

# *SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS*

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## **REFORM**

### **PRINCE SAUD GIVES ASSURANCES OF PROGRESS IN REFORM**

In his January 6 press briefing, Prince Saud Al-Faisal commented on the recent National Forum for Intellectual Dialogue in Makkah and cited Crown Prince Abdullah's call for tolerance, renunciation of violence and extremism, and the pursuit of moderation in accordance with Islamic principles. He confirmed that Saudi Arabia is moving forward with reform measures, especially in education, and stated that there is consensus on the central role of women, adding that no one should downplay this role in building the homeland.

Saudi daily *Okaz* of January 11 quotes the Center's deputy director Rashed Al-Shareef as saying that women will make up half of the participants of the next National Dialogue Forum, to be held in Madinah in April.

## **IRAQ**

### **PRINCE SAUD WARNS AGAINST FRAGMENTATION OF IRAQ**

Prince Saud Al-Faisal has said Iraq must come out of the vicious circle of violence of Iraqis against Iraqis that is obstructing progress towards sovereignty, independence and reconstruction. If the Iraqis do not unite, he warned in his January 6 press briefing, there is the danger of their country fragmenting; and a divided country would have a negative effect on its neighbors.

## **ECONOMY**

### **SAUDI EXPORTS PROGRAM INAUGURATED BY FINANCE MINISTER**

Inaugurating the Saudi Exports Program, a new service launched by the Saudi Development Fund (SDF), Minister of Finance Dr. Ibrahim Al-Assaf said January 11 that the process of raising the rate of non-oil exports to 50 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) requires diversification of product and improvement in quality. He urged businessmen and industrialists to benefit from the Gulf Customs Union and the Arab Duty-Free Zone, and stressed the government's support of the private sector in contributing to the development of the nation's economy.

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