opportunities and open the way for the advancement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and will have the most prominent role in finding job opportunities for competent Omani youth.

**The branch always organises a set of events and activities. Can you tell us about the objectives and results behind that?**

Holding economic events and activities is a strategic goal of the Chamber, because in these activities the latest economic decisions and laws are discussed and the challenges facing the business sector are examined and proposals are put forward and recommendations and visions are submitted to the competent authorities through the results of its various activities. Each year the branch sets an
action plan that includes holding a group of activities which achieve added value to the private sector in the Governorate and try, through the available tools and means, to address the difficulties that hinder the progress and development of the projects implemented in the Governorate in addition to providing training and development opportunities through designing specialised training programs and various workshops as well as conducting trade delegations for participation in local and external exhibitions for the purpose of enabling business owners to be acquainted with successful business experiences and to explore available opportunities and exchange experiences and knowledge.

Do you agree with us that the economic situation in the Governorate needs something greater than events?

Events represent an important part of our efforts to develop economic conditions because they support business owners, as mentioned above, and represent means of introducing and conveying the views of the private sector to those concerned about many economic issues. Therefore, they are an effective tools for development, and in this context we can add that the branch uses all available capabilities and means to develop the economic conditions in the Governorate through cooperation with officials of government departments and authorities in the Governorate who in turn seek to provide everything that would advance the development wheel and achieve economic growth in the Governorate.

What are the most prominent projects in the Governorate?

There are various projects in the Governorate, perhaps the most prominent of them are the large shopping centres group, which provides a variety of purchasing options that are affordable for the consumers, in addition to the existence of pioneering factories in the field of producing light and heavy vehicle oils, plastic and rubber production factories, home furniture production factories, factories for pharmaceutical products, food products, marble products, industrial stones and cement products, steel and paints, in addition to the availability of a group of hotel establishments, including the newly opened Salam Grand Hotel and Resort within the category of five star, which forms one of the most prominent modern projects in the Governorate.

In the educational field, there are Al Buraimi University College and Al Buraimi University, which offer distinguished educational and training programs in various specialisations.

We are at the beginning of a new year. What is your plan to meet the challenges of the private sector?

Simply, our plan is to utilise all the available energies and resources to serve the Governorate and strive to advance the fields of investment in cooperation with our partners, especially in the promising sectors, including industry, tourism, education and health.
The postal sector is one of the main sectors contributing to connecting individuals and groups with the outside world, and it is an important element in national development. It plays an important part in the technology and communications sector, and it has given importance to developing its technologies to keep pace with the developments taking place in the world. The Sultanate was not far from these developments that the sector has been witnessing, as it launched new services with modern products, and this promising sector has also become a link between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs and their clients from inside and outside the Sultanate.

“Al Ghorfa” is hosting Abdul Malik AL Balushi, CEO of Oman Post, a company of Asyad Group, to talk about the importance of the postal sector, its developments, the role of the sector in promoting and supporting the entrepreneurial sector, and the services it provides in e-commerce. He indicated that the sector in the Sultanate provides logistic services aiming to connect individuals all over the world and create a position for the Sultanate as a leading global centre for trade and logistic services. Oman Post family includes more than 600 employees in 83 branches across the Sultanate, and the company cooperates with more than 150 operators and 677,000 post offices in 192 countries. It is notable that Oman Post Company received the international recognition “Committed to Excellence” from European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The EFQM Model provides a framework allowing organisations to evaluate their performance for achieving institutional excellence.

1. Despite the accelerating digital development that the world is witnessing today, the postage stamp still exists, what makes the postal sector continuing and active? What are its roles?

The postal sector is constantly evolving to keep pace with the latest developments in the current digital world, and in Oman Post, we always aim to meet the requirements of our customers and for this we have launched a list of digital postal services and a collection of modern products that combine electronic systems and traditional services, because the company is aware of the developments that have resulted from current technological progress in the global economy and in facilitating the work of public and private sector institutions. Of course, this has contributed to changing the ways through which we communicate in our daily life and to bring about concrete developments in the postal sector, and to respond to these changes in the business environment and the society in general. We work according to the highest international standards applicable in the postal sector to enhance our business and be able to achieve institutional excellence at all levels of supply chains. This will lead to more flexibility and competitiveness and increase focus on customers to meet their requirements well.

To ensure providing our customers with services at the highest level of quality, at present and in the future, we follow-up and study all the developments that the world has been witnessing in the field of mail, due to its great importance and its close link to other fields. The mail is a link between services and investment sectors from all over the
world, and accordingly we aim to ensure that all our activities are completed faster, in a more innovative manner and less wasteful, to enhance our market share and competitive capabilities. This means achieving a qualitative shift in culture and institutional approach. Also, following the latest technologies will form the cornerstone of the transformation process, ensuring modern and innovative solutions that enhance the quality of postal services.

2. The investment climate contributes to the direct investment flow. How could Oman Post be an important factor in activating the distinctive investment climate and achieve the highest levels of quality in customer service?

The global economic climate has been witnessing great challenges that have cast a shadow on the Omani economy, especially with the continued decline in oil prices and political crises in the Middle East region. To overcome these challenges, the Sultanate has developed a long-term strategy and a future vision focusing on diversifying the national economy and sources of income through reliance on non-oil sectors, including the logistics sector. In Oman Post, the focus is now on completing all activities faster and in more innovative manner to enhance market share and competitiveness to achieve a qualitative shift in culture and institutional approach, and to follow clear strategies in order to strengthen the central postal activities and enter new markets.

Also, following the latest technologies will form the cornerstone of the transformation process, ensuring the provision of modern and innovative solutions that enhance the quality of our services. Oman Post will continue its active role in promoting the growth of the logistics sector, because of our belief in the important role of these enterprises in achieving economic diversification. Therefore, we always continue to enhance the ways through which these enterprises can benefit from the growing Oman Post network, in order to contribute to the expansion of their business and promote their growth. We have also sought to facilitate the access of commercial customers from start-ups to all the services we provide, as well as the development of e-commerce activities through supply

3. It is known that the Sultanate has been promoting and supporting the entrepreneurial sector, and developing business owners in various economic fields. How can SMEs benefit from Oman Post services?

We are keen to support and facilitate the business of SMEs and entrepreneurs. Multiple postal logistic services are provided through our 83 branches scattered all over the Sultanate, in addition to 10 shipping offices that reach 192 countries around the world. Our operational strategy is based on building business relations and finding lasting and strong cooperation, which is particularly appropriate for SMEs and entrepreneurs because of our belief in the important role of these enterprises in achieving economic diversification. Therefore, we always continue to enhance the ways through which these enterprises can benefit from the growing Oman Post network, in order to contribute to the expansion of their business and promote their growth. We have also sought to facilitate the access of commercial customers from start-ups to all the services we provide, as well as the development of e-commerce activities through supply

Abdul Malik Al Balushi:
We are aware of the importance of logistic services to achieve the Sultanate’s goals and ambitions related to the diversification of the national economy.
chains, and investment in technology to provide delivery and operation services.

We also focus on promoting and developing ways of distribution to form a link between SMEs and entrepreneurs and their customers inside and outside the Sultanate. We provide delivery services from the source to the recipient directly, which would increase the sales of SMEs and enhance the growth and development of their business and sustainability. In this regard, two memoranda of understanding have recently been signed with both Mazoon Market of Al Zubair Centre for Small Enterprises, and the e-commerce platform ‘Markitex’, whereby Oman Post will be their logistic partner inside and outside the Sultanate.

4. “Matjar” service has been created in an effort by Oman Post to find easy digital solutions and increase income flow through e-commerce. What is this service? How can it develop e-commerce in the Sultanate in general and the private sector in particular?

“Matjar” is a distinguished service through which we aim to facilitate electronic commerce by providing virtual addresses in the United States of America (USA) for free to meet customers’ requirements easily and quickly. Immediately after signing up for the “Matjar” service, customers can start e-shopping from their favourite brands in USA and other countries and take advantage of the various discounts and offers they show. Then they are shipped immediately to the nearest Oman Post branch, and the delivery period does not exceed more than five to seven working days. Among the advantages of this service: registration is free lifetime, customers are billed on the actual weight of the products, with the possibility of adding 12 personal addresses to their accounts and receive their shipments aggregated from any of Oman Post branches in the Sultanate.

Today, we focus heavily on investing in technology to provide delivery and operation services and enable and develop e-commerce activities through supply chains, and from this standpoint we have launched “Matjar” service and e-post mailbox service, and we make many e-mail initiatives that aim to strengthen the sector in the Sultanate in a form in line with the national logistics strategy led by Asyad Group to establish the Sultanate’s position as a global commercial and logistics centre.

To contribute to achieving this, we have laid the cornerstone for achieving growth and progress. The percentage of express mail service (EMS) delivery in time reached 87.7% in August 2019 compared to 33.8% in 2018, and this service achieved a new record during September 2018 and reached 97.4%, as well the rate of customs clearance of goods increased from 54% to 95.7% within 24 hours, and the rate of customers’ satisfaction increased to 85%, and not only that, but the number of delivered parcels increased by 23% compared to 2018.
The prices of advertising in ALGHORFA Magazine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside Page</td>
<td>400 RO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite side cover</td>
<td>600 RO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside Cover</td>
<td>600 RO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two ads in same issue</td>
<td>750 RO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For communicate and advertising please contact to
24763790 - 24763819
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) organised an evening on the desired economic benefits of the Sultanate’s participation in Expo Dubai 2020. It discussed the importance of participating in the exhibition to promote the Sultanate as an economic, investment and tourism destination, as well as designing the Omani pavilion participating in the exhibition.

The evening was sponsored by HE Mohsen bin Khamis Al Balushi, Commissioner General of the Sultanate’s Pavilion at Expo 2020, who made a presentation about Expo exhibition, showing the economic impact of EXPO and the efforts made by the responsible authorities in the Sultanate to increase the Sultanate’s benefits through participation in Expo Dubai 2020.

HE also explained the relative and competitive advantages that qualify the Sultanate to be one of the beneficiaries of Expo Dubai 2020, which is represented in the good relations with the UAE, geographical proximity, ease of movement and transportation. HE added that the number of countries and regional organisations participating in the exhibition reached 195 countries and organisations, and it is expected that 25 million visitors will visit it.
Dr. Al-Fadhl bin Al-Abbas Al-Hinai, CEO of OCCI, made a speech during which he clarified that the evening aims to enhance the partnership between the public and private sectors and society to review the most important efforts made for the Sultanate’s participation in Expo Dubai 2020.

He explained that the Sultanate’s participation in this event contributes to highlighting the achievements of the Omani Renaissance in various fields, explaining that Expo Dubai 2020 will focus on a number of key factors for global development that will discover innovative solutions in the field of sustainability and find permanent sources of energy and water.

He said that the exhibition will also focus on the factor of transportation and finding new systems for transportation and logistics, adding that the exhibition will focus on new opportunities and ways to achieve economic growth and that these factors contribute to supplying the global economy in general and business owners in particular.

He confirmed that the Sultanate’s participation in this global event allows it to introduce its huge projects such as ports, airports, Duqm special economic zone, and industrial and free zones, in addition to introducing incentives that attract investment in the Sultanate.

HE Hassan bin Mohammed Al Lawati, Deputy Commissioner General of the Sultanate’s Pavilion at Expo 2020, spoke about the economic gains in various fields due to the Sultanate’s participation in the exhibition.

He added: A project has been prepared to provide specialised advisory services to prepare economic studies and marketing and promotional plans to increase the return from the exhibition.

Shaima Al Ghailania from Innovation Research and Development Factory spoke about the design of the Omani pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai, and the promotion of the Sultanate as an international economic, investment and tourist front through digital marketing platforms and social media.

The evening included a visual presentation on the design of the Sultanate’s pavilion participating in Expo Dubai 2020, and another presentation on business opportunities for small and medium enterprises through participation in Expo Dubai 2020.
Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre (OCAC) announced the results of the elections of the first board of directors of the Centre. The elections were performed through secret voting at the Headquarters of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and Hamed bin Mohammed Al Sharji was elected a Chairman of the Centre’s Board of Directors, with Majid bin Sultan Al Touqi as Vice-Chairman.

According to Article No. (8) of Royal Decree No. 37/2019, published in the Official Gazette (Issue No.1300) on 7/7/2019, members also elected the members of the permanent committees. Ali bin Salim Al Junaibi and Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Saadi were elected in the Technical Committees. Hussain bin Mohammed Al Saleh, Ibrahim bin Said Al Moselhi and Jimmy Kelic were elected in the Audit Committee, while Dr. Rahima bint Hamed Al Kharusiya and James Mckeverson were elected in the Advisory Committee.

The board of directors announced by the chamber includes Hussein Bin Mohammed Al Saleh, Dr. Rahima Bint Hamed Al Kharousiya, Eng. Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al Saadi, Ali Bin Salim Al Junaibi, Ibrahim Bin Said Al Moselhi, James Mckeverson, and Jimmy Kelic. Dr. Mosa bin Salem Al Azri was appointed CEO of Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre.

Hamed bin Mohammed Al Sharji, the Centre’s Board Chairman, indicated that the elections were held by secret voting, and the members voted while attending by themselves at OCCI Headquarter where the elections were conducted, except for one member who had to vote through remote voting mechanism due to his presence abroad. According to the applicable system, we hope to hold four annual meetings to discuss the issues that will be entrusted to the Board. He also expressed the desire to develop the Centre so that it can compete with the neighbouring regional arbitration centres and to have a good position on the map of international arbitration centres, adding that the centre aims to encourage business owners to choose arbitration as a method of dispute settlement between the parties, because arbitration is characterised by resolving the dispute within a short period, compared to the period required for dispute settlement before the courts. In arbitration, the dispute is settled within one year and without appeal, and arbitration hearings between the parties are confidential.

Ali Bin Salim Al Junaibi, a member of OCAC Board of Directors, said: OCAC is a faster way to settle commercial disputes, and thus saving time and effort of companies. The existence of
this Centre enhances commercial investments and litigation procedures between companies. The Centre has been established at the appropriate time in which the Sultanate seeks to attract foreign investment, as the establishment of the centre coincided with large commercial projects in the city of Duqm, and it will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing confidence between local and foreign companies, and reducing the burden on the courts. Through this Centre, we seek to have cooperation and representation with international centres and organisations of commercial arbitration, and to provide all means and services needed by companies in the field of arbitration.

HE Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, OCCI Chairman, congratulated the members of OCAC Board of Directors, in the presence of Rashid Al Mosalhi, OCCI Vice-Chairman for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and members of the executive body of the Chamber. HE expressed his pleasure for the Chamber’s keenness to continue the efforts made by the Board to ensure that the Centre fulfils its roles and responsibilities and achieves the desired objectives in line with the vision of Oman 2040.

Since the issuance of the Royal Decree establishing Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre, OCCI, in coordination and cooperation with all relevant bodies and parties, has made great progress towards achieving the establishment of the Centre, starting from the formation of the founding committee.
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) participated in the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (ABLCC), which was held in Brussels, and headed by Johan Berlandt, Chairman of ABLCC Board of Directors. OCCI was represented by Rashid bin Amer Al Moselhi, OCCI Deputy Chairman for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Abdul Azim Al Bahrani, Adviser to OCCI board.

The meeting discussed the draft budget of the Belgian Chamber for 2020, in addition to discussing the results of the first nine months of 2019, as well as reviewing the Chamber’s activities during 2019 and its plans for 2020, in addition to the presentation of the new website of the Chamber, and the project of updating the devices of the Chamber.

During the meeting, Nabil Jijkli was elected as the treasurer of the Chamber, and new members of the Board of Directors were appointed, in addition to approving the affiliation of new members during the period from June 14 to November 18, 2019.

Rashid bin Amer Al Moselhi, expressed the Chamber’s keenness to participate in this meeting which brings together representatives of the Chambers to discuss the global economic prospects, and the challenges facing the current situation and develop appropriate solutions to overcome them, confirming the Chamber’s endeavour through this meeting to enhance opportunities for partnership and cooperation with all participating countries.

Al Moselhi indicated that the available statistics show that the value of Omani imports from Belgium to Oman reached approximately RO 86 million during 2017, while the value of Omani exports to Belgium amounted to more than RO 12 million, while the volume of Belgian investments registered in the Sultanate until 2016 exceeded RO 450 million, and the contribution rate from Belgium reached more than RO 760,000 until 2016, with a contribution rate of approximately 17%, by 15 investment companies.

The meeting discussed the prospects of the global economy during 2019 and 2020 in general, and the Belgian economy in particular. Statistics indicated that economic activity is moving at a rapid rate in almost all regions of the world a year ago, and is expected to grow by 3.9% during 2018-2019, then things changed more, as the escalation of trade tensions between the United States and China, macroeconomic pressures in Argentina and Turkey, turmoil in the auto industry in Germany, tightening credit policies in China, tightening financial conditions along with the return of monetary policy to normalcy in the major advanced economies, all of which contributed greatly to weakening of global expansion.

As for the Belgian economy, economic developments showed that annual GDP growth was relatively good during 2018, as it reached 1.4%, compared to 1.7% in 2017 supported by strong domestic demand, and GDP reached 1.2% in the first quarter of 2019. The growth in the Belgian economy is not expected to exceed 1.1% during 2019 and 2020 and therefore growth will slow for the second year successively, which can be described as a slowdown in the international economic situation. The production index in the manufacturing industry increased during 2018 for the fourth year in a row, while Belgian private consumption expenditure reached 230 billion Euros in 2018, just over half of GDP.
Al Ghorfa Attends Business Forum in Morocco

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) participated in the second forum, entitled “The role of industrial and free zones in attracting industrial investment and export development” and organised by Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organisation, in Tangier, Kingdom of Morocco. The delegation of OCCI was headed by Rashid bin Amer Al Moselhi, Vice-Chairman of the Chamber’s Board of Directors for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

The forum aimed at creating the basic requirements needed to drive the wheel of industrialisation and mineral wealth development in the Arab countries, in addition to achieving comprehensive Arab cooperation that can raise the standard of Arab industry and mining to keep pace with the rapid technological and administrative developments at the global level, as well as assisting Arab countries with the available means to overcome the obstacles standing in their way in the field of manufacturing and mining, laying down specifications, standards, quality control and other activities related to industrial production and mining, planning to support and establish industrial projects, and encouraging cooperation between Arab countries in the framework of joint Arab economic strategy.

The forum dealt with a number of discussion sessions that discussed various topics such as the development of free industrial zones and available investment opportunities and the role of zones in economic development and attracting investment. It also displayed many experiences of industrial cities in Arab countries and the strategy of activating industrial zones in emerging economies and their contribution to attracting foreign investment and increasing the size of exports and the importance of moving towards smart and sustainable industrial cities.

From the Sultanate, Public Establishment for Industrial Estates “Madayen” participated in the Forum by a working paper presented by Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, General Manager of Al Mazyona Free Zone, entitled “Advantages, Facilities and Incentives Provided to Investors”, where he reviewed the Sultanate’s distinction in terms of geographical location, political and economic stability and international free trade agreements with major organisations and international countries, in addition to reviewing the services provided by “Madayen” to beneficiaries and those who wish to invest and benefit from the incentives, facilities and investment opportunities available in industrial and free zones.
Chambers of commerce in different countries make great efforts for sharing their national products in various external events and exhibitions, especially those that have a great demand and global reputation, where the focus is on choosing distinctive projects with added value that can have an external marketing outlet. Through cooperation and coordination with the various bodies related to the projects, the events and exhibitions to be participated in are specified by the commercial delegations that are sent by these chambers of commerce to the various countries of the world.

In fact, there are great efforts undertaken by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) regarding this aspect of the various national projects and industries, whether large or small and medium, in cooperation and coordination with the various concerned parties and with the Sultanate’s embassies in the targeted countries for these participations. Here we must refer to two important points:

The first one is that marketing and promotion of national products and projects externally requires that the owner of the project should have a large degree of professionalism and readiness for such partnerships, both in terms of product quality, presentation, introducing, forms and types of marketing available, in addition to the importance of the availability of the skills necessary for the presentation and promotion of these products. There is keenness and interest on the part of many business leaders to actively participate in these external events whenever they are provided and various facilities for participating in them are available, both in terms of finding special prices for those wishing to participate in such events and trade fairs in cooperation with the various concerned bodies and the Sultanate’s embassies in the targeted countries for these participations. Here we must refer to two important points:

The second point is concerned with complementarity roles among the various parties concerned with the national products, both in terms of qualification and good training for project owners to participate well in such an event or by agreeing on a specific action plan that tries to increase the contribution of participation in this vital and important sector in the national product and find new external marketing outlets for national products, without relying on a specific party to implement these goals and aspirations, as well as the participation of private sector companies within the framework of their social responsibilities in supporting the participation of entrepreneurs, especially owners of small and medium enterprises, in various external exhibitions and events, which will have a good effect in introducing and highlighting these products and trying to find new markets for them, especially the Sultanate enjoys excellent political relations with various countries, hoping that these relations and the Sultanate’s position abroad will be benefited in increasing the proportion of foreign national exports.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that external exhibitions and events are an important marketing window and play a role in introducing and promoting national products and can enhance the market share of national products, especially in some countries that have promising business opportunities which can be benefited from, in addition to the importance of raising awareness among business owners, having national projects, on innovation and good attendance in such external participations, with the importance of providing various types of facilities and support to those participants.

Salem bin Labkhit Mahad Kashoub, Vice-Chairman of Small and Medium Enterprises Committee, OCCI branch in Dhofar Governorate, Email: sbkashooop@gmail.com