

EMIRATES BANKS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates

The agenda of the national economy of the United Arab Emirates during 2008 was rife with a plurality of significant resolutions, initiatives, and achievements. They formed an essential support for the economy to continue its growth, realize more achievements and positive results at the entire economy level, and enhance its capabilities and methodology in facing local and external challenges, namely those procedures taken to counter the developments of the global financial crisis.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the State, may God safeguard him, confirmed that the UAE was capable of curbing the impacts of the global financial crisis through pumping liquidity, legislating laws, and enhancing the productivity of the national institutions. Referring to the effects of the global economic recession on the UAE, His Highness also reiterated that such effects will not restrain the State from proceeding with the plans and programs of advancing the oil industries and increasing the productivity of crude oil, gas and petrochemicals.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa believed that the budget of the federal government for the year 2009, seen as the biggest since the rise of Emirates union, reflected the availability of financial resources and a real will for more spending in all sectors. He confirmed that "the decline in oil prices will not restrain us from continuing to provide financial allocations for this budget without reducing any part of it under the influence of the crisis." His Highness also confirmed that the UAE will concentrate its investments inside the country within the framework of the comprehensive development process. "As far as we look for viable investment opportunities abroad, we seriously seek to attract foreign investment to our country" he said.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, may God safeguard him, explained that the UAE position towards the global financial crisis. He confirmed that the government and the competent authorities of the State have carefully and wisely dealt with the consequences of the crisis. He believed that the global financial system was a single unit that cannot be divided, and called for more serious and vigorous cooperation and coordination among the various financial and banking institutions around the world to curb the untoward consequences of the crisis and its

implications on development programs and plans in the various countries around the world, "Our national economy was and is still in good shape", he said.

On the other hand, H. E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, as he chaired a coordination meeting with the Directors of Economic Departments in the UAE, confirmed that coordination and joining of efforts among federal and local authorities was an essential need to curb the impacts of the global financial crisis on the various economic sectors in the State. An outcome of the meeting was the formation of a Joint Emergency Committee to deal with the economic challenges in the State, adopt an effective policy and submit urgent recommendations to the Council of Ministers.

- Expectations related to Gross National Product (GNP) of the United Arab Emirates in 2008 indicated that the GNP increased by 13.9% to AED 801 billion (\$ 218.1 billion), compared to AED 703 billion (\$ 191.4 billion) in 2007.

Non-oil economic sectors achieved a growth rate estimated at 8.4% with their total input to the GNP amounting to AED 495.5 billion (\$ 134.9 billion) compared to AED 457 billion (\$ 124.4 billion) in 2007 and about 62% of the GNP in 2008, compared to 65% in 2007.

However, the oil sector achieved high growth rate by 24.2% amounting to AED 305.5 billion (\$ 83.2 billion) compared to AED 246 billion (\$ 67 billion) in 2007. These revenues are seen as main funding source for the annual budget, which was issued without deficit. Moreover, these revenues cover government spending, which is the primary engine of economic activities in the State. The rate of the oil sector's input in the GNP increased to 38% in 2008 compared to 35% in 2007.

Formation of a council to coordinate the government financial policies:

A Council to coordinate government financial policies was formed under the Council of Ministers' resolution No. 39 of the year 2008. The new council will have following responsibilities:

- Collecting all government financial statements and reports at the State level.
 - The government financial policies.
 - Consultation on budget projects and government expenditures at the State level to support the economic development in the UAE.
 - The policies related to the development of revenue and taxation policies.
 - Sovereign credit rating of the federal government and local governments.
 - Mechanisms for funding the projects, either through borrowing or bonds.
- H. E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, announced that the ministerial committee on legislations concluded the study of the draft law to

regulate the credit operations in the State. The new law will address all matters related to the rules and basics of credit, the provision of a database for credit operations in the State to ensure the organization of such operations and help to sustain the economic stability of the State.

On the other hand, H.E. Minister of Economy expected the new Companies Law in the UAE to be issued in 2009. He indicated that the draft law was still under study, as several amendments thereon were made to address the weaknesses of the current Companies Law. When issued, the new law will constitute a significant step forward in improving the economic climate and business environment in the State.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) confirms the strength of the economy of the UAE:

International financial institutions and the International Monetary Fund, in particular, confirmed that capability of the UAE national economy to cope with the current global economic challenges thanks by virtue of its distinctive flexibility that enabled the UAE economy to stand firm in the face of the global financial crisis. The IMF predicted that the UAE economy will record positive growth of 3.3% during 2009, which is the best rate when compared to the economies of other fast-growing emerging countries.

Furthermore, reports issued by international financial institutions indicated that their forecasts for the UAE national economy to continue its growth trend despite of the consequences of the global financial crisis were based on the fact that the UAE managed over the last years to direct a significant portion of its oil revenues to domestic investments and to investments in ambitious developmental infrastructure projects that serve the future vision of the State and its economic diversification strategy.

The Union's budget for the fiscal year 2009:

The Council of Ministers approved, in its extraordinary session of October 2008 under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, the Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, **The Union's budget for the fiscal year 2009**, which amounted to AED 42 billion and 200 million without deficit for the fifth consecutive year and with an estimated increase by 21% above the fiscal year 2008.

The Education sector acquired 23% and the service sector 37% of the said budget, which confirms the government's endeavor and interest in developing both the education and service sectors, and in particular the health services for the citizens.

- The volume of foreign direct investment flowing into the United Arab Emirates during 2007 increased from 3% to \$ 13.2% billion, the equivalent of AED 48.6 billion, compared to \$ 12.8 billion in 2006 according to the report on foreign investment in 2008 issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The report rated the UAE in the second place among the Arab countries in terms of the most favorable countries to foreign direct investment after Saudi Arabia which attracted investments in the value of \$ 24 billion.

- A report issued by the Dubai International Financial Center stated that the value of assets of four investment funds in the UAE amounted to \$ 6.5 billion, and that real estate investment funds achieved the highest levels of growth in volume at the UAE level rising up from \$ 45 million in 2004 to \$ 1.9 billion.

- The value of petroleum exports from the UAE in 2007 amounted to approximately \$ 100.2 billion of \$ 2.038 trillion, the total value of the international petroleum exports.

Thus, the UAE is a major exporter of petroleum products worldwide. It is ranked the fourth after the European Union, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

- At the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom for 2009, based on 10 key parameters to measure the degree of economic freedom, the UAE has globally advanced from the 63rd position to 54th position with a rating of 64.3 points (on a 100-point index).

Also, the UAE was ranked in the sixth position at the Arab world level on this index. According to the 2009 index, the UAE has earned the rating of 99.9 points in terms of government financial freedom, thereby becoming the first at the world level.

- The UAE was ranked the 46th globally and the fourth at the Arab level on the index of the World Bank for the ease of doing business for the year 2008, in addition to attaining the first rating on the index of competitiveness capability in the information field in the Middle East.

- The UAE maintained its first place among Arab countries with respect to the average of Internet use at 37.79%, the use of computers at 26.44% and the introduction of 1482 million new computers into use during the year 2007.

- The UAE was ranked second, after Qatar, at the Arab level, and 35th at the global level on the index of corruption perceptions for 2008 released by Transparency International. It was reported that the improvement in the rating of the UAE on the index was attributed to the strengthening of the state financial audit institution.

- A report by the United Nations on the performance of electronic governments in 2008 ascribed the progress of the UAE to the first rank in the Arab world and 32nd out of 192 countries at the international level in the field of e-government

applications to the enormous development in the e-services, particularly with respect to shortening lead time to complete transactions.

- The UAE was classified on the sixth rank globally and the first regionally for attracting foreign labor and for the employment services related to such migrant labor.

- The international credit rating agency (Moody's Corporation) confirmed that the decline in oil prices will not affect the high sovereign rating of the UAE. Moody's asserted the high capability of the UAE economy to continuously achieve good growth rates over the coming years in the light of the positive ratings which the State is still maintaining at Aa2 level, being the best sovereign evaluation among the countries of the Middle East.

- The UAE was ranked 14th among 181 countries on the World Bank classification of the ease of doing business around the world.

The classification report indicated that the economies having the advantage of customs efficiency and high quality transportation network, not requiring a great deal of paper work, and making compliance with import and export procedures easier and more cost-effective would be the most competitive in this field at the global level.

- The UAE was ranked tenth among the largest countries of the world in terms of gross financial surpluses in the fiscal year 2007, according to the IMF estimates.

The IMF said that the gross global financial surpluses in 2007 amounted to \$ 1.68 trillion, wherein the share of the largest 10 countries accounted for 70%.

The payment balance surpluses of the UAE, according to the report on the 2008 Global Economic Prospects issued by the International Monetary Fund, amounted to approx. \$ 39.11 billion (AED 143.53 billion), which is the equivalent of 21% of the gross national product. A recent specialist report considered the UAE to be the largest source of Dollar Sukuk (bonds in dollar) in the world wherein the UAE input during 2008 was about 35.6% of the total global issuance of Sukuk at \$ 15 billion. The main portion of these bonds came from the financial and real estate service sectors.

Emirate of Abu Dhabi:

- His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, in his capacity as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, issued the Law No. 7 of 2008 establishing the Statistics Center - Abu Dhabi, with an independent nominal person. The center shall have financial and administrative independence along with full legal capacity to act. It will be the only source for official statistics on the entire Emirate.

- His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, in his capacity as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, issued the Law No. 14 of 2008 establishing the Abu Dhabi Accounting Institution as an independent authority with a nominal personality reporting to H.H. the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. The new institution will replace the financial control institution. The new institution shall have a chairman selected from UAE nationals and appointed by an Emiri decree based on a recommendation from H.H. the Crown Prince on the grade of directorate head.

The objective of the new institution is to verify the authenticity of financial reports and ensure compliance by all subject authorities to the laws and regulations. His Highness Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Presidential Affairs and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Judiciary Directorate issued his instructions to establish specialized courts to consider the various types of economic law cases, including contracting and construction cases, other courts for the cases involving banks, financial institutions, securities and investment, and courts specialized in cases of industrial disputes as well as other economic issues.

- A report issued by the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry predicted that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Emirate during 2008 will amount to about AED 501 billion.

The report indicates that the GDP of Abu Dhabi is expected to achieve growth at the rate of 14.5% at current prices and 7.3% at fixed prices (actual).

As to the development of economic sectors (except crude oil), it is expected that the economic sectors will achieve a growth rate of no less than 14.8% in aggregate, and that the construction and building sector will continue in leading the other sectors with a growth rate of no less than 20%.

It is also predicted that the input of non-oil sectors in GDP of Abu Dhabi will amount to 44% in 2008, compared to its input of 42% in 2007. In addition, the expected and flowed-in volume of direct foreign investments to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi was estimated at around AED 10 billion during 2008, so that the total expected DFI of around ten thousand foreign companies in Abu Dhabi would be approx. AED 131 billion by the end of 2008.

- Economic Vision of 2030 for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi:

Abu Dhabi Government announced the launch of a long-term plan to transform the economy of the Emirate into a knowledge-based economy and gradually reduce dependence on the oil sector as a key source of economic activity. The plan statement, entitled "**The Economic Vision of 2030 for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi**", provides a comprehensive plan aiming at achieving sustainable development through:

- * Attaining economic growth rates of 7% p.a. through 2015, and 6% onward through 2030.
- * Increasing the GDP by 5 folds by 2030.
- * Reducing dependence on oil.
- * Controlling inflation.
- * Achieving the target of (full employment) for the citizens.

The vision, detailed in 140-pages document, focuses on seven areas, on top of which is the creation of an open and integrated business environment in the context of a global economy, and the adoption of disciplined financial policy capable of responding to economic phases.

- An economic report predicted that the volume of investments on new projects in five major sectors in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi by the end of 2010 will be approximately AED 1.925 trillion distributed as follows:

AED 1.2 trillion	on the building and construction sector
AED 290 billion	on the tourism sector
AED 75 billion	on the service sector
AED 120 billion	on the energy and water sector
AED 240 billion	on the industrial sector

- Five of the largest real estate investment and development companies in Abu Dhabi announced the launch of (Abu Dhabi Joint-stock Finance "private") company with a capital of AED 500 million to provide funding for individuals in the real estate market of Abu Dhabi. The company will initially provide real estate loans for house buyers in the Emirate. The real estate projects of the founding companies accounted for more than two-thirds of the new real estate units in Abu Dhabi.

Emirate of Dubai:

- His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, in his capacity as the Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai, issued the Law No. 1 of 2009 pertaining to the Budget of the Emirate of Dubai for the fiscal year 2009 with a total of AED 135 billion and a growth of 11% above the budget of 2008 achieving a surpluses in the consolidated budget of AED 3 billion.

- His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, in his capacity as the Ruler of Dubai, issued the Security Mortgage Law in the Emirate of Dubai No. 14 of 2008. The Law comprises five chapters explaining, through 35 articles, all matters related to the procedures of security mortgage on property, its legal effects, the concerned authorities, the execution procedures on the mortgaged property, and regulating the relationship

between the mortgagor, the mortgagee and the Dubai Land Department being the relevant enforcing authority thereof, as well as setting forth the rights and duties of each party.

- His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, in his capacity as the Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai, issued a law pertaining to the establishment of the Dubai Institution for Event Management & Organization with capital of AED 150 million. Pursuant to the provisions of this law, the institution aims at contributing to the promotion of the Emirate position as an international hub for various events, conferences and exhibitions.

- Through a group of wholly owned companies and its shares in public shareholding companies, the Government of Dubai investments achieved net profit in the value of AED 33.085 billion in 2007.

- The DUBAL Company plans to invest AED 700 million in a move aiming at increasing its total production capacity to 1.5 million tons p.a. DUBAL announced the launch of the first foundry of its kind in the region with total investments amounting to AED 100 million. The total production capacity of this foundry will reach 80 thousand tons of aluminum metal per annum.

- The Emirate of Dubai is currently implementing large-scale projects to develop the aviation sector and establish ancillary facilities to be progressively completed through 2012 with a cost of AED 300 billion out of the total investment related to the construction of the highest quality infrastructure in all economic sectors with a cost of AED 800 billion.

- Work continues in the implementation of the (Dubai World Central) city project. The cost of the infrastructure of the city amounts to \$ 33 billion and will be built on an area of 140 square kilometers in Jebel Ali. The project includes an airport, to be one of the largest airports in the world; as well as a number of special purpose cities including an aviation city, logistic services city, trade city, and a golf resort, in addition to residential cities, utilities, recreational and tourism facilities.

- For the first time ever, the railway networks were added to the transportation infrastructure in the State. The Government of Dubai announced the establishment of a network of subway trains worth AED 15 billion.

The trains' network, which will be implemented in two phases and completed in 2013, extends over about 72 kilometers of tunnels and 51 kilometers of bridges to accommodate 100 trains serving 55 subway stations.

Work in the second phase of Dubai Metro (Green Line) project achieved significant progress as the work continues on the construction of 6 underground stations and 12 and above-ground stations. It is scheduled that the work in the project will be completed in March 2010 and will include the construction of a 23-kilometer long line.

Northern Emirates:

As the real estate boom expanded to the Northern Emirates, these Emirates attracted the attention of a large number of local and foreign investors. This was supported by the launch of more new real estate projects in the Emirate of Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah and Ajman, which witnessed the launch of 20 projects during the first half of 2007 only, with a cost of AED 20 billion. In the Emirate of Sharjah, six development projects were launched including the (Seer Bon'air) project; while in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, a joint venture project with an American companies was launched to build a giant regional complex in the global hospitality sector under the name of (International Hospitality Zone for Trade and Training) with a cost of AED 10 billion.

Tameer Holding Company in Sharjah has completed the infrastructure work for (Assalam City) project, which is to be completed in three phases. The investments involved exceed AED 30 million and the project comprises 20 luxury residential and commercial towers.

The Investment Authority of Ras Al Khaimah signed an investment deal on July 18, 2007 with an international Japanese company to purchase the fourth island of Al-Murjan Islands Project for AED 3.4 billion. The company plans to convert the island to a luxury tourist resort with a Japanese touch.

The size of real estate investments in the Emirate of Ajman exceeded \$ 7 billion during the years 2006 and 2007. They included the Emirates City Project developed by the (R Holding) Company with investments amounting up to \$ 4 billion. The Emirate of Ajman intends to launch two new projects during the year 2007 with a cost of \$ 15 billion to develop the visitors' area, and launch the (Ajman Marina) project.

The total value of the new real estate investments in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain amounts to approx. AED 42 billion.

***The Arab Countries and
GCC***

The Arab Countries and GCC

- According to the United Arab Economic report for 2008, the GDP of the Arab Countries, at current rates, amounted to around \$1472 Billion achieving a growth rate of around 14% compared with 18.2% in 2006.

The increase in oil revenues due to the rising of oil prices in the international markets reflected a remarkable growth in GDP of the Arab Countries.

- Most of the Arab Countries witnessed an improvement in level of per-capita income from GDP at current rates in 2007 compared with 2006, the average per-capita income at current rates increased at Arab Countries from \$4188 per-capita in 2006 to around \$4661 in 2007, an increase by 11.3% compared with 15.9% in 2006.

- Report issued by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce signified that GDP of the GCC amounted to \$804.2 Billion in 2007 compared to \$713.5 Billion in 2006 with gross growth rate of 12.7% according to the Following :

GCC states (GDP)

\$ Billion

	%	2007	2006	
UAE	16,4	190,-	163,3	الامارات
Bahrain	21,8	19,-	15,6	البحرين
K.S.A.	8,8	376,-	345,7	السعودية
Oman	13,8	40,1	35,4	عمان
Qatar	29,9	67,8	52,2	قطر
Kuwait	9,9	111,3	101,3	الكويت
Total of G.D.P.	12,7	804,2	713,5	إجمالي الناتج

Resource: Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce

The GCC Monetary Union Agreement

The closing statement for the 29th Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held in Muscat included the approval of the Monetary Union Agreement and the Basic Statute of the Monetary Union Council, which will complete the technical requirements for monetary union and the preparations for the establishment of the GCC Central Bank and the issuance of the single currency, excluding the Sultanate of Oman.

However, the GCC member states demonstrated significant progress on the economic level, especially with the declaration of the Common Gulf Market in Doha in 2007 in addition to the agreement on the Customs Union, which enhances the process of economic cooperation and, hopefully, after the ratification of Monetary Union referred to above, the Union will be operational as of 2010 simultaneously with the launch of the single currency.

"The impact of the global financial crisis on the Gulf Cooperation Council"

- During a meeting in Dubai, the Federation of GCC Chambers (FGCCC) called for joint efforts to address the consequences of the current global financial crisis through the development of a common assessment of the size of the Crisis effects and how to make use of it by directing the GCC investments inward and increasing the exchange of inter-trade among the GCC member states and between the GCC member states and Arab countries.

According to the FGCCC data, the volume of trade exchange increased among the GCC member states from AED 18 billion in 2002 to AED 31 billion in 2005, and then to AED 45 billion in 2008.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expected a slowdown in the economic growth in the Arab Gulf States to 5.1% in 2009 compared with 6.8% in 2008, and it is expected to experience further decline because of the deteriorating global economic conditions.

In its forecasts for global growth in 2009, the IMF reduced the growth rate to be in the range of 1% and 1.5% with the deteriorating economic conditions. IMF indicated that the opportunities for global economic growth have deteriorated in the

past few months. Consumers and corporate confidence fell down to unprecedented levels since decades. Economic activity has also sharply declined, and the year 2009 will experience formidable challenges for the global economy.

- The GCC decided to suspend the negotiations under way since 20 years with the European Union on a free trade agreement. The decision was announced by the Secretary-General of the Council, who added that "We will suspend negotiations until the European party agrees to sign the final draft of the agreement;" and he confirmed that the GCC member states made many concessions and responded to the numerous demands made by the European Union.

- According to estimates by real estate developers for the year 2008, the size of the real estate market in the GCC member states amounted to more than one trillion dollars (AED 3.68 trillion). The United Arab Emirates accounted for more than 900 billion dollars (AED 3.3 trillion) i.e. more than 90%, which confirms the strength of the real estate sector in the UAE.

- Currently, there are between 114 to 120 power generation projects in the six GCC member states with combined total cost ranging between 160 to 200 billion dollars.

In addition, GCC member states play an increasing role as exporters of capitals to the developing countries. Such capital funds were estimated at about 30 billion dollars in 2008 according to World Bank report on global development.

- The flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the Arab countries amounted a record 62 billion dollars in 2006 with a growth rate of 36% above the figure achieved in 2005 as per the Report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

The report considered that this growth reflects the magnitude of efforts made by most Arab countries to attract FDIs, helped by several factors, including the high rate of economic growth in the GCC member states because of the substantial rise in oil revenues and economic reform efforts carried out by Arab countries, particularly the privatization programs, the opening of new sectors to FDI and the substantial progress in improving the business climate.

- The Chairman of the General Federation of Arab Countries Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture that the volume of liquidity available in the various Arab countries is greater than three trillion dollars and is ready to engage in new projects in various sectors and investment fields.

- A study by an international company specialized in the field of strategic management consulting estimated the volume of capitals available for investment in the public and private sectors at the value of 4 trillion dollars in the Middle East. Such huge investment power is closely associated with sovereign wealth funds, where the value of assets managed by such sovereign funds increased by 18 % over

the years 2006 and 2007 to amount to 3.3 trillion dollars at the global level. The sovereign funds in the Middle East account for 50% of these international funds.

- The Arab Monetary Fund confirmed that the remittances of the migrant workers were the most important financial sources flowing into the labor-exporting Arab countries. The report indicated that such remittances exceeded 24.4 billion dollars per year.

Comparing the ratio of worker remittances to the recipient Arab countries to the combined gross national product (GNP) of these countries, the average of this ratio amounted to approximately 5.3%, while in some Arab countries, the labor remittances thereto constitute a relative importance higher than this average. Examples include:

In Jordan, the ratio of worker remittances amounted to 19.7% of its GNP.

In Lebanon, the ratio of worker remittances amounted to 19.3% of its GNP.

In Palestine, the ratio of worker remittances amounted to 15.4% of its GNP.

In Morocco, the ratio of worker remittances amounted to 8.8% of its GNP.

In Egypt, the ratio of worker remittances amounted to 5.6% of its GNP.

***The Banking Sector in the
United Arab Emirates***

The Banking Sector in the United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates has managed to absorb the first shock of the global financial crisis. The State leadership and government have taken a series of steps as preventive measures of any potential impacts of this crisis on the local banking system and the national economy.

In this context, pursuant to the directions of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and His Highness Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, the government decided to support and protect the banking sector in the UAE by funds amounted to AED 120 billion in two payments: The first was through the allocation of AED 50 billion by the Central Bank in the form of facilities for the benefit of banks operating in the State for use when needed; and the second was made when the government decided to transfer AED 70 billion to the Ministry of Finance and ordered the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance to develop the appropriate mechanisms for pumping this liquidity in the banking sector during the coming period. Committee was formed to follow up implementation of the resolutions and action of the Council of Ministers in this regard.

Furthermore, government resolutions was issued providing guarantee to the deposits in the national and foreign banks operating in the State for a period of 3 years in addition to providing guarantees for borrowings among the banks and assurances that no national bank will be exposed to any credit risk.

Moreover, in an initiative to strengthen the solvency of the five national banks in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the Abu Dhabi government announced that it will purchase qualified bonds in the first segment of the capital of those banks in the value of AED 16 billion.

Those bonds will not be fixed-term bonds and banks shall have the right to pay them in full in accordance with certain conditions. The Government of Abu Dhabi announced that this initiative is a proactive strategic step to affirm confidence in the banking institutions, especially under current global economic conditions. The initiative came after the completion of a comprehensive review for the growth plans of the banking sector growth and in implementation of the ambitious economic strategies in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Government of Dubai also announced the launch of a long-term bonds scheme, considered to be the largest in the history of the State, in the amount of 20 billion dollars (AED 73.4 billion). The UAE Central Bank subscribed for the first issue of these bonds in the value of 10 billion dollars (AED 36.75 billion) in order to secure the necessary funding to meet their financial obligations and proceed with the development programs.

His Excellency Sultan Bin Nasser Al Suwaidi, Governor of the UAE Central Bank confirmed that the total funds utilized by the banks from the facilities provided by the Central Bank as a result of the global financial crisis consequences was less than 15%, and later on this percentage had fallen to zero according to press statements by H.E. the Governor, which indicates a sound position of liquidity appropriately available at the banks. He emphasized that there was no liquidity problem in the UAE pointing out that liquidity crisis in the world was caused by the high interest rates on borrowing among banks because of the global financial crisis.

H.E. the Governor indicated that the Central Bank has instructed the banks not to force their customers to liquidize their share assets due to the current unfavorable conditions in the local capital markets, stressing that the consequences of the global financial crisis was still in its beginnings and was hitting all countries of the world after hitting the global banking sector in the first impact. He believed that mergers between banks could be one of effective solutions to face the consequences of the global financial crisis.

H.E. Sultan Bin Nasser Al Suwaidi Governor of Central Bank of the UAE announced – during his visit to Washington DC for attending the IMF/WB Annual Meeting – the following:

The UAE national banks and foreign banks enjoy a strong financial position, as the ownership of deposits are distributed as follows:

- Nationals 75%
- Arab 8%
- Other nationalities 17%

As for the inter-bank deposits percentage, it is 12.7% to the total assets and most of these are owned by banks in the UAE.

For the assets side, the majority of assets of national and foreign banks operating in the UAE are in the UAE and their parties are known and sound, contrary to what is there in other economies where most parties in these countries are unknown.

And for capital of banks and their reserves, they represent 11.02% of bank assets, which is considered high according to Basel II standards.

Thus, national banks and branches of foreign banks operating in the UAE are constructed on safe and sound foundations of 77.4% of secure financing recourses.

H.E. Ahmed Humaid Al Tayer, Deputy Chairman of the Emirates Banks Association (EBA), Chairman of the Board of the National Emirates Bank of Dubai, expected that the banks operating in the State will achieve good growth rates in their profitability during this year despite of the financial crises occurred in the recent period.

He said that the UAE banks are characterized by their balanced investment policies, which enabled them to strongly face the challenges that occurred recently and had not encountered serious problems as the case with other banks. He announced that after the recent global developments, EBA created a specialized technical committee for risk management comprising senior officials involved in risk management in the major banks of the UAE.

He said that the banks should give higher priority and significance to the aspect of risk management, especially in the light of the recent events in the global markets. He confirmed that the banks' indicators, particularly with regard to their utilization of only 15% of the facilities provided by the Central Bank to enhance liquidity, showed that these banks are in a good position and that there was no cause for any concern. He said that all indicators demonstrated the strength of the UAE banking system and that it was not significantly affected by the global financial crisis, especially as the banks had realized excellent profit growth rates in third quarter last year, exceeding 50% in some cases.

UAE Banking Sector Indicators:

According to UAE Central Bank statistics, all banks indicators have shown remarkable growth during the year 2008 (compared with the year 2007) as follows:

(In Billion Dirhams)

	2007	2008	Growth
Total Assets	1223,-	1480,5	21%
Total Credits	696,5	1018,5	46,2%
Total Deposits	716,-	922,5	28,8%

- Statistics of the UAE Central Bank for the year 2008 revealed that commercial banks operating in UAE were 52 banks (24 national banks and 28 foreign banks).

The total numbers of the banks and their branches including Pay Offices, Customer Services Units and Automated Branches were 860 as follows:

- 714 National Banks
- 146 Foreign Banks

- Statistics also indicates the following for the middle of 2008:

Number of Investment Banks	:2
Number of Specialized Banks	:2
Number of Finance Companies	:19
Number of Development Institutions	:2
Number of Investment Institutions	:2
Number of Representative Offices	:86
Number of Financial Investments Companies	:17
Number of Exchanges Offices	:481 (including H.O. 108)

- ATM machines with UAE switch reached 2129 as at the middle of 2008.

- Islamic Banking Sector in UAE witnessed a remarkable growth during 2008 by inaugurating the operation of three new Islamic banks as follows:

- 1- Noor Islamic Bank with capital of more than AED 3 Billion, started inauguration of his operations officially during Jan. 2008 through 10 branches all over the world.
- 2- Al Hilal Bank with capital of AED 4, - Billion owned in full to the Government of Abu Dhabi, started inauguration of his operations during June 2008.
- 3- Ajman Bank with Capital of AED 1 Billion - 55% of same owned by public shareholders – started inauguration of his operations during the last quarter of 2008.

- 17 UAE National Banks emerged on the list of the major 1000 banks in the world, and (7) UAE National Banks emerged on the list of the first 25 Arab Banks, according to “The Banker” magazine July 2008 issue.

- 13 sources of funding for the Real-Estate sector distributed among specialized companies and banks in UAE in accordance to management studies for the department of planning and economy in Abu Dhabi .

The value of mortgage lending reached AED 64 Billion until Sep. 2008 compared with AED 58 Billion in 2007.

- Human Resources Development Committee for Banking Sector issued statistics in regard of the number of National Employees and overall number employees in banking sector for the year 2008 (Compared with the year 2007) as follows:

Percentage of National Employees	Number of National Employees	Overall Number of Employees	Date
32.3%	10566	32723	31/12/2007
31,1%	11808	37964	31/12/2008
1,2-%	1242	5241	Different
1,2-%	% 11,7	16%	Percentage Change

National branches Managers percentage raised to 68.42% compared with 65.96% in 2007, and 11 banks achieved 100% in national branch Managers position.

Swap Operations (Dirham / US dollar)

For the purpose of providing further services to the banking system, the Central Bank Board of Directors has resolved to provide swap facilities (Dirham / US Dollar) to banks operating in the UAE according to the following steps :

- 1- These facilities shall be provided to all banks operating in the UAE, regardless of whether or not they have a shortfall in their Dirham net position.
- 2- These operations will begin by the Central Bank buying US Dollar against the Dirham (spot) and selling US Dollar against the Dirham (forward) at the same time.
- 3- The tenors of these facilities shall be as follows:
One week, one month, two months, three months, six months, nine months and twelve months.

Financial Transactions Carried-out Electronically through the UAESWITCH

The Central Bank of the UAE announced that the statistics of the UAESWITCH for the 1st half of 2008 have shown a remarkable increase in number and value of financial transactions, carried-out electronically through the UAESWITCH.

The total number of financial transactions has increased to 17 million financial transactions, compared to 12.388 million transactions in the 1st half of 2007, i.e. an increase of 37.2%.

Also, the total value of financial transactions increased to AED 18.291 billion in the 1st half of 2008, compared to AED 11.640 billion in the 1st half on 2007, i.e. an increase of 57.13%.

As for the total number and value of financial transactions carried-out through connection of the UAESWITCH to the GCC Switches, the total number of such financial transactions increased to 681 thousand transactions in the 1st half of 2008, compared to 633 thousand transactions in the 1st half of 2007, i.e. an increase of 7.61%. The total value of the financial transactions, also, increased to AED 849 million in the 1st half of 2008, compared to AED 758 million in the 1st half of 2007, i.e. an increase of 12%.

“(ICCS) Image Cheque Clearing System Operation”

The Central Bank of the UAE announced that Cheque Clearing in the UAE entered a new era as of 12th July 2008.

A new, fully electronic image based cheque clearing system now links all banks in the UAE.

The new system will enable fully electronic clearing of cheques regardless of where they are presented.

Real Estate Bank and Emirates Industrial Bank merged into “Emirates Development Bank”

In implementation of the resolution taken by the Ministerial Council under the presidency of H.H. Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai “may God save him”.

The Ministerial Council for services approved the merger of Real Estate Bank with Emirates Industrial Bank in one entity under the name “Emirates Development Bank”, which expected to strongly support the Banking, Financial and Real Estate sectors in the country.

Counter money laundering and terrorism financing measures

His Excellency Sultan Bin Nasser Al Suwaidi, the Governor of the UAE Central Bank and Chair of the National Ant-Money Laundering Committee of the UAE delivered an opening statement in the Eighth General Meeting of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENA FATF) against money laundering and terrorism financing, whose presidency was assumed by the UAE in 2008. During its term, the U.A.E exerted extensive valuable efforts to develop and advance the Task Force. H.E. the Governor pointed out that the UAE had demonstrated its determination to counter money laundering and curb the financing of terrorism through the establishment of robust legal, institutional and regulatory

framework consistent with the Forty Recommendations and Nine Recommendations of FATF.

H.E. the Governor confirmed that joining international and regional efforts to counter money laundering and terrorism financing was one of the key strategies of the UAE.

Arab Banking Sector

Arab Banking Sector

The Arab Banks realized unprecedented achievements since the beginning of the third millennium, and mainly, the expansion of the overall economic activities, and increase in their internal savings, in addition to attracting non-resident deposits while providing high rates, which lead to increase funding to stimulate economic developments and increase its capital base.

This was accompanied with reform programs and high economical growth of the Arab Countries.

The Arab Banking Sector witnessed a remarkable growth in financial assets during the year 2007, reaching \$ 1.69 Trillion compared to \$ 1.30 Trillion in 2006, and an increase of 30%.

GCC banks total assets amounted \$ 1.106 Trillion equal 65.4% of Arab Banks total assets.

UAE took the lead in 2007 for total assets \$ 335.8 Billion followed by Saudi Arabia \$ 286.7 Billion and Bahrain \$ 245.8 Billion as the second and third positions respectively.

Arab Banking Sector			
(In Billion US\$)			
	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	Growth %
Total Assets	1297,964	1690,275	%30
Total Credits	644,293	830,426	%29
Total Deposits	799,535	997,463	%25
Total Private Money	129,897	160,688	24%

GCC Banking Sector			
(In Billion US\$)			
	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	Growth %
Total Assets	816,861	1106,238	35%

Total Credits	406,268	546,813	35%
Total Deposits	462,017	589,514	28%
Total Private Money	92,996	119,034	28%

*** Recourse: Union of Arab Banks**

- Currently, there are 470 Arab Banks including 45 Islamic Banks as at the end of 2007.

Arab Banks collectively employ more than 370,000 employees and have an extensive network of 15000 branches distributed over the Arab states and the world, according to 2006 statistics.

The Arab Banks total assets amounted to US \$1.69 Trillion in 2007 as mentioned, represent around 125% of the GDP of the Arab Countries collectively, which reflects the huge financial depth in Arab World economy.

- The Islamic Banking Sector includes around 300 Islamic banks and financial institution, operating among 60 states across the five continents, 40% of them concentrated in Arab Countries, specifically in GCC Countries.

Financial Indicators for the First 100 Arab Bank			
Size indicator (Total Assets)			
(In Billion US\$)			
	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	Growth %
Total Assets	990,6	1281,9	29%
Total Deposits	624,7	813,5	30%
Total Credits	467,7	635,7	36%
Total Shareholders Equity	104,6	135,5	30%
Net-Profits	23,3	25,6	10%

*** Recourse: Union of Arab Banks**

- EmiratesNBD Bank topped the list of the major 100 Arab Bank according to assets criterion in 2007, the bank assets amounted US \$69.2 Billion.

Internationally 80 Arab Banks joined the list of the top 1000 world banks in accordance to the capital main criterion as revealed by a study of "The Banker Magazine".

The mentioned list included the following:

Banks from UAE	17
Banks from Saudi Arabia	11
Banks from Bahrain	10
Banks from Kuwait	8
Banks from Qatar	6
Banks from Oman	3
Banks from Lebanon	8
Banks from Jordan	5
Banks from Egypt	4
Banks from Morocco	3
Banks from Tunis	3
Banks from Syria	1
Banks from Algeria	1

The global financial crisis and the challenges facing the Arab banking sector

The most significant challenges facing the Arab banking sector as a result of the global financial crisis are probably the following:

1. The completion of the necessary preparations to comply with the required implementation of Basel 2 early in 2008 as planned by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. It is known that such implementation requires fundamental development in the risk management systems, the enhancement of corporate governance, development of capital management policies, refinement of credit and asset portfolios, and attainment of high credit ratings to avoid substantial increases in capital to cover new risks.
2. The importance for Arab banks to continue the development of their resources and expertise in combating money laundering and terrorism financing.
3. Building strategic alliances among Arab banks and between them and other local, regional or international banking and financial institutions.
4. Refinement of credit and asset portfolios of the Arab banks to free them from bad debts and the need to activate the provisions associated therewith.
5. The creation of viable feasible investment opportunities for the Arab monetary surpluses generated by the oil boom over the recent years.

Emirates Banks Association

Activities

***Activities
Of
Emirates Banks Association***

General Assembly :

EBA General Assembly held its annual ordinary meeting on Wednesday 2nd April,2008 and the minutes of the meeting distributed to all members under Ref. No. 210/2008 dated 12/4/2008.

During the meeting mentioned above, it was unanimously re-elected the members of the Board of Directors as follows:

- MashreqBank	Represented by	Mr. Abdullah A. Al-Ghurair
- Commercial bank Of Dubai	Represented by	H.E. Ahmed H. Al-Tayer
- InvestBank	Represented by	H.E. Khalfan M. Al-Roomi
- Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank	Represented by	Mr. Rashid H. Al- Mazroui
- Emirates Bank International	Represented by	Mr. Anis A. Al-Jallaf
- National Bank of Abu Dhabi	Represented by	Mr. Abdullah M. Ghubash
- RAKBank	Represented by	Mr. Abdul Aziz Al-Za'abi

According to the article No.(28) of the Association by-laws, E.B.A. Board of Directors and following the Ordinary General Assembly meeting, held a closed meeting and agreed to re-elect Mr. Abdullah A. Al-Ghurair as Chairman, H.E. Ahmed H. Al-Tayer as Deputy Chairman, and Mr. Abdullah M. Ghubash, Member of the Board of Directors as the Chairman of E.B.A. Technical Committee.

Board of Directors :

EBA Board of Directors held several meetings during 2008, three routine meetings in addition to the Annual General Meeting, and other meetings held with official concerned parties.

Besides following-up the activities performed by the association and its committees, most of those meetings were focused on discussion and following up all new circumstances occurred and related to the global financial economic crisis from its beginning since the appearance of the American real estate crisis and its direct influence and/or expected, and ways of its remedy and confrontation.

The EBA Board of Directors, expressed their appreciation and thanks to the UAE Government, and the UAE Central Bank, for adapting quick procedures in

supporting UAE Banking Sector, and insuring financial means and facilities, for their use when necessary , as a preventive measures of any potential impacts of this crisis on the local banking system and the national economy. As well as, strengthening our banking sector to jump over the crisis in order to continue their principal role in supporting all other economic sectors in the country and maintaining what have been achieve with a highly distinguished level.

Meeting With Arab Monetary Fund 30/1/2008:

During a meeting held with H.E.Dr. Jassim Al-Mannai, General Manager / Chairman of Arab Monetary Fund and other Consultants from AMF, it was agreed on the necessity of working together to find the mechanism that serves the interest of our banking community and their customers among all Arab Countries, and to continuing following-up its development and facing any circumstances revealed and solvent of any problems that prevent its achievements as well.

Meeting agreed to explore jointly with Emirates Banks Association a feasibility study for the creation of a Regional Payments System for the Arab Region.

Meeting With UAE Central Bank :

E.B.A. Board of Directors held two meetings with H.E. Sultan Bin Nasser Al-Swaidi the Governor of the UAE Central Bank, and H.E. Mr. Moh'd Ali Bin Zayed Al Falasi the deputy Governor, and other Senior Executives on 18/3/2008 and 14/12/2008.

During the mentioned above meetings and besides, continuing following-up discussion, and exchanging views regarding the important banking matters. H.E. the Governor declared the main features of the Agenda of the Central Bank Agenda, which came coincided with objectives and recommendations, mentioned in the UAE Federal Government strategy, and concentrated on updating of the current Federal Economic Laws, and Legislations, in order to meet with the necessary requirement of the current economical development, and the present expected economical growth and insuring its execution.

Ministry of Justice

A meeting on 21/4/2008 held with H.E. Dr. Hadeef Bin Jouaan Al Dhaheri to congratulate H.E. in the occasion of appointing him as the “Minister of Justice”, and to follow-up, the subjects raised and discussed previously by the formed committee jointly from Ministry of Justice, UAE Central Bank and Emirates Banks Association. Necessary recommendation issued regarding those subjects during the meeting; particularly it came in conformity with what announced in the UAE Government Strategy in respect of updating the Federal Economical Laws and Legislations.

E.B.A. Committees:

The Board of Directors followed-up the recommendations issued by Technical Committee and Legal Consultation Committee, and took the necessary recommendations and submitted to the concerned authorities with continuing follow-up.

Risk Management Committee (RMC):

Emirates Banks Association, and after communicated to all its member Banks, formed a Risk Management Committee which comprised of 26 Bank specified as (18 National banks and 8 foreign banks), in addition, the UAE Central Bank approved to nominate with thanks the Banking supervisor / Basel II implementation working Group, to represent the Central Bank in the committee .

Members of the committee agreed to form working groups to review and examine issues for the following subjects and each working group to submit their report for discussion in the RMC meetings:

- Real Estate & Legal
- Lending Against Shares
- IRB and Data Issues
- Retail Sector

HRDC-BS :

EBA Board of Directors expressed their appreciation to the committee for the hard efforts as well as the operating banks in the state for responding positively to attach many of UAE National graduators for joining the banking sector, in addition sponsors the training operations for assuring all the job levels in the banks.

Statistics of the HRDC-BS revealed as we mentioned previously, that the total number of the Nationals staff working in the banking sector during 2008, has increased by (1242), whereas the number of UAE national male and female at the end of 2008 has reached 11808 versus 10566 at the end of 2007 representing a growth reached 11.7%

It is worth to mention that the HRDC-BS chaired by H.E. Ahmed Humaid Al-Tayer and including H.E. Khalfan M. Al-Roumi- EBA Board of Directors member, who represents the Association in the committee.

Personal Loans :

Based on an invitation presented by the Federal National Council, the Association participated along with senior officers from the UAE Central bank, in a meeting on 13/3/2008 held by the Temporary Committee formed by the Council to discuss the Personal Loans Phenomena.

Following the meeting mentioned above, UAE Central Bank sent a circular to banks under reference No.1701/2008 dated 1/4/2008 regarding Personal Consumer Loans, enclosed with a drafted proposal for a new regulation amending the existing regulation No.12/93 dated 32/2/1993, for submitting their comments and suggestions regarding the proposed regulation.
Hoping the new system to meet confirmation and issuing soon.

Dormant Accounts:

To insure that all operating Banks implement the unified regulations regarding Dormant accounts, UAE Central Bank issued a circular No. 1732/2008 dated 8/4/2008 attached with the proposed system for this purpose requesting the operating banks to give their opinions

Hoping to confirm the new system in the nearest.

The Yearly UAB Conference for 2009:

H.E. Mr. Abdullah Bin A. Al Ghurair, Chairman of the Association, received Dr. Fouad Shaker the Secretary General of the Union of Arab Banks, accompanied by Mr. Wissam Fattooh, the deputy Secretary General, where they have discussed the different phases of cooperation between the Association and the Union of Arab Banks, as well as, means of support, and development.

Both emphasized on the importance of the communications between the Union and all Banking Associations in the Arab World in order to realize the aimed goals in supporting and strengthening the bilateral relations.

Mr. Al Ghurair advised with the programs of the Union of Arab Banks, and activities of the Union, particularly, the current preparations and coordination to organise the forthcoming Arab Banking conference for 2009, which has been decided to be held in Dubai on 19-20 April 2009, this besides the UAB current Annual General Meeting, which Mr. Al Ghurair welcomed this kind of initiatives to be held in the UAE.

Meeting was attended by Mr. Rashid H. Al Mazroui the Member of Board of Directors, and Mr. Fathi M. Skaik, the General Manager of EBA.

Publications

E.B.A. Publications Matters:

1. The Financial Position of Banks in U.A.E.

As in the past, Emirates Banks Association published the volume 21 of its yearly book on The Financial Position of Banks in U.A.E. for the years (2006-2007).

2. The Group of Verdicts on Banking Cases:

EBA issued the 12th supplement /2008 of the group of verdicts, which the association used to gather and distribute since 1996.

The association keen to add any new verdict with importance in the banking business.

3. S.W.I.F.T. News Letter:

Similar to the mentioned above issues the association also keen to continue publishing information with importance to SWIFT users in UAE Emirates Banks Association through issuing the quarterly newsletter about SWIFT services in UAE as well as comparing it with Services render to GCC SWIFT User Groups.

Its worth to advise, that the number of banks and financial institutions using SWIFT services in UAE exceeded 80th bank and financial institution, which made an increased in the number of traffic messages sent and received to UAE comparing with GCC countries as shown in the following table :

**Comparative List for SWIFTNet FIN Traffic Messages Sent & Received in
G.C.C
(2007-2008)**

Total Sent				
	Growth	2008	2007	
Total GCC	%25.31	41,933,399	33,461,497	اجمالي دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي
Total UAE	%30.07	16,033,568	12,325,943	دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
Total Percentage		%38.23	% 36.83	النسبة المئوية

Total Received				
	Growth	2008	2007	

Total GCC	% 21.88	27,586,074	22,633,012	اجمالي دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي
Total UAE	% 24.68	14,435,304	11,577,500	دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
Total Percentage		%52.32	% 51.15	النسبة المئوية

Finally, and as a conclusion to our 2008 report, we tried our best to highlight and cover the most important activities performed by the Association during the year.

In addition, we tried to highlight the most general economic developments in the UAE country and the Arab Counties focusing on the Banking Sector in UAE, and Arab countries as a whole, in the light of the global financial crisis and its reflections, influences, and results as well, locally and globally.

Such crisis left all sectors facing big challenges and exerting hard efforts in facing it to prevent any side effects, in order to help the banking sector to continue maintain their banking business in healthy atmospheres.

We hope that we have succeeded in our performance, and with most pleasure to receive any comments /suggestions from your side.

Assuring you, of our best cooperation.

Emirates Banks Association

21/4/2009