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TRENDS RESEARCH AND ADVISORY



# TRENDS Global Round Table Series: Middle East and Africa

**"Unlocking the Potential of Think Tanks:  
New Ideas and Innovative Strategies for Impactful Engagement"**



Tuesday, 16 July 2024



Cape Town International  
Convention Centre (CTICC)  
Cape Town, South Africa

## Purpose and Themes:

The TRENDS Global Round Table Series aim to assess, analyse, and optimize the impact and influence of think tanks on public policy and governance across the world. The Global Round Table Series strive to foster impactful dialogue and share comparable lessons as well as generate and contribute to knowledge on trends, challenges, opportunities, and prospects for building the capacity and advancing the efficacy of think tanks in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

## Key Goals:

The main objectives of the TRENDS Global Round Table Series: Middle East and Africa are to:

- Assess the role of think tanks and a meaningful added value they provide for public policy planning and management in their respective countries;
- Identify challenges think tanks face in fulfilling their mandates;
- Explore the potential for cooperation between TRENDS and think tanks across the Middle East and Africa to improve outcomes;
- Develop a network of like-minded think tanks; and
- Engage Middle Eastern and African stakeholders to leverage think tanks' research and impact.



# Agenda



**Tuesday,  
16 July 2024**



**Registration  
8:30 am – 9:00 am**

**MC**

**09:00 AM**



**Ms. Sharifa Al Raeesi,**  
Deputy Head of Advisory Sector, TRENDS

**Opening Session 9:00 am – 9:30 am**

**Opening Remarks**

**09:00 AM**



**Dr. Mohamed Al Ali,**  
CEO, TRENDS Research and Advisory



**Dr. Hamad Al Kaabi,**  
CEO, AlEtihad News Center

**Keynote Address**

**09:10 AM**



**H.R.H Prince Turki Al Faisal Al Saud,**  
Chairman, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies

**Keynote Address**

**09:20 AM**



**Mr. Zondwa Mandela,**  
Chairman, Mandela Legacy Foundation

# Panel 1:

## The Role and Influence of Think Tanks in Shaping Policy Making

The session seeks to assess the role of think tanks in various Middle Eastern and African countries and how they have affected change. It will explore practical experiences of the policy development process and the function and value of think tanks in its various stages.

**Panelists: 9:30 am – 10:45 am** (45 minutes for panelists, 20 minutes open discussion)

### Moderator



**Mr. Awadh AlBreiki**  
Head of TRENDS Global sector  
TRENDS

### Speakers



**Dr. Omar Al Ubaidly**  
Studies and Research Director  
Bahrain Center for Strategic,  
International and Energy Studies



**His Excellency Nickolay Mladenov**  
Director General  
Anwar Gargash Diplomatic  
Academy



**Prof. João Bosco Monte**  
President  
Brazil Africa Institute



**Mr. David Willima**  
Research officer - Maritime  
Researcher officer, Maritime and climate risk  
and human security, Southern Africa Africa  
Programme, Insitute for Security Studies

10:45 am – 11:15 am

**Break**

## Panel 2:

### The Organizational and Policy Challenges Facing Think Tanks

The session will tackle the key areas that hold think tanks back from engaging in the policy development process (skills, funding, access, policy-making structure).

**Panelists: 11:15 am – 12:30 pm** (45 minutes for panelists, 30 minutes open discussion)

#### Moderator



**Ms. Sumaya Al Hadhrami**  
Deputy Head of TRENDS Global sector  
TRENDS

#### Speakers



**Dr. Naji Al Seiri**  
Research & Innovation Division  
Director & Interim Dean of Faculty  
at the College of Resilience  
Rabdan Defense and Security  
Institute – Rabdan Academy



**Dr. Ali Issa**  
Managing Director  
Horn Economic and  
Social Policy Institute



**Mr. Emmanuel Owusu-Sekyere**  
Director of Research  
Policy & Programs  
African Center for  
Economic Transformation



**Dr. Heidi Aly**  
Vice Director  
Center for Economics and  
Financial Research and  
Studies – Cairo University



**Dr. Tayo Aduloju**  
CEO  
The Nigerian  
Economic Summit  
Group

12:30 pm – 1:15 PM

**Lunch Break**

## Panel 3:

### Cooperation Between Think Tanks of the Middle East and Africa: Prospects for Improving the Quality and Impact of Outputs in the Field of Development Policy

The session will focus on the collaboration between think tanks and the opportunities for improving the quality and impact of outputs, especially in the field of development policy.

**Panelists: 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm** (45 minutes for panelists, 30 minutes open discussion)

#### Moderator



**Mr. Abdulaziz Ahmed AlShehhi**  
Senior Researcher  
TRENDS

#### Speakers



**Mr. Richard Morrow**  
Analyst  
Brenthurst Foundation



**Prof. Fortunata Songora Makene**  
Executive Director  
Economic and Social Research  
Foundation



**Dr. John Karanja**  
Director Integrated Development  
Kenya Institute for Public Policy  
Research and Analysis



**Mr. Nazir Pandor**  
Business Development Manager  
Zambia Institute for Policy  
Analysis and Research



**Mr. Benjamin Davis**  
Economic Affairs Expert  
TRENDS Research and  
Advisory

### Recommendations and Closing Remarks

**2:30 pm –  
2:45 pm**



**Ms. Fatmah Alyammahi,**  
Strategic Partnerships Specialist, TRENDS

**3:00 pm**

**Visit to TRENDS Office for the official opening and Dinner at Stellenbosch.**



## Biographies



**His Royal Highness (HRH) Prince Turki AlFaisal Al Saud** is Founder and Trustee of the King Faisal Foundation and Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. He was born on February 15, 1945 in Makkah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. HRH began his schooling at the Model School in Taif and went on to gain his high school diploma at the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, the United

States of America. HRH then completed his studies at the Georgetown University.

HRH was appointed Advisor at the Royal Court in 1973. In 1977, HRH was appointed Director-General of the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), Saudi Arabia's main foreign intelligence service, with the rank of Minister, and headed the GID until 2001. In 2002, HRH was appointed Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. HRH served in the position until 2005 when he was appointed Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States of America. He retired in 2007.



**Mr. Zondwa Mandela** is the CEO of Mandela Legacy and Chairman of the affiliated foundation. Commerce degree graduate in business. He serves on other boards namely, Operation Hope, Lake Nona Impact Forum, IndyGeneUS AI. Born into a legacy of leadership and resilience, Zondwa Mandela embodies a deep commitment to providing practical solutions to drive economic impact in Africa, through

sustainable employment opportunities. To date Mandela Legacy has created more than 15,000 jobs and trained over 350,000 youth in Africa within the BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector. Establishing Africa – South Africa as a leading Business Process Outsourcing destination, servicing the outsourcing requirements for Multi-National Organisations.



**Dr. Mohammad Al-Ali** is The CEO and Founder of the new TRENDS Research & Advisory & Senior Researcher/Writer and an Emirati author, specializing in strategic and political affairs.

Dr. Al-Ali received a Ph.D. in Criminology from Muthah University. He obtained a Master of Arts in Diplomacy from the American University in the Emirates, and a Bachelor's in media, radio, and television from the UAE University.

He has vast experience in the media where he supervised magazines and academic journals covering and analyzing regional and international developments. He has worked as Editor-in-Chief of several scholarly periodicals and has held important positions in think-tanks.

Dr. Al-Ali has produced several studies including The Role of Electronic Press in Creating Awareness Among the Youth in Arab Gulf Countries, published in the Annals of Arts and Social Sciences in Kuwait. He has also presented numerous research papers at various international conferences.



**Dr. Hamad Al-Kaabi** is an Emirati journalist and writer. He has been working in the field of media for 25 years as a journalist, reporter, and editor. In 2005, he won the Journalism Award in the Journalistic Investigation category, and held several dialogues and interviews with a number of heads of state, and government, and public figures, the latest of which was with His Holiness Pope Francis, Pope of the Vatican. He progressed

in the field of journalism until he was assigned as chief of news sector in the Abu Dhabi Media network, and he also doubles as the editor-in-chief of Al-Ittihad newspaper, the oldest newspaper in the United Arab Emirates and the region, from mid-2017 until now. He participated as a lecturer and keynote speaker in several local, regional and international conferences focusing on various fields of media, renouncing terrorism, and the fight against extremism and political Islam. He writes a weekly opinion article, and has a host of publications, namely "Abu Dhabi Countryside", "The White Nun", and "The Third Page" which is under publication. He holds a master's degree in business administration, and he is also an academic researcher in a PhD program on the topics of tolerance and coexistence.





**His Excellency Nickolay Mladenov** is the Director General of the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy. With over 20 years of experience in Middle Eastern and European politics, he has held prominent positions such as the UN Secretary General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Envoy to the Middle East Quartet. He has also been involved in Bulgarian politics, serving as the Minister of

Foreign Affairs and Defense. In addition to his political career, President Mahmoud Abbas has honored him with the Grand Star of the Order of Jerusalem in 2021.



**Prof. João Bosco Monte** is the Founder and President of the Brazil Africa Institute, is a well-respected scholar with a Ph.D. in Education and expertise in international relations. He holds various academic positions and has authored numerous publications on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Trade, and the BRICS. Recognized for his significant role in fostering Brazil-Africa relations, he has been honored by the

Brazilian government and appointed to the UN Food Systems Champions Network. As General Coordinator of the Brazil Africa Forum, he continues to lead initiatives promoting dialogue and cooperation between Brazil and Africa.



**Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli** is the Director of Research at Derasat, Bahrain, and an affiliated associate professor of economics at George Mason University. His research interests include political economy, experimental economics, and the economics of the GCC countries. He has published his research in international peer-reviewed academic journals and contributes to newspapers and blogs such as AlHayat,

The National, Forbes Opinion, and US News. Al-Ubaydli earned his BA in economics from the University of Cambridge and his MA and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago.



**Mr. David Willima** is a researcher in the Southern Africa programme at the Institute for Security Studies. His focus is on maritime security, blue economy and ocean governance, climate risk and human security and works to strengthen African maritime governance institutions. Since 2021 he has worked to promote maritime security as a policy priority with organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority for

Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). David is also passionate about driving youth involvement in the maritime sector and has represented the continent as one of the 28 International youth Delegates and the only African youth delegate at the 7<sup>th</sup> Our Ocean Conference co-hosted by the U.S government and Palau in Koror, Palau and was recently an ocean delegate speaker at the prestigious One Young World Young leader's summit in Manchester. David holds a Master's degree in Security Studies from the University of Pretoria, South Africa.



**Dr. Naji Al Seiri** is currently the Division Director for Research and Innovation & Interim Dean of Faculty, he is also an Associate Professor at Rabdan Academy. He joined Rabdan Academy in June 2023 with 22 years of experience in both academia and industrial sectors. Prior to joining Rabdan Academy, he was an Associate Professor in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department at Khalifa University for 11 years (2012-2023)

Dr. Alseiri has an outstanding publications record, he has published many journal articles in renowned international journals, most of his journal articles were published in Q1 & Q2 journals, he also published a good number of conference papers and contributed in publishing a book chapter. His current H-index is 12 in Scopus. As part of his scholarly contribution to his Department, he supervised 6 graduate students between MSc & PhD students. Dr. Alseiri also supervised 3 postdoctoral fellows on research projects for number of years.

Dr. Alseiri has received a number of educational awards and recognitions, including Sheikh Rashid Award for Scientific Outstanding Performance in 2008 and 2013, ADNOC good academic recognition four times during the period 1997-2001, and the Ministry of Presidential Affairs good academic recognition in 2012.



**Dr. Ali Issa** is the Managing Director of the Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (HESPI). He has a PhD in Economics and an MBA in International Finance. His previous roles include working at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Citibank in New York and serving as the Executive Director of the National Economic Council of Somalia. Dr. Ali addresses the economic challenges and potential of countries in the Horn of Africa.



**Dr. Emmanuel Owusu-Sekyere** is the Research, Policy, and Programs Director at the African Centre for Economic Transformation in Ghana. He holds a PhD in Economics and a Master's in Economic Management and Policy. His research interests include inclusive growth, financial inclusion, migration, youth development, poverty, infrastructure, African industrialization, remittances, African integration,

and climate change. He is a member of professional groups, reviews peer-reviewed journals, and serves on expert committees for international organizations. His research is on REPEC, Research Gate, and the HSRC website.



**Dr. Heidi Aly Fahmy** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at Cairo University and the Vice Director of the Center for Economics and Financial Research and Studies (CEFRS). She earned her Master's and Ph.D. degrees in Economics from Cairo University in 2010 and 2015. Dr. Fahmy has participated in numerous research and consultancy projects funded by institutions like the EU,

USAID, and UNDP, focusing on fiscal decentralization, administrative and financial reform, monetary policy, and public finance. She has consulted for various government entities and contributed to Egypt Vision 2030. Her research interests include macroeconomics, finance, financial policy, and the digital economy, with several publications in these areas.



**Dr. Tayo Aduloju** is the CEO of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, a prominent private-sector think tank and policy advocacy group in Africa. He has over 20 of experience in economic, social, and political reform in Nigeria, 14 other African countries, and the Middle East. Dr. Aduloju has a successful track record of translating strategic plans into tangible results. He holds six academic degrees, including a

doctorate in Economic Policy and Public Administration, and has completed programs at prestigious institutions such as Harvard University, Oxford University, MIT, and INSEAD. Additionally, he is a member of various professional bodies and is a board member of the Governing Council of the Nigerian Institute of Management.





**Mr. Richard Morrow** is an Analyst at The Brenthurst Foundation. He focuses on public sector reform and policy strategy. Richard has worked in 10 African countries, served on two presidential advisory teams, and designed investment strategies for numerous investment promotion agencies. He studied International Relations at Durham University.



**Prof. Fortunata Songora Makene** is the Executive Director of the Economic and Social Research Foundation. She is an Expert in Development Sociology, Gender, and Social Protection with extensive experience in academic and policy research. She has worked on research and policy work on social protection, human rights, gender equity, women's economic

empowerment, children's rights, and urbanization. Prof. Makene has taught at Worcester State University and Clark University in the USA and was the Head of Research and Policy at the UONGOZI African Institute of Leadership. She is a member of the National Advisory Committee on Generation Equality Forum in Tanzania.



**Mr. Benjamin Davis** is an Economic Affairs Expert, based in Abu Dhabi and Stellenbosch, South Africa. Ben has a consulting and business commercialization background for S&P500 and large regional businesses. He has used new technologies (AI, cloud hosting, scalable database platforms and IoT), research techniques and ways of work to deliver those businesses in a range of sectors, including Financial

Services, Telecoms, Energy and consulting. His geographical experience spans Emerging Markets in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South and South East Asia as well as Developed Western Europe and the US. In a global consulting firm, Ben was considered a subject matter expert, delivering internal and external training to staff and clients. He holds an undergraduate degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from University of Cape Town and a Masters in Economics from Stellenbosch University.



**Ms. Sharifa Al Raeesi** specializes in Quality and Strategic Management, bringing a wealth of experience in organizing high-profile events and developing comprehensive training programs. As Head of the Conferences Section, she excelled in managing event logistics, crafting detailed programs with global partnerships. She organized prominent events with esteemed partners such as The Atlantic Council, the

University of Pennsylvania, and the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, among others. In her role as Head of the Institutional Training Department, Sharifa implemented effective training strategies and led a team of trainers to enhance organizational performance. Currently, she serves as the Deputy Head of the Advisory Sector, overseeing all scientific projects and providing strategic insights to clients.



**Mr. Awadh Al-Breiki** leads the TRENDS Global Sector, overseeing international research and strategic initiatives. He has a solid academic background in political science and security studies. Al-Breiki received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Temple University in the United States, giving him a strong understanding of political theory, international relations, and comparative politics.

He furthered his expertise with a Master of Arts in Civil and International Security from Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, specializing in civil security, international conflict resolution, and security policy. In his current role, Al-Breiki guides research projects, builds global partnerships, and promotes thought leadership on critical global issues. His work involves analyzing geopolitical trends, developing security strategies, and providing advice on international policies. His contributions have been essential to shaping TRENDS' global outreach and impact, making him a key figure in addressing complex international challenges. Aside from his academic and professional achievements, Al-Breiki is committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. His leadership is focused on innovative research and a strategic vision aimed at enhancing global security and stability.



**Ms. Sumaya Al Hadhrami** serves as the Deputy Head of the Trends Global Sector at TRENDS Research & Advisory. In her role, she focuses on developing research-based programs for organizing virtual and on-ground events, coordinating with various departments within the organization, and recruiting qualified speakers. She actively seeks partnerships with renowned organizations and institutions and collaborates with them to organize global events. Some notable

partnerships she has fostered include the Atlantic Council, the Middle East Center at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Prior to her current role, Sumaya Al Hadhrami worked at The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research. During this time, she held multiple positions, including Deputy Head of the Conferences Department. Sumaya Al Hadhrami pursued her academic studies at renowned institutions, obtaining a Master of Environment: Dynamics of Territories and Societies from Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Her studies in environmental dynamics provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between societies and their surrounding ecosystems. She also holds a Bachelor of Political Science with a minor in Design from the University of Minnesota, USA. This interdisciplinary degree equipped her with a unique perspective on global issues and creative problem-solving. Additionally, she co-founded the Khaleeji Student Association at the University of Minnesota, demonstrating her commitment to fostering cultural exchange and support among students. Sumaya also participated in a study abroad program in Costa Rica, where she focused on sustainable tourism. This experience allowed her to deepen her understanding of environmental issues and their impact on communities.



**Mr. Abdulaziz AlShehhi** joined TRENDS Research and Advisory at the beginning of 2024 as a Senior Researcher in the Strategic Studies sector interested in strategic affairs and political analysis. Before joining TRENDS, he was in charge of coordinating faculty affairs and worked as an Assistant Instructor in the Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Programs Department at New York University Abu Dhabi in Political Science Classes from 2022 to 2024.

During his undergraduate studies, he trained in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Abu Dhabi and played an important role in organizing the Building Political Awareness Forum at UAEU, serving as its lead organizer and moderator for three years.

He was also a moderator for many Youth Circles that were organized by the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs on political participation. Abdulaziz was chosen to represent the UAE in the UAE Youth Ambassadors Program to China under the generous patronage of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court in 2015 and participated in research at Tsinghua University on "Decentralized Energy Systems" where he studied for a semester and was part of an international team.



Abdulaziz Alshehhi holds a bachelor's with honors of the first degree from UAEU majoring in Political Science complemented with a minor in Communication and Leadership in 2018. He continually pursued professional development through prestigious programs such as the Tomoh Fellowship at NYU and a specialized course on Negotiation and Diplomacy at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.



**Ms. Fatmah Alyammahi's** academic journey led her to Sorbonne University, where she successfully completed her studies with a bachelor's degree in Applied Foreign Languages. This educational path has equipped her with a strong foundation in Arabic, English, French, Italian, and Spanish, reflecting her dedication to mastering diverse languages. During an enriching linguistic stay at the Università per Stranieri di Siena in Italy, she further immersed herself in cultural exchange and deepened her linguistic skills.

Currently, Fatmah thrives as a Partnership Specialist in the Global Sector at TRENDS Research and Advisory, where her focus lies in cultivating strategic partnerships related to TRENDS's research programs and its strategic goals—both regionally and globally—as well as driving forward impactful research initiatives. She is deeply committed to contributing to projects that tackle global challenges and innovative approaches. Her career journey is driven by a passion for fostering cross-cultural understanding and harnessing the power of partnerships to achieve meaningful societal outcomes.