

From Oil and Political Stalemate to Corona Pandemic: Algeria's Services Economy Reality and Implications

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to present the economic reality of the Algerian services sector in light of national and international events economically, politically, and hygienically based on official statistics and publications.

The study reached a positive impact of the improvement in the financial position of the period 2001-2008 on the services sector, which helped this sector to face the global financial crisis of 2008, while it did not survive the difficult political and health situation for 2019, which led to an absolutely low performance mainly related to commerce, transport and communication

1.Introduction:

In the concept of economic diversification, the weight and the relative importance of economic sectors requires always paying attention to the sectors that generate the most jobs and national income, hence for economic growth and development. The services economy is one of the economic sectors most influencing the general economy, and specifically on the gross domestic product of countries; in most countries of the world, the economic services provided to the population constitute 50% of the total GDP, especially in developing countries that depend on providing services as one of the means that contribute to supporting their economy. Also, the service economy is one of the most important factors that contribute to supporting population growth, and whenever the services have the higher quality, this has contributed significantly to the high levels of the population growth, and to the developed of commercial market continuously.

The Algerian service sectors, in terms of trade services, health, education, hospitality and tourism, financial and insurance services, transport services, information and communication technology services and other services, today represent more than a third of the national income generation in the country. Today, it represents more than one a third of the national income creation in the country. It is one of the sectors very sensitive to the crisis, whether internal or external.

Based on this proposition, the main question of the study is:

What is the reality of the economic performance of the Algerian services sector in light of the oil, political and health shock?

as well as the study attempts to answer the following sub questions :

- How did the service sectors perform before the economic, political and health deteriorating?
- How hard is the service sector affected by the internal and external crises?
- How can the service activity be revived so the sector promoted?

In order to answer the last questions, the study aims to:

- Detect the level of performance of the services economy before crises;
- Present the economic situation of the service sector during the oil crisis, political stalemate, and COVID-19;
- Show some strategies for the advancement of the sector.

However, the current study aims to reveal the economic performance of the service sector, the case of Algeria, for the period 2001 to 2019, indicating some strategies for promoting the sector in order to achieve economic diversification and to advance the overall development.

The importance of the study is shedding light on the service sector because of its position in parallel with the path that various countries have come to follow and is based on adopting policies and strategies that work to encourage economic diversification and sectors outside of hydrocarbons, especially trade, transport, tourism and communication, and the unprecedented technological revolution witnessed in this sector, which encouraged intense competition between different countries, especially the industrial ones, to expand their markets and get through new ones. In addition to the urgent need for developing countries to catch up with developed countries, as well as the need to find optimal ways to exploit this sector, considering the decline and fluctuation that characterize the traditional sectors (industry and agriculture), and the pursuit of achieving sustainable development goals.

As a methodology, the nature of the topic requires adopting the descriptive approach, especially when dealing with the various concepts related to the services economy, and it requires also the descriptive and analytical approach when performing the analysis of the statistics related to the study.

2. Literature Review

Service is the scientific method of serving people, and the social system that helps solve their problems and develop their capabilities, and helps other social systems in society to play their role well. The services sector has emerged as the largest segment in and driving force of the economy, contributing a growing share to gross domestic product (GDP), trade and employment. The sector contributes to productivity and economy-wide growth, as it provides essential inputs to other products and services.

Many services activities with important social functions – in health, finance, energy, transport and telecommunications – are indispensable to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, basic and infrastructure services can make significant contributions towards achieving Goal 1 on ending poverty, Goal 2 on ending hunger, Goal 3 on health, Goal 4 on education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 6 on water and sanitation, Goal 7 on energy, Goal 8 on economic growth and decent work, Goal 9 on infrastructure development (including financial, telecommunications and ICT services), Goal 10 on reducing inequality, and Goal 11 on means of implementation (for example through ICT services). Achieving many of the Goals and targets depends on universal access to basic and infrastructure services. Given the multifaceted contribution of services, there is a significant opportunity to explore a services-driven growth and development strategy. (UNCTAD, 18–20 July 2017, p. 2)

Prof. Kotler defines a service as an activity or performance that one part can provide to another.

Or it is the intangible activity that aims mainly to satisfy the desires and requirements of customers, so this activity is not linked to the sale of another good or service, and according to this definition services include both professional services, such as law, accounting and health services, as well as financial services, such as banking services, and transport, housing, cleaning, and educational services ... etc. (Attif, 2012, p. 39)

The following are among the most relevant factors that contributing in services' growth: (Suidan, 2003, p. 22)

- The increase in the average age of the population, which increased the demand for medical services, and resulted the increase in health-care and physical rehabilitation centers relatively related to the elderly;
- The increase in leisure time, working time and in the individual's income, which increased the spending on entertainment services, and childcare centers in their early stages due to the increase and expansion of the circle of women's work and became an influential force, so the single family had two incomes, which required many services from outside the home ;
- The increasing of product's technical complexity, which necessitates the need for maintenance services, especially with the increase in the number of private hospitals, car rental centers and insurance companies etc.

The importance of services is evidenced by its development, as services have grown dramatically over the past years, and this came due to the technological developments that the world witnessed, which led to the interest of the countries of the world in these services and this interest came as a result of the development of society and the increase in its purchasing power as well as the increase in the number of workers in this sector. (Kurtel, 2009, p. 76)

The importance of the services sector also appears through the role that services play within the different organizational and productive levels in the organization, and this importance can be highlighted through the following points: (Murad, 2007, p. 48)

- The service sector can provide inputs to physical production in the agricultural and industrial sectors and in the background phase preceding the production process, for example, feasibility studies, market research, product design;
- At the production stage for commodities, for example feasibility control and equipment leasing;
- In the parallel production stage with regard to operating companies, for example accounting, personnel management and legal affairs;
- In front-end operations: for example, marketing advertising, transportation and distribution, where feedback links between services at various stages have become a way to achieve competitiveness as they ensure product acceptance and increase sales;
- The service sector directly meets basic needs, as is the case in education, training, health care and housing;
- Meets basic needs indirectly, as is the case in providing employment opportunities or generating new incomes, which are necessary for the expansion of the market in the commodity and production sector;
- It plays a social role represented in reducing unemployment and poverty, and the related impact on the political and economic climate, which is an urgent necessity for the investment process.

3. Analysis of the economic performance of the services sector during the period 2001-2019

3.1. Transport and Communication Sector

The transport and communication sector is the economic lifeblood and the most important infrastructure sector due to the important role that this sector plays in the economic and social development of societies. As investment in transport and communication projects is characterized by its great benefits that are achieved for a very long time, and its important economic and social implications for the national economy, and due to the great importance of transport and communication in this field, developed and developing countries alike have been ensured to develop and modernize their systems. The existence of an effective transport and communication sector is a basic requirement to ensure economic development in every country. The level of development of the country is measured by the extent of this sector's development in it.

The transport and communication sector in Algeria has seen a real transformation, due to the large number of projects have been completed and others are in the pipeline which make this sector more efficient and effective to contribute to the economic development of the country. Algeria, like the Arab countries, has also seek to reduce the gap in the field of modern technology between it and the developed countries, by mobilizing individual and collective efforts with which it tries to affect the telecommunications sector from multiple fields.

In the field of transportation, the Algerian road network is one of the most dense networks in the African continent, and the railway network in Algeria is estimated at 150,2 km, if it witnessed in recent times the electrification of some sectors to put high-speed trains soon that would connect the main cities.. The various states of the homeland abound with urban transport, tramway and metro in Algiers.

Algeria has tried to develop the air transport sector in a way that makes it a real vehicle for integration at the regional and international levels.

Maritime transport also delivers passengers to European shores, and transports goods to all parts of the world. Also most of the international commercial activities are carried out by sea transport, through 11 commercial ports.

Developments in the value-added of the transport and communication sector for the period 2001-2019 are as follows:

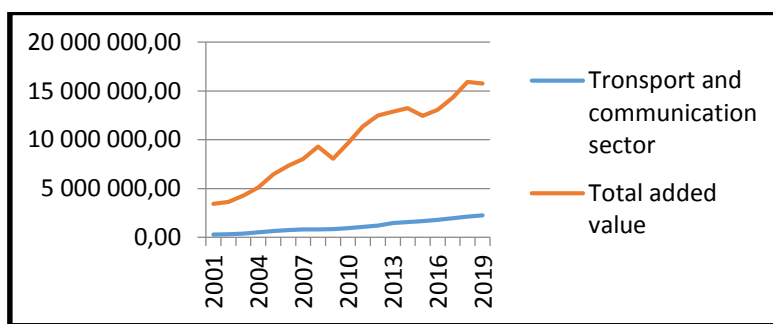
Table (01): The added value of the transport and communication sector for the period 2001-2019

year	Transport and communication added value Million DZD	year	Transport and communication added value Million DZD
2001	303 693,50	2011	1 074 147,70
2002	340 983,30	2012	1 194 841,70
2003	390 551,20	2013	1 462 802,20
2004	512 569,90	2014	1 556 077,90
2005	645 028,90	2015	1 658 814,20
2006	743 533,60	2016	1 796 979,30
2007	808 380,90	2017	1 965 157,70
2008	830 341,50	2018	2 139 892,30
2009	865 214,50	2019	2 244 879,1
2010	933 707,60		

Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

Figure (01): Evolution of the added value of the transport and communication sector compared to the total value added for the period 2001-2019



Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

The recorded economic and financial performance during the period 2001-2008 indicates the improvement of the external financial position and the accumulation of budgetary savings resources, which allowed the national economy

to prove its ability to resist the great external shock that happened in 2008 and that resulted from the aggravate of the international financial crisis and the global economic crisis.

This is evidenced by the enhancing of the external financial position during the period 2010-2014 and the degree of monetary and financial stability. (Algeria)

Table (01) shows the development of the added value of the sector, which reached an average growth rate of about 12% for the same period, and this is due to the investments made in the sector in order to modernize it to serve the requirements of the national economy and achieve the economic development of the country.

It should also be noted that the activity of marketed services, including the transport sector, has improved clearly after its slight decline in previous years, registering the highest growth rate since 2019 with an added value of 2244879.1 million DZD, and this activity contributes more than a third (38.13%) to The added value of the service sector and about 11% in the total added value on average for the same period, as shown in Appendix (01).

Despite the liberalization of the telecommunications sector significantly, the current situation, especially with regard to the Internet, is still weak compared to neighboring countries. One of the available statistics reveals that the total number of internet users in Algeria amounted to 1.9 million people until the end of 2005, and in 2009 the number of users exceeded 4 million users, reaching 5.4 million and reaching 22.71 million in 2019, or about 52% of the population. And the authorities are betting on reaching 60 million subscribers in the horizon of 2025, while the percentage of Internet access remains very weak, as it does not exceed 5%. (datareportal)

3.2. Trade sector

Algeria endows tremendous potential to enhance its economic growth, including the commercial sector. This refreshing sector of the economy at all times and in every circumstance due to its vitality and its flows in many economic and social fields. The commercial sector ranks first with 828,328 institutions (55% of the total number of counted institutions) followed by the rest of the service activities (transportation, communication, tourism and hotels ... etc). (afdb)

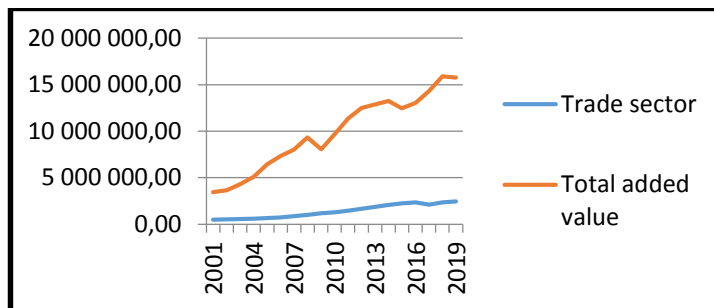
Table (02): The added value of the trade sector for the period 2001-2019

year	Trade sector added value Million DZD	year	Trade sector added value Million DZD
2001	476 208,70	2011	1 446 331,40
2002	509 285,70	2012	1 649 969,80
2003	552 179,90	2013	1 870 581,00
2004	607 052,60	2014	2 070 075,40
2005	668 130,00	2015	2 259 343,20
2006	728 366,70	2016	2 341 237,10
2007	863 197,30	2017	2 116 090,10
2008	1 003 199,40	2018	2 349 598,70
2009	1 160 160,00	2019	2 445 815
2010	1 283 227,70		

Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

Figure (02): Evolution of the added value of trade sector compared to the total value added for the period 2001-2019



Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

The average value added of this sector in the studied period is about 1389476.3 million DZD, contributing 13.65% to the total value added. Growth in the value added of commercial services for 2017 declined significantly by 9.61%, realizing the recent rise and maintaining stability as shown in Figure (02).

regarding to foreign trade, Algeria's exports in 2019 amounted to approximately 35.82 billion \$, with a decline of 14.29% billion \$, while its imports amounted to 41.93 billion \$, with a decline of 9.49% billion \$. (commerce.gov)

3.3. Other services

This sector includes hotel, café and restaurant services, and services to enterprises and households, most of which are run by the private sector at about 75% on average. The table notes that the share of rest of services in the value added of GDP for the period 2001-2019 averaged 14.30%, grew positively but slowly, and accounted for 4.12% of total value added. The share has been weaker compared to trade, transport and communication, making it the country's lowest contributor to production.

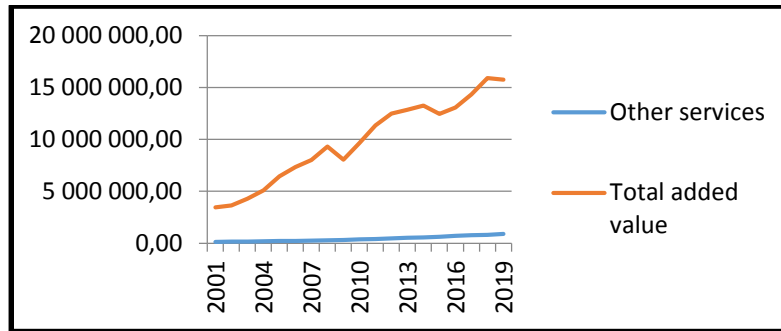
Table (03): The added value of the rest of services sectors for the period 2001-2019

year	rest of services sectors added value million DZD	year	rest of services sectors added value million DZD
2001	141 882,90	2011	412 721,50
2002	153 889,60	2012	460 340,00
2003	169 482,60	2013	516 178,50
2004	183 559,50	2014	564 876,50
2005	205 771,10	2015	628 404,10
2006	226 224,60	2016	699 632,30
2007	247 972,10	2017	777 700,50
2008	280 131,50	2018	815 926,70
2009	323 684,60	2019	893209,3
2010	369 400,00		

Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

Figure (03): Evolution of the added value of the rest of services sectors compared to the total value added for the period 2001-2019



Source :

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

It should be noted that the fragility of hotel, catering and café services, which are part of tourism services, has caused a particular deterioration of the service sector and has a direct negative impact on the value-added structure of GDP.

4. The economic and social situation of the service sector in the context of the oil crisis, the political stalemate, and the Covid

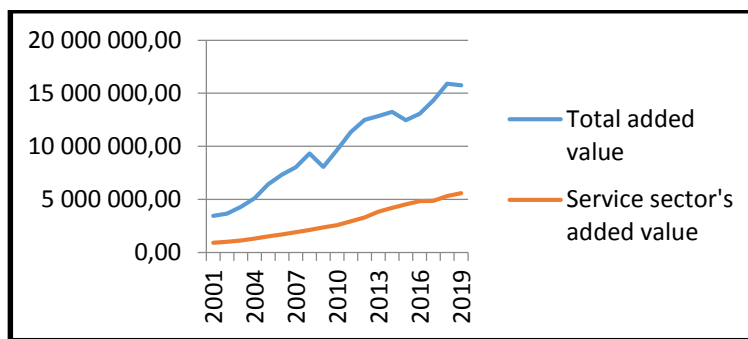
The outbreak of the global health crisis (Covid-19 pandemic) coincided with the severe collapse of oil prices, which has continued since 2014. This crisis has had a severe impact on the Algerian economy, more precisely on tax revenues from the export of fuel and on the rate of GDP growth. Algeria loses about 21.2% of its oil revenues if oil prices remain at 30 \$ per barrel. The oil crisis caused economic growth to drop from 3.8% in 2014 to 0.7% in 2019. However, these results cannot be attributed solely to the decline in oil prices on the world market, as the political unrest experienced in the country in 2019 had a share; A wide range of economic activities have been affected by the recession due to the uncertainty and uncertainty that has prevailed over a year. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects the Algerian economy to shrink by about -5.2%, restarting growth in 2021 by about 6%, taking advantage of the economic recovery and the improvement in oil prices estimated by it. (IMF, 2020, p. 4)

On the political issue, since the end of 2018, Algeria has been in a state of political dislocation owing to popular demands for the departure of the government and compensation to a competent government, primarily a consensual one. It seems that the continuation of the political crisis in Algeria will lead to its economic exclusion and isolation from the world sphere, whether related to all its international agreements with the European Union, the African and Arab Free Exchange Zones and all bilateral investment contracts, As a result of the ongoing deterioration of the national economy apparent through the apparent collapse of the macro-economic indicators for the first semester of 2019 and the negative outlook for the rest of the year, as well as the slowdown in economic activity and the contraction of public demand due to the decline in the price of fuel, which had already recovered relatively by the beginning of the year, this would lead the economy towards negative growth for 2019 and very difficult activity in 2020. (Minh, 2020, p. 1)

The negative economy's effects further complicated the political field, and thus economic initiatives and courageous decisions to maintain fiscal balances, economic fabric and labour must be taken quickly.

There are political and economic concerns that also have implications for the social situation. Consequently, there must be a politically and economically integrated way out that will create a political climate that will stimulate initiative and encourage national capital and allow productive investment of wealth.

Figure (04): Evolution of the added value of service cuts compared to the total added value for the period 2001-2019
Unit: 100 billion DA



Source: depending on the data of Appendix (01)

This political situation has been negatively reflected in almost all economic sectors, including the service sector, and has had a significant impact as a result of the behavior of people, which has introduced most supermarkets into a state of imbalance due to irrational food consumption. From figure No. 04, given the slow increase in the development of the value added of the services sector, it can be seen that its growth declined to 22.69% for 2008 owing to the decline in the price of oil in the world markets from 94 \$ to 61\$ per barrel, leading to a decline in the transport and communication sector, primarily. This decline is repeated in 2018 to 33.36% because of the sensitivity of the political situation and the extent to which it reflects negatively on overall economic performance, which is reflected in Figure (05) for the 2019's devaluation of gross domestic product (GDP) by -0.4%, as data indicate that tourism and hotel services are primarily affected (appendix 01).

The economist Kamal Razig (currently Minister of Trade) noted in this regard that the services and tourism sector lost 70 to 80% of its turnover, also in the transport sector, Metro Algeria which did not work on Friday, had an estimated five-block loss bill of 108 billion DZD, and the company had the right to seek compensation from the state of Algeria, which had decided to stop working. (Jamili, 2019)

In the health sector, Covid-19 quickly entered the Algerian economy into a perilous spiral, given the recent alarming signs of high inflation and the depreciation of the dinar caused by the suspension of activity in the productive sectors at a time when the country has been struggling with the decline in oil revenues since 2008. (Saidan, 2020)

Economists warned that if no action was taken to address the situation on a large scale, seeking external debts would become inevitable.

The National Bureau of Statistics announced "alarming figures" from a 3.9% decline in gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2020 to a close to 15% unemployment in July after proving at 11.4% at the end of 2019.

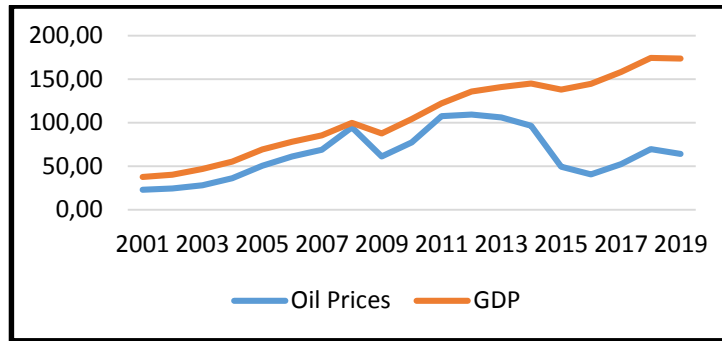
With confinement procedures, State-owned companies have suffered nearly 1 billion € in losses as a result of the health crisis, according to the Finance Minister Ayman ben Abdurrahman estimations.

Private sector losses have not yet been estimated, but many closed stores, including restaurants, cafes, travel and hotel agencies, unnecessary retail, tourism and a large part of manufacturing, are at risk of bankruptcy because of their closure since March 19. (Ghidoun, 2020)

The Tourism and Travel Agencies Syndicate also confirmed that 2,000 agencies face the unknown if closure continues, especially since the majority of them have disposed of their equipment, stopped their workers and abandoned their headquarters. (Yahi, 2020)

However, the World Trade Organization (WTO) warned that the global trade crisis would "probably be greater than the contraction in trade caused by the global financial crisis in 2008-2009". (Zahran, 2020)

Figure (05): Evolution of Algerian gross domestic product (GDP) by 100 billion DZD and oil prices by Dollars for 2001-2019



Source: depending on the data of Appendix (01)

According to the report, the periods are "similar in certain respects," particularly since Governments intervene significantly to support companies and families; As in Algeria, they differ depending on the nature of the epidemic itself and the measures taken to contain it. The report also added that travel and social exclusion restrictions to slow the spread of the disease had directly affected employment, transport and travel offers.

In this context, 11,000 merchants, including 1,100 importers and exporters dealing with the Chinese market, faced bankruptcy, following the suspension of flights to China due to the Corona virus, and that the percentage of losses of export and import companies represents 80%, and these losses will also affect 800 Chinese companies operating in Algeria, if the virus continues to spread.

Where the president of the Algerian Federation of Import, Export and International Trade, Mohamed Hassani, confirmed that the epidemic had led to a complete paralysis in trade traffic to and from China, and said that the financial losses of the smallest merchants or owners of "el-kaba" ranged between 20 thousand and 40 thousand Euros, which is approximately 4 and 8 million DZD, which, according to him, will affect the Algerian market and the external economy. (Slimani, 2020)

5. Conclusion:

The main objective of this study was to determine the performance levels of the service sector in the context of the oil, political and health crises that have struck the country, based on available data and statistical data.

The recorded economic and financial performance during the period 2001-2014 contributed to enhancing the internal and external financial situation and ensuring monetary and financial stability, which has helped to revival mainly service activity in the trade, transport and communication sectors through investments made to modernize it to achieve economic development. However, most economic performance indicators were quickly affected after 2017, and the impact on the service sector was evidenced by declining rates of value-added growth due to the difficult political and health situation, which created total paralysis in commercial and tourist traffic to and from abroad.

Through what was stated in this research paper and based on what was proposed, some suggestions can be made that will reduce the impact on our economy of severe crises related to the service sector as follows:

- The Algerian Government should re-examine the various positive and negative effects of the transport sector in order to develop a strategy for this sector and to maximize its utilization to the national behavioural economy;
- The need to diversify service activities and methods and to develop new ways of integrating the service sector into key sectors of the economy, such as industry and agriculture, in view of the latter's high added value, ensuring economic diversification and giving a robust economy in the face of crises;
- To observe the improvement of social facilities and to raise awareness of the human potential, in particular the national youth, for cooperation and responsibility with regard to the current political, health and economic situation;
- Emphasize the continuation of dialogue between the ministries responsible for the health sector, the commercial sector, the transport and communication sector and other service sectors in order to ensure the success of productive projects, given the close association of these sectors.

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Appendix (01)

Year	The contribution of other services to the total added value %	The contribution of transport and communication to the total added value %	The contribution of trade to the total added value %	The contribution of other services to the service sector %	The contribution of transport and communication to the service sector %	The contribution of trade to the service sector %	Total added value million DZD	The services sector's added value million DZD	The contribution of the services sector to the added value %
2001	4,11	8,80	13,80	15,39	32,95	51,66	3 451 958,40	921 785,10	26,70
2002	4,22	9,35	13,97	15,33	33,96	50,72	3 645 911,40	1 004 158,60	27,54
2003	3,94	9,09	12,85	15,24	35,11	49,65	4 296 969,80	1 112 213,70	25,88
2004	3,60	10,05	11,90	14,09	39,33	46,58	5 099 672,70	1 303 182,00	25,55
2005	3,20	10,02	10,38	13,55	42,47	43,99	6 436 135,10	1 518 930,00	23,60
2006	3,08	10,12	9,92	13,32	43,79	42,89	7 345 467,50	1 698 124,90	23,12
2007	3,09	10,08	10,76	12,92	42,11	44,97	8 021 812,00	1 919 550,30	23,93
2008	3,01	8,91	10,77	13,25	39,28	47,46	9 314 979,80	2 113 672,40	22,69
2009	4,02	10,74	14,40	13,78	36,83	49,39	8 054 982,30	2 349 059,10	29,16
2010	3,83	9,67	13,29	14,28	36,10	49,62	9 656 782,20	2 586 335,30	26,78
2011	3,63	9,46	12,74	14,07	36,62	49,31	11 356 382,00	2 933 200,60	25,83
2012	3,69	9,57	13,22	13,93	36,15	49,92	12 483 951,50	3 305 151,50	26,48
2013	4,01	11,38	14,55	13,41	38,00	48,59	12 857 073,70	3 849 561,70	29,94
2014	4,26	11,75	15,63	13,48	37,13	49,39	13 248 083,20	4 191 029,80	31,63
2015	5,04	13,31	18,13	13,82	36,49	49,69	12 459 026,60	4 546 561,50	36,49
2016	5,36	13,76	17,93	14,46	37,14	48,39	13059417,6	4 837 848,70	37,04
2017	5,43	13,72	14,77	16,01	40,44	43,55	14326731,9	4 858 948,30	33,92
2018	5,13	13,45	14,77	15,38	40,33	44,29	15905648,7	5 305 417,70	33,36
2019	5,67	14,24	15,52	16,00	40,20	43,80	15760991,9	5 583 903,40	35,43
Average	4,12	10,92	13,65	14,30	38,13	47,57			

Sources:

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.

Appendix (02)

year	Oil Prices Dollars	GDP 100 billion DZD	year	Oil Prices Dollars	GDP 100 billion DZD
2001	23,12	37,54871	2011	107,46	122,1058
2002	24,36	40,23414	2012	109,45	135,6056
2003	28,10	47,0004	2013	105,87	140,9264
2004	36,05	55,45852	2014	96,29	144,8971
2005	50,64	69,30153	2015	49,49	137,9143
2006	61,08	78,23795	2016	40,76	144,5502
2007	69,08	85,54266	2017	52,43	158,0419
2008	94,45	99,68909	2018	69,78	174,4951
2009	61,06	87,70806	2019	64,04	173,755
2010	77,45	104,0447			

Sources:

- ONS, the economic accounts 2011-2016, N° 786.
- ONS, the economic accounts 2016-2019, N° 899.
- ONS, economic accounts retrospective 1963-2014, N° 85, January 2016.
- https://asb.opec.org/data/ASB_Data.php