

Official languages: Arabic (English and French used in translated documents and correspondence).
Headquarters: Street No. 7, Al-Amarat, Khartoum, Sudan.
Website: <http://www.aoad.org>
Director General: Dr Salem Al-Lozi.

Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC)

Origin. Also referred to as the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCASG), the Council was established on 25 May 1981 on signature of the Charter by Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Aims. To assure security and stability of the region through economic and political co-operation; promote, expand and enhance economic ties on solid foundations, in the best interests of the people; co-ordinate and unify economic, financial and monetary policies, as well as commercial and industrial legislation and customs regulations; achieve self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs.

Organization. The Supreme Council is formed by the heads of member states and is the highest authority. Its presidency rotates, based on the alphabetical order of the names of the member states. It holds one regular session every year, in addition to a mid-year consultation session. The Co-operation Council has a commission, called 'Commission for the Settlement of Disputes', which is attached to the Supreme Council. Also attached to the Supreme Council is the Consultative Commission. The Ministerial Council is formed of the Foreign Ministers of the member states or other delegated ministers and meets quarterly. The Secretariat-General is composed of Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and a number of staff as required. The Secretariat consists of the following sectors: Political Affairs, Military Affairs, Legal Affairs, Human and Environment Affairs, Information Centre, Media Department, Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO), GCC Patent Office, Secretary-General's Office, GCC Delegation in Brussels, Technical Telecommunications Bureau in Bahrain. In Jan. 2003 it launched a customs union, introducing a 5% duty on foreign imports across the trade bloc.

Finance. The annual budget of the GCC Secretariat is shared equally by the six member states.

Headquarters: PO Box 7153, Riyadh-11462, Saudi Arabia.
Website: <http://www.GCC-SG.org>
Secretary-General: Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah (Qatar).

Publications. *Attaawun* (quarterly, in Arabic); *GCC Economic Bulletin* (annual); *Statistical Bulletin* (annual); *Legal Bulletin* (quarterly, in Arabic).

Further Reading

Twinn, J. W., *The Gulf, Co-operation and the Council: an American Perspective*. Washington, 1992

League of Arab States

Origin. The League of Arab States is a voluntary association of sovereign Arab states, established by a Pact signed in Cairo on 22 March 1945 by the representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen. It seeks to promote closer ties among member states and to co-ordinate their economic, cultural and security policies with a view to developing collective co-operation, protecting national security and maintaining the

independence and sovereignty of member states, in order to enhance the potential for joint Arab action across all fields.

Members. Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen. Libya left the League of Arab States in Oct. 2002, citing its 'inefficiency' in dealing with the stand-off between Iraq and the USA and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Joint Action. In the political field, the League is entrusted with defending the supreme interests and national causes of the Arab world through the implementation of joint action plans at regional and international levels, and with examining any disputes that may arise between member states with a view to settling them by peaceful means. The Joint Defence and Economic Co-operation Treaty signed in 1950 provided for the establishment of a Joint Defence Council as well as an Economic Council (renamed the Economic and Social Council in 1977). Economic, social and cultural activities constitute principal and vital elements of the joint action initiative.

Arab Common Market. An Arab Common Market came into operation on 1 Jan. 1965. The agreement, reached on 13 Aug. 1964, provided for the abolition of customs duties on agricultural products and natural resources within five years, by reducing tariffs at an annual rate of 20%. Customs duties on industrial products were to be reduced by 10% annually. However, it never became reality although it has remained the ambition of many people throughout the Arab world for many years since.

Organization. The machinery of the League consists of a Council, 11 specialized ministerial committees entrusted with drawing up common policies for the regulation and advancement of co-operation in their fields (information, internal affairs, justice, housing, transport, social affairs, youth and sports, health, environment, telecommunications and electricity), and a permanent secretariat.

The League is considered to be a regional organization within the framework of the United Nations at which its Secretary-General is an observer. It has permanent delegations in New York and Geneva for the UN, in Addis Ababa for the African Union (AU), as well as offices in Athens, Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid, Moscow, New Delhi, Paris, Rome, Vienna and Washington, D.C.

Headquarters: Al Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt.
Website: <http://www.arableagueonline.org>
Secretary-General: Amre Moussa (Egypt).

Further Reading

Clements, F. A., *Arab Regional Organizations* [Bibliography]. Oxford and New Brunswick (NJ), 1992
 Gomaa, A. M., *The Foundation of the League of Arab States*. London, 1977

Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC)

Established in 1968 to promote co-operation and close ties between member states in economic activities related to the oil industry; to determine ways of safeguarding their legitimate interests, both individual and collective, in the oil industry; to unite their efforts so as to ensure the flow of oil to consumer markets on equitable and reasonable terms; and to create a favourable climate for the investment of capital and expertise in their petroleum industries.