

Ambassador Thomas Fitschen (Germany)

**Welcome:**

- Chair (Andrew Reynolds, US State Department)
- H.H. Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al-Said (Adviser to the Sultan and Chair of The Research Council-TRC)

1. Congratulate the Government of Oman for undertaking the review exercise and UNCTAD for the quality and the readability of the report. The sober analysis and assessment contained in the report as well as the recommendations – their sheer size, but also their intellectual depth – demonstrate the value and significance of UNCTAD's technical assistance through the STIP Review. One can at this time only wonder about the impact these recommendations may have if implemented.
2. Oman has made huge progress in integrating science, technology and innovation (STI) in various sectors of its society. On Monday this week the Secretary General of the Research Council mentioned here that some 40 years ago Oman had been - in a figurative sense - in the medieval ages. One month ago, the Global Information Technology Report of the World Economic Forum ranked Oman as no. 40 out of 150 states covered by the report. This simple figure gives us a good idea of what an enormous amount of effort have been made over the past few decades.
3. The Policy Review tells us that Oman's development strategy is focused on diversification of production activities, away from oil and gas. The Review confirms that STI – strongly promoted by the Research Council that was established less than 10 years ago – was at the centre of this development. But I think that the Review also confirms that STI, to be able to generate the desired effects, needs to be rooted in a strong, modern system of education, including the vocational training side. The Director of CERN and the representative of UNESCO have made that point in their opening statements on Monday, and

delegations in this room are of course aware that Germany shares that view.

4. Over the past 4 decades, Germany has maintained intense and fruitful cooperation with Oman. Our common economic commission indeed exists since 1978, and we are working together in fields such as renewable energies, infrastructure development, health, education and vocational education as well as tourism and archaeology. Another innovative institution is the "Owners Forum" that meets annually and brings together SME's, esp. family owned businesses, from both countries.

5. Apart from the economic cooperation we are particularly satisfied with our cooperation in the education sector. Let me highlight just 4 areas:

- i. Oman's first public university, the Sultan Qaboos University, has intense cooperation with many German Universities, the German Academic Exchange Service and other scientific research centres like the Helmholtz foundation.
- ii. In 2007 the joint German University of Technology (GUtech) was founded in Maskat in collaboration with Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule – Aachen University. Since 2012 it is based in a brand-new and award-winning building in Halban and currently 800 students are enrolled.
- iii. Under the auspices of the TRC, an Institute of Advanced Technology Integration (IATI) is going to be established, with the the German Helmholtz Association as the major international planning partner.
- iv. A group of German archaeologists are currently working together with local experts in Bat to preserve the historic necropolis for the national Ministry of Heritage & Culture.

6. We are convinced that the implementation of the STIP-Review's recommendations will further promote the educational, scientific and economic reforms required to enhance the development in Oman. H.H., let me assure you, that Germany stands ready to continue our fruitful cooperation on this path.