

Implementing Recommendations, Voluntary Commitments  
and Pledges of the Universal Periodic Review

## PROGRESS REPORT YEAR 2010



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## Introduction

Human Rights are a guiding principle and a responsibility that must be shared by the Government, civil societies and individuals alike.

In this dynamic era of change, the Kingdom of Bahrain has endeavoured to implement qualitative decisions on aspects of human rights concepts, principles and mechanisms. Protecting the rights of the individual is a prime priority that has required us to invest in all possible means and resources to safeguard life, dignity and provide all basic requirements to strengthen the foundations of our community.

Our focus has been to build a modern State that welcomes advancement and progress of society. The same view has also been embodied in Bahrain's 2030 Economic Vision, which aims to achieve the utmost at the economic, governmental and social levels. This vision will be manifested through the development of the individual, who is by all respects, the pillar on which the prosperity of the State would be founded.

We are determined to move forward by overcoming the difficulties and challenges that face us.

This Progress Report summarizes the implementation of Bahrain's UPR recommendations, voluntary commitments and pledges for 2010. It represents the milestones and achievements of the past two years. However, our efforts will continue beyond 2012, when the next Universal Periodic Review is due. Our vision is to impact the next generation who will remember the genesis of a journey towards a better tomorrow.



## Background

In February 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs finalized and launched a work plan for the implementation of the Kingdom of Bahrain's recommendations, voluntary pledges and commitments of the UPR process.

### In doing so, we were guided by several principles:

1. **Participation:** We involved all relevant national stakeholders, from the governmental sector, civil society organisations, the judiciary, Parliament members and the private sector to actively participate in making this project successful
2. **Transparency:** We ensured that the information is exchanged and disseminated through dedicated channels
3. **Responsibility:** A national Steering Committee was established to implement the Action Plan and to provide the Human Rights Council with periodical reports
4. **Cooperation:** Between the Government, the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Human Rights Council
5. **Commitment:** By the Kingdom of Bahrain to successfully implement its pledges

## UPR Project Document (2008-2012)

On 10 July 2008, the project document "Supporting the Implementation of Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review Action Plan", meant to cover the period between 2008 and 2012 was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The project aims at supporting Bahrain's process of implementing the UPR recommendations, voluntary commitments and pledges, including in the process all concerned governmental and non-governmental bodies in the Kingdom. The project details the steps to be undertaken before the submission of Bahrain's second UPR report to the Human Rights Council in 2012.

## The Steering Committee

On 27 July 2008, an order issued by the Cabinet established the “Universal Periodic Review Steering Committee” that was assigned to follow-up on the implementation of the UPR recommendations, commitments and pledges.

The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and includes members from relevant governmental and non-governmental, ensuring that all segments of society are involved and can monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

### The Steering Committee includes members from:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice & Islamic Affairs
- Public Prosecution
- Ministry of Labour
- The Supreme Council for Women
- Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA)
- Central Informatics Organisation
- Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Bahrain Human Rights Society
- Bahrain Society for Public Freedoms and Democracy Watch
- Bahrain Transparency Society
- Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society
- Women’s Union
- Bahrain Bar Association
- Bahrain Federation of Trade Unions
- UNDP Bahrain

The Committee held six meetings since its foundation, aimed at supervising the process of implementation and defining its tasks, guided by the Project Document and the National Action Plan.

## Project Manager

On February 2010, Ms. Giorgia Brignone was selected as UPR Project Manager. She would be responsible for the implementation of the UPR project work plan until 2012, as well as to ensure communication and cooperation among the members of the Steering Committee.

### The Five Outcomes of the action plan:

1. Creating a database concerning human rights and supporting it with relevant information.
2. Implementing Bahrain's human rights obligations in line with International human rights conventions.
3. Applying human rights based approach and methodology in Development Programs.
4. National system for the protection and promotion of human rights, supporting the National Institution for Human Rights.
5. Strengthening the normative framework for human rights, in conjunction with the second outcome related to capacity building, examining current laws and framing new laws, if required.

# Creating a database concerning human rights and supporting it with relevant information





## Universal Periodic Review Website

On 2 December 2009, a website for Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review was launched ([www.upr.bh](http://www.upr.bh)). The website is the first of its kind in the field of UPR and includes information and documents on human rights such as the UN Conventions and their Committees as well as other human rights resources. The website also includes a variety of information on thematic human rights such as the

## Publication of a Book on Human Rights

The UPR Project supported the publication of a book by journalist Ms. Amani AL-Maskati entitled: "Bahrain Human Rights File in Geneva: from Procedure 1503 to the Universal Periodic Review."

The author looks at Bahrain's handling of human rights in international forums over a period of time. The 190 pages book focuses on the concept of



rights of women and children, the right to work, non-discrimination and other rights. It provides information about Bahrain's efforts, activities and national laws pertinent to human rights.

Additionally, the UPR project communicates with people through social websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

the Universal Periodic Review and the role played by the Kingdom as the first country to undertake it, as well as the National Report submitted by Bahrain to the Human Rights Council.

# Implementing Bahrain's human rights obligations in line with International human rights conventions



## Recommendations of the Human Rights Council:

- Further to the study and review of the human rights conventions that were yet to be complied with, Bahrain's Cabinet has agreed to ratify the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The Convention has been referred to the Legislative Council.
- One of the recommendations focused on the possibility of Bahrain inviting the United Nations to participate in a workshop to follow-up on the Universal Periodic Review. Based on this recommendation, the "Regional / International Conference on Comparative UPR Experiments: Past, Present and Future" was held on 19 and 20 November 2008, with a wide participation of representatives of 23 Arab and Western countries, in addition to several international organisations and bodies such as the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Human Rights Council, Amnesty International as well as civil society organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It was recommended that the "Regional/ International Conference on Comparative UPR Experiments" be held periodically as a forum in which civil society could cooperate, discuss, participate and benefit from the best practices followed by others.

We are committed to act in conformity with the international human rights conventions.

- The Conference discussed the experience of Bahrain during the UPR process. The experiences of other countries and their follow-up to the UPR process were also shared. The conference addressed issues related to preparation of reports, the interactive dialogue, the adoption of the report and its follow-up, namely the implementation of recommendations and voluntary commitments.
- It was recommended that the "Regional/International Conference on Comparative UPR Experiments" be held periodically as a forum in which civil society could cooperate, discuss, participate and benefit from the best practices followed by others.

The recommendations serve as an incentive for us to walk in the direction we have chosen and on which we continue.

## Voluntary Commitments:

The Kingdom of Bahrain voluntarily pledged to a number of commitments during its first year at the Council and also when it was re-nominated for membership. These commitments were considered necessary to enhance the promotion of human rights and advance the concept of community participation.

### **The achievements thus far can be summarized as under:**

- Bahrain continues to follow the recommendations issued by Special Procedures related to the Kingdom.
- In all its pledges to the Human Rights Council, the Kingdom of Bahrain confirmed that it will adopt the best practices.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomed the visit of former President of Human Rights Council Dr. Martin Uhombihi in May 2009, on the occasion of the visit of the UN Secretary-General.
- In April 2010, it also warmly received the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navenethem Pillay. During her visit, Ms. Pillay had an audience with H.M. the King and met with a number of officials and human rights activists to discuss the human rights situation in Bahrain.
- Bahrain has requested the support of OHCHR in its efforts for developing and supporting educational curricula and training courses on human rights.
- Efforts are being made by the Kingdom of Bahrain to eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons and illegal exploitation of human beings. To implement Bahrain's law on combating trafficking, a "National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking" was established. This committee is composed of representatives from government entities as well as NGOs. It is tasked with developing programs for preventing and combating trafficking in persons, protecting victims of trafficking, as well as submitting annual reports to relevant international entities on the

Our commitments to promote human rights on the ground are centered on regional cooperation in human rights field, in addition to the cooperation with the UN Human Rights System in general and the Human Rights Council in particular.

measures that are taken to combat human trafficking. The Committee launched its first Annual Report in April 2010.

- In an effort to combat trafficking, the Ministry of Interior established a specialized Unit to investigate and combat crimes of human trafficking.
- The Ministry of Social Development established a shelter for victims, in cooperation with relevant judicial authorities.
- The Ministry of Interior affirmed its ongoing commitment not to restrain peaceful demonstrations on the condition that they are conducted lawfully, the participants do not gather illegally and protests do not turn into violent disturbances.
- Bahrain considers the possibility of reviewing some of its existing reservations on Conventions it has acceded. The Kingdom has already withdrawn its reservation on article (20) of the Convention Against Torture and is studying the possibility of withdrawing other reservations.
- The Ministry of Labour issued a resolution prohibiting work under harsh conditions in open places between 12 and 4 pm during summer.



## The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

Through the Supreme Council for Women, Bahrain is looking into the possibility of lifting a number of reservations to CEDAW. The Supreme Council is also conducting awareness campaigns and workshops to promote CEDAW's principles in Bahraini society.

It is also considering ratifying the Optional Protocol and working to conform national legislations to CEDAW, in line with Bahraini human rights principles.

### Family Law:

The King of Bahrain issued Royal Decree No. 19 (2009) on the Family Law (Section One) after the Law was approved by Nuwab and Shura Councils. The Kingdom of Bahrain seeks to achieve community consensus that would allow the issuance of the Section Two of the Family Law.

In 2010, the Supreme Council for Women will work on a study regarding the implementation of the Family Law.

A number of training courses were conducted in 2009, such as:

- (a) Rights of the concerned parties in marriage agreements.

- (b) A Campaign on Women's Rights within the marriage document.
- (c) A workshop on the effects of domestic violence, meant for journalists and the youth.
- (d) A training course on how to use the Family Law in judicial processes before Shari'a courts.
- (e) A training course on the right to legal assistance for women with special needs.

## International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance:

The Government of Bahrain, through consultations and discussions with all relevant authorities, is seeking to support the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

### Nationality:

The Supreme Council for Women recommended to His Majesty, the King, to amend article (4) of the 1963 Citizenship Law so that Bahraini women married to non-Bahrainis can pass their nationality on to the children. The law should be amended according to rules and criteria guaranteeing both women's right to equality and the sovereignty of the State.



Recently, 372 children of Bahraini women were granted Bahraini nationality through a Royal Order.

Law No. 35 (2009) aims at ensuring equal treatment in governmental, health, education, residential and other services for non-Bahraini women married to Bahrainis as well as for children of Bahraini women married to non-Bahrainis.

## Domestic Workers:

The new Labour Law, which includes provisions protecting domestic labour, is currently being debated in the Parliament. New provisions include commitment to sign a contract defining rights and obligations of both employer and employee, with details on salary, annual leave, end of service, exemption from court fees and other issues.

## Gender:

Since 2008, efforts have been made by the Supreme Council for Women to elevate the status of women in society. Several national conferences and workshops have been conducted which cover various themes as seen below:

- In 2008, a round table meeting was held on ways of integrating women's needs in development policies.

- In 2008, a National Conference was held on highlighting gender balance in development programs. An endeavour to coordinate with ministries and various authorities and encourage them to integrate women's needs in their programs and budgets.
- The Ministry of Finance issued a bulletin advising budgets to comply with the National Plan, in particular, with respect to the implementation of the strategy for the advancement of Bahraini women and maintaining a gender balance.
- In 2009, the Supreme Council for Women and the UNDP began a project with the purpose of bringing women into the mainstream of development activities.
- Crucial points were decided in unison with the Shura Council, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and the Ministry of Education. These will work on training key employees on ways of integrating the needs of women and including it among the policies and action plans of these Ministries.



- In August 2008, a workshop was held on the importance and ways of creating a balanced approach that responds to women's needs.
- In November 2008, a workshop on capacity building was held in the area of integrating the needs of women in policies and plans.
- In June 2009, a workshop was held on ways of raising awareness and gaining support for bringing women into the mainstream of development.
- In March 2008, a workshop was held on ways to integrate gender perspectives in the media.
- In 2010, the Supreme Council for Women will hold the First National Conference for Bahraini Women titled "Integrating the needs of Bahraini women in development".

## Press Law:

In March 2008, the Cabinet agreed on issuing a press law, which inter alia abolishes the imprisonment of journalists. The law is currently being discussed in the Parliament.

## Invitation to Special Procedures:

The Kingdom of Bahrain is considering extending invitations to Special Procedures mandate holders.

## Commitment to timely submission of reports:

The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to submit its periodic reports in a timely manner. It also urges relevant governmental authorities to complete Treaty Bodies reports in the specified time periods.



## Law to Combat Discrimination:

The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination pointed out that Bahraini law provides no definition of racial discrimination that includes the criteria set out in Article 1 of the Convention. The Committee also asked for additional information on housing. The Kingdom of Bahrain will duly include in its next report to the Committee additional information on the follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations. It will also explore the possibility of obtaining appropriate technical assistance to strengthen national implementation of the Convention.

## Regulating Labour Market Law:

In a historic step aimed at improving living conditions of foreign labour, Bahrain has enacted Article 25 of the Law Regulating Labour Market, giving foreign labour the right to move to another employer, without jeopardizing the employer's rights under the work agreement signed by both parties. This decision was

initially opposed by businessmen, but was passed in consideration of the Government's commitment to human rights principles and to its efforts to guarantee the right to work in Bahrain.

## Convention Against Corruption:

The Kingdom of Bahrain, with the Law No. 7 (2010), ratified the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption.



# Applying a human rights based approach and methodology in development programs



Human rights are an integral part of our vision 2030. We aspire to shift from an economy built on oil wealth to a productive, globally competitive economy, shaped by the government and driven by a pioneering private sector – an economy that raises a broad middle class of Bahrainis who enjoy good living standards through increased productivity and high-wage jobs. Our society and government will embrace the principles of sustainability, competitiveness and fairness to ensure that every Bahraini has the means to live a secure and fulfilling life and reach their full potential.

Justice in the society means that all are treated equally, according to the law and the application of international standards of human rights. It also means providing everybody with equal access to education and health care and providing support to the needy through the provision of appropriate training and social security.

Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030

- A high standard of social assistance gives all Bahrainis an equal start
- All Bahraini nationals and residents have access to quality health care
- A first-rate education system enables all Bahrainis to fulfill their ambitions
- A safe and secure environment
- Bahraini nationals and residents enjoy a sustainable and attractive living environment

As an example to the application of human rights based approach in our development programs,

## Human Rights and Education:

- In 2009, the Ministry of Education set up a team that was assigned to prepare a plan with regards to human rights education. The team includes 20 members from various departments of the Ministry of Education.
- In April 2010, the team held a workshop which focused on the roles that the various departments within the Ministry would have in the implementation of the human rights education plan.



The workshop, which involved over 70 representatives from all departments, also focused on the dissemination of human rights principles to be adopted throughout the Ministry.

- Reinforcement of human rights culture among children at the primary level was initiated. Human rights education is already a part of the syllabus for all grades starting from the first to the twelfth grade.

## Participation of Civil Society:

- In light of the country's positive approach to support non-governmental organisations within the legal framework and in view of the effective role played by these organisations, the Ministry of Social Development has made efforts to maximize the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations. This has been done by facilitating proper coordination among them, providing facilities to enable them to function and by including them in all workshops, seminars and conferences organized by the Ministry.
- The Ministry of Social Development has intensified technical support programs for NGOs through an assessment of institutional

performance conducted on approximately 308 national associations in 2009. In addition, the National Center for NGOs' Support within the Ministry organized a number of training workshops. The Ministry has also increased cooperation with UNDP for the provision of technical and financial support for NGOs, ensuring human resources training and development of annual work plans.

## Empowerment of Women:

- The program "Tamkeen" ensures effective participation of Bahraini women in micro enterprises. As an example, the program provided loans for women to buy mini buses, and has offered training support on sewing as well as for purchasing necessary sewing supplies and tools. This has been achieved with the cooperation of the Supreme Council for Women, with whom Tamkeen shares a common vision for women's empowerment.
- Recently, the Supreme Council for Women launched, in cooperation with "Tamkeen" and the "Innovation Bank," a one-million-dinar financial portfolio for women's entrepreneurship empowerment program.



- The government has sought to work on the empowerment of women and integrating them in leadership and political positions at various levels. In recent years, women have held quite a few important positions in leadership and decision-making capacities, such as Minister, Judge, Ambassador, Assistant Secretary-General of the Constitutional Court, members in the Shura and Nouab Councils. This is a unique indicator for the equality between men and women, which affirms Bahrain's leadership in efforts towards the empowerment of women and the promotion of women's rights.
- In addition to these efforts, "Tamkeen" signed an agreement with the Bahraini Women Federation to provide Bahraini women with training on basic computers skills.

### Bahrain's participation in International Forums

- Bahrain contributes to the ongoing process of developing human rights standards in the United Nations and participates in the United Nations human rights forums where standards are discussed.
- From 20 to 24 April 2009, Bahrain participated in the Durban Review Conference which evaluated progress towards the goals set by the 2001 World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and contributed to its outcome document. Bahrain reiterated its rejection to all forms of racial discrimination and its acceptance of the fact that human rights are universal which all countries must work to strengthen and support.
- Bahrain also continues to participate actively in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council and its various Committees, General Assembly and the Security Council.
- In March 2010, the Kingdom signed the "National Program for Decent Work in Bahrain", with the participation of the Ministry of Labour, the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the General Federation of Labour Unions and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- The Kingdom of Bahrain also participated in the meetings of the Human Rights Council in Geneva and expressed its commitment to honor and protect human rights on its territory and promote human rights worldwide.



# National system for the protection and promotion of human rights



- On 11 November 2009, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, issued the Royal Order No. 46 (2009) establishing the Kingdom's National Institution for Human Rights.
- The National Institution is tasked to strengthen, develop and protect human rights as well as promote human rights awareness through free, impartial and independent exercise of its functions, in accordance with the Paris Principles.
- The National Institution will include a Chairman, two Vice Chairmen and twenty members renowned for their competence and integrity. Their membership would be valid for four years, renewable for one more term only. This step is considered one of the most important achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain with regard to the implementation of voluntary pledges undertaken at the Universal Periodic Review.
- One of the National Institution's main objectives would be to design a comprehensive national strategy for strengthening and protecting human rights in Bahrain and proposing mechanism and means for achieving this goal. It is also mandated to review national legislations and

regulations related to human rights in light of their compatibility with international human rights conventions and standards. The Institution also has the mandate to receive complaints on human rights violations, study them and refer them to the relevant authorities. Moreover, it would discuss cooperation with international human rights organisations and enhance the relationship with those organisations. The National Institution's main areas of operation would include issuing and publishing reports on the most important human rights developments and efforts made by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- On 25 April 2010, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, issued the Royal Order No. 16 (2010) appointing the twenty-three members of the National Institution for Human Rights.

Strengthening the normative  
framework for human rights





## Our capacity building program

On being re-nominated to the membership of the Human Rights Council, the Kingdom of Bahrain pledged to enhance the human rights situation in the country and focus on capacity-building. In this context the Steering Committee, in cooperation

**We must work together on promoting a human rights culture. This will be achieved only through intensifying capacity building and through the involvement of all segments of society.**

with UNDP, held a series of workshops aiming at consolidating capacity building of government officials in all fields. The Workshops or training programs included the following:

### Workshop on Paris Principles:

Between 22 and 24 July 2008, the UPR Steering Committee, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), held an introductory workshop on the Paris Principles and the best practices for establishing national human rights institutions.

A number of governmental and non-governmental organisations participated in the workshop during which historical background, legal framework and other aspects related to the Paris Principles were discussed.

The workshop also addressed the main mandates of national human rights institutions, notably, the enhancement of human rights, the provision of advisory services, investigations, documentation of human rights violations and handling of individual complaints. The workshop

also addressed the role of national institutions in supporting the rule of law as well as their role toward Government and civil society.

### Training Program in International and Constitutional Law and Human Rights:

During the period between 1st March and 4th June 2009, the UPR Steering Committee, in cooperation with the Center for Consultation, Legal and Constitutional Studies, organized a training program on international human rights and constitutional law. The training program covered several topics such as International Public Law, Constitutional Law and

International Human Rights Law as well as the preparation of UPR reports.

Participating in the program were: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Social Development, Education, Labour, Information, Health, Justice and Islamic Affairs, Public Prosecution, Supreme Council for Women, LMRA, Central Informatics Organisation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bahrain Society for Human Rights, Bahrain Society for Public Freedoms and Democracy Watch, Transparency Society, Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society, Women's Union, the Bar Association and the General Federation of Labour Unions.

### **Workshop on “Prevention and Criminalization of Torture according to the Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol”**

On 6 and 7 April 2009, the UPR Steering Committee held a workshop on the Prevention and Criminalization of Torture according to the Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the Association for the Prevention of Torture and Amnesty International. This workshop was a fulfillment to one of Bahrain's

voluntary pledges, according to which the Kingdom would consider reviewing some of the current reservations on the ratified Conventions. For the record, Bahrain withdrew its reservation on article (20) of the Convention Against Torture.

The workshop discussed the measures necessary to prevent torture and the necessity of the commitment to criminalize torture, as enshrined in international law. It also focused on the importance of increasing the effectiveness of combating torture through the full integration of the concept of torture in national legislation. During the workshop, a working paper was presented containing the necessity to investigate the charges and designing a complaint system. The workshop also reviewed the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture.

### **Workshop on “Health and Human Rights”**

On 13 and 14 May 2009, the UPR Steering Committee, in coordination with the World Health Organisation, organized a workshop on Health and Human Rights.

The workshop focused on the important link between health and



human rights, shedding light on the meaning of the “right to health”. The workshop demonstrated how to exercise the right to health care and to enhance human rights in public health programs. It discussed the right to health care, as a basic right, as well as national and civil society organisations’ role in raising awareness on the right to health.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants discussed the importance of guaranteeing the rights of health sector workers, including doctors and nurses, and raising their awareness and capacity. It was suggested that a national committee to defend the right to health should be established to work according to defined strategies and protocols. The workshop also discussed the importance of methods that would promote progress for the civil society and decision-makers, also through the use of media.

## Workshop on Prison Management

On 3 and 4 June 2009, the UPR Steering Committee organized a symposium on prison management in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross. The symposium discussed the standards for prisons, most importantly health

conditions and medical ethics in detention places as well as treatment of prisoners. The workshop aimed at exchanging views between specialists from the Kingdom of Bahrain and international organisations with regard to the international human rights legislations. Management of prisons and best practices on the subject and ways of implementation were also discussed.

Several non-governmental organisations and governmental institutions participated in the workshop where the Ministry of Interior and Public Prosecution delivered presentations on the Kingdom of Bahrain’s efforts on Prison management.

## Workshop on “The Rights of The Child”

On 26 and 27 October 2009, the UPR Steering Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), organized a workshop on the “Rights of the Child”. This workshop was conducted within the framework of implementing Bahrain’s voluntary commitment which entails spreading a human rights culture throughout Bahraini society.





The workshop discussed important topics related to the principles and the characteristics of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, methods and goals of modern education, how to establish a friendly education environment and the appropriate methods to promote children rights through various means including school curricula. Participants also reviewed how teaching methods could be more appropriate to children's rights and which would enable them to absorb human rights concepts in a simplified way. Among the participants were teachers from different educational levels.

### **Workshop on “Human Rights and Responsibilities”**

On 7 and 8 December 2009, the UPR Steering Committee, in collaboration with OHCHR, held a workshop for journalists on “Human Rights and Responsibilities”.

This workshop was conducted in the framework of Bahrain's commitment to implement its voluntary pledges, more specifically, the recommendation stipulating that the draft press law should not unduly restrict freedom of expression, a goal Bahrain willingly seeks to achieve.

The workshop discussed means and scope of international human rights law and comprehensively addressed the human rights protection system, the role of journalists in protecting and disseminating a human rights culture and follow-up the UPR recommendations of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Rights of journalists - most importantly, freedom of expression, were also addressed during the workshop, which was attended by a large number of journalists from various newspapers, governmental departments and NGOs.

### **Training Program on “Trafficking in Persons and Human Rights”**

In light of efforts to enhance human rights education and capacity building of government officials and civil society organisations, the UPR Project supported a training program on human trafficking investigation and prosecution. The workshop was held between 28 and 31 March 2010 and organized by the Public Prosecution, in cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

This workshop addressed the concept and definitions of trafficking in persons and how it is considered the most severe violation of human rights.



The workshop also addressed how to collect evidences and study cases, in addition to working with international cooperation and the types of mutual assistance to address these cases.

## Visits and Exchange of Experiences

### OHCHR's visit

On 25 May 2008, the Kingdom of Bahrain hosted Ms. Karin Lucke, human rights expert with OHCHR. During her visit, efforts undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain for further achievements in human rights, and

The UPR team within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the Kingdom's experience, namely:

- a) The process adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparing its first UPR report;
- b) The process used for the interactive dialogue on the Kingdom's report at the Human Rights Council in April 2008;
- c) The steps currently undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with concerned bodies, to implement Bahrain's recommendations, voluntary commitments and pledges.

Our understanding and perception evolves through the exchange of experiences and best practices.

features of the national plan to follow-up on the Universal Periodic Review were addressed.

### Visit of the Delegation from the United Arab Emirates

In October 2008, a delegation from the United Arab Emirates visited Bahrain to inquire about the Kingdom's experience in the Universal Periodic Review.

### Visit of the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi

Dr. Nizar Al-Baharna, the Chairman of the Steering Committee and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs received the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi, on 18 May 2009. The visit was in keeping with Bahrain's commitment to invite the President of the Council. Discussions and consultations included topics related to human rights and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism.



The President of the Human Rights Council commended the Kingdom of Bahrain's close relationship with the Council and praised Bahrain's experience and expertise in the Universal Periodic Review, which other countries can benefit from.

#### **Visit of the Delegation of the Republic of Iraq**

On 28 September 2009, a delegation from the Government of Iraq visited Bahrain to benefit from the Kingdom's experience in the Universal Periodic Review process. The delegation was briefed on Bahrain's experience, OHCHR's role as well as the role played by national and international civil society organisations.

The UPR team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided a detailed briefing on the steps and the methodology pursued by the Kingdom of Bahrain in preparing the national report and its discussion before the Human Rights Council.

The most important measures used by Bahrain to implement the recommendations and commitments resulting from the UPR were also reviewed. These measures sought the improvement and development of human rights on the ground.

## Our aspirations for the future

We realize that all our efforts to follow through with our commitments will not meet perfection at this stage. There are still many challenges before us which require overcoming for the sake of our aspirations for the future.

We look forward to building and establishing a just, prosperous and unified society, and in order to achieve this, we shall accomplish the following:

- Obtain the highest level of education, through which it will be possible to acquire skills required for achieving the ambitions.
- Enable the enjoyment of high quality health care for all.
- Empower women and integrate them in various fields, especially in leadership positions.
- Provide appropriate jobs for all groups of the society.
- Protect children and ensure protection of their rights.
- Provide a safe environment for all.
- Provide housing support and subsidies to those in need.

“Bahrain’s commendable human rights record proves that we are moving together in the right direction where democracy will remain our choice, justice is our pioneer and to us, Bahrain’s interests are above any other consideration.”

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa King of Bahrain

We have taken strides to improve our human rights situation, but the road is still long and difficult, and we need to combine all efforts, governmental and national, and all individuals. We must be a knit fabric of all segments of society.

We are all responsible for achieving our target. Together, we can confront challenges regardless of its size and complexity. Whatever the circumstances, we are determined to finish what we started and land at a safe shore.

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