“Our Arab nation, in spite of the difficult situations it is facing, possesses the potentials and capabilities which enable it to surmount difficulties and achieve our common goals provided that we stand united.”

HH Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
President of the UAE

NCDR Marks UAE 41st National Day

In celebration of the UAE’s 41st National Day, the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) planted the Federation Tree in the Center’s garden in response to the national initiative launched by HH Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

Opening the ceremony marking the occasion, Dr. Abdulla El-Reyes, Director General of the NCDR, paid tribute to the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan who, together with his brother, the late Sheikh Rashid Bin Said Al-Maktoum, planted the seeds of the Federation and nurtured the blessed tree. With their determination and farsightedness, the Union’s accomplishments bourgeoned.

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SPIRIT OF THE UNION
NATIONAL DAY
UNited Arab Emirates
The National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) is constantly developing; it is no longer a mere repository of documents as may be seen by its varied activities and events providing linkage to the various official bodies in the United Arab Emirates. The NCDR is the authority they turn to for the organization and preservation of their respective archives.

Through the seminar organized by the NCDR, the Center successfully introduced and explained Federal Law No. (7) for 2008 issued by HH the President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan regarding the NCDR. The seminar was attended by the majority of archivists from ministries as well as federal and local institutions. The ultimate objective of that gathering was to help save state archives and reorganize them as per the best practices in archiving and documentation.

A questionnaire conducted by the NCDR in 2003 revealed the sorrowful status of archives and archival systems throughout the country. Documents were haphazardly thrown into repositories that were terribly lacking even the most basic preservation prerequisites. Eventually, documents and records became susceptible to deterioration and damage. This state of affairs, which may be described as ‘archival bleeding’, prompted the NCDR to play a leading role as keeper of the nation’s memory.

Upon directives from HH Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidential Affairs and NCDR Chairman, the NCDR has managed to diagnose the archival status of about 75 percent of federal and local bodies. However, the biggest challenge is the processing of documents accumulating in repositories for decades; a task that requires hundreds of archivists and sufficient restoration equipment as well as an appropriate preservation site. Nevertheless, the first step has already been taken and, inspired by the spirit and text of Federal Law No. (7) for 2008, the NCDR is proceeding with confidence and enthusiasm. The said law is indeed a life-saving boat for documents and archives; it is also a true translation of a statement earlier made by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan: “A nation that knows not its past shall have neither a present nor a future.”

Abdulla A.K. El Reyes, Ph.D.
Director General

NCDR Marks UAE 41st National Day
NCDR Wing at the Sharjah Book Fair
NCDR participates in the events of the Document Day in Sharjah
NCDR Marks National Days of Bahrain and Oman
NCDR Organizes Training Course in Record and Document Management
NCDR Participates in International Conferences
NCDR Participates in OHA Meeting
NCDR Organizes an Historical Photos Exhibition
Online Social Media Workshop
Workshop on the Three Occupied UAE Islands
NCDR Visitors
NCDR Visit to Sharjah’s Home for the Elderly
Cooperation with the Ibn Majid Society
NCDR Participates in Cultural Convoys at Wadi Helu
Point of View
Photo Gallery
British Archives
Aref Al-Sheikh—Writer of the National Anthem

Consumed by love of his homeland, and deeply impressed by the rise of the Federation, Aref Al-Sheikh spontaneously transformed his emotions into the verses that have become the national anthem of the United Arab Emirates.

The lyrics were inspired by the music arranged by the Egyptian composer Saad Abdul Wahhab fifteen years earlier. From 1972 to 1986, the National Anthem was but a tune without lyrics until Aref Al-Sheikh, a jurist-poet provided the text, offering it in a sealed envelope to the Minister of Education. Hours later, Aref was contacted by the Minister who proudly told him that that was the anthem required.

Arrangements were made with Dubai Radio to record the anthem to the tune of the word-less anthem. A decree was later issued endorsing the full anthem and ordering recital thereof at the morning lineup and flag-hoisting at all schools.

Aref Al-Sheikh is known by Emiratis as one of the cultural and intellectual pioneers. He received his early education in Dubai and Mecca and later joined Al-Azhar University in Egypt where he graduated from the Faculty of Sharia and Law, and eventually obtained Ph.D. He held several positions at the Ministry of Education, first as a teacher and subsequently as Director of the Secondary Religious Institute, Head of the Exams Section, Director of the Exams Department, and Director of Educational Services respectively. He contributed to the writing of Islamic educational textbooks for both the primary and preparatory stages. He, alone, has published over 45 books and has written numerous songs crowning his poetic career by writing the national anthem.

The following is a translated version of the lyrics to the National Anthem of the UAE:

Live my country, that the unity of our Emirates has lived
May you live for a nation
Whose religion is Islam and guide is the Qur’an
I made you stronger in God’s name oh homeland

My country, My country, My country,
My country
May God protect you from all evil throughout time
We have sworn to build and work
Work sincerely, work sincerely
As long as we live, we shall be sincere

Security has lasted and the flag has lived oh our Emirates
The symbol of Arabism
We all sacrifice for you, we supply you with our blood
We sacrifice for you with our souls oh homeland
This tree continues to be cherished by the present leadership of the UAE headed by HH the President, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and his brothers, the Rulers of the Emirates.

Dr. El Reyes spoke in detail of the great endeavors that ultimately led to the rise of the Union, all of which have been documented by the NCDR since its establishment in 1968.

“Our prudent leadership had from the very start focused on the training of its citizenry through education and awareness, this
being the basis of progress and development,” Dr. Reyes said. The Director General conveyed NCDR greetings on this occasion to HH the President and Rulers of the Emirates, as well as to HH Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidential Affairs, and Chairman of the NCDR.

At the Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Hall, NCDR staff and guests watched Baba Khalifa, an operetta by the Hanan Ghaith Troupe (all children) and a documentary film on the course of transformation witnessed by the UAE since the rise of the Union.

In the Center’s main courtyard, a heritage village was constructed and dances by the Harbiya Troupe were performed to the sound of folk music. The heritage village included a live display of bygone handicrafts (pottery, leather and copper, sweets), antique cars, cameras and gramophones, all from the collections of the late Abdul Jalil Al-Fahim.
Following the inauguration of the Sharjah Book Fair (7-17 November, 2012), HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohamed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah, met with representatives of the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) who briefed HH on the mission and vision of the Center and presented him with a copy of a recent NCDR publication, Anthony Rundell’s book *Emiratis: All Our Yesterdays*. HH paid tribute to the NCDR role as keeper of the nation’s memory.

Meanwhile, HH Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohamed Bin Sultan Al-Qassimi, Crown Prince of Sharjah, inspected the NCDR wing at the Fair. HH was also presented with copies of some of the NCDR’s latest publications (in
Arabic and English), including: Emiratis: All Our Yesterdays; Memoirs of Arabia; A Journey in Pictures; and Memoirs of the Emirates.

NCDR participation in the Sharjah Book Fair places its publications at the disposal of the public, particularly those concerned with, or interested in the history and heritage of the UAE and the Arabian Gulf region, and allows the NCDR to enrich its own library with the latest publications compatible with its varied fields of interest. Additionally, participation provides a forum for enlightening the public regarding the role of the NCDR as the national archives of the UAE and hence keeper of the nation’s memory.
The National Center for Documentation & Research of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs participated in “Document Day”, sponsored by the Sharjah Center for Documentation & Research. Mrs. Salma Al Mansouri, the Director of the Center’s Archives Department, presented a paper on the role of the National Center for Documentation & Research in the development of effective methods in all of its specialties and operations in order to keep pace with international practices, achieve its objectives in provision of services to researchers and to keep the national memory for future generations. The Director of Archives addressed aspects of the Center’s experiences in providing its sections with historical documents related to the UAE and the Gulf region from around the world and the methods of archiving and preserving those documents.

Mr. Soufiane Boharrat, the Center’s Head of Government Archives Section, presented a paper on the Center’s experience in the management, archiving and preservation of documents. The Center participated in its capacity as preserver of the memory of the nation, which is comprised of millions of records relating to the UAE and the Arabian Peninsula.

Boharrat’s paper dealt with the legislative fundamentals and the scientific standards adopted by the Center in designing methodologies of archival work in the ministries and government institutions and in building an integrated system for management of government documents and the policies and procedures for organizing them.
News

NCDR Marks National Days of Bahrain and Oman

The National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) has joined the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain in celebrating the Kingdom’s 41st National Day. The NCDR’s contribution was in the form of a photo exhibition accompanying the ceremony organized by the Embassy to mark the occasion.

The exhibition included photos documenting the historical and brotherly relationships between leaders of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as between their brotherly peoples.

In addition to the photo exhibition, the NCDR also displayed its own publications which deal with the rise and development of the UAE, as well as its culture and heritage. Also displayed were samples of postal stamps and coins issued on the occasion of the NCDR’s 40th anniversary.

Commenting on the NCDR contribution, HE Mohamed Saqr Al Ma’wah, Ambassador of Bahrain to the UAE, said the photos exhibited clearly reflect the strength of the deeply-rooted ties between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the NCDR marked Oman’s 42nd National Day also through a photographic exhibition documenting the various aspects of the brotherly ties between the Sultanate and the UAE. Supplementing the exhibition was a display of the NCDR’s latest publications including the Imamate in Oman; Zayed from Challenges to Union; and Qasr Al-Hosn: History of the Rulers of Abu Dhabi (1793-1966).

HE The Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the UAE, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Abdulla Al-Qatbi, paid tribute to the NCDR contribution to the ceremony marking the occasion, saying it truly reflected the excellent relations between the two countries and the efforts exerted by their leaders to further cement ties.

NCDR Organizes Training Course in Record and Document Management

Within the context of its staff development policy, the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) recently organized a training course in the latest developments in record and document management. The course included state-of-the-art procedures in the fields of classification, digitalization, preservation, electronic handling and accessibility.

The 4-day course was attended by the staff of the Documentation Department and the Information Technology Section, as well as staff from both the NCDR Archives and the Strategic Planning and Development Section.

Mr. Malcolm Beach of IIR (a leading provider of training programs across the Middle East) conducted the course, giving lectures and providing practical training where samples of documents were examined and classified, stored and retrieved on the basis of their respective confidentiality and date.
NCDR Participates in International Conferences

The National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR), represented by a team from the IT section recently participated in an international information technology conference organized by Fujitsu Company in Munich.

Also participating in the Forum were representatives of major world IT companies who displayed their latest products and services in a number of workshops and advisory sessions.

Concluding their presentations, delegates paid a visit to the Fujitsu plant in Osburg where they were briefed on the manufacturing of servers and new generations of state-of-the-art PCs.

Meanwhile, the NCDR Executive Director, Mr. Majid Al-Mehairi, represented the NCDR at an IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim for Regional Cooperation) conference of Heads of Archives which was hosted by the Indian Archives in New Delhi.

In addition to closely monitoring the conference's proceedings, Mr. Al Mehairi also presented a paper detailing the NCDR's efforts to develop its operations, including the digitalization of its archives. He also indicated the significance of turning the NCDR into an all-out national archives serving the entire UAE as per the Federal Law (No.7n for 2008) issued by HH the President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

Moreover, the NCDR participated in Momentum 2012, the annual conference organized in Vienna (Austria) by EMC, a global leader in enabling businesses and service providers to transform their operations and deliver IT as a service. Fundamental to this transformation is cloud computing. Through innovative products and services, EMC accelerates the journey to cloud computing, helping IT departments to store, manage, protect and analyze their most valuable asset – information – in a more agile, trusted and cost-efficient manner.

Due to its multipurpose nature, the NCDR IT status has been included in the agenda of Momentum 2013.

Representing the UAE
NCDR Participates in OHA Meeting

Dr. Aisha Bilkhair, Director of the Research and Knowledge Services Department at the NCDR, said that membership in this specialized association would permit NCDR access to its electronic link and thus to all past and forthcoming issues of Oxford, the association’s journal, considered one of the foremost oral history reference journals in the world.

The Oral History Association, established in 1966, seeks to bring together all persons interested in oral history as a way of collecting and interpreting human memories to foster knowledge and human dignity. Through its international membership, the OHA caters to a truly diverse base of local historians, librarians and archivists, students, journalists, teachers, and academic scholars from many fields who have found that the OHA provides both professional guidance and a collegial environment for sharing research.

In addition to fostering communication among its members, the OHA encourages standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, dissemination and uses of oral testimony. To guide and advise those concerned with oral documentation, the OHA has established a set of goals, guidelines, and evaluation standards for oral history interviews.

The association also recognizes outstanding achievement in oral history through an awards program. Awards are given in the categories of oral history publications, non-print media productions, teaching, and projects.
NCDR Organizes an Historical Photos Exhibition

Within the context of launching the First Human Development Report for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (2011-2012), the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) organized an historical photos exhibition.

The exhibition, which was visited by HE Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mabarak Al-Nahyan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, included photos dating back to the 1960s and reflecting Abu Dhabi realities in the mid-20th century. The photos document the urban development drive capably launched by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan as well as the quality shift witnessed by the Emirate of Abu Dhabi during HH's reign.

In a corner of the exhibition, the NCDR displayed its publications which also document the rise and development of the United Arab Emirates.

Online Social Media Workshop

In conjunction with the Information Sector of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) recently organized a workshop on the use of on-line social contact with a view to creating fresh channels for communication with the public.

In view of the increasing demand for social media, (on-line contact) in the Gulf region in general and the UAE in particular, the NCDR recently organized a workshop on how to build an on-line community.

As a national entity, the NCDR decided to go online to maximize its interaction with the public, particularly with people and organizations with similar interests and targets.

Social media would surely enrich the NCDR stock of documents on one hand, and maximize access thereto, on the other.

The workshop dealt with ways and means of building a community on the web and the human, technical, administrative and financial resources needed for that purpose. It also dealt with security and privacy of on-line social contact.

Other aspects discussed at the workshop were the tools used to bring about effective contact such as bulletin boards, online forums, newsletters, and on-line calendars. Also debated were the web design path and on-line community resources.

The workshop is a product of a Memorandum of Understanding recently concluded by the NCDR and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.
NCDR Visitors

- Dr. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Musallam Bin Ham Al-Ameri, Member of the National Federal Council
- HE Kim Sung Huan, South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- A delegation from the South Korean Ministry of Land Affairs and Transport
- HE Lu Bet Chin, Charge d’Affaires of the Singapore Embassy in Abu Dhabi
- An academic delegation comprising library science professors and MA students from the American University in the UAE

All visitors were received by the NCDR Director General, Dr. Abdulla El-Reyes, who briefed them on the mission and vision of the NCDR as well as its operations and services. The guests were also shown around the premises and briefed on the performance of individual departments and units. They were particularly impressed by the acquisitions housed at the Sheikh Zayed Hall.

Workshop on the Three Occupied UAE Islands

NCDR lecturer Abdullatif Al-Sayyady recently conducted a workshop on the Three Occupied UAE Islands at the Strategic Studies and Research Center.

Entitled “Legitimacy of Unilateral Iranian Actions in the Three Occupied UAE Islands”, the workshop dealt with the UAE historical and legal right to sovereignty over the three islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, occupied by Iran since 1971.

Mr. Sayyady reviewed international conflicts in the Gulf region and the emergence of the three islands’ issue as well as claims by both sides. He evaluated such claims in light of Public International Law, supporting his argument by references to historical and legal documents as well as international rulings.

An authority with regard to the Islands’ Issue, Mr. Sayyady has several published works including Legal Settlement of the Emirati-Iranian Dispute over the Three Islands.
Cooperation with the Ibn Majid Society

Within the context of the NCDR endeavors to collect oral histories, Dr. Aisha Balkhir, Director of the Research and Knowledge Services Department, paid a working visit to the Ahmad Bin Majid Folkloric Society in Ras Al-Khaimah.

Dr. Aisha was seeking to identify elderly folk prepared to relate their memories of the pre-oil era. She was also interested in the Society’s heritage acquisitions, including manuscripts, photographs and old documents. Moreover, Dr. Aisha was particularly keen on exploring ‘endangered’ folklore and methods of performance.

Dr. Aisha Balkhir is a UNESCO-accredited expert in the field of non-material culture and heritage. She paid tribute to the spirit of cooperation shown by the Ibn Majid Society’s officials. Both sides agreed to maintain contact to serve mutual purposes. On their part, the Society’s officials paid tribute to the NCDR role in documenting the nation’s history and heritage and the preservation thereof for forthcoming generations.

NCDR Visit to Sharjah’s Home for the Elderly

A delegation from the National Center for Documentation and Research recently visited the Sharjah Home for the Elderly, met with its aged residents and were briefed on the geriatric services offered to them at the Home.

Led by the NCDR Director General, Dr. Abdulla El-Reyes, the delegation toured the facility accompanied by the House Director, Ms Mariam Ahmad Al-Qatari.

The visit, beside its purely humanitarian nature, also aimed at raising the morale of elderly folk through encouraging them to unleash their sawaliif (stories) or memories as they actually represent the nation’s living memory.

NCDR Participates in Cultural Convoys at Wadi Helu

The National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) recently participated in the proceedings of the Cultural Convoys in the district of Wadi Helu in the Emirate of Sharjah (18-19 October, 2012), organized by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development.

It is through such events that the NCDR conveys its cultural products to the various segments of society. These products include publications relating to the history and heritage of the UAE and the Gulf region, informative posters as well as adequate briefing on the annual Young Historians competition it organizes for Secondary School students in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, the NCDR has participated in Document Day organized by the Sharjah Documentation and Research Center. Ms Salma Al-Mansouri, Director of the Archives Department, briefed attendants on the role of the NCDR and the methods and procedures in its various departments. She also spoke of the NCDR efforts to enrich its archives with historical documents relating to the history of the UAE and the Gulf region at large from all parts of the world.

NCDR archivist Soufiane Bouharrat also presented a paper on the NCDR role as keeper of the nation’s memory.
Point of View

Reviewing old letters

The Documentation Department of the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) houses numerous old documents (manuscripts and correspondences) exchanged between the nation’s leadership, between them and foreign officials who had, in one capacity or another, served in the region that has become the United Arab Emirates. This archival material is of special importance as it tells of social, political and economic events and affairs people had then witnessed or were the subject matter thereof, including a wealth of information about the rulers, and their relations to one another as well as to foreign officials based in the area. As such, this material consists of historical folios that need to be revived and published so that scholars, students and researchers may have access to them.

Many of these letters and messages were written by people at a time when education, knowledge and culture were limited. Moreover, most of those messages were written in near-vernacular style and thus contain words and phrases with peculiar spelling, hardly understood by today’s youth or general populace. In many cases, the writers, in postscripts, would add a word or phrase above or under a word or phrase or in the margin. Moreover, many sentences, words and letters have been blurred due to oldness and therefore whole paragraphs can barely be read, except by the most adept experts.

I have personally spent a lot of time and effort trying to perceive the proper meaning of some of those messages through their context while conducting research on the pearl industry. At times I felt compelled to guess certain names and words; a practice contrary to the norms, authenticity and credibility of research work. It is incumbent on us to find scholars who can assist in the deciphering of these blurred parts in order to obliterate all forms of confusion and ambiguity so that scholars and researchers may ‘precisely’, not ‘nearly’, interpret their findings, thus, making best use of the valuable material available. By doing so, we will have rendered an invaluable documentation service to the present generation, allowing them to peruse an extremely significant part of our history and heritage.

Nouf Salem Al Junaibi
تحوي إدارا الوثائق في المركز الوطني للوثائق والبحث رسائل ومخطوطات قديمة متبعة بمنطقة القلعة، وينتهي بين مسؤولين أجانب خصموا في المنطقة الإدارية العربية المتحدة. Wolhine الرسالة أنها كبيرة، لأنها تتوافق أحداثاً إسلامية، وسياصية، واقتصادية، وصناعية، بمختلف المواضيع، وعندما كانت هذه الرسالة إجابة كبيرة، وأبدأنها إلى مَنْ يزمل عن أولئك، ووقتها يتعرفك الناكلة، العثور على القلم، والألعاب، وكان الرسالات إجابة كبيرة، وأمامه لولا هذه الرسالة، لا يوجد لنا، ورسالات وأ.glideت غير مانعرفه، وبحرف غيرة، من وجهة نظر من التاريخ، وتراثنا، وأبانه الناكلة، عات والكلمات، وتنقلغ السلم الجنيبي، أكثر الناكلة، وأرهب ذلك.. والرسول أدرك من الدارسين، ونحتها في الكتب، ولا يجد لها حيّزاً في التكبير، والبيانات التاريخية، والقيم التوثيقية لسماحي الشاخص من تاريخ المنطقة، وربنها، كان لا يتمعن في إجاباتها، يتمتعها ومشرحاً، كي يستفيد منها الباحثون، وينقلغ عليها المدارس، ومن بينه الأمر.

هذه الرسائل كتبها -على الأرجح- أبناء المنطقة، في زمن عز فيه العلم، وقلّت فيه المعرفة والثقافة؛ أبناء المنطقة. ولمّا كان الأمر كذلك، كان من حيّزات ذلك الزمان من الآباء والأجداد، أن نقول: إن هذه الرسائل الوثائق، كتبها بأسلوب أقرب إلى العامي، وركبت فيها الألفاظ النبليّة، التي لايفهمها أكثر الناس. في عصرنا هذا، كتب بالأعمال غير منفردة، ويرحف غير ما اعتاد، وملعث فيها الحفارات والكلمات، وقد تضاف فيها إليه الابتعاد من هناك، فيفجعها هذه الكلمات أخري، أو فجعها، وقد يضيف صورة أخرى إلى المنزل، فلا يجد بها حيّزاً إلا في المعرض، فشئها صورة من الفناء. هذه إضافة إلى أن كثيراً من الجمعيات قد طمست حروفها أو كتبها، فلا يسمعها، ويجلي صحتها إلا الخبير الحاذق.

لقد بدأت جهازاً كبيراً، ووقتام شنيعاً، ولقيت صعوبة وأنا أحاول أن أدرك مضمون بعض هذه الرسائل، ولكنها ت🔍 في القوس على هذين الجداول، وتجارتها، وعشرة أمن قراء بعض الأسماء والكلمات، وهذا لايفهم مع صعوبة البيت وصحتها. إذا إلى الحاجة، تأتي من توزيع عن هذه الرسالة، في عرض موضة مفتوح، وصويرة لريادة الحفارة، والمساحات، ونحتها في الكتب، ومعها النص، وقد يكون قد نقلل سبيلاً للاستفادة منها، ومنهذا الطريق للباحثين والدارسين، ونحتها في الكتب، للوصول إلى مبتغاهم دون إضافات الوقت، وداً كثير من الجهود، وعندما أتمام خدمة توثيقية عملية للجيء الحاضر، إلا أنه يطول على قدّ لاسيسته بمن تاريخنا ولاستانا، فهل إلى ذلك من سبيل. أرجو ذلك. نوف سالم الخنيبي