

High Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan:

Keynote Address

Remarks made October 13, 2010, at “Towards Stable and Prosperous Communities in the Middle East,” an international symposium convened by the EastWest Institute in partnership with Zayed University in Abu Dhabi

Good Morning, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our nation’s capital city for what promises to be an engaging symposium. The topic “**Towards Stable and Prosperous Communities in the Middle East**” and the role that Education and Innovation play in developing Economic Security is very timely.

I am especially pleased that we have been able to partner with the East West Institute in sponsoring this conference and I thank President Mroz and his colleagues from the East West Institute for joining us today. I also want to acknowledge the distinguished group of knowledgeable and interested people from around the world assembled here. And since my public responsibilities in the United Arab Emirates are in the field of higher education, you can understand how pleased I am to welcome you to a symposium that focuses on “education and innovation”.

Economic security is the foundation for a successful society and is essential for improving the quality of life for its citizens. But as we know, these are troubled times for the world economy. Sustaining and improving economic security is challenging for even the more advanced countries. For developing countries, achieving economic security is a daunting task. Countries with few natural resources, weak economies, and troubled educational systems face bleak prospects for improving the economic security and prosperity for their people unless they can connect their societies to the knowledge-based economies emerging in this century. Consequently, governments around the world continue to focus on this subject and seek solutions to it.

For most of the first two centuries of the Industrial Revolution, economists focused on labour and capital as the two factors which were thought to drive economic development. Knowledge, education, and intellectual capital were regarded as factors that fell outside the purview of economic development and economic security. I believe it was Peter Drucker, the distinguished managerial consultant who, in 1966, coined the term **Knowledge Economy**. Anticipating changes that lay ahead in economic development, Drucker advanced the idea of a knowledge-driven economy as one in which education and innovation would play an increasingly important role in the creation of wealth.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The knowledge economy is often assumed to include only development of high-technology industries such as those in information, computations and communications. Of course, these categories are vital components of a knowledge society. However, a broader definition of the term is needed – one that includes the various ways that any country and its economy can utilize new and existing knowledge to increase the productivity of its agricultural, industrial, and service sectors, and thereby improve the quality of life for its people.

This expanded definition of the knowledge economy requires willing countries to define and leverage their strengths to become leaders in knowledge creation and application and, through education, to increase the human capital which is essential for economic growth. In a knowledge society human capital, created through education and training, is the engine of economic growth.

To participate in and to get the greatest possible benefits from the knowledge revolution, a country must move aggressively in implementing educational and economic reforms, creating a skilled labor force, reducing bureaucracy, and building technological infrastructure. Educational systems must extend well beyond simply technical training to include development of critical thinking and analytical skills, to teach more than one language, to foster understanding of one's culture and heritage and to place them in a global context. Graduates must be proficient in the use of information and communication technology, as well as being creative risk-takers. These educational attributes are essential for

a person to understand and participate fully in the complex knowledge-based world and to have the capability to visualize innovative new ideas and put them into practice.

In the United Arab Emirates we have a conscious strategy for developing a knowledge-based economy and society. Under the wise leadership of His Highness, the President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, and with the support of the Vice President and Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, and that of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, the UAE has, in a very short time, positioned itself to become a leader in developing a knowledge-based economy. Under the leadership of the President, the United Arab Emirates has been very successful in bringing together people from government and the private and public institutions, nationals and expatriates, to create a vibrant and balanced society which is focused on the need to improve the quality of life for our people.

As you may know, Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates play a pivotal role in regional and world economic affairs.

- We have committed substantial resources to improving our educational system at all levels;
- We play a key role in regional and global security, trade and investment;
- We are fully engaged in global energy matters;
- We are active in promoting economic integration and cooperation in the Gulf region, and
- We help stimulate socio-economic development in the Middle East.

In addition to these elements that impact our over-arching goal of becoming a major regional hub in the global economy, we have initiated important actions to

address the major issues and challenges that the UAE faces now and in the future. These issues include human resources development and the need for sound economic policies and structural reforms that promote growth. We believe that the economic and political security and stability of our nation will be enhanced by full employment of our citizens. We are working to increase the number of Nationals employed in all sectors of our economy. We have developed institutions and programs to ensure that UAE women are fully prepared to join in the new economy and that they are afforded every opportunity to do so.

Our national leaders consistently stress the importance of improved and broader education at all levels. This commitment makes higher education in the UAE an important force in the development of the country. Our colleges and universities produce graduates with new knowledge and skills to fill the jobs of the knowledge economy and carry out research and innovation. Our colleges and universities promote innovation and entrepreneurship and serve as important intellectual resources to support and advance national priorities and needs. Additionally, International alliances are increasingly important to us. We support student exchange programs, international technology cooperation, and international conferences. Prominent world universities are locating their campuses in the UAE in order to assist in the development of our human capital.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am so pleased to read in your Symposium Overview the statement that this symposium is, and I quote, a “space to showcase new ideas and innovative approaches on how challenges such as unemployment and extremism can be addressed effectively by policymakers.” End quote. The Overview goes on to state that, and I quote: “governments in the Middle East can set an international example by overcoming historical shortcomings to ensure a sustainable and secure economic future for their citizens.” End quote. This focus on solving major problems facing our societies is welcomed and very much needed.

The lasting value of your Symposium will lie in the recommendations for action that come from your work here. Your success and ours depends on building relationships across boundaries and borders and strengthening cooperation in all regions of the world. Please remember that the future of our world depends on our ability to innovate and create new knowledge and to apply it to improve the quality of life of the world's citizens.

I extend my very best wishes to all of you for a very productive Symposium.

Thank you.