

Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

25 May 1981

The Cooperation Council - Charter
The Supreme Council - Rules of Procedure
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COOPERATION COUNCIL
FOR
THE ARAB STATES OF THE GULF

The United Arab Emirates
The State of Bahrain
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
The Sultanate of Oman
The State of Qatar, and
The State of Kuwait

Being fully aware of the ties of special relations, common characteristics and similar systems founded on the creed of Islam which bind them; and

Desiring to effect coordination, cooperation and integration between them in all fields; and,

Having the conviction that coordination, cooperation, and integration between them serve the sublime objectives of the Arab Nation; and,

Having the conviction that coordination, cooperation, and integration between them serve the sublime objectives of the Arab Nation; and,

In pursuit of the goal of strengthening cooperation and reinforcement of the links between them; and

In an endeavour to complement efforts already begun in all essential areas that concern their peoples and realize their hopes for a better future on the path to unity of their States; and

In conformity with the Charter of the League of Arab States which calls for the realization of closer relations and stronger bonds; and

In order to channel their efforts to reinforce and serve Arab and Islamic causes,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE ONE

The Establishment of the Council

A Council shall be established hereby to be named The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf hereinafter referred to as the Cooperation Council (GCC).

ARTICLE TWO

The Cooperation Council shall have its headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

ARTICLE THREE

Cooperation Council Meetings

The Council shall hold its meetings in the state where it has its headquarters, and may convene in any member state.

ARTICLE FOUR

Objectives

The basic objectives of the Cooperation Council are:

To effect coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them.

To deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing between their peoples in various fields.

To formulate similar regulations in various fields including the following:

Economic and financial affairs

Commerce, customs and communications

Education and culture

To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; to establish scientific research; to establish joint ventures and encourage cooperation by the private sector for the good of their peoples.

ARTICLE FIVE

Council Membership

The Cooperation Council shall be formed of the six states that participated in the Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Riyadh on 4 February 1981.

ARTICLE SIX

Organization of the Cooperation Council

The Cooperation Council shall have the following main organizations:

1. The Supreme Council to which shall be attached the Commission for Settlement of Disputes.
2. The Ministerial Council.
3. The Secretariat General.

Each of these organizations may establish sub-agencies as may be necessary.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Supreme Council

The Cooperation Council shall be formed of the six states that participated in the Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Riyadh on 4 February 1981.

The Supreme Council is the highest authority of the Cooperation Council and shall be formed of heads of member states. Its presidency shall be rotatory based on the alphabetical order of the names of the member states.

The Supreme Council shall hold one regular session every year. Extraordinary sessions may be convened at the request of any member seconded by another member.

The Supreme Council shall hold its sessions in the territories of member states.

A Supreme Council's meeting shall be considered valid if attend by two-thirds of the member states.

ARTICLE EIGHT

The Functions of the Supreme Council

The Supreme Council shall endeavour to realize the objectives of the Cooperation Council, particularly as concerns the following:

Review matters of interest to the member states.

Lay down the higher policy for the Cooperation Council and the basic lines it should follow.

Review the recommendations, reports, studies and joint ventures submitted by the Ministerial Council for approval.

Review reports and studies, which the Secretary-General is charged to prepare.

Approve the bases for dealing with other states and international organizations.

Approve the rules of procedure of the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes and nominate its members.

Appoint the Secretary-General.

Amend the Charter of the Cooperation Council.

Approve the Council's internal rules of procedure.

Approve the budget of the Secretariat General.

ARTICLE NINE

Voting in the Supreme Council

The Cooperation Council shall be formed of the six states that participated in the Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Riyadh on 4 February 1981.

Each member of the Supreme Council shall have one vote.

Resolutions of the Supreme Council in substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous approval of the member states participating in the voting, while resolutions on procedural matters shall be carried by majority vote.

ARTICLE TEN

Commission for the Settlement of Disputes

The Cooperation Council shall have a commission called "The Commission for the Settlement of Disputes" which shall be attached to the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council shall establish the composition of the Commission for every case on an "ad hoc" basis in accordance with the nature of the dispute.

If a dispute arises over interpretation or implementation of the Charter and such dispute is not resolved within the Ministerial Council or the Supreme Council, the Supreme Council may refer such dispute to the Commission for the Settlement of Disputes.

The Commission shall submit its recommendations or opinion, as applicable, to the Supreme Council for such action as the Supreme Council deems appropriate.

ARTICLE ELEVEN

Ministerial Council

The Ministerial Council shall be formed of the Foreign Ministers of the member states or other delegated ministers. The Council Presidency shall be for the member state, which presided the last ordinary session of the Supreme Council, or if necessary, for the state which is next to preside the Supreme Council.

The Ministerial Council shall convene every three months and may hold extraordinary sessions at the invitation of any member seconded by another member.

The Ministerial Council shall determine the venue of its next session.

A Council's meeting shall be deemed valid if attended by two-thirds of the member states.

ARTICLE TWELVE

Functions of the Ministerial Council

Propose policies, prepare recommendations, studies and projects aimed at developing cooperation and coordination between member states in various fields and adopt the resolutions or recommendations required in this regard.

Endeavour to encourage, develop and coordinate activities existing between member states in all fields. Resolutions adopted in such matters shall be referred to the Ministerial Council for further submission, with recommendations to the Supreme Council for appropriate action.

Submit recommendations to the Ministers concerned to formulate policies whereby the Cooperation Council's resolutions may be put into effect.

Encourage means of cooperation and coordination between the various private sector activities, develop existing cooperation between the member states' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and encourage the movement within the GCC of workers who are citizens of the member states.

Refer any of the various aspects of cooperation to one or more technical or specialised committee for study and presentation of appropriate recommendations.

Review proposals related to amendments to this Charter and submit appropriate recommendations to the Supreme Council.

Approve Rules of Procedure of both the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General.

Appoint the Assistant Secretaries-General, as nominated by the Secretary-General, for a period of three year, renewable.

Approve periodic reports as well as internal rules and regulations relating to administrative and financial affairs proposed by the Secretary-General, and submit recommendations to the Supreme Council for approval of the budget of the Secretariat General.

Make arrangements for meetings of the Supreme Council and prepare its agenda.

Review matters referred to it by the Supreme Council.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN

Voting in the Ministerial Council

Every member of the Ministerial Council shall have one vote.

Resolutions of the Ministerial Council in substantive matters shall be carried by unanimous vote of the member state present and participating in the vote, and in procedural matters by majority vote.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN

The Secretariat General

The Secretariat General shall be composed of a Secretary-General who shall be assisted by assistants and a number of staff as required.

The Supreme Council shall appoint the Secretary-General, who shall be a citizen of one of the Cooperation Council states, for a period of three years, which may be renewed once only.

The Secretary-General shall nominate the Assistant Secretaries-General.

The Secretary-General shall appoint the Secretariat General staff from among the citizens of member states, and may not make exceptions without the approval of the Ministerial Council.

The Secretary-General shall be directly responsible for the work of the Secretariat General and the smooth flow of work in its various organizations. He shall represent the Cooperation Council with other parties within the limits of the authority vested in him.

ARTICLE FIFTEEN

Functions of the Secretariat General

The Secretariat General shall:

Prepare studies related to cooperation and coordination, and to integrated plans and programmes for member states' action.

Prepare periodic reports on the work of the Cooperation Council.

Follow up the implementation by the member states of the resolutions and recommendations of the Supreme Council and Ministerial Council.

Prepare reports and studies requested by the Supreme Council or Ministerial Council.

Prepare the draft of administrative and financial regulations commensurate with the growth of the Cooperation Council and its expanding responsibilities.

Prepare the budgets and closing accounts of the Cooperation Council.

Make preparations for meetings and prepare agendas and draft resolutions for the Ministerial Council.

Recommend to the Chairman of the Ministerial Council the convening of an extraordinary session of the Council when necessary.

Any other tasks entrusted to it by the Supreme Council or Ministerial Council.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN

The Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretaries-General and all the Secretariat General staff shall carry out their duties in complete independence and for the joint benefit of the member states.

They shall refrain from any action or behaviour that is incompatible with their duties and from divulging confidential matters relating to their appointments either during or after their tenure of office.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN

Privileges and Immunities

The Cooperation Council and its organizations shall enjoy on the territories of all member states such legal competence, privileges and immunities as are required to realize their objectives and carry out their functions.

Representatives of the members on the Council, and the Council's employees, shall enjoy such privileges and immunities as are specified in agreements to be concluded for this purpose between the member states. A special agreement shall organize the relation between the Council and the state in which it has its headquarters.

Until such time as the two agreements mentioned in item 2 above are prepared and put into effect, the representatives of the member states in the Cooperation Council and its staff shall enjoy the diplomatic privileges and immunities established for similar organizations.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN

Budget of the Secretariat General

The Secretariat General shall have a budget to which the member states shall contribute in equal amounts.

ARTICLE NINETEEN

The Implementation of the Charter

This Charter shall go into effect as of the date it is signed by the Head of States of the six member states named in this Charter's preamble.

The original copy of this Charter shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which shall act as custodian and shall deliver a true copy thereof to every member state, pending the establishment of the Secretariat General, at which time the latter shall become depository.

ARTICLE TWENTY

Amendments to the Charter

Any member state may request an amendment of this Charter.

Request for Charter amendments shall be submitted to the Secretary-General who shall refer them to the member states at least four months prior to submission to the Ministerial Council.

An amendment shall become effective if unanimously approved by the Supreme Council.

ARTICLE TWENTYONE

Closing Provisions

No reservations may be voiced in respect of the provisions of this Charter.

ARTICLE TWENTYTWO

The Secretariat General shall arrange to deposit and register copies of this Charter with the League of Arab States and the United Nations, by resolution of the Ministerial Council.

This Charter is signed on one copy in the Arabic language at Abu Dhabi City, United Arab Emirates, on 21 Rajab 1401 corresponding to 25 May 1981.

The United Arab Emirates
The State of Bahrain
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
The Sultanate of Oman
The State of Qatar
The State of Kuwait

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