



البعثة الدبلوماسية
للديبلوماسية المتعددة
جنييف فيينا

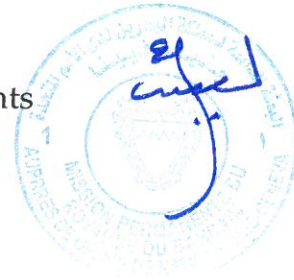
Geneva, 7th September 2016
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The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and wishes to refer to its note verbale dated 8th July 2016, regarding the resolution A/HRC/RES/30/15 entitled "Right to Work" adopted by the Human Rights Council on 23 March 2016.

In this regard, the Mission has the honour to enclose herewith the reply of the Ministry of Labour and Social Environment of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the aforementioned subject.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

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Report on "Women's Right to Work."

❖ Introduction:

- Bahraini women are evidently and increasingly playing more advanced roles in the development of the community, and as a result they have become to have greater opportunities to hold high positions in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken major steps in the field of the empowerment of women and the development of their capabilities. This resulted in the participation and advancement of the role of Bahraini women in all spheres and sectors. Women are now equal partners to men in the building of a sustainable competitive society. We now see women ministers and successful businesswomen without forgetting or downplaying the women's natural and prime role in looking after and taking care of the family.
- Bahrain has made great strides in terms of equality and non-discrimination between women and men. Bahrain comes on the top of the lists of international indicators that measure the contribution of women in public life in general. One cannot miss the presence of women in various decision making circles and in legislative, executive and judicial bodies, which reflects positively on promoting and enhancing the equality between men and women.
- Perhaps the most important factor in consolidating the empowerment and advancement of Bahraini women is the prevalence of a firm conviction that there will be no meaningful and comprehensive development without the advancement of women who represent half of the society.

❖ Legislation:

- There are many laws and regulations that contribute in one way or another to ensuring equality and fairness to working women in Bahrain. To start with, we would like to emphasize that Bahraini laws do not discriminate between hiring men and women. The Bahraini labour market is open to both sexes in various fields and sectors, and it offers both genders the same salaries, benefits, allowances, bonuses and working hours.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain keeps updating its national legislation to always keep pace with global developments and Arab and international labour standards, considering that Bahrain is a recognised commercial and financial center. This, in turn, contributes to increasing the pace of change in the position, status and progress of Bahraini women.
- In the following, we will highlight the most important national laws that support the employment of women:

1. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain:



- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses that “People are equal in human dignity, and citizens are equal before the law in public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination among them on the basis of sex, origin, language, religion or creed”.
- The State, under Article 13 of the Constitution, ensures that “The State guarantees the provision of job opportunities for its citizens and the fairness of work conditions”. It also asserts that “Work is the duty of every citizen, is required by personal dignity and dictated by the public good. Every citizen has the right to work and to choose the type of work within the bounds of public order and decency”. Article (16) stresses that “Citizens are equal in the assumption of public posts in accordance with the conditions specified by the law”.
- From this, it is clear that the Bahraini Constitution affirms the right of women to get suitable jobs as men. The constitution even goes a step further in supporting working women by taking into consideration the duties of women to their families. This is reflected clearly in Article (5), which stresses that the “State guarantees the reconciling of the duties of women towards the family with their work in society, and their equality with men in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres without breaching the provisions of Islamic Shari'a law”.

2. Law No. (36) of year 2013 with respect to the issuance of the Labour Law in the Private Sector:

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Development seeks to continuously modernize its laws, especially those that relate to giving women more rights and benefits, as well as studying recommendations and Arab and international agreements and conventions in this regard.
- When planning and preparing for its strategies, the Ministry also takes into account the development of the skills of Bahraini women workers and job seekers to ensure that they get all the benefits and privileges that men get.
- The definition of “**worker**” in the Labour Law does not discriminate between men and women. It defines a worker as “Every natural person working in return for a wage for an employer under the management and supervision of such employer”. The provisions of the Labour Law apply equally to all the workers in the private sector, whether they are men or women and they all enjoy equal benefits, rights and duties. The legislator did not discriminate against women or men, as they are treated as equals in the rights, duties and benefits that they are accorded.
- The Bahraini legislator did not impose any restrictions on the employment of women, but on the contrary, the law grants working women more privileges as it takes into account the nature of women and their family and social responsibilities. Such stance reflects the strong belief in the significant role played by women in the local labour market.
- The Labour Law allocates a full chapter for women under the heading “**Employment of Women**”. The eight articles of this chapter give women more labour rights. They stipulate the occupations in which women may not be employed and the times during which they may



not work, as well as other privileges that are appropriate to the status of women and enable them perform their roles at work and towards their families.

- The labour law explicitly prohibits discrimination in wages on the basis of gender, origin, language or creed. Similarly, the prevailing norms and practices, which almost have the power of the law, do not discriminate between males and females in the workplace or in wages for similar work or positions. This proves that the Bahraini legislator is keen on protecting the working women's rights that are stipulated by international labour standards and other relevant international agreements and conventions.

3. Law No. 78 of 2006 with respect to Insurance against Unemployment:

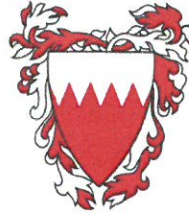
- It is important to note that the insurance against unemployment scheme does not discriminate between men and women when applying for benefiting from its services, despite the fact that the majority of the unemployed persons registered on this scheme are women. This is evident very clearly from the number of the unemployed women benefiting from the scheme compared to the number of unemployed men. This in turn proves in a clear way that this scheme adheres to the principle of equality between men and women.

4. Arab and International Labour Conventions:

- Bahrain has in 2000 ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 111 of 1958 Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation which prohibits any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion or opinion which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.
- The terms "employment" and "occupation" include access to vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, and terms and conditions of employment. By signing this Convention, the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Ministry of Labour, is committed to the equality of all workers without discrimination – whether against females or males – and to have access to vocational guidance, employment and training solely on the basis of the suitability of the individual for such training or employment and the appropriateness of this to him or her. Such non-discrimination also applies to wages, work conditions, working hours, rest periods, vacations and health and safety measures.

❖ **Efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development:**

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Development seeks to encourage the employment of women and their integration into the labour market. In this regard, the Ministry has launched many projects and programmes, such as the training programmes that are designed specifically for women to provide them with the skills needed to enter the labour market, especially in professions that are favoured by women.
- The Minister of Labour issued a ministerial order requiring employers to employ women in stores that sell women's underwear and women's tailor shops, which provided many job opportunities for women in the labour market.



- In a strong and close partnership with the Supreme Council for Women, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development works on promoting the integration of women in the labour market. The Ministry and the Supreme Council have jointly carried out a number of programmes and projects that were aimed at assisting Bahraini women looking for jobs, such as organising an exhibition for the recruitment and training of women. The Ministry has also been very keen to have a representative from the Council in the committees that it forms especially those related to employment and training. There is continuous coordination and exchange of information between the concerned staff in the Ministry and the Supreme Council to serve the interests of working women.
- Women have the freedom to choose the jobs that suit them and their qualifications. There are no barriers, legal or otherwise, that limit the fields or sectors in which women can work. Women can take up any, and they exist in all, jobs. The Ministry of Labour uses all its resources for the development of women's skills to help them enter the labour market. It spares no efforts in providing training programmes to help them get jobs that are available in the labour market and facilitate their promotion up the career ladder.

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