2021 IS LEFT WITH BURDENSOME LEGACY
The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) was founded on the basis of the agreement signed in Beirut, Lebanon on 9 January 1968 between the governments of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait and the (then) Kingdom of Libya. The agreement stipulates that the Organization shall be domiciled in the City of Kuwait.

The principal objective of the Organization is the cooperation of the members in various forms of economic activity in the petroleum industry, the determination of ways and means of safeguarding the legitimate interests of its member countries in this industry, individually and collectively, the unification of efforts to ensure the flow of petroleum to its markets on equitable and reasonable terms, and providing appropriate environment for investment in the petroleum industry in member countries.

In 1970 the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Algeria joined the Organization, followed by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Iraq in 1972, Arab Republic of Egypt in 1973, then the Republic of Tunisia in 1982 (its membership was suspended in 1986). Any Arab country which derives a significant share of its national income from petroleum is eligible for membership in OAPEC upon the approval of three-quarters of the member countries, including all three founding members.
OAPEC-Joint Ventures:

OAPEC has sponsored the creation of four companies: The Arab Maritime Petroleum Transport Company (AMPTC), established in 1972 with headquarters in Kuwait City, the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard Company (ASRY) established in 1973 with headquarters in Bahrain, the Arab Petroleum Investments Corporation (APICORP) established in 1974 with headquarters in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, the Arab Petroleum Services Company (APSC) established in 1975 with headquarters in Tripoli, Libya.

OAPEC’s Organs

The Organization carries out its activities through its four organs:

- **Ministerial Council:** The Ministerial Council is the supreme authority of the Organization, responsible for drawing up its general policy.
- **Executive Bureau:** The Executive Bureau is composed of one representative from each of the member countries, drawing recommendations and suggestions to the Council, reviewing the Organization’s draft annual budget and submitting it to the Council, it also adopts the regulations applicable to the staff of the General Secretariat. The resolutions of the Executive Bureau are issued by the majority of two-thirds of all members.
- **General Secretariat:** The General Secretariat of OAPEC plans, administers, and executes the Organization’s activities in accordance with the objectives stated in the agreement and directives of the Ministerial Council. The General Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General. The Secretary General is appointed by resolution of the Ministerial Council for a tenor of three years renewable for similar period(s). The Secretary General is the official spokesman and legal representative of the Organization and is accountable to the Council. The Secretary General directs the Secretariat and supervises all aspects of its activities, and is responsible for the tasks and duties as directed by the Ministerial Council. The Secretary General and all personnel of the Secretariat carry out their duties in full independence and in the common interests of the Organization member countries. The Secretary General and the Assistant Secretaries General possess in the territories of the Organization members all diplomatic immunities and privileges.
- **Judicial Tribunal:** The protocol of the Judicial Tribunal was signed in Kuwait on 9 May 1978 and came into effect on 20 April 1980. The Tribunal is competent to consider all disputes related to the interpretation and application of OAPEC’s establishment agreement, as well as disputes arising between two or more member countries concerning petroleum operations.
2021 IS LEFT WITH BURDENSOME LEGACY

In spite of the fact that the UN Climate Change Conference COP 25 (in Madrid, 2019) could not come up with solutions or agreements, the upcoming COP 26 will take place this year, which has already been full of unprecedented events and fundamental developments in modern times. The international scene is shadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the current global economic situation, and disruptions of the international trade system. The Parties, that have signed the UN Climate Change agreement, will convene at the COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2021. The summit will be the first of its kind in light of these variables and the return of the United States of America to the Paris Climate Agreement. COP26 will be the first summit to review and measure the progress of the international community in delivering the targeted goals since the signing of the Paris Agreement back in 2015.

International negotiators are expected to set new long-term goals to combat climate change. They will be bold and highly ambitious goals that will specify prioritizing achieving zero-emissions by the middle of the current century with more courageous and rapid cuts of CO2 emissions by 2030.

However, there are many thorny and complex issues in the climate negotiations dossier, most importantly the ideal way to manage carbon markets, carbon credits, and funding provided to developing countries to face the impacts of climate change. The dossier also includes the developed countries’ pledges to compensate developing countries for their economic losses resulting from that change; the global goal on adaptation; food security; in addition to post-fossil fuel era issues.

It will be unfair to imply that the international economic system is no longer in need for fossil fuel, although oil and gas are still on top of the most traded goods in the futures stock market.

In any case, we do not expect the upcoming summit to meet the developing countries’ ambitions. There will be failure in some dossiers, especially in light of the international economic repercussions, the COVID-19 impacts, and the new international trends towards the climate change dossier.
106TH MEETING OF OAPEC MINISTERIAL COUNCIL (AT REPS LEVEL)
OAPEC Secretary General, HE Ali Sabt Ben Sabt, said that the 106th Meeting of OAPEC Ministerial Council (at Representatives level) was held via ZOOM technology, on 22 May 2021, and chaired by the Saudi Representative at OAPEC Executive Bureau, HE Dr Nasser bin Al Humaidi Al Dossary. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia chairs the 2021 term.

HE Ben Sabt added that the meeting discussed a variety of issues relevant to the work and activities of the organisation, including approving OAPEC’s final financial statements (Secretariat General and Judicial Tribunal) for the year 2020. The Council also reviewed a report on the Secretariat General’s activities in the first half of 2021, including following up environmental and climate change issues; databank work progress; meetings with the Arab League; activities organised or joined by the Secretariat General; in addition to future events that OAPEC will organise in 2021.

The Secretary General explained that the Council also reviewed the Secretariat General’s Report on the World Petroleum Conditions, alongside studies carried out by the Secretariat General in H1/2021 on: oil prices; role of scientific research in developing the refining industry; corrosion problems; hydrogen production; and the impact of declining oil prices on petroleum exploration and production.

HE Ben Sabt concluded by extending sincere thanks for the massive support the Secretariat General is receiving from the member countries, which enabled the organisation to continue delivering in spite of the critical conditions imposed by the pandemic all over the world. He wished the Arab petroleum industry further progress and prosperity.

HE Ben Sabt also sent another cable of congratulations to HE Eng. Khaled Matar Al Elaij on the occasion of his appointment as Syria’s Representative at OAPEC. He wished HE Al Elaij all success in his new post.
Within the framework of activating the MoU on scientific cooperation that has been signed between OAPEC and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) on 8 March 2021, the first coordination meeting of OAPEC-KISR Joint Taskforce was held on 24 May 2021 at KISR’s headquarters in the State of Kuwait. Aspects of mutual interest have been discussed alongside finalising a cooperation roadmap to be executed during the second half of 2021.

Dr Mane’ Al Sedairawi, Acting Director General, received the Taskforce members. He underscored the importance of facilitating the work of the Taskforce by making available all potential resources from both sides in order to deliver on the goals set by the MOU and make progress in placing implementation mechanisms.

After that, the Taskforce held their first meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest and oil industry’s developments, drawing an initial workplan in the next six months, including: calling for participation in the Secretariat General’s upcoming seminars and workshops; organizing joint events; and looking into appropriate mechanisms to conduct joint research. It has been agreed to hold this meeting on a regular basis to follow up work progress.

During the meeting, the Secretariat General was represented by Mr Abdul Fattah Dandi, Director of Economic Department, Dr Yasser Baghdadi, Oil Industries Expert, and Eng. Warl Abdul Moati, Gas Industries Expert. KISR was represented by Dr Abdul Atheem Maarafi, Dr Bashar Al Kanderi, Dr Sheikha Al Sanad, and Advisor Maher Baqatar.
Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries

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OAPEC Secretariat General released its Quarterly Report on LNG and Hydrogen Developments in Q1/2021. According to the report, Arab countries’ LNG exports performance has been exceptional recording the highest exports rate on quarterly basis for years (with a total of 29.9 million tons compared to 27 million tons in Q1/2020); representing an annual growth rate of 10.7%. The new record has been achieved due to growing exports from Qatar, Algeria, and Egypt, as well as, non-stop production (at full capacity) in liquefaction plants in the UAE and Oman. The Arab countries combined account for about 31% of the global market share.
World LNG Exports on Track to Recovery

Total LNG exports in Q1/2021 were about 96.9 million tons, compared to approximately 95.5 million tons in Q1/2020; an annual growth of about 1.5%. In general, world markets started recovery from the repercussions of COVID-19 pandemic since Q4/2020 to make up for past periods of declining exports. Q1/2021 registered the best performance (in terms of exports) since the outbreak of the pandemic; a clear indication of global demand recovery albeit at a smaller growth rate compared to pre-pandemic rates.

Continued Recovery of World LNG Demand

On the demand development front in various markets in Q1/2021, it has become clear that the world LNG demand continued to recover. Total imports were 98.4 million tons compared to about 97.3 million tons in Q1/2020; an annual growth rate of 1.1%. The key feature of the world market in Q1/2021 has been the sustainability of LNG trade dynamics as demand has grown in Asian markets while imports dropped in EU markets; a step towards rebalancing the world trade.

Return of Investment Trends in New Liquefaction Projects

Q1/2021 witnessed the return of investment trends in new liquefaction projects after Qatar Petroleum (QP) has taken a final investment decision (FID) for the North Field East project, a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Qatar with a capacity of 33 million ton per annum. On the contrary, the first decision to delay the final investment decision was on the Rovuma LNG project in Mozambique at a capacity of 15.2 million tons/year.

Hydrogen Developments: unprecedented international momentum

Until the end of Q1/2021, 29 countries started preparing national plans and strategies on hydrogen. There were about 228 announced projects/plans on hydrogen production and exploitation dispersed around all parts of the world. A clear indication of its importance as a component of a future energy system heading towards carbon neutrality.

Significant Activity on Boosting International Collaboration and Partnership on Hydrogen in Arab Countries

Q1/2021 witnessed a significant activity by the Arab countries on boosting international collaboration and partnership on hydrogen. In this connection, planned hydrogen projects totalled about 12 in the Arab countries: 8 green hydrogen; 2 blue hydrogen; and 2 on using hydrogen as a transportation fuel.

Apart from national Arab companies’ partnership with international entities, Q1/2021 also witnessed signing MOUs at governmental level, which reflects genuine will towards boosting strategic dialogue and cooperation between Arab and foreign countries. February 2021 witnessed the release of a joint study by the Emirati-German Energy Partnership (a declaration signed in 2017) on “The Role of Hydrogen for the Energy Transition in the UAE and Germany.” Also, in March 2021, Saudi Arabia and Germany inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost cooperation on the production and exploitation of hydrogen. These steps reflect a political will to expand hydrogen production targeting potential exporting, in order to diversify national economies and boost strategic partnership with international partners to serve the interests of all parties.

OAPEC Secretariat General underscores the future role of the gas and hydrogen industry in clean energy. The Organisation calls for paying more attention to this aspect and injecting the required investment to achieve sustainable energy. The report was prepared by Eng. Wael Abdul Moati, Gas Industries Expert at the Technical Affairs Department in OAPEC.
In a press statement, OAPEC Secretary General, HE Ali Sabt Ben Sabt, said that the Secretariat General has updated its statistical data obtained from official sources, through the Energy Data Collection Form of member countries, which covered most key energy indicators of the member countries in order to help adopting effective economic policies.

HE Ben Sabt extended sincere thanks to officials in the member countries for their continued cooperation in terms of providing official data and statements ensuring the credibility and transparency of oil and energy industry data that came in the report.

Part One the report provides general indicators of OAPEC member countries. Part Two reviews data of reserves, production, and new discoveries. Crude oil reserves of Arab countries were estimated at 715.74 billion barrels by the end of 2019, representing a slight increase of 0.01% comparing with the previous year, and constituting a share of 57.2% of world proven reserves of 1252 billion barrels. On the other hand, Arab natural gas reserves have dropped slightly by 0.2% in 2019, compared to 2018 levels, reaching 54.4 trillion cubic meters and accounting for 26.5% of total world gas reserves.

As for crude oil and natural gas liquids production, Arab countries produced nearly 29.7 million b/d in 2019, out of which 28.5 million b/d from OAPEC member countries. At crude oil production level alone, Arab countries produced 24.6 million b/d, out of which 23.6 million b/d from the member countries, representing a decline of 0.76%, compared to 2018. Arab countries’ crude oil production accounts for about 28.3% of global production. Arab marketed natural gas production amounted to 596.8 billion cubic meters in 2019, out of which approximately 562.6 billion cubic meters were produced by OAPEC members, representing 94.3% of Arab countries’ production, which accounted for nearly 15% of world total production of 3974 billion cubic meters.

With regard to exploration activity in 2019, Arab countries have made 79 new discoveries, of which 52 were oil and 27 were gas discoveries. All these discoveries were in OAPEC members.

In Part III, the Report addresses oil and natural gas industries. The design capacity of existing oil refineries in Arab countries reached about 9.2 million b/d in 2019 representing an increase of 43 thousand b/d compared to 2018. Arab countries’ petroleum products output amounted to 7.671 million b/d, with a decline of 3.12%, compared to 2018.

The Report, in Part IV, highlights oil and energy consumption in OAPEC members and other Arab countries, including crude oil, petroleum products by product, natural gas, coal, and hydroelectric energy. Energy consumption in the Arab countries totalled about 14.7 million boed in 2019, including 6.9 million boed of crude oil and petroleum products, and nearly 7.5 million boed of natural gas.

Part V of the Report reviews oil and natural gas trade in OAPEC members and other Arab countries, covering data of crude oil, petroleum products, and natural gas imports and exports. Part VI tackles average spot prices of Arab and global crudes, monthly and annual spot prices of OPEC basket and energy product prices in local currencies and US dollars for the period 2017 - 2020.

Also, the Report refers to oil and natural gas means of transportation and reviews the number and tonnage of oil tankers, and pipeline grid available in the member countries in Part VII. While Part VIII contains data on electricity.
HYDROGEN PRODUCTION AND ITS ROLE IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION
Hydrogen is gaining unprecedented momentum as a central pillar to foster the energy transition. This growing interest stems from the global shift toward decarbonization of the energy system. Hydrogen can be used as a fuel or an energy carrier and storage or a feedstock for many industries while emits no GHG emissions. It has many applications across industry sector, power generation and residential sectors.

In this regard, government policy is a crucial element to achieve such transition in a successful and well-organized manner and help to support the development of Hydrogen economy in a cost-effective way. This could include low carbon fuel regulations, CO2 pricing, vehicle emissions regulations and zero-emission vehicle programs. Furthermore, policies may include specific incentives and/or legislations that could enable to reduce the risk of hydrogen demand and supply for the sector actors. Such policy support may help to attain the required economies of scale to enable the industry to drive down costs across different parts of the hydrogen value chain.

This study provides an overview of different production pathways of hydrogen, and its current and potential uses to decarbonize the global economy. It also addresses international policies and strategies that promote the use of hydrogen to foster energy transition.

The study is divided into three chapters. Chapter-I provides an overview of different production pathways of hydrogen and the most commonly used processes to produce it. Furthermore, it covers the main parts of hydrogen value chain and the most recent technological advances in each part. While Chapter-II is devoted to highlight the potential uses of hydrogen to foster the energy transition. It also addresses the international policies and strategies adopted to promote the use of hydrogen as a fuel for the future. Chapter- III analyses the key success factors to develop hydrogen sector in the Arab countries and actions needed to achieve that end. Moreover, it provides a market survey of the announced projects and plans to invest in this promising sector.
The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in the world since the beginning of 2020 has raised a storm of predictions claimed that the oil era is over or nearing an end, and that the demand and production have reached their peak.
The spread of Covid-19 had an unprecedented role in restricting movement within countries and abroad, and the closures followed in a unique historical move. These measures led to a reduction in the demand for energy, especially in the field of transportation, along with the suspension of many factories and plants. This caused a decline in demand for oil which led to a marked decrease in prices and contributed to the increase in oil stocks in some countries of the world that have storage capabilities, especially the United States of America. These factors formed the main reason behind the agreement of OPEC countries and its allies, or the so-called (OPEC +) group, on a gradual plan to reduce oil production as part of its efforts to maintain a stable market and fair prices.

The foresaid factors created many concerns about the future of the petroleum industry, particularly with the emergence of renewable energies as a potential long-term competitor according to some opinions. Some emerging warnings were deeply pessimistic, indicating that the petroleum industry is living its final days. But predictions that are based on numerous variables cannot withstand the facts and figures that tell the story from the point of view of the facts. Throughout history, the petroleum industry has proven that it is able to recover its equilibrium much faster than previously thought. The study included a preface about the general picture of the situation of the petroleum and energy industry in 2020 and how they were impacted by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, with brief examples of some of these effects on some Arab countries.

Then the study was divided into three chapters:

1. The first chapter examined companies’ budgets and the various influencer on throughout history, the most important milestones that the petroleum industry has gone through since the 2008 economic crisis, the relationship between global demand and oil prices, and then the relationship between prices and the volume of discoveries. The second chapter focused on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the petroleum industry in terms of global oil production rates, and the role of previous health crises on production. It also looked at OPEC countries’ reduction in production as a result of the pandemic and the extent of this impact on prices. The study then proceeded to investigate the impact of the pandemic on drilling operations in the Arab countries and the world, and looked at changes in shale oil production in the United States. Then the study touched on the impact of the pandemic on renewable energy sources from projects under construction and in terms of the effect on current assets. In an effort to clarify the impact of the pandemic on the petroleum industry, the study presented an example of the impact of Covid-19 on the pipeline market. While in the third chapter, the study examined the topic of peak demand and refuted some of the allegations that the demand for oil had reached its peak in 2020. Then it moved to the major risk indicators of the petroleum industry today.
First: World Oil Markets

1. Oil Prices

OPEC primary estimates indicate that OPEC Reference Basket price decreased in April 2021 by 2.8% compared to the previous month, to reach $62.78/bbl. While annual price of OPEC Basket is expected to increase in 2021 by $19.2/bbl or 46.4% compared to 2020, to reach $60.71/bbl.

It’s worth mentioning that, OPEC Reference Basket increased in March 2021 by 5.7% or $3.5/bbl, compared to the previous month, to reach $64.6/bbl, the highest monthly average since January 2020. This is mainly attributed to the improvement in oil market fundamentals and the positive futures markets amid rising optimism about the global oil demand recovery and restrained global oil supply. As OPEC+ continued to show strong conformity levels to their production adjustments, and Saudi Arabia implemented an additional voluntary reduction in its production by 1 million b/d. This further contributed to accelerating the global oil market rebalancing. Oil prices were also supported by data showing a decline in OECD oil stocks in February 2021, for the sixth month in a row.

2. Supply and Demand

- Primary estimates indicate that world oil demand is decreased in Q1 2021 by 0.8% compared with previous quarter, to reach 93.4 million b/d. As demand in OECD countries increased by 0.7% to reach 43.3 million b/d. Whereas demand in Non-OECD countries decreased by 2.1% to reach 50.1 million b/d.

Source: OPEC, Monthly Oil Market Report, Various issues.

Weekly Average Spot Prices of OPEC Basket of Crudes, 2020-2021 ($/bbl)

* Prepared by the Economics Department.

Monthly Report on Petroleum Developments in The World Markets *

* Prepared by the Economics Department.
Projections indicate that world oil demand is expected to increase in Q2 2021 to reach 95.1 million b/d. As demand in OECD countries is expected to increase to reach 44.3 million b/d. And demand in Non-OECD countries is expected to increase to reach 50.8 million b/d.

Primary estimates indicate that world oil supplies in March 2021, increased by 1.139 million b/d or 1.2% comparing with previous month level to reach 92.9 million b/d. Non-OPEC supplies increased by 1.5% to reach 62.8 million b/d, and OPEC crude oil and NGLs/condensates total supplies decreased by 0.3% to reach 30.1 million b/d.

For the first time in four months, US tight oil production in March 2021 increased by 493 thousand b/d compared to the previous month level, to reach 7.595 million b/d. Production is expected to continue rising in April and May 2021 to reach 7.612 million b/d. On other development, US oil rig count increased in March 2021 by 14 rigs, to stand at 374 rigs.

3. Oil Inventories

OECD commercial inventories in March 2021 decreased by 8 million barrels from the previous month level to reach 2969 million barrels, whereas strategic inventories settled at the same previous month level of 1849 million barrels.
4. Oil Trade

- US crude oil imports in March 2021, increased by 0.4% from the previous month level to reach about 5.7 million b/d, whereas US crude oil exports decreased by 3% to reach about 2.7 million b/d.

- US petroleum products imports in March 2021 increased by 19.1% from the previous month level to reach about 2.5 million b/d, and US petroleum products exports increased by 0.3% to reach about 4.5 million b/d.

Second: Natural Gas Market

1. Prices

- The average spot price of natural gas at the Henry Hub decreased in March 2021 to reach $2.62/million BTU.

- The price of Japanese LNG imports in February 2021 increased by $0.82/m BTU to reach $9.32/m BTU, and the price of Korean LNG imports increased by $2.27/m BTU to reach $10.21/m BTU. And The price of Chinese LNG imports reached $8.39/m BTU.

2. Exports

- Arab LNG exports to China, Japan and South Korea were about 4.582 million tons in February 2021 (a share of 24.4% of total imports).
Tables Annex
Pursuant to its policy of encouraging scientific research by awarding two prizes on a biennial basis (First Prize KD 7000, Second Prize KD 5000, equivalent to USD $23000 and USD $16000), upon the resolution number 1/151 of OAPEC Executive Bureau at its meeting dated 1/10/2018. The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) is pleased to announce that the research field selected for the "OAPEC Award for Scientific Research for the Year 2020" is:

**Environmental Research Related to Petroleum & Energy Industry**

The deadline for receiving research participating in the OAPEC Scientific Award for the year 2020 has been extended to 31 May 2021 instead of 31 December 2020.

Research papers will be received by email of the award:
Oapecaward2020@oapecorg.org

**Research Field:**

Environment is an important aspect of the world’s energy system. Energy is closely linked with environmental issues, particularly after the conclusion of the UN agreement on climate change by the international community. The petroleum and energy industry is currently facing many challenges, most significantly the increasing global interest in environmental perspectives and the tightening of environmental legislations and their impacts on the energy industry in general, and petroleum industry in particular. Therefore, research work in this field varies to cover all aspects of the petroleum industry from exploration, production, transportation, storage, to refining, distribution and marketing. This is along with considering the impact of new energy and renewables on the environment.

The research work eligible for this award may address one or more of the environmental perspectives of the petroleum and energy industry, including, but not limited to:

1. Environmental Impacts and the Role of Modern Technologies in:
   - Exploration and Production of Oil and Gas
   - Treatment of Liquid and Solid Waste Resulting from Downstream Industries
3. Economic Implications of Environmental Legislations on the Petroleum and Energy Industry
4. New Environmental Regulations and their Impacts on the Operation Performance of Production Units, e.g. Cleaner Fuel Production.
Conditions for Submitting the Research

1. The research may be submitted by one or more author(s). Institutions and organizations are excluded.
2. The research submitted must be new and original, and has not been granted an award previously.
3. The author(s) shall agree in advance to give OAPEC the right to print and publish the research in case he/she/they win one of the prizes. A signed statement to this effect must be submitted with the research (sample provided below). The author(s) will maintain all other rights, including patent rights (if applicable). OAPEC shall not exercise its right to publish the winning research for a period of six months commencing with the date of advising the winning author(s) with the decision of the Award Committee, must be provided.
4. A statement by the author(s), attesting that the research is original, must be provided. Segments fully or partially taken from other sources should be properly cited. A detailed list of all references used must also be attached.
5. Four hard copies and a digital copy of the research (either in Arabic or English) should be submitted, along with the Curriculum Vitae of each researcher.
6. The deadline for submitting the research is 31st December, 2020. No submission will be accepted after that date.
7. Prizes are awarded to individuals of all nationalities advised of the Award Committee’s decision.
8. The award will not be presented twice consecutively to the same recipient.
9. Any research that does not fulfill the above conditions shall be disregarded.