

TAWASOL



15th AWARDING CEREMONY - 2019



UNESCO SULTAN QABOOS PRIZE
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



**The Sultanate participates
in the 40th Session of the UNESCO General Conference**

**The Ashoka Ecology and Environmental Research Fund, India
winner of the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation**

**The Sultanate ranks first in the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia Prize
for Environmental Management in the Islamic world**



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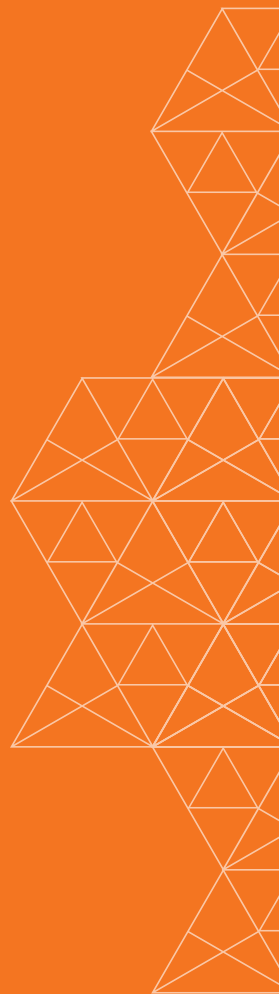
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The articles only reflect the points of view of their writers and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the National Commission



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Foreword by the Chairperson



Her Excellency
Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani
Minister of Education
Chairperson of the
Oman National Commission for
Education, Culture and Science

Education and Heritage

Nations take pride in the cultural legacy left by their ancestors. A legacy that painted a vivid picture of what life looked like in their times and what thoughts went through their minds and then worked on preserving this culture generation after generation. Since the dawn of the Renaissance, the Sultanate of Oman, through its various official, private and civil institutions, has paid great attention to Oman's heritage and made visible efforts to connect the Omani citizens with their glorious history.



The Ministry of Education played its part by including Omani heritage conservation in the educational philosophy represented by two principles: identity and citizenship, and pride and national benefit. These principles aim at realizing pride in Omani identity and history, preserving and developing heritage, and promoting citizenship, loyalty to Oman and obligatory to defend it. The Ministry of Education has incorporated concepts of cultural heritage in its various forms: tangible, intangible, and natural through-out all school curricula and grades. Culture related or inspired pictures were used in school books, cultural elements were integrated in the educational process, and customs, traditions and arts practiced in the local community circles were highlighted. The curricula also included some historic Omani personalities celebrated in association with UNESCO.

The Omani identity was also taken into consideration when designing the school buildings. All school buildings were built with the traditional Omani architectural style and the surrounding environment in mind.

Another tool that schools use to promote the sense of belonging is the organization of field trips. The schools frequently arrange visits to heritage sites across the governorates in the Sultanate which helps students by linking them to their past. Moreover, initiatives like “Our heritage, our future” which is launched by Oman Natcom is another example of ways to imbibe in their hearts a deep sense of appreciation

for their culture. This initiative came within the framework of activating sustainable development goals related to cultural heritage as UNESCO considers the integration of culture in development policies is one of the methods to achieve a comprehensive and equitable development centered on the human being. The objectives of the initiative were formulated to be consistent with the principles of education for sustainable development. This initiative was presented in the form of a competition between the (28) schools affiliated with UNESCO which are distributed in the various educational governorates of the Sultanate.

As for higher education levels, among the many ways used to link the youth to their Omani heritage is developing a course called “Oman civilization”, which includes the historical, archaeological and cultural aspects of Oman throughout history, in addition to the establishment of a special department for archeology at Sultan Qaboos University and the establishment of a research unit to study the Omani aflaj in one of the private universities.

Finally, we can say that heritage is one of the most important factors for the success of any tourism development due to the desire of tourists from different cultures to know the heritage, civilization and culture of the countries they visit. Many countries seek to include their heritage sites and cultural elements on the cultural lists of UNESCO; to preserve them and to increase their visibility to tourist. All which prove the significance of teaching heritage ■



Oman as a Member of the Executive Council IOC-UNESCO

The Sultanate has been elected as member of the Executive Council of Unesco's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) the second time in a row during the 30th general assembly of the IOC which was held in Paris.

The Sultanate won the majority of the votes (97 out of 111) from the "African/Arab" group, which competed for 8 seats. Dr. Juma bin Said al Maskari, Director-General of Meteorology at the Public Authority for Civil Aviation represents the Sultanate at the IOC's Executive Council.

The Sultanate won the majority of the votes (97 out of 111) from the "African/Arab" group

(IOC-UNESCO) has been established in 1960 to promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity-building as well as leading the global ocean observing system, and promoting international cooperation on tsunami early warning. ■

A team from the World Food Program learns about the Sultanate's experience in school feeding

ONC welcomed officials from the World Food Program Regional Bureau who came on 31st of July 2019 to learn the Sultanate's experience in school feeding programs.

The delegation met with a number of stakeholders from the Ministry of Education represented by the General Directorate of Educational Programs as well as ONC and representatives of the Ministry of Health to exchange experiences and expertise in this field, and to discuss the extent to which the Sultanate can benefit from the World Food Program to improve school feeding in the Sultanate's schools, as well as to discuss future aspects of cooperation with the World Food Program. ■



A Syrian delegation visits Oman to learn the Omani experience in the field of educational assessment and evaluation

ONC welcomed a delegation from the Educational Measurement and Evaluation Center in Syria in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States in Beirut to learn the Omani experience in the field of measurement and evaluation and to follow up training on statistical programs carried out by specialists in the Sultanate.

A delegation of 9 officials from the Syrian Educational Measurement and Evaluation Center visited the Sultanate from 8-12 September 2019; This is within the framework of developing a training pack "Calendar for Education" which is implemented by UNESCO Beirut office for the purpose of capacity- building as well as to benefit from the experiences and expertise of the member states of the organization in this field, including the Sultanate. The delegation's program included training on (IRT) (Iteman) and (Multilog). The delegation members were also briefed on the tasks and functions of the General Directorate of Educational Evaluation.



ALECSO visits Oman



His Excellency Professor Mohamed Wald Aamar, Director General of the Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation - ALECSO - visited the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, on the sidelines of his participation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Innovation Forum in Education in 2019, which was hosted by the Sultanate from 15-17 September 2019.

His Excellency was received by ONC's Secretary General Mr. Mohammad Saleem Al Yaqoubi and they discussed the relations between the two bodies and exchanged experiences and views regarding their work together as well as future joint endeavors. The guest and his accompanying delegation toured the departments of the Secretariat and learned about their various tasks and activities. ■

ONC represented by UNESCO Associated Schools, Youth Programs and UNESCO Clubs Department carried out field visits to the UNESCO Omani Schools Network with the aim of following up and evaluating the implementation of the assigned projects and programs such as celebrating the international days, years and decades of UNESCO, as well as “the largest global lesson for teaching sustainable development goals” project, in addition to following up the twinning projects that Omani schools establish with their counterparts in other countries.

The idea of “our heritage is our future” came within the framework of activating the sustainable development goals related to cultural heritage, as UNESCO seeks to embed culture in development policies to achieve a comprehensive, equitable and people-centered development. The initiative aims to enhance knowledge, skills and values related to heritage and culture, and mobilize volunteer youth energies to safeguard heritage sites and sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in the Sultanate, in addition to preparing a generation that is responsible for preserving and enhancing cultural heritage. ■

Field visits to ASPnet Schools





The Sultanate participates in the 207th session of the UNESCO Executive Board

The Sultanate represented by the Oman Permanent Delegate to UNESCO participated in the works of the 207th session of the Executive Council for the eighth time in its capacity as a member of the Council, which was held during the period from 9 to 23 October 2019 at the organization's headquarters in Paris.

The agenda of the session - which preceded the General Conference of the Organisation - included a number of topics related to the goals and priorities of UNESCO, such as budget, programmes, administrative matters, and human resources issues. The participants also reviewed the evaluation on what has been accomplished by UNESCO. ■

.. and chairs the meetings of the UNESCO Committee on Programs and External Relations

The Sultanate, represented by Her Excellency Ambassador Dr. Samira Mohammed Al-Mousa, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO - chaired the meetings of the Committee for Programs and External Relations of the Executive Council of the Organization, on the sidelines of the 207th session of the Executive Council.

The agenda of the committee's meetings included discussing a number of items related to following up the implementation of the

organization's programs, discussing the reports of other international organizations, as well as studying the work of international convention bodies on artificial intelligence.

The Committee also discussed the United Nations reform, UNESCO Literacy Strategy, the topic of staving off violent extremism, the Memory of the World program, the report on the implementation of the Information for All Programs (2018-2019), the topic of amending the statute of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical and Sports Education and finally the themes of anniversary celebrations.

Her Excellency the Chairperson of ONC participates in the 11th Conference of Arab Ministers of Education

Her Excellency Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Minister of Education - Chairperson of ONC - headed the Sultanate's delegation participating in the 11th Conference of Arab Ministers of Education, organized by the Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation - ALECSO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Bahrain during the period from 6-8 November 2019 in Manama.

The objective of the conference, which was titled "The role of educational policies in achieving the fourth objective of the sustainable development goals", was to discuss ways to develop educational policies in the Arab world and enhance its role in achieving this goal.

The conference also discussed several working papers, the most important of which are: "Integration of the education evaluation system to achieve the goals of sustainable development, reading in the experience of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", generalizing open educational resources to support this goal, integrating the concepts of Arabism in the curricula of general education, as well as discussing mechanisms to activate a study titled "Evaluating and developing general examinations in the Arab world,". The conference also discussed education licenses to ensure quality improved outputs. ■



Oman as a Member of the World Heritage Committee

The Sultanate joined the World Heritage Committee following elections within the 22nd session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was held during from 27 to 28 November 2019 at the UNESCO headquarters.



The Committee consists 21 countries and Oman being among them will be reflected in the preservation and protection of Omani sites listed on the World Heritage List, and will also support future sites, ultimately helping the achievement of SDGs in Oman. It is worth noting that the Sultanate joined the membership of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1981. ■

ONC participates in the fifth meeting of introductory days for organizations

The General Secretariat of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated in the fifth meeting of introductory days for international organizations (ALESCO, ISESCO, and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States) which was held on 14-15 October 2019 at the headquarters of the Arab League of Education, Culture and Science in the Tunisian capital Tunis.

The participants discussed a number of topics, the most important of which is setting a strategic vision for achieving coordination and cooperation between the three organizations and inviting the organizations to consult and coordinate with the national committees when discussing the most important issues of concern to the Arab and Islamic world. During the meeting, the organizations discussed coming up with a unified position that promotes solidarity in a way that serves Arab and Islamic issues, to develop a joint plan to unify future programs and projects for organizations, and to invite the three organizations and national committees to exchange successful experiences in the fields of education, culture and science. ■

ONC participates in the 20th meeting of Secretaries-General of Arab National Commissions

The meeting was organized by the Arab League of Education, Culture and Science at its headquarters in Tunis during the period from 16-18 October 2019.

The agenda included discussing a number of issues, including following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous two sessions on the project to establish an interactive platform among the Arab national commissions, the periodic celebration of "ALECSO Day" which falls on July 25 of each year, the programme to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the organization, the media role of the Arab national commissions, the establishment of scientific chairs for ALECSO, the establishment of affiliated school networks and ALECSO clubs, the ALECSO Observatory and mechanisms for cooperation with Arab national commissions, and the Ibn Khaldun-Senghor Award for Translation in Humanities. ■

A sub-regional workshop for training trainers to prepare educational courses that respond to the standards of distance education



The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and the General Directorate for Human Resources Development, in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - ISESCO - represented by its regional office in Sharjah, organized a sub-regional workshop for training trainers to prepare educational courses

that respond to the standards of distance education, with the participation of university professors and specialists in the ministries of education in the subject of distance education and e-learning in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, during the days of 3 and 4 December 2019 in the Governorate of Muscat.

The workshop aimed to enhance the skills and experiences in preparing educational courses that respond to the standards of distance education through researching the reality of programs and methods of training trainers in this field, and clarifying ways to develop content, goals and training methods based on the latest international educational experiences, in addition to explaining ways to develop courses that are educational, renewable and appropriate for objective educational and developmental goals. The workshop also worked on identifying and explaining the best methods to evaluate the results of these courses. The workshop was an opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge between participants and inform them of pioneering projects and experiences in the field of developing training and qualification of trainers programs in this educational field. ■

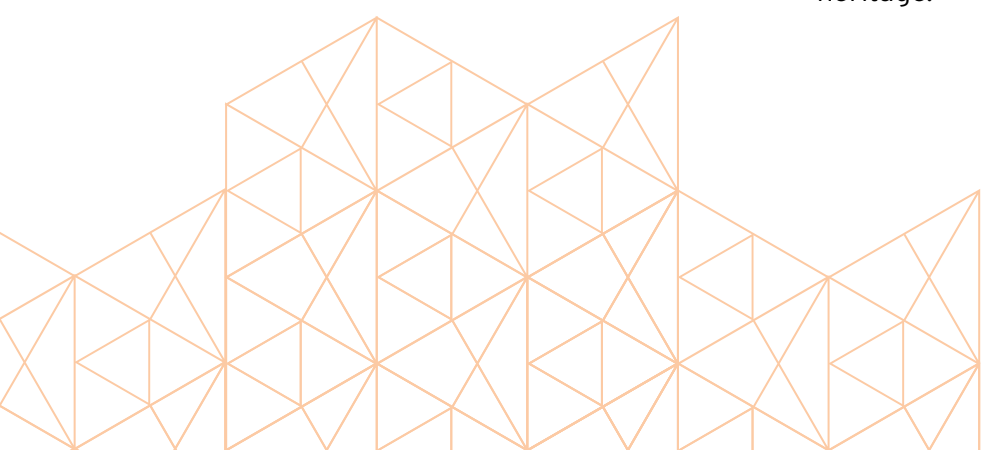


Sub-regional seminar: “Education and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development”

During the period from 9 to 10 December 2019, the Sultanate hosted a sub-regional seminar on “Education and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development”, organized by ONC in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Doha and with the participation of many education and culture entities from in and out of Oman.

The seminar aimed at highlighting the importance of: educating about preserving

cultural heritage and promoting sustainable development, introducing participants to the role of culture in achieving SDG4, promoting dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences on including concepts and values of cultural heritage in school curricula and its reflection on practices in the community and the school environment, and strengthening community partnership through entities that support the role of education in safeguarding cultural heritage. ■



The Date Palm ... A common Arab File on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at UNESCO



In cooperation with a number of Arab countries, the Sultanate succeeded in including the joint Arab file "The Date Palm: Associated Skills, Practices and Traditions" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at UNESCO. Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and ONC, attended the 14th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Member States at the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO,

which was held during the period from 9-14 December 2019 in the Republic of Colombia.

ALESCO was charged with supervising and following up on the registration of this file with UNESCO, which was submitted by fourteen Arab countries, including the Sultanate. Among the most important skills, practices and traditions associated with the date palm tree are the traditional crafts and chants performed during the phases of cultivation and climbing competitions. ■

As UNESCO celebrates him as eminent personality:

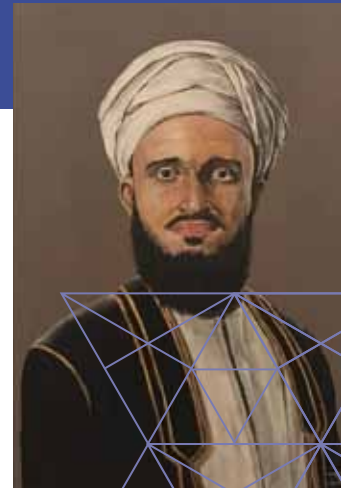
A lecture on the Omani poet Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani

ONC organized, in cooperation with the National Museum, an introductory lecture about the Omani poet Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani to celebrate his inclusion on the UNESCO program of important historical events and influential figures globally. The lecture was given by Dr. Humaid Saif Al-Nawfali, Director of Culture Department in ONC. The lecture was attended by the students of the College of Sharia Sciences along with a number of researchers. It was held on December 11, 2019 in Muscat Governorate.

The lecture aimed to introduce Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani, his most prominent contributions and writings, his knowledge and his reform

efforts inside and outside of Oman, and his role in human civilisation. The lecture also highlighted the great contribution of Abu Muslim to enriching the Diaspora press in East Africa, specifically Zanzibar. The lecturer also reviewed a number of important milestones in the life of Abu Muslim and the aspects of creativity that characterized him.

Abu Muslim was a polymath, poet, linguist, journalist, politician, jurist, judge, and an official in the court of the Sultans of Zanzibar. ■





The Sultanate participates in the 40th Session of the UNESCO General Conference

by Mohammed Ali Alabri, ONC



The Sultanate of Oman is committed to pursuing the implementation of SDG4 related to education.”

“The Sultanate is aware of the growing role that youth play in serving their societies, so it pays the utmost attention and care to them. We call for the strengthening of the position of the teaching profession, and investment in the teacher as an essential component in the educational process.

Her Excellency Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani

The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Education, participated in the work of the fortieth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held from 12 to 27 November 2019 at the headquarters of the organization in the French capital Paris, with the participation of the Member States' delegations and representatives of a number of international organizations.

The Sultanate's delegation to the conference was chaired by Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Minister of Education - Chairperson of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. The delegation included Ambassador Dr. Samira Mohammed Al-Mousa, permanent

delegate of the Sultanate to UNESCO, Nasser Hamad Al-Rawahi, the deputy delegate of the Sultanate, Mohammed Saleem Al-Yaqoubi, Secretary General of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Fatima Abdul Abbas, Minister Counselor for Curriculum Development, and Ali Abdullah Al-Harithi, Director of Committees and Councils at the Minister of Education Office. Representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Technology and Communications, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, and Sultan Qaboos University also participated in the work of the session in order to attend a number of specialized committees emanating from the General Conference.



The opening ceremony of the conference

The plenary session of the conference opened on November 12, 2019, during which His Excellency Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, delivered a speech in which he appreciated the role of UNESCO in addressing many current issues of a global nature, most notably the ethics of artificial intelligence, environmental issues and climate change, achieving the SDG4 and dealt with the efforts of the organization in this aspect.

In addition he led on the subject of human rights, primacy of the dialogue language and tolerance to resolve outstanding issues.

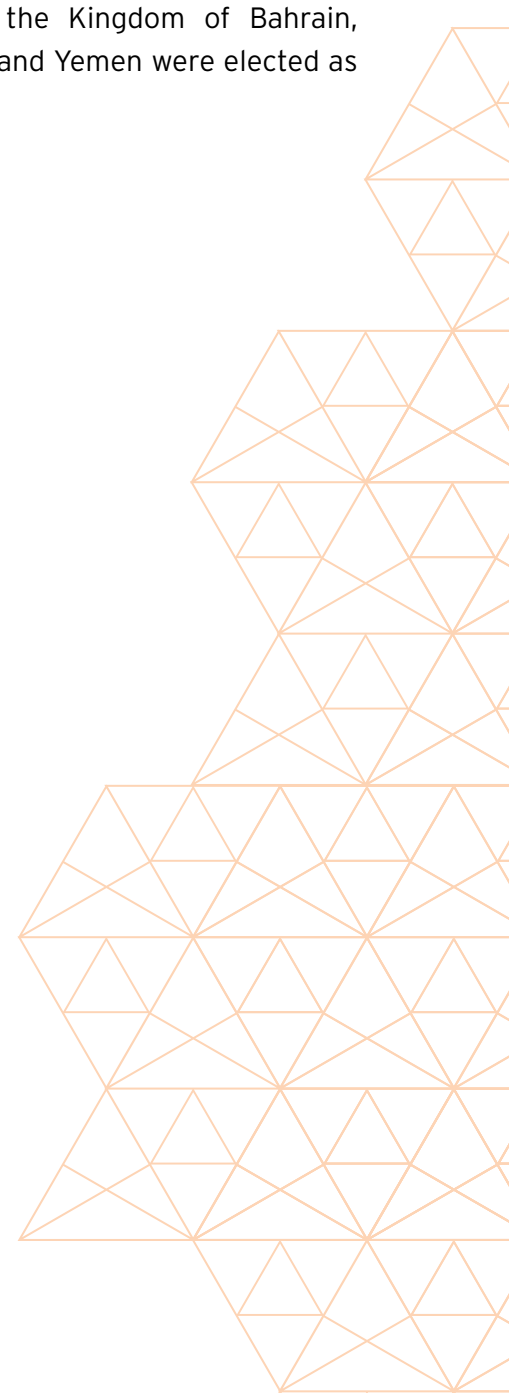
Then Zohour Al-Alawi - President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Conference - delivered a speech in which she led on the organization's role in bringing peace and preserving the common human heritage; It represents a shared memory and richness,

and must therefore be preserved to ensure coexistence. Therefore, UNESCO endeavors to protect it by including it on the World Heritage List, transferring some of it to its country of origin, and monitoring future risks, as well as harnessing artificial intelligence techniques in this aspect.

Her Excellency Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the Organization, delivered her speech during the plenary session, in which she emphasized the organization's efforts in shaping the future of education, and in this regard she stressed the importance of training and continuing education, and paying attention to the youth. In her speech, she led on some programs which were implemented by the organization, including the recognition of higher education certificates, programs to confront racial discrimination and extremism in addition to programs related to profession of journalism and protection of journalists. She also pointed to the existence of international cooperation in the field of water and biosphere reserves, confronting some environmental challenges,

and working for the future.

Then, the Credentials Committee of the Conference and the Nominations Committee were established to appoint a new president for the current session, vice-presidents and chairmen of the committees emanating from the General Conference, as well as looking at the conference's agenda and adopting it, in addition to studying the recommendations of the organization's executive council regarding acceptance of observers from international NGOs. At the end of the plenary session, Ahmed Altay Cengizer, delegate of the Republic of Turkey, was elected president of the fortieth session of the General Conference, succeeding Zohour Al-Alawi, president of the previous session, while representatives of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Tunisia, Iraq, Egypt and Yemen were elected as vice-presidents. ■





In light of the social, political and cultural transformations the world expects UNESCO to play critical roles that require the unity of the international community to work on overcoming it with a common international thought that will help it to move towards achieving its aspirations.

Her Excellency Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani

The Sultanate's Speech

Her Excellency Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani - chairperson of the delegation - delivered the Sultanate's speech before the plenary session of the conference, during which she congratulated His Excellency Ahmed Altay on his election to chair the conference for this session.

She affirmed that the Sultanate is aware of the growing role played by youth in serving their societies, and has therefore given them the utmost care and attention. As it has endeavoured to develop and refine their capabilities in the sports, cultural, artistic and social fields, and enabled them to have innovation and entrepreneurship skills as the main component of development, the Sultanate of Oman supports UNESCO's endeavour to involve youth in setting policies and strategies, preparing development plans, and establishing global platforms and forums for them.

Quality education

Her Excellency the Minister of Education added, "There is no doubt that ensuring the provision of quality education for all has become the top priority for all countries of the world, and the most prominent challenge facing the entire international community, in order to achieve the SDGs, especially the SDG4 by

the year 2030. Perhaps the procedural steps taken by UNESCO and its regional offices to urge Member States to take urgent measures to address the risk of depriving about two hundred and fifty-eight million children of their right to education revealed progress, but it is still little, if not nonexistent.

In this context, the Sultanate of Oman is committed to pursuing the implementation of the SDG4 nationally and globally; At the national level, the Sultanate has developed a 2040 education

The Sultanate has developed a 2040 education strategy that includes all the goals related to the SDG4

strategy that includes all the goals related to the SDG4. At the global level; The Sultanate

of Oman submitted to the United Nations its voluntary review report on the sustainable development goals.

We welcome the launch of the UNESCO “Future of Education initiative”; Let us call for enhancing the position of the teaching profession, investing in teachers as an essential component in the educational process, and adopting international standards to prepare, train and enable them to carry out their desired educational role.”

Investing in science, technology and innovation

Regarding communication and information sector, she noted that investment in science, technology and innovation is a key factor in achieving economic development and social progress, which is confirmed by UNESCO and seeks to promote and support it. Believing from the Sultanate that science and technology are

future features, pillar of scientific research and national capacity building has been adopted within the first national priority of the Education Strategy and Oman Vision 2040.

In this context, HE stressed, that the Sultanate of Oman supports what UNESCO is doing in adopting a document based on observing the human and moral values of the ethics of artificial intelligence as planned in this conference. She also praised UNESCO’s role in employing modern technology to achieve sustainable development by reducing the digital gap in individual capacity development, and providing high-quality educational opportunities through open educational resources (OER).

Safeguarding cultural heritage

On the cultural front, HE said, “As the Sultanate of Oman values UNESCO’s unremitting efforts in the field of safeguarding cultural and natural heritage to achieve the goals of sustainable development, it calls on states to take measures to integrate the preservation and management of cultural heritage into national policies, development strategies and plans, and to invest the capacity of cultural heritage to make cities where cultural life flourishes and achieves environmental sustainability, while stressing the importance of urging countries to intensify cooperation and coordination in order to reduce illicit trafficking in cultural property and a commitment to implement the 1970 agreement, especially since UNESCO will celebrate in 2020 the fifty-year anniversary of its launch.

In appreciation of the important role that art plays in achieving sustainable development in the various fields of art through supporting creativity, stimulating innovation skills, and strengthening links between artistic works to serve society and bring peace, the Sultanate of

Oman encourages everything that contributes to enrich cultural scene in the world, and supports the conference proposal for announcement of a world day for art, and another day for Islamic art.

Bioethics

On the scientific side, HE affirmed that among the most prominent issues which have imposed themselves as an inevitable consequence of the rapid development of science and the production of knowledge; The issue of bioethics, since the launch of the Bioethics program, UNESCO has drawn the world's attention to the need to adhere to ethical frameworks when dealing with the huge surge of science and technology in its various forms. In light of the importance of these ethics and the enhancement of their link to scientific progress in accordance with the cultural, legal and philosophical context, the Sultanate of Oman intends to organise the second International Conference on Bioethics, on the legislation regulating this in Muscat, during the month of February 2020, in partnership with UNESCO.

The Sultanate of Oman intends to organise the Second International Conference on Bioethics in partnership with UNESCO in Muscat.

New positions and memberships for the Sultanate in the Organization

Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani

During this session, the Sultanate succeeded in including the Omani poet Nasser bin Salem Al-Rawahi, nicknamed (Abu Muslim al Bahlani), among the influential figures on the occasion of the 100th of his death (1860 - 1920). He became the fifth Omani figure listed on this global list, and the decision was adopted by the executive board of the General Conference of the organization.

MOST

The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, joined the membership in the Government Council Committee for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, and this committee works with governments, social and human sciences societies, and civil societies to improve health conditions and achieve better social conditions. It also aims to transfer the results of research in the field of social sciences and related data to decision makers and specialists. ■

India's Ashoka Ecology and Environment Research Fund (ATREE) wins the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation in 2019

by Mohammed Ali Alabri, ONC



Ashoka Trust was handed the prize by Her Excellency Dr. Madiha Al-Shaibani, the Minister of Education, as part of the agenda of the World Science Forum that was held in the Hungarian capital Budapest from November 20th -23rd 2019. The Forum hosted well-known scientists, decision-makers and technology leaders, research and development investors,



and influential opinion-makers in civil society from all over the world including His Excellency Dr. Janos Ader, President of Hungary, and Shamila Bedouil, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO.

Audrey Azoulay, the UNESCO Director-General announced that ATREE of the Republic of India has been awarded upon the recommendation of the award jury committee. ATREE was established in 1996 and its activities are based on rigorous, multidisciplinary research that involves academics, policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and students. It has won the award for its outstanding efforts to safeguard the environment at the social level, the diversity of its activities related to sustainable development and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods through the completion of a wide range of environmental works including ecosystems in the Himalayas, Western Ghats forests registered within the biosphere reserves

and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Grasslands in Koch, wetlands in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, urban landscapes in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, as well as several activities conducted by ATREE in the fields of Ecology and environment to raise awareness and environmental conservation training.

Dr. Kamal Bawa, President and Founder of the Ashoka Environmental Research Fund, said: "This year we won the UNESCO - Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation in its fifteenth edition. First of all, I would like to thank His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said for allocating this award in cooperation with UNESCO and we are proud that it was awarded to us; it is not the first time. We were previously honored for our efforts in preserving the environment, but this award is special and valuable, as it is granted by UNESCO and funded by the Omani government,



and we received it in an important international forum.

I think that one of the reasons for the recognition of our institution is its distinguished work style, as you know that preserving the environment in the tropics poses some challenges because of the population's desire to use some natural resources. Everyone seeks to conserve these

natural resources but they depend on it as a source of livelihood, and therefore these natural resources face economic and political pressures.

The Fund dealt with this matter using multidimensional solutions, taking into account the social, economic, political and ecological dimensions. We tried to bring all stakeholders together on one table to develop strategies for preserving the environment, and indeed we succeeded in moving forward in the environmental conservation agenda in India, not only in the field of biological diversity but also preserving Natural resources in general, especially

at the present time, with the emergence of a number of important issues such as issues of climate change and water provision. We, as an institution, believe that biodiversity science brings us together to cooperate in resolving these very important issues and this award will give us the opportunity to advance further in our work”.

Dr. Nitin Pandit, Director of the Ashoka Environmental Research Fund (ATREE), renewed his thanks to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and to UNESCO for this award, and said:

“We have worked intensively and for long periods with researchers and university students for nearly two decades, which qualified us to obtain this International recognition. We are excited to do more and grateful for highlighting that natural resources around the world are under great pressure as Dr. Bawa pointed out. Solutions must be balanced between the

pressures to raise the standard of living and managing natural resources as this will not only benefit humanity; but it is also to improve the ecosystems that support them.



We seek to use this award for the sustainability of our programs in the future such as the National Mission for Biodiversity and Human Well-Being, a program launched by Dr. Vijer Ragven, the science sector advisor representing the Prime Minister’s office, and it is a multidimensional and multisectoral program that includes all parts of India, and we look forward to using this award to support this program in addition to other programs in the most remote areas of India such as wetland programs or land reclamation. The question we aim to answer is how can

we use these resources to prepare strategic initiatives and ways to address these problems in a balanced way for the continued development of India while preserving the environment at the same time?” ■

Solutions must be balanced between the pressures to raise the standard of living and managing natural resources





United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
Associated
Schools

Youth role in Omani cultural
diplomacy in international
organizations:

The UNESCO-associated Omani Schools are a Model

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Youth are the cornerstone of countries' progress, sustainable source of giving, and flowing energies to build their homelands. Therefore, UNESCO Associated School networks has capitalized on cultural diplomacy to introduce the concepts of peace and intercultural dialogue, acceptance of others and pride in patriotism.

Moreover, the UNESCO associated schools introduce the Sultanate, its constituents, cultural heritage, and tolerant values. Moreover, the UNESCO- associated schools participate

in international events and activities, which helps in strengthen international relations and promote the Sultanate abroad through students, plant a positive image of Oman in

the minds of international students and other UNESCO-associated schools in an atmosphere of peace, respect, tolerance, cooperation and exchange of knowledge and science, to make future generations more aware, harmonious to achieve international peace and coexistence, accept other cultures and combat racism.

In order to know the importance of UNESCO-associated schools role in the cultural diplomacy of countries and organizations, it is necessary to define first what the UNESCO Associated Schools Network is, and then to address Omani schools associated with the network.

UNESCO Associated Schools Network

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization “UNESCO” established a network of associated schools in 1953, in order to be a pioneer and based on new approaches and systems in the process of good preparation for children and youth for coexistence in a global society. This is through encouraging schools, colleges and students to prepare activities and events to increase knowledge of local and global issues, develop international understanding and cooperation, open to the world, different peoples and cultures, promote, respect and understand the principles on which human rights and freedom depend. Also, this network enhances communication and exchange of experiences and information between schools associated with it. Among its most prominent slogans and principles is “We live in one world and learn for one world.” UNESCO-associated schools depend on dealing with their activities on the concept of “think globally and act locally” and the principle of “learning through action”, considering that the activities implemented in these schools

depend on scientific experiences to enhance educational concepts and exchange them with other schools, to achieve integration between activities at the both local and international level (Oman National Commission, 2010).

Among the most important objectives of the UNESCO associated schools is instilling the concepts of peace, cooperation and international understanding in youth minds, with awareness of global issues and the role of the United Nations in finding solutions to them, support intercultural dialogue, emphasize principle of democracy and human rights, support principles of the rights of women and children.

Also UNESCO associated schools aim to teach youth to preserve national and global cultural and

UNESCO-associated schools have major roles to achieve the goals of UNESCO at the global level

environmental heritage, improve quality of education, familiarity with modern technology, optimal use of knowledge and science, and awareness of how to deal with others at local and global level alike (Oman National Commission, 2011).

UNESCO-associated schools have major roles to achieve the goals of UNESCO at the global level, which are represented in the openness of these schools to new ideas, coexistence in a world of interconnected interests, and undertaking of projects based on these new ideas. In addition to strengthening the pillars of education in the twenty-first century, improving cooperation between the school administration and the local community, and with other schools at the local and global levels, making joint projects with lofty value and goals. As well as distributing brochures and publications issued by UNESCO and the United Nations to students, teachers,

and local community which serve the goals of establishing (Oman National Committee, 2011).

The strategy adopted by UNESCO Associated Schools Network

A report on the news of UNESCO associated schools in the Sultanate of Oman (2013/2014), published by Oman National Commission (2013), provided a detailed presentation of the strategy adopted by UNESCO-associated schools. The report highlighted UNESCO Associated Schools Network's commitment in all countries of the world to work according to an approved strategy during the period 2014-2021 (for global citizenship) for the advancement of global citizenship through education for peace and human rights, education for sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue. This strategy is divided into four levels as follows:

The first level:

The network of associated schools at the international level

This level is based on three main objectives:

1. Establishing the UNESCO Associated Schools Network as an essential factor in promoting global citizenship.
2. Make use of technology, information and communication platforms to enhance communication and cooperation between associated schools.
3. Enhancing skills and capacities of the national coordinators of the UNESCO-associated schools and other key partners.

The second level:

The network of associated schools at the regional level

This level is based on three main objectives:

1. Involving associated schools in programs of UNESCO regional offices, and institutions of the organization at the regional level.
2. Benefiting from various regional programs to enhance communication and cooperation between national coordinators, teachers, administrators and students in associated schools.
3. Good coordination of associated school programs and pilot projects at the regional level.

The third level:

The network of associated schools at the national level

This level is based on three main objectives:

1. Increase coordination between UNESCO-associated schools through national coordinators and national commissions.
2. Establishing partnerships between UNESCO-associated schools and other institutions in the public and private sectors.
3. Promote the network of associated schools at the national level to ensure recognition of them and their activities.

Fourth Level:

Associated Schools Network at school level

This level is based on three main objectives:

1. Promote school's activities and their integration to include all the school.

2. Developing partnerships and organizing joint activities and programs with local institutions and local community.
3. Promote global citizenship and participate in national, regional and international events.

Omani Schools Associated with UNESCO

The Sultanate's accession to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972 is considered a factor in developing and improving the education system in Oman. The UNESCO Associated Schools Project is also a testament to the continuous cooperation between the Sultanate and the Organization in the field of education, noting that these schools do not differ from other public schools in a work system and curricula, but what distinguishes them is a presence of systematic activities with global dimensions and concepts.

The Sultanate joined the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in 1998, with two schools from post-basic education category, one for males and the other for females,. After the impressive success of these schools in their activities and events, the Sultanate sought to increase the number of schools to five schools in 1999. Then to 14 schools in 2007, then the number reached 26 schools in 2014 (Oman National Commission, 2014). The Sultanate realized that the activities and events of these schools had achieved their goals, and helped in developing

and refining students' skills, which increased its desire to increase the number to 28 schools in 2020 distributed between males and females and for all academic levels from all educational governorates in the Sultanate (Oman National Commission's website, 2020).

Here are the most prominent projects and activities carried out by associated schools in Oman during the period from 2000-2020 in enhancing Omani cultural diplomacy:



a) Intercultural Communication Project

The Communication of Cultures project is one of the pioneering projects implemented by UNESCO- associated schools in Oman. It is a youth forum for the age group between 17-25 years. Short trips that do not exceed one week are organized including young people from different Arab and European countries and cultures. Participants are required to be from different countries and different cultures, where they meet in a place far from modern means of communication to enjoy picturesque nature, dominated by dialogue and direct contact between youth



to correct negative perception prevailing in the West about the East and vice versa. They gather and know each other closely, identify common values among them, thus, they acquire communication and intellectual dialogue skills. Also, they introduce values, customs, and traditions of associated countries' participants. It is a model for extracurricular learning, and the Intercultural Communication Project was selected twice by the United Nations Global Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations as The best pioneering initiatives of civil society (The Sultanate of Oman, 2011).

These youth intercultural trips include trips for males and others for females, from 2007 to 2019, at a rate of two trips annually participated by hundreds of male and female students from more than 27 countries. They were covered by various media means; television channels, local,

Arab, and international newspapers, and social websites, where the followers reached more than 14 million followers (Oman National Commission, 2010).

b) Twinning project

The twinning project between UNESCO-associated schools began at the local and global levels, because of cooperation between Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and German National Commission for UNESCO in 2008, through the Cultural Diversity Program. Joint projects are held between Oman and German UNESCO associated schools. This is to strengthen links between associated schools of UNESCO and its students, learn about cultures, customs, traditions and heritage of other peoples, develop cultural and social skills through communication between students and teachers, learn about

programs and events organized by schools to exchange experiences, and make mutual visits between teachers and students of associated schools from both countries, in international seminars and conferences of interest to schools associated with UNESCO, and focus on global issues of heritage, environment, cultural exchange, peace, and tolerance (Oman National Commission, 2011).

Twinning projects have also expanded among UNESCO associated schools at the local level, . That enhance national and human values. other international, was twinning with UNESCO-associated schools in Lebanon and Denmark, working with them in joint projects between Omani students and students of these countries, to strengthen partnership, revive world heritage, and pay attention to youth for peace and sustainable development (Oman National Commission, 2013).

c) A joint project between UNESCO and Life Link:

Some Omani schools associated with UNESCO participated in the joint project between UNESCO and Swedish Life Link on the “Culture of concern” program. This project aims to encourage students to prepare small projects that support the main dimensions of peace, namely: self-concern, concern for others, and concern for nature. With the opportunity for youth to play effective roles in spreading the culture of concern, protecting, and preserving the environment, with the participation of civil society institutions and parents in support of sustainable development. About 50 Arab schools participated with 50 European schools. Given the success of this experience, UNESCO and Life link have extended this project for another

three years, to allow the largest possible number of associated schools and students to participate in this project, and to focus on the second project (2009/2011) on the topic of culture of peace and water as a source of life, sustainability and our daily life. (Sultanate of Oman, 2011).

Such international projects are an opportunity to prepare students and involve them in global dialogue and international cooperation. In addition, these projects introduce cultures and promote them globally, which reduce cultural gap between East and West.

d) Mondialogo World Competition:

Omani schools associated with UNESCO participated in the World Mondialogo Competition in 2002, launched by Chrysler and Daimler in cooperation with UNESCO, in order to promote dialogue and exchange between cultures, and to promote the principle of learning for living together in peace. This competition targets youth between the ages of 14-18 years from all over the world to build bridges of agreement and harmony between students, transcending geographical borders and distant continents, to achieve the goal of cooperation in developing mutual understanding, friendship and tolerance among people belonging to various religious, cultural and lingual horizons. This competition, which began in 2003, has met with great success, with nearly 1500 teams and 35,000 students from 26 countries participating in it. The Sultanate of Oman has achieved an success in choosing the Dawhat Al adab School, one of the Omani schools associated with UNESCO, among the top 25 projects around the world. The project was a partnership between an Omani school and a Russian school associated with

UNESCO on the issue of water. The Omani School covered the water scarcity aspect in the Sultanate of Oman, while the Russian School covered the water pollution aspect. Projects were evaluated by international commissions and arbitration bodies (Oman National Commission, 2010).

e) Muscat Youth Forum:

Students of UNESCO associated schools participated in the activities of the first Muscat Youth Forum, which was organized by several Omani institutions in cooperation with UNESCO in 2009. Approximately 160 young males and females from schools, colleges, and universities from different countries of the world participated. It was followed in the following year, 2010, by the second forum, in which about 180 young males and females from the Sultanate of Oman and around the world participated as well. This type of forums aim to conduct an open dialogue between youth to exchange views on global issues, challenges facing the contemporary world, the requirements of sustainable development, creating a character of creativity, innovation and interest in digital media, environmental and intellectual creativity, music, and other common values among nations (Oman National Commission, 2011).

f) Celebration of international events:

There is no doubt that involving youth in international events increases global awareness and facilitates participation in global issues.

Accordingly, Omani schools associated with UNESCO work on developing an annual plan to celebrate international events, and arranging events and activities associated with them to highlight their importance, including, for example: celebrating

International Year of Biodiversity (2010), and activating the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005- 2014), the International Year of Chemistry (2011), and the celebration of Earth Hour on an annual basis, to remind the world to preserve the planet and spread awareness at the local level. There are many international events declared by UNESCO and circulated on the UNESCO Associated Schools Network to interact with them and prepare activities for these events (Oman National Commission, 2014).

g) External participations of Omani schools associated with UNESCO:

There are many events, seminars and conferences attended by students and teachers from Omani schools associated with UNESCO at the international level, which come in the form of invitations to schools annually. Among the distinguished participation of the Omani schools, their participation in the regional workshop of the joint project between UNESCO and Swedish Life Link in 2008 in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, participation in the Asian Youth Climate Conference in Kuwait in 2009, and participation in the regional workshop on World Heritage for teachers and coordinators in The Arab region in the Kingdom of Jordan in 2009. In addition to participation in the joint regional symposium between UNESCO and ISESCO for the national coordinators of UNESCO-associated schools in the Arab countries, which was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and many activities related to the Arab-European dialogue, the sustainable development goals, some of them related to the environment and its preservation. (Oman National Commission, 2013).

Conclusion

Omani cultural diplomacy, in cooperation with UNESCO, has been able to qualify youth and students to use cultural diplomacy and its programs to promote Omani culture, its values, and its civilized role, through joint programs for students and youth with their peers from countries that participate in UNESCO programs through its associated schools, through intercultural program, which won international admiration for the United Nations. In addition to some annual meetings and competitions in which Omani youth participated with youth from different countries of the world, through which they learned about the Omani civilization and its cultural role, and openness to the world through dialogue and international competitions concerned with culture, environment and peace. Accordingly, youth can communicate with others more than governments, and therefore investing in this group helps to qualify diplomatic competencies that are open to others, accept, and respect other cultures. This results in a generation that loves peace, coexistence, and promotion of global citizenship. ■

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Beit Al Ajaib

by **Riyadh Abdalla Al Busaidy** - Expert in Oman and East Africa relations



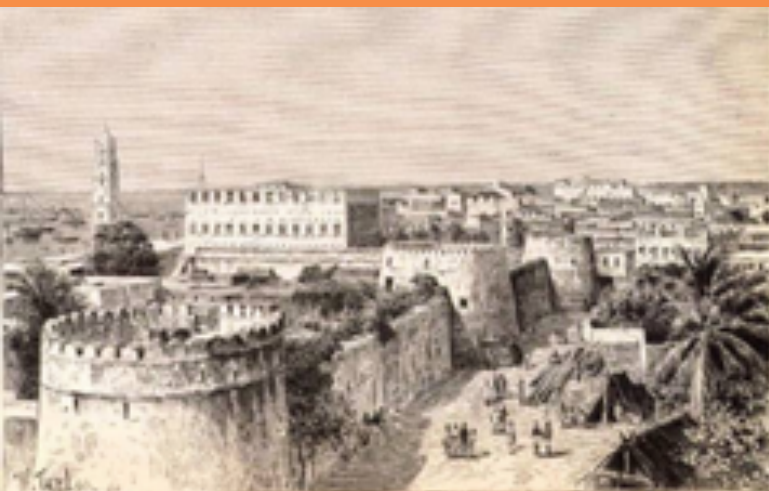
To the right of Beit Al Hukum is the start of construction of Beit Al Ajaib in 1883.

Beit Al Ajaib (the House of Wonder), as an historical building, dominates the seafront of the Unguja (Zanzibar) Town. Back in the early 1600s, when the Portuguese occupied the Indian Ocean countries, they had a small garrison, a church and a graveyard around this area where the present 'old fort' is located. According to some Portuguese records, it is also highly probable that Beit Al Ajaib was built at the site of Queen Fatima's residence who ruled around 1690s.

Beit Al Ajaib was built by H.M. Sayyid Barghash bin Said bin Sultan who ruled from 1870 to 1888. After the death of his father, he tried twice, but failed, to take the throne from his elder brother Sayyid Majid bin Said who was militarily supported by the British. He was defeated and was banished to Bombay (Mumbai) India. While in India he studied, observed and acquired a lot of new ideas. When he was allowed to return, and later when he became the ruler, he implemented many of his progressive plans. It is tempting to say more about Sayyid Barghash,

but since this article is about Beit Al Ajaib I shall try to avoid digressing from the subject.

During his reign Sayyid Barghash built several country residences/palaces for himself. Among the palaces he built, , were Chukwani, Marhubi, Migombani and Chuini. However, the jewel on the crown was Beit Al Ajaib which was built in 1883. Unlike the other palaces, this one has so far survived until today. Sadly, after 135 years, the building is being neglected and is in very bad condition. In spite of the fact that Zanzibar



A lithograph image of Beit Al Ajaib in progress

Stone Town has been declared a UNESCO site, parts of this historical building has been allowed to decay and to crumble.

In many narratives, Beit Al Ajaib has been described as a ceremonial palace. This is not correct! Sayyid Barghash used to spend at least 2 to 3 weeks a month at this palace attending the affairs of the state and to hold daily 'baraza' (reception) in the throne room located on the first floor. Probably this is what prompted the European writers to think it as a ceremonial palace. Nevertheless, Beit Al Ajaib had private apartments for the monarch and a retinue of household staff to run the daily chores of the palace. In fact two of his brothers who ruled after him also occupied this palace as their residence.

The people dubbed this building as "Beit Al Ajaib" because of its many features. Like many buildings in Stone Town, Beit Al Ajaib is a square building with an open courtyard inside. This courtyard was later covered to create an indoor covered atrium. It is the tallest building with imposing high ceiling verandahs all around.



... and after completion

The palace was built next to Beit Al Hukum and, like all of these royal residences; they were all joined by 'air bridges'. These air bridges provided covered passages for the royal ladies to visit each other without having to step out into the streets.

Beit Al Ajaib had many 'wonderful' things to brag about! It was the first building to have electricity and the first in East Africa to have an electric lift (elevator). Unlike many other buildings in Zanzibar, it had wide and very high veranda that was supported by cast iron columns and steel beams. At night the veranda was lit by beautiful wall mounted lights all around. All the rooms had several doors that open to the veranda which allowed the tropical breeze to cool the rooms. The wooden stairs that takes one to the first floor was well polished and decorated with silver vases. The marble on the floor was imported from Europe.

The Throne Room was on the first floor. It was carpeted with the best carpets and lined with sofas. The ceiling of the Throne Room was lined with crystal chandeliers that were imported



The air bridges between Beit Hukum and Beit Al Ajaib

from Austria. The alcoves on the inner wall were decorated with precision decorative items that were given as gifts or the ones the Sultan had purchased. The walls between the doors to the veranda were draped with velvet curtains.

The magnificent doors of this building require a whole chapter. Alas, I have to do them injustice and mention them briefly. The main entrance is adorned by a massive beautiful carved door. The design gives away the Indian and “the British Raj” influence. The decorative brass studs represent the Indian influence. The two lions at the centre top and the eagle eating a snake are typical ‘European’ design. The doors on the upper floors facing the inner courtyard are nothing less than exquisite. These doors are all beautifully carved inside and outside with a thin layer of gold leaf. The design on the outside panels depicts the 99 beautiful attributes of Allah. The insides panels of the doors are carved with complete passages from the Holy Qur’an.

The residential rooms were lavishly furnished with a mixture of oriental and European furniture and decorations.

Beit Al Ajaib went through several changes after the bombardment of 1897. The bombardment was aimed at Beit Hukum and Beit Sahel. (The reason for this bombardment is a different story). As you can see from the above picture, on the left was Beit Sahel, in the center was Beit Hukum, on the right is Beit Al Ajaib and in front of it was the Lighthouse Tower. Beit Sahel and Beit Hukum were totally destroyed. The Lighthouse sustained bad damage that it had to be pulled down. Beit Al Ajaib sustained damage to the left side, next to Beit Hukum. The Government decided to incorporate a ‘replica’ of the destroyed Lighthouse Tower on Beit Al Ajaib. New steel beams and concrete block work was undertaken at the front centre of the building in order to be able to bear the weight of the new tower. And that is how Beit Al Ajaib got its new image. The pictures tell the story.

In 1911 Beit Al Ajaib was taken over by the government and turned into government offices and as the British Secretariat Offices. Sadly many of the precious and historical items disappeared without trace. Some of the chandeliers in the Throne Room were installed in the Beit Serkal's Throne Room, now known as the Palace Museum.

Although this is a story about Beit Al Ajaib, I feel it is pertinent to briefly mention some of the important projects Sayyid Barghash bin Said undertook for the country. The country was undoubtedly wealthy and one could refer to this period as "Zanzibar's Renaissance".

1. He built piped water system from the Bububu water spring to town free of charge. It was well known that Zanzibar possessed the best fresh water on the coast of East Africa. For many years ships would call at Zanzibar port just to fill up their tanks with her fresh spring water. These pipes are still operational.
2. In 1879, he gave permission for laying of undersea telephone wires that connected Zanzibar with Aden and beyond.
3. He built the first printing press in East Africa.
4. In order to reduce the cost of imported goods, he kept four ships to bring in goods and to export goods from Zanzibar to India, the main trading partner at the time.
5. He encouraged the immediate re-plantation of clove trees after the great hurricane devastated the crops.
6. He provided free passage on one of his ships to take anyone who wished to go to Mecca for Hajj. He also kept a house in Mecca for their use free of charge.
7. In 1872 he allowed the British Steam Navigation Company to operate between Zanzibar/Aden/Zanzibar in order to encourage further business and ease travel access to other parts of the world.

These are just a few of the achievements he accomplished during his reign. There is a lot to write about this ruler and his achievements and progress he brought to his dominions.

Zanzibar within the UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Zanzibar (Unguja), the stone city, is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List due to its unique centuries-old architecture. The stone city structure reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of its residents. Trade between Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian subcontinent, and the Far East contributed to cultural harmony.

Some monuments and buildings date back to the fifteenth century, but the main buildings date back to the eighteenth century. Many buildings of the stone city of Zanzibar are famous for their historical importance and for their beautiful carved doors, most of the buildings follow the same building style, materials, and design. Some of them also feature balconies and ornate facade.

It should be noted that before the intervention of UNESCO, the government of Zanzibar had a legal framework to protect historical sites known as the Ancient Antiquities Law of 1948. The City and State Planning Law of 1955 introduced provisions to protect buildings of historical importance.

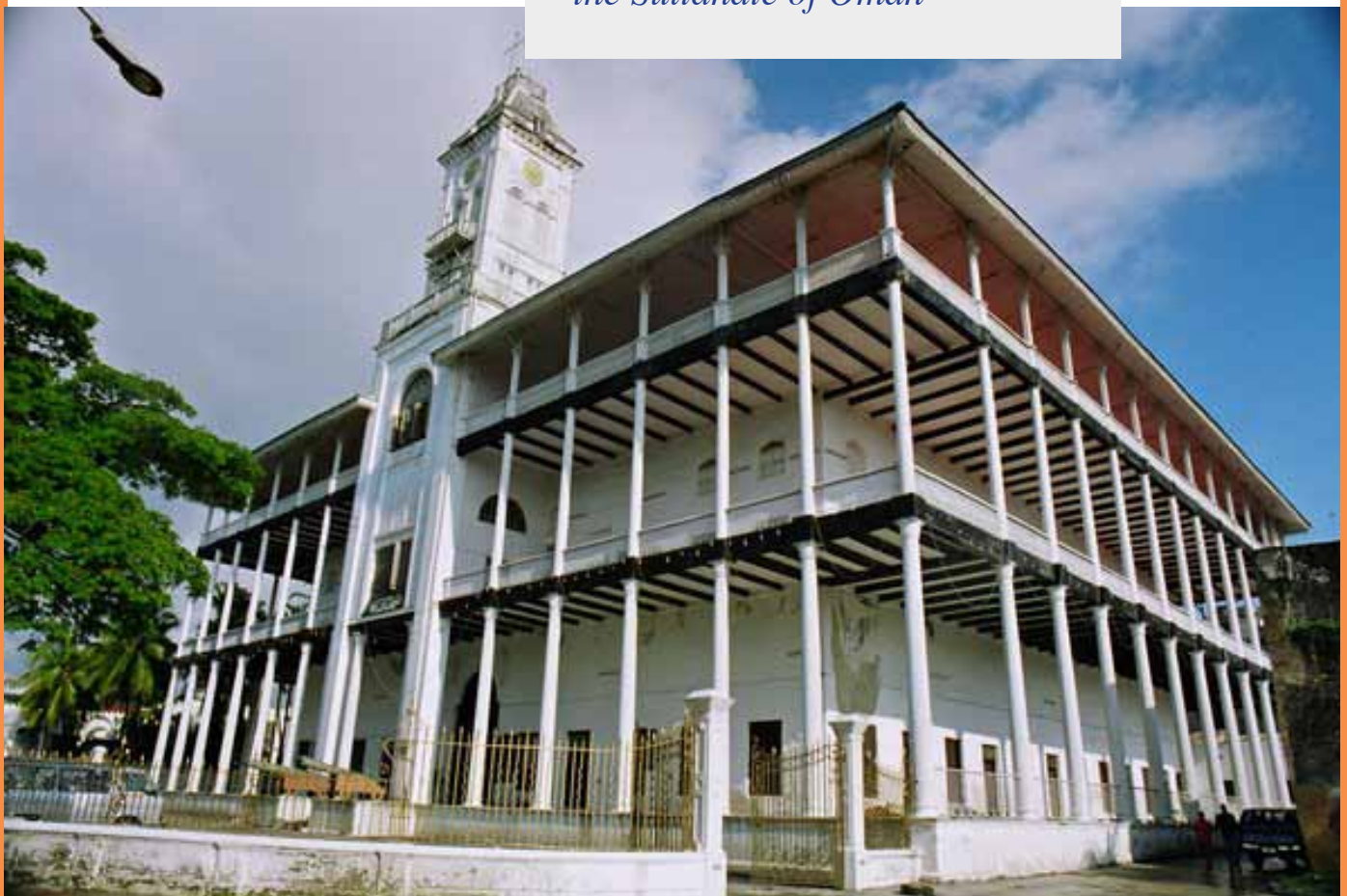
The 1964 revolution sparked chaos, destruction, and looting for many of these buildings. Most of the private buildings in the stone city were illegally seized and vandalized. The residents of the illegal houses divided the houses from the inside to provide living spaces for their families, which distorted their features. As no one took responsibility for its maintenance, the external façades began to collapse. As a result, many historic buildings were destroyed and collapsed.

In 1985 the government issued the Stone City Conservation and Development Law based on the City and State Planning Law of 1955, and this matter was strengthened by the 1994 Stone City Conservation and Development Law. Despite these laws, there are no clear policies and strategies to implement them on the ground; Unfortunately, the buildings continued to collapse, and Beit Ajaib and the Sultan's Palace are two examples of this, as shown in the pictures.

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture recently signed an agreement to restore this house in confirmation of the common heritage between the two countries and in the interest of the Sultanate to preserve its history and the effects of the Omani man at home and abroad, and this step received great welcome, both in the Sultanate and in Zanzibar itself. ■



The Ministry of Heritage and Culture recently signed an agreement to restore this house in confirmation of the common heritage between the two countries and in the interest of the Sultanate of Oman







Artificial Intelligence in Education

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence is one of the computational sciences, which some of its applications exceeded the human mind in its performance and skills, and some of them became one of the most dangerous techniques; Which requires some countries to enact legislation, laws and regulations to ensure that their services are used safely. It may be a substitute for the services provided by human due to its ability to deal with complex data that human may not be able to complete and make a correct decision about. One of the international companies specialized in this field is experimenting with the cultivation of an artificial memory in the human head that helps him get information faster.

Definition of artificial intelligence

There are many definitions of artificial intelligence, and they all agree on the ability of the machine to produce decisions quickly and with high accuracy, according to the data reduced in it. It was also known as the science of inventing intelligent machines and computer programs to simulate human thinking and its ability to do smart tasks in projects and systems that employ advanced intellectual processes for humans. As Pearson also defined it in its book Decision Support and Business Intelligent Systems as a branch of computer science that focuses on two aspects: the first is the science of studying human thought processes, and the second is how to represent these mental processes and deep thinking in machines such as robots and computers.

Artificial Intelligence applications in education

Artificial intelligence applications included various medical, educational, military, industrial and security fields, and there are applications that provide users with quick access to the required assistance according to the specific options; By analysing the data entered into the machine and it does a quick extrapolation and an automatic response to the requirements of the users according to the data and complex analyses that sometimes take a long time for human.

Robotics is one of the technologies that has entered the field of education as an assistant to teacher in the classroom; As it facilitates the teaching process for the teacher and students, so that you can communicate with students and provide immediate assistance for the chosen lessons, as well as suggesting the appropriate content for each student and follow up on his progress in the subject according to the activities implemented.

The development of various software has allowed the computer to do simulations in virtual reality and augmented reality, enabling the user to live in a semi-real atmosphere using educational and non-educational games and visiting sites by default, which are difficult to access real or costly to visit, such as visiting international hotel rooms, castles, forts, and forests where predatory animals abound or exploring deep sea.

With this, teacher can use technology-based teaching methods to change the student's methodology of browsing the information, making sure of its authenticity, and choosing reliable sites. Now there are multiple sources of information rather than textbook and teacher. The role of teacher became more involved in the information age; His/Her role as a mentor and guide for students in obtaining useful feedback,

Examples of educational applications based on artificial intelligence technology

especially in the generation of artificial intelligence.

1 - Thinkster Math

This application is used in mathematics. It uses a curriculum prepared for the subject with learning options intended for learner so that it provides immediate assistance to the student as a private teacher (online), tracks the progress of the student's learning and provides useful feedback step-by-step with suggestion of other



2 - Smart marketing

By using big analytical data by knowing customers' desires of goods, the shop pre-plans to provide these goods selected by the customers according to saved information in the company's systems, and through which their purchasing desires are identified. Systems can also get support information through social networks and provide them For decision makers of the company to increase their sales.

3 - Smart Drones

Drones are programmed by specialists to carry out specific tasks in a specific time. Their uses were limited to military fields, but with development in uses and multiplicity of their economic feasibility by the countries that manufactured them, civil use became useful and profitable, Thus, they became used in natural disasters to save people or to put out fires, and to deliver food and medicine to hard-to-reach places by traditional methods.



4 - Smart e-learning environments

Due to the proliferation of electronic learning platforms and interactive forums, learning has become available anywhere and anytime, and virtual learning environments help self-learning and respond to the content presented to learner, where the machine collects all the completed work as evaluation grades for the student from various activities and tests. Accordingly, the computer, by A I programming, sends these scores to teacher, student, and parent. Thus, the feedback to the student's achievement will be instantaneous for all partners of the educational process. It also enables them to follow the learning process and find alternatives and proposals if needed. It develops students' abilities with a focus on shortcomings that students must pass as a result of the issued electronic evaluation information from the system. The system can also recognize the preferred preferences for activities and games that the student has previously participated in or accessed on the site or other sites and provides options to the student to improve his / her level or suggest interactive activities to learn from.



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8. Artificial Intelligence Between Reality and Expected "Technical and Field Study" International Forum "Artificial Intelligence: A New Challenge to the Law" Dr. Samia Qamoura Algeria 2018.



Proposals by the author to apply artificial intelligence in any educational institution

1. To switch to e-learning, the A I tool must be available; To provide important reports for the immediate and automatic learning where the system with the help of the artificial intelligence feature provides many options for the learner in terms of monitoring the progress of learning as well as providing suggestions in the scientific subject and learning path. It provides immediate nutrition to develop learner's level. The system also allows teacher to see all options that students choose in their entry into the e-learning environment and any content browsed or answered and presented to the teacher as clear data for the development of student learning. It provides suggestions or decisions that teacher can make when communicating with students in the classes or communicating with parents.
2. E-learning environments equipped with artificial intelligence systems can automatically assign contents to people with learning difficulties or who need scientific assistance so the smart assistant will suggest options for students in the difficulties they face in their learning path as well as guide them in understanding terms that may be unclear. Also it suggest activities and exercises or games that match their abilities; So that the system can arrange them according to student's level.
3. Accelerating insertion of programming and learning to build smart applications since the first stages of education in the curricula, especially information technology curricula, to build innovative and creative students those can find smart technical solutions to help community to overcome difficulties. Machine can perform this works efficiently and without boredom or tiredness with little or zero percentage of comparing with humans; such as monitoring grades and analysing them, as well as taking absences and rewriting names of classes and other routine work that teacher performs, which can be computerized automatically. Thus, teacher can spend his/her time in topics related to following scientific and practical development of students..
4. Adopting smart programming and applications project as a national competition with involvement of private sector as a strategic partner to support the initiative and adopting students' projects and their achievements to present them to the labour market as well as compatibility of visions between what private sector needs and labour market and what is taught in schools, colleges and universities.
5. The national institutions concerned with these technologies adopt scientific workshops and conferences to introduce artificial intelligence, its most prominent applications today and future, its uses in education and other fields and contribute to cooperation to develop ethical frameworks and challenges related to it.
6. Adopting training programs to qualify workers in different sectors, especially educational sector, on artificial intelligence skills and market requirements for future jobs. The focus in the coming years will be on specialized technical skills and dealing with software that facilitate communication with machines and changing thinking style to focus on creativity and innovation of new nontraditional ideas. ■



**Her Excellency
Dr. Samira Mohammed Al Mousa**
Ambassador - Permanent Delegate
of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO

by Mohammed Ali Alabri, ONC

1. *The presence of the diplomatic delegations of UNESCO Member States at the organization's headquarters has proven to be vital. Would you, Your Excellency, inform us of the civilized role of these delegations?*

The diplomatic delegations of countries in international organizations differ from diplomatic delegations between countries, as international organizations including UNESCO are multilateral with the number of UNESCO member states reaching 193 countries, not to mention the observers of non-member states, and governmental and non-governmental international organizations. So this plurality and diversity creates an environment for exchange of views and discussion pertaining draft resolutions which creates an opportunity for dialogue among them and, consequently, reaching agreement in most cases regarding these decisions. In addition, this cultural diversity is in itself an enrichment and an element of strength for this international organization, as this diversity opens the way for states to converge and interact in a civilized and positive way that serves the public interest.

2. *Could you please tell us more about the Sultanate's membership in the Executive Council of the organization 2015 – 2019 and how this serves the Sultanate's projects in particular and the Arab group in general?*

First, let us make it clear that UNESCO has two main governing bodies, the General Conference and the Executive Council. The General Conference is held once every two years in the presence of the member states and their affiliates. As for the Executive Council, its members are elected by the General Conference, and it is concerned with the implementation of its decisions.

Oman has been an active member of the organization's executive board since 2015 for a period of four years. The membership facilitated introducing Oman's own projects and helped gaining support from other countries. Among these projects was the tourism project for sustainable development and the Silk Road project.

Several committees emerged from the Executive Council, which meet continuously during the sessions of the meetings of the Council, the most important of which are the Program and External Relations Committee, the Administration and Financial Resources Committee, and the Recommendations and Agreements Committee. There are committees that meet once during the term of each session of the Council: the Special Committee and the Committee of International NGOs.

During the period from 2015 to 2017, the Sultanate chaired the Special Committee, which is concerned with discussing corporate governance issues, mechanisms and methods of work in the organization. Oman also chaired during the period from 2017-2019 the Committee for Programs and External Relations, which discusses and follows up the organization's programs, as well as the draft resolutions that concern member states. In addition to some political issues, the decisions of the State of Palestine fall within this committee, and the Sultanate has an important role in supporting any draft resolution that is in the interest of the Palestinian people due to its membership in the Executive Council.

3. *In the past years, the Sultanate has enjoyed many positions and memberships in the organization. What is the positive impact of these positions and memberships on highlighting Oman as a civilized country of the world?*

Oman's positions and memberships in some of the international organization's committees is definitely a national gain and evidence of the positive international reputation it holds. For example, during the membership in the organization's executive council, Oman has submitted several draft resolutions, most notably the tourism for sustainable development project which has been supported by many countries, especially countries that work on and implement sustainable development projects. It also presented the draft resolution on the Silk Road, and this decision was also supported by many countries, especially China. These positions give us the required authority to propose projects or support draft decisions that are in the interest of the Sultanate in particular and the Arab group in general, and in many cases through this membership we affect the draft resolutions of the organization at the level of the organization's executive board. The Sultanate also has many positions and memberships in other committees of the organization, most notably the Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) which is concerned with the nomination of institutions and individuals for the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Protection. The Sultanate is also a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for Oceanography and is represented by Dr. Jumaa bin Saeed Al-Maskari, Director General of Meteorology at the General Authority of Civil Aviation. The committee aims to enhance international cooperation and coordination of programs in the field of oceanography research, services and capacity building. It also leads the global ocean observing system and promotes international cooperation on tsunami early warning. Most of these committees are represented by experts from different countries, each within its competence. For example, the Sultanate is represented in the Intangible

Heritage Committee by Mr. Saeed bin Sultan Al Busaidi as an international expert to assess ICH files for the period 2018-2021.

4. *What are the most prominent councils and committees that the Sultanate is seeking to join during the next stage? What are the gains that the Sultanate will achieve from that?*

Thanks to the huge efforts during the 40th session of the General Conference of the Organization for this year (2019), the Sultanate became a member of the World Heritage Committee which is one of the most important committees after the Executive Council. This committee is made up of representatives of 21 countries who are elected by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Agreement. The representatives of the World Heritage Committee study the proposals of Member States of UNESCO wishing to include their sites on the World Heritage List, assist them in reporting and evaluating their proposed sites and then decide whether or not to suggest the proposed sites in the World Heritage List.

Oman was also a member of the Governmental Council Committee of the Program for the Management of Social Transformations - MOST. The Council Committee works with governments, social and human sciences societies and civil societies to improve health conditions and achieve better social conditions, in addition to transferring research results in the field of social sciences and related data to decision makers and specialists, and it is the only social transformation program in the United Nations to assist Member states to confront the changes of daily life through research in social sciences and the development of appropriate



public policies. The Sultanate is represented in the membership of this committee by an expert from the Ministry of Social Development.

5. *Oman always strives to foster joint Arab actions. How was this employed at UNESCO?*

We may agree that the general policies of Arab countries can shed their light on the performance of the Arab group in the organization, but I assure you that the Arab group is working hard to meet and agree on decisions regarding our Arab nation. Many issues are absolutely agreed upon like the Palestinian issue but sometimes there are differences in views on some issues but we try hard to reach a meeting point and common solutions.

We in the Sultanate of Oman believe that different points of view may sometimes be a source of strength. It is not difference in itself but how we deal with it that is important. Yes we disagree but with respect and affection. We understand some issues that concern a particular country but we might not be able to take action regard them because of some political lines that we have to adhere to. Having differences is not problematic and we should not view them with absolute passivity. When we are nominated for a membership in a committee, it is difficult to obtain the votes and support of all parties. Representatives of countries, must choose the candidate that they believe - from their point of view- is most appropriate and most efficient for any position in the organization.

With reference to the Palestinian issue, as the Arab Group previously stated, it meets and supports any positive decision related to it and the Arab member states of the World Heritage Committee have a major role in discussing issues

of tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to those lands and there is international support for the Palestinian people, and many countries believe in and support the Palestinian cause outside the Arab group.

6. *What are the most prominent topics and issues on the agenda of the General Conference at its 40th session?*

During this session, many issues related to the work of the organization and its competencies were discussed, most notably the agreement on the general budget of the organization, as the organization's budget was affected after the United States of America left its membership. Member States were asked to raise the value of their contributions and this matter was discussed during the 207th session of the Council. However, unfortunately no agreement was reached at that time and this matter was postponed until this session of the General Conference to approve the budget which requires providing a maximum of \$ 534.6 million to overcome the budget deficit and a minimum of \$ 518 million. There are differences between countries in this matter and the Sultanate wants to sustain the 518 million dollars but on the other hand, the Sultanate will not stand in the way if the other countries are unanimous in raising the budget.

As for the programs and plans, three draft resolutions submitted by three countries and with the support of other countries were presented during the session. The first decision is concerned with determining the time period for members of the Executive Council, so that the membership period of states in the Council does not exceed two terms which is four years and then go off for two years, and we are still studying this decision. We believe in it in principle and we do not want to split over it and we try to be with consensus. The



second decision concerns member states that have not paid their financial contributions for their membership in the organization. Member states must believe in their responsibility to support the organization through the payment of contributions and non-delay, yet, some countries ask to obtain certain concessions from the organization or ask for a delay. Qatar presented the third draft resolution on the mechanism for electing the Director-General of the organization, where the State of Qatar believes that the Executive Council consisting of 58 countries choose at least two candidates for this position, and then a recommendation is made to the General Conference about them, which in turn decides the appropriate candidate. This is the difference between the DG of the organization being elected by 58 countries through the Executive Council and being elected by the general conference consisting of 193 countries, and the Sultanate will support the majority in this decision. I assure you that all of these decisions are difficult to agree upon because some continental groups do not understand each other and if they are adopted, the founding charter of the organization must be changed to give it legal status.

7. *How can the organization deal with thorny global issues such as climate change, AI, and refugee issues?*

Certainly, UNESCO has a great role in discussing many new issues. The organization works on policies, and its principles include assessing policies and keeping abreast of developments that occur within the scope of its competencies. As far as climate change is concerned, this issue is important because many countries, small islands and small states have been negatively affected and can even affect their existence. It is imperative to take decisions and urge countries in all organizations, including UNESCO, to take effective decisions to cope with the negative

consequences of this phenomenon. With regard to the issue of refugees, the organization must have a role in reality on the ground and in the field and not only to take decisions in the corridors of the organization, and UNESCO has many projects for Iraq and Syria and the restoration and rehabilitation of World Heritage sites affected by armed conflict.

8. *How do you see the position of the Sultanate among the countries of the world?*

I believe that the Sultanate has an important role in the work of the organization, especially during its membership in the organization's executive council and its chairmanship of the special committee emanating from the council. The Permanent Delegation of Oman to UNESCO is following the same path consistent with the general political orientations of the Sultanate. As you know during the past years, the Sultanate obtained many positions and memberships in the councils, bodies and committees that follow the organization, and even chaired many of them. It also managed to register many of its cultural elements in the various cultural lists of the organization and there is fruitful cooperation in the educational, scientific, communication and information fields. All these accomplishments are not by chance, but rather as a result of the balanced diplomatic policies that the Sultanate is pursuing, and these policies have resulted in the support of brotherly and friendly countries for all the steps that the Sultanate is taking in every corner of the organization.

The Sultanate's delegate also has a role when the organization takes any decision. Some countries will interfere in some of the decisions in the Executive Council only if it affects them and this is a major mistake that some countries make because the organization must be discussed in its administrative decisions And

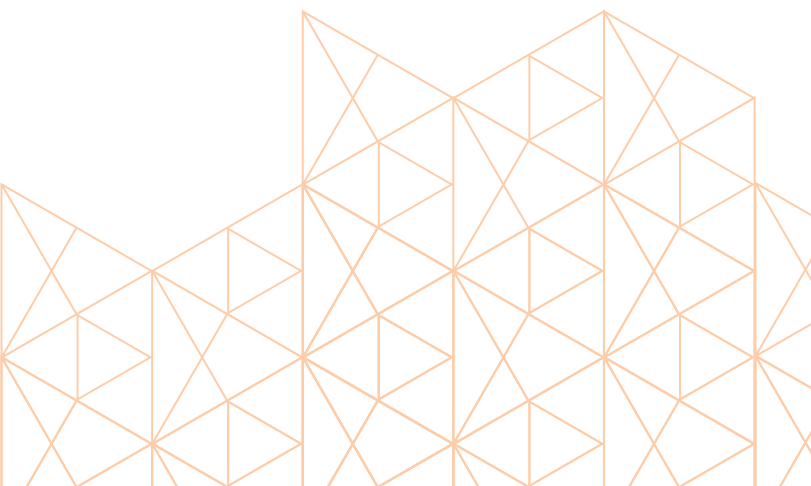
finance and its various programs, including the organization's strategic transformation program where member states must have a major role in decision making to see what's best for the organization. Sometimes there is a conflict between the interests of the employees themselves and management In general and therefore the member states in the organization should have a clear role.

Oman is one of the countries that always talks about transparency and ethics and what we do in the delegate is a complement to the Sultanate's policy and a proof of that is when countries meet to discuss some projects within the mini-meetings prior to the Executive Council, Oman is invited to attend these discussions because it has a clear voice and an influential role.

9. *Is there anything you would like to add before we end this interview?*

In conclusion, I would like to add that the national authorities in Oman should be fully aware of the mission and functions of the organization, its role and the role of its specialized committees, such as the World Heritage Committee and the representative list of intangible cultural heritage and here I confirm that it is not only important to register the elements of Oman in the different lists of UNESCO, but what comes after registration as in how can these elements be invested at various levels, how to promote them locally and externally, and how can we spark the citizens' interest in them and to embed them in the hearts of young people.

Thank you for this important addition.





The Sultanate ranks first in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Award of Environmental Management in the Islamic World

by

Dr. Abdullah Hamad Al Nahdi

Marine Science and Fisheries Center,
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries



The Sultanate, represented by the Marine Science and Fisheries Centre affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, won the first place in the Saudi Arabia Prize for Environmental Management in the Islamic World at its current session for the years 2018-2019, for the branch of best research, achievements and practices in the field of environment and sustainable development through the project that The Centre implemented it with the title: "Investigating the age estimates for commercial silvery grunt fish in the Arabian Sea."

The award aims to consolidate the broad concept of environmental management in the Arab world, and motivate Arab countries to pay attention to the concept of sustainable development, and to introduce distinguished efforts and successful practices in the field of environmental management and circulate them

to secure future generations in the Arab region and for the benefit of all humanity.

The award was received by Dr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al Nahdi, Director of the Marine and Fisheries Sciences Centre. This is on the sidelines of the eighth Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers held at the headquarters of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - ISESCO - during the period from 2-3 October 2019.

Marine and Fisheries Science Centre

The fish and marine wealth sector has received great attention in the Sultanate of Oman, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fish plans focused on preserving and exploiting this national wealth in a manner that ensures its sustainability for future generations. From



to Arab countries to benefit from them. The award also encourages environmental action and awareness-raising, and at the same time it is an incentive for all institutions and individuals

this standpoint, the Ministry established a specialized centre that conducts scientific studies and research related to fish wealth and marine environment providing a scientific

database on that research; to provide scientific advice to researchers, decision makers, and those responsible for managing marine resources to make appropriate decisions that contribute to the optimal exploitation and sustainability of these resources, which is the "Marine and Fisheries Science Centre", opened on 12/29/1986, and includes several departments and laboratories that work as one

sector and preserve the marine environment in order to ensure the sustainability of their productivity in the long run. The centre also works to prepare and implement research programs for living aquatic resources, estimate fish stocks, determine the optimal indicators for their exploitation. In addition the centre identifies fishing sites and seasons in which fishing is prohibited and the amount of water



unit with each other In all research projects. The centre includes five departments: the Department of Fish species, the Department of Marine Environment and Oceanography, the Department of Crustaceans and Molluscs, the Department of Surveys and Fish Stock Estimation, and the Department of Fishing Techniques and Equipment. These departments carry out scientific research to develop the fish

resources permitted to be fished, proposes models for fisheries management that are able to protect living aquatic resources in the Sultanate, and conduct Research and studies on studying and controlling the marine environment and its impact on living aquatic resources. Moreover, it conducts research and studies on marine biotechnology, studies, and practical experiences to develop fishing

techniques and equipment.

The centre worked to raise the level of scientific research in the Sultanate at the local and regional

levels, in conjunction with developing the capabilities of specialists and workers in the centre and raising their level of competence to keep pace with developments in scientific research in the world to achieve success.

The past years have witnessed many research achievements represented in publishing a number of scientific research and reports for research projects, including the study of benthic fish for commercially important species, studies on an integrated project for the management and exploitation of coastal tuna resources, and the study of fishery and shrimp fisheries in the Sultanate of Oman through which a database on biological characteristics and stockpiles of commercial fish species was established such as identifying breeding and mortality seasons, and information on its genetic makeup; This is to help develop an appropriate plan for managing fisheries resources, formulating and implementing appropriate fisheries policies for the development of their resources.

The Centre also implemented an exploratory survey project for shellfish resources in Oman coastal waters, and a number of marine shells samples were collected during the survey about 252 species of shellfish, distributed over 30 sites along Oman coast. The Centre also works on several other research projects and programs, the most important of which is the project of monitoring and minimizing the impact of the red tide on fish wealth and public health, a project concerned with the classification of phytoplankton in the Sultanate and the identification of poisonous species thereof,

The centre worked to raise the level of scientific research in the Sultanate at the local and regional levels

classification of fish larvae in the Sultanate, geographical distribution, and knowledge of the breeding seasons. 433 types of 176 species

representing 19 groups were classified by collecting samples from six main sample collection stations, three of which are in the Sea of Oman and three stations in the Arabian Sea. Among these types were identified 362 types of relatively large micro algae which are Most of the groups examined, and

the remaining groups of relatively small algae are permanently found in phytoplankton and contribute to the overall abundance.

As for development of specialists in the centre, the Ministry has paid attention to qualifying specialists to obtain scientific qualifications from local and international universities in fisheries specialities and related research, and the centre currently includes eight doctoral employees who have completed their studies in universities in the United States and the United Kingdom, and eight others who hold a master's degree graduated from different universities. In addition there are five Bachelor's holders from Sultan Qaboos University, not to mention many employees who are still under study and training in specialized courses linked to the research and laboratory work of the centre.

All these efforts resulted in the development we see today for the sector in various fields related to marine species or the surrounding environment. Many regional and international organizations working in this sector are also seeking to cooperate with the Centre, by setting up joint projects that contribute to managing and maintaining this sector. The centre had several departments and laboratories working as one unit with each other in all research projects.

The winning research

As for the research submitted by the Marine and Fisheries Sciences Centre and won the ISESCO Prize, it was a study on “Investigating the age estimates for commercial silvery grunt fish in the Arabian Sea”. This study was published in the international magazine “Applied Ichthyology”, in which the latest analytical programs were used to reach accurate and clear results, and it is considered one of the important studies in the management of commercial fisheries by knowing the current state of these stocks. Where it continued for a period of two years, during which the necessary data were collected for fish analysis and sampling from fish landing sites in the Arabian Sea. After collecting fresh fish samples, anatomy of these samples was done in the centre’s laboratories and taking metrological measurements and lengths for all fish, as well as taking biological data such as weights of ovarian, liver, bowel, and tare weight. After that, the ear bones were extracted and the methods used in preparations for age readings were taken by taking a cross section of these bones and readings of the bone rings under the microscope.

After collecting all data, it was analysed by one of the advanced programs in graphical analysis, which is “AR platform” program; To achieve the highest accuracy rates in taking the results, and at the end of the study, appropriate recommendations were submitted for its outputs, and the results of the study are used for measurements in estimation of fish stocks in the Sultanate of Oman as a model for the remaining commercial stocks which thus contribute to the sustainability of the fish exploitation of these fisheries.

Conclusion

Scientific publishing at the Marine and Fisheries Sciences Centre has a clear impact on the advancement of scientific knowledge; To contribute to advancing societal progress through documenting the results of studies and scientific research that are concerned with finding solutions to existing problems at the level of the environment or society through research, authoring and disseminating scientific results in a way that is beneficial to the Omani society and for all mankind. Not to mention the dissemination of knowledge in scientific circles such as graduate students and researchers and specialists in research and educational institutions, in addition to developing scientific research and keeping pace with international studies. Scientific publishing includes research papers in peer-reviewed journals, scientific books, and final reports of research projects in addition to educational publications. ■

Under the slogan “Arabic language and Artificial intelligence

Countries of the world celebrate the International
Day of Arabic Language

by Fatma Mohammed Al Yahmadi, ONC



The world celebrates on the 18th of December of every year the International Day of Arabic Language, which was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be the International Day of the Arabic Language, bearing the slogan of this year “Arabic Language and Artificial Intelligence”. The celebration of this day comes within the framework of the organization’s support to promote linguistic diversity and multiculturalism, and to recognize the importance of Arabic language; as it is



Centre for Arabic and Human Studies and Arabic Language Department at the College of Science and Arts at Nizwa University, the speech of the committee included Mahmoud bin Abdullah Al-Abri, Assistant Secretary of Oman National Commission for the sectors of culture, communication and information, In it he explained the importance of celebrating this day; It is one of the six official languages recognized by the United Nations, and is considered one of the most widely spoken languages globally. The event also included a dialogue session on the personality of "Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani Al-Rawahi; an Omani international figure: the indications of the achievement, the role of official and private institutions and specialists and researchers in sustaining the achievement and maximizing its cultural and moral returns, in which Dr. Hamid bin Saif Al-Nofli, Director of the Culture Sector in Oman Commission.



one of the six official languages recognized by the United Nations along with English, French, Russian, Spanish and Chinese. The 190th session of the UNESCO Executive Board decided in October 2012 to consider the eighteenth of December a world day for the Arabic language, and that year UNESCO celebrated for the first time on this day.

In conjunction with the celebration of this day, Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated in an event organized by Alkhalil bin Ahmed Al-Farahidi

The commission also participated in an event organized by Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Nonnative Speakers, as the program included a dialogue session, poems and cultural competitions, in addition of displaying a video film on Arabic language education initiatives. Moreover, UNESCO Associated Schools Network celebrated this day through implementation of several events, programs and competitions that highlighted the importance of Arabic language and its great status. ■

PUBLICATIONS

Book Title:

UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation

Publisher:

Ministry of Education - UNESCO

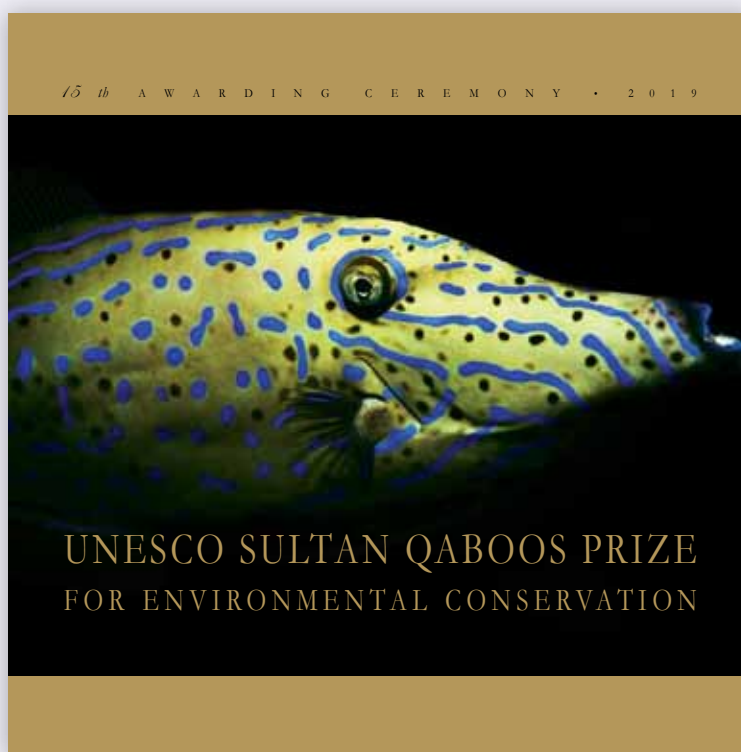
Publication information:

Muscat, Ministry of Education, 2019

Content:

This book is published biannually in celebration of granting the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation which in 2019 has completed its 15th edition. The book gives an overview of the prize including its •Statutes and financial regulations and states the winners since its inception through a generous donation to UNESCO by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al-Said of Oman in 1989. The 2019 Prize was awarded to the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) - established in 1996- following the recommendation of Audrey Azoulay, DG, UNESCO and the international jury of the prize.

The prize recognizes ATREE for conservation planning and the creation and promotion of sustainable livings based on rigorous



interdisciplinary research that includes academics, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and students. The prize also recognizes significant contributions towards the World Heritage Western Ghats and its efforts towards the conservation of diverse environments throughout India, including the Eastern Himalayas, the grasslands of Kutch, the wetlands of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and urban landscapes of Karnataka, in addition to many activities to raise awareness and train in the field of environmental conservation.

Book title:

Transforming the future: anticipation in the 21st century

Corporate author: **UNESCO**

Person as author: **Miller, Riel**

Publication: **2018, Paris**

Electronic copy:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000264644>

Summary:

This book presents the results of significant research undertaken by UNESCO with a number of partners to detect and define the theory and practice of anticipation around the world today. It uses the concept of 'Futures Literacy' as a tool to define the understanding of anticipatory systems and processes - also known as the Discipline of Anticipation. This innovative title explores:

- new topics such as Futures Literacy and the Discipline of Anticipation;
- the evidence collected from over 30 Futures Literacy Laboratories and presented in 14 full case studies;
- The need and opportunity for significant innovation in human decision-making systems.

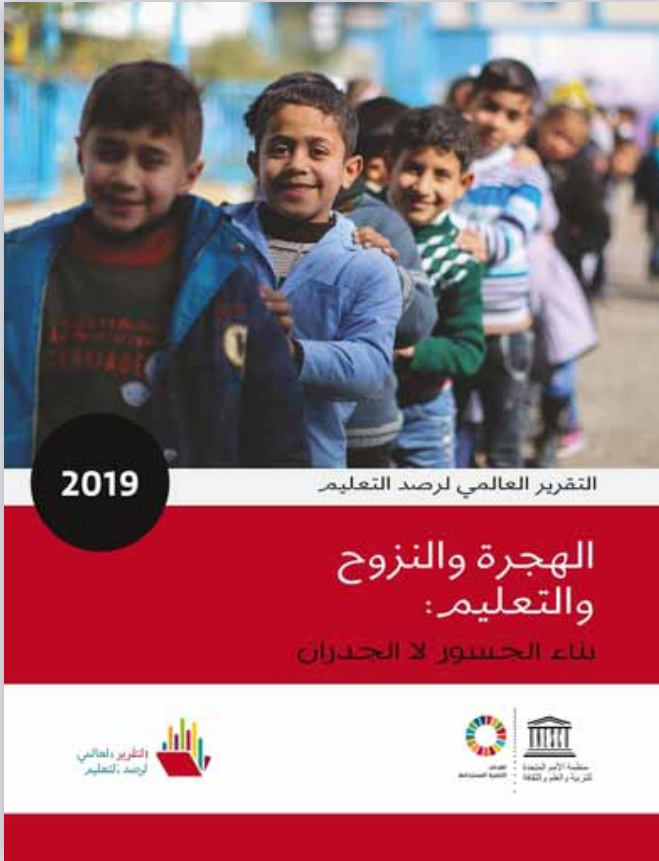


This book will be of great interest to scholars, researchers, policy-makers and students, as well as activists working on sustainability issues and innovation, future studies and anticipation studies.

Riel Miller is Head of Futures Literacy at UNESCO, Paris, France.

Book title:

**Global education monitoring report 2019:
Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls**



Corporate author: **UNESCO**

Publication: **2019, Paris**

Electronic copy:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366946>

Summary:

The Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 examines the effects of migration and displacement on education. It includes all forms of population movement, whether their movement is limited to or transit

through national borders, voluntarily or forcibly, for work or for education. The report also reviews progress made on education within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report analyses how education can be harnessed to build inclusive societies and help people learn to coexist, as well as to tolerate, for equality in the provision of education builds bridges between different groups of the population, while inequality in the provision of education creates walls between migrants, refugees and host communities.

UNESCO Strategic Transformation

Mohammed Saleem Al Yaqoubi

Secretary General

Oman National Commission
for Education, Culture and Science



Welcome back. This issue featured a number of educational, scientific and cultural topics and highlighted many activities and programs implemented by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science in cooperation with national institutions. This issue also mentioned the Sultanate's active participation in the 40th session of the UNESCO which was held during October of this year during which the country has achieved many accomplishments and has joined a number of memberships in the various bodies and councils of the organization as well as the country's participation in the discussions on a number of emerging issues on the global scene and the process of identifying the risks and the opportunities to overcome them and discussed files related to the work mechanism of the organization and its functions, including the "UNESCO strategic transformation process".

The process of strategic transformation is defined as a series of actions that leaders and decision makers in an organization take in the short and long term in order to reach major changes and improvements in performance and capacity building in order to reach productive efficiency as well as to achieve more

accomplishments through the implementation of a number of plans and programs that diagnose the institution's existing status using appropriate analytical tools based on accurate facts and data in order to identify weaknesses and benefit from strengths.

From this standpoint, UNESCO looks to the future by reading and adapting to the accelerating international developments and changes along with adopting the vision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the modernization of the United Nations system in all its configurations. UNESCO seeks to improve internal institutional work and increase its effectiveness with a focus on aligning its programs and activities and strengthening them to meet current and future challenges and build partnerships with various international organizations in various sectors towards achieving the sustainable development goals around 2030.



To achieve its goal, the organization works with the participation of member states in drawing up this strategy to ensure the exchange of ideas, opinions and views about it and to reach consensus. The UNESCO also ensures informing the national commissions of the developments through specialized publications and conducting periodic dialogue programs between the permanent delegates and the Assistant Director-General in various sectors to consult and coordinate with and take their views and know the points that they are reserved about and reach common solutions.

Because the staff of the organization are its nerve and its throbbing heart, they have been involved in this process by holding a general meeting of the staff at the headquarters of the organization along with regular and direct meetings with the staff of the regional offices via closed-circuit television in the presence of the Director-General of the organization and its assistants to exchange views on a number of their issues, including issues related to human resources management in the organization and in the regional offices of the organization and its institutes in the first and second categories, matters of communication at the internal level, and the reorganization of the organization's field network. Regarding youth, the organization has established an informal internal network that represents the various segments of the youth to exchange ideas with them, listen to their future directions and aspirations, and discuss a mechanism to include them in this process. ■

