

10 July 2018

English translation of the VNR report

COVER PAGE

**The Kingdom of Bahrain's First Voluntary National Review (2018)
on the implementation of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
and the
Sustainable Development Goals**

Main Messages

Bahrain's development process, which dates back decades, was accelerated with the launch of the comprehensive development and reform process by the King of Bahrain, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. It was further cemented with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, which has strengthened sustainability and reinforced competitiveness and justice, with the aim of doubling real household income by 2030. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and with the support of the Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, there has been strong focus by the government towards economic, human, structural, and civil development, which enabled Bahrain to meet the Millennium Development Goals and laid down strong foundations for sustainable development.

Achievements:

- ✓ 0% of Bahrainis live below the poverty line.
- ✓ The average annual economic growth in the last decade was 37.4%, and in 2017 the average per capita GDP was approximately US \$22,000.
- ✓ Expenditure on health services, education and social protection exceeds 35% of total government expenditure.
- ✓ Basic education is free and compulsory. The net enrollment ratio for primary and secondary levels is 100% and 86.4% respectively, consequently eliminating illiteracy; while enrollment in kindergartens is 82%.
- ✓ The population receives free healthcare with free medical prescriptions. Maternal mortality dropped to 28.6 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 226 deaths per 100,000 live births worldwide. Deaths of children under five have dropped to 9 deaths per 1,000 live births compared with 44 deaths per 1,000 live births worldwide.
- ✓ The Constitution guarantees gender equality. The Supreme Council for Women launched several initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities, by forming committees and allocating budgets. Bahraini women hold 55% of supervisory positions, with 53% participation in the public sector and 33% in the private sector.
- ✓ The private sector is a key partner in development and provides equal employment opportunities with high wages, which have contributed to a decline in unemployment to approximately 4%.

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- ✓ Approximately 65% of the citizen population benefited from housing services and five sustainable cities are under construction.
- ✓ Water systems, sanitation and clean energy networks reach 100% of the population.
- ✓ The Labor Fund (Tamkeen) has provided considerable support to small and medium enterprises. It has contributed over \$2.5 billion into more than 47,000 enterprises and has helped train more than 120,000 women, young people and persons with disabilities since its inception.

Major national priorities by major dimensions of development and the 2030 Agenda

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No one is left behind by the development process

The Constitution and public policies guarantee universal access to basic services. Government and civil society programs provide support to female victims of violence, persons with disabilities, and those with limited income. These public social services also cover expatriates, providing them with healthcare, housing, protection against arbitrary dismissal, and freedom from the sponsorship system through the flexible work program, which allows expatriates to work without a sponsor. Several initiatives to protect migrant workers' rights and to combat human trafficking have also been launched.

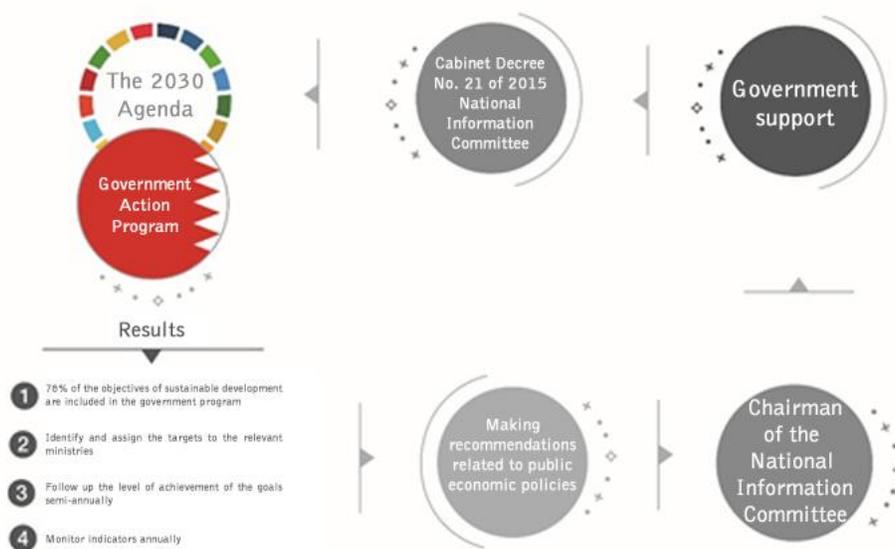
Regional integration and international contribution

Bahrain is part of the GCC. Its regional integration is strategically important for sustaining its security and stability. Bahrain provides humanitarian assistance to mitigate the impact of disasters and provides more than 600,000 permanent jobs for expatriates. Financial remittances coming out of Bahrain amounted to BD 927 million (US \$2.5 billion) in 2017, contributing to development and the alleviation of poverty in the home countries of expat workers.

Implementation mechanism

The Sustainable Development Goals are implemented through the Government Action Plan, in partnership with the private sector and civil society. The current program includes six strategic areas or dimensions that intersect with the key areas of the Sustainable Development Goals. Approximately 78% of the targets of the SDGs are included in the current program. This approach will continue with future programs.

Integrative approach between the Government's work program and sustainable development goals



Preparing the review

The National Information Committee, chaired by H.E. the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, monitors the achievement and delivery of the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, links them to the Government Action Plan, monitors programs and policies that achieve these objectives, and measures progress. The National Information Committee, with follow-up through the coordinating committee, supervises the preparation of the national review. A team has been responsible for the collation of information and data from sectoral reports and national reports submitted to international organizations. A number of consultative workshops were also held to better inform the review preparation process.



Current and future challenges

As one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Bahrain faces the following challenges:

- Climate change threatens water and agricultural resources, biodiversity, coastal installations, infrastructure, and health. Tackling this requires the transfer and resettlement of appropriate green technologies, funding, national capacity-building, and community awareness raising campaigns.
- Maintaining sustainable economic growth to provides an attractive environment for investment and better and diverse employment opportunities for citizens.
- Strengthening the role of evidence-based national statistics to improve its quality and transparency, and establish regular monitoring of the SDG indicators.
- Addressing the issues of extremism and terrorism, with a focus on conflict resolution and building resilience within Bahraini communities in order to combat these problems, to strengthen national identity and community cohesion, and to preserve the gains of national development plans and processes.

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Bahrain reaffirms its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals to improve the well-being of its citizens and preserve resources for future generations.

Summary

The current review seeks to monitor Bahrain's progress towards achieving sustainable development and addresses the challenges, experiences, and accomplishments of Bahrain to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The progress to date in achieving the goals and objectives are supported by statistics, reflecting the multi-dimensional and interdependent nature of related development issues, the intellectual link between its causes and effects, and the policies taken to sustain development and human welfare. The review forms a sound basis for identifying opportunities, challenges, and areas for future development.

The preparation of the first National Voluntary Review of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs is the result of a consultative and participatory process by government agencies with a wide range of stakeholders, including community groups, civil society organizations, the private and public sectors, academics, and those concerned with development issues. This process helped raise awareness and interest in the 2030 Agenda and national development plans by identifying their synergies and linkages, while also advancing stakeholder contribution in the preparation of the review.

The national review is based on a robust methodology, linking the global agenda to national development plans. It not only presents Bahrain's achievements, but also highlights the opportunities and challenges the Kingdom faces in economic, social, environmental, cultural, and institutional dimensions. The review process has stimulated dialogue and discussion between government agencies and civil society stakeholders, providing a platform to both raise awareness and share information; this consultative process will continue even after the presentation of the national review at the United Nations High-level Political Forum.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes that achieving sustainable development requires national and global efforts. This motivated Bahrain to gain international recognition for its efforts through awards, and through establishing international awards for initiatives that aid and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, the King Hamad Award for Youth Empowerment to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals; the Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa International Women's Empowerment Award; His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Award for Urban Development and Housing; and His Highness Award for Sustainable Development all promote and motivate competition in the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The national review addresses a number of good practices, most notably the establishment of the National Information Committee, which has helped facilitate and encourage the exchange of data in relation to the indicators of the 2030 Agenda. Data is updated periodically by contributors and data users, which has increased the validity and reliability of official performance information. It has improved decision making processes, basing them on comprehensive and scientific data, which recognizes key development issues and their challenges and also takes into consideration future trends. This cooperative and collaborative process supports the realization of sustainable development and follows the principles of partnership and consultation.

The Economic Vision and Structural Strategic Plan 2030 are important steps in the planning of sustainable development in the Kingdom. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is holistic, interdependent and inclusive, and pledges to leave no one behind. It is the world's road map towards a sustainable future. However, the challenge remains to translate and implement the global SDGs and its targets into successive government work programs for the successful delivery of the SDGs. The approach in the alignment of the 2030 Agenda with the Government Action Plan has resulted in Bahrain successfully integrating around 78% of the targets into the 2015-2018 Government Program. Bahrain is eager for continued in-depth integration and conformity with the principles of the 2030 Agenda in the Government Action Plan 2019-2021 to support the sustainability of its development process.

The Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) signed between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations agencies in Bahrain, for the period 2018-2022, demonstrates the Kingdom's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SPF is one of several initiatives that aim to support achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Another initiative includes supporting the preparation of Bahrain's first Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The review highlights that the key challenge faced by the Kingdom of Bahrain in pursuing sustainable development is that it is a small island facing challenges such as climate change, population growth, urbanization, and the accompanying demand for land, as well as growing pressure on its limited natural resources. The population density and associated development infrastructure and facilities in the coastal areas, and the potential for the rise in sea levels due to climate change both pose a threat to the sustainability of Bahrain's rich coastal ecosystems, along with the accompanying economic, social, and environmental costs. Identifying trends in urbanization and

taking measures which anticipate the rise in sea levels is critical to sustaining development and preserving large investments in coastal development facilities, ecosystem services, and for assessing its impact on human well-being.

The integration of economic, social, and environmental issues and the recognition of the interlinkages between them is difficult to address without international cooperation and technical support. Despite the desire for sustainability, there are costs involved in development, which can be challenging for small island states. The localization of smart technology, especially in the area of large data and cybersecurity, geospatial information systems, data modelling, and forecasting scenarios are important factors in monitoring progress towards sustainability. Support is also required in the adoption of green technologies such as seawater desalination, clean production, waste recycling, optimization of treated wastewater, transportation networks, and smart cities, etc. Global funding partnerships are essential for bridging the gap and in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The support of the international community for Bahrain in strengthening internal stability and security is also necessary to raise the level of human development and human well-being in the move towards sustainable development.

The Kingdom hopes that the report and the preparation of the current review will augment inclusive, community-based processes and reinforce a collaborative culture at all levels within the Kingdom. This includes strengthening and facilitating participation rates for national statistics; expanding the preparation of sustainability reports at sectoral and institutional levels; and capacity-building and raising community awareness of sustainability concepts, practices, and behaviors. This process will facilitate the understanding of the mechanisms involved in developing policies which promote sustainability, both with respect to the rational consumption of resources, and in other areas such as maintaining stability, peace, community cohesion, and partnerships.

Chapter I: Ownership of the sustainable development goals and the reporting mechanism

1.1 Preface

The Kingdom of Bahrain will present its first Voluntary National Review to the High-level Political Forum for Monitoring and Reporting on Progress in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The review considers national policies and collates information on various development issues in the Kingdom, including highlighting the challenges and progress made towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. The review presents the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on issues of priority for the Kingdom, and around the thematic sessions of the Forum under the topic "Transitions towards flexible and sustainable societies," with focus on Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17; noting that Bahrain is preparing to organize three additional side events at the HLPF, focusing on housing policies and projects, labour market reforms, and the efforts of the Labour Fund (Tamkeen) in empowering Bahrainis in the private sector and in entrepreneurship.

1.2 National ownership of the sustainable development agenda and people's opinion

National ownership of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and accelerating its implementation at the highest levels in the Kingdom of Bahrain are reflected in the development of regulatory frameworks and institutional mechanisms. This has been achieved, for example, by an alignment exercise that aimed to link the SDGs and 2030 Agenda with national strategies and the Government Action Plan (2015-2018) and opening up different avenues for citizen participation to help define the Kingdom's priorities. The results of the United Nations "MY World" survey (2014/2015), undertaken by 6,336 individuals in Bahrain, demonstrated that there are a number of areas of focus for Bahraini citizens, most notably quality of education, better healthcare, improved employment opportunities, and protection from crime and violence.

All subsequent surveys conducted during the preparation of this review, including within civil society organizations, the private sector, the academic sector, and those concerned with sustainable development, confirm that the priority Sustainable Development Goals for the Kingdom of Bahrain were: better education (Goal 4); better health (Goal 3); and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8). However, security and stability to sustain achievements and to continue towards sustainable development were also key and primary priorities of the citizens of Bahrain. Basic global sustainable development issues, such as poverty and hunger, the availability

of drinking water, sanitation services, energy reliability, housing, and infrastructure are all either accessible or not areas of concern for Bahrainis, as the Kingdom has successfully improved access to basic necessities through its successive Action Plans.

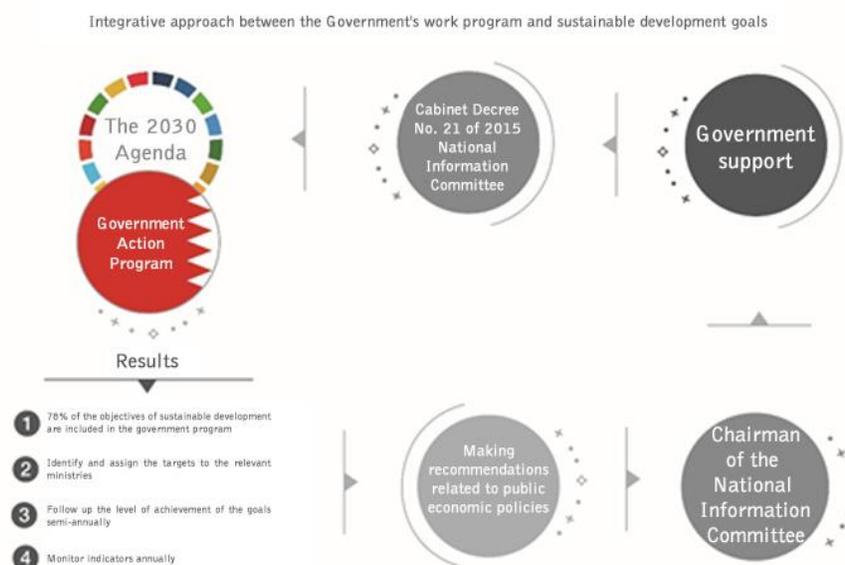
تطلعات البحرينيين في الاستيفاء الشعبي الأممي "العالم الذي نريد"
2015-2014



1.3 Institutional mechanisms

Decree No. 21 of March 2015, facilitated the establishment of the National Information Committee (NIC) (1) under the chairmanship of the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the membership of ministries, and government agencies. This Committee aims to follow-up on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and link it to its national development strategies to better monitor the sustainability of

Bahrain’s development process. The NIC has been responsible for monitoring sustainable development indicators, coordinating the collection of data from different sources, and disaggregating them according to sex, location and other factors. It succeeded in incorporating 78% of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda within the programs and initiatives of the Government Action Plan 2015-2018. However, some goals have been omitted due to their lack of relevance in the Bahraini context, either due to its geographical or urban traits. This includes goals related to forests, epidemics, the rural environment, etc., or goals that already being realized; such as the existence of a legal identity for every citizen and resident, and recording all births in a central register immediately after birth, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Bahrain joined in 1989.



Establishing an institutional framework has helped the National Information Committee in mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals across all government sectors by collecting and classifying indicators, preparing sustainability reports and providing them successively to the Information Authority and eGovernment, establishing a monitoring and reporting system for indicators, and exchanging development related information between all partners. The establishment of an electronic system to regularly monitor the implementation of the tasks of the Government Action Plan has made it easier to obtain accurate information on key statistics and indicators of government agencies. Periodic reports can now be submitted to the Council of Ministers to monitor the implementation of government projects, allowing them to take appropriate decisions on challenging projects to review the difficulties facing implementation and to explore solutions to them.

To complete these institutional mechanisms a national information database of indicators on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals has been developed to boost coordination and cooperation between data providers and users, linking Government Action Plans to Sustainable Development Goals, as well as monitoring and exchanging information to complement the work of decision makers with access to reliable information.

1.4 The mechanism of preparing the review

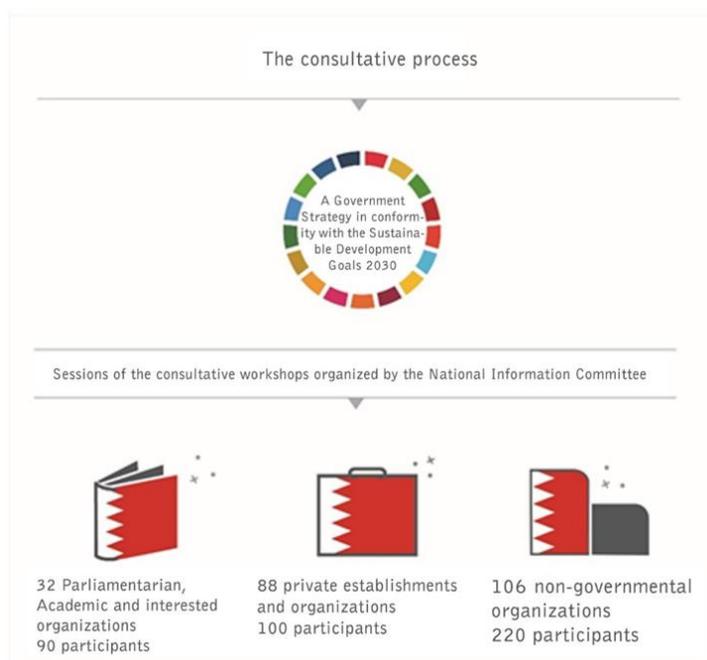
This report was prepared based on the guidelines proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as mentioned in the Manual on the Preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews 2018, which is prepared by the Sustainable Development Department of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, with international support. This report considers the progress made towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—focusing on the goals for the 2018 review—and assess the policies, institutional mechanisms, implementation methods and the overall enabling environment that has been developed to achieve the goals.

However, the purpose of the review is not limited to presenting it at the High-level Political Forum, and exchanging experiences with other states but the review also aims to achieve a number of national goals. This includes enhancing national ownership of the global agenda and aligning it with Bahrain's national development plans. The review also provides a reliable source for internal evaluation by reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the development goals in the Kingdom, and by identifying challenges and solutions to support a plan of action in accelerating the realization of the SDGs.

The Information and eGovernment Authority (National Statistical Office) informed the President of the Economic and Social Council of its intention to present the voluntary review in 2018 by developing a roadmap for the preparation of the review through a number of meetings and mini-workshops with the National Information Committee, chaired by the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, with representatives from 21 ministries and government agencies, while identifying the relevant government authorities directly linked to the delivery of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and areas of overlap. The process of collecting the necessary information and data also began, and each authority prepared its report on the progress towards each indicator of their relevant Sustainable Development Goal.

A team that included representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Information and eGovernment Authority was also formed to monitor that all aspects of the preparation process were covered. A national expert was also hired to help prepare the review. The review was based on evidence and information received from stakeholders connected to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and from relevant national reports submitted to UN conferences. This was followed by a series of meetings with ministries and government agencies to brief them on the review process, including consultations with the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UN agencies in the Kingdom. In addition to meetings with a delegation from the United Nations Department for Sustainable Development, who visited Bahrain in early May 2018.

The preparation process of the review included wide participation of representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, academics, research centres, and educational and media institutions, and included women and youth who participated in three workshops held in April 2018. The workshops contributed to raising public awareness of the goals and objectives of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and were open to anyone interested in sustainable development issues.



1.5 Regional and international contribution

The Kingdom of Bahrain played a key role in the negotiations on the preparation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its global goals at a regional, national, and international level. Through its participation in the intergovernmental negotiations within the “Open Action Team” on the sustainable development goals, Bahrain helped in formulating the implementation strategy, the funding framework, and the follow-up and review mechanism. It also hosted the second session of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Manama during the period 5-7 May 2015. The Forum’s proceedings resulted in issuing “Bahrain document” and included 19 recommendations on the key issues related to sustainable development in the Arab States, which was presented to the United Nations High-level Political Forum in July 2015. The Kingdom of Bahrain represents the GCC in the Group of Experts (IAEG) responsible for identifying the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, with Bahrain hosting its fifth meeting in November 5, 2017.

This significant role played by the Kingdom of Bahrain was complemented by the development of the partnership with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bahrain on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, in October 2017, resulted in the signing of the Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) agreement, which is considered the first of its kind in the region. The agreement is the result of five decades of cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations, represented by sixteen UN agencies operating in Bahrain. It aims to support the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and expertise between Bahrain and the international community; launch international projects from Bahrain; prevent duplication of initiatives and projects within the framework of the Government's Action Plan 2019-2022 and Bahrain Economic Vision 2030; and align them with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A coordinating committee was formed to work on this agreement, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bahrain. This ongoing cooperation between the Kingdom, the UN, and other partners has contributed to the successful preparation of the review.

Chapter II: Creating an enabling policy environment

2.1 Preface

The Kingdom of Bahrain is considered a pioneer in the region with the launch of its development process. The government has adopted a range of policies and strategies to diversify the economy, raise the living standards, and achieve progress on economic, social, and environmental issues. Since the accession of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in 1999, the Kingdom has made significant advancements

in the fields of democratic representation, political reform, economic and human development, environment, and the conservation of natural resources within the overall development process.

On 14 February 2001, the National Action Charter, approved by 98.4% of the electorate, laid the foundation for national stability, establishing a constitutional monarchy and the principle of separation of powers; it guarantees personal and religious freedoms, freedom of expression and publication, freedom of association, allows for trade unions, and provides citizens with other rights and freedoms. Parliamentary elections were held, allowing Bahrainis to exercise their political and constitutional rights in full. The elections were held for four consecutive sessions in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014. The number of civil society organizations in Bahrain has increased from 100 in 1999 to 613 to date. In the fourth quarter of this year, the 2018 elections will be held to select the members of the House of Representatives and to form a new Shura Council.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain¹ affirms the principles of sustainable development. It states that the national economy is based on social justice and on equitable cooperation between public and private activities to build economic development in accordance with national plans and to achieve prosperity for all citizens. Articles 8, 9, and 11 of the Constitution focus on the protection of the environment and the need to balance national strategies with the development processes which can be strengthened through government institutions and legislations.

The progress achieved in supporting sustainable policies around environmental issues, has been accompanied by sustained economic and social growth, reflected in the high rates of human development indicators, as demonstrated by Bahrain's high human development rate, particularly in comparison to the rest of the region. In 2016 Bahrain ranked 47th globally and 4th in the Gulf, with average life expectancy at birth at 77 years, while the per capita GDP was approximately BD8,272 (US \$22,000). Bahrain was the first in the region to localize and meet the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

In 2005, a decision was made to prepare the "National Strategic Structural Plan" which balanced economic growth with growing demands on land use to meet the demands of current and future generations, while accounting for sustainable development. The plan aimed to reduce reliance on oil and gas revenues, and to

¹ <http://www.alshafafeyabh.org/KingdomLaws/BhcConstitution2002.pdf>

reform the labour market, as well as education and training systems. It also focused on advancing Bahrain's standing in the Gulf in the fields of finance and business, led by the private sector, particularly to provide a welcoming environment where expatriates could create businesses and advance infrastructure, supported by a skilled workforce.

In 2008, the Economic Vision 2030 was launched with the primary goal of doubling household family income by 2030. The vision, which was based on three basic principles: "competitiveness, justice and sustainability," defined the Kingdom's ambition in three key areas: "economy, government, and society." It addressed the nature of society and the role that both the public and private sectors can play in the economic development process, which reflects positively on Bahrain's efforts towards sustainable development.

Specifically, the Government's Action Plan (2015-2018) focuses on diversifying the economy, supporting growth of the non-oil sectors, opening up to foreign investments, and strengthening public-private partnerships. This has increased the contribution of non-oil sectors in 2017 to more than 80% in Bahrain's economy

The Health Plan (2016-2025) has been concerned with building confidence in the national health system, reducing diseases and inequalities in accessing healthcare and medicines, and in complementing the National Plan for Reducing Noncommunicable Diseases, which was developed by the Ministry of Health (Goal 3).

In the education sector, access to education is guaranteed, and efforts continue to enhance the quality of education. Further, there are programs that focus on the development of vocational skills for young people, and entrepreneurship (Goal 4).

In the energy sector, Bahrain's 2016 energy policy is in line with Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is improving the reliability and efficiency of electricity, increasing energy security, increasing the share of renewable energy in the national energy mix, linking electricity and water services with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and assessing the level of interdependence on issues such as water, energy, and food. In the water sector, Bahrain has achieved its objectives in the quality and quantity of domestic water, its treatment and reuse for the agricultural and municipal sector, and in the afforestation of urban and barren areas. The National Water Strategy (2017-2035) is in line with Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The objective of the agricultural initiative is to promote sustainable agriculture, food security, improve nutrition, and eradicate

hunger (Goal 2). Furthermore, it also takes into account other Sustainable Development Goals related to health (Goal 3), poverty (Goal 1), gender equality (Goal 5), water and sanitation (Goal 6), sustainable production and consumption (Goal 12), and climate change (Goal 13.)

The Supreme Council for the Environment is developing a legal framework to reduce marine pollution from land-based activities, to protect marine and coastal ecosystems, and to preserve fish traps to make them more sustainable. This contributes to the achievement of Goal 14, while also focusing on the issues of air quality and waste (Goal 3 and 11), climate change (Goal 13), biodiversity protection, desertification, and other aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as Goal 15.

2. 2 Integration between dimensions and national adaptation

Bahrain realizes the importance of integrating the three dimensions of-sustainability - economic, social, and environmental development. It also takes into account the political and institutional component of the State (i.e. peace and good governance), believing that "there is no development without peace and no peace without development." Bahrain pays particular attention to knowledge, innovation, and culture, as there is no sustainable development without advances in science and knowledge, and in developing a system of values, behaviours, and innovations that achieve sustainable development. This interdependence is echoed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has identified five key areas: people; planet; prosperity; peace; and partnership, which intersect with the three dimensions of development mentioned above.

At the national level, the Economic Vision 2030 adopted three key guiding principles: competitiveness, justice, and sustainability, which are inseparable elements to achieving their goals of stability and progressing the advancement of the welfare of citizens by "doubling the real income by 2030, taking into account sustainability requirements." These three elements can be better understood in their connection with the three dimensions of the economic vision of the Kingdom of Bahrain: - the economic dimension (the principle of competitiveness); the social dimension (justice); and the environmental dimension (sustainability). This is also reflected in the six pillars of the Government Action Plan 2015-2018²: sovereignty;

² https://www.bahrain.bh/wps/wcm/connect/8824a860-8f2f-4906-b50d-2a0b584f9043/government_action_plan_2015-2018.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

economic and financial; social services and human development; environment and urban development; infrastructure; and government performance. Strategic objectives, policies, and actions have been developed for each axis, which are mutually constitutive, and which intersect with the five areas of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



The relationship between vision guides and development dimensions, as reflected in the Government Action Plan and the 2030 Agenda, the similarity of horizontal colours means the convergence of concepts and components

3.2 Toward leaving no one behind

Development in Bahrain does not exclude anyone, it is inclusive of all, including vulnerable groups who are prioritized in any development process. Access to information on these groups has been facilitated by the availability of statistics and information disaggregated by sex, age, place of residence, standard of living, type and degree of disability, etc., so that it is easier to monitor inequality and identify specific difficulties within groups, including migrant workers serving in low-income occupations.

The concept of extreme poverty, according to international standards, does not apply to Bahrain (as stated above). The Constitution and public policies guarantee universal access to basic services without exception. It should be noted that the percentage of people covered by public services such as water, sanitation, and electricity is 100%, including expatriates. Education is free for all and is mandatory for citizens in the early years. Healthcare is also free. Comprehensive coverage is achieved without exception through existing government policies and further initiatives are not required in these areas. In addition, Bahrain provides a package

of social assistance programs in accordance with Law No. 18 of 2006 on social security and social assistance, which helps to ensure minimum basic life requirements for citizens (including vulnerable groups such as orphans, disabled persons, widows, the elderly, and prisoners' families). The total amount of this assistance was approximately 265 million US dollars in the past five years and benefited 8% of families.

This is in addition to other services and assistance provided by non-governmental organizations such as Zakat funds and the Royal Charity Organization, amongst others (with the participation of the private sector and civil society organizations). Therefore, social groups, particularly from marginalized or excluded groups, are protected by government policies and programs that provide basic services, which are guaranteed by the Constitution.

Financial Assistance

The Government is committed to providing social and development services to all, to build a Bahraini society based on the principles of solidarity, cohesion and partnership for positive change.

These include:

- 1) direct financial assistance to families and individuals on a low-income, including widows, divorcees, families of prisoners, displaced persons, orphans, the elderly, children, unmarried women and those unable to work;
- 2) financial assistance to persons with disabilities;
- 3) financial assistance to families who have lost their homes due to fire;
- 4) reduction of electricity and water charges for families in need;
- 5) monetary compensation for citizens for the removal of meat subsidies;
- 6) housing allowance for Bahraini families until they receive adequate housing;
- 7) financial facilities in cooperation with the private sector to provide social housing;
- 8) financial assistance for the unemployed;
- 9) direct financial assistance for retirees with low income.

Additionally, the National Strategy for the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence and the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women (2013-2022) both aim to address all forms of violence against women, strengthen family cohesion through family bonds, and encourage the participation of women in national development; providing them with knowledge and qualitative training, and establishing business incubators to support women entrepreneurs. The strategies further encourage the establishment of equal opportunity committees within state institutions and the adoption of budgets which are responsive to the needs of both women and men, to ensure justice and equal opportunities for all (Goal 5 and 10).

For persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with civil society organizations and the private sector, provide various types of healthcare, social, cultural, and rehabilitation programs. These efforts focus on training and empowering persons with disabilities to support their integration into the labour market and wider society. This is in addition to enacting legislation which protects the rights of citizens with disabilities to receive access to support services, including access to disability-related financial benefits, which are currently provided to 10,000 disabled persons; as well as providing special support to any dependents. Specialized comprehensive disability complexes and care centres for the care of people with disabilities, such as autism, or cerebral palsy have also been established. These centres provide learning, training and skills development programs to empower them to integrate into the labour market, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Bahrain in 2011.

The care of children from birth has remained one of Bahrain's top priorities. Bahrain has had an established civil register since 1984, registering individuals and providing legal identities for every citizen and resident. The register records all births soon after the child is born according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Bahrain joined in 1989. Article 7 of this Convention states that "the child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, to the extent possible, the right to know and receive care from his parents." In 1999, The National Committee for Childhood was formed to oversee the implementation of the National Strategy for Childhood, with the aim of providing a safe environment for all children and to promote their rights. This is affirmed in the Convention, guaranteed by the Constitution, and ratified by international charters and agreements without discrimination through the provision of the child's rights to healthcare, survival, learning, capacity development, protection, and the right to participation and non-discrimination. In the same context, the Child Protection Centre was established in

2007, which is a social care institution attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, for the protection of children, up to the age of 18 years, from all forms of abuse, including neglect, and social and sexual abuse; and encompasses the protection of children from abuse within families and communities. This includes providing them with psychosocial, social, and legal services, as well as providing rehabilitation to families where possible, in order to keep the child in his/her family environment, or to find alternative care in the event of ill-treatment.

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain is also committed to providing the best health, social and educational care for youth, and takes seriously its responsibility in educating the community on the importance of raising young people, improving their skills, enhancing their spirit of citizenship and belonging, and encouraging their participation in youth activities (Goal 4). The Ministry of Youth and Sports has allocated sports facilities and youth centres with 39 Centres to date, distributed across the Kingdom's governorates. The number of young people benefitting from these centres was 12,000 in 2017. The Ministry developed a partnership with the private sector (Goal 17) to promote social integration among the wider sectors of society. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has also developed a youth strategy closely related to Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As for services provided to the elderly, since 1985, a number of specialized day care centres, have been established to provide social, psychological, and healthcare for the elderly. There are currently 10 of these centres throughout Bahrain. The private sector and civil society organizations also deliver care to the elderly to assist their wellbeing and independence within their communities and residential neighbourhoods. In addition, a mobile unit system was created to assist the elderly in their homes and provide health services and nursing care, as well as personal care and family counselling services. The project "Quality of Life for the Elderly" has been launched to assume the responsibility of upgrading the services provided to the elderly in Bahrain. This project takes into account the provision of dignified care for the elderly, while enabling them to live independently for longer, without the need for care. To this end, a field survey of the Kingdom's existing measures was conducted to assess the quality of life of the elderly in Bahrain, so that a range of programs could be developed to raise standards.

Expatriate workers, particularly those working in low-income jobs, also benefit from public utilities and social services which are guaranteed through public policies. There are special measures in place to ensure accommodation, health, and accident insurance, and which also provide protection from arbitrary dismissal. In 2004, the

Kingdom established the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) as part of the labour market reform project. Accordingly, a number of steps have been taken to protect the rights of expatriate workers without prejudicing the rights of other parties, including the freedom of movement for workers between employers and the provision of a grace period for those violating the law in order for them to find legal solutions. The flexible work permit is also an innovative solution for the reform of the labour market, while strengthening and guaranteeing the rights of expatriate workers, alongside the rights of other parties such as employers. It also provides a qualitative economic benefit to the national economy through the provision of flexibility in employment, while also ensuring economic flexibility and competitiveness.

The Kingdom is keen to continuously review and develop its legislative and legal system in line with international standards, particularly in the field of safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrant workers against any attempts of extortion, exploitation, or trafficking. The Centre for the Support and Protection of Expatriate Workers, which includes a shelter, has been established; in addition to the launch of the National Referral System for Combating Trafficking in Persons, which reinforces the role of the relevant authorities involved in fighting crime of this nature, including a focus on the mechanisms used to deal with suspected trafficking cases.

Chapter III: Situation analysis and progress achieved

3.1 Preface

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago consisting of 40 islands located in the Arabian Gulf, between longitudes 50.50 to 51.11, and latitudes 26.06 to 27.18. The total area of the country is 8,269 km², of which 778 km² is land mass, constituting about 9% of the Kingdom's total area. Bahrain Island is the Kingdom's largest island, which includes the capital, Manama, and accounts for about 85% of the total land area. Bahrain is connected with Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway, which was opened in 1986. The surface of Bahrain is generally flat, with the highest point and elevation at the Mountain of Smoke, 134 meters above sea level. Structurally, Bahrain has a “dome structure” with limited oil resources compared to other Gulf countries.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is located in a tropical region and has a dry climate, with very hot summers, and mild winters, only seeing 80 mm of rainfall per year. Therefore, most of the Kingdom's rocky surface is covered by dunes of dry and salty sand which prevent the growth of natural forests, except for some wild plants which

are able to tolerate arid climatic conditions. However, the northern and northwestern coast of Bahrain Island is characterized by its fertile and agricultural land due to the existence of natural springs, in addition to the freshwater springs within the sea. These places have become a place of sanctity throughout the ages and have been named - the land of Delmon, Awal and Tylos, by Bahrain.



Satellite Image of the Kingdom of Bahrain

About 80% of the population is concentrated on the main island of Bahrain, specifically in the northern half where government facilities and business incubators are concentrated. In some parts of Bahrain, the population density is more than 1,800 inhabitants/km², with the total population of the Kingdom reaching 1.5 million in 2017. Of this figure, 45% are citizens, 64% are of working age (between 15 and 64 years of age), while the proportion of youth (between 15-24 years of age) comprises about 12% of the total population. The proportion of the population who are dependents (that is, under the age of 15, or over the age of 64), has reached approximately 31%, of which 25% are children and 6% are elderly. Those under 30 years of age make up 46% of the population (of which 58% are Bahrainis and 36% are non-Bahrainis). The average life expectancy of the Bahraini population is 76.7 years, which means that Bahrain has the potential to take advantage of its demographic dividend.

With regard to key economic indicators, Bahrain's GDP amounted to around \$35 billion in 2017. The average per capita GDP was \$22,000 in 2017, placing Bahrain amongst high-growth countries and ranking it 47 out of 188 globally, according to the 2016 Human Development Index. Economic growth has seen some fluctuation

over the last decade, as the global economic and social crisis of 2008 resulted in slow growth, especially in the field of construction. The effects of regional instability in the Arab region and in the Gulf from 2011, coupled with the instability of oil prices, have had a negative impact on the Kingdom's economic growth with GDP at around BD 12,245 million (USD 32.5 billion) in 2017, with the oil and gas share at 18.61% and with the percentage of exports to imports at 65%.

3.2 The current situation in relation to the goals and objectives of sustainable development

Pursing the 2030 Agenda will require a comprehensive process of alignment between the SDGs and Bahrain's national development plans, and a consideration of the local context. In the case of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), some development targets had already been met when the MDGs were adopted. As a result, Bahrain adopted a more ambitious approach (MDG Plus) to bolster national development plans, in order to further reflect the Kingdom's development priorities, and the aspirations of the people and the Government of Bahrain.

This same approach has been applied to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda itself is different in its inclusive and comprehensive approach, and differs from its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals. Each signatory has agreed to adhere to the guidelines and general principles of the Agenda, such as leaving no one behind, and to promote sustainability integration and partnerships, etc. In this context, Bahrain has taken steps to evaluate the global goals and their targets in order to determine the following:

- to assess the SDGs and targets that do not apply to Bahrain;
- to differentiate, within each SDG, the targets which are applicable and those which are not;
- to identify the targets that have been achieved or are close to being achieved (as measured by their corresponding indicators) and identifying an appropriate plan and timeframe to meet outstanding targets.

Based on this thorough assessment, Bahrain identified its goals and objectives, as well as the priorities and policies which would be required to achieve them. Taking existing strategies into consideration, new policies and programs were proposed to fill the gaps and to support the achievement of the remaining high priority development goals, within national plans. Based on the above, four distinguished

categories of objectives were acknowledged in terms of priorities in Bahrain and existing levels of achievement:

1. The first category includes targets that apply nationally and have been fully or partly achieved. This includes the number of well-established development goals measured through quantitative indicators, the most important of which is the eradication of extreme poverty (Goal 1), but also providing public services and systems for all, for example water sanitation (Goal 6), and in the provision of health and education services (Goals 3 & 4 respectively). Bahrain will continue to build on existing progress and achievements in these areas to support the full realization of these goals, where applicable.
2. The second category includes goals and targets that are applicable to Bahrain and are already being pursued, such as the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix (Goal 7), the promotion of scientific research, and the improvement of technological capabilities (Goal 9).
3. The third category includes targets that Bahrain faces challenges in achieving, such as the goals related to climate change (Goal 13), waste management and recycling (Goal 11).
4. The fourth category includes goals and objectives that are not applicable to Bahrain, such as those related to forests, mountains and rivers.

Developing national plans that are proportionate with the existing requirements and capacity of Bahrain, but which also reflect the challenges faced by the Kingdom, is the best strategy to support the implementation and realization of the global goals, while also generating a strong sense of national ownership around the sustainable development plan. By taking these elements into consideration, Bahrain will be better able to incorporate the global goals into its national action plans. These include, for example, Goals 1 and 10, which relate to raising living standards and reducing inequality. Additionally, Goals 14 and 15 (which focus on marine and terrestrial environments respectively) can be incorporated because of the archipelago nature of Bahrain; as well as Goals 8 and 9 (economic growth and infrastructure respectively). This is equally the case for other areas such as Goal 2, which focus on food security and its related targets on healthy nutrition and food market stability; as well as Goal 17 on strengthening partnerships. It is worthwhile noting that the current Government Action Plan distinguishes between the sovereign axis that deals with security and peace and the axis on government performance, which means it also distinguishes between two dimensions within Goal 16. This reinforces the principle of flexibility and considers the 2030 Agenda to be a flexible framework for national planning, and not a rigid framework.

Based on this flexibility, national planning and strategies can look to adopt an approach that reflects the identification of the key, and often complex, issues, which directly affect Bahrain, while using this information to consider an approach which links them directly to the sustainable development agenda. Linking sustainable development to national planning in this manner demonstrates an understanding of both national realities and of the wider global sustainable development challenges, as outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter IV: Issues central to a national perspective

4.1 Preface

Bahrain has adopted the Sustainable Development Goals into the 2030 Agenda in a way which reflects the challenges and key development issues which are unique to the country. Hence, six key areas of sustainable development that are of importance to Bahrain have been identified, and are as follows:

- National policies for cities, housing and urban development
- Environmental challenges (as the Kingdom is a small island state in a dry desert environment)
- Population and social issues, the growth in the number of expatriates, and the pressures on health and social services
- Issues of education, scientific research, values of productive work and citizenship
- Requirements for growth, economic diversification, sustainability and institutional development
- Peace and security issues, including partnerships and regional integration

These areas are the key focus of national policies and, as such, they correlate with each dimension of development which is directly relevant to Bahrain. These include social, environmental, economic, political, cultural, and partnership dimensions, and although they are the subject of attention and consideration under separate headings, this in no way negates the interrelationship between them. The correlation and overlap in these areas require joint solutions that can lead to achieving the objectives of each axis and can also contribute to the achievement of the overall development goals.

4.2 The cities

Given that the inhabited areas in Bahrain are generally urban areas, urban development remains a permanent concern in national plans and strategies. Urban development encompasses all aspects of the Kingdom's economic, environmental,

social, cultural, and urban governance, and it forms the most visible representation of the interrelation and integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development on the ground.

Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals highlights this integration, as it mentions "making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," reflecting both social and environmental dimensions, as well as governance. The adoption of the "New Urban Plan" at the UN-Habitat Conference 3 in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, (and adopted by the UN General Assembly in December of the same year), serves as a detailed action plan for implementing this commitment. The plan plays an important role in supporting and guiding national policies for urban development in Bahrain, building on a long history of cooperation between the Kingdom and UN-Habitat. The status of cities (Goal 11) will be discussed in detail in the next section of the report, as Goal 11 is one of the objectives that has been selected for detailed review by the 2018 High-level Political Forum.

The Kingdom's housing portfolio is of great importance to the government. The King issued a Royal Directive to build 40,000 housing units, and within the Government Action Plan 2015-2018, the Ministry of Housing has committed to building 25,000 housing units by 2018. The Ministry of Housing is also implementing several housing projects in numerous governorates that serve all citizens of the Kingdom without exception, including the establishment of new sustainable cities in suitable locations, and within international service and engineering specifications, to build new urban communities in line with Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

المدن الإسكانية الجديدة في مملكة البحرين



4.3 The environmental challenge

Sustainability, in its most comprehensive form, is of the utmost importance to the Kingdom of Bahrain. At the core of sustainable development lies environmental sustainability, which is also particularly important to Bahrain due to the serious environmental challenges it is facing due to the country's geographical characteristics. Bahrain consists of a group of small desert islands that suffer from water scarcity and insufficient agricultural lands. It is under threat from the effects of climate change, in addition to the subsequent impact of human pressures on the environment, resulting from large urban expansion, change in lifestyles, and

		الخدمات الرئيسية	✓
		مدن مستدامة	✓
		البيئة والموارد الطبيعية	✓
		الاستدامة والتغير المناخي	✓



(1) إدارة استراتيجية مستدامة للموارد الطبيعية من خلال تعزيز أنماط إنتاج واستهلاك مستدامة؛ (2) تطوير سياسات اقتصادية وحضرية لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة؛ (3) المساهمة في التصدي للتغير المناخي وأثره على المملكة؛ (4) اتخاذ الإجراءات المناسبة لترشيد استخدام المياه والطاقة.

population growth. In this regard, the environmental challenge Bahrain faces is also a key challenge to sustainability, thus requiring a holistic approach in the formulation of relevant strategies, which must address these issues comprehensively, and not in a piecemeal way. As a result, Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 focuses on issues such as the environment, sustainable resource management, urban development, water and energy, transport, urban growth, waste management, as well as marine conservation and biodiversity, recognizing them as existing and serious issues. Sustainability is one of three principles guiding for Bahrain's Vision 2030, government programs (for example in environment and urban development), and other relevant policies and strategies (including in the areas of energy, agriculture, and water, etc.).

The Environmental Dimension (the planet) in the 2030 Agenda and the Government Action Plan

During this review process, the environmental dimension was addressed through the environment and urban development axis (as outlined in the current Government Action Plan), and the strategic objective of this theme was defined as "sustainable management of resources and ensuring sustainable urban development." This axis can be linked to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Methodologically, these goals can be categorized into three groups:

- The first group intends to provide services related to natural resources, namely water, sanitation and energy (Goals 6 and 7). The policy concern here is twofold: the provision of these services must be of a decent quality, without exception (this has already been achieved); and to ensure sustainable management of these resources to protect them from depletion and pollution. This requires relevant policies to be in place, including an appropriate pricing policy for services and an expansion in renewable energies. The multiple elements of Goal 11 on sustainable cities also complements this.
- The second group focuses on the natural environment itself, life on land (Goal 15), and life below water (Goal 14). The key issue is sustainable management, reducing pollution, preserving biodiversity, protecting species and their habitats, and the appropriate use of resources, which requires immediate policies and strategies focused on the medium to long term.
- The third group deals with issues of a structural nature that lie at the heart of the principles of sustainability. These issues require concerted regional,

national and international efforts, and difficult decisions to achieve sustainable development, economic growth, and lifestyles. Goal 12 (sustainable production and responsible consumption) and Goal 13 (climate change) are included in this and expand the focus on the environment to address areas of impact such as urban development.

Facing the environmental challenge at a strategic level requires dealing with these three categories. The following section of this thematic report will include a detailed review of some of these goals.

4.4 Population and social issues

This section addresses some of the selected issues that fall within the area of "people" in the 2030 Agenda, and within the social section on "Human Development and Social Services" of the Government Action Plan. The strategic goal in this program has been phrased as follows: "Empowering Bahrainis to increase their contribution to the development process." It focuses on empowerment, as the mechanism and means with which to increase contributions to development in all its dimensions, and as a means to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This has been translated into a package of policies and procedures that ensure access to services for all and for the attainment of high levels of economic and social empowerment for all social groups



The following paragraphs deal with the issues of poverty and living standards (Goal 1), population growth characteristics (as covered by several of the SDGs), healthcare (Goal 3) and the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women (Goal 5).

4. 4.1 Population challenges and their impact on development

Rapid population growth is a major concern for small countries such as Bahrain, which is also a small island with limited natural resources and where population growth continues to impact on all aspects of life. Specifically, Bahrain has witnessed rapid population growth over the last few years. The total number of residents has increased from 1,039,297 in 2007 to 1,501,116 in 2017, at an annual rate of 4.4%. The growth rate can be mainly attributed to an increase in the number of expatriates. The rate of growth for citizens is at 2.8% (from 527,433 in 2007 to 677,506 in 2017), in contrast to the growth rate of expatriates which stands at 6.1% over the same period; representing 55% of the total population and 80% of the total workforce. Bahrain rightly celebrates and encourages diversity in the Kingdom but needs to continue to better understand how changing demographics in the country may impact future population growth.

With regards to the environment, population growth is already placing pressure on water resources and sanitation as the Kingdom continues to commit to providing clean drinking water for all. This requires an increase in funds for the establishment of new desalination plants, which provide the main source of drinking water in Bahrain, although there has been a decrease in per capita consumption of water to 113 cubic meters per year in 2016, compared with 118 in 2007.

The same applies to the sewerage networks, where the coverage declined from 87% in 2006 to 77% in 2009 due to rapid population growth and urban development, which resulted in a large proportion of the population being served by sewage tanks attached to their housing unit. The government started implementing necessary measures to correct this and to connect more of the population to the sewerage network. In 2015 coverage extended to 92% of the population, an increase of 26%, with only 8% still using the sewage tanks.

To address the growing demand for land, it has been necessary to reclaim land to accommodate population growth and establish new housing projects, while also supporting the industrial and tourism sectors. Land area increased from about 712 square kilometers in 2000 to 778 square kilometers in 2017. Urban growth has also

caused a decrease in agricultural lands from 6,400 hectares in 2004 to 3,750 hectares in 2014. Demand for housing and land is a concern for any small country, and Bahrain is no exception. It is hoped that ‘vertical city’ construction and the reorganization of city spaces will help maintain existing agricultural lands and protect coastal habitats, especially the mangrove areas, grasses, marine algae, and coral reefs, which are necessary to maintain the stocks of blue carbon sites; not to mention the numerous environmental benefits that also come along with protecting these important environments.

Likewise, the demand for social services, especially in health and education, is increasing due to population growth, as the government is committed to providing these services either free of charge, or for a minimal fee. This puts an additional burden on public funds in order to continue to meet these growing demands and their environmental, economic, and social costs, especially in healthcare, education, and housing, as well as additional pressures on the roads and municipal services.

4.4.2 Well-being and standard of living



To eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere

The World Poverty Rating (living below \$1.9 per day), is not applicable in the Kingdom of Bahrain, thanks to the adoption of a package of policies aimed at raising the level of per capita income, in addition to the provision of public utilities and basic social services to 100% of the population. This means extreme poverty in a multidimensional sense is not applicable in the Bahraini context.

Furthermore, the government supports vulnerable social groups who are most in need of social security and related assistance through a series of social protection systems and measures, housing programs, free education, and health and basic services (Target 1, 2, 3, and 4), which aim to reduce the proportion of individuals on a low-income by at least half by 2030 (Target 1.2). Allowances are also provided to persons with disabilities, and the unemployed. Additionally, monetary payments to compensate for the lifting of meat subsidies, as well as the provision of reduced electricity and water charges etc., thus guaranteeing a good standard of living for those on low incomes. This is in addition to the economic empowerment of families through training courses, workshops, and a dedicated program (step) which aims to support home projects through the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, delivered in cooperation with civil society organizations. These services are provided in accordance with an advanced system of social security that takes into consideration the differing needs of all sections of society. The state ensures access

and engagement of target groups through the collection of relevant data related to their social circumstances by registering this information electronically and updating it periodically. The social security system includes financial support that covers groups such as children with special needs, the elderly, and the young by providing timely payment of entitlements and ensuring there are no sudden suspension of services to citizens. Some of these aspects of support have already been covered in the previous sections which highlight that development leaves no one behind. The most appropriate strategy to ensuring further progress within Goal 1 is to move steadily from the social assistance approach to one of empowerment, as outlined in the Government Action Plan.

These efforts have resulted in increasing the average income of Bahrainis by 47% over the last 10 years. Despite these achievements, the challenge remains to sustain economic growth (Goal 1); continue to improve the quality of education (Goal 4); improve health (Goal 3); support job creation (Goal 8); reduce social inequality (Goal 10); and develop housing policies which reflect the growing demand for housing (Goal 11).

4.4.3 Healthy lifestyles



Ensure that everyone enjoys healthy lifestyles at all ages.

Sustainable Development Goal 3 calls to: "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", thereby shifting the focus of attention from disease to universal health as a key component in the promotion of well-being throughout the course of a person's life. This does not mean that disease, its prevention, or its treatment, are neglected. Rather, health policy focuses on areas such as non-communicable diseases and mental health (Target 4 of Goal 3), as well as health nutrition and obesity issues (Target 1 and 2 of Goal 2). Addressing child and maternal mortality and non-communicable diseases (which are linked to healthy lifestyles), reproductive health, access to medicines and treatment, and comprehensive health coverage are all priorities for Bahrain. Access to good quality health services remain at the heart of the Government Action Plan and, in particular, through the work of the Ministry of Health.

The Government of Bahrain has adopted the policy of "providing comprehensive healthcare to all citizens and residents" through preventive and curative programs, and through a network of health services at all levels, including primary and secondary healthcare, as well as clinical care. The government has assumed responsibility for implementing this policy in its relevant technical and financial

fields in cooperation with the private sector, which has led to a significant improvement in many of the health indicators for the Kingdom. For example, the maternal mortality rate of 14 deaths per 100,000 live births (Indicator 3.1.1) is low and surpasses the 2030 target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births. In addition, 99.8% of births are supervised by health professionals (Indicator 3.1.2), which has led to a decline in maternal mortality. Healthcare programs are provided during pregnancy and involves prenatal and neonatal care and includes the areas of vaccinations (Indicator 3.8.1), and family planning services (Indicator 3.7.1). The Kingdom of Bahrain seeks to decrease the number of deaths of infants by 2030, which stood at 6.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014 (Indicator 3.2.2). In this regard, the launch of the National Strategy for Children (2013-2017) has contributed to the reduction in the under-five mortality rate to 12 deaths per 1,000 live births (Indicator 3.2.3), which is about 50% lower than the global target values for this indicator of 24 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2030.

With regards to HIV infection and tuberculosis, generally there is a low prevalence in Bahrain, with a new infection rate of 0.04 AIDS per 1,000 non-infected people (Indicator 3.3.1) and 0.17 TB per 1,000 people (Indicator 3.3.2). This is due to increased community awareness on prevention and the early detection of cases, particularly through the introduction of a pre-employment medical check-up system, as well as access to treatment for patients, which in turn has reduced the risk of transmission. For malaria and other vector-borne diseases such as Hepatitis B (Indicator 3.3.4), the incidence rate decreased from 4.9 per 100,000 in 2004 to 0.6 per 100,000 in 2014.



نسبة وتوزيع الوفيات حسب مجموعات الأمراض للعام 2014

On the other hand, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases are the leading causes of death in the Kingdom of Bahrain, posing a major challenge to the health system. As a result, a national plan addressing noncommunicable diseases has been adopted, which was recommended by the World Health Organization. It is hoped that this will lead to a reduction in the rate of premature deaths resulting from these diseases from 65% in 2010 to 48.8% by 2025. Emergency and ambulatory services (Indicator 3.D.1) have also improved. This has meant that health emergency preparedness and basic health regulations in the Kingdom were strengthened, with indicators in this area met by 100% in 2015, positively reflecting on the national capacity and readiness to address any risk or incident affecting public health.

In addition to the aforementioned, developments have also been made in mental health services. Mental health awareness has been introduced into school health programs, and the National Commission against Narcotics and Addiction has been established, resulting in deaths from suicide falling from 11 to 0.7 per 100,000 people for the period 2005-2014. Further to this, in 2017, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched the “Takatof (solidarity)” program for preventive awareness on the use of drugs, in line with Target 3.5, with the aim to create a conscientious generation aware of the dangers of this devastating epidemic, which can destroy the lives of youth. It also deals with the problems of drug abuse and addiction by utilizing peer education as a means to counter this epidemic.

Despite the numerous successes in the health sector, there are still a number of challenges remaining which are related to population growth on the one hand and the rising cost of medical services on the other, and which account for about 8% of total state expenditure (Indicator 3.8.2). The government bears the brunt of these costs in providing free or affordable medical services (Indicator 3.B.1) for all citizens and residents of the Kingdom. In this regard, the unified medicine procurement program of the Executive Office of the GCC Council of Ministers of Health plays a positive role in meeting the requirements of Gulf countries to provide medicines, hospital supplies, vaccines, and laboratory supplies, amongst others. The Supreme Health Council is currently developing the National Health Strategy aimed at implementing a comprehensive system of health insurance and developing quality standards for health services.

There is no doubt that there is a link between lifestyles and public health, especially in the interrelation between the spread of non-communicable diseases and the promotion of nutrition and healthy lifestyles, for example, around sports and exercise etc. Adult obesity in Bahrain is at 40%. This pathological phenomenon also affects children and young people, with 24% between the ages of 6-24 years affected. However, the age of onset of diabetes is on the decline, with diabetes affecting 14.7% of the adult population. It is the same with narrow or blocked blood vessels and heart diseases, which are also linked to lifestyle choices around nutrition, lack of movement, smoking, or other harmful habits. Preventing these diseases requires a public health approach to raise awareness, and change harmful habits such as smoking, and to change sedentary lifestyles. Various tools are available in education, media and social media to promote healthy living.

In order to evaluate the health status of people living in Bahrain, a National Health Survey was launched in January 2018, in collaboration with the Information and eGovernment Authority. Over a period of approximately 5 months, the project assessed a sample of 4,000 Bahraini and non-Bahraini families from across all governorates of the Kingdom. In addition to studying and profiling the health status of Bahraini society, it provided an integrated database on the health of the population and measured health indicators across a range of medical test areas, which were not previously available in the administrative records. This included the health status of the population, risk factors, spread of diseases, and reproductive healthcare. The survey consisted of two questionnaires: the first for families and the second for an individual from each respective family who participated in a more detailed health survey. This helped to identify risk factors and chronic diseases, in addition to providing information around maternal and child health. The implementation of this project was part of the Government Action Plan and aimed to contribute towards defining the health priorities of the Kingdom, by considering future strategies with regards to health expenditure, health insurance, human resources for the health sector, program management, monitoring and evaluation, and other factors that help decision makers develop health policies and programs which benefit the general public. It is worth noting that this National Health Survey was endorsed by WHO and has been implemented in more than 70 countries so far.

4.4.4 Gender equality and empowerment of women



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Bahraini women have become active partners in all aspects of development with an increase in their representation in leadership positions, decision-making positions, and with their participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres in the Kingdom. The proportion of women in the Shura Council (who are appointed) is at 23% compared with 8% in the House of Representatives (who are elected). Women hold 20% of the posts in municipal councils and the capital's secretariat. The percentage of Bahraini women participating in the public sector in 2016 was 53%. The percentage of women serving as Undersecretaries in government was 18% in terms of the total ministries. The percentage of women in chief executive positions in the government sector was 42%; while 54% of the women were heads of departments in the government sector; with the proportion of female supervisors at 55%. By 2017, the number of female ministers in the government and those of the same rank increased to four.

According to 2016 data, Bahraini women accounted for 33% of the workforce in the private sector, and the proportion of women on the boards of private companies was 14%. Furthermore, 43% of the total active registered trade companies are owned by Bahraini women, while the proportion of more permanent registrations (lasting for more than five years) was 51%. By 2017, the percentage of active commercial registrations of Bahraini women-owned clinics and medical centres was 41%. The proportion of Bahraini women working in the private sector and in financial services and financial intermediation was at 36%; and the percentage of Bahraini women working in the private sector in administrative and supervisory occupations was 33%.

In terms of specialized jobs, Bahraini female doctors account for 64% of all Bahraini physicians. In 2016, Bahraini women accounted for 73% of all Bahrainis in education jobs in the public sector, and 62.2% of all jobs in academia, while women held 25% of diplomatic posts. The percentage of female graduates of higher education institutions was 64%. In the academic year 2016/2017, women accounted for 42% of the total faculty members in higher education. The percentage of female students in higher education institutions reached 59%. According to statistics for 2018, the proportion of female lawyers stood at 57%.

Undoubtedly, the measures undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain in the area of women's empowerment have resulted in the Kingdom's positive progress in terms of gender equality. The Global Report of the Gender Divide (Davos) in 2017 ranked the Kingdom first in the world in indicators related to closing the gender gap in terms of enrolment in primary, secondary, and higher education; and regionally in the economic participation and opportunity index. The Kingdom of Bahrain was ranked

first in the Gulf for both equal pay between men and women and the level of women's participation in legislative and higher administrative positions. Bahrain ranked ninth in the world in the equal pay index for similar businesses, among 144 countries around the world, providing a positive impact on the ranking in the report for the Kingdom of Bahrain, as second in the Gulf and the third Arab region.

Women have been given considerable attention by the government in all areas of development. In housing, in particular, housewives have been granted the right to apply for housing services, and over the last five years approximately 1,500 housing services have been accessed by women. This included the allocation of housing units, access to all types of financing, access to temporary housing, and access to a program of financing for social housing, titled "Mazaya." This is in addition to women's access to housing services provided in partnership with men (i.e. with their husbands). Housing services are also provided to divorcees, abandoned women, widows, single women, and orphans. Bahraini women benefit from a housing allowance immediately upon applying for housing services, in contrast to male applicants who must wait five years from the date of application before this allowance is paid. In addition to the above, the housing system exempts widows and their children from paying the remaining monthly instalments of the value of the housing unit (or on the financing of the house) in the event of the death of the head of the family (i.e. the main breadwinner). This provides important support to women and demonstrates the importance to which the issue of women's rights is regarded as well as a commitment to solidarity and cooperation with women and their families, setting a positive example of empowerment not often found in other countries around the world.

New issues in Goal 5

Bahrain has taken practical steps to develop a plan of action which monitors acts of violence and discrimination against women, issues around economic empowerment, and legislative and institutional development. The legislative efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, in both public and private spheres, are reflected in the issuance of a number of laws. This includes Family Law No. 19 of 2017, which codified family laws and provided the same legal rights to all women in personal family law, regardless of social or religious background; and Law No. 23 of 2015, which allowed the Court of Cassation to challenge Shari'a provisions, to ensure access to justice at the highest level on family law. In addition, Law No. 17 of 2015 on the protection against domestic violence issued a number of executive decisions to enforce effective implementation of the law for protection of women against domestic violence, including a decision of the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Endowments (No. 7 of 2017), which

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established judicial control officers from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and empowered them to implement the provisions of Article (6) of Law No. 17 of 2015 in regards to domestic violence. Additionally, the Minister of Labour and Social Development issued a decision (No. 26 of 2017) on the conditions and procedures for the licensing of family counselling centres. Furthermore, in 2018, family courts, specializing in resolving family disputes, were opened.



In 2018, Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of the King of Bahrain, and President of the Supreme Council for Women, inaugurated the Family Courts Complex, cementing the efforts of the Council in reinforcing social stability and promoting family rights through specialized family courts.

Family Courts Complex

Eliminating all forms of discrimination requires cultural and social transformation as well as legislative and legal intervention. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, article 5 (b), states: "equality between men and women is guaranteed and the State shall guarantee reconciliation of a women's obligations towards her family and her work in society, as well as her equality with men in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres of life, without prejudice to the provisions of Islamic Shari'a." In 2002, the Kingdom of Bahrain joined the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and committed itself to implement its provisions on awareness programs and the preparation of periodic reports on the implementation of its articles. Bahrain is in the process of preparing its current report which is due to be submitted this year. According to a proposal by the Higher Council for Women, the Government of Bahrain lifted its reservations on article 15, paragraph 4, and article 9, paragraph 2, and amended its Nationality Law. However, it did not lift its reservation on article 29, paragraph 1, insisting on Bahrain's legislative sovereignty (regarding international arbitration), while the reservations on articles 2 and 16 were rephrased to limit the reservation to the text dealing with matters regarding family and personal status, so long as it does not contradict Islamic law.

In 2013, The Supreme Council for Women launched the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women (2013-2022), which includes five areas that seek to ensure family stability, in the context of enhancing family cohesion and protecting women from all types of violence. In November 2015, the Council launched the National Strategy for the Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence.

Additionally, mandatory training has been provided to members of the judiciary, executive departments, and civil society organizations involved in dealing with violence against women or in supporting female victims. Family protection offices have also been established in the police directorates across all governorates in addition to the establishment of a specialized family and child prosecution office, according to the order of the Public Prosecutor No. (1) of 2016. It should be noted that this office is held by a woman with the rank of a judge in the Supreme Court of Appeal. The prosecution office is responsible for measures which protect women from all forms of violence and the prevention of further violence, by providing psychological, social, and legal support to the victim; and by moving victims and dependents to safe locations and bringing perpetrators to justice.

The Family Law No. 19 of 2017, which codified family law, states in article 20, with regards to the age of marriage that: "a girl under 16 years of age shall not marry unless authorized by the Shari'a Court and after verification of the adequacy of marriage," and the marriage of a girl under the age of 16 years shall be with the permission of the Shari'a court and for an achieved interest. Statistics indicate that the percentage of girls who were married under the age of 15 (Indicator 1.3.5) was below 0.3% of the total marriage contracts in 2015, and the proportion of those married at the age of 18 in 2015, was 3.4%. This is a positive indicator that progress is being made in this area.

Conditions of employment and economic activity

Women in the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoy the right to sign all contracts related to credit agreements and real estate as well as the right to conduct business without the prior consent of their husbands. Women also have the right to manage their own finances without requiring the permission of male relatives. Amongst the most important legislation enacted by the Kingdom of Bahrain in this respect is a circular issued by the Central Bank of Bahrain in November 2015, obligating all financial institutions licensed by the Bank to provide the same employment benefits (such as health insurance) to women working in the same sectors as men; and the Ministry of Housing's resolution No. 909 of 2015 on the housing system, which grants women independent access to housing services. In addition to this, the Cabinet issued a decree in 2015 to separate a husband's salary from that of his wife's when calculating the income of the head of the family, in relation to the application for housing services.

As for female entrepreneurs, a recent ILO report states that although the percentage of female employers is still relatively small in the region, it stands at 28% in Bahrain. Women's active participation in private economic activities has also increased. For

example, commercial registrations (licenses) owned by women increased from 24.3% in 2001 to 43% in 2016, an increase of 18.7%. In 2018, three women were elected to the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, resulting in women now making up 16.7% of the positions.

International cooperation and initiatives



In January 2017, the Kingdom of Bahrain launched the King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the SDGs to support young people in contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on a local and global level, and for the health and prosperity of the world. The Award aims to empower young people and encourage them to become effective citizens and productive members of society by contributing to the well-being of their communities. It also encourages institutions focused on development and building social infrastructure for youth across all member states of the United Nations, to build a world where justice, tolerance, and peace prevail. The Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, has chosen the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to support and manage the Award, utilizing their 166 offices worldwide to promote the Award and its objectives.

Bahrain also witnessed the opening of the Representative Office for the United Nations Commission on Women at the United Nations House in Bahrain, whose role is to provide a platform to facilitate an exchange of experiences with the international community, through the United Nations. In March 2017, Princess Sabeeka's Global Award for Women's Empowerment was launched at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, following its successful decade-long national implementation. Bahrain strongly believes in the importance of women's participation in the development process and in the achievement of social stability. Bahrain also encourages all members of the United Nations to empower women and

consider them as equal partners in sustainable development and to not only recognize the achievements of institutions and individuals across the world who support the empowerment of women, but to also recognize the necessity of gender-sensitive methodologies, especially in the integration of the needs of women in development plans, and its effect on equal opportunities on women's progress.

Challenges

There, however, remains a key challenge which requires further attention. It exists at the intersection between the economy, society, and culture, and is addressed in Target 4 of Goal 5, which states: "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate." The indicator which corresponds with this target is as follows: "the percentage of time spent on unpaid domestic work and care work, by sex, age and location." In this regard, the Kingdom has taken measures to provide public services, flexible working hours, and parental leave for mothers. However, these measures fall short of fully reconciling women's domestic duties with their work commitments. There are also cultural and social practices to consider in relation to gender roles and responsibilities within families, which can impact economic development priorities and the contribution of women in the labour market to GDP growth. It is essential to recognize the impact of women's unpaid care and household work in sustaining families and supporting economies, given that the proportion of work they carry out in this regard is far greater than that of men.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 and its objectives, as well as the other SDGs encourage us to consider new and innovative approaches in the realization of the SDGs, while recognizing the importance of the cultural, behavioural, and social dimensions of the development process, especially with regards to the promotion of gender equality and the protection of women.

4.5 Education, innovation and culture



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The SDGs and their targets demonstrate an understanding of the cultural dimensions of sustainable development. In the Government Action Plan (2018-2015), the human development and social services axis also demonstrates an awareness of cultural sensitivities with a focus on education (human development axis), as well as health and social services and welfare (social services axis.)



(1) تمكين البحرينيين لرفع مساهمتهم في التنمية، وتحسين مستوى المعيشة مع التركيز على الفئات الأكثر حاجة؛ (2) الحد من التفاوت بكل أشكاله، وتحقيق المساواة بين الجنسين؛ (3) تعميم أنماط تغذية وحياة صحية، وتوفير السكن اللائق، (4) تأمين استدامة الخدمات بكلفة متيسرة؛ (5) تعزيز التعليم والبحث العلمي والابتكار وقيم المواطنة والعمل المنتج.

Education: the current situation

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been, and continues to be, a country that is committed to providing education for all, and in ensuring quality in its delivery. Education is compulsory and free from primary to secondary level, as stipulated by the Kingdom's Constitution. In 2019, the Kingdom will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the launch of its formal education system (in 1919), having achieved a total enrolment rate of 100% for the academic year 2016/2017 and a complete eradication of illiteracy. Bahrain also has a number of public and private universities that are open to all. There is equal access for men and women to good and affordable vocational and higher education, including university education (Indicator 4.4 and 4.3), which has helped eliminate gender disparity in education and ensured equal access in line with the principle that development “leaves no one behind.” Despite the financial difficulties faced by Bahrain since mid-2014, due to the collapse in oil prices, the Kingdom boosted its education budget to 339 million Bahraini dinars in 2016. Furthermore, the allocation of 3% of the university budget for scientific research to bridge the digital knowledge gap is a positive step, which progresses the use of

statistical data and the acquisition of advanced technologies. Utilizing university budgets in this way serves to support sustainable development and promote partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society. Nationally and regionally, the University of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf University provide opportunities for studies which integrate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the postgraduate level. However, the Kingdom is also integrating the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development within all stages of the education system in the country.

In the field of education, persons with disabilities and students with special needs have not been overlooked (Targets covered by Goal 4 & 5). In 1986, special classes were opened for students who were slow learners and annual local and external scholarships were allocated to support them. The Ministry also ensured that all schools supporting this group of learners were provided with the necessary infrastructure and equipment, as well as providing them with special buses and a cadre of professionals specialized in their educational needs. The Ministry also applies a policy of integrating students with special needs into regular classes with their peers, with the aim of encouraging inclusivity in classrooms and schools.

The Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain has adopted the Lifelong Learning Strategy to enable learners to acquire knowledge and enrich their lives. This is in line with the philosophy of continuing education to seek professional development, which supports the modernizing of society through improvements in the abilities and skills of the Bahraini workforce, helping them to achieve career progression and thereby supporting the development process in Bahrain. This is implemented through the provision of numerous public programs of all levels, which take into consideration the requirements of individuals and the wider labour market. Continuing education programs for those who were unable to continue with their education, due to learning or circumstantial difficulties, has increased, with the number of enrolled students increasing from 4,653 citizens in 2013/2014 to 5,476 citizens in 2015/2016. There were 10 schools providing technical and vocational education in 2015/2016, of which six provide commercial education and four provide technical education. Furthermore, the number of students enrolled in schools increased from 6,204 students in 2011/2012 to 6,364 students in 2015/2016. The Kingdom also understands the important role that partnerships with the private sector play in improving education and, in this regard, the number of private educational institutions increased from 175 in 1999/2000 to 248 in 2015/2016, which covers 36% of primary students, 29% of intermediary students, and 25% of secondary students.

In addition to the above, the Kingdom continues to focus on the quality of education. Surveys and questionnaires on the priorities of sustainable development found that quality education was among the main concerns of citizens. This led to the project: "Improving the Performance of Schools" in 2008, which directly contributed to improvements in education quality and student learning. This was followed by the National Quality Education and Training Project, which set quality standards across all education levels and institutions. The Supreme Council for Higher Education and the National Commission for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training were established in 2008 to implement the National Qualifications Framework for classifying qualifications according to high professional standards, and learner outcomes.

UNESCO King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Award for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education

In 2005, the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Award for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education was launched, funded and initiated by the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Award rewards projects and activities of individuals, institutions, and non-governmental organizations which are based on best practices and promote the innovative use of information and communication technologies to enhance education performance and recognize the importance of ICT in innovation; while also taking into consideration the security of children, and promoting the values and standards associated with sustainable and peaceful societies.

In the education sector, His Majesty's 2004 initiative, the "King Hamad Project for Future Schools," and His Majesty's initiative to launch the Digital Empowerment Program in 2014, which is an extension of the "Future Schools" initiative, should be commended for improving students' learning and enabling digital learning. These initiatives seek to develop the education system in terms of use of information and communication technologies in learning and education, including e-learning. These initiatives aim to develop and transform the information society and build a successful knowledge-based economy which meets the needs of the labour market in dealing with modern information and communication technologies. The digital education empowerment program includes projects and initiatives such as: the Safe Use of Technology Project; the Technical Guidance Project; the Education Portal Project; the Digital Education Content; the Specialized and Qualitative Training Field; and the Infrastructure and the Evaluation Project. All of these projects are

delivered across all schools in Bahrain. It is hoped that the Digital Education Empowerment Program will contribute to the expansion of digital technologies and the knowledge-based economy, and complement the digital culture projects, such as the UNESCO King Hamad Award for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education and the Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT).

Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT)

The Regional Centre for Information and Communication Technology (RCICT) operates as an accredited centre under the auspices of UNESCO. It contributes to the advancement of human development indicators through its numerous programs, initiatives and activities, by harnessing information and communication technologies with respect to capacity-building, and the exchange of knowledge, expertise and best practices. The Regional Centre works in partnership with UNESCO on education, providing support and cultural dissemination in the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in cooperation with the government and local, regional, and international institutions.

Citizenship, development and innovative education

The Kingdom of Bahrain has sought to promote human rights and a spirit of citizenship among students by encouraging a culture of peace, moderation, tolerance, and coexistence; and the rejection of hatred, extremism, and violence in schools. This has been done through the introduction of curricula on citizenship education for all education levels with a focus on student activities in this area, in cooperation with UNESCO. This was initially run as a pilot project in four intermediate level schools during the 2015/2016 academic year and then expanded to 14 schools in 2016/2017, before its eventual delivery in all schools in 2017/2018. The schools focus on student activities both in and out of the classroom, alongside initiatives which promote the values of: tolerance, moderation, respect for opinion; rejection of fanaticism and extremism, preservation of national unity, and the encouragement of collective voluntary action; as well as taking pride in national customs and traditions. These projects include campaigns such as: "Ambassadors of Tolerance and Coexistence," "Shake My Hands," and "Planting Love," amongst others.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has also taken strides in supporting the seventh target of Goal 4 (Target 4.7) to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to support sustainable development. This includes, through education, adopting sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development. This has been done in partnership and cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which has delivered programs and organized conferences to promote the realization of these goals and targets by 2030. Innovation is considered one of the most important drivers of economic growth (Goal 9). A key determinant of the economy's ability to innovate is the educational attainment level of the population and the production of research and development by universities and the private sector (Goal 9). This is one of the key challenges faced by Bahrain, particularly given its small population (1.5 million) and limited resources that hinder Bahrain's competition with innovators working in larger economies. However, Bahrain has responded positively to this challenge by launching its National Strategy for Scientific Research in 2014, strengthening research capabilities and encouraging integration between academic institutions, the private sector, and international scientific research institutions, as well as promoting a culture of scientific research.

Additionally, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in cooperation with the Government of Bahrain, is encouraging and promoting entrepreneurship among young people in schools and universities to reduce unemployment rates, improve productivity, and provide more job opportunities for qualified young people. All these efforts are aimed at strengthening partnerships (Goal 17) between the private, public, and academic sectors as a means of promoting innovation and education, research, and development, as well as supporting economic growth. This partnership led to the establishment of the Arab International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Investment, which is recognized internationally as the Bahrain Entrepreneurship Model, and is currently being implemented in 52 countries around the world. This Centre provided support and assistance to 8,500 Bahraini entrepreneurs, which led to the creation of 2,000 new enterprises with investments of US \$2 billion, having creating around 15,000 new jobs.

International initiatives and contributions

Bahrain's achievements in the field of education has gained international recognition. The “Education for All” report published by UNESCO included the Kingdom in a list of high-performing countries in education. A further report published by the World Economic Forum (Davos) in 2015-2016 placed the Kingdom in the 26th position globally in the Education Quality Index. It also ranked Bahrain

34th globally in the Internet use index in schools and ranked it 42nd globally in the Mathematics and Science Teaching Index. Bahrain has also endeavored to achieve Target 4.7 of Goal 4 on education for sustainable development. This has involved ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to support sustainable development, through measures including: education, adopting sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and of the contribution of culture to sustainable development. In this context, the King Hamad Centre for Interreligious Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence provides a positive example of the promotion of tolerance and respect for cultural and religious diversity, and the rejection of extremism, hatred, and discrimination based on religious doctrine, and the eradication of religious tyranny and intolerance. The Kingdom believes that peace can only be achieved through understanding and dialogue. It is crucial to nurture an environment that supports peace, dialogue, and interfaith understanding, particularly in combating hate speech and intolerance. Bahrain has a long history as a pioneer in peaceful coexistence of all religions and nationalities, and this reputation has continued through the ages.

The King Hamad Centre for Interreligious Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence also contributes to high-level international debate on promoting dialogue and tolerance between religions. Its initiative “The Declaration of the Kingdom of Bahrain,” is a global document committed to promoting freedom of religion for all. The Centre also includes a museum that displays the history and heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Centre’s leadership in this field was recognized internationally with the ‘King Hamad Chair in Inter-Faith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence’ launched at Sapienza University in Rome, highlighting the King’s principles in promoting dialogue, peace, and interfaith understanding.

Culture

Bahrain has a number of ancient monuments and heritage sites, making it an attractive location for visitors and expatriates. As a result, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities is promoting its cultural and historical heritage and advertising its natural landscape to stimulate tourism to support job creation and stimulate the national economy. Bahrain takes seriously its social responsibility to preserve the natural landscape and protect the environment and is committed to the principles of sustainability in the preservation of the environment and in understanding its economic and social impact. Initiatives and programs such as the "Spring of Culture" "Pearl Road" and "Our Heritage is Our Wealth" have been developed to promote tourism in Bahrain and to encourage tourists to visit the historical and archaeological sites of Bahrain, to promote cultural understanding and

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raise awareness of the need to preserve and maintain cultural heritage and natural landscapes.

"Pearl Road: A Witness to an Island's Economy"

Bahraini natural pearls are among the rarest and most expensive pearls in the world. As a result, the Kingdom of Bahrain wishes to document the historical background to the pearl trade, on which the Kingdom's economy was highly dependent. As such, the Culture and Antiquities Authority initiated an integrated project which documented the pearl industry from a social, economic, environmental and cultural perspective, with the launch of "The Pearl Road", which was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2012. The "Pearl Road" represents the historic route taken by Bahraini pearls from the moment of their extraction from the seabed to the point they reached global markets. The road extends over a distance of more than three kilometers starting from "Herat Pearl", which was declared a nature reserve in 2017, due to its pearl oysters, through "Herat Shtayeh" and "Baumahr Castle," passing the houses of the divers and the pearl merchants, and ending at the Pearl Museum, which displays pictures depicting the cultural heritage of the Kingdom and the way of life at that time.

Challenges

Improving the quality of education remains a key objective of national policies. As part of the education system, there needs to be a focus on the interrelationship between culture, behaviour, and values as component parts of national identity, and how this in turn impacts on national development. Societies that have faced conflict, or even war, have often done so because of the threat of external extremist ideologies competing with national identities. These extremist ideologies claim to transcend the nation state, the rule of law, and even the boundaries of nation states. Social media, social networks, and transnational forces are used to disseminate these dangerous ideologies, which damage the very fabric of national cohesion, as well as undermine the family unit and normative religious belief systems. Combating this serious extremist threat and stopping it from spreading through societies requires preventative initiatives to be implemented across a range of areas including education, culture, and the media.

Although improving the quality of formal education should remain a key objective of national policies, it is also worthwhile recognizing that development in education is not limited to just formal education systems. Action plans in this area should take into account the potentially valuable role of informal educational institutions and systems in terms of positive impact in emphasizing common values and constructive social norms. The educational curricula should also adopt modern teaching methods, which support students to proactively challenge negative ideas and help them to develop the ability to think logically. Students should be supported to innovate, engage with science and technology, and develop creativity in literary and technical fields. Success in this will require cooperation and cross-fertilization between the different parts of the state involved in the delivery of the sustainable development agenda.

4.6 Economic development from the perspective of sustainability and prosperity



Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.



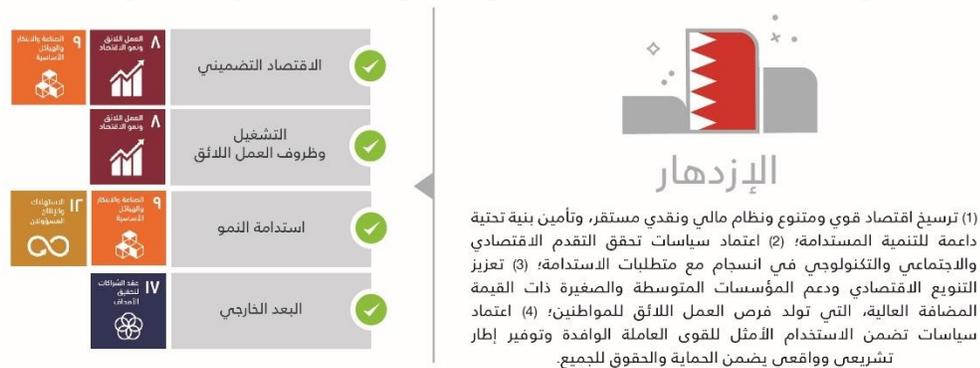
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable Industrialization, and foster innovation.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the transformative change it sets out focuses on key areas such as economic growth and promoting prosperity as well as protecting the planet and its people. Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth is highlighted in Goal 8. But economic growth is not an end in itself but provides a means to implement sustainable development initiatives. We must pay close attention to the nature of economic activity and growth and measure its impact on society, beyond traditional quantitative indicators.

Bahrain has been able to successfully manage change and address challenges thanks to policies aimed at diversifying sources of revenue for the state and the economy by enhancing the role of the private sector as a partner in the development process, and as a key driver of growth, in line with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. The Kingdom is working diligently to implement major development projects which cover all key sectors, and which contribute to - and consolidate the economic position of - the Kingdom by increasing competitiveness and attracting investment.



Based on an understanding, which views prosperity, economic activity, and economic growth in the wider development context, the 2030 Agenda and its attention on finance, the economy, and building infrastructure is also reflected in the Government Action Plan 2015-2018 and its focus on pushing “Towards Justice, Security and Welfare of Society.” These sections focus on Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and take into account Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and Goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals), and focuses on the regional dimensions of Bahrain's economy as well as Bahrain's own contribution to the global economy.

Identifying economic, situational, and structural challenges and issues provides the context to understanding Bahrain's macroeconomic performance. The key challenges in this area include:

a. achieving real and sustainable economic growth rates

Bahrain's economy depends mainly on oil. Although the contribution of oil to real GDP is about 20%, this figure masks the interrelationship between the oil sector and other sectors in the economy. Specifically, government expenditure on projects and salaries of public sector employees is a key driver for different sectors of the economy. The percentage of employees working in the public sector is 85%, which is high according to international standards. Bahrainis account for 24% of total employees in the labour force. Oil revenues account for 80% of total public revenues, and these revenues in turn finance public expenditure.

The economy grew at an accelerated pace during the period 2000-2014 and was characterized by a stable rise in oil prices, which temporarily slowed in 2008-2009 due to the global financial crisis. In the period 2000-2012, GDP growth rate was 5.1% per annum. However, the significant decline in oil prices after 2014 was reflected in the rate of growth of the real economy, which declined to 3.2% in 2015, 2.2% in 2016, and fell to 2.0% in 2017. Growth rates would have declined further had the government not raised borrowing, with a budget deficit of 15.1% of GDP. In 2014, Bahrain's public debt reached 44% of GDP, and is expected to exceed 90% of GDP in 2017.

The government pushed forward with reforms aimed at reducing the deficit by cutting government spending (and channelling expenditure), but the price of oil is still below the levels that would be necessary to balance the budget (more than 90 US dollars a barrel). Experts expect the price of oil to remain below this level for at least a few more years, especially since the price of a barrel of oil has not yet exceeded the threshold of 80 US dollars.

With this in mind, all Gulf countries, including Bahrain, have adopted two key measures, the first of which is the restructuring of subsidies of certain goods and services (including energy and water). The second measure is the introduction of taxes on goods including value added tax, in addition to reducing all types of bonuses and allowances. Proactive measures have been taken to mitigate the impact of austerity measures on the purchasing power of citizens, in conjunction with the launch of awareness campaigns and the application of safety nets which protect vulnerable citizens.

b. promoting Gulf economic integration

The economy of Bahrain is closely linked to that of the other GCC states. Subsequently, the government is required to take this into account when

implementing initiatives for building a sustainable national economy. The GCC has in principle agreed on measures for economic integration since the establishment of the Council in 1981, including the establishment of a free trade zone, customs unity, a common market, and a realistic plan for monetary unity. The states have achieved tangible returns according to traditional integration criteria, mainly in Gulf trade, which rose from \$6 billion in 1984 to \$101 billion in 2015. Despite these tangible achievements, GCC economic integration has not advanced as quickly as initially expected.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has also committed itself to the directives of the Gulf Cooperation Council in facilitating the movement of individuals, goods, and capital, and working conditions, and considers economic integration to be beneficial to both Bahrain and other GCC members. However, this successful integration and its positive impact cannot be delivered by any single member but requires the collective commitment of all members in ensuring progress.

The promotion of Gulf economic integration has a number of advantages for Bahraini and Gulf citizens alike, and for regional and global economies, through the development of partnerships as highlighted in Goal 17. In particular, it provides opportunities to engage with larger markets. Therefore, addressing political and logistical obstacles to Gulf economic integration remains a key challenge for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

c. structural challenges associated with the pattern of growth

There are a number of structural challenges stemming from the nature of economic growth in Bahrain, and which are defined by the natural and human environment. Economic growth in the country is based on large investments, including foreign investment, especially in construction, infrastructure, and real estate, and in industrial areas related to the oil sector, energy production, and heavy industries. This requires a large labour force of expatriate workers who are brought in to help in industries in which local labour is not focused. The growth of economic activity in these specific areas has meant an increase in the number of foreign workers. As a result, and as is the case in the wider GCC, foreign workers often outnumber local citizens. The influx of expatriates is in turn causing rapid population growth, which consequently puts pressure on the environment, services and natural resources. In addition, due to Bahrain's open economy and as a result of economic globalization, it is more vulnerable to the impacts of global crises (such as the 2008 financial crash) and global market volatility. Nevertheless, Bahrain has continued to weather these challenges and has maintained acceptable levels of growth, labour protection, and economic diversification. This is despite the shrinking financial reserves as a result

10 July 2018

of the reduction in oil prices, which have led to some fiscal imbalances in the budget and an increase in public debt.

In terms of foreign investment, Bahrain has maintained its ability to attract significant capital over the past ten years. This has amounted to approximately \$10 billion, of which 70% is from the Gulf States, primarily in the financial sector (95%). This reflects Bahrain's success as an international centre of finance. The total number of banking and financial institutions and insurance companies licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain reached 393 in 2017, and included 78 traditional banks, 23 Islamic banks, and 156 insurance companies. The consolidated budget of the retail sector and Islamic banks amounted to 31,389 million dinars in 2017.

The Bahrain Association of Banks

The Bahrain Association of Banks considers sustainable development as one of its top priorities. It has established a standing committee to determine the importance of sustainable development in the banking sector in Bahrain and to determine the innovative opportunities it brings to this sector. The Committee focuses on two main areas: the establishment of a framework for sustainable financing and financing for sustainable infrastructure. At the beginning of 2018, a report was issued titled, "Policy Recommendations on Organizational Considerations of Sustainable Financing," to raise awareness and explore regulatory considerations related to sustainable financing. Work is currently underway to translate this into tangible objectives to assist the Government of Bahrain in the sustainable financing of projects and initiatives, most notably in the areas of:

- a) Education and healthcare (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health)
- b) Infrastructure Services (Ministry of Works)
- c) Agricultural development
- d) Sustainable energy and green financing.

Al Baraka Sustainability and Social Responsibility Program

Al Baraka Banking Group, through its head office in Bahrain and its banking units in 16 countries, is implementing a program on sustainability and social responsibility based on linking the objectives of "Sustainability and Social Responsibility" of Al Baraka Group to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Priority targets were selected in the areas of poverty, health, education, gender equality, energy, labor, economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, for which \$635 million was allocated for the period (2016-2020), to support the achievement of these goals. Four programs have been designed to meet a number of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

1. Al Baraka Charity Program, which aims to establish and build strong communities by providing education, healthcare, housing and services to people with special needs.
2. A program to provide economic opportunities and industrial investments to support funding for different sectors and micro, small, and medium enterprises, and encourage them to create jobs.
3. Al-Baraka Good Loan Program, which provides interest-free loans to economically vulnerable sectors.
4. Al Baraka Time Commitment Program, which allocates a number of hours each year to social responsibility programs to contribute to the communities it operates in.



أهداف البركة للتنمية المستدامة 2016 - 2020		
الوظائف	التعليم	الرعاية الصحية
1. خلق 50,000 وظيفة جديدة في البلدان التي نعمل فيها من خلال توفير الاحتياجات المالية لعملائنا الحاليين والجدد.	2. التمويل والتبرع إلى المؤسسات التعليمية الخاصة والحكومية بمبلغ وقدره 191 مليون دولار أمريكي.	3. التمويل والتبرع إلى المؤسسات الصحية الحكومية والخاصة بمبلغ وقدره 434 مليون دولار أمريكي.
إنجازات البركة 2016 وأهداف البركة للتنمية المستدامة 2016 - 2020		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • هدفنا خلق 10,207 وظيفة في 2016 • لقد ساهمنا في خلق 14,535 وظيفة جديدة • تم تحقيق 28% من أهداف الـ 5 سنوات و 142% من أهداف عام 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • هدفنا لعام 2016 هو التبرع والتمويل بمبلغ وقدره 38,173,398 دولار أمريكي للتعليم • لقد قمنا بالتمويل / التبرع بمبلغ وقدره 41,596,059 دولار أمريكي للتعليم • تم تحقيق 21% من أهداف الـ 5 سنوات و 108% لأهداف 2016 للبركة 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • هدفنا لعام 2016 هو التبرع والتمويل بمبلغ وقدره 86,700,977 دولار أمريكي للرعاية الصحية • لقد قمنا بالتمويل / التبرع بمبلغ وقدره 96,826,507 دولار أمريكي للرعاية الصحية • تم تحقيق 22% من أهداف الـ 5 سنوات و 111% لأهداف 2016 للبركة

Work and employment

In view of the notable characteristics of the labour market and the balance between national employment and expatriate labour, the Kingdom of Bahrain has adopted an active policy in the labour market which seeks to achieve a set of specific goals. These include the areas of: skills development, labour market needs, decent employment opportunities for citizens, effective utilization of the skills of an expatriate workforce, and extending and guaranteeing rights to workers regardless of their nationalities through regulation of the labour market.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Development uses evidence-based methods and rigorous methodology to create employment opportunities. Its strategy is to develop vocational training systems through the National Labour Market Monitor, in accordance with strategies aimed at reforming the labour market and developing national capacities. This is done through the use of education and training and the application of legislation including Law No. 17 of 2007 on vocational training, Law No. 36 of 2012 on working in the private-sector, and Law No. 25 of 1998 focused on private education and training institutions; and through a draft law on private training institutions, which has been referred by the Council of Ministers to the Supreme Council on the Development of Education and Training.

The Labour Fund “Tamkeen” was established in 2006 to provide support to both individuals and institutions who wish to develop and strengthen their enterprises, establish their own businesses, increase and improve their productivity, and raise their living standards; thereby supporting the achievement of one of the Kingdom's key goals of the ambitious 2030 Agenda, which is to stimulate the private sector as a key engine of economic growth. The Fund engages in numerous training and financing programs with various parts of society. It also provides consultancy services for feasibility studies and marketing for individual and group institutions, increasing efficiency, engaging in international markets, and participating in specialized exhibitions. Over the past few years, Tamkeen has managed to qualify and train 13,000 Bahrainis in different disciplines. The percentage of start-up projects that have been supported by Tamkeen has reached 60%, and 5,000 Bahrainis have been employed through their Business Development Program. The fund has also contributed to supporting nearly 130,000 citizens within the Professional Certification and Training Program, as well as supporting around 45,000 companies and institutions, injecting more than \$2 billion into the national economy. The Fund also focuses on empowering Bahraini women, assisting 131 female entrepreneurs with BD 2.7 million (about US \$7.2 million) in funds. The support provided to women in the business sector comprises 40% of the total funding granted by the Fund since its inception.

Given the changes in the labour market in recent years, the challenges posed by low oil prices and the need for a trained and efficient workforce compatible with the requirements of the labour market, Tamkeen has embarked on the implementation of a modern strategy (2018-2020), allocating an annual budget of 60 million dinars (about \$160 million), which is expected to increase in the future, to fund its annual programs and projects. The most notable is its support of 3,600 citizens, providing them with much needed practical skills in accordance with labour market requirements in fields such as technology, health, hospitality industry, business management, aviation, and aviation engineering, as priority areas for employment. This is in addition to supporting around 1,500 entrepreneurs to establish enterprises, to provide employment opportunities and create jobs, as well as assisting about 4,000 institutions to build their infrastructure to make them better able to absorb and deal with developments in the labour market. Tamkeen focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises, which represent about 99% of Bahraini companies and 70% of Bahrain's workforce, therefore maintaining Bahrain's high ranking on the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index of the Global Entrepreneurship Development Institute, where Bahrain ranked 29th in the world and 3rd amongst Arab countries in 2016.

In addition, in order to achieve Target 8.2 of Goal 8: “to achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation,” the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched Fab Lab—an extension of the international Fab Labs—as the first laboratory of its kind in Kingdom of Bahrain to help inventors, entrepreneurs, and students to turn their ideas into reality, and to discuss and solve manufacturing problems. With regards to Target 8.3 of Goal 8 the Ministry of Youth, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), launched the "Best Home Product" initiative, exhibiting the products of families linked to youth centres, supporting them to sell their products in local markets and exporting them where possible. Since 2010, the Ministry of Youth has implemented the summer program "Youth City 2030," with the support of Tamkeen, to deliver a range of capacity building projects with the aim of upgrading the skills, qualifications, and training of Bahraini youth, to assist them with entering the labour market. There were 94 projects in 2017, benefiting 4,875 young people in Bahrain.

Expatriate labour: towards liberation from the sponsorship system

The Kingdom of Bahrain attracts a large number of foreign workers thanks to its attractive business environment. Expatriates represent 55% of the population of Bahrain and 76% of the total workforce. Bahrain, although small, provides more

than 600,000 permanent jobs for expatriates. Despite the limited resources of Bahrain, it has sought to meet the basic needs of the workers and their families by providing fully or partially subsidized services as well as free education and semi-free medical treatment. Expatriates are also allowed to transfer money they earn without deductions, with total remittances reaching BD 927 million (equivalent to US \$2.5 billion) in 2017, and contributing, as hard currency, in the development of the national income of their respective countries. It is worth noting that foreign workers in Bahrain fall into three categories. The first category of workers is highly qualified and are usually from places such as the United States or Europe. They tend to work in the private and public sectors and have high salaries. The second category includes those with mid-range qualifications who serve as the middle-level cadre of staff in different fields. The last category includes those with lower levels of qualifications who make up the majority of foreign workers and who tend to work in the construction and service industries. Particularly for the last category of workers, their employment in Bahrain contributes to supplementing the income of their families and helps in alleviating their poverty through the remittances they send home.

Sponsorship system for expatriates

Bahrain's commitment to the overall objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which "leaves no one behind," has led to the liberation of foreign workers from the sponsorship system. In 2017 the Flexible Work Permit system was launched, which exempts foreign workers from exclusive association with only one

The United Nations supports Flexible Work Permits as an example of international best practice

The Flexible Work Permit provides an innovative solution to reform of the labor market by improving the working environment of expatriate workers, thus guaranteeing their rights and the rights of other parties. It also provides a qualitative economic addition to the national economy by fulfilling market requirements for temporary employment without prejudicing competition, as well as allowing employees to correct their resident status in accordance with the law. Under the permit, workers are granted the right to work in numerous non-professional jobs, both full-time and part-time, and with one or more employer. A flexible worker also benefits from healthcare provided by government centres and is allowed to leave the Kingdom and return on a regular basis during the period of validity of the work visa.

sponsor. The Labour Market Reform Project, the first of its kind in the Middle East, has been warmly received in the region and by the international community as it is in line with international labour standards, agreements, and conventions, and takes into account all legal, humanitarian and social considerations. It further reflects the Kingdom's commitment to protect workers' rights, in accordance with national laws and legislation, and to improve working environments for employees.

Regional and international partnership

Partnership is a two-way relationship between the state and other relevant parties, in which both share responsibility and benefit together. As has been noted previously in this report, regional integration and an open approach to the world is crucial to Bahrain's sustainable development path, along with meeting its obligations as a member of the international community, so that the Kingdom can continue to benefit from these partnerships.

Bahrain is neither a donor nor a recipient country, in the traditional sense, but it has a different relationship with the GCC system. This affiliation is an advanced form of an institutionalized partnership that results in other forms of support such as an exchange of knowledge and expertise, development support through regional development projects, trade exchange, and movement of investments and manpower among the member countries; of which the development impact exceeds any potential impact from traditional systems of financial aid and lending.

However, Bahrain, through the Royal Charity Foundation, the Bahrain Red Crescent Society, and civil society organizations, has provided financial and in-kind contributions to support refugees in various parts of the world such as Palestine, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, Turkey, Nepal, Philippines, Egypt, and Yemen; in addition to building hospitals, schools and other infrastructures in partnership with the GCC and the international community. The Kingdom provides what it can within its resources but does not consider itself a donor. Instead Bahrain believes its support to be a matter of moral obligation to demonstrate solidarity with people in need of assistance and those facing difficult circumstances.

Challenges and a look at the future

Affirming the above achievements aim to highlight Bahrain's capabilities to further develop and build upon its accumulated experiences over the past years. This further helps in monitoring problems and challenges and attempts to address them with a strong will and strategic planning. Goal 8 calls for achieving stable economic growth over a sustained period of time. In this regard, the average annual economic growth over the past decade was 37%, which represents positive growth despite the

difficulties Bahrain has faced due to the global economic crisis and the fluctuation of oil prices, the mainstay of its economy.

The Kingdom's economic diversification process highlights its commitment to increase effective economic integration into the regional economy, and move towards science, technology, and innovation in the realization of the SDGs. Bahrain aims to increase its energy efficiency and share of renewable energy, consistent with sustainability objectives, as a safe option for sustainable economic growth for the prosperity and protection of the planet.



4.7 Security, Governance and Institutional Development

Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions looks to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

The Government Action Plan covers two development dimensions, out of six, encompassing the areas of peace, justice, and good governance, in relation to Goal 16. They are the sovereignty axis and the government performance axis. The first focuses on "strengthening security, stability, democratic systems and external relations," while the latter focuses on procedural aspects and the provision of services to citizens, with its strategic priority to "enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the government performance.”



Security and stability in Bahrain, as in any other country, is a regional affair as much as it is national. National measures may succeed in providing security and political and institutional stability in the country, but this does not create a desired

environment to preserve, protect, and promote development, unless it is reinforced by regional and international efforts in support of peace and stability.

In the last decade, the pace of foreign interference in the affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain has increased, according to irrefutable evidence, including documents in clear violation of the principles of respect for the sovereignty of states, non-interference in their internal affairs and good-neighbourliness, as affirmed by the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. This is of course in addition to the impact on the Kingdom's quest for comprehensive sustainability and national capacity-building in various areas of development. The Kingdom of Bahrain offers a distinctive development model according to international indicators, but it faces a security challenge from state sponsored terrorism, which targets its stability and development plans. Security and development are fundamental requirements that are inseparably linked—one cannot be achieved without the other—and both can only be achieved through a state that is secure and has good governance in place. Providing sustainable growth remains contingent to ensuring the effectiveness of security, stability, human development, and the preservation of human values. Bahrain has maintained a balance between security and development in a stable environment. It has confronted terrorism within the framework of the rule of law and human rights. At the same time, it has consistently pursued development and directed efforts and resources to serve the welfare of citizens and residents.

The current review process highlighted the impact of regional tension on Bahrain and Bahrain's commitment to confronting it jointly with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to prevent further crises and to minimize its impact. As for internal stability, His Majesty the King, the Government of Bahrain, and all institutions of the State are striving to establish a culture of dialogue, the rule of law, and continuity of the rule of the constitutional institutions (Shura and Parliament) through periodic elections, with parliamentary elections due to be held in 2018. The Kingdom is also fighting corruption and tightening control over public money through the Financial and Administrative Control Bureau, which was established by Law No. 49 of 2010. The law monitors the use of public money to verify the integrity and legitimacy of its use, its good management without redundancy or waste, and to direct the funds to benefit the state and society. Furthermore, it assists the parties subject to inspection to manage their affairs within the legal regulations of the institutions, and to regulate their work to improve their institutional performance and close any gaps which could allow for irregularities and the misuse of public funds. This is in addition to the disclosure of financial and administrative irregularities within institutions and investigations of violations.

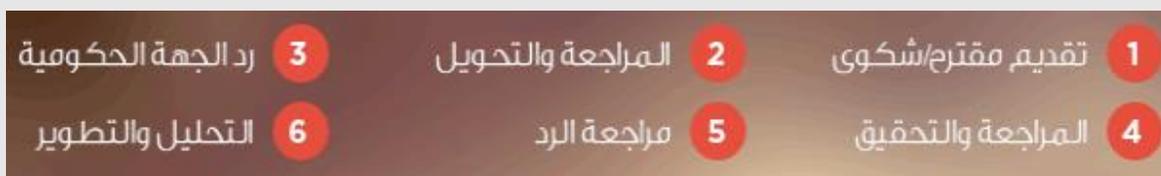
The Financial and Administrative Control Bureau also reviews the financial and administrative regulations and procedures of the operations that ensure the efficiency and adequacy of these measures. It identifies any shortcomings and considers how to protect the laws from external influences by proposing appropriate means for their development and reform. Under Article 116 of the Constitution and Article 1 of Law 49, the Bureau is financially and administratively independent from the legislative and executive branches - to enable it to perform its duties impartially, transparently, and independently. The Bureau issues an annual report that includes the results of its review of the financial status of the state and the results of its review on the performance of the government. The Bureau has been effective in protecting public funds, improving the performance of the audited institutions, ensuring accountability, enhancing transparency, improving the performance of those institutions, and in closing the loopholes used to commit violations and misuse public money.

As for security against criminality, the availability of modern urban infrastructure, lighting, road networks covering all neighbourhoods, availability of police stations and service centres, effective communication systems, and emergency services have all contributed to a safe environment for all in Bahrain.

The Kingdom seeks to promote and protect human rights through legislative measures and policies, including through an independent judiciary, which follow a series of legal procedures to ensure fair trials and due process, including the right to a defence and judicial assistance. The Kingdom guarantees respect for rights and freedoms and provides access to human rights oversight bodies such as the General Secretariat of Complaints, The Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC), the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR), and the National Suggestions & Complaints System (Tawasul). The Kingdom also has democratic practices in place through the legislative authority and through freedom of opinion and expression. These freedoms include establishing non-governmental organizations, a free media, and respect for civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the Constitution, national legislations, and international conventions on human rights, which Bahrain is committed to. Bahrain submits reports periodically in accordance with accredited international mechanisms.

National Suggestions and Complaints System "Tawasul"

The National Suggestions and Complaints System "Tawasul," is considered one of the main electronic channels by which citizens and residents are able to submit suggestions or complaints to a government agency in the Kingdom of Bahrain, both quickly and easily, from anywhere and at any time. A working group exists in each government body to deal with the suggestions and complaints submitted according to the performance indicators. Each suggestion or complaint must be dealt with within a specified time period and reflect the type of the complaint received.



The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted the Universal Periodic Review at the third session of the UN Human Rights Council in May 2017 and received 175 recommendations, agreeing to 139 of those, which represented approximately 80% of the recommendations made. Of these recommendations, 88 (50.3% of the total) are linked to specific sustainable development targets. The following table summarizes the agreed recommendations, which are categorized according to each Sustainable Development Goal.

A mapping of the recommendations accepted by Bahrain in its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal	Recommendations agreed on by the Kingdom of Bahrain related to the Sustainable Development Goals	No. of Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (One recommendation) to develop health programs at health and rehabilitation Centres, to accommodate all age groups and people with special needs. 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Six recommendations) on human rights education and training in general, to include human rights in school curricula and in various media and communication channels. ✓ (One recommendation) to intensify efforts to provide public education and training on the human trafficking law. ✓ (One recommendation) to raise awareness in the community among different age groups to enable them to realize the importance of civil society organizations and their role in Bahrain's society. ✓ 	8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Five recommendations) on legislation, policies, and measures to protect women and eliminate all forms of discrimination against them. ✓ (One recommendation) to continue the important process of improving reconciliation of women's rights with the obligations under Shari'a provisions. ✓ (One recommendation) to take steps to ensure the successful implementation of the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women 2013-2022. ✓ (One recommendation) to increase the number of women in political and public life at all levels and in all fields, strengthen the role of women in leadership positions, and ensure that they have access to higher education. 	8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Four recommendations) relating to the continuation of efforts and measures to eliminate and prevent trafficking in persons and to strengthen the protection and assistance of victims. 	12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Three recommendations) on the adoption and implementation of a national strategy to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and girls. ✓ (One recommendation) to take further steps to ensure equality in all professions and aspects of work. ✓ (Four recommendations) on continuing the efforts to ensure the safety, security, and dignity of migrant workers, and to protect them against discrimination, including domestic workers, through taking necessary institutional and legislative measures. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Two recommendations) to continue to promote sound social policies, with special emphasis on the rights of vulnerable groups. ✓ (One recommendation) to adopt effective measures in laws and practices to eliminate all forms of discrimination, especially those based on religious background or belief. ✓ (One recommendation) to take additional measures to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, and incitement of violence against persons because of their religion or belief. ✓ (Three recommendations) on the further implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities and effective measures to implement the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to continue to support the integration of persons with disabilities into society through promoting educational support and job training. ✓ (One recommendation) to further improve the social security system and take further steps to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. ✓ (One recommendation) continue to strengthen the capacities of the National Committee for Childhood to fully implement the National Strategic Action Plan for Children. 	<p>9</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Eight recommendations) related to strengthening the independence and effectiveness of national remedies in accordance with international principles and standards, such as the National Human Rights Institution, the General Secretariat of Complaints and the Special Investigation Unit at the Attorney-General. ✓ (Five recommendations) on capacity-building and training of judges and law enforcement personnel in 	<p>48</p>

	<p>accordance with international human rights standards and international conventions, and to disseminate a code of conduct for law enforcement personnel among themselves and in the society at large.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ (Six recommendations) on investigations into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances in accordance with the norms of the rule of law and questioning the perpetrators of such crimes, to ensure that there is no impunity.✓ (One recommendation) to continue the counter-terrorism strategy in order to protect human rights.✓ (Sixteen recommendations) on the removal of obstacles to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, promotion and facilitation of NGO activities, and that the new press law conforms to international standards.✓ (Three recommendations) on measures and legislation to protect civil society and journalists from acts of aggression, intimidation, and reprisals.✓ (Three recommendations) on the release of those imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression, establishing association, and peaceful assembly.✓ (Two recommendations) regarding respect for and protection of the right of all groups and individuals to legitimate political and public participation.✓ (One recommendation) to remove restrictions on the establishment and membership of political parties.✓ (One recommendation) to focus on strengthening legal frameworks, institutions, and the judiciary to ensure the independence of the judicial system and the right to fair trials guaranteed by articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.✓ (One recommendation) to prohibit the practice of corporal punishment against children in all contexts and at all places, including at home, according to the law, and revoke all exceptions relating to its use.✓ (One recommendation) on unifying the age of criminalization in the legislations of the Kingdom, to protect the best interest of the child in a manner that is commensurate with a child's age, protects their dignity and facilitates their rehabilitation and integration into society.✓ (One recommendation) to continue taking steps to promote human rights by adopting effective measures to implement the rights enshrined in the International	
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	Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (One recommendation) to continue efforts that solidify international cooperation in the field of human rights and to benefit from relevant experiences around the world. ✓ (One recommendation) to work on raising awareness about the right to a safe environment through participation and cooperation among all stakeholders and partners. 	2

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has agreed to these recommendations and will act accordingly to implement them. Bahrain began implementing some of these recommendations even before the submission of its report to the United Nations, while the remainder of these recommendations will be addressed in the next Government Action Plan (2019 – 2022), to guarantee their implementation before the next periodic review in 2021.

The existing political system and infrastructure in the Kingdom of Bahrain illustrates the country’s eagerness to learn from its political, economic and social experience, taking into consideration the challenges of continuous development. All of this is in pursuit of a modern state in terms of political and constitutional frameworks, which take into account local, regional, and international developments.

The process of developing the political system has been based on transparency and the accountability between the leadership and the people, through the proper frameworks of democratic practices that emphasize respect for the rule of law, the guarantee of rights and freedoms, and which emphasize the importance of popular participation and national unity.

Linking the Sustainable Development Goals with the periodic review will contribute to improving the mechanisms for pursuing the SDGs on the one hand and promote the interconnectivity of human rights with the concept of sustainable development on the other.

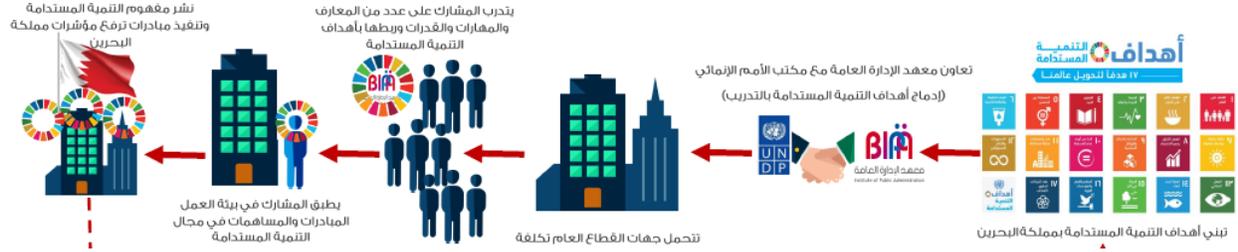
The e-Government

In the light of the information and communications revolution, Bahrain has succeeded in employing electronic technologies to improve the efficiency of government services by adopting the eGovernment initiative and has been ranked among the most advanced countries in the world in this field. This ranking is only given to countries that achieve more than 75% of the total rating indicators (which exceed 400 indicators). Bahrain continues to pursue its goals in terms of electronic transformation by providing numerous electronic services to citizens and residents, using the best international methods and practices in this area. The electronic readiness of Bahrain, the efficiency of its IT infrastructure, the availability of intelligent communication, and the reliability of the Internet in the country, has all enabled it to deal with and process huge amounts of data (i.e. Big Data). This data can be used to acquire information that assists in decision-making processes, particularly regarding sustainable development.

Develop government leaders to support public sector initiatives on the sustainable development goals

The Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) works to support government personnel with training and development programs, including those in a leadership level in the areas of policy, strategies, resource management, skills, behaviour, knowledge, and problem solving through scientific methods. The Institute works with international partners such as the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) to develop a unified international agenda for the future of public administration, as well as to prepare an international leadership project for international leaders and to design academic and training programs that contribute to the improvement of government performance.

In collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Bahrain, the Institute has also begun adapting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals with the National Program for the Development of Government Leaders. This works in several stages, starting with promoting an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and ending with monitoring performance indicators at the leadership level, which all help to achieve the targets for sustainable development in the institution.



مواءمة أهداف وغايات التنمية المستدامة مع البرنامج الوطني لتطوير القيادات الحكومية

تأسيس	بناء	تكوين	كوادير	قيادات
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • فهم أهداف وغايات التنمية المستدامة بالنسبة للقطاع العام 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • إدراك دور الموظف في تحقيق أهداف المؤسسة وأهداف وغايات التنمية المستدامة ضمن منظومة العمل المؤسسي بالقطاع العام 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • اقتراح مبادرة تتوافق مع الأهداف الاستراتيجية للمؤسسة وأهداف التنمية المستدامة وغاياتها. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • المشاركة في تصميم الأهداف الاستراتيجية للمؤسسة لتوائم منظومة العمل بالقطاع العام وغايات التنمية المستدامة • تحليل ممارسات الخدمات المؤسسية التي يقدمها القطاع العام للتوافق مع أهداف وغايات التنمية المستدامة. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • تقييم الأوضاع الاقتصادية المؤثرة على تنمية القطاع العام • رصد مؤشرات الأداء التي تحقق أهداف التنمية المستدامة في المؤسسة.

مراحل إدماج أهداف التنمية المستدامة في مؤسسات القطاع العام بمملكة البحرين

In 2008, the Bahrain Centre for Excellence was established to achieve this vision and provide leadership in advancing the administrative performance of all ministries and government agencies through the adoption of key international scientific methods that had proven successful in the public and private sectors, in order to reach innovative and sustainable solutions. This was through the application and adoption of methodologies of excellence from institutions around the world. These efforts are aimed at simplifying the procedures of government services provided to the public, while also ensuring accuracy and speed of service delivery. These are based on several criteria, the most important of which are:

- ✓ The ability of the institution to support the national economy;
- ✓ Manufacturing excellence through application;
- ✓ Development of leaders, leadership teams, and managing human assets;
- ✓ Preserving and developing knowledge assets;
- ✓ Communicating with the public and enhancing the ability of the institution to develop a spirit of social responsibility.

Chapter V: Thematic debate: Transforming into sustainable and resilient societies

5.1 Preface

In its previous sections, this report addressed the conceptual framework for development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the commitment to the principles of interdependence and integration of the goals, targets and objectives at a national level. In the next section, we review the five Sustainable Development Goals: 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15, as well as Goal 17, which is touched on in each section. We have also included Goal 13 on climate change, which will be reviewed at the 2019 Forum, because of its natural association with Goals 6, 7 and 12. It also addresses Goal 14 (Life Below Water), which was reviewed in 2017, because the marine and terrestrial environments of a country like Bahrain are interdependent and cannot be separated from each other as topics.

5.2 Cities and urban development in Bahrain



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The National Strategic Master Plan 2030 of the Kingdom of Bahrain focuses on urban development objectives and sustainable urban and construction development in the Kingdom since 2008. This covers the provision of services, modern housing, safe infrastructure, and the development of public facilities to meet the needs of citizens for quality standards of living, in accordance with best international practices. Other areas covered by the Master Plan includes water availability for different uses, wastewater treatment, efficient energy use, and the introduction of renewable energies; all in the context of turning cities into smart complexes that use technology and create a low-carbon economy (Target 11.3 of Goal 11). As part of the Plan, road networks have also been developed, public transport has been modernized (Target 11.2), and public facilities built, such as schools, education facilities, and health and social centres. It also includes the development of public parks, traditional and modern markets, and city and village development projects, all of which will have a positive impact on the lives, health, and social status of the population in different parts of the Kingdom and enhance the Kingdom's efforts in creating healthy environments and cities that are smart, resilient and, sustainable.

Modern housing services

Bahrain has achieved Target 11.1 of the SDGs in providing adequate, safe, and affordable basic housing and services to citizens, and in improving the quality of older houses. Legal protection is provided to ensure equal access to land, including the right for all citizens to inherit and own land. The Constitution, in Article 9 paragraph (f), stipulates that "the State shall provide housing for low-income citizens." This has directly led to the Ministry of Housing providing fair and adequate housing services to those entitled to it, in accordance to their monthly income levels. This approach equally applies to all parts of society and includes ensuring that people with special needs are also housed in modern housing communities.

Within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), a project was agreed to develop housing policies and services to ensure that the new sustainable housing development goals are included to ensure the long-term sustainability of the housing portfolio. This was applied in a number of ways including ensuring: more efficiency in construction, the use of environmentally friendly building materials, the use of thermal insulation which reduces energy consumption, and the installation of solar panels in a number of new housing units. This was tested as a pilot scheme before it was rolled out more widely.

The Ministry of Housing has followed three main pathways towards strengthening partnerships with the private sector in providing housing services, as a solution to ensuring the sustainability of the housing sector in the Kingdom. The first was the conclusion of a contract with a real estate developer to implement housing projects using government land, starting with the construction of 1,618 housing units in Salman Town and 832 housing units in the Al-Louzi Area. To date, this has been a very successful endeavour, with the Ministry distributing these new housing units to citizens on housing waiting lists.

The second pathway, which has been very successful and popular, is the Mazaya program. It has had a very positive impact on housing over a short period of time, which has led to its adoption as a key housing service, following a decision by Cabinet. Since its launch in 2013, 6,000 citizens have applied and qualified for this service, of which 2,800 have completed the necessary procedures and received their units in record time. Mazaya has contributed in encouraging qualified real estate developers to build more housing units at affordable prices within specified technical specifications. The Housing Bank, the strategic partner of the Ministry, has also encouraged more banks to grant easy and long-term financing to beneficiaries in receipt of direct financial support from the Ministry.

It can be said that the Mazaya program has achieved the principle of facilitating access for citizens to housing finance, as outlined in the Government Action Plan. This has been facilitated through funds provided to citizens by banks participating in Mazaya. This has also helped the Ministry of Housing develop new frameworks and policies for the allocation of direct housing finance to citizens for the purpose of purchase, construction, or renovation of accommodation. This approach ensures that housing applications are processed swiftly and, most importantly, allows the quick provision of financing to citizens who are most in need.

The third pathway has seen the Ministry launch an initiative to purchase more than 3,000 residential units from one of the largest real estate developers in the Kingdom of Bahrain, establishing a new form of cooperation with the private sector which directly assists citizens already on the housing waiting lists.



Social Housing Program "Mazaya"

In 2002, the Government of Bahrain in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) developed a social housing program to enable middle-income earners to choose a housing area and from a selection of types of housing units, with housing finance provided up to BD81,000 (\$215,000). The financing received by housing services' applicants from the banks participating in the program is guaranteed by the government, with loans paid in monthly installments which do not exceed 25% of his/her monthly income. The government then pays the difference between the actual monthly installment of the loan and what the beneficiary is able to comfortably afford. This financing system is a unique and modern system that is comparable to other international housing systems.

The two main challenges in this area are: providing sustainable financing for the housing sector by increasing the role of the private sector and the need to reduce

waiting periods for housing. The gap between the increase in demand and the waiting period puts pressure on the system and increases the possibility of violations in building codes, for example, from the challenge presented by changes to already occupied housing units to respond to the needs of growing and extended families.

Additionally, the government has proactively developed a number of older residential neighbourhoods in order to preserve the social fabric of communities already residing in these areas, whilst also preserving the historical features of these neighbourhoods. Examples include areas such as Bu Maher area. Recently, the “Furjan (neighbourhoods)” initiative was launched to develop a number of these types of neighbourhoods in the Muharraq Governorate, the capital of historical Bahrain. The development of this area has been carried out to ensure the construction of high-quality housing in tandem with the building of roads and infrastructure, which takes into account the history and tradition of the area.

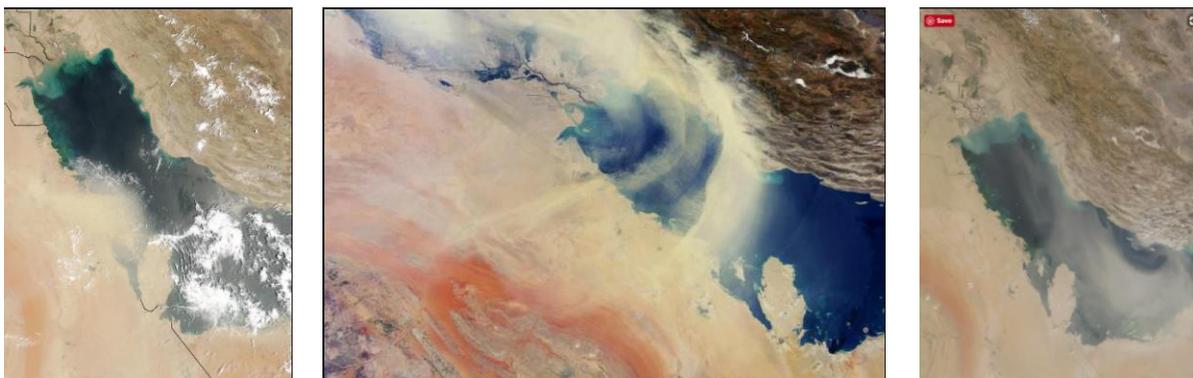
The Kingdom of Bahrain has received international recognition on several occasions for its efforts on this wider issue, notably the Honorary Award for Excellence in Urban Development and Housing to His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa in 2006, from the United Nations Human Settlements Program in Geneva, during a high-profile international ceremony. In addition, Muharraq was chosen as the capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2018 due to its historical importance, preservation of heritage, and the rich and distinctive culture of its ancient civilizations.

The environment and the impact of urban growth

In recognition that urban growth directly impacts air quality and involves increased waste, Decision No. 10 of 1999 on environmental standards (Target 11.6 of the SDGs) was issued to establish a national standard, customized for the context of the Kingdom and its natural environment. This directive has the objective of reducing emissions of gases and liquids and measuring the quality of the surrounding air. On November 27, 2016, the Council of Ministers approved Resolution 10 – 237, mandating the Supreme Council for the Environment to develop a national strategy for air quality in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in coordination with the relevant authorities and in cooperation with specialists, to improve air quality and create a healthy environment in the Kingdom.

Technical reports on air quality indicate that micro particles smaller than 10 and 2.5 microns (10 PM and 2.5 PM) have increased in all governorates in the Kingdom, according to national standards, which are higher than WHO standards (Indicator 11.6.2). This is a direct result of the regional problem of dust and dust storms over

the last two decades. This cross-border problem has resulted from drought, due to low rain falls in the region. The correlation between the number of days with dust and total annual rainfall is inverse, as the number of dust days has increased in the years where rainfall has decreased, such as 2008. The recent drought in Badiat Al-Sham (Syria) and Iraq, in addition to the instability in these countries, has destroyed vegetation, dismantled the soil and made it susceptible to winds which increase the likelihood of dust and sand storms. The solution requires protection of vegetation by expanding the establishment of transboundary natural reserves in the northern parts of the West Asia region. Protected areas require a synergy between the multilateral environmental conventions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This is the only way to prevent soil from drifting and to reduce the problem of dust and excessive particles.



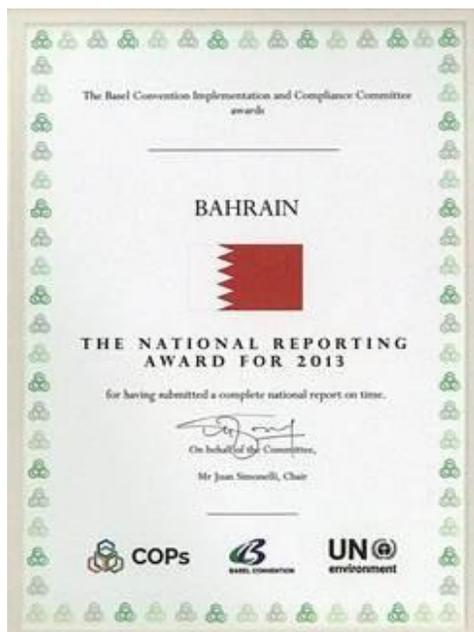
In addition, the increase in construction projects, resulting in a large number of vehicles and industrial activity, has resulted in the increase of concentrations of micro particles in the surrounding air. To reduce the phenomenon of dust and air pollution in urban areas, Bahrain has established parks, gardens, beaches, and walking tracks. This is coupled with the ‘beautification’ of local streets in different governorates of the Kingdom using local plants. This wider approach takes into account the health needs and requirements of all segments of society – such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities (as highlighted in Target 11.7). Bahrain's old water springs have also been rehabilitated and turned into swimming pools and parks such as Ain Adhari and Ain Um Shuoom and are available for public use. This has enabled Bahrain to preserve its heritage and at the

same time contribute to the preservation of the environment and the wider wellbeing of the country.

Waste is a big problem

Waste is considered one of the major problems associated with urban areas and is exacerbated in small island countries, especially those with rapid population growth and the corresponding increased per capita daily production of waste. In Bahrain this amounts to about 1.5 kg / person / day, which is higher than the global average of 1.2 kg. Solid urban waste accounts for 94% of the total waste generated, while the percentage of collected and transported waste from urban areas to their disposal sites reached 100% (Indicator 11.6.1). Since 1986, waste has been disposed of in the Mardam or Askar landfills, which are quarries of rocks in southeastern Bahrain. Waste is dumped in these landfills without any prior sorting, processing, or recycling. They are then bonded with heavy machinery and covered with a layer of sand, with this process continuing successively. The Askar landfill received about 2 million tons of waste in 2016. The preliminary results of the National Integrated Waste Management Strategy currently being prepared indicate the urgent need to adopt an integrated waste management approach and the need to improve its governance, starting with reducing individual production of waste. This needs to be coupled with sorting and recycling the waste to save resources and to recover energy, and to increase the default age of the landfill, particularly given limited land availability in the Kingdom.

Hazardous waste is currently disposed of in a waste dump at Hafeera, created especially for this type of waste. The Kingdom of Bahrain has ratified the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes. Subsequently, the Supreme Council for the Environment has issued a number of resolutions regulating the movement of hazardous waste. A statistical system has been established to manage this, including the daily registration of the amount of industrial waste, its type, source, place of disposal, export, and information on the carrier. The system also includes an annual report to the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, which has recognized Bahrain's efforts in this area.



Bahrain Honored by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention

At the Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions held in Geneva in 2017, Bahrain was recognized by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes as the first Gulf, Arab, and Asian country to be bound by this Convention.

Bahrain was honored at a ceremony with nine other countries, all of whom demonstrated a high level of commitment to the Convention – namely, Argentina, Australia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, and South Africa.

As part of the Kingdom's plan to make cities safe and sustainable (Goal 11), a national emergency plan has been drawn up to combat oil spills. An industrial and hazardous waste management plan, including IT recycling, is in progress and will be delivered within the scope of the National Waste Management Strategy which aims to preserve and protect the environment.

Confronting disasters

In the area of maintaining public safety, the Ministry of the Interior has established the Civil Defence Council and the National Disaster Response Committee (NDC) to implement measures and actions related to the handling of emergencies, and to strengthen cooperation with friendly countries to alleviate human suffering by preventing natural and human accidents. This includes taking measures to mitigate their effects when they occur. The Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (Indicator 11.B.2) in Bahrain is in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The strategy includes prevention measures, planning, incident handling procedures, and reducing impact and risk, alongside recovery and return to original conditions. An Earthquake monitoring station has been set up, as well as a station to monitor radiation and land-based nuclear and submarine radiation, within and outside of the borders of Bahrain.

The National Disaster Management Committee

The Ministry of Interior's National Disaster Management Committee ensures the readiness of the appropriate authorities to deal with emergency events such as fire and chemical hazards, including industrial accidents, hazardous materials, road accidents, radiation, and nuclear pollution etc. These incidents often have serious consequences on wider society and can result in death, injuries, and destruction of infrastructure (electricity, water, sanitation, roads, and transportation, etc.) The Committee plans to proactively prevent disasters and increase preparation to be able to successfully confront these issues if, and when, they occur. The National Risk Matrix is periodically updated in accordance with the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework and Strategy, through the delivery of workshops for all partners from the government, the private sector, civil society, and academia. The workshops identify the risks which the country may be exposed to and their potential effects, and assess appropriate actions for prevention, by developing plans which address these concerns and ensure the readiness of the relevant institutions to deal with them.

Transportation problems

The increase in population and successive housing projects have contributed to the growth and expansion of the road networks. However, the steady increase in the number of vehicles, about 26 thousand vehicles per year, and the limited capacity of public transportation have caused an increase in traffic violations and congestion. As a result, the transportation sector has not yet adapted to meet the development processes or challenges in the Kingdom (Indicator 11.2.1). Therefore, efforts are being made to develop the road network, along with the issuance of the Ministry of Interior's Traffic Law "Rethink", alongside the implementation of several development projects such as control of traffic signals, traffic cameras, and awareness campaigns. Despite these challenges, statistics show that the rate of traffic violations has decreased by more than 20% since the implementation of the 2015 Traffic Law and the approval of the National Road Safety Plan, alongside general improvements to road safety (Target 11.2), which have impacted the reduction in the number of road traffic fatalities.

National Plan on Traffic Safety and Road Safety Improvement

The General Directorate of Traffic adopted a modern road safety strategy, which included the issuance of the Traffic Law "Rethink" and improvements to roads, with electronic monitoring leading to an increase in the level of road traffic safety. The mortality rate resulting from road traffic injuries decreased from 14 deaths per hundred thousand cars in 2013 to 7 deaths per hundred thousand cars in 2017 (Indicator 3.6.1), despite the steady increase in the number of vehicles over the same period.

However, these regulatory measures are insufficient from a strategic point of view. The transportation problem is structural in nature and is closely linked to the climate, growth patterns, urbanization, and consumer lifestyles that encourage the acquisition of private cars. It is therefore necessary to undertake proactive efforts to adopt a package of effective transport policies aimed at reducing the large number of vehicles on the roads and which focus on improving land use planning, organizing the transport network, and re-planning and implementing smart public transport, thereby contributing to the positive development of the transportation system. The national strategy for air quality, when its preparation process is over, is also expected to contribute to this approach.

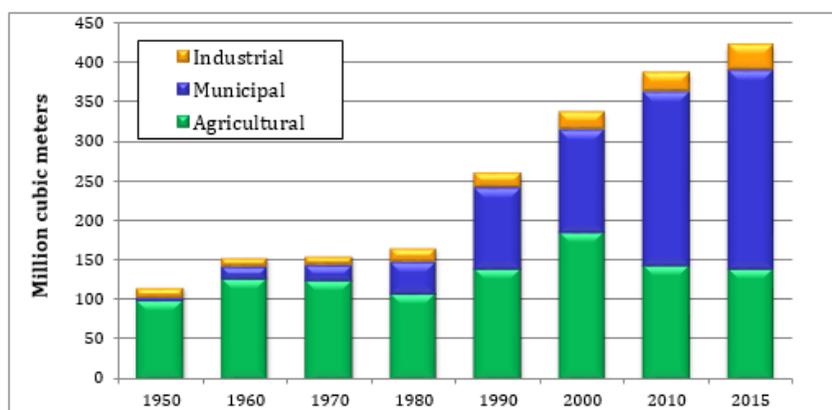
5.3 Water quality sanitation services and sustainable management



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Although Bahrain suffers from a scarcity of water resources, like a number of drought-stricken and desert countries in the region, coverage of water and sanitation networks is 100%. The population of Bahrain relies entirely on non-traditional water resources (desalinated water from sea water) and traditional water resources (groundwater or rainfall), to meet their drinking water needs. Sewage treatment water is used to meet the requirements of the agricultural, municipal, and industrial sectors.

Water Desalination naturally puts pressure on the environment due to its energy consumption, its contribution to air pollution, and the impact of saline solutions on the marine environment. On the other hand, the unsustainable use of groundwater leads to a decline in their quality and degradation, resulting in the natural dryness of springs and the salinization of the agricultural land on which they depend. This is compounded by the effects of climate change and rising sea water levels, due to the invasion of sea water of the aquifer class, the decrease in rainfall, and high temperatures, which have increased the demand for water in all sectors, especially agriculture.



Trends in total water demands in the Kingdom of Bahrain, 1950-2015 (BHN_IWRM, 2018)

إتجاه تنامي الطلب على المياه في البحرين مع الزمن

The Kingdom of Bahrain is making very good progress in providing safe drinking water and sanitation services throughout the Kingdom, increasing storage capacity to ensure water security, and increasing the efficiency of its use—especially the use of treated water for the domestic and agricultural sectors. Bahrain is also implementing an integrated approach on water resource management through the Water Resources Board, which was formed in 2009. The percentage of the population with access to improved and safe drinking water (Target 6.1) is 100%, with affordability and quality levels having improved over time.

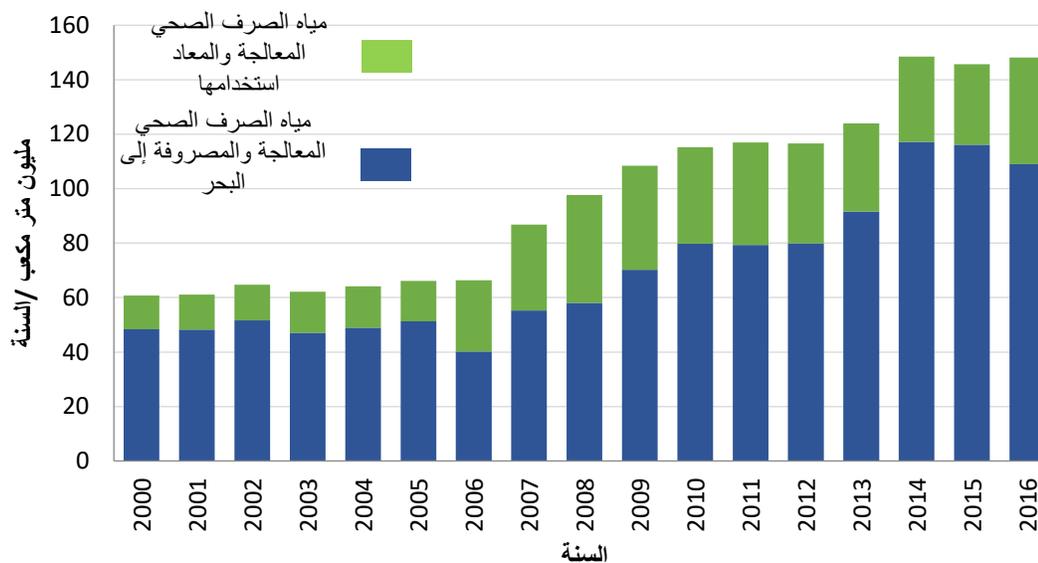
Wastewater management and treatment

The proportion of people connected to safe sewerage networks increased from 73% in 2000 to 92% in 2015. The remainder of the population benefits from safe sanitation services connected to treatment plants. Therefore, Target 6.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals has been fully achieved by providing adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all. There has also been a steady increase in the

10 July 2018

percentage of collected waste water to drinking water, from 47% in the base year to 58% in 2015, close to the recommended international rate of 60%.

Between the years 2000 to 2015, the combined wastewater treatment rate was 100%. The challenge remains to raise the proportion of treated wastewater and increase the reuse of treated wastewater (usage share), which in 2016 accounted for only 39% of total treated wastewater (Indicator 6.3.1), while the rest was discharged into the sea.



Treated and reused wastewater, and those discharged to the sea, 2000-2016 (1)

The agricultural sector consumes about 33% of total water produced for a variety of purposes, according to 2014 statistics, and more than 84% of the total groundwater taken out by 2015, despite the small contribution of this sector to GDP (of only 0.21%). Measures have been implemented to rationalize water consumption in the agricultural sector by placing meters on all groundwater wells to monitor water taken out and ensure that they do not exceed the safe limit. This is in addition to considering crop structure, the cultivation of fewer water consuming crops, and the expansion of the use of triple treated water in irrigation instead of groundwater. Furthermore, modern methods of agriculture and irrigation, particularly regarding protected hydroponic agriculture, which has proven successful in conserving resources and the environment, has a high economic return, and provides a number of employment opportunities, have been applied.

Institutional actions and regional cooperation in the field of water

In order to conserve water and ensure sustainability, the Water Resources Council has drawn up a water policy, which applies measures to ensure the proper utilization of water for its various uses, regulates the drilling of wells and the use of groundwater, and considers other administrative and regulatory procedures. The aim

of integrated water resources management is to balance supply and demand, protect it against pollution, preserve the environment, and to meet the demands of all sectors. This requires management, institutional responses, and governance of traditional and non-traditional water resources, maximizing the utilization of treated wastewater and protecting the environment. The GCC Unified Water Strategy (2016 - 2035) and its Operational Plan are considered guides for the current Strategy for Water Resource Management in Bahrain (2018-2035), in collaboration with the Arabian Gulf University, under the umbrella of the GCC and with participation from all sectors and segments of the society. The national strategy is expected to be a qualitative leap forward in addressing the issues and the challenges of water scarcity and how to manage it sustainably.

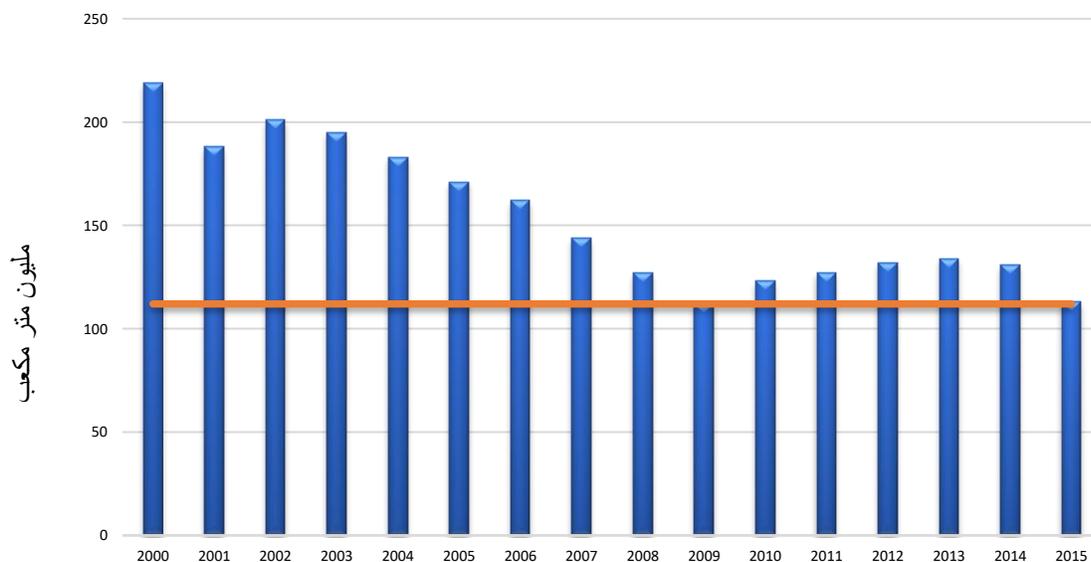


The GCC Unified Water Strategy (2016 - 2035)

The GCC Unified Water Strategy is based on five key areas that constitute the pillars of integrated water resource management in the GCC. These are: water resources development and sustainability; efficient and fair use of water resources; strengthening municipal water supply security; effective governance and awareness; and economic efficiency and financial sustainability. They also intersect with four other areas: capacity-building and training; scientific research and development; environmental and ecological aspects; and the impact of climate change.

In view of the importance of collecting data and statistics on water consumption, the Information and eGovernment Authority has made significant progress in the establishment and development of a comprehensive national water statistics database for the Kingdom of Bahrain, that reflects regional and national demands in water data collection. The database contains about 440 variables, or statistical variables, including water quality, groundwater levels, water use efficiency, and water demand management. In addition, the collection of other data related to water such as climate, natural environment, demographic, and economic data and indicators have allowed for the collection of comprehensive quantitative indicators and standards on water resources and sustainable development. The national water statistics database is regarded as a source of continuous national data on water. It is linked to geographic information systems and application models which facilitate data processing and analysis and allow for the preparation and extraction of technical and statistical reports to support decision-making processes in water resources planning and management.

Available data on the conditions of shallow aquifers in Bahrain, associated with Indicators 6.6.1 and 6.3.2 on ecosystem change and water quality in these systems respectively, show positive results in groundwater levels and its quality as a result of reducing the quantities of water taken out from reservoirs, which have reached safe levels of use, amounting to 112 million cubic meters per year.



The change in water taken from aquifers compared with the safe limit of groundwater use

of 112 million cubic meters/year

Support and pricing of water services

Price revisions have been made to the tariffs of drinking water and water for municipal, commercial, and industrial uses. The revised tariffs reflect the real cost of water gradually being met under the principle of cost recovery and the creation of economic incentives to rationalize water consumption and raise the efficiency of its use, in addition to ensuring budgets necessary to improve efficiency and ensuring services provided by the water sector. An integrated program to detect leaks in the distribution networks and limit the amount of non-measured water is being implemented alongside the organizing of campaigns and programs dedicated to rationalizing the consumption of drinking water.

Within the framework of the national sanitation strategy, a series of projects are being implemented, most notably the expansion and rehabilitation of the Tubli Central Sewage Treatment Plant and leakage reduction projects in the collection, transport, and distribution of sewerage networks. There are also reviews of the current central sanitation system in Bahrain to study the possibility of replacing it with a decentralized system, including the establishment of new stations in the areas of Muharraq, the Southern City, and the Northern City, as well as the rehabilitation of a number of treatment sub-stations. This is in addition to increasing the triple treatment capabilities and increasing water reuse on the one hand and reducing the negative environmental impacts on the coastal environment on the other.

However, consideration must be given to the costs involved to restore some of these services, such as connecting to sewerage networks and treatment and reuse, to reduce the financial burden of the sewerage sector on the public budget and improve the level of services provided by this sector. Also, further studies are required around recharging/feeding aquifers with surplus of tri-treated wastewater to increase the groundwater reserves.

Success Story: Recycling and reuse of water at GPIC

The Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC) was established in 1979 as a joint venture between the Kingdom of Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Water is a key factor in production as it is used to cool heat exchangers and produce high pressure water vapor needed for operating turbines. The company's water needs are estimated at an average of 341 million cubic meters per year (about 933,000 m³ / day), which is fully secured by sea water. The design concept is based on the recycling of approximately 66% of the total water used in the operations, while the rest of the water requirements of the project are met by the desalination unit. The principle of water recycling is based on the fact that the desalinated water produced is mainly consumed in the form of steam and is also re-generated as part of the production process, before then being collected and processed with the water produced from the rectory operations in the plants, according to special techniques, before recycling. This process addresses development needs, environmental and ecological challenges, and the impact of climate change.

5.4 Modern, reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy services for all



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Energy plays a crucial role in achieving all Sustainable Development Goals, starting with the eradication of poverty to achieve progress in the areas of health, education, water supply, and industrialization, through to development in areas such as climate change. The Kingdom of Bahrain has adopted a strategy to provide electricity services with the highest degree of reliability and quality from gas turbine and steam turbine stations. The electricity produced is transported through major power stations to all governorates of the Kingdom and then distributed through the network to all subscribers.

The steady population increase in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which accompanied economic development, especially in industrial development due to the oil boom in the 1970s, led to an increase in the annual consumption of electricity and increased the production capacity from 1,447 MW in 1999 to 3,934 MW in 2016. The number of main power transmission stations increased from 68 stations in 1999 to 179 stations in 2016, while the number of substations reached 7,888 stations in 2016 to ensure coverage of all regions.

The percentage of the population who benefit from electricity services (which are managed safely) with reliance on clean fuels and technology is 100% (Indicator 7.1.2). These are delivered with high efficiency and with minimum interruptions even during peak times and during the summer period, when demand for electricity reaches its peak.

Severe weather is one of the factors affecting the increase in the demand for electricity and consequently to the increase in per capita consumption. Temperatures and humidity are high during most months of the year, with its peak in summer, increasing an individual's energy and water consumption. The per capita annual consumption of electricity has increased from 11,348 kWh in 2014 to 12,719 kWh in 2015.

The Kingdom is working hard to meet the increasing demand for electricity by building new production plants. In 2012, the first phase of the Al-Door production plant was launched to produce electricity with a capacity of 1,234 MW. It operates in a complex cycle mode to obtain reliability and high efficiency in order to ration the use of fuel and reduce emissions. The Kingdom is also working to improve the management of electricity demand through awareness campaigns to rationalize consumption, in addition to reducing the importation and circulation of low-efficiency electrical appliances and gradually revising the tariff for subscribers. It restructured the support and set a new tariff structure for various sectors and segments of society as of March 2016, noting that the rate of support reached 40% of the cost of electricity in certain cases.

Alternative sources

In order to provide sustainable energy, the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, through the Sustainable Energy Unit project, which is a joint venture between the Government of Bahrain and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has made concrete efforts to diversify the energy makeup (Target 7.2), utilize renewable

energy sources to meet the growing demand for energy, and keep pace with sustained economic growth in the Kingdom.

In this context, in December 2016, the Government of Bahrain adopted the National Energy Efficiency Plan (NEEAP) and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), as well as the proposed initiatives included in the two plans. In January 2017, the proposed national ratios were adopted to increase the share of renewable energy in the national mix by 5% by 2025 and 10% by 2035, with a 6% increase in energy efficiency by 2025.

The net measurement policy, which represents a shift in the production of energy in the Kingdom, has been adopted, changing the traditional roles of the producer and the consumer. Energy production is no longer restricted to the government. Every user can be a producer, for example, through the immediate installation of solar panels, and by connecting their renewable energy systems at home with the national network.

In addition to the above, construction of a solar power plant with a capacity of 100 megawatts has been approved. It is expected to be operational by the end of 2019. The initial construction phase of Al-Door Power Plant has also been completed, this plant will use solar and wind power with a total capacity of 5 megawatts. Efforts are also under way to complete the remaining works on the plant, to begin actual operation of the station, with the hope of connecting it to the network by the end of this year.

In January 2017 the first solar panel production plant was opened in the Kingdom, reflecting the efforts made to encourage investment in the field of renewable energy and its uses.

5.5 Bahrain: sea and land



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The marine and coastal environment (as covered in Goal 14) of the Kingdom of Bahrain is characterized by a rich biodiversity that includes at least 1,455 living creatures belonging to the different taxonomic groups and important habitats that are gaining environmental, economic, social, cultural, and national importance at the national, regional, and international levels. The most important of which are the so-called blue carbon environments (coral reef environment, marine weed, mud surfaces, and the mangrove environment), in addition to the pearl oysters, sandy and rocky beaches and salt marshes.

Due to the limited land area in Bahrain, population concentration has led to development activities on the coastline. As a result, land-based activities are putting pressure on coastal ecosystem services and affecting the sustainability of fish stocks and food security, which in turn are having economic and social impact. The most important of these pressures are on landfill operations, drainage and sewage treatment, as well as disposals from desalination plants and other factories, not to mention the pressures on the marine environment caused by the fleet of vessels that roam the waters of the Gulf and the impact of plastic and other items they throw into the sea. In 1996, the Kingdom announced Resolution 16 of 1996, declaring the Hawar Islands and the surrounding territorial sea a protected area, as it is host to the world's largest colony of *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*. Its territorial waters are also part of the world's second largest herd of dugongs. After the declaration of the Hayrat Naghwa Bouthamah, Hayr Bouthamah, Hayr Shtayeh, and Hayr Buamama protected marine areas, marine protected areas increased to 1,603 km² in 2017, making up more than 21% of the total area of the territorial waters of the Kingdom of Bahrain, exceeding Aichi Biodiversity Targets "aimed at conserving (at least 10%) of coastal and marine areas by 2020."



Bahrain has the second largest herd of dugongs in the world after Australia with about 1,500 dugongs

Bahrain hosts the largest gathering of the Sumerian sea gulls in the world

Bahrain is regarded as the first country in the Gulf region to have adopted the management of some of its coastal areas according to the ecosystem approach to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as represented in the Hayrat reserves (Hayr Bulthama, Hayrat Shitia, Hayr Bouamama and Naghwa Boulthamah), which were recognized in the international list of heritage sites in 2013. The aim is to preserve coral reefs and pearl oyster deposits and the cultural heritage of the pearl industry and trade by promoting ecotourism and creating new jobs. In addition, degraded habitats such as weed and coral reefs have been rehabilitated by cultivating living coral, establishing artificial coral reefs, and planting mangrove trees to increase fish stocks and ensure sustainability, including promoting sustainable livelihoods of the local fisheries. The Kingdom also regulated the fishing industry to protect the wealth of Bahrain's territorial waters against exploitation, the latest of which was Decree No. 27 of 2017, which prohibited the fishing of shrimp in the territorial waters of the Kingdom and the trade in shrimp for six months, instead of the usual four months, to protect shrimp deposits.

Furthermore, the Biodiversity Strategy and the National Plan of Action of the Kingdom of Bahrain (2016-2021) has been adopted, which looks at administrative, legislative, and regulatory measures aimed at addressing threats to biodiversity in the marine environment and in general, notably the shelf and landfill operations, the emergence of invasive alien species, and the regulation of sea fishing. The identification of areas of future urban growth is critical to sustainable development in the islands of Bahrain and the preservation of natural resources.



Small islands and important habitats

Despite the limited land resources of Bahrain and its desert environment, it contains many important ecosystems such as natural springs, palm groves, reeds, and deserts. In view of the growing demand for land, these habitats are being degraded by human pressures. The deterioration of groundwater has led to the transformation of some agricultural land into residential areas. Urban growth towards the coasts has also become a threat to shallow and important wetlands such as mangroves, mud flats, marine weed, and pearl oysters. Although the Kingdom's land is free of forests (Indicator 15.1.1), according to the FAO, the black mangroves of *Avicennia marina* grow heavily in a specific area in Tubli Bay, Ras Sanad, which led some international organizations such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to consider these areas among forest areas. The area of the mangrove trees is about 437 hectares, which is below the international standards set by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which requires at least 1,000 hectares of forest classification. However, the Kingdom of Bahrain has protected these areas and declared them wetlands of international importance (Site No. 921) and issued Law No. 53 of 2006, which states that Tubli Bay is a protected area. Since 2013, a program for the cultivation of mangroves has been initiated in cooperation with Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco). The adoption of ecosystem approaches to the management of coastal ecosystems provides means to preserving the sustainability of these systems and its services, maximizing its economic and social return, and promoting human well-being. There has been a full assessment of the environmental impact of projects alongside strategic environmental assessments (SEA) which are necessary to identify and avoid its adverse effects on development projects.

With regard to the protection of endangered species and their habitats (Indicator 15.5.1 - Red List Index), the status of 23 endangered species in the Kingdom of Bahrain has been assessed based on the criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List categories, to determine their status and the degree of threat of extinction they are facing. The result of the assessment at the regional level was the existence of six species in Bahrain "endangered by the first order", five "threatened with extinction", five "subject to extinction", four "under threat", one "less threatened", three "not applicable", and one "non-resident." These categories reflect the stressful reality surrounding these species as a result of the invasion of alien species, overfishing, urbanization, depletion of groundwater, pollution, dredging, and landfill activities, as well as climate change that has led to the deterioration of their habitats and their endangerment, especially in populated islands, the most significant being the Island of Bahrain. However, other islands that

belong to the uninhabited archipelago of the Kingdom of Bahrain have maintained a rich, abundant, and balanced biodiversity. This is evident in Hawar Islands for example.

Recently, the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Kingdom of Bahrain (2016 - 2021) on biodiversity has been finalized and is awaiting ratification by the Government. It includes strategic, administrative, legislative, and regulatory measures that are expected to contribute to mobilizing efforts to protect the Kingdom's biodiversity and to address threats, especially in the marine environment. In 2011, Bahrain issued Law No. 2, which approved joining the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. Bahrain contains 81 medicinal plants which are accessible and commercially profitable, still popular for medicinal use, and require protection because of its place as part of Bahrain's unique cultural heritage. The Protocol is awaiting ratification as part of the agenda of the Government Action Plan. The Kingdom also works in the same context with the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council to build capacity for access to genetic material and the equitable share of the benefits that arise from them. They also impose regulations on the import of genetic resources to ensure the rights of exporting countries, and to provide other countries with access to genetic resources including agricultural products and marine and cultivated fishery resources. The Kingdom is also monitoring the trade of endangered animals in accordance with the CITES agreement, which was ratified by the Kingdom in 2012.

With regard to the agricultural sector, despite the fact that the Kingdom of Bahrain is located in the belt of the dry areas, it has historically been known as the island of the million date palm trees, thanks to the abundance of fresh groundwater that has flowed through the ages through natural springs at sea and at land. However, since the end of the last century, due to the increase in population, economic development, and increased demand for water, groundwater has deteriorated in quantity and quality, affecting the agricultural sector in the Kingdom. This in turn creates many challenges, including a dry climate, small agricultural land area, land decline due to urban growth, and the reduction in the number of Bahraini farmers as a result of being attracted to other sectors, which has led to the decline of national agricultural labour and the shrinking of productive agricultural land.

However, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses, in Article 9 (g) that the State shall make the necessary arrangements to ensure the proper use of land suitable for productive farming, with the law laying down how small farmers are to

be helped (Goal 2). Article 11 affirms that "all natural wealth and resources are the property of the State. The state shall safeguard them and use them properly, while observing the requirements of the security of the State and of the national economy." Although Bahraini farmers make up only a very small percentage of Bahrain's labor force, the National Agricultural Sector Development Initiative has attached great importance to the agricultural sector, with aspirations to increase agricultural productivity, thus increasing the income of small farmers, especially women. The Government has assigned a public park in Bahrain to display farmers' products in a "Farmers Market", which has developed into a permanent market in the Hourat A'Ali area. It has also facilitated farmers' access to the markets and marketing opportunities (Target 2.3 and 2.4). Most forms of agricultural export subsidies (Target 2.B) have also been reduced or eliminated and access to information on markets and food reserves has been reduced to help reduce their price volatility (Target 2.C). Tamkeen supports agriculture production inputs and expansion in modern farming, especially in protecting hydroponic farming, to preserve the agricultural environment and its limited resources. This is in addition to increasing agricultural research (Target 2.A), focusing on innovation, increasing agricultural productivity and food security (Goal 2), enhancing capacity to adapt to climate change (Goal 14), and extreme weather conditions, such as droughts, floods and others disaster (Target 2.3 and 2.4).

**Framework: National Initiative for the Development
of the Agricultural Sector**

The National Initiative for Agricultural Development (NIAD) was launched with the support of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, in cooperation with Agricultural Affairs in Bahrain. The non-profit initiative aims at re-establishing the agricultural sector, maintaining its contribution to GDP, expanding the green area in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and overcoming obstacles to its development by expanding the use of modern agricultural technologies. The initiative also aims to provide skills and training in this sector and encourage the public and private sectors to invest in agriculture, to revive agricultural markets and support the marketing of the produce of Bahraini farmers. The initiative also organizes an annual Bahrain International Garden Show to encourage the sharing of knowledge and expertise, allow review of the latest agricultural technologies, and to establish new trade partnerships between local and international agricultural institutions (Target 2.A).s



5.6 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Reviewing the policies which provide support to sectors like energy and water, and reorganizing and redirecting them for the benefit of the most vulnerable groups in society, is considered an important step in achieving sustainable consumption and

production patterns. As is improving resource efficiency and maintaining healthy and safe environments. The success and expansion of these types of initiatives require a public awareness strategy and an educational program that promotes sensible use of natural resources, alongside policies that focus on sustainable production and consumption patterns.

The Supreme Council for the Environment serves to protect the environment and preserve natural resources. It seeks to raise the level of environmental awareness and the dissemination of environmental information among all segments of society to emphasize the importance of community partnerships, and its effective role in achieving equitable sustainable development and changing attitudes toward environmental problems.

In Small Island Developing States, waste forms a major challenge for municipal administrations and requires thorough and sustainable management, especially in regard to issues such as the continuity of landfill options. The integrated waste management system delivers a way to meet the objectives of sustainable development. However, this requires creating a favourable environment to raise awareness of environmental issues. Measures include raising awareness of the importance of sorting and recycling, as well as the importance of building on current legislation, along with encouraging institutions to adopt policies on recycling, and introducing industrial specifications that govern the quality of industrial products. With regards to recycling, economic motivations should be addressed in considering recycling rates. A resource and energy efficiency program is also being implemented in government buildings, while air conditioning in the central markets has helped in reducing damage to food, thereby reducing waste.

The measures mentioned above are considered within the context of sustainable consumption, which the Kingdom of Bahrain is working to adopt within its national programs. The Supreme Council for the Environment has developed a practical road map to highlight how the ten-year framework programs for sustainable production and consumption will be implemented. The Council is currently working alongside relevant authorities to launch the first initiative within this framework (Goal 12).

The Kingdom has also adopted the principles of sustainable building and construction. The Green Building Assessment Guide (which includes guidance and standards for designers, owners, and engineering offices on the application of green building systems), has been launched to promote awareness of sustainable building techniques and ensure a healthy environment for future generations based on the principles of sustainability, rationalization, and environmental improvement. The

Sustainable Green Buildings Initiative has been implemented as a strategy since 2010 in the building of various new ministries and government institutions that are designed, supervised, or maintained by the Ministry of Works. According to official statistics, the new green buildings have achieved positive results in the reduction of: electricity and water consumption by at least 30%; operation and maintenance costs were reduced by 15%; carbon emissions were reduced by 35%; and construction waste was reduced by 50-75%.

Climate Impact on Bahrain

According to Bahrain's Second National Communication Report submitted to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, climate change and the rise in sea levels is threatening Bahrain with the flooding of about 11% of its land (National Communication Report II, 2012) and the potential loss of its coastal lowlands, which would expose coastal cities to flooding. The rise in sea levels will also cause additional pressure on groundwater resources due to the invasion of sea water into underground water reservoirs. Climate change is also a public health threat due to the frequency and intensity of dust storms associated with droughts, decreased rainfall, and increased exposure to extreme temperatures. Changing vector population dynamics and increased incidence of food and water-related diseases are likely to affect parts of the population, especially the elderly, the sick, and children. In addition, climate change may lead to a deterioration in water and food security, with an expected impact on biodiversity, fish stocks, date, and other plantations, as well as an impact on coral reefs, mangrove trees, and migratory birds. Climate change is also especially concerning given that Bahrain hosts sixteen marine habitats, six of which are priority systems. These are: algae areas; coral reefs; shellfish; seagrass; mangrove; mud areas; salt swamps; and coastal dunes.

Providing funding for the climate change response program is critical for eliminating the negative effects of this phenomenon on Bahrain to enable it to reduce emissions in the more greenhouse-gas-emitting sectors. This is in accordance with the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities, according to each country's capacities as set out in the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, where developed countries are encouraged to provide financial resources to assist developing countries (including Bahrain). This is according to Resolution GC.161 on the establishment of the Climate Fund (GCF) and Article 11 on the support given for projects, programs, policies, and other activities provided to developing countries that are members of the Convention.

Despite Bahrain's low greenhouse gas emissions, which amounted to 22,374 Gg of carbon dioxide in 2000, making up less than 0.1% of total global greenhouse gas

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emissions, the Kingdom was among the first to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2016. It reaffirmed its national commitment in a report on its specific national contributions in the areas of adaptation and mitigation and is currently preparing its third national communication. The issue of climate change has been introduced into national policies across all sectors in Bahrain, enabling them to raise their capacities to cope with climate change and its adaptation and mitigation. This includes taking into account that the coast, as well as the facilities and the development sectors built on them, are more secure and resilient to the threat of rising sea levels, in addition to raising energy efficiency and increasing the proportion of renewable energy in the energy mix.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The first Voluntary National Review of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the High-level Political Forum highlights the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the progress made in overcoming challenges in the economic, social, and environmental areas of sustainable development. Lessons have been drawn from the experience gained in this regard and success stories have been referenced for replication or expansion, regionally, nationally, and globally. Bahrain's development journey began decades ago, with its development efforts enabling the Kingdom to progress and modernize. This has enabled the Kingdom to lay the groundwork and build institutional frameworks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The preparation process of the national review has helped strengthen partnerships between the public and private sector, civil society organizations, and academia through the introduction of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The National Information Committee has facilitated the implementation of the goals across all sectors and in national policies and has started the process to compile and tabulate Bahrain's achievements, in preparation for the launch of the web portal for the Sustainable Development Goals' indicators. This is to be used as a planning, follow-up, and reporting tool, and to be accompanied by a monitoring and reporting system on sustainable development, allowing for the exchange of information on development issues between all partners.

It became clear during the process of preparing this review that raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals is vital to its success and requires working across several development areas. One of the most important of these is the education sector, through the inclusion of the goals in the national curricula at all stages. The media is another important sector in this regard, as media channels, in cooperation with the National Communication Centre, were assigned the task of raising awareness of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through initiatives run in cooperation with the United Nations in Bahrain and abroad. Stakeholders in the development process, including civil society organizations, parliamentarians, local councils, women, and youth, have also all helped to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and to create a sense of ownership of the goals across all sectors of society to ensure that "no one is left behind."

The review highlights that climate change remains a major challenge facing the Kingdom of Bahrain, threatening several of its sectors including agriculture. Climate change will negatively impact Bahrain's water and agricultural resources and biodiversity and its coastal facilities, where 98% of Bahrain's population is

concentrated, in addition to impacting its already costly infrastructure. This will also affect food and water security as it poses a threat to the advancement of the Kingdom and its efforts to achieve sustainable development. The Kingdom is committed to the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the delivery of the outcomes of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016, in enabling Small Island Developing States to reap the benefits of the 2030 Agenda, by mobilizing resources from all sources for the effective implementation of sustainable delivery; and in utilizing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to secure sources of funding for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Population growth also poses both a challenge and an opportunity for Bahrain. The pressures it places on resources, the environment, and society are matched by the opportunities it creates to boost the labour market with qualified local labour and its impact on maintaining and improving the standard of living. Stability, peace, and tolerance within society are crucial to enhancing democratic systems, attracting foreign investments, developing new economic engines, and in providing rewarding employment opportunities for citizens facing the effects of the global and regional economic recession and low oil prices.

Nevertheless, the government has reaffirmed its commitment in implementing strategic projects in a number of sectors, including oil and gas, most recently with the expansion of Bapco's refinery and the Bahrain Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas (BNG) projects. The government will continue its efforts to implement royal directives to provide 40,000 housing units through the implementation of a number of housing projects and services. On health, the government is redefining the role of the Ministry of Health from a health services provider to a health services regulator, responsible for adopting the health insurance program and establishing a number of new hospitals and public health centres. Some of these centres include the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Cardiology Centre and the Specialized Centre for Kidney Dialysis. Additionally, the government is improving the quality of leadership skills, and human resources in educational institutions, and is developing national curricula, establishing a number of new schools, as well as providing support to the most vulnerable groups in society. The Kingdom is also undertaking an expansion of its international airport and increasing its capacity, alongside implementing a number of strategic road projects, developing electricity transmission, and improving the sewerage networks. This is in addition to the completion of the integrated water management strategy, which considers the interdependency between water security, energy security, and food security.

The development process is an ongoing, structured process in Bahrain, which builds on the experience of having delivered development projects over many years. Preparations for the next Government Action Plan (2019-2022) began late 2017 with a series of workshops organized to discuss mechanisms for delivery and to define priorities according to the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. The Action Plan will recognize the principles of development that emphasize the importance of increasing economic growth, developing legislation to sustain development, diversifying resources for project financing, and in raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the government sector and its services, especially in the areas of education, health, housing, and environmental protection. The workshops for the Government Action Plan focused on five areas: economy and finance; infrastructure; legislature; government performance; the environment and services. The workshops have led to the formulation of 29 policies and 106 initiatives.

The Government's Action Plan (2019-2022) aims to shape the future role of the public sector from being the main driver of the economy to a regulator and a partner with the private sector through the implementation of projects which continue to support innovation and excellence, and invest in citizens to improve their standard of living, improve the quality of services and government measures, and develop legislative and organizational frameworks. The Government Action Plan 2019-2021 builds on the achievements of the current Government Action Plan, which has reached an 83% completion rate to-date, and which will complete the government's efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A new oil discovery in 2018 in the Gulf of Bahrain, brings with it a promise of another development boom that will help Bahrain achieve its vision of doubling the per capita income and covering the Kingdom's current debt, which would support the implementation of the initiatives of the Government Action Plan for the next four years and beyond, and help push forward the implementation of 2030 Agenda. However, the volatility of oil prices since 2014 indicates the need for Bahrain to continue its precautionary approach in terms of diversifying its economy and to focus on the continuation of economic reform programs to achieve growth and development in a sustainable manner.

Bahrain recognizes that the sustainability of its development agenda and the well-being of its citizens and residents requires the support and the expansion of global partnerships in the field of finance to help cover the cost of development initiatives, which is considered a challenge to countries with limited natural resources. Access to financing and capacity-building, as well as localization and growth of modern technology, provides opportunities for Bahrain to achieve sustainability, especially

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in priority areas at a national level, the most important of which is the introduction and use of green technologies such as renewable energy technologies, solar desalination technologies, waste recycling, and sustainable transportation. Sustainable development also requires prioritizing national security. The Government of Bahrain has always sought to ensure that Bahrain remains a safe place which encourages peaceful coexistence and dialogue between different races, cultures, and religions, as it has done throughout the ages.