

Bahrain

labour market system

● Bahrain signs agreement with UN

By SOMAN BABY

BAHRAIN yesterday became the first country in the Arab world to launch a United Nations-supported project to strengthen its labour market information system.

The \$771,500 (BD291,627) project will help build up the institutional capacity of the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry to provide better service to Bahraini nationals seeking employment.

It will also foster the Government's plans for optimum use of national manpower.

Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala signed an agreement on the two-year project with UN resident co-ordinator and UN Development Programme resident representative Dr Faysal Abdel-

Gadir yesterday.

The project is titled 'Enhancement of institutional capacity for labour market analysis and monitoring'.

Following the signing ceremony at the Labour Ministry premises, Mr Al Sho'ala said the project would help create and develop a modern and more efficient labour market information system.

He described the agreement as an important milestone in the activities of the Labour Ministry and its relations with UNDP.

"We are confident that with the experience and expertise of the UNDP, Bahrain will be able to mobilise its human resources more effectively," said Mr Al Sho'ala.

"The two-year project is centred on the principle that decision-making in the field of education and training should be increasingly based on an analysis of labour market signals and labour market behaviour, rather than on mechanical projections and on a rigid manpower requirements approach.

"The strategy is to build up such capacity in the Labour and Social Af-

fairs Ministry, providing assistance to Bahraini job-seekers and fostering the Government's plans for optimum use of national manpower."

Mr Al Sho'ala said the total cost of the project would be \$771,500 and a substantial part of it would be borne by the Government.

The UNDP share will be basically in the form of technical assistance.

"By implementing the project, we are giving an assurance to the private sector that the policies we pursue are based on accurate labour market information," said Mr Al Sho'ala.

"Bahrain is the first country in the

region to implement such a project," he added.

Dr Abdel-Gadir said three short-term consultants would be sent to Bahrain under the project to assist Bahraini officials.

They will be specialists in the areas of employment, information system and training.

"The project will be implemented in close co-ordination with the International Labour Organisation (ILO)," said Dr Abdel-Gadir.

"Three or four fellowships will be granted to Bahraini staff at the Labour Ministry to attend training courses abroad."

Dr Abdel-Gadir said the project addressed the most important aspects of human development, which in turn paved the way for economic and industrial development.

"The project is expected to establish a framework and a firm foundation for employment and labour market policies, which support socio-economic growth and diversification," he said.

Paying tributes to Bahrain's futuristic vision, Dr Abdel-Gadir said the country had been implementing effective strategies to promote human resources development and regularly seeking the ILO expertise in tackling the challenges relating to the labour market.

Assistant Under-Secretary for Planning and Training at the Labour Ministry Abdulrahman Al Zayani said the project would strengthen the ability of the staff of labour studies and research departments.

"It will enable them to collect accurate labour statistics information and enhance their analytical skills," he said.

Bahrain

Plan to improve



■ Mr Al Sho'ala, centre, shakes hands with Dr Abdel-Gadir after the signing ceremony, watched by, from left, Mr Al Zayani, Assistant Under-Secretary for Labour Affairs Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Abdulla Al Khalifa and UNDP programme officer Dr Sabika Al Najjar

Jobs drive proves big success

By SOMAN BABY

MANAMA: Companies employing more than 70 per cent Bahrainis have more than doubled in number, thanks to an intensive campaign launched by the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry.

The Ministry has also found jobs for 4,211 Bahrainis during July-September this year.

However, more than half

of the companies operating in the country still do not employ a single Bahraini.

Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdalnabi Al Sho'ala, who yesterday released the labour statistics for the first three quarters of this year, said the number of companies registered with General Organisation for Social Insurance (Gosi) which stood at 3,437 at the end of 1995, increased by 21.9 per cent to 4,191 by September-end this year.

It is mandatory for all companies

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■ Mr Al Sho'ala

Jobs drive proves big success

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employing 10 or more workers to register with Gosi.

However, those employing less than 10 are also being given the option to register.

Mr Al Sho'ala said companies employing 70pc Bahrainis or more had increased from 155 at the end of 1995 to 334 by September this year — an increase of 115.5pc.

Companies which employ 60 to 70pc Bahrainis increased from 45 to 60 — 33.3pc — and those employing 50 to 60pc Bahrainis increased from 80 to 99 — 23.8pc — during the same period.

However, out of 4,191 firms registered with Gosi, 2,329 or 55.6pc do not employ a single Bahraini.

Their number was 2,075 at the end of 1995, and by September this year it had increased by 12.3pc.

"This is an alarming number, and we make an urgent appeal to such companies to reconsider their stand and co-operate with the Ministry's Bahrainisation drive," said Mr Al Sho'ala.

He said the number of work permits issued during the third quarter of this year reflected the growing number of job opportunities in the country.

"Work permit procedures have been streamlined through computerisation of the department and the training of staff," he said.

Applications

"Applications which meet all criteria are processed and permits given on the same day.

"Our aim is to reply to each application within a maximum of one week."

Mr Al Sho'ala said out of 33,313 applications for new work permits and renewals received during July-September, 25,468 or 76.4pc were approved.

"Out of these, 14,699 were for new permits, which indicate that there were 14,699 new job opportunities during a short span of three months," he said.

"We approved 8,174 of them, and allocated the remaining positions for Bahrainis.

"A total of 5,429 new applications were for employing domestic workers including housemaids and gardeners, and 4,198 were approved.

"All the 1,609 renewal applications for domestic workers were approved. Other 10,393 work permit renewal requests were also granted."

Mr Al Sho'ala said these figures were being released to give two signals to the private sector.

"The Labour and Social Affairs Ministry is very flexible and understanding, and is making every effort to meet their requirements," he said.

"The private sector should exercise a sense of rationalisation while applying for work permits, and should also try to create as many job positions as possible for Bahrainis."

Mr Al Sho'ala said a total of 4,211 Bahrainis were helped to find jobs by his Ministry during the third quarter of this year.