

## Under the Patronage of

**Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait**  
**H.H Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al Sabah**

## **KUWAIT FINANCIAL FORUM**

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Sheraton Kuwait Hotel

### **(Preliminary Program)**

#### **Opening Session**

#### **Session 1: Rebuilding for the Future in Light of Lessons of the International Crisis.**

The international crisis has brought about a drastic change in policies and conditions that have shaped economic and financial trends in the world economy in recent decades. While the impact of the crisis continues, steps are underway to reshape the international financial system on the basis of lessons learned. This session will cover the following:

- Latest developments in the crisis and its aftermath.
- Main lessons learned from the crisis.
- Near term risks.
- Is there a need for a new international financial regulatory agency to set policy and priority guidelines for local or country agencies.

#### **Session 2: The Arab Economies in the Post-Crisis Era**

Most Arab countries have felt the impact of the international crisis, especially in terms of the decline in asset values, the sharp drop in oil prices, and the financing and liquidity squeeze. Conditions in the financial and oil markets have improved markedly since the height of the crisis, but the ability of the Arab economies to return to the momentum of growth necessary to meet development and job creation challenges remains uncertain. The session will consider the following issues:

- Has the phase of declining financial and real estate assets values and oil prices reached its end?
- Are there needs for new stimulus programs and initiatives in the various Arab economies?
- What are the new development strategies in the region in light of the impact of the crisis and the lessons learned?
- Are the objectives of Arab economic integration made more urgent by the crisis and its impact on the region?
- What is the future of economic reform and trade liberalization?

### **Session 3: The New Regulatory Paradigm**

Weak or ineffective regulation of banks and financial markets is considered one of the main causes of the international financial crisis. Accordingly, governments are developing new, tighter regulatory systems and controls. This session will cover the following topics and issues:

- Has the crisis made it necessary to review operating procedures in Arab financial markets, particularly with a view to regulating foreign investment in these markets?
- How can repeated speculative crises be avoided, what controls can be used and what are the lessons learned in this respect?
- What is the role expected of central banks and what coordination is required with other regulatory authorities.
- Is there a role for a “financial stabilization board”?
- What future for financial centers in the Arab world?

### **Session 4: The Challenges Facing Arab Banks**

After many years of rapid growth in an environment of rising financial surpluses, Arab banks are trying to adjust to the new reality of slower economic growth, tight liquidity, declining asset values, reduced opportunities for good risk lending, and lower profitability. This session will discuss the following:

- What are the expected main characteristics of the regional banking environment in coming years?
- Will domestic banks benefit from the retreat of international banks from the regional market by expanding their role and market share?

- Will the crisis slow the opening up of Arab banking sector to foreign banks?
- Will the crisis lead to more bank mergers and the rise of regional mega-banks?
- How can banks be helped to overcome the problem of the decline in asset quality due to the crisis?
- How should risk management be improved?

### **Session 5: The Financing Gap**

One of the main effects of the crisis on the Arab region was the sharp retrenchment in domestic and international sources of financing, as well as in foreign and inter-Arab direct investment flows. This has affected the ability of governments to undertake new projects, especially in infrastructure development and heavy industry. This session will look at the implications of the financing gap in terms of:

- Expected impact on project activity in the region.
- Availability of alternative sources of financing.
- The role that governments and country and regional development funds can play in making up for the financing gap.
- The possibility of developing an effective bond market in the region.

### **Session 6: Regional and Global Investment Trends**

This session will attempt to answer the following main questions:

- Where are regional and international markets headed and is now the right time to take advantage of opportunities or is it better to wait?
- What are the main investment opportunities in the new investment climate?
- What are the best future strategies for Arab sovereign funds and what are the lessons to be learned from the large losses sustained as a result of the crisis?
- How have investments in Arab markets fared and has crisis helped make the Arab economies more attractive for Arab investors?

## **WORKSHOPS**