The larger, extensive part is on the periphery of the built area and serves as a transition zone between it and the desert. There is little or no irrigation here; earth berms, artificial *wadis*, and basins collect run-off from roads and from drainage of the intensely irrigated parts, and direct water to green fingers and tiny gardens which soften the rugged landscape. Rainfall can be intense, up to 30 millimetres a day, an average yearly precipitation of only 115 millimetres.

The whole area is enclosed since, as a result of government grants and the mechanical digging of wells, overgrazing had killed all plants within a radius of 100 kilometres around Riyadh. Some 350 seed species were collected from the desolated area and have been raised in the project's nurseries to provide an authentic local flora. 250 animal and bird species have also been saved. A radically new, yet totally genuine environment was created for a self-sustaining ecological system in the extensive landscape areas.

The guiding principles which should be followed when planning in Saudi Arabia can be summarised:

1. In central Saudi Arabia, a real and not a man-made desert, sustainable with natural trees and vegetation, can only exist in *wadis* (dry riverbeds), which have good, deep soil and a very large rainwater catchment area.

" WE DID NOT ALLOW ANY TRUCKS TO LEAVE THE SITE! EXCAVATED ROCK WAS SORTED INTO THREE CATEGORIES FOR LATER USE: ROCK PLACEMENT, EROSION CONTROL, AND ROCK ART. "

2. To make desert cities habitable, trees, gardens, and parks are essential. In fast-growing cities like Riyadh, in the middle of the desert-where urban infrastructure can be overwhelming, the green factor is even more important.

3. The implementation of this greening needs the active participation of the landscape architect from the very beginning of each urban planning process; and sometimes he should be the leading figure.

4. The success and sustainability of Riyadh's Diplomatic Quarter landscaping was, furthermore, only possible under the following conditions:

A client with a deep understanding of the need to apply landscape design to the 900-hectare site that was a barren moonscape, without any vegetation or soil. This client, H.E. Dr. Mohammed al Shaikh (now a Minister of State), made the implementation of parks, trees, and gardens possible before the urban development started.

The lack of water-the limiting factor of all vegetation in the desert-made the treatment of wastewater for irrigation purposes a necessity. One human being produces enough wastewater to irrigate six trees.

The Diplomatic Quarter nursery, one of the first projects to be implemented, produced indigenous trees. Seeds were collected in the *wadis* of central Saudi Arabia.

A construction site of 900 hectares produced an enormous amount of excavation material. We did not allow any trucks to leave the site! Excavated rock was sorted into three categories for later use: rock placement, erosion control, and rock art. Other excavation material was dumped to create the ten-kilometre-long earth berm, which acts as a noise and pollution barrier between the Diplomatic Quarter and the Hejaz (Makkah) Freeway.