



COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD

**World Economic Forum
on the Middle East**

**The Promise of
a New Generation**

Preliminary Programme by Theme

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1. The Regional Business Agenda

social entrepreneurs

Beyond the Bottom Line

An ambitious new business model is taking root in the Middle East. Social entrepreneurship claims that it provides business solutions to development problems.

- 1) Can companies increase profits and improve the lives of workers and consumers?
- 2) Can the corporate world ignore the value of social entrepreneurship?
- 3) What is the difference between social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility?

capital markets

Davos WorkSpace - Challenges in the Evolution of Capital Markets

The Middle East enjoys dramatic rates of growth both in terms of consumption and investment. However, companies face varying challenges when seeking to access the capital markets; these challenges go beyond ownership restrictions or regulatory barriers. The discussion will tackle such issues as market access, regulations and Islamic finance.

Session objective: to identify critical areas where the key actors can impact change in building an improved financial ecosystem for the Middle East.

arab innovation

Davos WorkSpace - Looking for the Next Big Idea

The Middle East has a unique combination of natural and human resources. In order to drive future productivity growth and job creation, the Arab world will have to develop its own innovations to take advantage of these resources.

Session objective: to identify the source of big Arab inventions in the future, and tackle the question of how technological innovations can be encouraged and harnessed to drive forward economic development in the Middle East.

branding

Davos WorkSpace - Marketing and Branding the Middle East

Concerns about regional instability and insecurity affect the appeal of the Middle East as a destination for both tourists and investments. Issues such as marketing and branding strategies, the role of various actors in this process and the impact on the travel and tourism industry will be integral to the discussions.

Session objective: to create the basis for a ground-breaking regional marketing campaign that could revolutionize the image of the Middle East.

infrastructure

Davos WorkSpace - Rethinking Regional Transport Infrastructure

Growth is dependent on the capacity to move people, resources and merchandise. The regional transportation network is vital for increasing tourism and trade and for promoting regional cooperation and integration. Issues such as the necessary interlinked logistical hubs, trade and services routes, international regulations and the efficiency of the transport, logistics and tourism industries will be integral to the discussions.

Session objective: to develop a preliminary map of the ideal transport infrastructure requirements for the Middle East.

fdi

Developing an Innovative Investment Climate: The Case of Tourism

The Middle East offers good investment opportunities for business and foreign investors who recognize the creativity and potential of the region.

- 1) What reforms and incentive framework should the governments of the Middle East implement to further attract investors?

- 2) How can governments enhance FDI and private investment for tourism development in particular, in areas such as real-estate development, port development for the cruise shipping industry and airport development?
- 3) What can governments expect from businesses in return for their reforms?

family business

Family Business and the New Generation

Many family businesses in the Middle East are reaching a point where a choice is needed between handing over to the next generation and going public.

- 1) What challenges face family businesses as they seek to hand over to the younger generation?
- 2) Do family businesses need to go public in order to sustain dynamism and promote modern corporate governance practices?
- 3) In the current context of globalization, what will the best growth strategies for family businesses be?

private equity

Funding the Future?

In 2005 a record US\$ 250 bn of private equity (PE) was raised worldwide, with a small but rapidly growing proportion in the Middle East.

- 1) How is the nascent regional PE industry likely to evolve in the next few years?
- 2) What will the impact of the growing PE trend be on job creation, entrepreneurship and economic diversification?
- 3) What kinds of companies are likely to be the target of PE firms, and what kind of new regulatory mechanisms will be required?

abc

Hosted by the Arab Business Council: Towards and Arab Renaissance

The Arab Business Council is working to promote an "Arab Renaissance" that will propel the Arab world into the global economy and spark a regional revival.

- 1) What are the essential elements of an Arab Renaissance?
- 2) What is the role of the Arab private sector in working towards such a revival?
- 3) How can young people help drive this process?

going global

The Challenges of Going Global

In the current expansionary economic climate, the largest companies in the region are looking for new opportunities further afield.

- 1) What are the challenges facing Middle Eastern businesses as they seek to transcend the boundaries of the region and become truly global firms?
- 2) How has the recent controversy over the acquisition of ports in the United States affected Arab investors' views of opportunities there?
- 3) What can be learned from the experiences of companies from other emerging regions of the world, especially Asia?

water

The Water Business: Looking After our Liquid Assets

As competition for scarce fresh water resources increases, opportunities for business involvement arise.

- 1) How serious is the threat of water shortage as a limiting factor for economic growth in the region?
- 2) What is needed to turn the current situation into an impetus for change and innovation?
- 3) How can the trade-off between economic development and water scarcity be overcome, and how could businesses benefit from a compromise?

trade

Trading for Global Integration

As Saudi Arabia joins the World Trade Organization, and in a critical year for the Doha Round, the Middle East can reasonably ask itself what it has to gain and lose in further multilateral and bilateral trade agreements.

- 1) What should the Middle East be seeking from the Doha Round of trade talks?
- 2) What is the state of bilateral ties between Arab states and US/Europe on the one hand, and China/India on the other?
- 3) Should trade be used as a tool to reach political objectives?

reform

What's Happening to Economic Reform?

The hike in oil prices has eased the pressure on many governments in the region to implement meaningful economic reforms, but the underlying problems remain the same.

- 1) Are governments using the unexpected budgetary resources to push forward reforms, or are the tough decisions now on hold?
- 2) What are the prospects for job creation and unemployment following the current economic boom?
- 3) How can the private sector and civil society maintain pressure on governments to plan for the long term taking into account the needs of the region's youth?

oil boom

Where Is the Regional Liquidity Going?

The oil price spike has generated billions of dollars of liquidity in the Middle East to be spent or invested.

- 1) Are the enormous funds available being used for short-term gain, or for the longer-term benefit of the younger generation?
- 2) As the regional stock markets start to adjust to recent exuberance, will they remain an attractive proposition for investors?
- 3) What is the likely future trend of Arab investment outside the region, including in China and India?

2. The Rule of Law and Democracy

women

Equality Before the Law?

Gender equality in Arab countries can only be achieved when the legal climate allows for women's participation in government, business and civil society.

- 1) What lessons can be learned from Arab countries that have achieved some successes in this area?
- 2) Can laws pertaining to women be reformed while respecting Shari'a?
- 3) How can women's movements be more effective in influencing parliament to achieve legal reform?
- 4) Once laws are changed, what is hindering women from participating in political life and becoming part of the legislature themselves?

saudi arabia

Is Saudi Reform Going Places?

The accession of King Abdullah was welcomed by many wishing to see Saudi Arabia become more progressive in its economy and open in its politics.

- 1) How did the accession of King Abdullah change the economic and political life of the country?
- 2) What is the Saudi government doing to take a long-term view of investing for the future of the country?
- 3) Looking further down the line, what can the region and the world expect from Saudi Arabia's next generation of rulers?

muslim democracy

Muslim Parties and Democracy

The success in the polls of Muslim religious parties in the Middle East in recent months presents a dilemma for some who want to see greater democracy in the Arab world.

- 1) Will this phenomenon slow down the advance of democracy in the region?
- 2) Does the international community have reasons to doubt the commitment of Islamic parties to the principles of democracy?
- 3) What lessons can be drawn from the experience of moderate Islamic parties in Turkey, Morocco and elsewhere?

freedom of expression

Say What You Want... But

Freedom of expression is considered a fundamental human right. Its use, however, needs to be balanced with respect and appreciation for the diversity of cultures.

- 1) What are the boundaries of freedom of expression in the Middle East?
- 2) How are traditional, official and self-censorship norms giving way to greater freedoms?
- 3) Is enhanced freedom of information in the Middle East leading to a convergence with European political traditions, or does the Middle East still retain significant differences in how freedoms are exercised in practice?

israel

Update on Israeli Politics

The last six months have seen a dramatic reshaping of the Israeli political landscape, with major implications for the region.

- 1) What dynamics of Israeli society lie behind the results of the elections?
- 2) How will the new Israeli government approach relations with neighbouring Arab states?
- 3) How do Arab Israelis view the current situation, and how do they feel about their place in the State of Israel?

democracy

What Is Arab Democracy?

Arab political reform is too often viewed through the lens of a Western understanding of the words "freedom" and "democracy".

- 1) How is "freedom" and "democracy" interpreted by young people in the Arab world?
- 2) What are the end goals of democracy, and what tools, beyond elections, can be used to reach these goals?
- 3) What lessons can be drawn from Asia's experience?

3. The Challenge of Employment and Migration

youth and entrepreneurship

A New Generation of Ideas

To keep pace with population growth, the Middle East must create 80 million jobs in the next 15 years. Entrepreneurship may be the way forward, but it would require a major cultural shift for this to work.

- 1) In which sectors could entrepreneurship be developed?
- 2) What are the roles of the established business community and capital market in allowing this cultural change?
- 3) What is the young people's perspective on this issue?

migration and europe

Arabs in Europe, or Arabs of Europe?

Over the next decades Europe will require immigrant labour to support ageing populations and to fuel economic growth.

- 1) What do the recent riots in France indicate about Europe's inability to implement an effective policy to integrate Arab immigrants?
- 2) Is there a dilemma between a more open European immigration policy, and the exclusion of unwanted terrorist elements?
- 3) What will the impact of migration from North Africa be on the economies of the emigration countries over the long term?

labour reform

Getting Nationals Working

The number of new labour market entrants in the Middle East is five times the number of jobs available each year. In an attempt to answer the employment challenges faced by the region, especially among young people, Gulf countries are attempting to bring more of their citizens into meaningful private sector jobs.

- 1) How successful have governments been so far in increasing the employment of nationals?
- 2) What wider strategies are now being introduced to tackle this issue, and what further steps are necessary?
- 3) How might governments develop new approaches to partnering with the private sector?

education

New Approaches to Further Education

Tackling unemployment among youth requires a reassessment of further education in the Middle East, emphasizing concrete skills rather than intellectual content alone.

- 1) What different approaches are being taken to educational reform in the Middle East?
- 2) Is it necessary for everyone to obtain a university degree, or are there alternatives better suited to today's jobs market?
- 3) What steps are required to ensure that private universities and training institutes are properly accredited and regulated?

hiv/aids

Saving Money, Saving Lives

According to the World Bank, if measures are not implemented immediately to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Arab states, at least nine countries in the region could lose up to 30% of their GDP in the next 20 years.

- 1) What are the implications of HIV/AIDS for the region as Arab economies become increasingly interdependent?
- 2) Why is the Arab world still largely ignoring the AIDS epidemic, and what steps have already been taken?
- 3) What does HIV/AIDS mean for business, and what can the private sector do to act now to address the problem?

human trafficking

What Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the third largest growing organized criminal activity in the world, with 2.5 million people trafficked across borders each year. No region of the world has been bypassed by this alarming trend.

- 1) How can the private sector, civil society and government work together to combat human trafficking?
- 2) What initiatives exist to address this issue? How efficient are they and how can their work be replicated?
- 3) How can the international community measure the progress in national legislation to reflect the requirements of the Palermo Protocol?

4. Peace, Security and International Relations

global citizenship

Accentuate the Positive: Transforming the Arab Role in Global Affairs

High oil prices present an opportunity for oil-exporting states to make a greater contribution to global development and improve their image in the eyes of the world.

- 1) Could increased Arab donations to international development causes be used as a tool of international diplomacy?
- 2) What are the political, economic or cultural factors preventing oil exporters from increasing their contributions to multilateral institutions?
- 3) Is global citizenship also the responsibility of the private sector, and are Arab companies becoming better global citizens?

iraq

Iraq and its Neighbours

Iraq's neighbours are being profoundly affected by the instability and uncertainty of the country's future. In this context, a number of international initiatives have been developed, among others by the Arab League, to promote peace and security within Iraq.

- 1) What can Iraq's neighbours do to enhance internal security in Iraq and improve the political climate in the region?
- 2) What should the Arab world be doing further to promote peace within Iraq?
- 3) When will the time be right for the American forces to withdraw?

peace process

Picking Up the Peace Process

The political landscape in Israel and the Palestinian Territories has been completely transformed in the last 12 months.

- 1) What is the likely course of Israeli-Palestinian relations and policies in the short and medium term?
- 2) How should the region and the world respond to the new political situation?
- 3) What initiatives can help to maintain dialogue and improve understanding between young Israelis and Palestinians?

europe

Reassessing Europe's Role

Europe plays a major role in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of aid and investment, and is taking a new approach to its Mediterranean neighbours.

- 1) What are Europe's long-term strategic goals in the Middle East and North Africa?
- 2) To what extent are the interests of the two regions aligned, and how can they better work together?
- 3) How has Europe's role in the Middle East been impacted by the cartoons issue?

global governance

Regional Instability: A Failure of Global Governance?

The Middle East has attracted a lot of attention from international organizations in the past few years, whether it be the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Atomic Energy Agency or others. The region has responded in different ways to these agencies' interventions.

- 1) What do recent events in Iraq, Iran and Syria tell us about the efficiency of international organizations to achieve their goals?
- 2) How can the leaders of international organizations and of the governments of the Middle East work together to achieve the lofty security, democracy and development goals set for the region?

iran

Rise of an Iranian Strongman

Iran has been emboldened politically by the situation in neighbouring Iraq and high oil prices.

- 1) What influence does Iran have over domestic politics in various countries in the region, either through ties to political parties or leverage over Shi'a populations?
- 2) What do Iran's neighbours have to fear from its efforts to develop nuclear technology?
- 3) What approaches are available for the international community, working with regional governments, to respond to the rise of Iran?

global risks

Risky Business: The Middle East and the World

Middle Eastern politics and economic development are unfolding in a highly volatile and complex global environment. The emerging trends require regional business and political leaders to assess the global risks that matter most to the organizations they lead.

- 1) What does the global risk environment look like today?
- 2) How might global risks impact the economics and politics of the Middle East?
- 3) What frameworks enable regional actors to better assess the global risk environment and develop adequate response mechanisms?

us-middle east

The US Agenda: Rolling with the Punches?

Leaders from the Middle East and the US will address the state of the relationship between both regions.

- 1) Will the US have to change its strategy in the region as a result of recent electoral results and growing challenges in Iraq and Iran?
- 2) To what extent are the US and the Arab world mutually dependent, and how might this change for the next generation?
- 3) What will the longer-term impact of the growth of China and India be on US-Arab relations?

5. Youth, Culture and Identity

cartoonists

Drawing the Line

Cartoonists in the Middle East interpret and respond to the opinions of society, and use humour to tackle sensitive issues.

- 1) Where is the limit between a provocative and an offensive cartoon? When does humour become an unacceptable insult?
- 2) How can cartoons bring nations together?
- 3) How did cartoonists in the region interpret the recent row over the Danish cartoons?

youth and society

Putting Young People in the Driver's Seat

Young people who are given the chance to become engaged citizens are more likely to make a constructive contribution to society.

- 1) What is citizenship and how are civic responsibilities exercised in the Middle East?
- 2) How differently will a young person lead a company, a non-governmental organization or a country?
- 3) What can different generations learn from each other?

cultural leaders

Strengthening Identity through Culture

Muslim societies have suffered in recent years from a negative image that is not representative of the region's diversity and creativity.

- 1) What is the role of cultural leaders in changing the image of the region and developing a positive identity among the Muslim world's youth?
- 2) How can the new generation of artists engage with political and business leaders more effectively in facing social and ethical responsibilities?
- 3) What difficulties and challenges do the region's young cultural leaders face?

leadership

The Psychology of Leadership

It is a commonly held view that the Middle East is held back by its lack of genuine leadership.

- 1) What are genuine leadership qualities, from a psychological point of view? What goes on in the minds of leaders?
- 2) How can leaders overcome conflict, influence others and raise performance? What is the link between reform and innovation, and leadership?
- 3) How can leadership qualities be encouraged among the region's young people?

youth and the media

The Revolution Will Be Televised

Today's technology offers new ways of communicating and sharing information. Whether it be through text messages, blogging or other phenomena, information circulates differently today than it has in the past and, not surprisingly, young people are fast catching on.

- 1) How are young people using the innovative avenues of expression provided by new media?
- 2) How is the business sector adapting to these new trends and connecting to potential new customers?
- 3) How are these new trends relevant to political developments?

youth and peace

Youth as a Catalyst for Peace

Young people have minds that are open to change and resistant to prejudice, and as such they can be harnessed as a powerful force for peace in the world.

- 1) Which current projects are currently working with young people across boundaries of conflict in the Middle East to promote understanding and harmony for the future?
- 2) What lessons can be learned from their successes and failures?
- 3) How can we ensure that young people remain a catalyst for peace as they enter the adult world?