



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge
Knowledge for All

The 2011 Gulf Research Meeting

July 6 – 9, 2011
University of Cambridge

Welcome Remarks

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Fitzpatrick Hall, Queen's College
The University of Cambridge

It is my great pleasure once again to welcome all participants to the opening session of the Gulf Research Meeting held here at the University of Cambridge. Last year, we began the idea of an annual academic gathering that focused on the Gulf region – i.e., the countries of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen – and to bring together scholars, specialists, policy practitioners and students to advance the field of Gulf studies and to contribute with their work and expertise to the further development of the field. The first annual Gulf Research meeting proved to be a great success and the response we received in the weeks and months that followed was tremendous and very

encouraging. But I am glad to be able to say this second meeting has surpassed all of our expectations from last year. We received an even more enthusiastic response to our call for workshops and the subsequent call for papers. In the end, this year's GRM will have 17 workshops, covering the disciplines of international relations, politics, economics, education, health to urban planning just to name a few. This is already five more workshops than last year. In total, we have close to 400 people gathered here for what is sure to be an exciting few days of intense and serious discussion. That number represents a more than 100 percent increase from last year and it is thanks to all of you who have responded to our various calls that we have been confirmed in our belief that such an annual meeting is both needed and wanted. Thank you for all of your support.

Let me at the outset specifically thank some very special guests who have joined us for this occasion including **HRH Prince Turki bin Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud**, Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies and former Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the United Kingdom and United States; **H.E. Maj. Gen. Dr. Abdul Latef Bin Rashid Al-Zayani**, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council; as well as all the other distinguished guests and dignitaries.

This meeting and everything that is involved would of course not been possible with out the strong support from our sponsors. Thus, a very special thank has to be extended to them: Emmar, KAB Holding, The Zubair Corporation, Bank Muscat, the Khaled Juffali Company, Bank Dhofar, the Kuwait Program at the Chair for Middle East and Mediterranean Studies (Chaire Moyen-Orient Méditerranée) at Sciences Po-Paris; the Kuwait Program for Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science and last but certainly not least, the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University in Doha, Qatar.

Finally, an equally important thank you needs to be given to the University of Cambridge for their continued support for both the Gulf Research Meeting and for the GRC office hosted by the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. We have held discussion during the days here on expanding the activities of the GRC and we now looking forward to seeing those plans implemented. Prof. Yasir Suleiman, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa'id Professor of Modern Arabic Studies and the Director of the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies continues to be the driving force behind our cooperation and we highly appreciate all of his effort.

Given that it is the mandate of the Gulf Research Meeting to identify issues of importance to the Gulf region and provide a basis for academic and empirical research into those fields, it is great to see that participation in this meeting has once again come in from throughout the world including an increasingly strong contingent from the Gulf Region itself, which is a very welcome development. In addition to the full participants, this year we also received a tremendous interest from those who simply wanted to attend the one or the other workshop and who want to inform themselves about specific developments in the Gulf region. In fact, we received listening participant requests until the very last minute.

Thus, what can be said with certainty is that we have fulfilled our promise from last year which was to work hard, build on the success of the first Gulf Research Meeting and bring an even larger group together for this year's event. Allow me to end my introductory remarks by also alerting you to the fact that the Call for Proposals for the 2012 Gulf Research Meeting is now out and we look forward to receiving a rich array of proposals. The 2012 meeting will take place from July 4 to 7 here at the University of Cambridge. I of course encourage you to pass the call around to interested colleagues

and to disseminate it as widely as possible. A flyer is included in the information package that you all have and further information is available on the event website.

Thank you again for all of your support, welcome to Cambridge and please enjoy the coming days to the fullest.