

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
Speech Before
The Opening of The Annual Session of
The Council of Oman

12/10/2004

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God and may Blessings and Peace be upon the one whom his Lord chose as the Seal of his Messengers and Prophets and upon his Family and Companions.

Dear Citizens,

IT gives us pleasure to speak to you today, as we meet on the occasion of the annual session of the Council of Oman, to reaffirm our determination and resolution to work diligently, with full confidence in God's will, towards broadening the horizons of a sustainable comprehensive development. And we must bear in mind that this will only be attainable through means of knowledge, work and being broad-minded in keeping abreast of today's developments and achievements in all walks of life, but at the same time preserving our basic principles and our firm roots. We should be fearless when communicating with different civilizations and cultures around the world, and in exploring the accomplishments and developments in those communities, in order to enhance our position in a world which no-one doubts, thanks to the latest scientific advancements, has become smaller, like a village. Where no society can isolate itself without interacting and communicating with others, that is if that society seeks to achieve prosperity and welfare for its citizens.

This was the case with our Omani ancestors who, throughout the ages, travelled to different parts of the world. They extended the hand of friendship to all and looked forward with optimism to the mutual exchange of interests with other communities without taking sides.

Dear Citizens,

As you know, our goals are the implementation of successive development plans in the Sultanate, to finish the main infrastructure of a

modern state, and to raise the living standards in all areas of our dear homeland. This is being accomplished in accordance with specific programmes, which have been studied very carefully, and which are aimed at increasing the ratio of economic development with more emphasis on the diversification of the sources of national income and the development of human resources.

In this respect, the outcome of the policies followed by our government to encourage all non-oil sectors is now visible, thanks be to God. We can already see the projects which have been completed and those which are now on-going, these will all lead to an increase in the national income and will provide more, and larger, opportunities for work and training, and thus we will gain more and new skills for the youth of Oman who are keen to take over different jobs in various fields of employment.

We have a strong belief in the importance of the tourism sector, since it is an emerging industry at international level where it has become one of the main sources of revenue in many developed countries. And because God has bestowed our country with an environment and geographical diversity, as well as other essential elements, that makes it a favourable tourist destination in the region, we took the decision to establish a Ministry of Tourism to administer this vital and important sector. We hope that those who are in charge of its work will take the appropriate steps to expedite the implementation of the carefully studied procedures and steps which are necessary to develop this sector in the near future, God willing. This should be achieved through coordination with the other concerned government departments and private sector.

Dear Citizens,

We wish to underline in this important annual session the attention and emphasis we place on economic development and human resources in our dear motherland. As to our foreign policy - it is based, as you know, on certain fundamental principles which we have not deviated from, that is we always takes sides with rightness, justice, and joint efforts with other peace-loving nations to settle international conflicts through dialogue and negotiations so that security and stability may prevail and all nations on earth will be able to reap the benefits thereof. And on that basis, we call again for the lifting of the daily suffering endured by the Palestinian people and the need to give them the opportunity to achieve their goals and establish an independent state. We also hope that the Arab states, whose lands are still under occupation, will be able to recover them and that security and stability may prevail in Iraq and prosperity and progress reign

in our region and the whole world. We also call for respect for international law and the principles and conventions upon which it is based, and for tolerance between communities and races.

May God make this country secure and the stable, protect it, and bestow on its people abundant fruits. You are the hearer, the responder and able to do all things.

May Peace be upon you, and God's Mercy and Blessings.

