

Members. Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria*, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Yemen. *Membership suspended since Nov. 2011.

Official languages: Arabic (English and French used in translated documents and correspondence).

Headquarters: Street No. 7, Box 474, Al-Amarat, Khartoum, Sudan.

Website: <http://www.aoad.org>

Email: info@aoad.org

Director General: Ibrahim Adam Ahmed Al-Dikhiri (Sudan).

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 formed by the heads of member states is the highest authority. Its presidency rotates, based on the alphabetical order of the names of the member states. It holds one regular annual session in addition to a mid-year consultation session. Attached to the Supreme Council are the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes and 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 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 (Arabic only): <http://www.gcc-sg.org>

Secretary-General: Abdul Latif bin Rashid al-Zayani (Bahrain).

Further Reading

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

League of Arab States

Origin. The League of Arab States (often referred to as the Arab League) 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, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria*, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen. *Observers.* Brazil, Eritrea, India and Venezuela. *Membership suspended since Nov. 2011 after calls for the government to end violence against civilian protesters by a set date were ignored.

Aims and Activities. 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. It examines any disputes that may arise between member states with a view to finding a peaceful resolution. 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.

Against the backdrop of the 2011 Arab Spring, the League backed a UN resolution authorizing action in Libya against Col. Gaddafi's air defences and suspended Syria for its government's oppression of the opposition movement. At the 2012 Arab League summit, Syria's seat was granted in principle to the opposition, although it remained vacant as of Dec. 2016. In March 2014 Secretary-General Nabil al-Araby had stated that it would not be filled until the opposition had completed the formation of its institutions. In 2011 the League supported a Palestinian bid for UN recognition and in 2014 championed an unsuccessful move to push through a UN resolution calling for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal within 12 months and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the disputed territory by 2017. In Feb. 2017 the League accused Israel of 'stealing the land' of Palestinians following the passage of an Israeli law legalizing Jewish outposts in the occupied West Bank.

Arab Common Market. An Arab Common Market came into operation on 1 Jan. 1965. Initial plans to abolish customs duties on agricultural products, natural resources and industrial products by incremental reductions never came to fruition although the concept remains an ambition shared by many people in the Arab world.

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 and in Addis Ababa for the African Union, as well as offices in a number of cities throughout the world.

Headquarters: Tahrir Square, 11642 Cairo, Egypt.

Website (Arabic only): <http://www.lasportal.org>

Secretary-General: Ahmed Aboul Gheit (Egypt).

Further Reading

Bouhamidi, Soumia, *The Role of the League of Arab States: Mediating and Resolving Arab-Arab Conflicts*. 2011

Gomaa, A. M., *The Foundation of the League of Arab States*. 1977