



FEBRUARY 2, 2010

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Saudi Arabia pledges \$150 million in aid for Afghanistan

Saudi Arabia will provide \$150 million over the next three years to aid Afghanistan's government and finance Afghan developmental projects, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal announced January 28 at the London Conference on Afghanistan. The new pledge came on top of an earlier contribution of \$200 million made by Saudi Arabia at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan.

During his inaugural speech, Afghan President Hamid Karzai stressed the important and constructive role that Saudi Arabia can play in the Afghan national reconciliation process. "We hope that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud kindly plays a key role in guiding and supporting the reconciliation process in Afghanistan," he said.

Prince Saud calls on international community to aid Yemen

Prince Saud also led the Kingdom's delegation to the High Level Conference on Yemen in London on January 27. Speaking to delegations from more than 60 countries, he declared that Saudi Arabia will continue its strong support for the government of Yemen. "We are all gathered here to declare very clearly our friendship with Yemen, our commitment to helping Yemen and our determination to be partners with Yemen," Prince Saud remarked. "With the international community standing united in support of Yemen, we are confident that Yemen will be able to overcome all the challenges facing it today."

Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, also present in London, reaffirmed the importance of international support for the impoverished Gulf nation. "It remains important for the international community to support the government of Yemen, which is best equipped to effectively address the internal challenges by which it is currently confronted," he said.

During the conference, Prince Saud met with a variety of senior foreign officials, including Yemeni Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Majur, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

EDUCATION

Al-Angary: 60% of university places went to women

Minister of Higher Education Khaled Al-Angary said at the January 26 opening of the International Exhibition of Higher Education in Riyadh that 92 percent of last year's approximately one million Saudi high school graduates were admitted to universities and that 60 percent of university places went to women, the *Saudi Gazette* reported Wednesday. Dr. Al-Angary added that the number of public universities in the Kingdom had increased from seven to 24 in 12 years, in addition to the 29 private universities and colleges opened in recent years.

FOREIGN AID

IDB approves \$196.4 million for development projects

The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on Monday approved \$196.4 million for new development projects in member states and to assist Muslim communities in non-member states at the IDB's Board of Executive Directors meeting in Rabat.

The development project include a \$9.4 million loan financing for the New Nouakchott University Campus Project in Mauritania; a \$13.7 million grant for Uganda's National Education Support Project; \$160.2 million for the construction of the highway project in Pakistan; \$9.5 million for a rural electrification project in Senegal; \$300,000 for a secondary school in Borama Town, Somalia; \$330,000 for the vocational training center in Hefei - Anhui Province, China; \$490,000 for schools and health centers in Bosnia; \$400,000 for the school for the Salaheddin Islamic Centre, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; \$500,000 for the Islamic school for the Islamic Community Centre of Tempe, Tempe, Arizona; \$360,000 for the renovation of an elementary school in Manchester, United Kingdom; \$190,000 for the construction of a school in West Bengal State, India; a \$150,000 grant for agricultural microfinance projects in Kazakhstan; and a \$480,000 grant for the National Mass Polio Campaign in Afghanistan.

