



AUGUST 10, 2010

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

### **King Abdullah receives Palestinian President Abbas**

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz received visiting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at his palace in Jeddah on August 4. During their meeting, the Palestinian leader praised King Abdullah's efforts to facilitate Arab reconciliation, as evidenced by his tour last week of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. President Abbas also expressed his gratitude for the constant attention given by the Saudi monarch to the plight of the Palestinian people. Subsequently, the discussion focused on the derailed peace process and the importance of establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### **Ninth Development Plan (2010-2014) approved**

The Cabinet, on August 9, approved the Ninth Development Plan covering the period 1431/1432 -1435/1436 H. (2010-2014). Development spending has reached \$385 billion, an increase of 67% over the Eighth Development Plan. The majority of the spending was allocated to human resource and social development, health, municipal services, housing, culture and transport and communications. Minister of Economy and Planning Khalid Al-Gosaibi said the development plan is part of the Kingdom's long-term strategy for achieving sustained development and aims to eradicate poverty, provide housing, employment, education, health care and other public services and facilities. Minister Al-Gosaibi expects an annual economic growth of 5.2% during the development period. The private sector is expected to grow 6.6% annually while non-oil sector growth is expected to reach 6.3% and investment, 10.4%. The Ninth Five-Year Development Plan will establish 117 new hospitals, 25 new colleges of technology, 28 higher technical institutes and 50 industrial training institutes, and will expand the capacities of public universities to 1.7 million students and primary, intermediate and secondary schools to 5.31 million.

### **Preliminary census results show Saudi population at 27 million**

The Department of Statistics at the Ministry of National Economy and Planning announced on August 4 preliminary results of the recently conducted census. According to its figures, the Saudi population stands at 27,136,977, an increase of 19.7% from 2004. The 2010 population includes 18,707,576 Saudi nationals (68.9%) and 8,429,401 foreign residents (31.1%). Of the Saudi population,

9,372,495 (50.1%) are male and 9,335,081 (49.9%) are female; of the foreign population, 5,934,298 (70.4%) are male and 2,495,103 (29.6%) are female.

## EMBASSY ACTIVITY

### **Ambassador Al-Jubeir chairs annual meeting of Saudi envoys**

On August 4, Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir chaired the annual meeting of Saudi Ambassadors and Consul Generals to the Americas at the Embassy in Washington.

## FOREIGN AID

### **Saudi Arabia gifts dates to Palestine, the Philippines and Pakistan**

In advance of Ramadan, Saudi Arabia has gifted countries around the world with shipments of dates. Fifteen tons of dates for Palestinian refugees were handed over by Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Asiri at the Saudi Embassy in Beirut on August 3 to Palestinian Ambassador to Lebanon Abdullah Abdullah. On August 5, Saudi Arabia handed more than 100 tons of dates to the Filipino government. On the same day, the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad gave more than 150 tons of dates to the Pakistani government to distribute to those affected by massive flooding.

### **Saudi humanitarian aid arrives in Pakistan**

In the wake of the devastating floods that have killed more than 1,000 people and left many more homeless, King Abdullah ordered, on August 4, the commencement of a humanitarian airlift for Pakistan. As of August 9, eight planes had delivered large quantities of humanitarian aid, including food, medical supplies, tents, blankets and other necessities, to Pakistan. More flights are scheduled in the coming days.

### **Saudi Arabia leading MENACA aid donor**

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Regional Office for Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia (ROMENACA) reported in its Second Quarterly Regional Humanitarian Funding Update (April-June 2010) that the countries of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia (MENACA) have donated \$140 million to humanitarian operations worldwide in 2010. ROMENACA cited Saudi Arabia as the leading donor, followed by the UAE and Algeria. Compared to the first quarter of 2010, there is an overall increase of \$60 million in the combined contribution from MENACA countries. A significant portion of this increase is due to a donation of \$44.4 million from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) towards projects in the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP). Saudi Arabia is currently the second biggest contributor (17% of total funding) to the PHRP 2010 after the United States (32%).

