

**Muscat Declaration for
Fifth Arab – Indian Partnership Conference
Muscat / Sultanate of Oman
14-15 December 2016**

Within the framework of implementing the Memorandum of Cooperation that was signed in New Delhi on 02/12/ 2008 between the Arab League and the Republic of India.

The fifth version of the Arab – Indian Partnership Conferences was hosted by League of Arab States & India in collaboration with Oman between 14-15 December 2016 in a bid to enhance the relations between the Arab countries and the Republic of India. The conference was held under the auspices of H.E Kamil Bin Fahd Bin Mahmoud Al-Said, Assistant Secretary General at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers Affairs under the title “Partnership towards Innovation and Information Technology Cooperation”

The Conference was organized in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry (MOFA –Oman), Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), the Ministry of External Affairs in India, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Arab League Secretariat, the General Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Arab Countries (GUCCIAC) and the Federation of the Arab Businessmen (FAB).

Several Ministers from India & Arab Countries lead the delegations. H E Ahmed Bin Helli, Deputy Secretary General of Arab League led the Arab League delegation. The Indian delegation was led by HE M J Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs. Other dignitaries include from Sultanate of Oman HE Yahya Al Jabri - Chairman of

Special Economic Zone Authority (Duqm) , and HE Sultan Al Habsi- Secretary General of Supreme Council for Planning, HE Salah Al Hassan – Ministry of Trade in Sudan, and HE Dr Jawad Anani - Vice Prime Minister / Minister of State for investment in Jordan.

The significance of this conference increases being the largest event that holds tremendous potentials to highlight numerous trade and investment opportunities between the two sides with the supports from the governments of India, Sultanate of Oman and the Arab League.

The conference was attended by a number of Arab and Indian ministers, Heads of Arab specialized organization , Key state officials from both sides as well as (400) participants from experts and businessmen from both sides, which reflected the hope of two sides to give more momentum to the economy, trade and investment relations to the higher level and to new horizons of joint works between the two parties. The organization of this Conference comes amidst the rapid fluctuations and developments at the world economy which underscore the need to join hands between Arab countries and India to promote the solid and strong relations and taking them towards sustainable development utilizing all possible means to achieve this aim.

The Arab India relationship is deep-rooted throughout the different ages on entire fields especially the economy. The value of reciprocal trade between the two sides increased considerably despite drop in oil prices, and other factors that have affected the investments and trade exchange levels.

The conference was rich in content with opening session, the ministerial session and special sessions in which working papers were presented on the investment climates and opportunities by both India and Sultanate of

Oman, apart from business to business meetings oriented towards opportunities in trade and investments. The sessions discussed the reality of the Arab Indian cooperation and means to enhance them in the different domains. The two sides stressed the importance of sharing experiences in the areas that were covered during the conference. The meeting also stressed the important role of the private sector and businessmen to push trade and investment relations to wider horizons.

The conference succeeded in discussing a number of joint ventures in various fields between Arab and Indian in both Government and private sector.

The main highlights of the meeting were:-

- 1) The number of Arab Ministers (5), Arab representatives participated (350) from (17) countries , and (55) representatives from Indian side.
- 2) Total six (6) main sessions were held related to the following sectors ;-
 - 1) Technology and innovation.
 - 2) Health and pharmaceutical industries.
 - 3) Renewable energy and clean technology.
 - 4) Higher education and skill development.
 - 5) Food Security.
 - 6) Tourism.
- 3) Also held the business2business meeting (B2B) between the Arab businessmen and investors with their Indian counterparts.
- 4) (10) Arab Specialized Organizations participated in the conference.
- 5) Deliberations and negotiations were held on a large number of investment projects in various investment sectors.

Recommendations

1. It has been proposed for a possible upgrading of the India- Arab Partnership Forum to a bilateral chamber, with FICCI as the secretariat from the Indian side and League of Arab States for Arab countries, subject to the approval from both sides.
2. To deepen & diversify bilateral investment linkages in India & Arab region. India & the Arab league proposes to have a detailed feasibility study to evolve an action agenda.
3. India & the Arab league to work together on developing modules of series of capacity building programmes in vital sectors especially for small & medium enterprises in the region.
4. India & the Arab league works to promote cooperation in the areas of Innovation, Information Technology and exchange of experiences between both sides in this regard.

The 6th version of the conference is decided to be held in the Republic of India in 2018.

Muscat

15/12/2016