

**Address by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin  
Said to the 33rd Session of the General  
Conference of the United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organisation  
(UNESCO), coinciding with the 60th  
Anniversary of its establishment.**

**Paris – 4/10/2005**

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

YOUR Excellencies Heads of Delegations, Your Excellency Chairperson of the Executive Board; Your Excellency the Director-General.

It gives us great pleasure to address you on the occasion of the 33rd Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which coincides with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of UNESCO, that is the forum in which diverse cultures interact in order to inculcate crucial human values. We would like to take this opportunity to emphasise our commitment to work with UNESCO in helping to maintain its distinguished position with the United Nations organization, which advocates an ethical message calling for equity, respect for all human beings and providing equal opportunities for all.

In calling for the dissemination of knowledge, regeneration of human heritage, encouragement of innovation and cultural diversification, addressing challenges facing the environment and improving water resources, UNESCO raises issues which are of the greatest concern to humankind.

Human beings are always the target of nations' development programmes and, as such, they enjoy the gains it offers them. Human beings are also, however, the tools of development. It is human beings who make development plans and programmes a tangible reality.

In this respect, we are committed to providing women with opportunities to play a productive role in Oman's society. We have, therefore, endorsed the Sultanate of Oman's membership of the Convention for the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women.

With reference to UNESCO's pioneering role in enhancing ethical principles to guide scientific and technological development, we would like to emphasise the importance of increasing public awareness in facing the new ethical challenges related to scientific and technological innovations. It is essential that policies we devise to meet these challenges have been based on careful analysis, consultation and understanding.

The information and communication industries have become a dominant factor in modern life. We are all invited to contribute to the building of an information society; a society that is based on universal solidarity and displays respect for cultural and linguistic diversification.

Your Excellencies,

We devote great care and attention to the development and reform of education in Oman. Our aims include the raising of standards and updating the curriculum to make it richer and more relevant to the needs of an ever changing world.

These efforts recognize the importance the Sultanate assigns to the development of its human resources, to the fostering of scientific and technological understanding and the creation of an educated population who can make a positive contribution to the development process by dealing confidently with change and new developments.

Concern for the different forms of our national heritage, both tangible and intangible, has always been at the centre of our attention. The reason for this is the important role it plays in the enrichment of our intellectual and artistic life and in promoting creativity and innovation in society. We would like, therefore, to express our delight at the inclusion of several Omani cultural and natural sites on the World Heritage List. These sites provide clear evidence of the contribution made by Omanis throughout the ages in building civilizations and in interacting with other cultures.

We look forward to the addition to the World Heritage List of the Sultanate, the Aflaj Irrigation System, at the forthcoming meeting of the Heritage Committee in 2006. The falaj is a unique and important water resource that has made a major contribution to Omani society throughout its history. Not only is it regarded as one of the most important archaeological sites in Oman, but it represents the ability of Omanis to build civilizations in the face of severe challenges and, at the same time, enriching the world's heritage through their intellectual and creative endeavours.

The increasing world population growth rate in recent years and the increasing demand on water resources to meet the population growth, as well as the insufficient attention devoted to the need to balance resources and demand have resulted in serious consequences, especially for the Arab region. Finding suitable solutions requires a concentrated effort from the international community.

In the field of environment, we would like to emphasise the importance of promoting awareness of environmental issues.

UNESCO plays a vital role in mobilizing the international community to take measures to limit negative consequences resulting from natural risks. We are pleased that this organization is sponsoring the award promoted by Oman for preservation of the international environment, which will be granted this year for the eighth time. The award is open to individuals, groups, institutions and organizations throughout the world that have made a significant contribution to environmental preservation.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to all those who have devoted their lives to serving UNESCO, both past and present and to the Secretariat-General.

We would like to specifically mention His Excellency Mr Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General, for his continuous efforts in assisting the Organisation to carry out its mission and achieve its objectives.

We wish every success to this important Conference and pray to Allah the Almighty that it fulfils its target of achieving progress for mankind.

