



TAWASOL

Issue No : 14 - 2011
Sultanate of Oman



International Year of Chemistry 2011 (IYC)

5th Connecting Cultures Trip in Oman

Integrating the ESD concepts and topics in education plans and curricula

Oman Botanic Garden

Interview with:

Director General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



*Conference on Education For Sustainable
Development in support of
Cultural Diversity & Biodiversity
Muscat 24-26 Jan 2011*

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National Commission**



Tawasol

A bridge for communication between
the Omani National Commission and
international organizations .

Tawasol

A supplement of Resalat Al Tarbiyah
magazine published in Arabic &
English by the Omani National
Commission for Education, Culture
and Science to cover the educational,
cultural and scientific issues as
well as maintain coordination with
Arab, Islamic and International
Organizations to ensure better
cooperation and coordination with
them.

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Tawasol Issue No:14-2011

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Minister of Education
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Commission for Education,
Culture and Science



It was a pleasure and an honour for the Sultanate of Oman to host the international Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in support of Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity in Muscat. The three day conference offered rich discussions among participants and created a unique scientific environment. The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education and the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, aimed to promote this conference as a forum for those involved in cultural diversity and biodiversity from various countries across the globe, in addition to numerous scientists and experts representing international organizations and authorities.

Hosting international events of a scientific nature, attracting reputable and experienced scientists with international expertise and providing solutions for issues of interest to mankind, is nothing new to Oman. The conference was a significant landmark in enhancing Oman's standing among countries around the world interested in education. It also showed Oman's clear commitment to present youth issues in local, regional and international events, by highlighting Omani initiatives in communication and rapprochement with other cultures. All this reflects Oman's belief in the positive role youths can play in prioritising sustainable development.

The conference was an expression of the need of the global community to find appropriate solutions to the problems facing mankind. Oman is aware of the global interest in all the issues burdening mankind, and believes that it is necessary for all to join together to utilize the political, social and media potentials to stress the concepts of peace, meaningful dialogue and providing a balanced message, in addition to find a balanced natural environment to support the sustainable development goals.

Considering the great wealth of experience and expertise in cultural diversity and biodiversity and in managing youth affairs and initiatives, there is no doubt that the recommendations from the scientists, researchers and stakeholders involved in the conference are of great significance. These recommendations will, make a valuable contribution to various aspects of sustainable development.

The City of Muscat had the honour of hosting the teams of the national commissions for the Euro-Arab Dialogue. This was a historic meeting adding to the joint work of establishing dialogue and understanding between the two sides.

Undoubtedly, dialogue is essential for the promotion of understanding, coexistence and tolerance. It helps to reduce misunderstanding, and promotes a spirit of cooperation and exchange of experiences and expertise in education, culture and science.

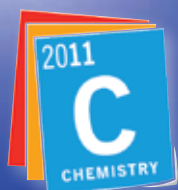
I would like to thank the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, conference organizers and all the participating working teams for contributing to the success of the conference, and I would like also to take this opportunity to convey my thanks to the coordinators of this initiative from both the Arab and European sides for their valuable and appreciated efforts, and for everyone who contributed to its success.



International Year of Chemistry 2011 (IYC)

All known matter – gas, liquid and solid – is composed of chemical elements or compounds made from those elements. Humankind's understanding of the material nature of our world is grounded in our knowledge of chemistry. Indeed, all living processes are controlled by chemical reactions, thus chemistry involves all life activities, and is present in all the activities of living creatures. Through chemistry, natural raw materials are transferred into materials fulfilling mankind's needs. The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and UNESCO strongly believe that it is time to celebrate the achievements of chemistry and its contributions to the wellbeing of mankind and, based on their recommendation, the UN General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Chemistry. It is anticipated that the students will participate in regional and local celebrations by implementing interactive programmes and activities, thus providing the opportunity for all communities to participate.





International Year of **CHEMISTRY** 2011

IYC objectives

Increase the public's appreciation and understanding of chemistry in meeting world needs as chemistry helps us to understand what is happening in the universe and in the production of life requirements including food, medicine, energy, metal and other extracted and processed materials. This understanding will lead us to support economic growth and encourage the creation of a healthy environment.

Encourage the interest of young people in chemistry and ensure that the youth are eager and excited to work in this science. The IYC stresses the role of chemistry in the sustainability of natural resources. In partnership with the UN, the IYC will achieve a strong educational contribution towards the ESD decade objectives, especially in health and environment.

Generate enthusiasm for the creative future of chemistry: creativity to continuously discover new and exciting principles and applications in chemistry. Chemists will be invited to play a fundamental role to overcome the challenges facing our world, like contributing in achieving the UN Millennium Goals. Deep understanding of chemistry is fundamental to micro medicine, and to produce new materials and sustainable sources for food and energy, and other significant topics.

Celebrate the centenary of Marie Curie's Nobel Prize and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the International Association of Chemical Societies:



Curie's discovery of radium and polonium inspired many chemistry students, especially females, to achieve success in their careers. The centenary of the International Association of Societies of Industry celebration in Paris will detail the need for international cooperation between chemists, and international standards for several chemical issues including the weight of the atom, physical constants and scientific communication.

To achieve these objectives, the IYC shall:

- Develop understanding and appreciation of chemistry in international communities
 - Encourage international cooperation by employing contact points and data sources of activities by international associations involved with chemistry, educational institutes, the industrial sector and public and private sectors.
- Enhance the role of chemistry in finding solutions to global problems and challenges
- Provide the opportunity for involving the youth in science, especially through scientific methods supported by hypotheses, experiments, analysis and conclusions

Activities:

There will be several international events and meetings throughout the year

Objective of IYC 2011: Enhance community awareness of the importance of water, and enhance the youth interest in this science.

including an event, the Global Experiment, to be applied throughout the world.

All the local institutions are invited to prepare their ideas and concepts for the year, and will be documented on the IYC website. Examples of local events and activities include:

- Ensure that all the students of various age groups (pre basic education – university) deal with chemical experiments consistent with their academic levels.
- Organize visits to industrial estates, factories, chemical producers and refineries.
- Involve the media to stress and highlight the role of chemistry in the global economy by publishing articles and specialized magazines, and through audiovisual programmes.
- Organizing exhibitions and presenting posters and brochures highlighting the benefits and wonders of chemistry.
- Organize “problem solving projects” allowing students to apply their knowledge of chemistry to develop solutions to the problems facing their local communities.
- Emphasize the role of chemistry in developing our life, especially recent developments in chemical research.
- Organize a chemistry related job fair, and invite chemists and experts to visit schools to explain how chemistry is applied in their careers, and organize live shows or simulations to encourage understanding of what chemistry achieve.
- Communicate and work with decision-makers in government authorities to highlight the significance of the institutions involved with chemistry.

The Global Experience

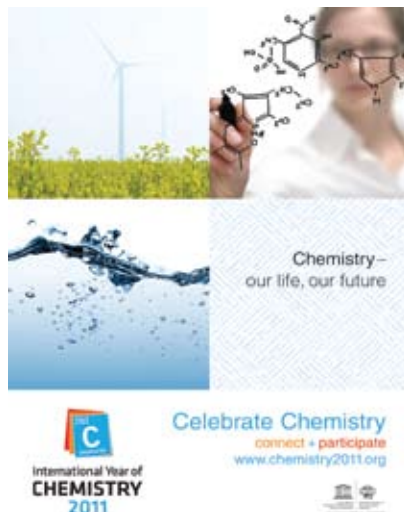
UNESCO and IUPAC explained that while celebrating the IYC 2011, the focus will be on activities that explain the role of chemistry and its active contributions to

International experience focusing on water as chemical solution

our daily life. The Global Experience is a direct interpretation of the IYC targeting the community at large, and the youth and students in particular. During this year, all students from around the world are invited to join the Global Experiment project under the theme “Water: A Chemical Solution”, to understand the composition of water, the most important source for life on earth. The global experiment will be the largest chemical experiment ever, and the students’ discoveries and results will contribute to the success of this project. Students will be provided with the opportunity to appreciate the role of chemistry in identifying the quality and purity of water, and will present their discoveries on water quality and treatment on a digital world map.

The main theme for the global experiment “Water: A Chemical Solution” provides opportunities to know more about the significant role of chemistry in ensuring the availability of clean water, in addition to its contribution in achieving the UN Millennium Goals to achieve the highest quality of drinking water by 2015. The activity will also help to show the connections between water and the issues of climate change, human health and fuel safety.

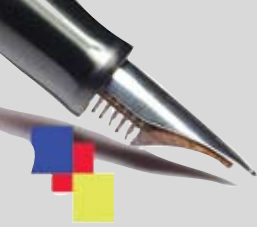
The Global Water Experiment will consist of four main activities, two are connected to water treatment, including desalination by filtration and evaporation, and the other two relate to water quality assurance by measuring the acidity and salinity of the water. The results of the four activities will be presented on a digital world map. The four activities will consist of:



- pH of the Planet: the students will measure the salinity of a water sample from a local source, and discover the level of salinity. Salty Water : sample of the seawater will be measured by evaporation.
- Treated water: No Dirt, No Germs: first a sample of polluted water will be filtered then purified.
- Desalinated water – Solar energy: the students will build and test solar energy, and discover its operation, and then design their solar power equipment to be used in water desalination.

An official website was launched for the IYC presenting a number of documentaries, films, articles and publications. The website also presents the participations and ideas from all the participating countries celebrating the year (included under “activities” on the website).

For participation please visit: www.chemistry2011.org



Education news

The Regional Arab Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education “Policies and Programme” – Damascus 20 – 22 September 2010

An Omani delegation formed by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Sultan Qaboos University and Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated in this conference. The conference was held in Damascus from 20 – 22 September 2010, and was organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut in cooperation with the UNESCO national and regional offices. The conference had several significant objectives including enhancing national potential in building policies and developing practices targeting early childhood care and education (ECCE) in the Arab region, founding a regional platform to build a network for exchanging experience and knowledge in ECCE, setting an initial vision on building an integrated strategy and setting national mechanisms to develop ECCE, and strengthen cooperation and coordination between the civil societies, government ministries and authorities active in preschool upbringing.

The themes of the conference focused on the international directions in ECCE, the strategic principles and integrated programmes for ECCE, the role of civil society and NGOs, ways to prepare ECCE national strategies and quality control tools and mechanisms.

The first World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (Building the Wealth of Nation) Moscow 27 – 29 September 2010

An Omani delegation representing the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Sultan Qaboos University and Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated at this conference. The delegation was headed by H. E. Dr. Muna Salim Al Jardani, Undersecretary for Education and Curricula at the Ministry of Education.

The conference discussed topics such as increasing global awareness and political dialogue concerning ECCE as a basic human right, its importance for the development and prosperity of individuals and communities alike, progress in achieving the Education for All goals and determining the factors limiting progress. At the conference, a number of standards and objectives to be implemented by member countries in order to achieve the Education for All goals and establishing a mechanism to monitor such standards and objectives were agreed. The conference concluded with a number of recommendations including the stronger mobilization of ECCE by developing the legal framework leading to safeguarding children's rights, integrating ECCE policies within the human, social and economic policies, expanding efforts and determining effective ECCE programmes.

***Training workshop for the trainers
of history teachers in secondary
education, Dubai 11 – 13 October 2010***

The Ministry of Education participated in this workshop organized by the Arab League for Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO), in cooperation with the Council of Europe, within the Arab – European cooperation programme to develop the education matrix. The workshop was held in Dubai on 11 – 13 October 2010.

Sub regional experts meeting on ways to enhance the values of peace and understanding between cultures through the curricula, school books and educational materials, Sana'a 1 – 3 November 2010

The Ministry of Education participated in this meeting organized by The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The meeting aimed at determining curricula that can include the values of peace and understanding between cultures, evaluating current curricula and establishing a work plan that includes standards and indicators to integrate the values of peace and understanding.

***Regional training workshop for those
responsible for the preparation of adult
education in Arab countries, Bahrain
26 – 30 December 2010***

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Continuous Education, participated in this workshop organized by the Arab



Education news

League for Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO). The workshop aimed at training members on determining the requirements of various groups and categories of adults, on determining priorities and developing, producing and evaluating the educational programmes required to fulfil such requirements.

Regional meeting of experts on educational continuity and integration between higher education, basic education and post basic education, Kuwait 6 – 9 December 2010

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education participated at this meeting organized by The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in Doha. The meeting aimed at monitoring country experiences in continuity and integration between the systems, determining the role of continuity and integration to achieve efficient outputs and drafting standards for continuity and integration in order to achieve community development.

The meeting focused on several topics including the objectives of continuity and integration between basic and post basic education, the elements of continuity and integration in term of education system classification, education policies and legislation and general objectives of participating countries and enhancing continuity and integration between the two systems to fulfil market needs and requirements.

Sub-regional training workshop on approaches to family literacy, Cairo, Egypt 27 – 30 December 2010

The Ministry of Education, represented



by the Department of Continuous Education, participated in this workshop organized by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The workshop aimed at enhancing family literacy and the strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in families between generations in the member countries, enhancing the capacity of early childhood specialist working in family literacy programmes, preparation of early childhood programmes and presenting success stories from member countries on eradication of family illiteracy.

The workshop discussed several topics including the challenges facing the eradication of illiteracy between the generations, strategies and approaches to family literacy, developing literacy programmes for early childhood and ways to implement and evaluate family literacy programmes.

The workshop came up with several important recommendations including: preparation of total quality standards in family literacy, encouraging establishments active in literacy programmes and focusing their plans to build family literacy programme, include family literacy programmes within life skills, and encouraging civil society and NGOs to enhance the concept of coalition and networking with establishments involved in family literacy.

The regional meeting of experts on strategies to mobilize resources to fund literacy programmes and adult education, Khartoum, Sudan 27 – 30 December 2010

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Continuous Education, participated at this meeting organized by the Arab League for Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO) and the UNESCO regional bureau in Doha. The aim of the meeting was to present the current strategies of the member countries in illiteracy eradication and adult education, supporting the efforts of the member countries in setting financial strategies and enhancing the skills of their staff to use best practices to set finance strategy.

The meeting discussed several

topics including current strategies in the member countries, monitoring global success stories, employment and planning for preparing financial strategy and enhancing skills for setting financial strategy for literacy and adult education.

Training workshop “Capacity Building in educational planning” Muscat 19 – 21 December 2010

The workshop was organized by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the UNESCO regional bureau in Doha and the Regional Centre for Educational Planning in Sharjah. The objectives of the workshop included determining the relationship between diagnoses and planning, identifying tools for data collection and analysis and the main indicators related to the data. The workshop also focused on the skills required to analyze internal and external environments, developing the skills to determine the programmes and activities required to implement the plan and identifying concepts and modules for the follow up and evaluation process.

Meeting of education experts to discuss success stories in integration of persons with special needs in adult education programs, Khartoum 21 – 24 February 2011

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development participated at this meeting aimed at reviewing the programmes, policies and legislation required in order to enhance opportunities for adults with special needs, and to exchange regional and international experiences and directions.



Visit of Yemen delegation

An educational delegation from the Yemen National Commission for Education, Culture and Science visited Oman between 9 – 12 October 2010 to exchange experience and review successful experiences in education, culture, science and in UNESCO associated schools. The delegation visited the Secretariat of the Oman National Commission and received an introduction to its activities and programmes, in addition to a



presentation on the most important programmes and events implemented by the National Commission and its intended plans for this year. A tour of the various divisions was organised for the delegation.

The visiting delegation visited Jabir Zeid Post Basic Education School in Muscat, and Al Amal Post Basic Education School in Al Batinah South. The two schools have been UNESCO associated schools for more than 10 years. During the visit, the schools prepared a special programme including a number of events presenting popular art and games, peace, citizenship and environment and activities and programmes currently implemented by their schools. The visit concluded with an invitation to the delegation to visit the permanent UNESCO exhibition in both schools.

The International Year of Youth (IYY)

Our year ... our voice

"Youth deserve our full commitment – full access to education, adequate healthcare, employment opportunities, financial services and full participation in public life."

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General

In 1985, the UN celebrated the first International Year of Youth. On its 10th anniversary, the General Assembly

adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, setting a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. Today, the World Programme of Action for Youth plays a prominent role in youth development. It focuses on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity



Muscat Youth Forum 2010

Muscat Youth Forum is one of the most important youth initiatives in Oman, organized for the second consecutive year by Oman Brand Marketing Unit, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Oman's National Commission.

Celebrating the International Year of Youth, the forum expanded this year's participation to include various nationalities within Oman, a number of students and teachers of UNESCO Associated Schools in Oman and a number of Arab and

European countries, with more than 180 participants. New economic, cultural and social topics were added, in addition to research and technology and arts developments, and other topics of international interest. The objectives were to highlight the role of youth in the community, the need to spread awareness of issues of interest to the youth and to create a platform for the youth to discuss issues among themselves and with the public and private sectors in Oman.



of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

In December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 64/134 proclaiming the International Year of Youth, celebrated from 12 August 2010 to 11 August 2011. The Year aims to promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity across generations, cultures, religions

and civilizations, within the framework of dialogue and mutual understanding.

To participate in celebrating this international year, the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science organised several events and activities, in cooperation with numerous public and private institutions. The most significant of these events was the Youth Forum and the 5th Culture Connect Voyage in Sharqiya Sands.



5th Connecting Culture Trip to Oman

The Connecting Culture Project, implemented by the Ministry of Education and the Oman National Commission in cooperation with the Connecting Culture Foundation, and held annually since 2007 is one of the most important youth programmes in Oman. This project has been selected twice by the UN Alliance of Culture Forum (AOC) as one of the best leading civil society initiatives. UNESCO awarded the project a financial grant for improving and adding new services to the project's website, to provide a larger platform for the youth to participate in dialogue and discussions on the web. The project also obtained a financial grant for five years from Sultan Qaboos Centre for Islamic Culture.

For the 5th Voyage, 18 young women from various Arab and European countries met face to face in Sharqiya Sands between 18 and

24 January 2010. They carried out several activities and discussions to attempt to determine common values amongst the participants and to acquire skills for communication, dialogue and team work.

The activities and discussions touched on the role the participants could play following the trip to improve the image of Arab and European cultures in their communities. At the end of the trip, the participants presented their experience and the lessons learned from this meeting in the beautiful desert in Oman. The presentations took place during the opening ceremony of the ESD in support of cultural diversity and biodiversity conference, in front of H. E. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, and a large number of representatives of Arab and European national commissions participating at the conference.

Launch of “Connecting Culture in Oman” book

At the ESD in support of cultural diversity and biodiversity conference, held in Muscat from 24 – 26 January 2011, H. E. Yahiya Saud Al Suleimi, former Minister of Education in Oman and President of the Oman National Commission, and Mr. Mark Evans, founder of the Connecting Culture Project, launched the book, “Connecting Culture in Oman”. The launch ceremony was attended by H. E. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General and a large number of Their Excellencies the Ministers, Secretary Generals of Arab and European National Commissions and youth representatives.

The book contains an introduction by H. E. Yahiya Saud Al Suleimi, articles from UNESCO and AOC, and an article by Mr. Mark Evans. The book deals with the origins and objectives of the project, and the voyages implemented in Oman since the start of the project in 1997. The book presents the views of the young people who had the opportunity to participate in the trip, including the important lessons learned and experience gained through their participation, and the role they can play in the rapprochement between cultures in their schools, universities and civil society.



Launching the International Year for Chemistry (IYC 2011)

Oman National Commission for Education, Culture & Science, represented by the UNESCO associated schools, launched IYC 2011, declared by the UN General Assembly.

Invitation was sent to all the UNESCO associated schools in Oman to participate in the celebration of this international year by encouraging their students to participate with all the students around the world, and join the international experience for this year “Water: Chemical solution” in order to learn about the water component, considered one of the most important bio resources on the planet. On this occasion, a number of students from Jabir bin Zeid post basic education school – UNESCO associated school – implemented several experiences on water to celebrate the International Day for Water and International year for Chemistry. The launching ceremony was organized on the side of celebrating the students’ exhibition for the knowledge development competition, with more than 200 students and supervisors from all over Oman.



Integrating the ESD concepts and topics in education plans and curricula

Introduction:

Sustainable development and education for sustainable development are current buzzwords. They are also important, and considering the significance of sustainable development for the socioeconomic and cultural development plans and projects undertaken by all the countries to improve the living standards for current and future generations, and deserve to be the focus of education systems in countries around the world.



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School curricula includes various subjects relating to ESD



There is a global interest in sustainable development, and education can play an important role in helping to change people's behaviour toward their communities and surrounding environment, and to enable future generations to enjoy the resources available in the environment. This interest is manifested by various global and international summits and conferences, dealing with education, development and environmental education. Such interest was crowned by the United Nations considering the decade from 2005 – 2014 as the UN ESD Decade, requiring all countries to take the steps and procedures required to integrate the concept of sustainable development in their education plans and programmes, at all levels and throughout the education process

The role of education in sustainable development

Education, at all levels, plays a significant role in achieving the ESD objectives, for it provides individuals and communities with

the skills, information and values for coexisting and working in a sustainable way, and is the main tool by which change occurs in the world. ESD means balancing between the individual's economic needs and respect for culture, without violating or exhausting the natural resources in the surrounding environment. According to education experts in Arab countries, it also means "Acquiring and practicing knowledge, values and skills that achieve a balance between socioeconomic and environmental aspects of development, while observing the growth and development of individuals and communities."

The ESD concept is a dynamic one and involves a new perspective on education to enable individuals of all ages to take responsibility in creating a sustainable future for the benefit of future generations. Accordingly, ESD works to find ways to assist individuals to better understand the world they live in. To this end, ESD requires teachers and learners to:

- Contemplate the communities

Education provides the individuals and communities with the skills, ideas and values to live and work in a sustainable style.

they live in

- Identify non viable elements therein
- Explore the tension between conflicting values and goals

In a nutshell we can say that ESD works on creating a spirit for education, for it enables the learners to develop and evaluate various visions of a sustainable future, and collectively work to achieve these visions.

There are four main elements that should be considered while planning and executing education programmes for ESD.

Developing basic education

It means providing basic education for all individuals within the community, male and female, without excluding anyone. In basic education, students acquire the basics of reading and mathematics, and the skills and values that support and encourage citizens to live sustainably. Oman adopted basic education in 1998, with the education system being divided into ten years of basic education and two years of post basic education.

Redirecting all levels of current education

This means reconsidering and reviewing the education provided from kindergarten to university to ensure that the objectives, programmes, content and teaching activities include the concepts, skills, values and ideas relating to sustainable development in its three aspects: environment, social and economic. This element complements the previous element in Oman, the

academic plans at all levels were reviewed when basic and post basic education were adopted. In this review, topics relating to ESD were included in school subjects, especially science and social studies, which will be discussed later.

Developing public understanding and awareness of the concept of sustainability

This means that any advancement towards achieving a sustainable community requires the people of that community to know and understand the meaning of a sustainable community through the information, values and skills made available to them. The consumerism culture within communities can control foodstuff prices and this problem faces communities every now and then due to economic and natural elements. Thus consumerism and food cultures can be changed. Oman is seeking to achieve this element through state radio and TV programmes that focus on the environment, social development and economic affairs. This can also be achieved through the printed media, seminars and lectures. The school curricula also play an important role in this context. In a lesson on nutrition, for example, discussion will naturally revolve around healthy nutrition and ethical principles for shopping.

Training and qualification

This means that all the sectors can participate in sustainable development, locally, regionally and internationally, through training and

Science and social studies are the most subjects relating to ESD in its three dimensions

education programmes that enable individuals to acquire the skills and values they need to perform their work and achieve a sustainable existence. Oman is seeking to achieve this element through the development of local human resources. This is apparent in the speeches by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos - the Sultan of Oman – on various occasions, and through His Majesty's meet the people tours. It is also visible through the large funds provided for training programmes implemented by various government authorities including the Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education, often in partnership with the private sector.

The role of the curriculum in achieving the ESD objectives

The curriculum, along with the students and teachers, is one of the pillars of the education process. The curriculum here is defined in its broadest sense as the objectives,

content of the school books, evaluation, the teaching tools and methods, the school environment, the teachers, school management and educators and supervisors.

Considering this description we can conclude that ESD cannot be just another subject added to the curriculum, rather it should be in every aspect of the school work. Developing the curricula and preparing and training the teachers are important to achieve ESD objectives, just like ensuring proper conditions and quality education inside the schools.

Educational literature indicates several concepts and topics that should be included in ESD. The priorities of including such concepts and topics in the curricula differ from one country to another, according to the conditions, potentials and needs of each country. Table 2 presents concepts and topics listed in ESD related studies and research.

Table (1): ESD topics and concepts

Environmental sustainability	Social sustainability	Economic sustainability	Political sustainability
Biodiversity Environment Environment preservation Environmental fossils Ecology Biosphere Ecosystem Natural systems and cycles	Natural human needs Cultural diversity Cultural heritage Human rights Partnership Peace Risk management Justice Relation at work Team work on site	Spending benefit analysis Economic growth Environmental effectiveness Capital Natural resources Permanent consumption Permanent production Stability of economic situation Economic literacy	Citizenship Decision making Respect and appreciation Settlement of disputes Tolerance

Various academic subjects play a significant role in highlighting the concepts of sustainable development

They can be introduced into the curricula in the following three ways:

First: Independent introduction: This involves preparing independent curricula (subjects) around ESD concepts and topics within the academic plan. However, looking at the situation in countries around the world, it is difficult to assign an independent subject for ESD in the public education system for several reasons. Many countries, including Oman, have recently reviewed their education systems and find it difficult to add a new subject. Another reason is the large number of subjects currently studied means that adding another subject will increase the students load. Nevertheless, there are good practices in the Omani public education system with the following subjects including ESD concepts and topics:

- Science and technology for students in grade 11
- Science and environment for students in grade 12
- Life skills for students in basic education and post basic education
- Applied mathematics for students in grade 11 and 12
- IT for students in basic education and post basic education

Second: Partial introduction: This means assigning special units for ESD concepts and topics within appropriate subjects. This is currently practiced by several countries, particularly in science and social studies which



are the most related subjects to sustainable development with its three dimensions: environment, social and economy. The environmental dimension is clearly related to the science curricula, while the social and economic dimensions are relevant to social studies. Table 2 lists units in science and social studies in Oman which deal with concepts and topics relating to ESD.

Table 2: Units relating to ESD in the science and social studies curricula in Oman in grades 5 – 10

Science units	Class	Social studies units	Class
Adaptation of living creatures	Five	Arabs and their natural environment	Five
Discovering Earth and the universe		Populations, development and economic activities in the Arab world	
Diversity of living creatures	Six	Social concepts (social work)	
Energy		Lithosphere	Six
Air & water (air, weather & climate – environmental issues)		Atmosphere and hydrosphere	
Science & technology		Biosphere & ecosystems	
Interactions within the ecosystems (basic needs in the ecosystems, natural cycles in the ecosystems, changes in the ecosystems)	Seven	National & social concepts (citizens' rights and obligations, credibility and honesty, time management and respecting appointments, respecting work and appreciating workers)	
Plants and usage (plants in the environment, plants structure)		Population geography	Seven
Planet earth		Population education (income and consumer rationalization, health, public properties, awareness and traffic safety)	
Environmental chemistry	Eight	Lifestyles and population needs (rural and urban settlements, countryside and its problems, urbanization, urban problems, population needs)	
Marine environment system		Water	Eight
Diversity of living creatures	Nine	Population education (population explosion, economy and human resources, family planning and its relation with social improvement)	Nine
Electricity and its transformation		Creation of Earth	
Space discovery (our vision of the universe)		External elements affecting the formation of the Earth's surface	
Exchange with the environment	Ten	Environmental problems and hazards (global warming, desertification, cyclones, earthquakes and volcanoes)	

Various aspects of the curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation, management, teachers and training, all work towards achieving the ESD objectives



Third: Incorporation (integration): This means incorporating ESD concepts and topics in all rather than specific school subjects within the student's plan and not dedicating special units in each curriculum. The integration of ESD concepts means that ESD should not relate to any particular subject, but is rather an integrated process which should be given a special dimension and discussion in all the school curricula (Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, 2008). Also, solving the community's problems requires the participation of extra-curricular scientific knowledge within various specialties. Accordingly, such subjects should not be separated within the classroom. Despite the fact that science and social studies are closer in dealing with ESD

concepts, other curricula are also capable of discussing these concepts and topics. Islamic education/culture for example is capable of discussing these concepts and topics from religious vision, supported by Koranic verses and the Hadith. The language curricula, i.e. Arabic and English, can discuss the issues of sustainable development. Mathematics also plays a role in ESD through the economic dimension, especially when dealing with saving, consumerism and production. Arts and physical education can also play significant roles in dealing the ESD concepts through art and sport expressions. Table 3 recommends certain concepts and subjects that can be incorporated within various subjects in basic education, post basic education and technical and vocational education.

Table (3): Matrix for integrating certain ESD concepts and topics in the curricula

Concept/topic	Recommended curriculum	Education level
Biodiversity	Science, social studies, some technical and vocational curricula	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Environment	Science, Social studies	Basic education
Environment preservation	Science, social studies, languages, physical education, arts, certain technical and vocational curricula	All academic levels and types of education
Cultural diversity	Social studies, languages, physical education	Higher basic education, post basic education
Cultural heritage	Social studies, languages, physical education	Higher basic education, post basic education
Human rights	Social studies, languages, religion, physical education, arts, technical and vocational education	All academic levels and types of education
Peace	Science, social studies, languages, PE, arts, religious education, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Relations at work	Science, social studies, languages, religious education, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Team work	Science, social studies, languages, religious education, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Economic growth	Social studies, mathematics, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Permanent consumption	Social studies, mathematics, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Permanent production	Social studies, mathematics, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Economic literacy	Social studies, mathematics, technical and vocational education	Higher basic education, post basic education, technical and vocational education
Citizenship	All the curricula	All academic levels and types of education
Decision making	All the curricula	All academic levels and types of education

In order to integrate or include the ESD concepts and topics, the following is recommended:

- Determine ESD related concepts and topics in partnership with representatives from the community, in here it is recommended to focus on issues relating to the local community.
- Analyze the current curricula in terms of including ESD related concepts and topics.
- Discuss the outcome of the analysis with ESD officials locally, and/or regionally and internationally.
- Attempt to integrate and include certain ESD related concepts and topics, which were not previously included in the curricula, especially those relating to the local community. The following are recommended:
- Determine suitable curricula to include these concepts, and attempt to connect it with other curricula
- The concepts and topics to be included should be appropriate to the students' age group

- Discuss the concepts to be included with teachers, supervisors and parents

- Pilot with a sample of students before general implementation.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt that the curricula plays a significant role in achieving the ESD objectives. The various aspects of the curriculum; the content, teaching methods, evaluation, modern technology, school management and teachers and preparing the teachers prior and during service, all work on achieving these objectives.

There are various ways to introduce these concepts and topics into school books, although integration is considered the best way since it deals with these concepts in all the books and curricula, and not just one or two. It is important to evaluate current curricula to identify its ESD content prior to introducing anything new in the curricula.

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Al-Bar'ah music and dance Inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science participated in the 5th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Nairobi, Kenya on 15 – 19 November 2010, where the Omani application to inscribe Al-Bar'ah music and dance in the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage was considered. This is the only Arab portfolio to be inscribed individually. The meeting concluded with a number of resolutions including the inscription of 46 new



portfolios on the list of intangible cultural heritage for humanity, with the approval of 5 new inscriptions considered to be in need of urgent preservation and adopting the falconry inscription applied for by 13 countries, including UAE, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

34th meeting of the World Heritage Committee

The Ministry of Regional Municipality and Water Resources participated in the 34th meeting of the World Heritage Committee, held in Brazil from 25 July to 3 August 2010. The committee completed its study on the sites nominated to be inscribed on the world heritage list, and the endangered world heritage list. At this meeting, presided by the Brazilian Minister of Culture, the committee agreed to inscribe 21 new sites, consisting of 15 cultural sites, 5 natural sites and one mixed (natural/cultural), raising the number of sites on the list to 911. Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tajikistan were introduced for the first time into the UNESCO World Heritage List Club. The Tareef District in Dariya, Saudi Arabia was listed as the country's second site after Madaen Saleh, inscribed in a previous meeting. The WHC added 4 sites on the list of endangered cultural sites, and removed Galapagos (Ecuador) from the list. The meeting resulted in several resolutions including the selection of Sheikhha May Mohammed Al Khalifa, Bahrain Minister of Culture, as the president for the 35th session, to be hosted by Bahrain next June.

National institutions capacity building in preventing illegal trade in cultural properties

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture participated in a building national institution capacity to prevent illegal trade in intellectual properties workshop held in Bahrain on 21 – 25 November 2010. The workshop aimed at providing the participant with tools to combat illegal trade in intellectual properties, and evaluate the status of recording and documentation in museums in the GCC countries and Yemen, and the legal tools for protecting cultural properties.

Sibawayh and his approach to language in the rapprochement of cultures

The Ministry of Education participated in the Sibawayh and his approach to language in the rapprochement of cultures seminar held in Paris on 9 November 2010. The seminar was organized in cooperation between the Oman and Iran permanent delegations to UNESCO and focused on the Persian linguistic who contributed in improving the study of Arabic language. The seminar aimed at introducing Sibawayh as a linguistic and highlighted his role in the rapprochement of cultures in general, and the Persian and Arab cultures in particular, through his various books.

4th meeting of the Intergovernmental committee for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture participated in the 4th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held in Paris from 29 November to 3 December 2010. The committee discussed the implementation of the international convention on cultural diversity in relation to the activities of member countries, and followed up on the activities of non member countries, in order to promote the convention through innovative activities carried out by member countries. H. E. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, inaugurated the first session of the meeting along with the 24 committee members and 28 observers from other countries and NGOs. The session was presided over by the Croatian Minister of Culture Nina Obelgin.

17th meeting of the Arab Ministers responsible for cultural affairs

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture participated in the 17th meeting of the Ministers responsible for cultural affairs in the Arab World, held in Doha, Qatar, on 27 – 28 October 2010. The main theme of the meeting was on a “comprehensive plan of Arab culture updated”. The closing statement of the conference acknowledged that joint work on Arab culture is the only way to achieve an active Arab contribution at a time of regional blocs, and the challenges posed by globalization. It was stressed that the conditions for such joint Arab cultural action are in place in the Arab World, in terms of culture and civilization, common language, joint interest and one future. The conference stressed the importance of upholding the basic principles referred to in the comprehensive plan to achieve the objectives, and confirmed the commitment to protect Arab culture. The closing statement confirmed the

importance of the Arab World interacting with global developments, to positively interact with other cultures, to be aware of the dangers of imitating other cultures, to stress the importance of the principle of freedom of thought and expression as a precondition for creativity, and the importance of democracy and the respect for human rights. In addition, it stated that the Arabic language is essential for the development of Arab culture, and called for the development and modernization of teaching methods, and for Arab universities to upgrade their curricula in order to provide appropriate knowledge and produce more scientists. The plan called for the establishment of a knowledge society in the Arab world, to restore the role of intellectuals and to provide a suitable environment for cultural creativity and protection of the rights of innovators and the elites to play their role for a cultural renaissance.

Regional seminar on manuscripts in the Arab World

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and ISESCO, organized a regional seminar on the manuscripts in the Arab World under the slogan “Reality, challenge and horizons Muscat”. The seminar was held on 3 – 5 October 2010 with experts participating from 7 Arab countries. The seminar aimed to enhance awareness of the importance of preserving manuscripts as an important part of heritage and of cultural identity, and the use of modern technology



Regional training course on the press survey techniques in culture

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in cooperation with the Syrian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, organized a regional training course on media survey techniques in culture. The course was held in Damascus on 8 to 11 November 2010, with a large number of participants from the Arab and

Gulf media representing major newspapers in their respective countries.

The course aimed at updating Arab journalists of important developments concerning media work, with a focus on media survey and investigation. The course dealt with skills relating to media survey and investigation, media principles, stages and ways to get the news, news analysis

to document it. The first session of the seminar discussed the concept of manuscripts in terms of date, type, physical elements and technical features. The second session focused on the use of IT in saving manuscripts (digitalizing the manuscript). The third session discussed the maintenance and restoration of manuscripts. The fourth session dealt with the rules and practical application of indexing the manuscripts (samples of Arabic and Islamic manuscripts), while the fifth session discussed the situation of manuscripts in the Arab World. The seminar concluded with a sixth session dealing with the methodology of investigating the recorded heritage and a critical review of the schools and application.

and presentation to the readers, in addition to a session where the participants were divided into working groups for discussions and the preparation of news investigations.

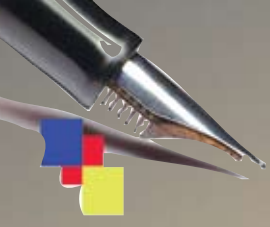
Mr. Salim Hilal Alhabsi, International Relations Specialist at the Omani National Commission represented Oman on this course.

Teaching subject to change the stereotype on Islam

Sultan Qaboos University participated in a regional expert conference to discuss teaching to change stereotypes on Islam in the colleges and institutes of information in the Arab World. The meeting was held in Tunisia on 18 – 20 October 2010 and experts from 12 Arab countries participated. The meeting evaluated the foundation programmes for journalists to counter media campaigns distorting Islam, and discussed the type of curricula required for changing the stereotype of Islam in the media.

Arab League Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO)

Specialized course on manuscripts
The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and the National Records and Archives Authority participated in the first training workshop on manuscripts, held in Cairo on 22 – 25 November 2010. The aim of the workshop was to show how to determine the age of a manuscript or object, and to enable participants to exchange experiences and knowledge on best practice on preserving manuscripts and protecting them from damage.



On the translation of

“The waste land”

to Arabic



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The translation of poetry is the most difficult and the most taxing of all types of translation. This is because the translator should not be satisfied with converting the vocabulary of the original text only, but also the meaning and tone of the words. When we say the "meaning of the text" we do not mean texts found in dictionaries, rather whatever surrounds the words including intimations, shadows and history. Each word is a living being, it originates, matures, grows, ages and then dies. Words are generated and are popularized in a particular time, and then pass through a time of stagnation before breathing its last breath and, eventually, being replaced by new words. You can refer to the dictionaries to check what you know and what you don't know to appreciate the large volume of words that are buried inside dictionaries. How can you explain a woman putting her makeup in front of the mirror prior to inventing it, or a person hiding from the "Sigel", the old English word for "Sun"?



Words are like living beings, they are born, mature, grow and grow old

The difficulty of translating poetry is not limited to this, for poetry is not just abstract and transparent words, but rather words within the context of culture, civilization and literature. What poetry in one language may not be considered poetry in another, for the poetic or cultural framework, in which the poem moves, is subject to literary values deep rooted within the nation and its conscience. And Arabic poetry is a unique phenomenon compared with the literatures of the world. Written Arabic poetry dates back to more than one thousand five hundred years, and its verbal examples are close to two thousand years old. Such a long existence has resulted in the poetry consolidating literature, art and social values making it difficult to deal with this poetry without considering such values and foundations that the poetry is based on. Strangely, such an enormous poetic heritage is accompanied by a tremendous lack of translation. Arabic poetry remained immune against foreign impact for more than one thousand years, and it continued its immunity against change up to WW1, and maybe even to WW2. In addition, Arabs are not known to have translated poetry from any other nation, although their translation heritage is a unique phenomenon in itself, which continued for around four hundred years, during which the Arabs translated most of the knowledge from Greece, Persia and India (the ancient civilizations) (1).

What was it that prevented the Arabs from translating the Greek, Persian or Indian poetry? Was it pride in their own poetry, or was it due to a small number of translators and the need of a new empire to concentrate on science and knowledge? There may, of course, be other reasons we do not know and have been forgotten? (2).

What is baffling is that the Arabs have taken samples of prose from Indian and Persian literature, but never touched their poetry. What prevented them from translating some verses from the two languages? In the Greek language, the topics of poetry and excessive description about their gods and idols may have formed a block, although reference to the gods is not uncommon in pre-Islamic poetry, and this did not stop the Arabs from priding themselves and enjoying their pre-Islamic poetic heritage. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that despite more than one thousand years of contact with other peoples, nations and cultures, foreign poetry was not included in Arab tastes.

This introduction was necessary to show the cultural background and the difficulties of translating poetry into Arabic. The passing of

The Arab culture did not accept the translated poetry sometimes, and rejected it at other time or faced it with absolute rejection

all these centuries without any poetic translation means that Arabs have resisted and refused to translate it, even ridiculed and dismissed the poetry of others. Otherwise, how can we explain Ibn Faris Al-Sahbi (395 AH) in his attack on the translated poetry:

“... and they claim that the people have poetry, we have read it and found it lacking in emotions traces of pleasantness, and its measures are not consistent. The poetry is for the Arabs and the register of their emotions and folklore (p 16) (3).

When we consider the words of Al-Jahiz on the impossibility of translating poetry “... poetry cannot be translated, and may not be quoted, and when transformed it will lose its poetic meaning, beauty and wonderment ...” (4) we can conclude that in Arab culture translated poetry was not accepted, or even flatly rejected, justifying it by the difficulty of translation, or the impossibility of translation. So, what can we do? Do we leave the translation of poetry and continue crying about the lack of poetic translation into Arabic, or mock the poetic heritage of others, or continue to ignore others who invaded our mind and thinking with their machinery, industries, discovery and development? Or should we try to keep pace with humanity and interact with others, as they have interacted with us during a history marked by prosperity, openness and interaction? Let us first agree that no nation can survive if it decides on cultural, intellectual or geographical isolation from other nations. The world now is a small village, and various means of communications and travel bring countries even closer. Isolation of any country is almost impossible, even if it wanted to. Mobile communication and internet have invaded every country, organization and house, and interaction and impact are inevitable, whether we like it or not. However, if we contribute to change we may be able to avert its risks. Otherwise we will be exposed to the high winds of the cultural storm that will take everything in its wake. One only need look at contemporary culture and consider all the values and principles that have been ousted by foreign and western influences.

Thus, interacting with other cultures is better, for we will not be just passive recipient since we will be able to influence as well as be influenced. Translation can be a significant tool in this interaction, which has, and always be, an open gate for the cultures of the world. The translation of poetry opens a small window showing us the minds and consciences of other nations, and we should never close this window.

Poetry translation into Arabic is a cultural dilemma then linguistic problem

Translating poetry to Arabic is foremost a cultural dilemma and then a linguistic problem. Poetry has music, inspiration, figurations and meanings, in addition to the poetic traditions accumulating throughout the ages. When attempting to translate foreign poetry into Arabic (in our case poetry written in English), we need to be aware of the difficulties prior to undertaking it. The following is a brief description of our experiment, me and my friend Talal Abdul Rahman, to translate “The Waste Land” written by the American born, British national, T. S. Eliot (1888 – 1965) who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. The translation, along with several explanations on the margins, was published in 2005 in Cairo (5). The following is a brief account of the most important difficulties and dilemmas associated with the translation, along with the solutions.

The Waste Land poem (1922) is an important work (6), and is considered as an important landmark in western modernity. Its importance stems from the fact that it has broken all the rules of traditional poetry, and deviated from what is generally accepted in poetry. He combined classical language with the ugly colloquial, and used technical tools and innovative techniques to transcribe complex intimations and ideas, such as quoting excessively in various languages, in addition to the collage and juxtaposition, which combines two different positions for the reader to reveal the hidden meaning and close relation between the two.

The translation was based on two considerations: the first related to the feelings raised by the poem, and the second, was that the translation should be poetic and not mere prose. The poem is based entirely on stirring the reader’s emotions and feelings, thus forming a balance to the issue at hand. This required attention to the many transformations accomplished by the poet in the construction of the poem to lead to such emotions. The two translators could find no better way than to get assistance from an artist to express in colours and light the feelings stirred by the poem. The artist would “translate” the words to colours, accordingly the work will be a translation of a translation, or let us say translation of an art to a different art (language to colour). The purpose of such drawings is to enhance the content of the poem with the reader, and transport the reader to a world of colours and shades, in addition to the world

Translating poetry is like opening a small window to a beautiful garden in the minds and consciousness of other nations, we should never close it.

of language and words presented by the poem. The followings are three scenes catching parts of the poem's atmosphere or characters, and explain how the artist absorbed the intimations in the poem and recreated the language with colours and lines. The success or failure of the artists in this colourful translation, so to speak, is left to the reader to decide.

The cover picture represents the face of Sibyl Kumi penetrating throughout the details of the poem. She is the woman that has no wish other than to die. In her suffering and old age she resembles western civilization in its despair and failure, and its intellectual and spiritual emptiness.

The second picture represents the material civilization that worships the machine and industry, and the scourge it is causing to countries and peoples, with almost no one out of its clutches. The reader may feel the stifling atmosphere inspired by this scene, thus strengthening the poem's general atmosphere, and assisting in better understanding.

The third picture represents certain characters repeatedly mentioned in the poem. It is deliberately distorted to reflect its inner distortion, suffering and never ending crisis, and the ordeal of living with dignity.

The Waste Land has already been translated into Arabic several times, and all of these translations were prose and focused on transforming each letter and word as accurately as possible. This has grave consequences on the meaning of the poem, for literal translation kills the poem's spirit and poetic feeling, transforming it into a corpse with no soul or spirit. Poetry should be translated into poetry, despite the difficulties which make this almost impossible. Poetry in every language, and in every place and time, has its charm, allure and mystery.

The first dilemma facing the translators was the suitable poetic measure. From the beginning, the translators agreed that the translation should be poetic rather than prose. The difference between poetry and prose in western literature may be insignificant, and almost non existence in modern times, but Arabic clearly differentiates between the poetry and prose. For this translation to be successful it should be poetic, despite all the significant difficulties resulting from the poetic translation.

Poetry translation should be into poetry and not prose

So, what is the proper poetic measure? From the beginning, the translators understood that there are two measures popular in contemporary Arabic poetry, which are the (Rajz) “abomination” and (Khabab) “reparation”. The Rajz is a measure used by most contemporary Arab poets including Badir Shaker Al Siyab, Al Baiyati, Salah Abdul Saboor, Mahmood Darwish, Adonis and many more. This measure features great flexibility and easy rhythm.

The second dilemma was combining between various levels of the language. There is the rich and majestic Shakespearian, and the cockney, the market language, and lastly there is the language of drunken women in a bar complaining about their calamities. How can anybody translate this strange mix? The translators tried to use language closer to the street language than to the language of intellectuals to translate the colloquial verses, as in the following example:

II. A GAME OF CHESS

I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

The second example shed some light of the happy Shakespearian language, and the way the translators tried to translate it into Arabic:

THE Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
The use of cultured classical language is relatively easy in Arabic,

Literal translation of the poem kills its spirit and transforms it to a corpse, with no flavor

considering its ingrained history of literature, and the choices available to the translator are numerous. Arabic poetry from pre-Islamic to contemporary times, in addition to the use of allusion or referring to the Holy Koran, make the translated text more cultured in term of eloquence and aspiration. For the eloquence of the first line “THE Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,” we can refer to the Holy Koran in Surat Al-'A`rāf verse 54:

“Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne”

In conclusion we can say that translating poetry is possible, despite the challenges and difficulties, and the success of poetic translation is associated with the translator’s ability to absorb the poetic heritage and literal traditions of the target language, in addition to using all the rhetorical tools and vocal aesthetics to get the final product as close as possible to the taste and conscience of the reader.

References:

- 1) It is a common knowledge that the first person to translate poetry into Arabic was Gabriel Mokhalaa Al Dimashki (died in 1851). He was proficient in Turkish and Persian languages, and translated Saadi Al Shirazi Al Farsi to Arabic combining poetry and prose. The pioneer of poetry translation into Arabic was Salman Al Bustani who provided poetry translation of the Iliad of Homer into Arabic (see Mohammed Abdul Ghani, the art of translation in the Arab literature, Egypt Publishing and Translation, 1966, p. 100 – 101.
- 2) Anis Al Makdesi, The history of Arab language literature, Cairo 1957, p. 316
- 3) Ibn Al Faris Al Sahbi, Philology and the Arabs traditions in speaking, investigated by Sayyid Ahmed Saqar, 1971, p. 16
- 4) Al-Jahiz, The animals, investigated by Abdul Salam Haroon, part one, Beirut, Arab Book Publisher, 1968, p. 70
- 5) Dr. Adnan Khalid Abdullah & Talal Abdul Rahman, The Waste Land: Poetic translation with analytical study, Cairo, International Publisher, 2006
- 6) Eliot, T. S. The Waste Land, ed. Michael North N. Y.: Norton, 2001



Arab digital content ... and international challenges

Human history has gone through various phases, during which humanity has witnessed many changes and transformations, some of which have had a lasting influence while others have perished. Modern industries were formed using the latest technology, from traditional fishing to agriculture technology to information technology. The latter has presented us with initial glimpses into the information and knowledge community, where information is the foundation to building international networks based on the latest technology.

The knowledge and information economy is growing and developing. Countries are racing to develop their economies first and their people's welfare second. The digital content on the internet has also grown and developed, and the technology is providing more value to all communities. The digital content, in various languages, is the nucleus for the information industry. However, compared with others, the Arabic digital content is very modest. Statistics and indicators indicated that Arabic content on the internet does not exceed 3% of the total global content. Although our Arabic language is one of the oldest languages of the world, and is the language of the Holy Koran, Arabic digital content is facing extinction, as indicated by the studies. The Arabic language is not one of the ten most used languages on the internet, and with the growth and development of other languages – there are more than 3,500 languages, out of which 315 are written languages – we will find ourselves facing a real and inevitable extinction of Arabic digital content. This should be looked into seriously in order to unify Arab efforts to face the problems we have. Data also indicate that around three million Arabic and Islamic manuscripts are difficult to access and view, considering the bad conditions of its storage, making them then exposed to loss and extinction.

The current Arabic digital content lacks professionalism and interactivity. Studies and research concluded that there are several reasons obstructing the growth and development of the Arabic digital content, some of which are behavioural while others are technical and legislative. Behavioural elements vary between internet users. The majority of users in the Arab region tend to browse aimlessly, using it as a tool for chatting rather than as a tool for development and prosperity, for performing and directing our work, to communicate with the world and get the latest developments in science and culture. The scientific awareness of Arab users also plays a role in enriching the Arabic digital content. That is why it is important that scientific thinking should be readily available on the internet, including research and studies, and that obstacles to Arabic digital content on the network should be removed. Voluntary work to enrich Arabic digital content should be encouraged as it can have a positive impact on the amount of available Arabic digital content.

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Another weakness which impacts the existence of Arabic digital content on the internet is the limited writing in classical Arabic language, and using local slang or expressions that have intruded the language or what is called the “chatting language”. The language and expressions used in chat rooms, forums and blogs and comment on articles and news have no relation to the Arabic language, thus creating another negative impact on Arabic digital content.

The technical and legislative elements are represented in the infrastructure of the IT sector in countries. It is the information cornerstone for building the information community and information awareness, focusing on the importance of information in daily life, the proper use and preservation and fighting information illiteracy, creating protocols and policies to control information production and provision, setting laws to protect intellectual property and e-transactions, the extent of government support for the initiatives, and encouraging private companies and individuals to work towards building a knowledge community.

There are many and varied investment opportunities in this sector, with significant returns on the communities’ socioeconomic development, represented in employment opportunities, material economic returns and excellent public services and utilities. The industries and investment opportunities in the technology sector include e-learning, e-games, virtual libraries, scientific and industrial applications and many more IT based industries.

International institutions and organizations play a significant role. UNESCO, for example, plays a prominent role in building the knowledge platform as the engine for sustainable development in member countries. It has started to build digital content through various projects including virtual and digital libraries, launching a communication and information programme to enrich digital content and Information for All which aims to increase the digital content in the official languages adopted within UNESCO, including Arabic, and dedicating 22 February of each year to celebrate International Mother Language Day. The theme “Attention to new information and communication technologies” was assigned to the year 2011 and aims to preserve and enhance the languages, language diversity and enrich digital content, considering that each language is a unique source to understand reality and employ the technology to preserve and document human knowledge.

In conclusion, we need to understand that there can be no raw information without an intellectual matrix. Brains are required to draw, plan, implement and follow up if the raw information materials can be transformed into scientific knowledge energy to serve the development of Arab countries. Finally, the focus should be on the quality of the Arabic digital content, and not just on the quantity.



Science news

The 26th session of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel

The Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP) is an international programme organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to collect atmospheric and oceanographic data.

The twenty-sixth session of the Data Buoy Co-operation Panel (DBCP) was held in Oban, United Kingdom, from

27 to 30 September 2010. The meeting was organized in cooperation with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), and was attended by more than 80 researchers who presented more than 23 papers.

The meeting reviewed the methods of collecting data using stationary and floating buoys, and expressed its appreciation for the efforts in various places around the world

Regional seminar on ecotourism and coastal environment protection

24 – 26 October 2010

Within the framework of implementing the 2010 activities of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with ISESCO, organized a regional seminar on “Ecotourism and protection of coastal environment” in Muscat. Through this programme, ISESCO offers its support to sustainable development, evaluates the potential presented by the seas and oceans by developing living and non-living marine resources for their socioeconomic and scientific value.

The seminar aimed to encourage relations between marine scientists and researchers and stakeholders involved with marine resources, and disseminate the information relating to technology and marine potential among the member countries. The seminar also aimed to support joint marine research projects, work on solving the problems facing the member countries and to present solutions.

On the first day four scientific papers



were presented. The first paper was on the impact of tourism on the marine environment and the strategies required to develop tourism in coastal areas according to environmental standards. The second paper was on the planning framework for ecotourism, the third on marine environment studies in Omani waters, presenting various studies dealing with the Omani coasts and the elements affecting it, and the fourth on the integrated management of coastal areas.

Three papers were presented on the second day. The first was on the role of the Omani Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs in enhancing ecotourism in Oman, the second on the concept of

to develop ways to collect data by using buoys. The panel reviewed and discussed various regional collection systems using buoys, in addition to the mechanism of exchanging buoys information, reducing the loss and damage of buoys and modern technology used in manufacturing buoys and their contents. The panel also discussed other IOC programmes relating to data collection, along with comparison and methods of integration.

In conclusion, the panel discussed its future strategy, budget and financial mechanisms.

management and development of fisheries and the mechanisms required to integrate the fishing sectors in Arab countries, and the third paper was on ecotourism in Bahrain.

During the last day of the seminar the participants visited the marine science centre, quality control centre and remote sensor centre – Ministry of Fisheries – where they were introduced to the centres and were presented with information on the objectives, missions and achievements.

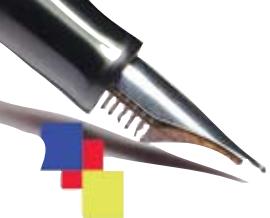
The seminar concluded with a number of recommendations including calling on the authorities concerned to study the environmental impact prior to initiating tourism projects, and ensuring proper waste treatment prior to its introduction to the coastal areas. The participants also called on the member countries to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism, stressing the importance of increasing coordination between the parties and authorities involved with ecotourism (environment, tourism, local communities, business sector, and research centres) and observe environmental standards while preparing their ecotourism plan.



14th International Conference on the Red Tide – Greece 1 – 5 November 2010

The international conference of the red tide is an international environmental conference of special importance considering the increased international interest in this phenomenon, considering its major environmental impact on fisheries and the economy, and the speed at which it spreads regionally and internationally. The conference is held every two years and is supported by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The conference was held in Crete, Greece, with participation by more than 700 marine scientists and researchers from more than 70 countries. It included an exhibition for companies active in studying the red tide and environment control, in addition to the meetings of the International Society for the Study of Harmful Algae (ISSHA), the conference organizers, and the meetings of the Marine Geological and Biological Habitat Mapping (GeoHab). Among the topics discussed at the conference were the chemical analysis, compositions and toxin of planktons and their harmful genes, climate change and its impact on the red tide.

Dr. Hamad Mohammed Al Ghilani, marine expert and Head of the Marine Environment and Oceanography Division, Ministry of Fisheries, participated in the conference and presented a working paper on the red tide in Oman in 2008 – 2009, along with various analysis and studies.



Oman Botanic Garden

the Jewel of Arabia

Oman is home to 1,200 species of plants; 79 species are found nowhere else in the world. They have been used for millennia as food, shelter, medicine, animal fodder, dye and perfume and each has its own traditional story. However, people are losing their connection to the land and ancient knowledge is being forgotten. The plants too are threatened, as their homes are fragile and easily damaged. About 20% of Oman's plants are at risk from problems such as over-grazing and construction.

Initiated by Royal decree in 2006, the iconic new Oman Botanic Garden, under the Office for Conservation of the Environment, Diwan of Royal Court, is currently under construction to help protect these threatened plants and traditions. Opening in 2012-2013, it will be a 420 ha world-class facility, developed to conserve, display and research the botany and ethno-botany of Oman, becoming a destination for local and international visitors for learning, recreation, fascination and fun.

Sarah Kneebone
Oman Botanic Garden
Office for Conservation of the Environment
Diwan of Royal Court,





Oman has more than 1,200 kinds of plants, 79 types are not found anywhere else in the world.

What is the Oman Botanic Garden?

Oman Botanic Garden will bring habitats and plants to life from all over Oman. Visitors will be able to experience the seasonal fog forests of Dhofar all year round, walk through baking desert sand, unique juniper forest, arid, salty Sabkha, dry gravel desert and beautiful wadis in one day in one place. All of Oman's plants, from the dramatic to the beautiful and the tiny will be on display among carefully created naturalistic habitats. An extensive nature reserve surrounding the constructed garden areas provides a stunning backdrop, as well as in situ conservation provision.

The second aspect of the botanic garden is the researching and display of the rich cultural and plant-related traditions of Oman. A 'heritage village' containing a series of workshops and exhibition areas will illustrate the traditional crafts and skills connected with Omani plants, from weaving to dyeing, perfume making to herbalism, through live demonstrations, practical hands-on workshops, displays and interactive sessions for the visitors.

The 'village' will be surrounded by agricultural terraces, complete with an aflaj irrigation system, date palm grove, and cultivated crops exhibit to illustrate stories of farming, life and survival in the harsh climate of the country. The aim is to not just provide an immersive sensory experience for visitors, but to encourage and enable them to become part of the story, sharing their own tales and skills to

help preserve Omani heritage.

Oman's plants have been used by its inhabitants for over 5,000 years, as food, shelter, medicine, animal fodder, dye and perfume, as well as being the main source of wealth for the country before the discovery of oil. Omani traders sold frankincense in huge quantities to the Egyptian, Roman and Greek empires, along trade routes that stretched half way around the known world. Today, Omani plants and herbs are still traded in souks throughout the country for food, flavouring, perfume and medicine.

Why is Oman Botanic Garden needed?

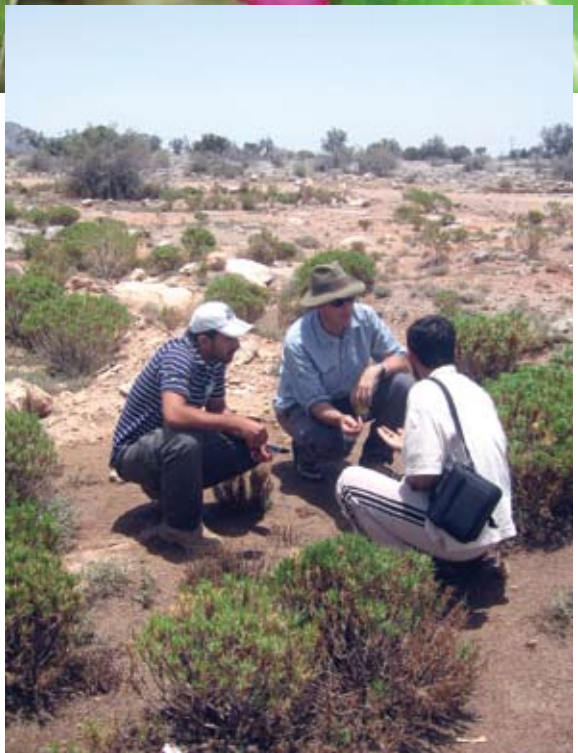
Oman's society is changing; people are losing their connection to the land and ancient knowledge is being forgotten. As is the case in so many countries, people, especially the younger generations, are moving away from their families and villages to seek job and education opportunities elsewhere. This physical separation from older members of the family, parents and grandparents that hold and use the traditional knowledge, makes it much harder for stories to be passed on. The knowledge loses its relevance and significance outside of the village community, the plants may not be found in the cities, and synthetic alternatives are readily available.

The plants of Oman are also threatened, as many of the habitats are extremely sensitive to change and damage. Over 20%, or one in five, of Oman's plants are at



risk from problems such as over-grazing, climate change, inappropriate development and habitat degradation, such as through off-road driving – a popular pastime. Obviously for the endemics, those plants that only live in Oman, this is deeply concerning. If not protected, they would be lost not just to Oman but to the whole world.

By researching and displaying the plants and heritage of Oman, the garden hopes to achieve its mission – to ensure that the plants and heritage are conserved and cherished and valued by all. To do this, the garden aims to grow and





display the entire flora of Oman – all of the 1,200 species native to the country.

Growing the plants of Oman

Growing the entire flora of a country is an ambitious target for any botanic garden; starting from scratch, with little or no information on how to grow any of the species is even more challenging! This was the task facing the horticultural team at the beginning of the project. Three years on, the nursery facility, opened in December 2008, is blooming, with over 70,000 plants of 370 species in cultivation. Each of these plants has been grown from seed or cutting collected from the wild by the project's intrepid field team. These young Omani men and women have travelled all over Oman since 2006, documenting, collecting and recording plant species during nearly 200 field trips.

Once wild seed are collected, it is brought back to the seed bank in the nursery where it is dried, cleaned, counted and then either stored or sown by the propagation team to form the basis of young plants in the collection. As the plants grow, they move through the nursery, from glasshouse to polytunnel to shade house, cared for by the horticulturalists. Once the plants are old enough and big enough they will be planted in the naturalist habitats that make up the garden's displays. The first two habitats were planted in mid-March of this year, making this an extremely exciting time for the whole team.

Construction of the team and the buildings

It is not just the plants that are growing. From a small beginning, the Oman Botanic Garden staff now numbers 45 young



Omanis in the horticulture, botany and communications teams, with more recruitment and training taking place throughout 2010. The stories of the garden have also been shared with some special interest groups, with local teachers, and groups such as the Horticultural Society and Historical Association attending short tours of the nursery to see the scale of the project.

The construction side of the garden is also well under way, with the core Orientation Centre, Field Studies Centre and Research Centre, along with the beginnings of the Heritage village being built. Phase III of the project, which will involve the installation of the infrastructure around the site, has just started and includes the layout of two of the outside habitat displays. It will not be long before the impressive 'biomes', the climate-controlled structures that will house the plants from Dhofar and the high mountains

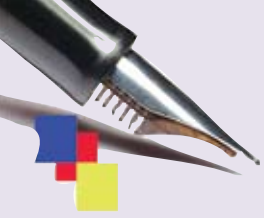
of Jabal Shams and Jabal Akhdar that cannot cope with the heat of Muscat, are initiated.

Oman Botanic Garden – 'green' beyond the plants

Oman Botanic Garden aims to promote and demonstrate best practice in sustainability by being the first project in Oman with international sustainability certification and recognition through the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) programme. This has implications for the design, construction and operation of the garden; it will have to use water efficiently, use recycled, locally produced and safe (e.g. low volatile organic compound content) materials, minimise energy use, invest in renewable energy sources (primarily solar) and minimise resource use. We will use our sustainable activities to promote best practice to our visitors and to share with Oman's construction and other industries as a whole through conferences, workshops and site visits. One of the central aims of the project is to act as a model for sustainability for Oman.

Watch the garden grow!

The huge scale of the project means that there is still much for the Oman Botanic Garden team to do and it is expected that it will open around 2012 – 2013. However, the garden is developing at an impressive rate and will surely be a fascinating, exciting and valuable place for everyone to visit.



Interview with

Irina Bokova,

Director General of the UN
Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO)

Irina Bokova of Bulgaria is the tenth Director-General of UNESCO. Born in Sofia in 1952, she received her school education in her homeland and then pursued higher education abroad. She earned her MBA in international relations in Moscow State Institute of International Relations. She has also studied in both the University of Maryland and Harvard University.

During her career, She has taken many political roles, especially that are related to human rights. She was the main coordinator of the relations of Bulgaria with the European Union between 1995 and 1997 before becoming, briefly, a Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. As the founder and president of the European Policy Forum, Bokova worked to overcome the divisions in Europe and focused on strengthening the values of dialogue, diversity, dignity and human rights.

Bokova is an executive member in UNESCO board since 2007 and was also elected as Personal Representative of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). In 2009, Bokova was elected as the first female Director General of UNESCO. She speaks fluent English, Spanish, French and Russian. She is married with two sons. She has visited Oman lately to launch the second meeting of the Arab Euro Task Force in 23 January 2011 as well as the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development to Support Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity, which was held at Al Bustan Palace Hotel in Muscat in the period between 24 and January 26, 2010. On this occasion, Tawasl has seized the opportunity to interview her, catch the latest news on UNESCO's activities and highlight the aspects of cooperation between the UNESCO and the National Commissions, particularly Oman National Commission.

**by : Farah Salem alharemi
Mahmoud Abdullah Al Ibri**





We would like to start by speaking about the power of education since it's a priority for both Oman and UNESCO and Oman firmly believes that it is an important requirement to achieve sustainable development. How can education contribute towards creating a sustainable, secure and peaceful society ?

First of all, let me start by saying that I believe that education as a development goal in principle is one of the most important factors for sustainable development. If we look at the eight millennium development goals, we find that education is what links them all and is a significant factor for a secure future. We cannot talk about poverty reduction without education, we cannot talk about improving maternal health and decreasing child mortality without education and we cannot talk about combating HIV or gender equality or shortage of clean water, which is also among the millennium development goals, without education. In order to give the responses to some of the most pressing challenges nowadays in the world, we need education because it is not only about literacy as in knowing how to write and read or having some basic knowledge about the world, but it is also about tackling present-day challenges.

What are the current challenges associated with the promotion of cultural and biological diversity ?

We face many challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss for example. I believe you here in Oman with your so diverse biological environment and so many species and so unique layers of nature, soul and marine makes Oman the best place to understand how important it is to educate boys and girls in schools on preserving our biodiversity for a sustainable development. Other challenges include human rights; we should educate our young generations to be responsible citizens in order to know their rights and the necessity to respect their societies and the rights of others whether locally or internationally because globalization brings this necessity..

In your past interviews, you have always called for equal education opportunities for stability and balance. What efforts the UNESCO making towards female education, especially at a time when many girls are dropping out ?

I believe UNESCO has a unique role in girls and women education because UNESCO pays a huge attention to the literacy of both genders. Unfortunately, there are too many illiterate people in the world. We have 800 million illiterate individuals, and this number has increased last year, with two thirds of them being women. It is in the mandate of UNESCO to fight illiteracy and it not only establishes education institutes, but also supports education conferences in this regard. In 2009, at a conference on education for adults, nine of the most populous countries in the world, which also contain almost half of the world's illiterate people, organized a group called the E9 countries. We meet with them regularly and try to fight illiteracy within the country through the establishment of dozens of projects. With initiatives like this, we have seen more girls enrolling in primary schools in the time we find being born a girl is still a reason for exclusion in some parts of the world. For example, Bangladesh, despite all the problems it has, has introduced good policies to enroll girls in primary schools. However, if we go deeper into the problem we find that it is secondary education which girls lack because of the high rates of drop outs for different reasons. Secondary education can be a solution to poverty reduction, maternal mortality decrease and child maternal health. We promote many programs and work with governments to convince them to put specific policies and incentives for families in order to keep girls in secondary schools.

UNESCO has always encouraged Cultural Diversity, and to stress on this matter, it has appointed the year 2010 as the year of rapprochement of cultures. What has the UNESCO achieved during this important year and can we says that UNESCO has achieved its goals.

I'm satisfied with so many initiatives that have been encouraged and implemented by UNESCO, national commissions, associations, government and non-governmental authorities. We have almost 1,000 initiatives all over the world and I believe this is a big achievement. I would like to note that I'm impressed by Oman's wonderful initiative, Connecting Cultures which is a good example of the type of initiatives I'm talking about. Now we can't say that we have reached the perfect stage of dialogue and



rapprochement of cultures, and we still have to continue to involve more young people and their networks for example. However, we have promoted many activities and I have also established a high panel on peace and dialogue among cultures. At our next meeting in New York we will announce the results of this international year.

Since 1974, the Oman National Commission has been dedicated to translate the principles and views of UNESCO and other similar organizations into plans and actions. How do you evaluate the efforts done by the Omani National Commission and other National Commissions around the world in applying and spreading these principles of UNESCO ?

I have always emphasized the role of National Commissions because they serve a unique function of linking UNESCO with governments. Oman's National Commission adopts a solid approach towards cooperation with UNESCO and enjoys excellent support from the government. In general, National Commissions are a source of initiatives and activities. Currently, I'm sending letters to various governments to assess their relations with the commissions. Also, we recently carried out an evaluation to assess the commissions' activities and one of the recommendations that resulted from this evaluation is to study how to strengthen cooperation with the national commissions.

UNESCO pays a huge attention to World Heritage and Oman was privileged to inscribe all "Baraa" dance and folklore in the World Representative List. Tell us how UNESCO attracts countries' attention in this regard and how does the organization facilitate the inscription of this heritage in the World Representative List .

By adopting the relevant conventions, countries are automatically encouraged to participate. The initial stages of implementation of the convention convince the countries that were hesitant at first. Today, around 130 countries have ratified the convention. Countries began to realize that we create more balance through this convention. We

help to introduce many countries and give recognition to small communities. We tell them what you have and what you do is important, what your ancestors did is important and should be preserved and passed on to future generations and inscription in the representative list stresses and confirms this importance.

Associated Schools Project Network play a great role in putting UNESCO's goals into action among societies. Since its inception in 1998, Oman ASPNet has worked dedicatedly to spread the principles of UNESCO and celebrate the international days, years, and decades. Talk to us briefly about UNESCO efforts in encouraging this project.

We have a big network of ASP schools. We prepare some special tools and create publications and distribute them to ASP schools. One of the most popular publications is "Heritage in Young Hands" which is an innovative education concept. We also count very much on National Commissions to get involved in and support the project. I can see that people in Oman pay great attention to this area and that was demonstrated in the wonderful opening of the conference.

This is your first visit to Oman. What do you think of the country's efforts and how do you evaluate Oman relations with UNESCO ?

Oman makes great efforts to apply UNESCO's principles. H.M. Sultan Qaboos was the first to visit UNESCO after ratifying the convention and the inscription of the World Heritage Sites. Mr. Mosa Jaafar, the former Omani Ambassador to UNESCO carried out the important duties of chairing the 34th General Conference and will continue to be a member of UNESCO's advisory group.

In general, UNESCO has excellent relations with Oman which is participating visibly and actively. Oman has a very modern and positive approach towards UNESCO principles as is proved by this conference. I will leave Oman with a positive impression and I have conveyed that to the leaders in the country. I have also expressed how impressed I am with the incredible development that has taken place over the last 40 years. The Human Development Report of 2010 shows that Oman has made a spectacular progress in education and other fields especially after H.M. the Sultan have adopted the Oman 2020 plan that aims at wider and deeper social and economic development.

New publications

The national report on the International Year of Biodiversity 2010

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science issued the national report on the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB 2010). The report documented events and activities carried out by various parties within Oman involved with biodiversity, including the public and private sectors and the civil community.

The report contained ten chapters listing more than fifty activities implemented throughout the year in cooperation with authorities and parties involved in the environment and biodiversity. In the introduction to the report, H. E. Yahya Saud Al Suleimi, Minister of Education and President of the Oman National Commission, stressed the importance of moving forward in implementing the plans worked on during the past year, in order to preserve what is left of biodiversity as the foundation for sustainable life for us and for the coming generations.

The first chapter of the report introduces IYB, and the second chapter focused on the biodiversity in Oman. The other eight chapters described the activities implemented during the year including: celebrating local, regional and international environment events, regional and international conferences, seminars and workshops, local training seminars and workshops, exhibitions, field activities, education, research projects, academic activities and publications.

The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science cooperated with a working team of representatives from several ministries and authorities including education, environment and climate affairs, agriculture, fisheries and tourism, along with Sultan Qaboos University, Oman Botanic Garden, Omani Environment Society and Oman Association for Fine Art. All these parties cooperated in planning and following up on IYB early in 2010 and continued their cooperation with all other stakeholders.



The annual publication of the UNESCO associated schools

On the sideline of the ESD in support of cultural diversity and biodiversity conference, held in Muscat on 24 – 26 January 2011, the first issue of the UNESCO associated schools publication was launched in Arabic and English. The publication highlights the international network and its objectives, along with an introduction on the Omani sites listed in the World Heritage List, the international years for 2010 and the most important activities and programmes carried out by the associated schools during these international years. The publication also described a number of the leading projects implemented by the schools, in cooperation with local and foreign establishments, in support of the UN ESD decade, and the Arab European dialogue and the youth, along with Connecting Culture project and twinning between Omani and German associated schools.



Omani culture and communication throughout history

(The education message book series, 13)

By: Humeid Saif Al Noufli

Publisher: Ministry of Education, Muscat, 2010

Contents:

The book aims to track Omani cultural contributions throughout history, and their fruitful interaction with the rest of the world.

The book also focuses on the contact between the Omani nation with other countries, the communications with the cultures of the world and its impact on the current generation. Throughout history Omani culture was distinguished by two very important dimensions: cultural dimension through which we came to know the best of Omani thinking and creativity, and the environmental dimension expressing the interaction of the Omani people with their surrounding environment.

The four main chapters are:

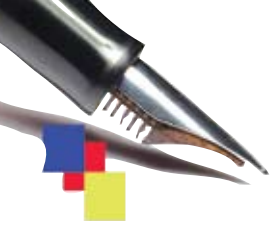
Chapter one: The culture of ancient Omanis ... astonishing facts – First: architecture of ancient Omanis: the settlements, buildings and fortifications, old Omani houses. Second: Cultural dimension in the people's activities: mining, industry, fishing. Third: environmental dimension: agriculture, irrigation and grazing.

Chapter two: Cultural communication throughout history – First: rapprochement with cultures is a historical Omani feature: Relations between Oman and prehistoric civilizations, Omani relations during the Islamic era, elements of cultural communication with the early Omanis, Oman in the international community. Second: Forms of communications with the world throughout history: religious communication, cultural communication, diplomatic and political communication, Omani voyages and discoveries.

Chapter three: Oman in world memory – First: Trips to Oman: social and individual voyages. Second: Omani treasures in the museums of the world. Third: Oman cultural and intellectual contributions and its international impact.

Chapter four: Outcomes from cultural connections with other cultures: First: mastering navigation and trade. Second: Oman cultural projects: Sultan Qaboos academic chairs, Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, Sultan Qaboos Encyclopedia for Arabic Names, participation in the Silk Route project, study of the Ras Al Hadd settlements project. Third: ambassadors for friendship and peace: the Sultana ship, Sohar ship, Fulk Al Salama ship, Oman Youth ship, Muscat Jewel ship. Fourth: culture of tolerance, love and peace: tolerance and its impact on the rapprochement of cultures, culture of love and peace.





ESD in support of Cultural Rapprochement & Biodiversity Conference, 24 – 26 January 2011



The Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of Education, in cooperation with UNESCO, and consistent with the results of the Arab European Dialogue Conference, organized the ESD in support of Cultural Rapprochement and Biodiversity Conference at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 24 – 26 January 2011. The conference aimed to help education systems to enhance international efforts to bridge the intellectual gap between culture and nature, and support the efforts aiming to limit the division between biological and social aspects. The conference was attended by more than 300 participants from UNESCO and international organizations and associations, in addition to the National Commissions from Arab and European countries and government and civil organization and NGOs from Oman.

By: Salim Hilal Al Habsi &
Mahmoud Al Ibri
Photography: Saif Al Saadi

Meetings preceding the conference

The conference was preceded by closed meetings of experts on 23 January 2011, where H. E. Dr. Irina Bokov, UNESCO Director General, inaugurated the meeting of the Arab European Dialogue working team, together with H. E. Dr. Muna Salim Al Jardani, Under Secretary for Education and Curricula, and Deputy President of Oman National Commission, in addition to the Arab Peninsula for Environment and the Middle East for Botanic Gardens meetings. The meetings were attended by the Secretary General of Arab and European National Commissions, and by experts from Gulf, Arab and other countries.

Conference inauguration

The ESD in support of the Cultural Rapprochement and Biodiversity Conference was inaugurated under the auspice of H. E. Abdula Aziz Mohammed Al Rawas, Advisor to H. M. the Sultan for Cultural Affairs. The opening ceremony was attended by H. E. Yahya Saood Al Suleimi, former Oman Minister of Education and President of the Oman National Commission, along with H. E. Dr. Irina Bokov, UNESCO Director General, and a large number of Their Excellencies the ministers, under secretaries, advisors and ambassadors of friendly countries. The opening ceremony began with a speech by H. E. Minister of Education and President of the Oman National Commission, stressing that the ESD in Support of Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity Conference in Muscat

is a significant contribution from Oman to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), the International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures and the International Year of Youth, as adopted by the UN General Assembly. UNESCO and member countries are joining in the celebrations in order to exchange good practice in education for sustainable development (ESD) and enhance dialogue between all the parties related to cultural diversity and biodiversity issues. His Excellency the Minister referred to the numerous contributions by Oman to enrich rapprochement of cultures, throughout its ancient and contemporary history, as a centre for cultural communications with other nations, and its role in disseminating a culture of peace, in addition to Oman's role in preserving the environment and biodiversity. H. E. stressed the role of the curricula in including themes and concepts on biodiversity. The Minister informed the conference that public and private establishments in Oman have adopted a range of plans and programs to advance youth education, health and culture as a way of developing their communities. The most important programme is the Muscat Youth Forum, under the supervision of the Oman Identity Marketing Management Unit, and in cooperation with the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of Education. The Connecting Cultures project is a significant initiative supported by Oman since 2007, in cooperation

with “Culture Connect” Foundation, in order to provide the opportunity for youths to meet face to face and communicate, thus contributing to the support of biodiversity between countries, and to acquire the skills of communication and dialogue with others.

H. E. Dr. Irina Bokov, UNESCO Director General, said that this conference reflects Oman’s deep commitment to education for sustainable development. She referred to the UN report for human development listing Oman as one of the principal countries developing human resources over the past 40 years. She pointed out that Oman’s economic vision 2020 resulted in the development of rich experience in ESD consistent with the International ESD conference held in Bonn in 2009. She added that the significance of this conference lies in the connection between building ESD and cultural diversity and biodiversity.

Connecting Culture

The opening ceremony included a presentation on the connecting culture project, and students from participating countries presented their experience and the benefits derived from this voyage through dialogue and exchange of cultures. In addition, the “Connecting Culture” book was launched by Their Excellencies the guest of honor, the Minister of Education and UNESCO Director General. Copies of the book were distributed to all the participants.

The Spirit of Peace Operetta

The opening ceremony ended with the operetta “The Spirit of Peace” with the participation of the D. G. of Education in Muscat.

The operetta consisted of scenes of peace and rapprochement of cultures presented by students from the UNSECO associated schools and from international and local schools in Muscat.

Associated Exhibition

Following the opening ceremony, the guest of honour, along with the participants, visited the associated exhibition consisting of four main topics:

First: Education for Sustainable Development

Second: Youth (Connecting Cultures)

Third: Cultural Diversity and Heritage

Fourth: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

The exhibition witnessed the participation of several parties, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Oman Traditional Music Centre, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, Public Authority for Handicrafts, Royal Navy of Oman, Sultan Qaboos Centre for Islamic Culture, Oman Environment Society and Oman Women Association.

Conference Sessions

The conference was divided into three main topics. On the first day the conference discussed youths and the rapprochement of cultures, while the second, third and last days were devoted to biodiversity.

The working papers presented on the first day focused on sustainable development and youth, discussing increasing youth awareness on global environmental and cultural issues, and how to deal with it to



ensure sustainable development, in addition to enhancing biodiversity and cultural diversity in education.

An evening workshop was organized for the coordinators of the National Commissions on the international campaign “Earth Care 2010 – 2014” for sustainable development.

Photography exhibition

The photography exhibition was inaugurated by H. E. Dr. Irina Bokov, UNESCO Director General, and in the presence of H. E. Yahya Saood Al Suleimi, former Oman Minister of Education and Their Excellencies and participants. The exhibition was organized to coincide with the official dinner party at the Intercontinental Hotel, with participation from the Omani Association for Fine Art.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to discuss investment in cultural diversity and dialogue between

cultures, in addition to the role of communications and civil society in supporting the rapprochement of cultures.

A special training workshop was organized on sustainable tourism in the UNESCO natural reserves, international culture sites and geology parks.

Discussion groups were organized in the evening on the role of heritage in supporting rapprochement between cultures, and success stories on including cultural diversity and dialogue within activities in UNESCO’s associated schools.

Recreational trips

Recreational trips to cultural and historical sites in Oman were organized for the participants. Participants visited Bahla Fort, Jabreen Fort, Falaj Daris and Nizwa Fort in addition to Mutrah Souk, the marine front, various historical and cultural museums, Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the treasures of the sea exhibition



and Sultan Qaboos University.

On the third and last day of the conference the presentations discussed the elements affecting biodiversity, investment in biodiversity, and in the evening a discussion group discussed biodiversity and the role of the media.

Conference closure

The conference concluded under the auspices of H. E. Sheikh Mohammed Hamdan Al Toobi, advisor to the Ministry of Education. The closing ceremony included a speech by H. E. Saud Salim Al Bulushi, Undersecretary for Planning and HR Development, followed by a speech by H. E. Dr. Hamad Saif Al Hammami, Director of the UNESCO regional office in Doha, in addition to the recommendations (Muscat declaration) by Dr. Ouhood Al Bulushi from Sultan Qaboos University.

Muscat declaration Introduction

Developments in

communication technology, have led to new challenges in all aspect of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In response to such challenges, and in support of sustainable coexistence, we, the participants in this conference, are convinced of the importance of determining relationships between biodiversity, cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures for sustainable development and rapprochement of cultures. Accordingly, we have adopted the following declaration:

- The importance of investing in cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures
- Culture reflects the rich human diversity. Since ancient times, communities have been involved in dialogue, cooperation and coexistence, regardless of cultural, religious and gender differences. Understanding of different cultures lead to positive relations between communities. Accordingly, respecting cultural diversity and fostering dialogue between cultures has become a global requirement.

- We understand the importance of cultural diversity and its impact on sustainable development and peace in the world. The world today consists of an abundance of cultural and religious diversity, and so we call for better understanding of the cultural qualities and joint links of communities and individuals alike.

- Emphasis on the importance of enhancing multimedia and modern communication and information technology to promote dialogue on the internet and social networks to circulate, translate and share cultural expressions.

In view of the above, we confirm the existence of a dual challenge facing decision makers and stakeholders, of promoting cultural diversity on the one hand, and enhancing dialogue between cultures on the other. This provides decision makers with an opportunity to benefit from various participating parties in all fields, while acknowledging the distinguished role and added value of each. In order to achieve this objective we need to:

- Harness the energy of all the educational, scientific, cultural and information establishments, by adopting a methodology to enable the civil society and the decision makers to achieve collaboration between all the active elements to promote the values of diversity and dialogue for sustainable future, while stressing the differences and similarities between cultures.

- Build new capacities, directions and skills through dialogue to achieve better understanding and maintain a culture of dialogue and peace,

together with special attention to the youth through official and unofficial education channels.

- Create more opportunities for scientific research and general discussions on the richness of cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures, by highlighting exchanges between cultures, increased focus on the role of innovation for creativity, and setting a comprehensive vision for maintaining all aspects of cultural heritage as the carrier of history and identity, and ensure its passing to future generations through exhibitions and festivals, and the use of the community centres and institutions, including schools, universities, museums, art galleries, cultural centres and libraries.

- Stress the importance of integrating the principles of cultural diversity and direct dialogue in all policies, especially in education, science, culture and communication, in the hope of correcting misconceptions about cultures, values and stereotypes.

The importance of preserving biodiversity to protect life on earth

- Climate change, greenhouse gases, damages resulting from air and water pollution and depletion of biological resources are leading to the loss of biodiversity and weakening the ecosystems on which mankind depends on. This requires the international community to take immediate action to enhance the international efforts to achieve sustainable use of biodiversity.

- Realizing the challenges facing biodiversity within the context of

increasing environmental pollution, the depletion and unsustainable use of resources, we call on countries to increase its efforts to preserve the ecosystems, especially within communities living in endangered ecosystems.

- Stress the importance of increasing awareness of the relation between food security and preserving biodiversity and the ecosystems, and encourage comprehensive local level studies of this relationship.

In light of the above, and consistent with the UN objectives of the Decade of Biodiversity, and the strategies adopted at the 10th meeting of the biodiversity convention (Nagoya, Japan October 2010), we confirm that preserving biodiversity on our planet is the most important pillar for sustainable development. It is important to create close regional and international cooperation and, accordingly, we need to:

- Direct national and international efforts to preserve biodiversity and protect the ecosystems. This means adopting sustainable tourism options, rehabilitating damaged areas, reducing the loss of natural resources, lessening the pressure on the coral reefs and protecting seawater, groundwater and coastal areas.

- Support scientific research and design innovative mechanisms for the benefit of biodiversity, including the industries relating to marine and terrestrial organisms, to preserve sustainability and avoid the risk of extinction.

- Assist communities to achieve sustainability and deal with several problems relating to water, energy

and climate change, and reduce the impacts and risks of disasters, reduce the loss of biodiversity, food crises and health hazards.

- Stress the importance of the initiatives to create regional and international networks supporting the application of sustainable development, exchange of experience and skills and transfer of success stories to improve the environmental situation. Accordingly, we commend the efforts of the Arab Peninsula Network of Experts in creating such a network and which was declared in the meetings associated with this conference.

- Encourage official and non-official youth environmental education by developing subjects relating to biodiversity within the curricula, developing field visits and scientific experiments and cooperating with general and higher education institutes to increase awareness of the importance of preserving the ecosystems, and encourage them to join supporting scientific and professional specialties.

The importance of providing suitable resources for the youth within the ESD framework

In relation to the general objectives of the ESD Decade 2005 – 2014 (to promote communication and cooperation between all the stakeholders, improve education and learning in environmental subject) we confirm the support of countries to achieve the millennium development goals and provide new opportunities and tools required for the education development process.

We confirm the objectives of the Bonn Declaration 2009 for the UNESCO ESD Conference, especially in the involvement of youth in designing and implementing educational programmes, and mobilize their skills to enhance ESD, and we commend the role of the UNESCO ASP students in supporting ESD. We recognise, however, that we still have a lot to achieve the involvement of the youth.

We also confirm the importance of making the efforts required to build a suitable environment for youth initiatives, and to facilitate local, regional and international dialogue and partnership between youth, related public and private establishments and the civil society.

In view of the above, and consistent with the global programme for youth adopted by the UN general assembly in 1985 during the celebration of the International Year for Youth, we support the initiatives, including the connecting cultures and care for the planet earth, and we also encourage youth involvement in these projects. Accordingly, we need to:

- Make efforts to provide good education, health care, and training and employment opportunities for the youth, consistent with the ESD objectives.
- Enhance the leading role of the UNESCO associated schools in developing the plans and programmes to support participating youths and teachers.
- Increase environmental, cultural and social awareness by reviewing education systems and enhance education projects locally, regionally and internationally.
- Assist youth participation in

governance, programming, policy development and monitoring.

Muscat Declaration Challenge.

The challenge put forth by the Muscat Declaration is to integrate cultural diversity, dialogue between cultures and rapprochement of cultures within the ESD concept, accordingly:

- Appeal to all concerned parties (decision makers, civil and academic communities and the private sector) to recognise the unique relationship between cultural diversity, biodiversity and dialogue between cultures to achieve the added value to enhance human development. Not only from an economic and environmental sustainability perspective, but also as a mean to achieve intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual existence in-tune with nature and the cultures of the world.

Appeal to the UNESCO and UN agencies responsible for organizing international conferences, to assess the current situation of cultural diversity and biodiversity in relation to international legal conventions, including the 1993 Biodiversity Convention, the 2001 UNESCO International Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2005 Convention on the protection and enhancement of all forms of cultural expression.

- Encourage the development of basic development projects to achieve best practice, enhance networks and involve civil society and youth in UNESCO programmes concerning biodiversity, cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures.

Participants impressions

H. E. Dr. Hamad Saif Al Hammami – UNESCO representative to AGCC countries and Yemen, Director of the UNESCO Doha Office

I feel heartened by this conference, and the collective efforts to achieve it, and hope for more conferences following this one. The good news is we are now preparing for another conference in Oman next year.

Dr. Bashir Ahmed Said – Secretary General of the Libyan National Commission

The Sultanate of Oman is a beautiful and welcoming country. This is not my first visit as I came here in the summer and winter. Since we arrived the welcome we have received have made us feel at home. The conference has been excellent, and included many important subjects concerning cultural diversity and biodiversity. The organization was also excellent. I pray to God Almighty to protect this country and preserve the peace and security, and to keep His Majesty the Sultan who by his wise leadership has enabled this country to such impressive development.

Nasif Hatta – Arab League Ambassador to UNESCO

As the former Director General for Educational Planning and Advisor to the UNESCO Arab European dialogue, Al Jaber Foundation, the European Council and the European Education Foundation in Norway for Civil Education and Human Rights, I look forward to Oman playing a strategic role and I will ensure that Oman is involved in the most important activities.

For the Arab European dialogue, nine European countries and nine Arab countries are working together to carry out major development projects. Kuwait represents the Arab team and Slovenia represents the Europe. The meeting arranged by Oman was fruitful and both teams made great efforts to achieve the anticipated objectives.

The conference is truly a magnificent initiative, and the Omani people who are proud of their culture and traditions, are a good example of harmonious international coexistence, understanding and peace, which is considered a difficult formula in many other countries. Protect your precious country and its resources.

Marjutka Hafner – Secretary General of Slovenia National Commission

We are proud of the effort taken to organize this conference here in Oman. The results are tangible as reflected by the Muscat Declaration. This conference has enhanced our communication, strengthened our relations and participants have exchanged e-mail addresses and future cooperation at schools and establishments levels have been agreed.

I have enjoyed my first visit to Muscat. I have noticed how clean the city is and the hospitality has exceeded our expectations. Thank you for having us.

Bernard Kom – UNESCO ESD division

I was happy to participate in this wonderful conference, and enjoyed the varied and successful selection of experts, especially regarding the connections between biodiversity and cultural diversity and how to involve schools, youth and the media. I appreciated the various opinions of experts on subjects. The conference was a good opportunity to discuss such differences of opinions, and for Oman to present its achievements to the neighbouring Arab countries.

There are certain issues that we may differ on during discussion. While some may focus on biodiversity, others focus on cultural diversity without trying to merge them together. Accordingly we need to agree on certain projects, and we need to be careful on how to integrate the experts and form teams. In general, it is the role of UNESCO to approximate these tracks. For example, people continue to look at education as restricted to schools, and education in environmental centres and museums is not taken seriously. Our role in UNESCO is to disseminate the culture of education everywhere. Individuals can be taught in different ways, even through music and popular folklore. Our concern is to provide education in different ways, in and outside schools. To achieve this we cannot deal with people from separate environmental, marine or

cultural perceptions, rather we need to involve them and harmonize them. In the fisheries for example, we need the fishermen to teach us how to cast the net and how to fish, and then ask people to try it because trial is the best way to learn and understand. Some people have lived all their lives in cities and they are separated from the environment and its surrounding, and forget that the fish does not just appear on their plate, but that there are steps before it reaches the plate. We need to use this method especially with children. Children in cities think of electronics more than nature, and this we need to address within the ESD concept.

This conference is a good initiative to gather experts from various member countries to discuss the ways to improve this and determine all the issues. Having discussions and workshops is a good start to find solutions. The role of the national commissions is to preserve and enrich this dialogue. The role of the UNESCO regional office in Doha is to preserve this communication between the GCC and the world. Some member countries may find common causes and the potential for cooperation. This is my first visit to Oman and the Gulf. I was born in Morocco and have visited Lebanon. I have had a wonderful time in Oman and I was able to experience the hospitality of Muscat and wish to return again.

Mrs. Somlak Charoenpot. President, Museum Association of Thailand

My impression of the people of Oman is that both men and women are very friendly and hospitable. I admire the efforts to organize this conference and I believe that these meetings and workshops will be fruitful to Omanis and to people in other countries. Your initiative will assist us to organize a similar event in our country. I also believe that soon we will be achieving the objectives of sustainable development.

Herbert Horka – Germany

I am impressed with the conference and with the youth of Oman in following the conference. The youth have through their many questions expressed their enthusiasm and their willingness to participate and learn. Their questions were important and vital and this is what I liked most.

Organizing this conference is a clear success for Oman and the participating countries. I was impressed by the level of hospitality which I have not experienced in any other country. I have extended my stay in Oman to enjoy it with my family. I can only congratulate the organizers for such a great effort.

**Dr. Hafeedha Saleh Alshiekh –
Assistant Secretary General for Yemen
National Commission**

First, I would like to congratulate the organizers on this excellent conference, and would like to thank them for inviting us to participate. All the participants have been impressed with the excellent organization. Each commission carried out its functions seriously. The papers presented in the conference were serious and consistent with the scientific themes, and managed to reconcile the themes of cultural diversity and biodiversity.

**Dr. Ohood Said Al Bulushi –
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Edu-
cation, Sultan Qaboos University**

The conference presented a huge opportunity for all those concerned with dialogue between cultures and biodiversity. The scientific papers were important for the region and for the world. I have attended all the sessions in my role as the conference secretary general reporter, along with my colleague Dr. Salim Humood Al Rawahi. We supervised the drafting of the Muscat Declaration 2011 which I consider as an important result of the conference, with its significant recommendations on cultural diversity, biodiversity and youth, which are consistent with the resolutions of international conferences and conventions. The recommendations stress the role of youth in particular and I hope that this is recognised in the development plans. As we all know, the Sultanate of Oman, headed by His Majesty the Sultan and His wise government, is very interested in biodiversity. The Ministry of Education plays an important role through school awareness and drafting the curricula. Oman is rich in cultural diversity, as evidenced by the open dialogue between the people and the leadership, although we will require more for a successful community.

Siham Ahmed Al Riyami – Deputy Director of Humanities for Developing the English curricula, Ministry of Education

The conference has complemented previous international conferences, notably the Bonn Conference 2009, to stimulate and enhance the role of cultural diversity and biodiversity in the ESD. This was clear from the harmony of the sessions, the quality of the working papers and the resulting recommendations. I can definitely say that this conference will be a platform for many projects, notably the call for Arab twinning and to increase the role of the UNESCO associated schools, consistent with UNESCO directions. The conference recommendations support cultural diversity, biodiversity and the youth to perform their role as best as possible.

Sabreen Al Lawati – student, Higher College of Technology

I was honoured to participate in this conference, and I love the idea of exchanging culture with neighbourly and friendly countries. Through this kind of exchange we, the youth, can find out more about ideas, civilizations and beliefs. Opening-up to others can help correct stereotypes and assist in the rapprochement of cultures.

Moza Al Kharoosi – student, Higher College of Technology

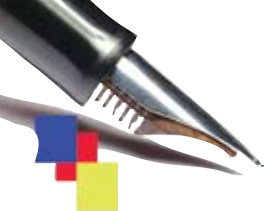
The conference was great, and discussed several topics of significant interest to us, the students and the Omani community, and the Arab communities in general. We look forward for more conferences with similar international participation to discuss other topics and issues.

Azza Al Oufi – student, Higher College of Technology

It was an honour for me and my colleagues to attend this conference, especially since not many youngsters of our age had such an opportunity. The conference allowed us to find out about very interesting subjects, which we did not know before. We wish we could have studied them while in schools, like the UNESCO associated schools for example.

Mariam Al Mamari – student, Higher College of Technology

Participation in this conference provided me with the opportunity to meet prominent personalities and experts in all the fields, especially in cultural diversity and biodiversity. I got to know about communication between cultures and witnessed successful stories. I expect this to be of benefit to me, especially in relation to biodiversity and the environment. It is great that Oman is hosting such a conference and that the youth are actively participating. I would like to thank all the organizers for this excellent conference.



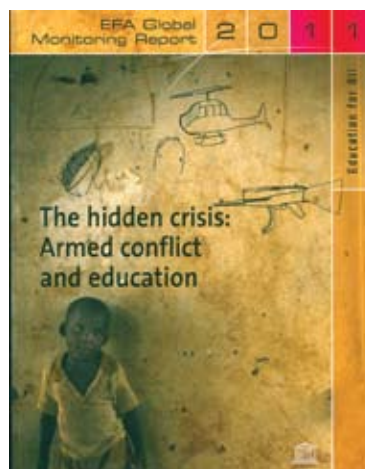
International Mother Language Day 2011: Focus on new IT

On February 21 of each year UNESCO celebrates the International Mother Language Day, and the theme for this year was “The information and communication technologies for the safeguarding and promotion of languages and linguistic diversity – highlighting the new technologies’ enormous potential for safeguarding, documenting and promoting the use of mother languages. This was emphasized by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, in her message on the occasion “... each language is a unique source of meaning for understanding, writing and expressing reality” and the International Mother Language Day is “a moment to recognize their importance and to mobilize for multilingualism and linguistic diversity.” “We must harness the power of progress to protect diverse visions of the world and to promote all sources of knowledge and forms of expression.” added the Director-General.

UNESCO organized an information meeting and debate, “Projects on Linguistic Diversity and New Technologies”. Linguists, experts and representatives of UNESCO, the International Organization of La Francophonie and the Latin Union reported on the latest updates of the Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, as well as the first results of a UNESCO project that analyses linguistic trends since the 1950s. The meeting also included debates on bilingual education and new technologies in education.

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011 The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education

The EFA monitoring report 2011 which will be launched officially next March at the UN HQ in New York, will examine the damaging consequences of armed conflicts on the Education for All goals, protecting the right to education during conflict, strengthening provision for children, youth and adults affected by conflict, and rebuilding education systems in countries emerging from conflict. The report also explores the role of inappropriate education policies in creating conditions for violent conflict. Drawing on experience from a range of countries, it identifies problems and sets out solutions that can help make education a force for peace, social cohesion and human dignity.



Historical stages – UNESCO over 60 years

November 16, 1945	37 representatives met in London to sign the Constitution of UNESCO, which came into force on 4 November 1946 after ratification by twenty countries.
1948	UNESCO recommends to the member countries to popularize primary education and make it mandatory.
1956	The Republic of South Africa withdrew from UNESCO complaining that UNESCO publications were “interfering” in matters relating to “racism issues”. South Africa, headed by President Nelson Mandela rejoined UNESCO in 1994.
1958	Inauguration of the Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris designed by Marcel Breuer (USA), Pier Luigi Nervi (Italy) and Bernard Zehruss (France).
1968	UNESCO organized the first intergovernmental conference to reconcile environment and development. It led to UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.
1972	Adopting the convention concerning the protection of the world’s culture and natural heritage, and in 1976 the World Heritage Committee was formed and in 1978 started inscribing the properties on the world heritage list.
1975	Establishing the United Nations University in Tokyo sponsored by UN and UNESCO.
1984	The USA withdrew from UNESCO for several reasons including a dispute on UNESCO management, and in 1985 UK and Singapore withdrew from UNESCO and the budget was greatly diminished.
1990	The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, initiated a global movement to provide basic education for all the children, youth and adults. Ten years later, the countries participating in the World Education Forum held in Dakar (Senegal) committed to universalize primary education by 2015.
1992	The Memory of the World Programme aiming at preservation of valuable archive holdings and library collections worldwide, and now includes various archives including audiovisuals, cinema and television programmes.
1997	United Kingdom returns to UNESCO.
1998	The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights prepared by UNESCO in 1997.
1999	UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura initiates major reforms of restructuring and decentralization of the UNESCO staff and activities.
2001	The General Conference of UNESCO adopts the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
2007	Montenegro (the Black Mountain) became member number 192, and Singapore number 193.
2008	The reinstallation of the 1,700 years old Axum Obelisk, which was removed by Italy in 1937 to Rome, back to its original place north of Ethiopia.
2009	UNESCO General Conference elects Irina Bokova (Bulgaria) to be UNESCO’ 10 th Director General. She is the first woman to hold this office.
2010	The International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and the International Year for Biodiversity.
2011	The International Year for Chemistry

As we continue
communicate



Mohammed Saleem Al Yaqoubi
Deputy Secretary
the Oman National Commission
for Education Culture and
Science

This issue of Tawasol is rich in topics relating to Oman's participation with the international community in celebrating the International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures, the International Year of Biodiversity and the International Year of Youth. The highlight was the conference on ESD in support of cultural diversity and biodiversity which was held on 24 – 26 January 2011.

The National Commission is looking forward to continue this participation with the international community during the celebration of the International Year of Chemistry in 2011. The National Commission, in cooperation with related parties, intends to organise a number of programs and activities to achieve the objectives of this year. The National Commission will continue to encourage youth participation in its programmes, in recognition of the significant role youth play in supporting the country's sustainable development.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the first report on human development, the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) issued the Human Development Report 2010 titled "The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development".

Oman came first out of the 135 countries covered by the report with regard to being the fastest growing country in the world over the past four decades in the standard of human development, relating to advancement and performance in education and health. This illustrates the interest Oman devotes to these sectors and the support it offers them from the state's general budget, based on its belief that human beings are the real wealth of the country.

In response to an invitation from UNESCO to present its experience and success in achieving this advancement, Oman participated in the 21st meeting of the working group for Education for All, held in Paris on 2 – 3 February 2011. The aim of this meeting was to prepare for a high level international meeting in Gotenim of 40 participating countries including Oman to mark the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Education for All initiative.