

Foreign Policy Institute - Ankara

Author - Peder Sjöman

Analysis - Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: A Roadmap to Global Recognition Through Hosting World Expo 2030

Historical Triumphs and Present Endeavors

On November 28, 2023, Saudi Arabia, led by a top level delegation, secured the rights to host the prestigious global event, World Expo 2030. The former Foreign Minister and the present Climate Envoy, Adel Al-Jubeir, expressed the following: “This will be an incredible exhibition, something the world has not seen before. It will be transformative and it will be a model for exhibitions after Riyadh to emulate (Arab News, A chance to bring the world to Riyadh’: Saudi officials, delegates react to Expo 2030 win). The vote, which took place in Paris, organized by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), was determined by the 165 delegates in attendance out of 182 all of whom voted confidentially, where Saudi Arabia won a substantial 119 of the 165 votes (BIE, Saudi Arabia elected host country of World Expo 2030). In practical terms, the Kingdom had defeated its competing contenders, Italy's capital Rome and South Korea's port city Busan. According to an adviser to the French President, Emmanuel Macron, France's endorsement in the World Expo was to some extent behind the fact that the Saudis advocated the French with additional affairs of the heart in French diplomacy at a previous phase, which likely irritated Rome (Reuters, Saudi Arabia wins bid for 2030 world fair, beating Italy, S. Korea).

In 1851 the first world exhibition occurred with London serving as the host. The global gathering of various nations, the World Expo, known as International Registered Exhibitions, where nations convene to discuss and analyze universal challenges. In these events held every five years, various themes prepared by the host city are promoted, among various elements, including well-crafted pavilions. During the six-month long event that is scheduled to occur between October 2030 and March 2031 according to Riyadh, the Kingdom expects to attract up to 40 million people (ABC News, Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh chosen to host the 2030 World Expo).

Vision 2030 Unveiled

Saudi Arabia's vision for 2030 has been conveyed through media platforms in recent years since Mohammed bin Salman presented the plans for their future in 2016, particularly concerning domestic politics (Reuters, Saudi prince unveils sweeping plans to end 'addiction' to oil). Given that the Kingdom ought to transform into independent from oil to instead promote various sectors, mainly new technology and marking a significant stride in the tourism sector, to create new cities and explore new landscape such as Sindalah, The Red Sea Project, Trojena, Oxagon, and The Line (Vision 2030, Tourism & Heritage). Included in their strategic approach is a commencing accompanied by a workforce of one million employees in the tourism and service sector, to attract 100 million annual visitors by 2030 and including to raise the tourism sector's contribution to the domestic product exceeds 10% (United National Platform, Tourism Strategy in Saudi Arabia). For the Kingdom to serve as host for World Expo 2030 in Riyadh, running the Asian Winter Games 2029 in Trojena, and recent news regarding organizing and hosting the Men's Football World Cup 2034, are important tasks in a place where they possess the tools to succeed and further strengthen their international brand (Al Arabiya, Saudi Arabia to host the 2034 World Cup: FIFA President).

Global Collaboration for a Sustainable Future

Occurrences such as this have led countries and cities to gain global recognition, to show economic growth, from its inception when it was associated with various types of celebrations of inventions. Saudi Arabia's direct attention concentrates on joint responsibility, joint work for a better, more sustainable and prosperous world. The World Expo has a history of drawing nations together, to contribute cultural achievements and advanced technology. The Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, stated the following: "We are about a journey, a journey that brings the world together... So that will be the legacy, working together for a brighter, more prosperous future." (ABC News, Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh chosen to host the 2030 World Expo). Additionally, there will be three pavilions on site conveying three distinct messages, "Prosperity for all", "Climate Action" plus "A Different Tomorrow" which will be the foundation and surround the landmark, with a total of 226 show pavilions. The design for these 226 pavilions is circular, symbolizing global cooperation and emphasizing Saudi Arabia's role in uniting the world and highlighting its significant contribution (Big 5 Construct Saudi, Saudi Arabia has released the master plan for

Riyadh Expo 2030 which will be held in 2030 under the theme ‘Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow’).

Beyond Doubts: Saudi Arabia's Economic and Environmental Visions

After that, the rich neighboring country to Saudi Arabia in the Arabian Peninsula, Qatar, managed a remarkable Football World Cup in the previous year. I am confident that Saudi Arabia aims to successfully host a significant World Expo, along with the Asian Winter Games besides the FIFA Men's World Cup. As the Kingdom prepares the world to visit the World Expo and Riyadh, the capital has a unique opportunity to shape the nation's economy for generations. In addition to a sustainable future and the promotion of innovation, there is a significant emphasis in international cooperation, highlighted by the overarching theme "The Era of Change: Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow" (Al Arabiya, Countdown to World Expo 2030 bid results: What will it mean for Saudi Arabia?). A member of the Expo Blueprint team conveyed the subsequent two utterances: “Our goal in the Kingdom is to organize the first environment-friendly exhibition that achieves zero carbon emissions,” alongside “The Riyadh Expo 2030 site will be powered by clean resources that rely on solar energy, and we are developing high standards for resource efficiencies and detailed strategies to enhance biodiversity, eliminate food waste, and ensure green waste management and recycling,” (Al Arabiya, Countdown to World Expo 2030 bid results: What will it mean for Saudi Arabia?). The impact extends beyond enhancing Riyadh's international image: the city has the potential to transform into one of the world's top ten economic cities. The promised economic growth along with environmentally friendly and innovative initiatives which leads to an increased demand in the real estate market, may come and create a new era for the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's achievements by 2030 are under scrutiny, several media analyzes and journalists are skeptical if they will deliver, particularly during major events like the World Expo, Asian Winter Games, and the Men's Football World Cup. Succeeding in the next seven years until 2030 and before the World Expo, will lay the foundations for the Kingdom's Future Vision: Vision 2040. In fact, the Kingdom's GDP growth, which has been driven by non-oil sectors, has led Saudi Arabia in 2022 and 2023 to have the highest growth rate among the G20 countries (Al Arabiya, Countdown to World Expo 2030 bid results: What will it mean for Saudi Arabia?). These major events are not only a magnet for large companies. It

attracts tourists and business travelers, which increases the growth in demand for restaurants, hotels and various services. The response during these times for visitors will reflect how the future for the Kingdom will occur, regarding the treatment-image for foreign visitors.

Preparations, Sustainability, and Riyadh's Ready Status

With "Riyadh is Ready", Riyadh Expo 2030 has posted a video on Twitter (Twitter, Riyadh, ready to welcome the world in Expo 2030) showing what travelers and visitors can expect during their visit to the capital. The video highlights sustainability which will be a key theme for Expo 2030. The theme that is mentioned above "Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow" remains sustainable over time in alignment with their vision of organizing the first eco-friendly exhibition, resulting in zero carbon emissions. There are numerous projects and large investments in infrastructure, sustainable development and technology that reflect the nation's transformation in terms of commitment. The Kingdom aims to be the "most connected Expo ever", where one can reach the Expo-event from the *under construction* King Salman International Airport by train within five minutes, while Riyadh Air will serve as the global connection point for travelers from around the world. The future outcome of World Expo 2030 is yet to unfold but Riyadh's determination is clear as they show off their Expo budget which goes up to 7.8 billion dollars as well as 1 trillion dollars in investments related for instance to technology, transport and energy. They are well aware of the opportunities at their disposal and know the significance for the Kingdom if they accomplish their forthcoming missions (Al Arabiya, Countdown to World Expo 2030 bid results: What will it mean for Saudi Arabia?) Now, three tasks remain for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: prepare, implement and deliver.

Conclusive Analysis

The Kingdom on the Arabian Peninsula has the chance in the next decade to persuade the world about its transition away from its dependence on oil. Saudi Arabia has garnered attention due to prominent features in newspapers and through media, regarding the Asian Winter Games 2029, the World Expo 2030, Men's Football World Cup 2034 and its ambitious, Vision 2030. It is Saudi Arabia that has the eyes of audiences and journalists worldwide, where I believe, they will become magnificent events which will be remembered. With the winning delegation receiving a whopping 119 votes, it also indicates that a *large majority* are united as to why Riyadh should be allowed to host this major event, World Expo.

It demonstrates their commitment to the issues that a large portion of the delegates see as important. If the general public among the delegations did not see potential for Riyadh as host, the vote result would have looked very different, the success or failure of the event now rests in the hands of Riyadh.

For inquiries regarding the analysis report, I am available to provide further information or clarification through my email: peder_sjoman@hotmail.se

References:

ABC News. "Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh chosen to host the 2030 World Expo" {online} Published on November 28, 2023.

<<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/high-stakes-glitzy-mark-vote-paris-2030-world-105199315>>. {Accessed December 1, 2023}.

Al Arabiya. "Countdown to World Expo 2030 bid results: What will it mean for Saudi Arabia?" {online} Published on November 22, 2023.

<<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/11/22/Countdown-to-World-Expo-2030-bid-results-What-will-it-mean-for-Saudi-Arabia->>. {Accessed December 3, 2023}.

Al Arabiya. "Saudi Arabia to host 2034 World Cup: FIFA President" {online} Published on October 31, 2023.

<<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/10/31/Field-clears-for-Saudi-Arabia-to-host-2034-World-Cup-after-Australia-withdraws>>. {Accessed December 3, 2023}.

Al Arabiya. "Saudi Crown Prince reiterates Kingdom's condemnation of Israeli violations in Gaza" {online} Published on November 10, 2023.

<<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/11/10/Saudi-Crown-Prince-reiterates-Kingdom-s-condemnation-of-Israeli-violations-in-Gaza>>. {Accessed November 28, 2023}.

BIE. "Saudi Arabia elected host country of World Expo 2030" {online} Published on November 28, 2023.

<<https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/news-announcements/expo-2030-en/saudi-arabia-elected-host-country-of-world-expo-2030>>. {Accessed December 7, 2023}.

Reuters. “Saudi Arabia wins bid for 2030 world fair, beating Italy, S. Korea” {online} Published on November 29, 2016.

<<https://www.reuters.com/world/saudi-arabia-beats-italy-south-korea-host-2030-world-fair-2023-11-28/>>. {Accessed December 4, 2023}.

Reuters. “Saudi prince unveils sweeping plans to end 'addiction' to oil” {online} Published on April 26, 2016.

<<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-economy/saudi-prince-unveils-sweeping-plans-to-end-addiction-to-oil-idUSKCN0XM1CD/>>. {Accessed December 6, 2023}.

Riyadh_Expo2030. “Exciting updates about World Expo 2030!” {online} Published on July 25, 2023.

<https://twitter.com/Riyadh_Expo2030/status/1683872020486930435?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw>. {Accessed December 4, 2023}.

The New York Times. “Saudi Arabia to Host World Expo 2030, in Victory for Crown Prince” {online} Published on November 28, 2023.

<<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-world-expo-2030.htm>>. {Accessed December 2, 2023}.

United National Platform. “Tourism Strategy in Saudi Arabia” {online} Last Modified Date, November 11, 2023.

<https://www.my.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/aboutksa/tourism!/ut/p/z1/jY5BDoIwFESP9H8rVF0WSDBAbUsBoRvThSFNtLownt-GuBWd3SRvJg8sjGCDe_nZPf09uGvsk2VnSkRZEQOS2bBH3bWmLZiojKJwWoBK7RLCkUi5STPUudhKbgaCmIL9Z49fwvH33i5IrRs8ZEK0OBKGWndF3tQ9jR8fYE1xAVYczCXA49aP6NX8Bu8u7VU!>. {Accessed December 2, 2023}.

Vision 2030 Saudi Arabia. “Touris & Heritage” {online}

<<https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/progress/tourism-heritage/>>. {Accessed December 1, 2023}.

