

Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj: Impact of technological innovation in Bahrain

Address by His Excellency Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj, Governor of the Central Bank of Bahrain, at the Middle East Financial Technology Exhibition & Conference (MEFTEC), Manama, 11 February 2008.

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Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to Bahrain for the 4th Middle East Financial Technology Exhibition & Conference, MEFTEC as it is popularly called.

This morning, as I look around, I am happy to see that this event is arousing so much interest and is attracting more and more participants each year, a clear testament to its success. I would like to thank the organizers for their efforts in enhancing and improving each event and the delegates for their participation. I wish you a pleasant stay here.

Bahrain, as many of you may already know, is best known for its success in banking and finance, an industry whose global reach and, indeed, penetration into every household, would not have been possible without information technology.

In short, information technology has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on the way we, as individuals, live and work, on the economies of countries and on the world.

While we all welcome and embrace technological innovation, the acceleration in technology also brings with it newer challenges for financial services regulators, such as the Central Bank of Bahrain.

Information technology has made possible the creation, valuation, and exchange of complex financial products on a global basis and, often, in real-time. As our banks increasingly engage in these technology-driven, I would urge them to take greater precautions in managing all the risks involved.

The management of risk is an issue which the CBB takes very seriously, as demonstrated by our regulatory requirements and examination procedures, which we continue to review and upgrade, when ever necessary.

As the financial sector relies more and more on technology, the issue of maintaining business continuity in the face of any kind of disruptions, we believe, is essential from a business and reputational perspective. Effective from the beginning of this year, all banks in Bahrain are required to maintain proactive business continuity planning that ensures delivery of critical services or products is maintained even during a disruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sure you are all eager to see what the exhibitors have to offer. I thank you for joining us today and again extend my appreciation and thanks to the organizers and exhibitors.