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MINISTRY OF ENERGY



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
وزارة الطاقة



ملتقى الإعلام البترولي الثالث  
The 3<sup>rd</sup> GCC Petroleum Media Forum

## WHITEPAPER SPECIAL REPORT 2017

# THE FUTURE OF ENERGY MESSAGES...?

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## WHITEPAPER SPECIAL REPORT 2017

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## Government-Industry-Media: Enhancing the Historic Nexus?

**BY H.E. ENG. SUHAIL AL MAZROUEI,  
MINISTER OF ENERGY, UAE**

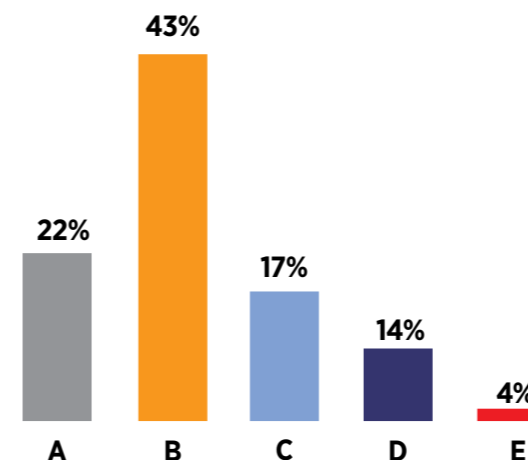
**I**nformation is knowledge and knowledge is power. We have more information at our fingertips today than ever before – it must be used wisely. Since the world’s first newspaper was created in the early 1600s, the nature of reporting has changed almost beyond recognition. Today’s highly competitive 24/7 cycle of petroleum media is fed by an ever-growing array of titles and news mediums. The deadlines are tight – news is reported in minutes and hours, not days – and consumers’ demands are higher than ever before. But this cannot jeopardize accuracy, which is the first and most important rule of journalism. The same ethos must also apply to those in industry and government, who are responsible for sharing information that must be timely with the correct data and messages. The entire energy ecosystem must adjust to keep pace with the unprecedented change in the energy markets, including the rapid growth of social media as a tool of communication. Decision makers in government, industry and media need accurate information in order for GCC countries to profitably and efficiently meet the 49% growth in the Middle East’s energy consumption by 2035, as forecast by BP’s Energy Outlook. Correct information leads to sound decision making – it is a simple equation that the entire ecosystem must keep at the forefront of their minds. Every facet involved in petroleum media – government, industry and media – must re-focus their efforts to bolster transparency, contact building and fact-checking. Updating the guidelines for the petroleum media in the GCC requires a collaborative effort, which is free from blame and finger-pointing. The GCC is entering a new chapter that has the potential to create a world-leading petroleum media - but everyone must be on board. Now is the time for unity. ●

# INDUSTRY SURVEY

## The Status of the Energy Industry's Communications & Media Engagement

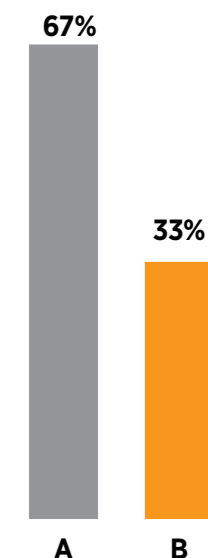
Which of the following makes the greatest contribution to poor media coverage of the regional energy sector?

- A - Journalists suffer from a lack of access to decision makers
- B - Journalists are not adequately trained on the technical complexity of industry
- C - Corporate comms/media relations executives do not have access to timely relevant data
- D - Corporate comms executives do not have adequate training to communicate complicated technical subjects
- E - Too many language barriers and cultural diversity in media and corporates comms



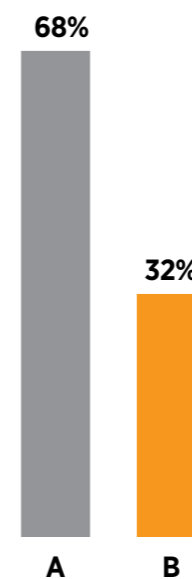
Tesla's market capitalization recently surpassed that of General Motors, making it the largest US-based automaker by that metric. How should oil producers' corporate comms teams spin this narrative?

- A - Good news story
- B - Bad news story



Disruptive Technologies - Big Data, automation, artificial Intelligence - will accelerate the transformation of the oil industry over the next decade and make it difficult for the Gulf's national oil companies to maintain their dual responsibility of revenue generation and the social contract of national employment. This is a major and long term trend story that the media and corporate communications teams are behind the curve on?

- A - Agree
- B - Disagree



The rise of fake news propels journalists and industry corporate communications executives onto the same side, triggering a greater urgency to transform their relationship from an adversarial posture to a professional partnership?

- A - Agree
- B - Disagree



# CHAPTER 1

## Energy Leaders Call for Positive Media Change





## GCC's Oil: Setting the Record Straight

BY H.E. KHALID AL FALIH, MINISTER OF ENERGY, INDUSTRY & MINERAL RESOURCES, SAUDI ARABIA

The historic economic reforms and transformation in GCC countries currently underway could be interpreted erroneously and lead to unintended messages, including the idea that our countries are moving towards a major oil renunciation. We are fully aware that oil will remain central to our economies in the Gulf, in our lives as individuals and in the lives of people throughout the world. In the same vein, diligence to maintaining our position in the global oil market will not prevent us from developing renewable energy sources. Accordingly, our media must deal with four

aspects of the petroleum industry with the professionalism they deserve.

The first is the negative image of oil producing countries, including the GCC, and the claim that we exert pressure on consumers in the oil market. Some even claim that GCC countries, and their cooperation through OPEC, blackmail consumers to achieve financial gains for our countries. They ignore the huge concessions and heavy burdens borne by the GCC countries to maintain the stability of the oil market and the balance between producers and consumers' interests. The most recent

example is illustrated by the sacrifices made by these countries in the past few months in cooperation with non-OPEC countries to restore stability to the oil market. Over the years, it has been proven that significant volatility in the markets hurts all interests.

The second key point is the inaccurate and scientifically unsubstantiated content; first about oil reaching its peak and then about expectations to attain peak demand. Studies have proven that such statements are false and have been launched to promote other sources of energy and some countries' economic interests.

Moreover, independent scientific studies affirmed that the world's oil reserves, which were proven to be scientifically viable and economically feasible, are sufficient for decades to come despite the increasing demand. This is especially the case if the reserves are handled in a responsible manner and benefit from the application of modern and innovative technologies.

Thirdly, there are some who are trying to make the petroleum industry totally responsible for environmental pollution and climate change. They ignore major consumer countries that do not pay any real attention to the environment and overlook the continuous efforts of the GCC countries to contribute to protecting the environment and fulfilling their obligations to relevant international agreements, such as Gulf governments' support of the Paris Agreement. In Saudi Arabia for example, we recently launched the Initiative of Custodian of Two Holy Mosques for Renewable Energy to generate 10 gigawatts of renewable energy within seven years.

The fourth and final issue relates to the size of revenues and the financial value generated by the oil consuming countries. Contrary to the misleading claims of media reports that producing countries are the only winners in the oil industry, we find that 40%-80% of the value of a litre of fuel in some consuming countries is allocated as taxes received by local governments.

The aforementioned issues and many others confirm that GCC countries need a petroleum media to educate the public at home and abroad about the various areas of industry and the fundamental role it plays in the global economy and in everyday life. The question here is: what are the secrets of success to building and activating a successful petroleum media and attracting and developing excellent oil journalists? I believe that it consists of the following four pillars.

**The petroleum industries in the GCC have a fascinating history and these stories must be shared with our people and highlighted to the whole world. Let this Forum be a new starting point to build the energy media that we want and deserve."**

The first and most important pillar is represented by the combination of all stakeholders' efforts to create effective and integrated partnerships that adopt the development of skilled and promising petroleum journalists.

Secondly, discovering talented resources who show a real passion to work in the petroleum media field, especially those at university. They must be supported with scientific knowledge, research and survey skills. They must also be supported with knowledge of basic information about the petroleum industry, related sciences and key aspects of the local and global economy.

The third pillar lies in the importance of developing effective and sustainable partnerships amongst media institutions. This includes specialized and distinguished local, regional and international media and research institutions, as well as ties with major oil companies. The aim is to develop, adopt and support academic and professional training and developmental tracks.

The fourth and final pillar is that media professionals wanting to work in this field must be aware that they play the most effective role in developing their career and promoting their skills. They must not rely on others, but dedicate themselves to the profession. They must build their professional relations locally and internationally to build a solid foundation of ethics.

We in Saudi Arabia, and especially in the Ministry of Energy, stand ready to cooperate and support any comprehensive and sustainable initiative to achieve these improvements. I also propose that the name of this Forum is changed for 2019 to include all industries across the energy spectrum.

The petroleum industries in the GCC have a fascinating history and these stories must be shared with our people and highlighted to the whole world. Let this Forum be a new starting point to build the energy media that we want and deserve. ●



H.E. Khalid Al Falih,  
Minister of Energy,  
Industry & Mineral  
Resources, Saudi  
Arabia



## A New Era of Communication: Out with the Old, In with the New

BY H.E. ENG. SUHAIL AL MAZROUEI, MINISTER OF ENERGY, UAE

**W**e must harness today's positive momentum between governments, industry and media to carve out a new standard of professionalism and trust across the GCC. Gatherings like the GCC Petroleum Media Forum are highly important to us, as leaders and decision-makers, to improve the true portrayal of the petroleum industry in the local and international media. Providing an accurate viewfinder into the GCC's oil and gas sector is also key to raising awareness of the importance of our natural resources.

We want to extend our contribution towards

building relationships between staff working in the public and private sectors, media and academia by using innovative communication channels that lead to sustained and positive change. The appetite for such improvements is clear. The Forum attracted officials, media personnel, students and academics from across the Gulf to exchange knowledge, share experiences and strengthen strategic communications.

We are privileged to have a mix of traditional and modern media facilities and the presence of established and seasoned media personalities in the region, which

are all gaining more prominence. This is in part thanks to technological expansions. This includes distinguished social media influencers; the GCC has one of the highest social media penetration rates worldwide.

We will not turn down a professional journalist who wants an interview, or a meeting. But there are things that we will not be able to talk about. Some individuals in the media must stop continually pushing for such information as it does not help build trust. We can sometimes be asked the same question five times in one day by the same individual – a question that we have already said we cannot yet answer.

We want to engage in longer term relationships with the media that are based on the right information. But everyone must remember that such information comes when the time is right. The credibility of our countries and the credibility of the organizations we represent – OPEC and the GCC, for example – are more important than individual ministers. Oil ministers will change, but the credibility of the organization and country will remain.

We need a cooperative attitude from the media in terms of how they deal with us and how they get the right information to the market. For example, there has been a fundamental change in the transparency and sharing of data, such as OPEC's data, which is now publicly available. But I worry about how data can be selected to create a story that does not reflect reality. Sometimes we read the headlines and think there has been a disaster, when in fact the oil price has merely dropped by twenty cents.

Media professionals have easy access to a tremendous wealth of information thanks to technological expansions, which means that stronger analytical skills are required. Journalists must be able to analyze information before it becomes news. For example, I was asked by media personnel recently if Saudi Arabia is exporting oil from the UAE's Port of Fujairah. In response, I asked them if Saudi Arabia has a pipeline to Fujairah? No. Did we hear this information from state-owned Saudi Aramco? No. Have we heard it from the UAE's state-owned ADNOC? No. The media must go and get the information from the source – this is the first step to being a professional. Always contact the company, as the 'news' may just be an internal study that will have no impact on the market. Analysis is the business of the analyst. We as ministers are also market professionals and we will tell you what we think; we tend to be right more often than not in recent history.



**Emphasis should be placed on accurate reporting and publishing, with information harvested from facts and not based on rumours and speculation."**

### A NEW RULEBOOK

Many steps can be taken to improve the current dynamic. Greater emphasis should be placed on accurate reporting and publishing and information must be harvested from facts and not based on rumors and speculation. There must also be more focus on preparing qualified official spokespersons within the oil and gas sectors and coordination and communication should be strengthened with the new generation of young influencers using social media. We also welcome the idea of integrating a prize for young and upcoming journalists at the next Forum to encourage the next generation into energy reporting.

Self-responsibility and internal monitoring must be established amongst those handling and publishing data and information. Access to data, understanding statistics and language skills are also challenges that need to be addressed. The same goes for assimilating specialized information and data analysis.

The next Forum should encompass all energy forms; from petroleum to renewables. These are all ways of providing energy to humanity and the oil and gas industry must work with other elements in the energy market to deliver a balanced equation. Each country chooses the structure that best fits their requirements to have a balanced energy mix.

The Forum has enabled us to start building a roadmap to improving that relationship and we will work with the media to deliver this. Building trust between us and our partners in the media is time well spent. We must keep discussing strategies and mechanisms that can lead to clear and accurate media messages. This is essential to enhancing the minds of our future generations. Thinking about energy is thinking about the future. We cannot afford to be idle. ●



H.E. Eng. Suhail Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy, UAE

# GCC: The New Home for Pioneering Energy Media?

BY H.E. DR. SULTAN AL JABER, UAE MINISTER OF STATE, CEO OF ADNOC & CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

Just as our region represents the center of gravity for the world's energy industry, so should the media. Our media should become the number one source for reporting on the region's energy markets. I have no doubt that this can be achieved. We all have an important opportunity to strengthen relations between the region's vital energy industry and important media organizations and communications professionals.

In today's constantly evolving energy landscape, the petroleum industry needs to accurately communicate complex strategies across multiple audiences – and quickly. We can only project a compelling narrative that will enhance public awareness of our industry through informed, equipped and empowered media.

Such media must have a deep understanding of the entire value chain of our business and understand how the different elements fit together. They must have insights into key global trends affecting supply, demand and growth.

ADNOC works in partnership with the media to help communicate our ongoing and important journey. Our journey aims to transform and strengthen our organization amid shifting market dynamics and growing competition. Against this backdrop, ADNOC has adopted an integrated strategy aimed at driving growth, profitability and unlocking value across our businesses through partnerships that bring technology, capital and market access.

Via this integrated strategy, ADNOC aims to deliver a more profitable upstream business, a more valuable downstream business and a more sustainable and economic gas supply. We are also developing a world class workforce by taking full advantage of the entire talent pool – both women and men alike.

These objectives will ensure that ADNOC is agile, resilient and fit for the future. It will enable ADNOC to keep driving prosperity and growth across the UAE. Bringing this journey to life can only be achieved through an informed media, which is supported by well-researched and smart storytelling.

By all working together, we can build a

**Social media is the quickest way to transmit information – or misinformation. A falsehood can span the world in a second, leaving the truth to play catch-up. Today, the role of reliable and factual journalism has never been more critical.”**

healthy ecosystem based on transparency and cooperation. The energy industry can openly inform, engage, educate and provide helpful context. And the media can responsibly report facts, cite evidence and offer informed analysis on our industry.

In today's multi-media world, where information moves faster than ever before, a single tweet can influence and change opinion. Social media is the quickest way to transmit information – or misinformation.

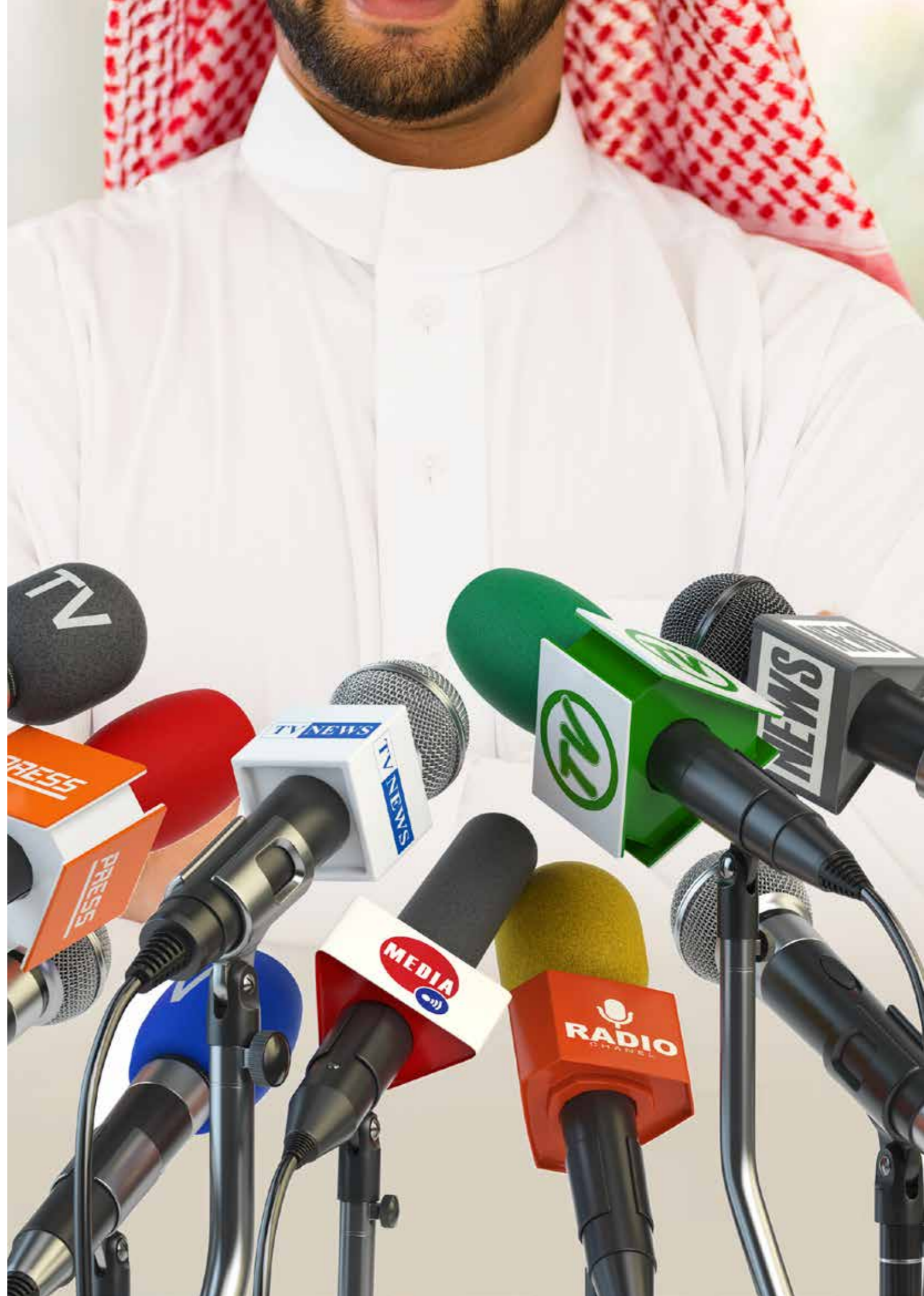
A false-hood can span the world in a second, leaving the truth to play catch-up. Accordingly, the role of reliable, fact-based and trustworthy journalism has never been more critical. We depend on everyone in the industry and media to be a responsible and reliable voice.

We all have the chance to not only reinforce the links between the media and the energy sector, but to work together to ensure accuracy, balance and credibility. Today's new energy era places responsibility on businesses to think differently, to make smarter decisions and to collaborate more closely. The same must apply to our relationship with the media, which I would like to thank for their ongoing dedication and professionalism.

We must build stronger bridges of trust and understanding that will not only bring our industry and the media closer, but will also ensure that together we can elevate the public's understanding of our industry. Our industry positively impacts every aspect of our lives, drives economic progress and will shape our shared future for decades to come. ●



H.E. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State, CEO of ADNOC & Chairman of the Board, National Media Council







## OPEC and the Media: A Future of Collaboration

BY H.E. MOHAMMAD SANUSI BARKINDO, SECRETARY GENERAL, OPEC

**O**f all the international organizations, OPEC is perhaps most frequently in the media spotlight and under intense scrutiny. The organization is written about daily and most leading media houses have specialized teams of journalists that focus exclusively on OPEC. Up to 300 members of the international media descend on every one of the meetings of the OPEC Secretariat in Vienna.

As we are under the constant glare of exposure, it is essential and mutually beneficial that we have a positive working relationship with our colleagues in the media.

The GCC countries' relationship with the media is extremely important.

Throughout its history, OPEC has been committed to two statutory points – stability and cooperation. They are two sides of the same coin. With petroleum set to remain center stage of the energy mix in the foreseeable future, OPEC will continue to sing from the hymn sheet that it knows holds all the right notes. Stability through cooperation is tried and trusted.

This cooperation is not confined to the producers and consumers of oil, but to another strategic stakeholder – the global

mass media. Such ties are invaluable for establishing and consolidating efficient and productive links of communication. With OPEC regularly making the news, it is vital that our decisions are not misunderstood and misconstrued. A good deal of that effort comes down to the relationship we have with the media.

**Accordingly, OPEC needs to remain** transparent in its day-to-day operations and clear in its policy initiatives so that the media can have ready access to the organization's information and decisions. In cooperation with the UAE's Ministry of Energy, OPEC unveiled a new Smart App version for the Organization's Annual Statistics Bulletin (ASB), as well as the recent launch of the 'Big Data Project'. Both aim to develop comprehensive and easy-to-use and multi-dimensional big data tools for analyzing publicly available oil and gas data.

Our channel of communication with the mass media must always be open and reliable. In return, we expect the various media outfits and individuals to report accurately, fairly and responsibly on the organization and its members. This requires a high level of professionalism on behalf of the media. Journalists covering petroleum need to be fully conversant about the industry's issues in order to write with authority. And for the rapport to prosper between all parties there must be openness, trust and understanding on both sides. Our general relationship with the media worldwide may not be perfect, but it is constantly growing in awareness, trust and respect.

**Fostering good ties in any undertaking** does not happen overnight. It is an ongoing process that needs nurturing through education, insight and understanding. That is why regular seminars, specialist training workshops and forums are so important for enabling economic blocs like the GCC and organizations like OPEC to sit down with media representatives to learn more about different perspectives, expectations and aspirations. After all, information is the raw material of the oil industry.

Technology has played a key role in advancing the fortunes of the oil industry, but the media has also been instrumental in bringing the industry closer to the society we serve. Every oil company today has a department or unit dedicated to raising its profile as a responsible corporate citizen – explaining to the public what it does and how it does it. This is about enhancing the relationship between the oil industry and

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wider society and raising awareness as to the unique advantages offered by the world's oil and gas resources. It is also about showing what the industry is doing in order to make its operations safer, more efficient and in tune with a cleaner environment.

Under the watchful eye of the media, the industry continues to work very hard to improve its green credentials by adapting and integrating new technologies into its drilling, production, refining, marketing and distribution activities. OPEC members have undertaken significant climate change-related projects in their petroleum operations. The UAE, for one, is at the forefront of the industry's response measures. It is firmly committed to energy diversification, with renewables taking center stage. Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, is designed to be the most environmentally sustainable city in the world.

We now have another outlet for information that we cannot ignore – social media. This medium is significantly expanding every year and has a growing influence on all walks of society. It enables ultra-fast information sharing; a piece of news can go viral in minutes. As good as that sounds, there are also pitfalls. Social media has few boundaries and those using no professionalism and experience in reporting. Anyone with a smart phone can become a journalist. And most users of social media are not bound by the professional code of ethics that journalists are. Still, the oil industry needs to embrace social media and exploit its true potential for getting our sometimes-complex messages across in a timely fashion.

The achievements of the industry – such as the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) – need to be brought into the public discourse in a positive fashion. That is down to the media, which shoulders a great deal of responsibility for accurate dissemination. The petroleum industry and the media are proactively working hand-in-hand to enhance the public's understanding of the responsible and innovative ways that OPEC and the industry operate. ●



H.E. Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, Secretary General, OPEC

# Correct Data Must Equal Accurate News

BY H.E. DR. SUN XIANSHENG, SECRETARY GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL ENERGY FORUM (IEF)

The right data often leads to the right decision – it is a simple equation. In today's age of rapid-fire information, the decisions made by government and industry must be based on accurate and real-time data. Authentic, detailed and insightful analysis is key.


Media reports that convey differing assessments and perspectives of the energy industry are gaining more influence. The same applies to media reports of the technological developments in the industry. Such communications shape market sentiment, which in turn impacts decision making processes and market fundamentals.

To help energy stakeholders distinguish between fact, probability and general market noise, the IEF has coordinated a global initiative called the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) since 2004. Thirteen years on, JODI aims to collect approximately 10,000 oil and gas data points from over 100 countries every month. This is a collaborative effort that means there is more and more data available in the market.

JODI has three key aims; to reduce market volatility and ensure market stability, to facilitate collaboration and information sharing and to encourage timely investments. JODI is highly relevant to supporting market stability with wide political support from ministerial energy forums, G20 ministerial meetings, Asian ministerial energy roundtables and various high-level media events. As such, the quality of information offered via JODI means it is a valuable tool for the media.

JODI ensures that energy journalists, as well as policy and investment decision makers, have access to transparent and verifiable data. Deriving information from a single, neutral and trustworthy data platform – such as JODI – increases the chances that sentiment in the energy markets will reflect the true market fundamentals.

Improving the role of JODI data in news reporting will enable better collaboration amongst stakeholders and help create a more transparent and predictable market environment. Such predictability is integral to unlocking the much-needed and huge investments that are required by regional governments and industry to ensure an orderly and secure supply of energy.

 **Deriving information from a single, neutral and trustworthy data platform – such as JODI – increases the chances that sentiment in the energy markets will reflect the true market fundamentals.”**

As well as collating and disseminating data freely to policy makers, market actors, the media and wider public, the IEF also carries out major training programs. We have trained more than 500 experts worldwide on the collection of energy data in emerging economies. Developing countries that are reporting rapid growth increasingly influence global energy market dynamics, but their data capacity is comparatively weak.

For example, some Asian and African countries do not yet have the depth and breadth of data that is available in the US and European energy markets. The IEF is working alongside JODI partners to deepen market transparency in these regions. In April, it held a JODI Training Workshop for more than 30 African countries in Tunisia to build data collection capacity. We linked the importance of energy data to effective decision making and investments that can help alleviate energy poverty across the continent.

This is not the end of our journey; there are many more milestones to reach. These include capacity-building through data-user seminars and the potential expansion of JODI to feature on electronic trading platforms and improving the presentation and accessibility of JODI data. Improving the creation and distribution of data is vital as JODI not only benefits today's energy market, but provides a solid foundation of knowledge for future generations.

As one of the most consulted energy databases in the world, JODI has improved the dialogue between producers and consumers. But there is much more work to be done. Continually enhancing the global level of understanding between the government, industry and media will help all market participants navigate volatility and identify stronger policy and investment decisions. We will all benefit. ●



H.E. Dr. Sun Xiansheng, Secretary General, International Energy Forum (IEF)



# Top 10 Recommendations Put Forward by Energy Leaders

## 1. Rename the Media Forum: The GCC Energy Media Forum

Strategies to improve communication between media, governments and industry should incorporate all energy markets and not just oil. The growth and increasingly complementary use of gas, renewables and other energy sources alongside oil must be considered as part of the narrative at the 2019 Forum.

## 2. Establish a Dedicated Degree Course at GCC Universities that Specializes in Petroleum Journalism

Energy journalists covering this sector have a really tough task; there is simply a lot to cover in the energy industry. For energy professionals themselves, it is easy to work in this sector and spend 30 years only becoming truly adept at one small element of it. An energy journalist trying to cover the entire sector must have a very broad spectrum of knowledge & challenges to cover.

## 3. Data-Led Communications' Leads to More Accurate Reporting

It is easy for a newsmaker to be mis-quoted, it is harder for a journalist to misreport a data point. The communications professionals within the GCC energy ministries and NOCs should coordinate internally to establish a robust system of capturing relevant and useful data that can be supplied to the media on a regular and consistent basis. This will enable journalists to write with authority and improve relations with government and industry stakeholders.

## 4. Promote JODI on Electronic Trading Platforms

Expand the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) to feature on electronic trading platforms – this could help enhance the media and industry's awareness of what is a highly valuable and under-utilized data tool. Produce seminars for Journalists to brief them on possible news narratives available from mining JODI.

## 5. Update Official Spokespersons Skills for 21st Century Media Engagement

The qualifications of spokespersons that provide the public viewfinder into the workings of local governments and energy industry should be updated. Spokespersons should appreciate the needs of media and respond to queries quickly, especially for reporters working for real-time media outlets.

## 6. Prepare to Publish Yourself – Leverage Social Media

The UAE Ministry of Energy has almost 350,000 followers on Twitter – that is about triple the circulation of most UAE newspapers. Saudi Aramco has double that number. Rapid technological changes in the last decade have brought social media to the forefront of the news landscape – traditional media no longer controls the communications gateway to the public.

## 7. Establish a GCC Energy Knowledge Competency Press Pass

Media professionals aspiring to report on the energy markets must appreciate the responsibility they have with every story they put their name to – a single news report can dramatically affect commodity prices and share prices. The GCC could establish an energy knowledge competency test that journalists covering market-moving news beats in the region would need to pass in order to qualify for a GCC energy-sector Press Pass, which would have to be shown for access to energy events and/or to receive energy data and information.

## 8. Establish a GCC Energy Reporting Accuracy Index

Media companies and/or their journalists publishing data-related energy stories could be measured against a set of criteria of key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that standards of accuracy are improved and then maintained at high levels. Media Companies would have to achieve and maintain a certain rating on the index to be granted access – like a credit score.

## 9. Young Journalist of the Year Award to Encourage Aspiring Reporters

A Young Journalist of the Year Award could be added at the 4th GCC Media Energy Forum in 2019 to recognize and encourage the next generation of energy reporters. This initiative could also include urging universities to establish energy beats on their student newspapers or magazines, which could also supply nominees for the Young Journalist of the Year Award.

## 10. Build Off-the-Record Knowledge Exchange Platforms Between Energy Stakeholders

Build stronger bridges of collaboration between media companies, research institutions – both local and international – with GCC energy ministries and NOCs. This could include off-the-record information sharing, brainstorming on key market trends and enhancing data awareness. ●

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **Strategies to Navigate Today's Media Age of Disruption?**





## Communications in an Age of Disruption: Challenges & Opportunities?

- DR. IBRAHIM AL-MUHANNA, FORMER ADVISOR, MINISTER OF PETROLEUM & MINERAL RESOURCES, SAUDI ARABIA
- BRIAN LOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROUP COMMUNICATIONS, MUBADALA INVESTMENT COMPANY
- ILYA BOURTMAN, VP FOR COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, BP MIDDLE EAST
- OMAR ZAAFRANI, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT - GROUP COMMUNICATIONS, ADNOC
- RICHARD MABLY, GLOBAL EDITOR, FINANCIAL MARKETS, COMMODITIES AND ENERGY, REUTERS
- MODERATOR: SEAN EVERS, MANAGING PARTNER, GULF INTELLIGENCE

**Moderator:** What is the mood of the industry in terms of journalists not being adequately trained on the technical complexity of the industry?

**Richard Mably:** I am not really surprised that journalists get it in the neck. Blaming the messenger is often the way of the world. Journalism is certainly in the spotlight now more than it has been for a long time. The issue of fake news – I am talking well beyond the oil and gas industry – is a huge issue now. It is incumbent on journalists to be responsible to report accurately, objectively and free from bias.

**Moderator:** Well, in the context of Reuters [and other newswires], how do you take on that daily challenge when journalists are faced with reporting on fairly technical topics?

**Richard Mably:** Reuters does not really try to report in great depth on the technicalities of the oil industry. Reuters' readership is really interested in global markets and the supply-demand balance, OPEC compliance, individual country compliance, politics and economics. Some of it is quite technical and if you are reporting on debt markets, you must be pretty well trained. We report in depth on the markets. Reuters has just celebrated its 150th anniversary here in the Middle East, so we have got a long history of doing it. But reporters really must be very careful that they get the facts right.

**Dr. Ibrahim Al-Muhanna:** One of the major problems right now facing the media and the market in general is the need for fast information and sometimes because the media is competitive, they do not look to carefully understand the story. They just release it in order to be first.

**Moderator:** What is the best approach for building a corporate communications industry inside a national oil company?

**Omar Zaafrani:** At ADNOC, we have taken the decision to be transparent and accessible and we try to provide information when we can and as fast as we can. One of the challenges we face is access to that information as quickly as possible. That is the responsibility of the communications team in-house to make sure that at a press of a button, it can get an answer to that question. We have built very good relationships with Reuters, Energy Intelligence and Bloomberg, for example. We have set a pretty good benchmark of trying to get back to the reporters with an answer within 30 minutes, even on complex technical issues. Sometimes technical issues do impact price in terms of what happens downstream if it may impact availability of supply and demand. It is really important for us to help avoid that speculation and provide information to the reporters as quickly as possible so they can make a decision.

**Moderator:** You are building a new communications team at ADNOC. Have you identified any areas of weakness as you try and recruit people?

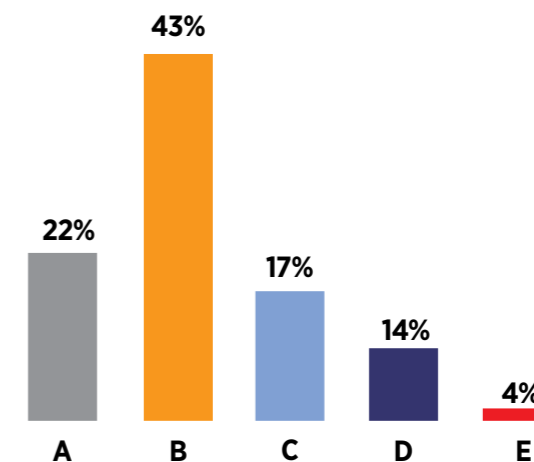
**Omar Zaafrani:** We are building a team from the ground up, so every single skill set is currently required. Whether it means coming from a strong media relations background, to being able to speak to the media, to understanding how to address their questions in a timely and sensitive manner and so on. These are all considerations. Being able to understand the industry, trying to understand complex ideas and translate them into compelling narratives – that is fundamentally a challenge. If we do that, it really helps the community here and internationally understand the importance of the oil and gas industry, the role that ADNOC plays in the economy and the community. Content, narrative development and understanding the industry are key skills sets which must be developed here.

**Moderator:** Brian, what are the challenges that need to be overcome?

**Brian Lott:** We are not doing enough on the corporate side in terms of media. This industry is and has been equivalent in size and innovation and wealth to Silicon Valley. And if you look at the amount of coverage and the amount of expertise that goes into studying

**Which of the following makes the greatest contribution to poor media coverage of the regional energy sector?**

- A – Journalists suffer from a lack of access to decision makers
- B – Journalists are not adequately trained on the technical complexity of industry
- C – Corporate comms/media relations executives do not have access to timely relevant data
- D – Corporate comms executives do not have adequate training to communicate complicated technical subjects
- E – Too many language barriers and cultural diversity in media and corporates comms



the technology companies of today and tomorrow versus the energy companies that are innovating and being agile and changing to the market conditions and economic needs... we are not doing enough. On the corporate side, we have got to get better at finding relevant stories using data and examples on what the energy industry is doing and how the oil companies are adjusting to market conditions. We must help the media get away from this immediate and impulsive story about just oil prices and talk about a much more profound economic base that is driving the economies of the Gulf. And from an employment standpoint and from a customer standpoint, we need to get better at helping all of us deepen our understanding of this industry and how vital it is to this region.

**Moderator:** Have you established what the posture of the new Mubadala company vis-à-vis the energy space will be?

**Brian Lott:** The same. You will see Mubadala Investment Company continue the legacy of being open and transparent in terms of how we work with our portfolio companies. We have stakeholders that are looking to us as the shareholder to be more transparent and to really help them understand our business model and how these companies operate in places like North America, Spain and Austria.

**Ilya Bourman:** Both sides can do better. Energy journalists covering this sector have a really tough task; there is a lot to cover in the energy industry. For energy professionals themselves, it is easy to work in this sector and spend 30 years only becoming truly adept at one small element of it. An energy journalist trying to cover the entire sector must have a really, really broad spectrum of knowledge and challenges to cover. As the communications professionals, we should be better at communicating and working with them. We need to give journalists more opportunities to learn.

If we look at the Gulf of Mexico incident for BP, the first and the most important thing to say about it is that it was a tragedy for the people involved and the environment. From a communications standpoint, the incident was broadcast live on television to homes around the world for 87 days. As a result, it tested every nerve and fiber of the organization. There are many lessons that we have had to take away from it. A lot of introspection has been done.

We realized that we need to do better in terms of processes, organization and capability development. When it came to processes, we did not have clear enough paths of communication between those who have the real information out on the rigs and folks back in the head office. When it came to the organization, several good spokespeople were identified through the course of the incident, but it did not happen initially. And we realize that we did not necessarily have the right combination of people used to dealing with



**It is easy to work in the oil industry and spend 30 years becoming adept at one small element of it. Compare this to an energy journalist who is trying to cover the entire sector and must report on a really broad spectrum of topics and challenges."**

traditional media, digital media and social media. When it came to capacity development, we now have a standing team whose job it is to travel around the world and teach communications professionals within BP and our business leaders on how to deal with crisis communications.

**Moderator:** In terms of building communications teams in the Gulf, is there ample talent available?

**Brian Lott:** The question is not talent; the question is the skill set and the knowledge base. There is no question that there is ample talent. Two thirds of my team are Emirati; two thirds of those Emiratis are female. There is no skill gap in their ability to communicate. All of us have a knowledge gap in terms of the depth of our understanding of the petroleum industry and what we need to learn in terms of new ways of working and the innovation that the industry is going through. But that is true of any company. That is not an issue. Our biggest challenge is working as a global organization across time zones with portfolio companies that can be up to sixteen hours away and creating that link particularly for the media that are here and who are curious about those companies.

**Omar Zaafrani:** There are a lot of young students graduating with a focus in communications, which is helping build that skill set and cultivate an understanding of the industry. A lot of this comes from exposure to different scenarios, different activities and case studies. Communications expertise comes from experience and being faced with challenges that must be dealt with first hand. That is where we need to work collectively.

**Moderator:** Tesla's market capitalization recently surpassed that of General Motors, making it the largest US-based automaker by that metric. How should oil producers, corporate communications executives and the wider oil industry handle this news narrative? How is it emerging as an editorial narrative for the news agencies?

**Richard Mably:** For Reuters, it is neither a good news story nor a bad news story. It is a news story like any new technology story. You want to be able to tell investors, if you can, how to get inside those two companies and work out what the real news is. And get beyond the PR. With all due respect to my PR colleagues, journalists do not want to simply receive the message. What we really want is to report whether that share price for Tesla, which leads to enormous CAPEX, is there to stay. Or whether investors are being taken for a ride.

**Moderator:** Does it feed into the narrative that the end of oil is near?

**Richard Mably:** Absolutely. One must try to decide whether this means that the electric car is going to arrive globally much faster than is being predicted by the oil industry. Every time I talk to an oil industry executive, they say electric cars are a long way away. I think if I was in the oil industry, I would be very worried about that. Investors are not stupid. Sometimes they get it wrong and sometimes companies like this fall apart. But if you look at the history of Apple, Amazon and Google, technology has moved much, much faster than most people expected.

Technology disruption is the story of our time. Robotics is a huge story that we are following for the auto and oil industry – two sides of the same coin really. We do not know whether the news is good or bad, but we want to find out what is going to happen. Shale is another technology disruption, like the car industry, which is enormously difficult to forecast accurately. As a journalist, you want to get that piece of information that tells you something that is not being disclosed publicly.

**Omar Zaafrani:** Every company needs to look at the broader macroeconomics and technology trends that may impact an organization. It is best not to look at one source of information and try to assess whether this is a good or bad story, but rather what does it mean for the industry? There is a significant amount of technology in the oil and gas industry that people to a certain extent have dismissed. In terms of how we handle these narratives, a technology story is always a good story. And for us, as a corporate communications team, we want to tell those technology stories.

**Brian Lott:** It is an interesting story, but it is the wrong story. The dynamic of this story is that a new kind of car versus a legacy kind of car is emerging. The real disruptor is not Tesla,



but people who do not buy cars anymore. It is car sharing; Uber, Lyft, that sort of thing. If anything should give this room comfort, it is how this industry has responded to the market dynamics of the last three years in terms of agility, cutting costs and looking for efficiencies. Imagine if your Buick Chevrolet, which sold for \$40,000, was all of a sudden on sale for \$6,000 because the market collapsed and demand for those cars went away. That is the scale of what the oil industry has gone through and I am not sure that the automotive industry is suited to deal with such fluctuation.

**Audience Member 1:** Comments have been made that companies do their best to respond to Bloomberg, Reuters and a lot of the big names in the media industry. What is being done to reach out or respond to local media?

**Omar Zaafrani:** We do the exact same thing for any queries we get; local media, news media, digital media, print, TV and so on. We are available and we address all the questions. I mentioned the wires because of the fast-paced nature in which they work.

**Audience Member 2:** To whom do you prioritize your communications; your stakeholders, customers? And what is the most important thing that needs to be communicated from the oil industry to the world?

**Omar Zaafrani:** For us, it is two-fold. We have a very important relationship with internal stakeholders. Our employees are fundamental and we want to make sure that they are aware of the company's developments, either before or at the same time as the public. In terms of the community, it is about the steps and actions that ADNOC is taking to address the shifting market dynamics. ADNOC plays a fundamental role in the UAE's economy and for the Abu Dhabi economy and it is important for the community to understand what ADNOC is doing. We have been actively telling the story to give the market and the community confidence that we are not just sitting idle. ●

*\*This is an edited transcript*



# Arab Energy Journalists – The New Way Forward?

**HASHEM AL MOHAMMAD, SENIOR EDITOR, AL ITTIHAD**

**NASER EL TIBI, SENIOR PRODUCER & PRESENTER, BUSINESS NEWS, AL ARABIYA NEWS**

**MOHAMMAD AL TUNISI, EDITOR IN CHIEF, ALROYA NEWSPAPER**

**MODERATOR: HAMAD RUAAB, SENIOR PRESENTER & CHIEF EDITOR, BUSINESS BULLETIN, ABU DHABI TV**

**Hamad Ruaab:** How is the Arab media doing in its coverage of energy issues?

**Mohammad Al Tunisi:** There were competent and efficient Arab journalists in the 1980s, but they have retired and not been replaced. We do not have journalists specialized in energy and oil like the international news agencies, where they have specialized segments and bulletins. We are suffering deeply; it is as if we are in a field with two teams and balls are bouncing in every direction - there are no specific goals and each side blames the other. The first accountable entity to address all these issues should be the media itself. We should not wait for others to organize courses for us, but do it ourselves.

**Naser El Tibi:** There are challenges facing the media nowadays. There is a shortage of expertise and competencies that can understand and analyze the data of the

**We are suffering; it is as if we are in a field with two teams and balls are bouncing in every direction – there are no specific goals and each side blames the other. The first entity to address all these issues should be the media itself. We should not wait for others to organize courses for us.”**

petroleum sector and thus simplify it for their audiences. The number of competent journalists must increase if we want to develop this sector.

**Hamad Ruaab:** What methods can we adopt to create and promote a specialized and competent energy media?

**Mohammad Al Tunisi:** In the early 1980s, the US witnessed a great deal of controversy in terms of media professionals specializing in energy and about how to create a specialized journalist. For some, the view was that you could bring a doctor and give him an intensive program in media and he would then become a journalist with a speciality in medicine. Another view was to bring a journalist and teach him via a structured program about energy and science. The latter was more practical. The University of Columbia, for example, had structured programs that collaborated with institutions in the field of energy. These programs are offered to date and they are productive, with graduates achieving good levels. Why does our media not follow the same approach? Journalists must also master the English language. I could not cover the oil and energy domain without mastering a foreign language. Some individuals attending OPEC meetings do not understand English and I used to sometimes translate for them, even though I am not a native English speaker.

**Naser El Tibi:** Any journalist, especially those working in the energy domain, would benefit from a scientific understanding in addition to a basic set of media skills. Unfortunately, many journalists who work in this domain lack this. And those who do have the scientific background do not always have reporting skills. This perhaps reveals a bigger problem in the region, such as the quality and level of education in our universities and colleges.

The second problem is that graduates who have a scientific background, some from prestigious local and even international universities, have language restrictions. This is a problem in our Arab press. A journalist may know all the terms in English, but it is difficult for them to compete in the field of Arabic journalism if they are not competent in language and scientific terminology in Arabic. There is a third challenge and that is one of sufficient financial rewards, which are lacking in the Arab media sphere. This encourages some to enter the financial sector and the oil industry, which can offer better salaries.

**Hamad Ruaab:** As a journalist specialized in the energy sector, do you make the news story yourself?

**Hashem Al Mohammad:** I have had the opportunity during the last ten years through my colleagues in the Ministry of Energy and the Abu Dhabi Oil Company to build relationships in the field of journalism. It is relationships that prepare you for offering



**Language is a problem. A journalist may know all the terms in English, but it is difficult for them to compete in the field of Arabic journalism if they are not competent in language and scientific terminology in Arabic.”**

the best information, in addition to creating a personal profile as a journalist in this field. Oil media is tough and the news is frightening. Sometimes I do not sleep when I publish numbers in the news. Even the source feels hesitant when giving you the story. The confidence I build with my sources is via long-term relationships.

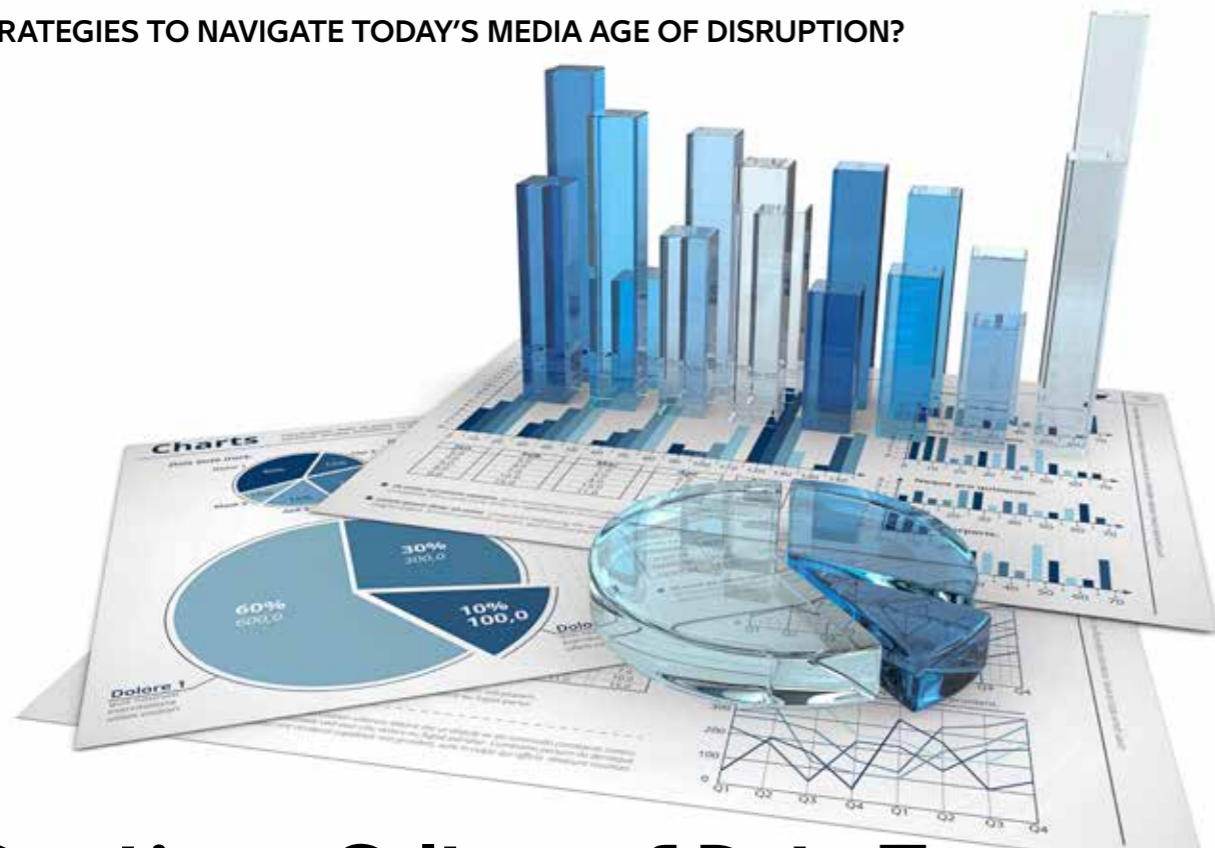
**Hamad Ruaab:** Are the communications teams in the oil and energy institutions designed to facilitate media queries, or do they just send their news to the media?

**Mohammad Al Tunisi:** Media departments in the ministries usually do not reveal anything, so they should not be relied upon, though some Arab oil ministries now have good communications teams.

**Hashem Al Mohammad:** Formal and informal institutions are also increasingly using social media to deliver their messages.

**Naser El Tibi:** They are complementing each other; you should use all the available means. ●

*\*This is an edited transcript*



## Creating a Culture of Data Transparency in a Rapidly-Changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

**DR. ADEAPO ODULAJA, HEAD OF DATA SERVICES DEPARTMENT, RESEARCH DIVISION, OPEC**

**H.E. AHMED AL-KAABI, ASSISTANT UNDERSECRETARY FOR OIL, GAS & MINERAL RESOURCES, UAE MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND UAE'S GOVERNOR FOR OPEC**

**CAPT. SALEM AL HAMOUDI, DEPUTY MANAGER OF FOTT, PORT OF FUJAIRAH, UAE**

**MODERATOR: SEAN EVERS, MANAGING PARTNER, GULF INTELLIGENCE**

**Moderator:** There are efforts underway to create a greater culture of transparency and data gathering within the UAE, the wider Gulf and OPEC. In some sense, the Gulf's oil and gas industry is a little behind the curve. I was recently speaking with a company about airport data; how do you get people through an airport, how many bags travel through and so on. There is so much big data being done inside airports now for both safety and commercially-driven reasons. In airports, the commercial incentive to crunch big data at a very sophisticated level is happening. But in the oil industry, putting a sensor on an oil rig seems like a radical idea. How can energy producing countries generate a culture of compliance to improve data transparency?

**H.E. Ahmed Al-Kaabi:** The importance of transparency and data generation in oil and gas is very significant for decision makers when they consider an investment. They need figures upon which to build their investment commitment. We always face challenges in finding data for oil and gas, which creates obstacles for researchers and academics who

need reliable sources. Whenever we look for our information, we refer to the international organizations like OPEC, the EIA and the IEA, for example. The media also needs to build reliable figures into their stories to give more strength to their reporting.

**Moderator:** How do you measure progress for the UAE's adoption of an open data effort at the government level?

**H.E. Ahmed Al-Kaabi:** The initiative to create data transparency for all sectors in the UAE will make it easier to get information and guidance on key decisions. Each ministry is working on it. There are limitations that maybe they cannot exceed but they are trying to provide what they can. We have indicators from the ministry and the cabinet to measure progress. They have not yet started or announced it, but they are working on it.

**John King (American University of Sharjah):** We had a week-long workshop with the information officers from the ministries and they were very open about the fact that they



provide data. It is on the ministry's website and is quite extensive. For example, the education ministry has years of data from graduation rates to accreditation rates. They have all kinds of very detailed information available.

**H.E. Ahmed Al-Kaabi:** And that is why the ministers came to the Forum and started talking about big data. Big data was also in the agenda at the UAE Government Summit in 2015.

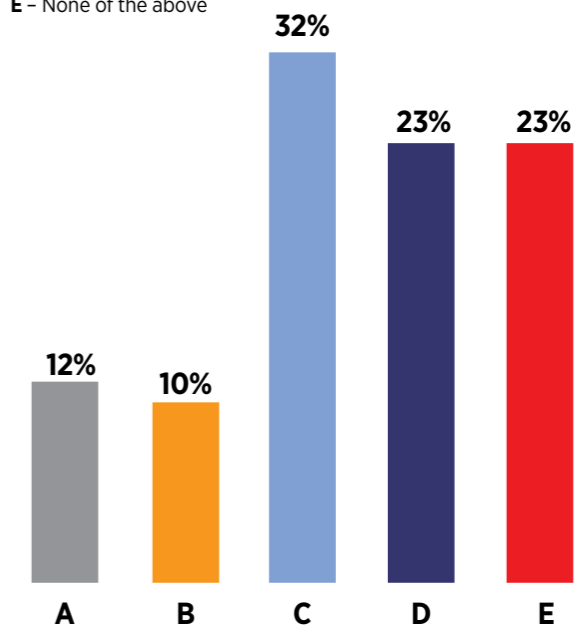
**Moderator:** JODI and the IEF have aggregated a significant amount of data, but the journalists do not appear to be using as much of it as they could be. There is a need for a communications exercise. For example, if the Port of Fujairah's inventory level has gone up or down in a week, what is the story? Does it mean anything?

**Dr. Adedapo Odulaja:** I attended a conference in London on the use of oil and data three years ago and the conclusion was that it has no usefulness in the oil industry. Looking back, I can see the level of low understanding that we had then had about the importance of data. Today, we cannot underestimate the importance of data in this industry. We all know that decision-making ultimately leads to stability or instability in this market and much of the instability can be traced back to inadequate data. When JODI was established in 2004, it was all about helping restore stability to the oil market.

Today, the JODI database contains over 90% of the total supply and over 85% of the demand, as well as other data points. Having this database is one thing, but data transparency goes beyond just availability. It includes accessibility. It includes the ability to be able to easily synthesize information

**Which of the following is the most significant message that can be taken away from Saudi Arabia's plan to IPO Saudi Aramco?**

- A** - Saudi Arabia plans to end its role as a swing producer and allow markets determine oil price
- B** - Saudi Arabia will have little problem navigating lower for longer oil price era - it has many very valuable assets
- C** - Transparency to define new era of Gulf oil industry as Saudi Aramco prepares to release a treasure trove of data on one of the world's most valuable natural resources
- D** - Gulf NOCs to join global peers and transform into IOCs as others - such as BP; Statoil; Petronas, etc - have done in the past
- E** - None of the above



and for media personnel to get the facts they need before going to print.

We need more data about the decline rates of wells in the different regions and how this affects supply-demand levels worldwide, for example. The minute we have this, we can put it into the hands of the analysts with the appropriate tools. This means better decisions can be made by policy makers to stabilize the markets.

**Moderator:** Where does OPEC see its role in realizing those needs?

**Dr. Adedapo Odulaja:** About 30 years ago, OPEC data was regarded as classified and was not open to the public. Today, you can download the data immediately. With the help of the UAE, OPEC was able to launch a Smart App last November that shows all of our annual data since 1960. OPEC's role here is to take the lead in data transparency - as we have been doing - and create an IT-friendly environment where everyone can easily access this data.

**Moderator:** What about creating a stronger culture of compliance?



**The initiative to create data transparency for all sectors in the UAE will make it easier to get information and guidance on key decisions. All the ministries are working on it.”**

**Capt. Salem Al Hamoudi:** I was recently surprised by the lack of knowledge that the media have on Fujairah. International reporting channels do not know what is happening there. For example, since January, we have been sharing and publishing weekly inventory data of the oil stored and traded in Fujairah. Why? To put Fujairah on the global energy map and to let people know what is taking place there. We are one of the world's biggest energy hubs. This is especially an achievement considering Fujairah does not own any oil. Fujairah supports the UAE's Vision 2021 [for open data] and we believe sharing this data will help the market to grow. It is publicly available, selective and relevant.

**Moderator:** Captain, could you please tell us how you went about achieving this in January?

**Capt. Salem Al Hamoudi:** Our customers and business partners in Fujairah started to get together to discuss the next step to increase data sharing and found recommendations through workshops and industry talks. We worked out what we wanted to report and how to report it. We selected three categories: heavy fuel oil, middle distillates and light distillates. The collection of data goes through a centralized body called the Fujairah Energy Data Committee, which was established in less than four months to look after this project. This data is then shared with S&P Global Platts, which posts it every Wednesday for free on a publicly available website.

**H.E. Ahmed Al-Kaabi:** Data is like raw materials. The next step is getting the right messages to the global market. It is not only the numbers, but the messages that we and the media get from all the data.

**Audience Member 1:** From the perspective of the US press and as a former journalist and PR professional, I would like to discuss the government PR trick – a data dump. So much data is written that it is overwhelming and might be open to misinterpretation.



Most journalists have very little background in statistical knowledge; it is atrocious in broadcast journalism, especially in the U.S. Journalists must trust that the data is credible and not angled to benefit the company in some way. This would generate better press coverage. Using infographics would also help.

**Moderator:** What I love about the Fujairah example is that it created a data stream from a place that was dormant. What other pieces of data are just sitting there ready to be plucked in the Gulf? Where is the future of oil field science going to collect and organize the tsunami of data at our fingertips?

**Morgan Eldred (Managing Partner, Digital Energy):** People need to be more connected in the field and have intrinsically safe mobile devices, which allow them to collect data in places they could not consider before. One of the most interesting things is collecting data on the type of person as well. Is a person somewhere that they have low oxygen levels, for example? Then you connect this data with human resources and then it is about building models and algorithms. That algorithm can actually train you as to who to employ and who is best suited to leadership and so on. The hardest challenge is culture. This is an industry where people typically just make a decision. It is experience-based as opposed to data-driven. Do people actively believe in the

data, or do they believe in their experience? If you do not have the cultural aspect in there, forget about the data and all the high-end stuff you could do. You are not going to be a doctor – medicine uses copious data points all the time – if you do not believe in medicine, right?

**Audience Member 2:** Oil and gas companies in the UAE might have an idea of how to use their data, but they are treading very carefully as they are not experienced in this field. It would help to find a place that we are reassured that this data will only be used for a good resource. Trust is very important.

**Moderator:** Malik might be able to speak more to your point of building trust in terms of this case study on Fujairah as he and his peer group are the providers of the data originally.

**Malek Azizeh (Commercial Director, Fujairah Oil Terminals):** It was very difficult at the beginning because what is in the tank is our customers and it is they who must give consent. From their point of view, why should they release their data to their competitors? This is counter-productive. We sat down with the guys at the Port of Fujairah and the [UAE] ministry and we started explaining the benefit of it and that it could lead to a benchmark that would assess Fujairah pricing. This would give the traders another tool, which they do not have now – paper trading. When you look at the big picture, of course there are risk. But the benefits outweigh these if it is managed properly. The data goes collectively into the port and is published as one big figure, which means nobody really knows what is in each tank.

**Audience Member 3:** From the point of view of a journalist, we are assigned beats, such as topic matter and region. It can be a challenge to get first-hand information about tenders that are being released, for example, or are soon to be released into the market. It is difficult writing about some markets when they are very closed with few details about the types of projects and platforms.

**Moderator:** What do you say in terms of providing protection of the data to ensure it is used correctly? This would reassure the industry.

**Audience Member 4:** More data is better, but there comes a point when maybe the data is coming too fast and becomes inaccurate. One of the big problems that I see, particularly with the EIA, is the frequency

**This industry is experience-based as opposed to data-driven. If you do not have the cultural aspect in there, forget about the data and all the high-end stuff you could do. You are not going to be a doctor – medical professionals use data points all the time – if you do not believe in medicine, right?”**

at which weekly production figures must be revised. The markets fluctuate every day, often within the hour. In this age of IT, the data can be more accurate. We must consider the benefits of having this data as accurate as possible, as well as fast and frequently as possible.

**Moderator:** Accuracy is potentially a win-win in the sense that if we hoard our data, we protect our commercial interest versus our neighbour. But if we participate in a wider data ecosystem, that generates greater accuracy and efficiency in the market that I work in and therefore a better margin and price transparency. Participating creates a greater potential win-win down the road that would deliver a more efficient environment.

**Morgan Eldred:** There must be a level playing field where everybody must comply and everybody must be comfortable.

**Audience Member 5:** In 2017, you have got to be transparent to have credibility. That benefits media coverage, investor relations and government relations.

**Audience Member 6:** A third party, or OPEC, must come in to regulate this kind of information.

**Moderator:** It would act as an arbitrator of the data, a protector. This is not unlike what is happening at Fujairah. The data has gone into a third-party facilitator, FOIZ, which has protected the data and aggregated it into a singular data point that then is made public. That gives all contributors a level of comfort.

**Dr. Adedapo Odulaja:** Also, a dedicated and in-depth conference that can escalate these conversations and bring together all the players over a few days would be beneficial to discuss the culture of data transparency in energy producing countries and the standardized practices of sharing data. ●

*\*This is an edited transcript*

# Top 10 Recommendations Put Forward by Communications Professionals – Energy Industry Executives, Journalists & Government Officials

## 1. Build a Reservoir of Size & Scope Narratives to Accompany Data Releases

GCC energy ministries and/or NOCs should build a reservoir of size & scope / why we should care narratives that can guide journalists on how to contextualize news, especially on important trend stories – accurate and effective communications of what a piece of data means to the public is more important than the news itself i.e. 90% compliance with OPEC cuts is the highest since 2001, when oil prices doubled on the back of supply constraints.

## 2. Be Aware of Media Sensitivities and News cycles to Ensure Maximum Impact

The media will be suspicious of large ‘data dumps’ by governments and industry, which are hard-to-digest volumes of data made public in a short space of time, that will more likely than not receive a skeptical review. The same applies to the release of information at times that challenge the news cycle, such as late on a Thursday evening, a public holiday or the weekend.

## 3. Adopt Visual Journalism – the Era of Bitesize Content

Using journalism visual tools, such as infographics and video, are low cost, allow for greater flexibility in distribution and are more aligned with current social media channels. These platforms are also especially helpful in ensuring accuracy when communicating complex technical or market information to general media agencies that do not have dedicated energy reporters.

## 4. Issue Regular Reports – Speculation Grows in a Vacuum

Release monthly, quarterly or bi-annual reports of timely & relevant data points occurring in the regional energy market – by country or by industry segment – would be useful for avoiding speculation by the media and ensuring accuracy. This would also reinforce the media’s ability to identify historical trends, which is typically where most market-moving news is located i.e. how does it compare to last year / to expectations.

## 5. Get the Figures Right – the First Time

Some institutions are a little sloppy and release data that must be corrected shortly thereafter – all the key players in the energy market need accurate data, especially considering the media will release a story based on the erroneous or misleading data that was first made public, and quite often bury any correction – the media operates very much on the view of once bitten, twice shy! Media must also limit the volume of misreporting caused by poor fact-checking and weak sources.

## 6. Introduce a Certification of Data Points

As governments across the GCC encourage greater transparency, the volume of data flow in all sectors, including the energy sector, will grow. The new data points that could be published in the media – oil inventory levels, for example – would benefit from an official fit-for-purpose stamp of verification to remove media skepticism and ensure accuracy. It would also act as an extra incentive for government agencies and NOCs to aggregate their data to a robust standard.

## 7. A GCC Issued Energy Glossary – English & Arabic

New terminology is regularly entering the energy media’s day-to-day vocabulary, especially when you take into account the digital disruption and the 4th Industrial Revolution – artificial intelligence, automation, data science, robots etc. Even an example of more traditional terminology, Carbon, Capture & Storage has recently entered the regional media’s vocabulary, and yet many don’t understand what it is. A glossary of technical energy terms and the name of a person who can provide further details – be they from government or industry – would help both media and communications professionals keep pace with the ever-changing sector.

## 8. GCC MOEs & NOCs Should Move from Reactive to Proactive Posture with Media

Government and industry must improve their ability to find newsworthy data-led stories that will allow national energy communications professionals to move onto a proactive posture when engaging the media. The current reactive posture allows the media to determine the agenda and the narrative, compelling the national stakeholders to react.

## 9. Address Arabic-English Language Barriers

Energy journalists reporting in Arabic in the GCC should also be fluent in English – the language of the global energy markets – to ensure that information is reported accurately and comprehensively. Regional energy newsmakers should provide boilerplate definitions in Arabic of relevant industry terminology included in press releases to avoid misunderstanding.

## 10. GCC Petroleum Media Forum – Schedule Seminars on Action Plan for Recommendations

Organize a series of workshops to identify the most urgent of the 30 Recommendations included in this Whitepaper, and agree on action plans for their implementation. ●

# CHAPTER 3

## Inspire Next Generation to Lead Energy Communications Transformation



# Youth Media Landscape: Inspiring Millennials to Join Energy Media & Communications?

**Inspiring millennials to join the energy media and communications world** relies on one over-arching need; reversing the public's sometimes negative perception of what a career in the industry entails. Communications professionals must engage directly with students at schools and universities to adjust the view that the energy industry – especially oil – is an archaic, clunky and slow-moving sector where communications are tightly controlled with little transparency.

Many youngsters see the oil industry especially as a 'sunset industry' in that it has reached its peak and is fading in global importance. Better industry-academia engagement must promote how technologically advanced the industry is, how vital it is to both the Gulf's economies and global economics and how many diverse career paths are on offer.

It is not well known, for example, that the Troll A gas platform is the heaviest structure ever moved by mankind, towering 650 feet above the surface of the sea and weighing nearly 700,000 tons. This is a marvel of engineering, regardless of sector and geography. Why is this achievement not in the public space more prominently? In large part because the industry fails to promote itself to the media. Coverage of the innovative spirit of the oil industry falls short when compared to the positive coverage of Silicon Valley's progress. The latter is far easier for

youngsters – each engaged in technology daily – to understand. But the fact that the oil industry is largely responsible for the world's rising standards of living is under-reported.

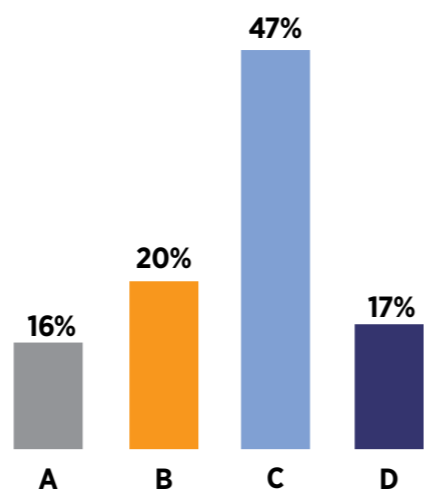
Rarely are a young student's perception of their 'ideal' job and the reality in the workplace the same, especially in industries like energy, which are vast and home to thousands of job titles. Industry and media professionals must unite their efforts to answer students' queries and to inspire them to pursue a career as a media or communications professional. Which subjects do I need to do well in at school and university in order to work in energy media? What jobs in corporate communications will allow me to travel and which are better suited to a family life? How can I leverage my scientific and data skills in the energy media and communications ecosystem? What are the positives of pursuing a career in energy communications when the industry is so often described as a dinosaur sector?

Identifying role models will give youngsters confidence that it is possible to achieve their ambitions. Existing media and communications professionals can also ignite youngsters' appetite in the energy ecosystem by distributing copy that promotes the value of the oil industry and the nuts and bolts of how the press, corporate communications and public relations professionals operate within the ecosystem. ●



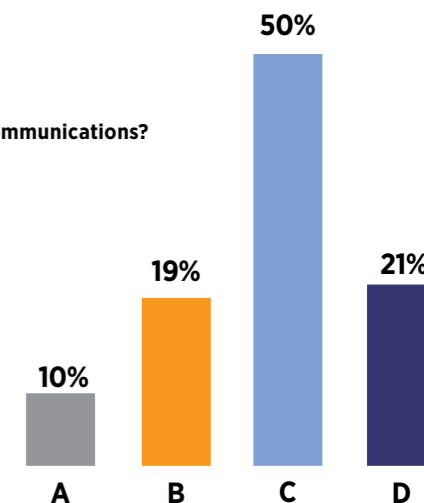
**What is the most important 'next step' in getting millennials interested in energy journalism and communications?**

- A - Increase understanding of energy industry's importance to development of UAE and region, with visits to schools by sector professionals
- B - Energy companies should improve knowledge of millennials, Generation Z and technological trends, such as social media
- C - Research youth's perception of the sector and then industry and media co-create an industry-wide campaign that shows value of the industry to UAE and the diversity within the sector
- D - Establish dedicated energy media institute to train and develop journalists and industry personnel



**What is the most important 'next step' in getting millennials interested in energy journalism and communications?**

- A - Industry and tertiary educational alignment to cooperate on standardizing curricula, so students gain knowledge to be employable and productive employees
- B - Change traditional perception of the industry as greedy and environmentally unfriendly, improve transparency and demonstrate success stories to media
- C - Give youth clear career paths and direct access to role models in communications and media. Create opportunity for dialogue, mentoring and internships
- D - Industry should partner with broadcast and print media to produce dedicated energy content and programming, highlighting oil and gas projects and the sector's contribution



# Creating an Energy Ecosystem in Education

**A**lmost half of the world's petroleum engineers are scheduled to retire over the next decade. This highlights a shortage in just one highly-skilled area, but there is a skills gap across the board. Economists, accountants, data scientists and analysts are just a few of the professions that are vital to the success of the Gulf's energy sector, along with traders, lawyers, financiers and regulatory experts.

Industry rapidly needs to start plugging its skills gap of relevant skills and collaborate with academia to unlock a treasure trove of talent. Youngsters at school and university need to understand why pursuing energy-related careers is a good move.

The energy ecosystem in education is also adjusting to radical change as a the 4th Industrial Revolution – in part spurred by digitization, supercomputing and intelligence robots – gains traction. Strong bridges of communication between industry and academia have never been more important. They are two sides of the same coin; one cannot thrive without the other.

Collaborations between industry and academia must create talent that has a mix of 'hard' and 'soft' skills. Hard skills generally fall under the umbrella of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning, while soft skills tend to be an ability to think critically and be a strong communicator. This is a tall order. Petroleum engineers are expected to communicate well in public and corporate communications professionals must understand the intricacies of oil and gas production, for example.

Better communication will also help ensure that those coming into the job market have the skills that the industry finds useful. There is little value in having a swathe of budding and well-qualified energy economists entering the job market if the industry is hungry for digital data specialists. Gaps in industry-academia communications will not only deepen the industry's difficulty in employing relevant talent, but also feed the 'brain drain' from the region as young professionals seek energy jobs elsewhere. Worse still, some might be discouraged to leave the energy ecosystem altogether to explore jobs in finance and IT, for example.

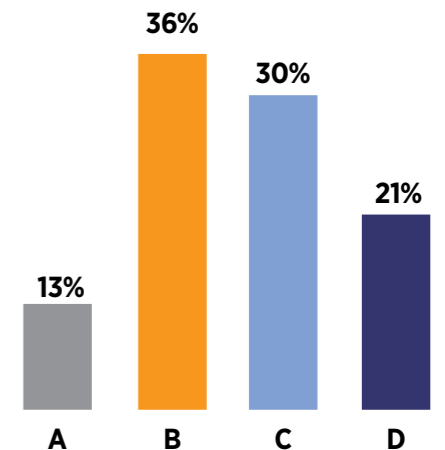
Industry and academia must use the media to help youngsters appreciate the increasingly tough educational checklist required by industry, which will give them a chance to work hard and get the grades required. Media can also help industry and academia turn the tide of cynical sentiment oft-voiced by some youngsters. The oil and gas sector is seen by youngsters as the world's 'dirtiest' operator. Yet it has been one of the world's pioneers in terms of technological innovation, low-carbon technologies and health and safety in hazardous environments.

Industry and academia must target their messages through the media wisely. While all aspects of media – traditional and digital mediums – must be leveraged, each serves a very different audience. Youngsters are adept social media users, while mature students will use a mix of social media and traditional media, such as newspapers. ●



What are the 'next steps' to creating an energy ecosystem in the education system?

- A - Encourage greater rigor in primary and secondary education in STEM fields to expand the pool of prepared students to advance to graduate education in the energy field
- B - Energy companies should partner with region's universities on research projects, which would help ensure that graduates have skills to contribute to regional energy sector
- C - Vocational Education – BTEC courses in schools to study technology, engineering and design, for example
- D - Build a pioneering position in online education, including skills development in data science and data management

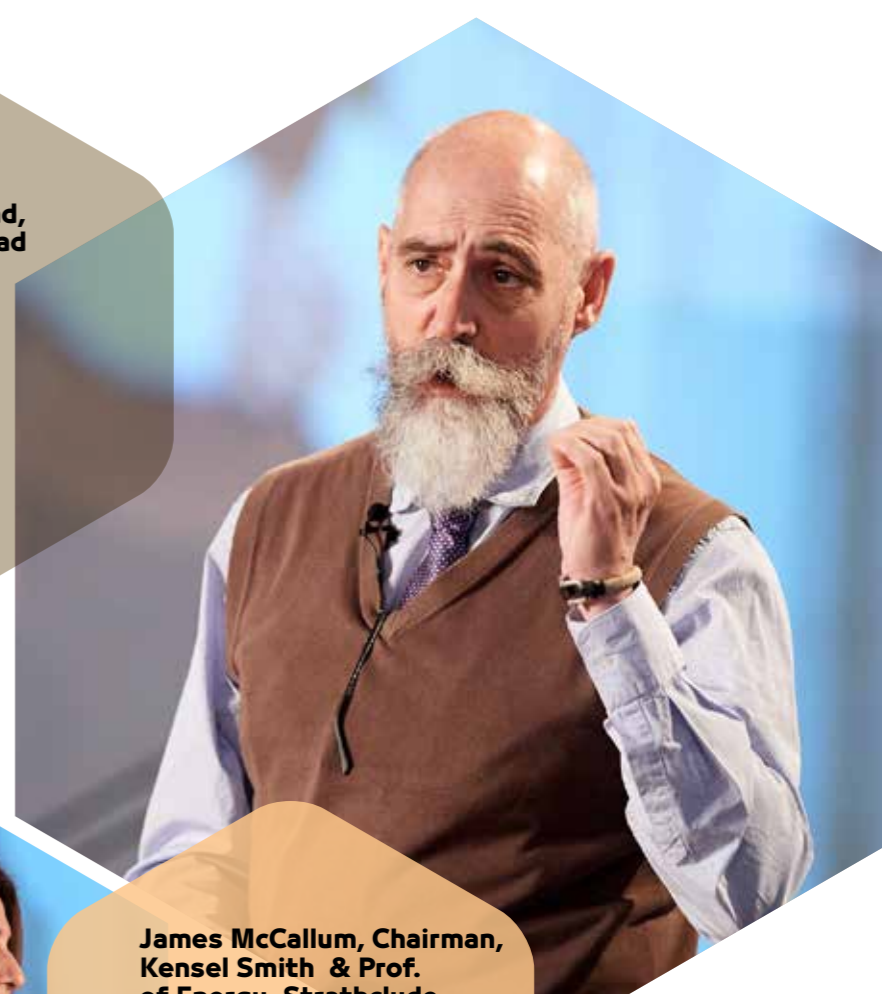




**Fatema Al Khateeb,**  
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Brunswick Gulf Ltd.



**Hashem Al Mohammad,**  
Senior Editor, Al Ittihad



**James McCallum, Chairman,**  
Kensel Smith & Prof.  
of Energy, Strathclyde  
University, Glasgow

## Industry Ignores Millennials' Creativity at Its Peril

The archaic narrative of the oil industry needs rewriting and fast. The plot must be spearheaded by passionate millennials; those in their twenties and thirties who think creatively and push the boundaries. The talent shortage in the global oil and gas industry is no secret; half of the world's petroleum engineers alone will retire in the coming decade. Add to this the tens of thousands of redundancies in the energy sector that dominated headlines last year as the financial strain of lower oil prices since mid-2014 emerged. Some of the layoffs will backfire, as they did during the last major crash in oil prices in the 1980s. Then, the industry shed significant numbers of talented employees and failed to recruit in advance of what was an inevitable demand in human resources, thus creating a significant shortage in talent.

I am now a baby boomer and when I joined the industry in the 1980s, I was surrounded by young colleagues who were also bursting with non-conformist ideas. I was proud to be brainstorming solutions for an industry that faced major roadblocks; challenging fields, rising energy demand, soaring costs and a shortage of innovative technologies. Does that sound familiar? This is the scenario that millennials cautiously eyeing a career in the oil and gas industry today face.

**Baby boomers truly do not have the technological skills required to deal with the millions of data points being created every day around the world. Knowing how to use an iPad does not make someone tech literate."**

From now, the market needs millennials with tech skills who can challenge baby boomers' traditional way of thinking. Big data – rapid analysis of extremely large data sets to identify patterns and trends – is not just another buzzword. It is driving major change in the industry. Baby boomers truly do not have the technological skills required to deal with the millions of data points being created every day around the world. Knowing how to use an iPad does not make someone tech literate. In 2013, IBM estimated that 90% of the data in the world had been created in the previous two years alone. The millennials already in the industry need to step forward and help companies' recruitment by sharing their stories and giving the industry a much-needed stamp of credibility. Meanwhile, those of us with grey hairs must guide millennials into an industry that I know they are ready to lead. Millennials are the solution, not the problem. ●



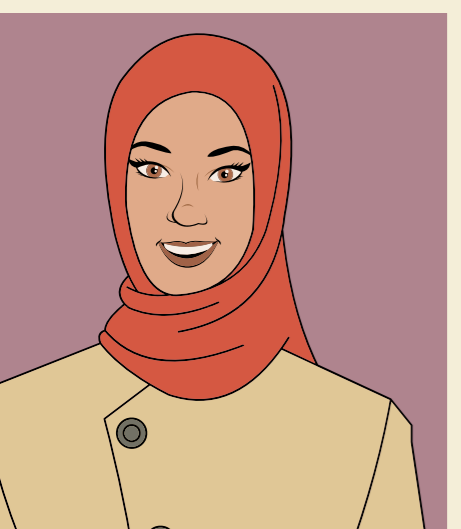
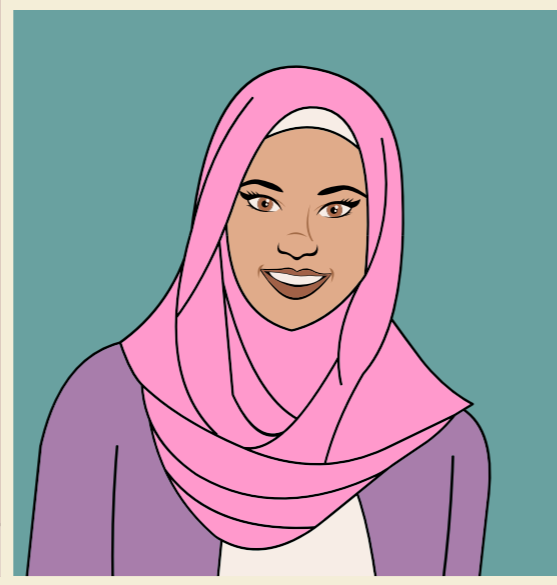
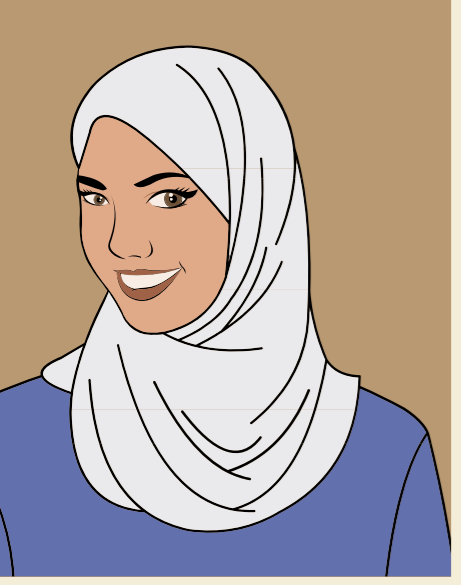
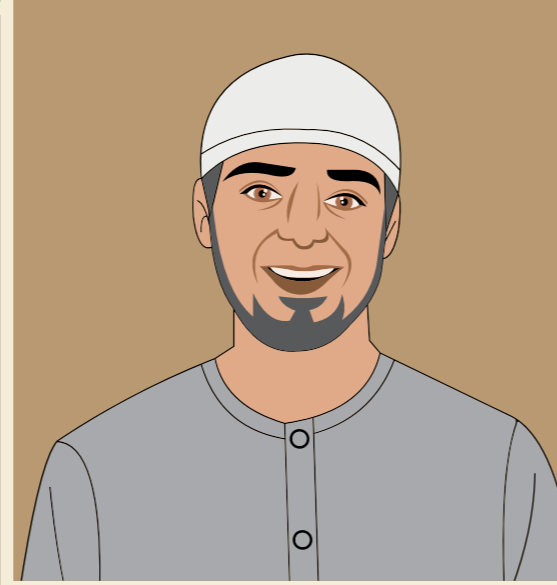
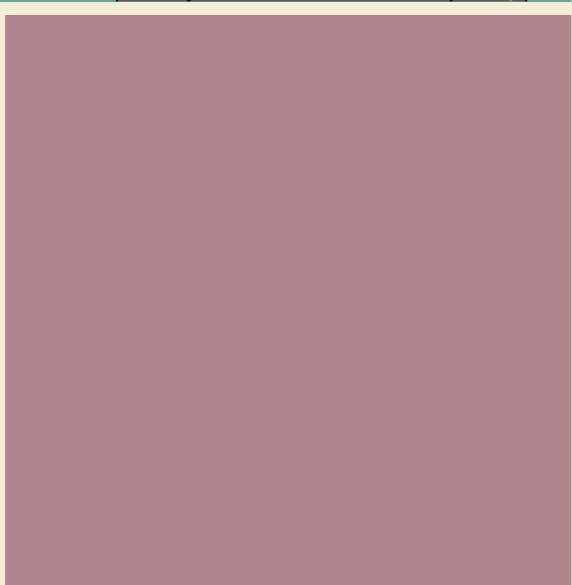
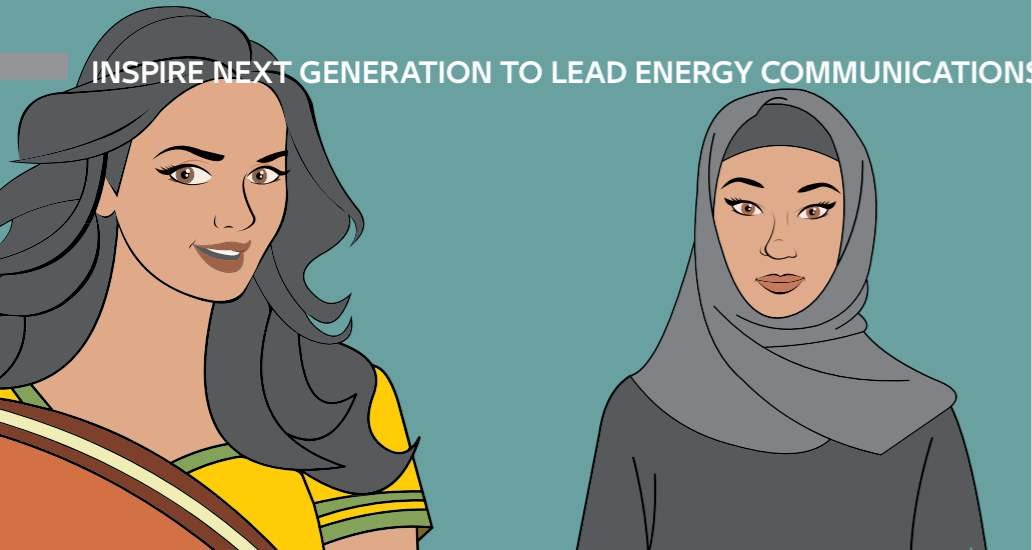
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**Dr. Patrick Allman-Ward,**  
CEO, Dana Gas



## Top 10 Recommendations Put Forward by Industry Thought Leaders, Educators and Policy Makers

### 1. Engage Role Models

Youngsters are more likely to be inspired by a career in the energy markets if they can understand the inner workings of the jobs on offer. Identifying role models within the media and communications space in the energy sector is key, especially female role models to counter the view that it is a male-dominated ecosystem. Role models within industry and media can also facilitate youth engagement initiatives during large energy events, such as ADIPEC, Atlantic Council and the next GCC Petroleum Media Forum.

### 2. A Campaign to Boost Understanding

Research youth's perception of the oil sector and then industry and media can co-create an industry-wide campaign that shows the value of the industry to the UAE and the diversity within the sector. This must also 'speak' to students' parents – the decision-makers in their lives. The campaign could be called #LetsEnergize or #IveGotTheEnergy and could be carried out in collaboration with youth-orientated ministries and national oil companies.

### 3. Increase Industry-Academia Partnerships

Energy companies must actively engage with the region's universities to develop collaborative research projects. This will help ensure that students graduating from local universities have the skills and understanding to meaningfully contribute to the region's energy sector when they enter the job market.

### 4. More Vocational Education

Establishing courses in schools that mimic BTEC qualifications will give students tangible experiences and some of the skills required by industry. Including subjects like technology, engineering and design would be especially beneficial.

### 5. Create Targeted and Positive Content

Industry should partner with media to produce dedicated energy content and programming, which highlights the role of oil and gas projects and the sector's contribution to local economies and societies. This could be via broadcast programmes – radio, television, YouTube, podcasts, for example – and weekly allocated slots in GCC newspapers and digital magazines.

### 6. Enhance Online Education

More online learning enables students from all geographies and socio-economic backgrounds to develop their skills, including data science and data management. It also gives students working part and full-time the chance to test their intellectual rigor. This will be especially beneficial to mature students who are juggling family and financial commitments. There is no expiration date on the ability to learn.

### 7. Industry Must Learn a New 'Language'

Energy companies should improve their knowledge of how to communicate across the spectrum, encompassing millennials, Generation Z and baby boomers. Energy companies must also become more adept at understanding and leveraging technological trends in social media, such as YouTube and Twitter, instead of traditional media, such as printed newspapers. The right messages must be directed at the appropriate demographic.

### 8. Re-shape the Industry's Reputation

The traditional perception of the industry as greedy and environmentally unfriendly must be improved through greater transparency and by providing success stories to the media. This can especially enhance youngsters' understanding of the fundamental role that the oil and wider energy industry in the development of the GCC's economies. Government and industry can visit schools to share this message with students. The younger the better as youngsters tend to ponder job options and develop negative and positive stereotypes in their early teens.

### 9. Establish a Dedicated Media Institute

A media institute entirely focused on training, developing and qualifying media and communications staff would provide a clear channel for aspiring professionals. Media and communications professionals can use all these portals to regularly share their experiences and offer youngsters advice.

### 10. Bolster STEM Learning

A greater intellectual understanding of STEM is required in primary and secondary education. Re-stocking this intellectual toolbox will also enable Gulf countries to reduce the amount of 'talent imports' from other countries and support national agendas to transform into knowledge-based economies in coming decades.

# CHAPTER 4

## Building Energy Communications Top 10 Training Seminars





# Building Energy Communications Top 10 Training Seminars

***Please see the attached USB to view the presentations provided by leaders in government, industry and media. The presentations correspond to the summaries below.***



## The Effective Use of Social Media in the Petroleum Industry



**Host & Moderator:** Abdou Gadallah, Social Media Editor, Sky News Arabia  
Explores the impact of social media on all aspects of life, including communications and business. This presentation also focuses on the evolution of digital media and the best practices for sharing information on the petroleum industry on social media platforms.

## The ABC of Energy Trading



**Host & Moderator:** Andrew Bonnington, Editorial Director, Strategic Oil Markets Development, S&P Global Platts  
Why do companies trade some oil products and not others? Why are some crude oils valued higher than others? Why do oil prices fluctuate and why are refined oil products not always correlated to crude oil? These are just some of the essential questions addressed by S&P Global Platts in this presentation. The company also examines the role of price reporting agencies (PRAs), their data-gathering methods and how companies interact in active commodity trading environments.

## Crisis Communication Management



**Host & Moderator:** Dr. Hanna El-Jor, Partner, Meirc Training & Consulting  
The high-quality safety measures in the oil industry are lauded worldwide, but there are inevitably challenges. Governments and companies' communications teams must be prepared to handle the tsunamic of media enquiries when a crisis occurs. What is the best crisis communications strategy to achieve three key goals; protect the company's reputation, not alienate public opinion and meet the media's demands?

## How to Develop a Successful Digital Communications Strategy



**Host & Moderator:** Mohammed Alsiddiq, Digital Communications Head, Mubadala  
This presentation outlines key principles for developing winning digital communication strategies, from identifying a clear mandate to defining the right strategic framework and team structure. Key topics include the importance of optimizing search engines and defining the right team structure and governance. This includes considering centralized versus decentralized and in-house versus outsourced structures. Alignment between digital strategy and overall business strategies is a must. The distribution of organic content will need to be supported by payment structures to make sure content is seen and consumed by the target audience.

## Transparency & the Media: What Are the Best Strategies?



Ministry of Oil & Gas

**Host & Moderator:** Suleiman Al Yaarubi, Information Specialist, Ministry of Oil & Gas, Oman  
 What is the role of the relationship between oil ministries and the media? How should this relationship be maintained and how best to establish levels of transparency? This presentation will consider recommendations and case studies that illustrate the key opportunities and challenges.

## How to Enhance the Petroleum Culture of The Gulf?



**Hosts & Moderators:** Sheikha Tamader Khalid Al-Ahmad Al Sabah, Public Relations & Acting Petroleum Media Manager and Head of Petroleum Culture Committee, Ministry of Oil, Kuwait & Abdullah Mutaib Al Bassam, Senior Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Oil, Kuwait  
 What is a petroleum culture? What are the opportunities to grow such a culture within the Gulf? How is the world of petroleum integrated into the region and is it different in the Gulf – most local economies rely heavily on oil production – to other parts of the world? This presentation focuses on whether the prominent role of oil production, exports and daily consumption in the Gulf means that the commodity has cultural value as well as being an essential economic driver.

## A Media Guide to Reporting Oil Markets



**Host & Moderator:** Paul Young, Head of Energy Products, Dubai Mercantile Exchange  
 Oil markets are comprised of many different and oft-interconnected elements; some of which require guidance. This Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) training presentation provides a solid foundation of such information, which is an invaluable tool for media reporting on the Middle East's oil markets.

## The Digitalization of the Oil & Gas Industry: What are the Trends to Look Out for?



**Host & Moderator:** Morgan Eldred, Managing Partner, Digital Energy  
 Digitalization has inspired new business models that are drastically changing how traditional services are delivered to the oil and gas industry, with many more upheavals over the coming decade. In the near future, analytics, machine learning, virtual reality, robotics and algorithms will be common place. Sensors will help guide the performance of mobility devices, wearables, autonomous vehicles and connected field equipment. Such developments are only the tip of the iceberg of the technological change that has the potential to make services in the oil industry faster and cheaper than ever before.

## Saudi Arabia Vision 2030: An Energy Perspective



**Host & Moderator:** Dr. Ihsan A. Bu-Hulaiga, Principal Consultant, Joatha Business Development Consultants  
 The launch of Gulf countries' long-term visions over the past year highlights the region's pioneering attitude to the energy markets. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, is no different. This presentation focuses on the integral and innovative role that renewable energy will play in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 as the Kingdom seeks to diversify its energy mix.

## UAE Energy Strategy 2050



**Hosts & Moderators:** H.E. Fatima Alfoora Alshamsi, Assistant Undersecretary for Electricity & Future Energy Affairs, Ministry of Energy, UAE and Eng. Meshayel Al Ali, Director, Future Energy & Security of Supply, Ministry of Energy UAE  
 An ambitious attitude underpins the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050, which details plans to boost clean energy and cut carbon dioxide emissions by 70%. This presentation focuses on how the architecture for such aspiring policy was created and the next innovative steps that will ensure that the UAE continues to stand tall amongst the world's energy pioneers.

# EPILOGUE





DEBATE

# Traditional Media is Dead

## – Agree or Disagree?

**FOR THE MOTION:**

Dale Hudson, Faculty Fellow and Associate Teaching Professor of Film and New Media, New York University Abu Dhabi  
Reem Abdellatif, Editor in Chief, Argam Plus

**AGAINST THE MOTION:**

Ed Crooks, US Industry & Energy Editor, Financial Times  
Mustafa Alrawi, Business Editor, The National



## FOR

BY REEM ABDELLATIF, EDITOR IN CHIEF, ARGAAAM PLUS

**T**he future of media, be it business or fashion news, will be via niche websites and niche projects. The revolution in how we communicate is underway at a rapid pace. Traditional media is dying for several reasons. One key reason is because young people are changing the conversation and forcing journalists to change the way we communicate with them. They want people to talk to them and not at them. Traditional media, such as newspapers and TV, often talk at millennials and that is where the need for change lies. The flourishing of digital media does not mean it does not sometimes use traditional means to verify information. You are still a journalist, whatever the medium. The modern viewer is very sophisticated and they still want the verification of a tweet and a Facebook post that has been written by a citizen journalist. Trained journalists do not compete with citizen journalists. There were a lot of active citizen journalists covering the Egyptian Revolution, for example, and consumers would sometimes get mixed messages. Then they would always go back to digital media and traditional media. There is no doubt that traditional platforms are dying, which is why the major traditional players are shifting their strategies. The Wall Street Journal has added a live blog with real-time streaming, for example. Everyone is adjusting their focus and their budgets to accommodate digital journalism and digital media and not the traditional platforms. ●

**Young people are changing the conversation and forcing journalists to change the way we communicate with them. They want people to talk to them and not at them. Traditional media tends to do the former.”**



## FOR

BY DALE HUDSON, FACULTY FELLOW AND ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROFESSOR OF FILM AND NEW MEDIA, NYUAD

**T**he UAE is beginning to produce a lot of features. But most of the screens tend to be dominated by foreign films, typically Bollywood, Kollywood, Hollywood and Egyptian films. Emirati films tend to only be screened at festivals and cultural centers. It is a similar situation in Saudi Arabia. The key difference between Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states is that cinemas have been prohibited since the 1980s. So why do the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman not have thriving film industries and busy cinema screenings for local films? One key reason is that traditional production, distribution and exhibition models are not reaching millennial audiences. The GCC states have some of the youngest populations in the world, with this generation actively consuming screen media. There are approximately 12 million Saudi internet users that view about 90 million videos per day on YouTube, making the Kingdom one of the largest users of digital platforms in the region – if not the world. Production companies like U-Turn Productions and Telfaz11 TV reach millions of local subscribers via new media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. They are low budget, but not low quality. The episodes are short to suit the attention span of millennials, at less than ten minutes, and they use slang expressions to appear edgy and hip. The topics are sometimes controversial, but not taboo. They bring global visibility to Saudi Arabia’s youth culture, particularly the underground cultures in Jeddah and Riyadh. These web series target audiences to impart reverse cultural invasions, particularly from the US. Saudi Arabia’s comedies counter these foreign stereotypes of Gulf Arabs and other Arabs with a soft power. This has been considered more persuasive as propaganda than Alhurra TV, which is the US Network in Saudi Arabia. Media-making in the Gulf could invest in developing local talent through locally conceived formats, such as the Saudi web serials – and those have been imitated here in the Emirates. This would be instead of importing directors from Hollywood and Europe to mentor aspiring talent with antiquated media paradigms. ●

**Web series target audiences to impart reverse cultural invasions, particularly from the US. Saudi Arabia’s comedies counter these foreign stereotypes of Gulf Arabs and other Arabs with a soft power.”**



# AGAINST

BY MUSTAFA ALRAWI, BUSINESS EDITOR, THE NATIONAL

When legendary media consultant, Juan Antonio Giner, has visited a media company's newsroom over the last decade, he has immediately started with a little skit. This includes him screaming at the top of his lungs at the journalists in front of him and telling them that their newspapers and jobs were dying. Why? He felt that denial and apathy were the biggest obstacles to traditional media brands and their ability to evolve and succeed in this modern environment. We must evaluate ourselves against new brands on social media and consider how consumers are changing their behaviour. We are evolving and going through a painful daily process in our newsrooms: what is the right way to present the news? And how can we continue to grow against a backdrop of an economic model that used to make more money thirty years ago? Still, Ernst & Young said the value of India's newspaper industry has grown by two thirds in the last six years. According to the PEW Research Centre, more people are consuming news than ever before. While it is true that young people are using social media, around 78% of people over the age of 30 consumed their news via their televisions during the last US election. Many of them may be using handheld devices to access these TV channels, but they are still attracted to traditional outlets of CNN and BBC. At The National, up to 70% of our readers engage with the copy via handheld devices. While advertising revenues and print sales have gone down, new metrics have arrived, such as the amount of time spent on a content platform. The New York Times averages about 19 minutes for each audience member on their platform. That is immersive. People are not there to get a snippet of news on what the latest celebrity is doing, but instead to engage in in-depth reporting. That will continue. The traditional media must work much harder to keep the current level of trust and to gain the trust of the younger audiences. But if we keep doing what we are doing as well as we have been doing it, then there is no reason why I will not be back with the same positive message a decade from now. ●

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# AGAINST

BY ED CROOKS, US INDUSTRY & ENERGY EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

Old media is far from dead. Allow me to use US President Donald Trump to set the scene. One of Trump's campaign managers said social media was vital to Trump winning the election. Trump wakes up in the morning and he tweets – that is how he very effectively gets his message across. And this has created a proliferation of stories, very many of which likely fell into the 'fake news' category. In that sense, you could say that old media is dying. But now Trump has stopped campaigning and is having to govern and he needs to get his agenda through. One of the first things on his list was healthcare reform, which had to pass legislation in Congress. It turned into a fiasco. One of the very early promises made by Trump was falling short of the mark. He had to get his favoured message out to the world and to spin it in a way that said to the public: "I am not as much of a disaster as I might look and everything is on track." What does he do? He calls The New York Times and the Washington Post to give thirty minute interviews to their respective reporters. Their stories emerge as the dominant narratives and go on to set the agenda for the national debate. This is a classic example of the enormous power of old media; to both set the agenda and give people reasonably trustworthy information. Comparatively, people can now make quite a good living by making up stories and distributing them on social media, regardless of their truth and value. Yes, old media must evolve, but it is certainly not dying. The Financial Times, for instance, has more paying readers than ever at more than 850,000 people. Nearly three quarters are online. The economics of it are challenging and we have yet to return to the peak profits reported in 1999 and 2000, but we are hanging on. Old media still has significant value and people still turn to us, even the President of the US. ●

**Trump has to get his message out to the public and say: "I am not as much of a disaster as I might look." What does he do? He calls The New York Times and the Washington Post."**



## Motion: Traditional Media is Dead – Agree or Disagree?

The audience voted using an electronic system before the debate began, with the results displayed at the end of the debate. The audience were asked to vote a second time following the debaters' closing statements. The winning team is the one that swayed more audience members between the two votes. At the conclusion of this event, the **'Against'** team won the debate.



**53%**  
DISAGREE



**47%**  
AGREE

**70%**  
DISAGREE



**30%**  
AGREE

# Gulf Energy Media Should Do More Leading Than Following International Peers



H.E. DR. MATAR AL NEYADI, UNDERSECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENERGY, UAE  
 H.E. KHALIFA BIN SAID AL-ABRI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL ECONOMIC & DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, GCC  
 H.E. SHEIKH TALAL NASSER AL ATHBI AL SABAH, ACTING UNDERSECRETARY, MINISTRY OF OIL, KUWAIT  
 H.E. ABBAS ALI AL-NAQI, SECRETARY GENERAL, ORGANIZATION OF ARAB PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OAPEC)  
 MODERATOR: ALYA HASSAN AL YASSI, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF ENERGY, UAE

**Moderator:** What is the importance of a Gulf strategy for petroleum media and what is your assessment of the performance of the petroleum media in the Gulf?

**H.E. Khalifa Al-Abri:** It is commonly known that oil in the Gulf countries is the basic commodity, the main source of income, the main source of government's revenues, as well as a major source of energy in the world. Therefore, it is important to develop a Gulf strategy for petroleum information that illustrates the important role of this sector in the Gulf countries and its importance all over the world.

In this context, the Gulf Petroleum Media Strategy was developed and approved by the Ministers of Petroleum and the GCC Secretariat is working with member states to implement this strategy. Perhaps one of the most important issues is the communication between this sector and all kinds of media and thus clarifying the importance of this sector and its role in the GCC economies.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, what is the importance of the GCC Petroleum Media Forum?

**H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi:** The Petroleum Media Forum has witnessed continuous success for 6 years, and this third round is a ring in this success chain. The official interest in the Petroleum Media Forum emerges from the great importance of the role of the media, and for the necessity of the availability of a transparent communications ring that enables the oil and gas sector to highlight the great success stories achieved in this sector.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Dr. Matar, referring to the decision to liberalize fuel prices adopted by the UAE in August 2015, to what extent did the media react to this decision by spreading awareness about its importance and disseminating accurate information about it?

**H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi:** When the decision was taken in the UAE to liberalize gasoline and diesel prices, directives were issued before announcing the decision to develop a media plan.

The UAE believes in the importance of media and the importance of delivering the messages transparently and accurately, and I would like to thank the National Media Council in the UAE for their support and assistance to the Ministry of Energy to develop a media plan that allowed the decision to be delivered in a convincing manner to the public.

Before announcing the decision, a meeting was held with the most important media in the UAE and they were informed and their observations and experience were taken into account as how to communicate this decision.

I think we have succeeded in delivering and highlighting this decision for people transparently by explaining the price equation, the dimensions of the resolution and the importance of the liberalization of gasoline and diesel prices in the UAE. Also, the ministry's leadership was represented by the Minister and there was a direct contact with the public through social media.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Khalifa Al-Abri, how does the General Secretariat of the GCC make efforts in developing specialized human resources in the field of the Gulf's petroleum media?



**H.E. Khalifa Al-Abri:** The General Secretariat of the GCC works within an integrated system with member countries. The GCC Petroleum Media Forum may represent an example of these efforts made in cooperation with the media sector in the GCC countries, as well as for conveying the message of the oil sector to the media and making dialogue and listening to them.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Abbas Al-Naqi, do you think there should be an Arab entity that is assigned the responsibility to disclose official oil information and data?





**H.E. Abbas Al-Naqi:** As for identifying or creating a particular unit or entity for issuing or publishing statistical data on energy, of course there is a difficulty to create a single central entity that represents all countries. We, in OPAEC, have this oil information, the Secretary General annual report and the annual statistical report, which includes all the information and data in the oil sector for all the Arab countries, not just the member states.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Oil in Kuwait has been launching several project initiatives, most notably is the Petroleum Culture Project The media would like to know more about this project.

**H.E. Talal Nasser al-Sabah:** This initiative was launched almost 14 years ago in 2003. This idea was created by establishing a committee specialized in petroleum culture. They visit several schools in different governorates of Kuwait and deliver lectures on the petroleum culture. The team who delivers lectures include members from the Energy Ministry – Department of Petroleum Media and Public Relations.

This is a pioneering initiative and we have been working on spreading the oil heritage project to the other GCC countries as part of the petroleum information strategy. There is great cooperation between us and our brothers for exchanging information in this regard.

The percentage of young people in our GCC countries is the largest percentage in society, as they constitute almost 60% of population. It is essential to spread the petroleum awareness for them and the importance of oil as a main source of energy.

**Moderator:** Your Excellency Dr. Matar, we would like to know your perspective on enabling young people to work in the energy sector?

**H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi:** The UAE Ministry of Energy pays a great attention to our relationship with educational institutions. In addition to the memorandum we signed recently with the UAE University, there is another university in the process of discussing the signing a memorandum to provide training opportunities for university students, especially fourth year students, i.e. get training in the Ministry of Energy and this training might enable students to obtain employment opportunities at the ministry or abroad.



We look forward to developing a generation of media who avoid excitement, who make sure that the information they report is accurate and not rushed with the aim of just achieving a breaking story. Rather, they shall ensure the accuracy of the information and ensure the analysis to be transparent. As officials in the oil and gas sector, especially in this region, open their doors to the media, we wish our media colleagues to ensure the accuracy of information.

**H.E. Talal Nasser al-Sabah:** Our colleague journalists should be in constant communication with the GCC energy ministries and national oil companies to ensure they receive correct information. Regional energy media specialists should not rely on reports issued from entities outside the region and they should not transfer them literally into the region without revision and making sure they are correct and that they will serve the oil sector in the GCC countries. The GCC media should do more to highlight the success stories in the region, especially in the field of maintaining the environment and sustainable development. ●

*\*This is an edited transcript*