

## Appendix (24)



مملكة البحرين  
نائب رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الرقم: ن ر أ / ٢٦ / ٢٠١٢  
التاريخ: ٢٩ فبراير ٢٠١٢م

معالي علي بن صالح الصالح  
رئيس اللجنة الوطنية المعنية بتوصيات تقرير  
اللجنة البحرينية المستقلة لتقصي الحقائق

تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

بالإشارة إلى خطابكم رقم ١٧ ص ل م ق المؤرخ في ١١ يناير ٢٠١٢م بشأن تبني وثيقة المصالحة الوطنية الصادرة عن مجلس الشورى البحريني وتعميمها على الوزارات والمؤسسات الحكومية لتحقيق المصالحة الوطنية الشاملة بين أبناء الوطن ومكوناته. و بالإشارة أيضاً إلى خطابكم رقم ٢٣ ص ل م ق المؤرخ في ٢ فبراير ٢٠١٢ المتضمن على بعض الاستفسارات حيال تنفيذ توصيات اللجنة البحرينية المستقلة لتقصي الحقائق، خاصة على استفساركم حيال تنفيذ التوصية رقم ١٧٢٥ الفقرة (ب) بشأن إعداد برنامج للمصالحة الوطنية.

يسرني إفادتكم بأن الوثيقة رُفعت إلى مجلس الوزراء، بالإضافة إلى قيام مختلف وزارات ومؤسسات الدولة تحت إشراف وزارة حقوق الإنسان والتنمية الاجتماعية بالبدء في تبني عدة مبادرات لإعادة اللحمة الوطنية على الصعيدين الاجتماعي والاقتصادي.

مرفق طيه نسخة من الخطوات التي اتخذتها حكومة المملكة بهيئاتها المختلفة تنفيذاً للتوصية المشار إليها أعلاه والتي تستجيب أيضاً لعدد من التوصيات الأخرى واستفساراتكم السابقة. وهي كالتالي:

(١) الخطة الوطنية للمصالحة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية المعدة من قبل وزارة حقوق الإنسان والتنمية الاجتماعية.

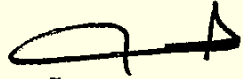
مملكة البحرين  
نائب رئيس مجلس الوزراء

٢) مذكرة التفاهم الموقعة بين وزارة التربية والتعليم والهيئة الدولية للتعليم التابعة لمنظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلوم والثقافة (اليونسكو)، والتي تستجيب إلى التوصية ١٧٢٥ الفقرة (أ) أيضاً.

٣) خطة إصلاح الإعلام المعدة من قبل هيئة شؤون الإعلام، والتي تستجيب إلى التوصية ١٧٢٤ الفقرات (أ)، (ب)، و(ج) أيضاً.

٤) مبادرة التسوية المدنية التي تتولاها وزارة العدل والشؤون الإسلامية والأوقاف والتي تستجيب للتوصية ١٧٢٢ الفقرتين (ي) و(ك) أيضاً.

وتفضلوا بقبول خالص تحياتي وتقديري ،،،



محمد بن مبارك آل خليفة  
نائب رئيس مجلس الوزراء

**PRESENTED BY HER EXCELLENCY DR FATEMA MOHAMED AL BALOOSHI, MINISTER OF  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN**

**BICI RECOMMENDATION NO 1725(B)**

**NATIONAL SOCIAL & ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION PLAN  
(*NSERP*)**

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. The Guiding Principles of the National Social & Economic Reconciliation Plan (NSERP)**

The Ministry of Social Development (*MoSD*) has developed the National Social & Economic Reconciliation Plan (*NSERP*) on the basis of the following guiding principles:

- The NSERP needs to be a long-term plan in order to ensure that sectarian feelings do not resurge in the future and to nurture the harmonious social and religious pluralism that have historically characterized Bahraini society;
- When appropriate, international experts have been called upon to ensure that best practices and international standards have or will be followed and applied in the implementation of programs;
- Social reconciliation entails two steps that may be taken simultaneously: (1) give all people a voice and provide forums for them to express their feelings and opinions openly in a respectful manner towards all, and (2) create opportunities for all segments of society to interact and bond around common interests and objectives;
- Economic reconciliation entails empowering members of civil society to be responsible for their own economic successes whilst providing an appropriate degree of Government financial help to those that need it most; and
- The NSERP will greatly benefit from a joint and consolidated effort from all Government bodies whilst including members of civil society in the implementation stages of specific programs.

### **B. Background to the NSERP**

#### **1. BICI Recommendation 1725(b)**

The BICI Recommendation 1725(b) reads as follows:

*In general, the Commission recommends to the [Government of Bahrain] GoB the development of a national reconciliation program that addresses the grievances of groups which are, or perceive themselves, to be deprived of equal political, social and economic rights and benefits across all segments of Bahrain's population.*

In order to implement this Recommendation, the Ministry of Social Development (*MoSD*), on behalf of the Government of Bahrain has considered various options to implement a long-term and sustainable plan.

## 2. Recommendations by the National Commission

The National Commission was established pursuant to BICI Recommendation No 1715 “with a view to making recommendations to the legislature for appropriate amendments to the existing law and the development of new legislation, in particular with respect to legislative reforms as contained in this recommendation.” The Chairman of the National Commission is Mr Ali Saleh Al Saleh, who also the Chairman of the Shura Council.

The National Commission has formulated the following recommendations with regard to Recommendation No 1725(b): “The program of national reconciliation should address the political, social and economic angles, and use international expertise in this regard, taking into account principles of human rights and constitutional principles.” This decision was made on 24 January 2012, and was communicated in a speech on 2 February 2012.

The MoSD has also carefully considered the comments and recommendations made by the National Commission in preparing the NSERP.

### C. Description of the NSERP

Since the unfortunate of events of February/March 2011, and sometimes even before the BICI Recommendations were formulated, the GoB implemented a considerable number of projects and programs destined to foster national social and economic reconciliation. A description of the GoB’s past and ongoing efforts is described at Section II below.

Further, the GoB has continued to consider and elaborate programs and projects aimed at economic and social reconciliation which will be implemented in the coming weeks and months with the help of the relevant Government bodies. Section IV contains a table of all the projects being currently crafted by the GoB. The implementation of the projects listed below has been entrusted to the specific government body or bodies with the required expertise and mandate to efficiently execute each different project.

In light of the considerable and growing number project and programs aimed at economic and social reconciliation and in order to ensure a continued, consistent and coordinated approach to the implementation of the NSERP, the GoB has decided to establish a National Social and Economic Reconciliation Commission (the *NSERC*). The NSERC will supervise the implementation phase, provide guidance and ensure that each project is analyzed and reviewed thoroughly during and after implementation to assess the success of each project and to identify areas of improvement for future similar projects and programs as explained below at Section III.

**The NSERP is a long-term plan that will keep on being developed under the supervision of the NSERC.**

## II. The GoB's Existing and Continuing Efforts

### A. Social Reconciliation

#### 1. Wi7da Wa7da Campaign

On the first of December 2011, a name that signifies UNITY was created to represent the campaign, (Wi7da Wa7da), which means One UNITY. The main strategic goal of the campaign is to reinforce nationalism, coexistence and public cohesion amongst Bahraini citizens. A symbolic logo was also designed using speech bubbles that come together to shape Bahrain's map. This is aimed at communicating the idea that, despite their differences, the people of Bahrain come together to call for unity. The speech bubbles have been designed in a modern and playful manner to resemble speech icons used on social media platforms that appeal to the youth of Bahrain. They also resemble the Letter "و" for وحدة. The varying sizes and shades of red reflect the diversity of Bahrain's community and its unity under one flag.



The action plan of the Wi7da Wa7da Campaign consists of four phases. The first phase was commenced on 16 December 2011, on Bahrain Independence day. It comprised of a festival with free admission to a garden where several activities were planned for all age groups.

A considerable media campaign was executed to promote this first phase: advertisements appearing on bill boards, in newspapers, on Bahrain TV, during radio commercials and social network media were run daily to invite the public to join the festival. The philosophy behind this first phase was to introduce the campaign to the public in a simple and fun, family-oriented event. As described in the table at Section IV, the second phase will engage participants in activities centered on the arts and educational projects. The third phase of the campaign will encourage the creation of commercial and social enterprises with the cooperation of elected municipality councils. Finally, phase four will be dedicated to engaging civil society with elected officials and government representatives.



## 2. Educational workshops for children

In implementation of Recommendation 1725(a), '[t]o develop educational programs at the primary, secondary, high school and university levels to promote religious, political and other forms of tolerance, as well as to promote human rights and the rule of law', the Ministry of Education (MoE), has been coordinating efforts with several national, regional and international organisations and specialised agencies to both update its curriculum and introduce new training for teachers and students.

To this end, a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNESCO International Board of Education and the MoE on 17 January 2012 allowing the Ministry to receive help and advice on its reforms to school curriculums from UNESCO.

The MoE has already held various workshops on human rights for children in December and January 2012 including a workshop entitled "A Games Package for Human Rights", administered by the Arab Network for Citizenship and Human Rights, held on 26-29 December 2011.

Beginning in February 2012, the MoE plans to cooperate with UNDP in order to introduce an intensive training program for teachers on education for human rights.

The MoE has conceived further training program, including program for children. These include:

- a workshop entitled "A Games Package for Human Rights" for 200 girl-scouts;
- four training workshops on "differences"; and
- two workshops on "dealing with each other" and "the value of dialogue".

## 3. Rehabilitation Programs

Several rehabilitation programs and a volunteering component have been undertaken by the Ministry of Municipalities and the Ministry of Works. This program concern mainly damaged homes and run-down buildings across Bahraini villages.

## 4. Health-related programs

A Health Bus initiative was developed by the Ministry of Health. The Health Bus was aimed at promoting hygiene and teaching them basic rules for a healthy life. The Health Bus also contains equipment to promote sports and physical activity. Unfortunately, the Health Bus had to cease activities during the unrest. It is now back in action and is also intended at giving people confidence back in the Bahraini public health system. The initiative will now also target the country's youths in an attempt to steer them away from street violence.

## 5. Cultural Programs

### **Taa' Al-Shabab**

Since 2009, the Ministry of Culture (*MoC*) has hosted a series of cultural events to create a movement of youth culture in number of fields including reading, architecture, media, arts, and of creative writing.

In 2009, Taa Al-Shabab engaged approximately 150 young men and women in a range of projects. This number increased to approximately 400 young people in 2010 and 2011. In addition to events staged in Bahrain, Taa' Al-Shabab has also organized youth delegations for cultural events abroad, including the Shanghai Exposition, the Venice Biennial, and certain youth media forums in Egypt and Kuwait.

The program is specifically tailored to university students and recent graduates of all backgrounds. The hope and expectation is that this program will continue to engage youth in the arts, and equip them with talent and expertise that allows them to make an effective and distinctive contribution to the labour market whilst bringing together youth from all backgrounds around a common passion for art and culture. In certain cases, the Taa' Al-Shabab has led to new job opportunities for young people in media, arts and culture.

### **I Love My Country, and I Love My Village**

This project was presented by the MoC in 2009 in order to facilitate communication and interaction between children of different villages and cities around Bahrain. It focuses on the restoration of old buildings and beautifying villages, in order to create cultural environments that foster a common love of Bahrain for all Bahrainis and develop its unique aesthetic. The program enters its fourth year in 2012, having been previously been implemented in Helat Abdalsaleh, Al-Malkiya and Arad.

For younger children, this program involves the mascot, "Nakhoul", who leads lessons and activities in villages that promote social cohesion during the Bahrain Summer Events.

The benefit of this program is two-fold. First, it promotes the spirit of belonging and pride in Bahraini heritage. Second, it encourages cross-community collaboration in the development of a common project.

### **The Pearl Route**

Under the leadership of the MoC, work has begun on developing the "Pearl Route", which will culminate in an application to UNESCO for a new World Heritage site. The plan calls for the restoration of the "Qaisareya Market", as well as the restoration of "The Nokhitha House" and several other traditional houses and structures. Once completed, the Pearl Route will be open to any visitor who wishes to discover more about pearls and their impact on the country.

The purpose of this project is to strengthen the special status of Bahraini pearls in the minds of citizens and tourists alike, and to promote the cultural dimension of the Bahraini pearl industry and thereby, to promote the Bahraini identity share by all Bahrainis irrespective of their

backgrounds. As a corollary, the MoC hopes to revitalize interest in traditional careers and practices related to the pearl industry.

The MoC intends to involve the community and the youth when creating the Pearl Route in the city of Muharraq, as a means to strengthen and revitalize the singularity of authentic Bahraini identity. The ancient city of Muharraq has been chosen for the site of the Pearl Route because its historic buildings support the story and objectives of the project. The MoC will pursue a scientific restoration plan for the historic buildings and invest in training Bahraini citizens for the project.

#### **Bani Jamra Textile Factory**

This project is intended to highlight the traditional textile industry in the village of Bani Jamra, in order to revive this profession and the practice of manual weaving. Bani Jamra is the only village that still practices weaving in the traditional, manual fashion.

Reviving this unique and traditional industry, the Ministry hopes to improve the standard of living for the workers in this village, and to engage all Bahrainis in the appreciation of the traditional practice. Bahraini children will be particularly important in this program and in establishing the social dimension that should exist between weavers and the general public. The Ministry sees this program as the starting point for protecting and promoting a number of traditional professions linked with Bahraini heritage.

At this point, the Ministry of Culture has signed a lease agreement for land from the Department of Jaafari Waqf to build the Bani Jamra textile factory, and the initial drawings for the project have been finalized.

### **6. Programs developed by the Ministry of Interior**

#### **D.A.R.E.**

The Ministry of Interior (*MoI*) has developed a program called D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) to tackling violence and drug addiction. The objectives of this program are to train the youth to avoid the problems associated with violence and addiction. It is designed to help children to make confident decisions regarding these subjects in their lives. Through this, the programme aims to improve national unity and brotherhood (since violence and addiction are negative influences on these).

24 community police officers were trained over a two week course by an American NGO called "the American Organisation for the Tackling of Violence, Addiction and Crime" (AOTVAC). This organisation came to Bahrain with a program which was originally developed in 1983 by another American organization called "D.A.R.E.". Pursuant to its meetings with AOTVAC, the MoI signed a memorandum of understanding with D.A.R.E which allowed for future cooperation between the two in adapting the program to Bahrain's education system.

Once the initial batch of community police officers was trained, the training program was rolled out to primary school students with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education. The program tailored from the original program presented by the American NGO in order to bring it into line with Bahraini culture and principles. The American NGO approved these changes prior to the rollout.

The program is split into two parts. Part 1 deals with basic principles of fighting violence and addiction. Part 2 deals with practical lessons and guide work. Indirectly, the program improves students' understanding of the role of police officers in society as it involves a large amount of friendly interaction between students and police officers in a way which might otherwise not take place. Ultimately, the training police officer becomes a confidante and mentor of the student with regard to the matters which form the subject of the program.

9254 students have now been exposed to this program. They come from 23 schools across the country. Table showing key figures involved with the "DARE" program in Bahrain

Academic Term	2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Second Term	First Term	First Term	Second Term
Number of Schools	6	23	23	50
Number of Officers	7	23	23	50
Number of Classes	109	322	322	700
Number of Sessions	744	2576	2576	5600
Number of Students	2580	9660	9660	21000*

\*21000 students represents 17% of the total student population in Bahrain – being 125000 students

#### Future Steps:

- The MOI will be seeking UNODC recognition of the programme.
- A program with similar aims will be created for university students.
- A training center will be established in Bahrain.
- A working paper on the programme will be presented at the next GCC meeting.
- The program will be expanded to cover all schools in Bahrain (including private schools).
- The training program will be translated into Arabic so that Community Police Officers can train each other more easily.

#### Summer Camp

The Summer Youth Setup Program is a joint project of the Ministry of the Interior, represented by the Royal Academy of Police, and Tamkeen. The purpose of the Program is to foster a sense of citizenship in children, develop their mental, physical, psychological abilities and direct their energy towards improving themselves and their community, families, and country.

This program is integrated into the Government's Vision 2030 plan by targeting 12-17 year olds, which is the age group that requires the most protection from crime and other forms of deviance. By engaging youth of this age group, GoB is aiming to instill the values of Vision 2030 in the younger generation so that they carry the values forward into adulthood.

The program runs for approximately two weeks in the summer in each Governorate (Capital, Muharraq, South, Northern and Central) and involves approximately 300 participants. The 2011 program included a range of lectures, field trips and visits, sports, and community service activities.

## **B. Economic Reconciliation**

### **1. Increase in salaries to improve living standards**

The GoB has implemented a policy to increase minimum wage and to ensure compensation for the increased cost of living and to improve standards of living.

Decree No 31 dated 20 September 2011, amended the provisions of Decree No 9 of 2011. Decree No 31 estimated the state revenues for 2011 and 2012 and determined how they should be distributed. A budget of BD 291,600,000 was allocated to increase public sector salaries, to increase allowances to improve standards of living and to increase pensions of retired public servants.

Decrees 54 and 55 of 2011 revise the salary scales for the Civil Service Bureau (*CSB*) and established an allowance to improve standards living. Minimum wage in the CSB has increased, continuing a steady annual trend since 2001. These Decrees implemented a base salary increase of 15% for all current CSB employees. In addition, they established individual grants of between BD50-60 for each public sector employee and current military personnel to improve their standards of living. Public and private sector retirees and retired military personnel received an additional grant allowance of BD75.

Overall, these measures amounted BD199,000,000 and almost 35,000 employees have benefitted from this policy change.

### **2. Welfare Program**

The Government of Bahrain operates several social assistance cash transfer programs targeted to easily identifiable categories of at-risk households, such as disabled, elderly, chronically ill, widowed (women), divorced, orphaned and/or poor. Motivated by the rising cost of the social assistance cash transfer programs and the need for better targeting, the GoB requested the World Bank to conduct an evaluation of these social assistance programs, and to provide guidance on how to improve and optimize the social impact of programs (the *World Bank Report*).

The World Bank Report found that the benefit levels of these programs are limited, contributing only 0.7 percent to the household income. Like most countries across the world, Bahrain also experienced a sharp increase in the price of food staples during 2006-08. To mitigate the impact of a rise in food prices, the Government has introduced a temporary Cash Transfer Program (*CTP*) in 2008 loosely targeted to low and lower middle income households. In 2009, the program was extended through 2010. The program has now become highly popular and discussions are underway to further extend the program until the end of 2012. The coverage of the program increased sharply in a very short period, now reaching about 82 percent of all Bahraini households, and costing about BD 54.46 million. The average amount of transfer per household was BD600 per annum.

The methodology adopted in the World Bank Report for assessing the impact of the CTP (and for other programs) was based on the calculation of social rate of return (*SRR*). The *SRR* is defined as the increase in social welfare for every dinar spent on the program. The level of social rate of return depends on which types of households receive the CTP. In general, the greater the benefits going to low and lower middle income households, the higher will be the social rate of return generated by a program, and the greater is its impact on improving the household welfare.

Based on this methodology, the main finding of the study was that cash transfer programs, including the recently launched CTP, were generally producing low social rates of return. The main reason for this outcome was that programs, as designed, were paying insufficient attention to household-level markers of welfare such as household size, thus lowering the programs' potential for enhancing household welfare. The program was not well targeted as it tended to reach almost all Bahraini households. There was, thus, a good case for reforming the CTP.

The World Bank has therefore articulated the following proposals which have been approved. The amended cash transfer program proposed by the World Bank has three important features:

- First, the program integrates both the ministry Social Welfare Program (SWP) and the CTP, which will now cost about BD 87 million per year (referred to as integrated CTP).
- Second, benefit levels are adjusted to household composition using adult equivalent scales. Adult equivalent scale takes into account the fact that large households enjoy economies of scale, which results in some saving in expenditure.
- Third, the reformed program was designed to retain incentive to work, ensuring beneficiaries do not lose their benefits totally when they earn an extra dinar in the market, (benefit levels gradually taper off, unlike in the present system when even a one dinar additional income in the market totally cuts off CTP benefit). Such a tapered benefit system ensures that the beneficiaries do not become permanently dependent on cash handouts and exit the program as income earning opportunities unfold.

The proposed reform system will generate social rates of return that is more than 90 percent as compared to about 8.5 percent of currently running cash transfer programs in Bahrain. Moreover, the program will have a significant impact on poverty reduction: the proportion of households in low income category will decline from 16.2% without the program, to 3.4% with the reformed and integrated CTP program.

The amended program will be rolled out in mid-March 2012.

### **3. USD500,000 of the NGO Fund allocated to Social & Economic Reconciliation**

The MoSD established in 2006 a NGO Fund as a way to develop a new methodology in the provision of financial grants based on providing financial support for development projects

carried out or planned by the NGOs. The policy of providing grants shifted from simply giving subsidies and financial assistance to NGOs to financial support for projects that provide real and tangible value to the development of the society.

The MoSD set up the NGO Fund to manage several programs including the grants program, based on the principle of social partnership.

The Fund comprises of representatives of the MoSD, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, three members of the national banks, three members of the national companies. The Board of the Fund defines general policies and follows the implementation of the program of financial grants.

In February 2012, the Board of the Fund decided to allocate half of its budget for 2012 to NGO projects aimed at social and economic reconciliation.

#### **4. Civil Settlement Initiative**

The Ministry of Justice (*MoJ*) has implemented a new initiative that will expedite the compensation process for victims of the events of 2011, without compromising their existing rights under law. The Civil Settlement Initiative (*CSI*) provides agreed upon compensation to families of the deceased victims mentioned in the BICI Report, to individuals with physical injuries, and to any other individual with a claim (such as property damage) that the MoJ and Islamic Affairs and Waqf deems valid, after consultation with other authorities.

By agreeing to a settlement under the CSI, eligible individuals waive their right to make a civil judicial claim for compensation. This agreement is entirely consensual, and those who choose not to accept a settlement under the CSI retain their right to claim damages in Court. Moreover, acceptance of a settlement does not presume any criminal responsibility nor does it preclude any criminal proceedings.

Upon the creation of a commission for the CSI, those who wish to apply for a settlement shall submit their application, with necessary documentation, to the commission. After reviewing the application and consulting with the relevant authorities, the commission will estimate the amount of recoverable damages to which the claimant is entitled, based on the rules of the Civil Court. The claimant may accept or decline this offer.

#### **5. Compensation Fund**

Decree 13 was issued on 26 January 2012. It creates a national victims' compensation fund which will be managed by a new committee which will be composed of five individuals appointed by the Supreme Judicial Council. This committee will receive and consider all requests for compensation on the condition of having obtained a criminal judgment establishing that the applicant has suffered harm. It is empowered to award whatever form of compensation



it sees fit. It may therefore award financial compensation, or order that an apology be given to the victim, or require that steps are taken by the relevant body to ensure that the abuse does not occur again.

The Decree is modeled on international best practices for victims' funds around the world and the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Redress and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.

### **III. The Creation of the National Social and Economic Reconciliation Commission (NSERC)**

The creation of the NSERC was decided by decision of the Working Group chaired by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa Deputy Prime Minister for Ministerial Committees.

#### **A. The Composition of the NSERC**

The NSERC is composed of seven members. The chairperson is a representative of the MoSD which is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the NSERP. Each of the following Ministries is represented by one person: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Housing and Works and the General Organization for Youth & Sports (GOYS).

The NSERC will appoint a Secretary to the Commission. The Secretary will be in charge of the daily supervision of the various projects under the responsibility of the NSERC.

The NSERC is empowered to invite any other ministry to participate either permanently or periodically in its work.

#### **B. The Role of the NSERC**

The NSERC will supervise and follow-up on the implementation of the projects included in the NSERP. Its role will be to regularly meet and liaise (through its Secretary) with each Ministry tasked with the implementation of a project to obtain regular reports on progress made and to formulate recommendations to ensure effective implementation.

The NSERC will obtain a report from each relevant Ministry after the implementation of a project setting out an analysis of the benefits observed and any strengths and weakness noted in the implementation in order to ensure that future projects may be improved on the basis of past experiences.

The NSERC will also be charged with reviewing and approving all programs aimed at social and economic reconciliation proposed by any Government body to ensure the consolidation of efforts, consistency and to prevent any overlap and waste of public funds. When and if appropriate, the NSERP will also suggest partnership with international experts to assist in the implementation of projects.

Decisions and recommendations of the NSERC will be made with a simple majority.

The NSERC will report once a month to the Cabinet on the progress and implementation on the NSERP.

**C. The Commission has begun work**

The first meeting of the NSERC took place on 26 February 2012 at the offices of the MoSD. The Commission members met and reviewed the existing programs. They have agreed to convene once a week and decided to begin their work with a national survey to understand precisely where the needs of economic and social reconciliation immediately rest as a matter of urgency.

#### IV. Table of NSERP Projects

Item No.	Responsible Ministry	Title	Brief Description	Expected Benefits	Progress	Budget
<b>Social Reconciliation: Wi7da Wa7da</b>						
1.	Education and Social Development (Wi7da Wa7da Campaign)	Coping with Crisis Seminars	A project to educate social counselors through seminars and workshops in how to deal with crisis, manage anger, and instill values such as forgiveness, respect and acceptance of others. The duration of the workshops will take one and a half months and will be conducted by qualified professors.	These events are intended to escalate people's participation in community projects. Organizers will encourage cooperation through communal work activities. Like other projects anticipated for "Phase II", this project is particularly concerned with re-engagement with the surrounding community. The goal of this program is to help children talk about their experiences and re-engage with the community as a peaceful and welcoming environment.	Projects are fully structured with names and lectures organized. There's a lot of demand on this particular program from other establishments. Another similar programs but from different angels are under study for the coming phases. Program will start 17 March.	Finalized : BD 41,688.65
2.	Social Development (Wi7da Wa7da Campaign)	The Peace Caravan	An artistic project that will involve students from different sects, who are encouraged to work together to paint 30 fiber glass camels. Ages of these students will be from 12 to 18. They will be sponsored by semi-government institutions such as Tankeen and Ahli Bank both have been approached and a sponsorship has been allocated. Throughout the work, and beyond, these organizations will provide opportunities as interns during the summer holidays	This event is intended to escalate people's participation in particularly designed projects. Like other projects anticipated for "Phase II", this project is particularly concerned with re-engagement with the surrounding community. This project emphasizes cooperation and group work for a common goal. It should also provide a tangible reminder and symbol	Program will start around March 10.	Finalized: BD 155,399.5

			and through their university years. The final painted camels will be displayed all over the Kingdom Of Bahrain.	of collaboration and community involvement. This project captures the social cohesion vision by uniting the teams and sects in a working environment. It shows the teams the model of cooperation among teachers and artists from different sects and the successful models of the Bahrain environment. The sponsorship companies will sponsor the teams morally by providing them for example an internship or a job in the future. The students will have an opportunity to be introduced to different institutions in Bahrain.		
3.	Social Development (W/7da Wa7da Campaign)	Traditional Games and Sports	This project will introduce traditional Bahraini games by having tournaments, targeting students from different schools aged 6 to 11 years. This tournament will educate the kids by introducing them to their ancient cultural games, help them to overcome all sectarian barriers and work as a team.	This event is intended to escalate people's participation in particularly designed projects. Like other projects anticipated for "Phase II", this project is particularly concerned with re-engagement with the surrounding community. In this particular event, students will be given an opportunity to discover aspects of their common identity, based on traditional games and sports. The expected benefit is that students will develop an appreciation for the culture and history of Bahrain, without the	This program will start 4 of March 2012	Finalized: BD 24,334

			influence of politics. This project also will help develop the student's interaction with different sects, endorses team spirit, prepare them for future challenges and raise their awareness of future threats in order to strengthen their abilities.		
4.	Social Development (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	Bahraini and Gulf Identity Study	This study will survey Bahrainis to gather their views on identity, national pride and feelings of inclusion. The purpose of the study is to pave the way for future studies and programs that build on the findings of this study. It will provide especially important information regarding the feelings of disenfranchised communities and members of all sects of society.	The expected benefit is that future programs will be sensitive to and properly tailored to the social consciousness of the Bahraini people. By conducting this study, future social and economic studies will be able to build on the expertise possessed by government agencies that can develop programs that meet the needs and expectations of all citizens.	Still in the process of financing
5.	Social Development and the Governorates (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	Municipalities Project	This program will involve pairing a young Bahraini with a member of the municipal government so that existing civic leaders can mentor the next generation of civic leaders. The mentoring is expected to begin at the municipal level, with the cooperation of the local governorates.	The expected benefit of this project is to create a sense of inclusion and civic engagement among Bahraini youth. It is very important for Bahraini citizens, of all sects and backgrounds, to feel connected to their government. Through this mentorship program, the Government of Bahrain hopes to create a direct link between young citizens and experienced civic leaders and elected	Still under discussion Still in the process of financing

6.	Social Development and the Parliament (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	"Cooperative Endowments" "الجمعيات التعاونية"	<p>This project is a commercial and educational project that will include Sunni and Shia Waqf. Mayasen team will lead the whole project. The activities involved are communal work plus commercial.</p> <p>The segments that are involved in this project are: Mayasen communication, 5 governorates, al awqaf sunna and shia, Ministry of human rights, Education Ministry and others.</p> <p>Boot camps will be organized as a follow up with coping with crisis (Phase 2). Social counselors that have attended seminars and workshops in how to deal with crisis, manage anger they will apply their studies in the boot camp. The students that will participate in the boot camp will be called "Knights of Peace".</p>	council members.	June 2012	Still in the process of financing
7.	Education and Social Development (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	Projects for Promotion of National Pride	<p>This phase encourages Nationalism and service to the country and for unity which can be shown through national concerts and volunteer work. Volunteer work will be through rehabilitation of old houses of the poor or needy.</p> <p>The whole theme of this will be a projection to the results of the study (Item 4)</p>	<p>This part will be designed to encourage citizens to care about their citizenship and their country by promoting knowledge of the constitution, care for the environments.</p> <p>The benefits of this project will spread love, unity and pride among the Bahraini's. It will spread a message of peace.</p>	Beginning of October	Still in the process of financing

			<p>There will be concerts that will include Bahraini national songs, it will be done LIVE in Bahrain streets like a flash mob model. With national traditional dresses and it will be announced all over Bahrain so people can participate in this event. The targeted group in this section will be all Bahraini's from different governments.</p> <p>The themes of nationalism and service will be tied to the concerts and volunteer work by including small Bahraini festivals that could be cooperated with the governors that also will include festivals.</p> <p>We will seek to cover the project by international media through youth, word of mouth and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.</p>	<p>tolerance and understanding. It will also increase the confidence between all segments of society in Bahrain especially the youth and promote love and unity.</p>		
8.	Social Development (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	Ambassadors of peace Club.	<p>Collective body of school students and teachers will form a club to educate young students throughout Bahrain and encourage environmental awareness in schools and villages and work as ambassadors to their areas.</p> <p>It can be an additional part in the existing curriculums in schools.</p> <p>It will be a partnership with schools through the cooperation of Ministry of Education.</p>	<p>The expected benefit in this project is to let students be more assertive and also to increase their knowledge and ability to overcome the challenges in the environment.</p>	Beginning of October	Still in the process of financing



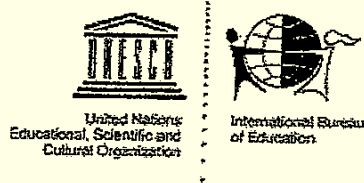
9.	Social Development (W17da Wa7da Campaign)	International and Global Project	A Plan will be devised to encourage students to work on international and global projects. These projects will involve interactions among different sects. We will have seminars on different sectors in the educational field and other areas.  We are currently working on a project to get in the book of records. In cooperation with the 5 governorates, we are still working on it.  A program intended to foster links with international expat communities within Bahrain is still under development.	This project will create more awareness through other cultural interactions and will benefit them in the long term towards the effectiveness of team work and increases the level of their understanding of how to communicate and integrate with the other sects and other cultures.	Beginning of October	Still in the process of financing
10.	Culture	To be defined	[Consideration of a project around graffiti]	To be defined	To be defined	To be defined
11.	GOYS	Football Leagues	In cooperation with the BFA and 3BL, which is a Bahraini company specializing in social cohesion and community service. This proposal is for the organization of a football tournament for youth from the villages. The teams will be intentionally mixed between Shi'a and Sunni.  The program will incorporate games and activities with specific variations. For instance, a game in which speaking is not permitted, or games with children from marginalized communities (especially the disabled community).  Coaches will similarly come from multiple backgrounds and could be volunteers or professional players.	This program aims to instill values of peace, tolerance and diversity; gender equality; social inclusion of marginalized communities; cultivate empathy; promote active lifestyles and physical fitness; teach fairness and impartiality; foster honour and good sportsmanship.  There will be a system developed to measure the impact of the program.	Discussions underway with GOYS, BFA and 3BL to finalise the project.	To be finalized.

			The program would include a documentary ("Reconciliation Kicks off in Bahrain"), including interviews, match footage and chronicles of the initial struggles.			
12.	Health	Ethics Conference with Doctors	A conference in which the medical profession will discuss the ethical responsibilities that doctors owe to their patients, particular during times of civil strife.	A comprehensive assessment of the ethical responsibilities of doctors will prepare doctors in advance of difficult moral decisions so that their behavior properly balances the various interests that underlie ethical dilemmas. A conference (or series thereof) could provide the basis of an updated guide of moral and ethical conduct for doctors in Bahrain.	The RCSI has agreed to coordinate this conference. Project to be approved by the Ministry.	To be finalized
13.	Housing and Works	Volunteering for Rehabilitation of Villages	Volunteer program amongst Government employees to help rehabilitate villages that are run down. This project would entail getting a contractor to work with volunteers in order for that to work. It should focus on fixing doors, plumbing and broken walls and painting.	Fostering a sense of community and unity through the country; demonstrate solidarity between neighborhoods and across community divisions.	The Ministry must be approached. Their approval must be attained before implementation of this proposal.	To be finalized
14.	Housing and Works	Addressing for housing waitlist	There may be opportunities to coordinate these efforts with Stage 4 of the Wi7da Wa7da Campaign.	These measures will ensure that the waitlist up to 2001 will be cleared. This will help address the basic needs of many families and improve standards of living.	2011-2016.	NA
15.	IAA	Ethics	A conference in which journalists will	A comprehensive assessment of	The Ministry has approved	To be

		Conference with Journalists	discuss the ethical responsibilities that they face when reporting locally and internationally, particularly in relation to violence or civil strife	the ethical responsibilities of journalists will prepare journalists in advance of their behavior properly balances the various interests that underlie ethical dilemmas. It will prepare them for field work that can have a significant effect on public perception of and engagement with an issue. A conference (or series thereof) could provide the basis of a guide of moral and ethical conduct for journalists in Bahrain.	this project.	finalized
16.	IAA	Soap Opera	TV soap opera featuring Bahraini actors and storylines that touch upon civic issues and cast light on the struggles of all sectors of Bahraini society. The content will aim to be realistic, and informative, while at the same time positive and not too dramatic.	Creation of a media culture that is more inclusive and reflective of Bahraini society, as a means to cultivate unity and community in the country.	Planned for Ramadan The Ministry has approved this project. Working with media experts to prepare list of proposals for adaptation into the planned drama series for Ramadan.	To be finalized
17.	Education and IAA	National Scholastic Debating Tournament	A national debating tournament intended to teach children of all socio-economic backgrounds skills that will last throughout their lives, and add to their self-confidence.  The tournament would culminate in a televised debating tournament for the final teams, and would be held annually at the end of the year. Public schools would integrate this aspect of the curriculum into their	Using debates in the classroom can help students grasp many essential critical thinking and presentation skills.  Classroom debates can foster a number of skills and attributes, including citizenship, ethics, etiquette, cross-examination, questioning, point of view, distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying bias,	Appropriate international partners have been identified. The IAA has approved this project. The Ministry of Education has been approached and expressed interest. Its approval must be attained before implementation of this proposal.	To be finalized

			programs, while private schools would be free to join.	personal vs. political values, teamwork, and cooperation.			
18.	IAA	Talk Show	TV talk show in which a trained and experienced host engages with everyday Bahrainis and prompts discussion about social and economic issues. This talk show could be in a studio, or filmed in the community, or both, depending on the preferences of the producers.	Creation of a media culture that is more inclusive and reflective of Bahraini society, as a means to cultivate unity and community in the country.	The IAA has approved this project. Working with media experts; spoken with SFCG to determine what services and training they could provide.	To be finalized	
19.	Interior	To be defined	[Consideration of a project around police volunteer work with youth from the villages]	To be defined	To be defined	To be defined	
20.	Municipalities	To be defined	[Consideration of a project around privately funded community centers]	To be defined	To be defined	To be defined]	
21.	Social Development	Psychological Assistance for Children	In partnership with UNICEF and the National Childhood Committee, a program that will provide psychological assistance to children who have suffered trauma.	To be defined	To be defined	23,000 BD	
<b>Economic Reconciliation</b>							
22.	Social Development	Decrease in electricity bill	The aim of this program is to decrease the electricity bill for people in need.	This would enable to decrease the feeling of economic duress experienced by certain members of Bahraini society.	This project is under review by the Ministry	To be defined	
23.	Social	Increase in	The project is aimed at increasing the	In increasing the capital of the	This project is under review	To be defined	

	Development	family capital	bank	capital of the family bank.	Family Bank, more families will be in a position to obtain loans to acquire homes or to establish family businesses. This would enable members of the society to take ownership of their financial stability.	by the Ministry and to be approved by the GoB.	
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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
AND  
UNESCO INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION (IBE)**

1. During the presence of H.E. the Minister of Education in Geneva for the purpose of attending the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the IBE Council from 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012, a meeting was held with the Director of IBE and IBE programme coordinators to enhance the existing cooperation between Bahrain and IBE, in the domain of School Curriculum.
2. The two sides agreed to cooperate very closely within the frameworks of policy and programmes of the Ministry of Education and the IBE to respond to the request from Bahrain to develop School Curricula in general and Citizenship and Human Rights Education Curricula in particular.
3. Cooperation between the two entities will serve the longer-term vision of the Ministry of Education to enhancing the quality of education for all through the development and implementation of relevant and forward thinking curricula as part of a comprehensive education development strategy. At the same time, it will provide grounds for dissemination to, and cooperation with other Gulf countries and the international education/curriculum community in the realms of education and curriculum development and innovation.

Main areas of cooperation will include:

- (a) Curriculum evaluation;
  - (b) Capacity development of curriculum specialists and specialized curriculum-related institutions (for instance, through customized Curriculum Diploma programmes; and through the implementation of programmes focusing on ICTs and e-learning in education);
  - (c) Curriculum planning in line with the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education and the Government of Bahrain and based on informed policy dialogue;
  - (d) Curriculum review that promotes competencies for study, life and work underpinned by values of Human Rights, participatory citizenship and sustainable development;
  - (e) Curriculum implementation through quality learning resources and tools, including e-learning; enabling learning environments; learner-centred teaching and learning; and effective links between schools, communities and stakeholders;
  - (f) Curriculum-focused research and knowledge management and production aiming to inform curriculum review processes based on national and local good practices, needs and development prospects, as well as international effective practices and trends.
4. The Ministry of Education will ask for technical support from IBE in selected areas in accordance with the needs which will be commonly identified. Such areas may include:
- Advisory Missions
  - Staff Training Workshops
  - Assistance to Curriculum Design and Selection/Organisation of Learning Content
  - Curriculum Evaluation
  - Research merely focusing on curriculum trends and effective practice.
5. More specifically, the Ministry of Education would like the engagement with IBE for the five-year period covered by this Memorandum of Understanding (2012 – 2017) to address the following:
- (a) To review the state of the art vis-a-vis the existing curricula, their design, content and methodology with the view to identifying points of strengths to build upon and weaknesses to be addressed within the perspective of the policy objectives of the Ministry of Education.
  - (b) To propose a new strategy (Framework for Action) for developing school curricula in a manner that can effectively improve the quality and the relevance of curricula to the changing situation in Bahrain, particularly the need to review the citizenship and human rights education in school curriculum. To this purpose, the development of a Curriculum Framework for Primary, Intermediate and Secondary education in Bahrain is envisaged as a key lever in promoting curriculum development based on existing strengths, as well as targeting strategic objectives, such as competency development by stressing Human Rights, participatory citizenship, peace, intercultural understanding, tolerance, Learning to Live Together (LTLT) and sustainable development.

(c) Based on the prospective strategy (Framework for Action), develop a five-year plan of action for curriculum development which should include programmes for reinforcing the national capacity in the following areas:

- (i) Through the development of a Curriculum Framework, building an advanced, competency-based high quality curricula for the three levels of general education (Primary, Intermediate and Secondary).
- (ii) Reinforcing the existing efforts by the Ministry (such as the "King Hamad Project for the Schools of the Future") to develop a comprehensive long-term strategy for future development of school curricula in synergy with education development efforts in higher education and teacher training.
- (iii) With a view to quality curriculum implementation in line with the Curriculum Framework, reinforcing training activities to include, in addition to curriculum specialists, teachers, school principals, education supervisors, evaluators, ICT specialists and research specialists.

(d) To work in close cooperation with curriculum specialists in the Curriculum Department of the Ministry of Education in order to enhance the needed synergies between different education development initiatives, as well as the relevance of education development efforts for learners, teachers and other stakeholders (such as Higher Education institutions and the National Council for Higher Education). Special attention will be given to cooperation with the National University of Bahrain, especially the Bahrain Teacher College (BTC).

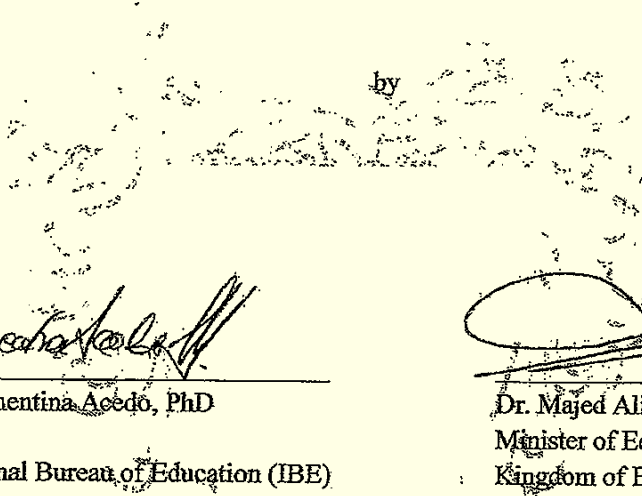
6. A preparatory phase of 3 to 6 months will be devoted to finalizing a five-year technical assistance project based on IBE's exploratory/fact-finding missions to Bahrain, as well as discussions with the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, and upon the signature of the MOU the Ministry of Education will transfer to IBE as soon as possible the amount of USD20'000.00 to be used as seed money towards covering the initial costs of preparatory activities.
7. Following this initial preparatory phase, a comprehensive technical assistance project 2012-2017 with a detailed budget will be submitted by IBE to the Ministry of Education for approval. The project document will refer to concrete mechanisms of execution by defining institutional roles and responsibilities. It will contain the general and specific objectives, the terms of reference for IBE's technical assistance, specific activities/interventions, expected outcomes and deliverables, timelines, resources needed, partnerships, as well as means of monitoring and evaluation.
8. In line with UNESCO rules and cost recovery policies, the two sides agreed that the Ministry of Education will provide the necessary funding for all operations undertaken by IBE based on a commonly agreed project document, and adjustable plan of activities and budget approved by the Ministry of Education that will be presented as annexes to the present Memorandum of Understanding.

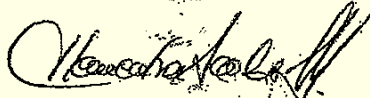



- 9. The two parties will constantly inform one another about progress made and obstacles encountered that solicit effective action from their side.
- 10. The present Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will become effective upon its signature by H.E., the Minister of Education and the Director of UNESCO IBE.

Signed in Geneva on this day, Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012

by



  
Mrs. Clementina Aceedo, PhD  
Director,  
International Bureau of Education (IBE)

  
Dr. Majed Ali Al Noaimi  
Minister of Education  
Kingdom of Bahrain



2

**PRESENTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH FAWAZ AL-KHALIFA, PRESIDENT OF THE  
INFORMATION AFFAIRS AUTHORITY, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN**

**BICI RECOMMENDATIONS NO 1724(A-C) & 1725(B)**

**MEDIA REFORM PLAN**

***(MRP)***

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## I. Introduction

### A. The Guiding Principles of the Media Reform Plan

The Information Affairs Authority (*IAA*) has developed the Media Reform Plan (*MRP*) as part of the continued implementation of the Kingdom of Bahrain's media strategy for 2011-2016. The media strategy was introduced by the IAA in June 2011, with the first main strategic objective to accomplish social partnership through "consolidating the principles and values of the national identity" in media programs, and develop common values on the basis of respect, professional commitment, quality, creativity and cooperation.

The global media landscape is in full transformation. Legislation and regulation relative to the media practices must evolve simultaneously with technological innovation and the changing habits of society. The government of the Kingdom of Bahrain (*GoB* or *Bahrain*) has decided to provide the Kingdom with a new legislative and statutory framework which takes these evolving behavioral patterns into account.

This new framework should also be accompanied by the recognition and implementation of the recognized international standards of professionalism expected of all journalists. In order to guarantee the independence of journalists and to encourage pluralism in media content generally, the regulation of the media sector will be entrusted to an independent authority.

As the Media Experts highlighted, "[t]his policy can—and must— be implemented, while taking into account the specificities that apply to Bahrain: respect for the monarch, the State religion, and the integrity of the national territory. It must also be inspired by the country's tradition of openness and respect for other cultures and beliefs."

These reforms will be implemented **as soon as possible**, in order to contribute to the process of national reconciliation and to promote the anticipated economic growth by the creation of private channels and the opening of the Media City.

## **B. Background to the MRP**

In preparing the MRP, the GoB carefully considered the BICI Recommendations No 1724(a-c) and No 1725(b), the Recommendations of the National Commission and the Recommendations of the Media Experts.

### **1. BICI Recommendations**

#### **No 1724(a-c)**

*(a) To consider relaxing censorship and allowing the opposition greater access to television broadcasts, radio broadcasts and print media. The continuing failure to provide opposition groups with an adequate voice in the national media risks further polarising the political and ethnic divide.*

*(b) To establish professional standards for the media and other forms of publications that contain an ethical code and an enforcement mechanism, designed to uphold ethical and professional standards in order to avoid incitement to hatred, violence and intolerance, without prejudice to internationally protected rights of freedom of expression.*

*(c) To undertake appropriate measures including legislative measures to prevent incitement to violence, hatred, sectarianism and other forms of incitement which lead to the violation of internationally protected human rights, irrespective of whether the source is public or private.*

#### **No 1725(b)**

*In general, the Commission recommends to the [Government of Bahrain] GoB the development of a national reconciliation programme that addresses the grievances of groups which are, or perceive themselves, to be deprived of equal political, social and economic rights and benefits across all segments of Bahrain's population.*

### **2. Recommendation of the National Commission**

The National Commission was established pursuant to BICI Recommendation No 1715 "with a view to making recommendations to the legislature for appropriate amendments to the existing law and the development of new legislation, in particular with respect to legislative reforms as contained in this recommendation." The Chairman of the National Commission is Mr Ali Saleh Al Saleh, who also the Chairman of the Shura Council.

The National Commission has formulated the following recommendations with regard to Recommendation No 1724(a-c):

1724 - The Commission makes the following recommendations with regard to <i>media incitement issues</i> .	
Resolutions of the National Commission	Response of the Esteemed Government
Providing the National Commission with the actions taken or to be taken in the future to implement this recommendation. This was stated in each item of this recommendation.	
A) <i>To consider relaxing censorship and allowing the opposition greater access to television broadcasts, radio broadcasts and print media. The continuing failure to provide opposition groups with an adequate voice in the national media risks further polarising the political and ethnic divide</i>	
Resolutions of the National Commission	Response of the Esteemed Government
Providing the National Commission with the actions taken or to be taken in the future to implement this recommendation. The resolution was made on 24 December 2011, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 25 December 2011.	- In process of being implemented. The GoB and the IAA have taken the initiative. French media experts were assigned to provide proposals to the GoB, as well as consultations related to the development of professional standards for the Bahraini media, in addition to the amendment of media laws and regulations to ensure compliance with international standards. These experts are part of IMCA, a well-known media consultant, headed by Pascal Joseph, who is considered to be a highly experienced organizer. He held many top level positions, including CEO of French television channel TF1, and French Radio and Television. He will be assisted by Didier Saboh, former Deputy Director of French Ministry of Telecommunications and Secretary General of the French Television. The team will include experts in the field of state of the art digital technology, radio broadcasting, audience measurement and analysis. IMCA helped many countries through their transitional phases to achieve media openness. IMCA had in particular worked with 11 governments in Eastern and Central Europe to reform their laws and management plans in compliance with the highest international standards, a prerequisite for the accession of those countries to the European Union. The experts will be in Bahrain for a period of one week starting Sunday 22 January 2012. The response was given on 10 January 2012.
Approval of the following items:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assigning the Media Affairs Authority to develop a national media strategy based on consolidating common national values and calling for reconciliation in all aspects which contribute to the benefit and development of the country.</li> <li>2. Adopting a fair, professional and balanced media policy towards the opposition, by ensuring that the media adopts points of view related to expediting reform at the legislative and executive levels, and catering to more of the living requirements of citizens. The official media organizations should announce the programmes to gain the confidence of citizens. This cannot be done without allowing all the political and social powers which constitute Bahraini society to appear in the official local media.</li> <li>3. Diagnosing and remedying any government discrepancies towards</li> </ol>	

<p>citizens through television and radio programmes.</p> <p>4. Covering seminars and events organized by political associations, focusing on their content in the media, and addressing them objectively. This would give the all parties responsibility of addressing those issues, provided that such actions are in compliance with Bahrain's Constitution and applicable laws.</p> <p>5. Qualifying media personnel to gain skills commensurate with international standards, in order to create specialized media expertise, focusing in the coming period on personnel concerned with political and social affairs to ensure their neutrality and mature performance.</p> <p>6. To stop all actions which could incite sectarian feuds and conflicts in official media. The resolution was made on 27 December 2011, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 3 January 2012.</p>	
<p>Further to the letter of HH Deputy Prime No. NRW/34/2012 dated 10 January 2012:</p> <p>*Arrangements for certain National Commission members to meet with the delegation of French media experts to discuss and clarify any ambiguities pertaining to the implementation of media related recommendations. The resolution was made on 17 January 2012, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 18 January 2012.</p>	<p>A meeting will be held on 25 January 2012 between a group of National Commission members and the French media delegates. The response was given on 24 January 2012.</p>
<p>The National Reconciliation Team made several decisions to be presented at the main Commission meeting to be held on 24 January 2012, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team emphasized the importance of meeting with the IMCA experts appointed by the GoB to provide proposals and consultations to closely identify the nature of their mandate in developing professional standards for Bahraini media, and amending media supervisory laws and regulations in compliance with international standards.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team recommends writing to the GoB requesting information on action taken to diagnose and rectify GoB remissness vis-à-vis citizens in television and radio programs, as provided in National Commission proposals for the implementation of the aforementioned recommendation.</li> <li>• On media supervision, the team proposed writing to the esteemed GoBt, to follow up the Commission's views on the implementation of the aforementioned recommendation, to reduce censorship of websites.</li> </ul>	
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*B) To establish professional standards for the media and other forms of publications that contain an ethical code and an enforcement mechanism, designed to uphold ethical and professional standards in order to avoid incitement to hatred, violence and intolerance, without prejudice to internationally protected rights of freedom of expression.*

<b>Resolutions of the National Commission</b>	<b>Response of the Esteemed Government</b>
<p>Providing the National Commission with the actions taken or to be taken in the future to implement this recommendation. The resolution was made on 24 December 2011, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 25 December 2011.</p>	<p>- In process of being implemented. As aforementioned, the team of experts will review this organizational aspect of the media as provided in the recommendations of the report (See Comments in 1724(A)). The response was given on 10 January 2012.</p>
<p>Approval of the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To expedite the process of issuing draft laws on the regulation of the print, audio and visual printing and publishing industry, both traditional and electronic, to consolidate the constitutional principle guaranteeing the freedom of expression, without prejudice to the unity of the people, and without inciting sectarian division, taking into consideration the events which took place in Bahrain and resulted in the existing sectarian prejudice, in which information and social media played a role. This item is to be moved to become Item 7 of Paragraph (A) of Recommendation No. 1724.</li> <li>2. To urge the Bahrain Journalists Association to formulate and adhere to a media code of ethics designed for the national reconciliation phase, to encourage writers to promote public opinion calling for reconciliation and tolerance and rejecting division and extremism, emphasizing the necessity of compliance by all journalists.</li> </ol>	



<p>3. To emphasize joint causes which consolidate national unity and call for sectarian tolerance, shedding more light on such causes in all programs and reconciling differences.</p> <p>4. To re-organize official media agencies, and attract information and media talent capable of building a media organization that meets international standards in this field. The resolution was made on 3 January 2012, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 4 January 2012.</p>	
<p>The National Reconciliation Team made several decisions to be presented at the main Commission meeting to be held on 24 January 2012, as follows:</p> <p>1. On expediting action to issue draft laws for the regulation of the print, audio and visual printing and publishing industry, both traditional and electronic, to consolidate the constitutional principle guaranteeing the freedom of expression, without prejudice to the unity of the people, and without inciting sectarian division, taking into consideration the events which took place in Bahrain and resulted in the existing sectarian prejudice, in which information and social media played a role.</p> <p><b><u>The Teams Comment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review a copy of the draft laws related to regulation of the printing and publishing industry, in order to assess the extent of their achievement of the objective of the recommendation.</li> </ul> <p>2. On urging the Bahrain Journalists Association to formulate and adhere to a media code of ethics designed for the national reconciliation phase, to encourage writers to promote public opinion calling for reconciliation and tolerance and rejecting division and extremism, emphasizing the necessity of compliance by all journalists.</p> <p><b><u>The Teams Comment:</u></b></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the journalists code of ethics which was recently signed.</li> <li>• The team also reviewed the concept of creating the Supreme Media Council to perform a regulatory role. The team will provide the Commission with its view on this subject at a later date. Mr. Ahmed Al Saati expressed his readiness to provide more information on this concept.</li> </ul>	
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*C) To undertake appropriate measures including legislative measures to prevent incitement to violence, hatred, sectarianism and other forms of incitement which lead to the violation of internationally protected human rights, irrespective of whether the source is public or private*

<b>Resolutions of the National Commission</b>	<b>Response of the Esteemed Government</b>
Providing the National Commission with the actions taken or to be taken in the future to implement this recommendation. The resolution was made on 24 December 2011, and a letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 25 December 2011.	- In process of being implemented. As aforementioned, the team of media experts will provide proposals on how to implement this recommendation. (See Comments in 1724(A)). The response was given on 10 January 2012.
Assigning concerned government agencies to provide international standard definitions of the term "to incite hatred and sectarianism". The resolution was made on 24 December 2011 (the general committee re-approved the recommendation of the legislative team – referred to above – on 27 December 2011). A letter was sent to HH Deputy Prime Minister on 11 January 2012.	

The GoB carefully considered these recommendations in preparing the MRP as set out below.

### 3. Recommendations of the Media Experts

The Media Experts were contacted to propose reform suggestions to assist the GoB in the implementation of the recommendations of the BICI in the media sector. In order to develop recommendations tailored to the specific situation of Bahrain, the experts conducted a series of meetings during two visits to the Kingdom between 21-26 January and 9-15 February 2012.

The following institutions and people were consulted:

- H.E. IAA's President, Sheikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa;
- IAA Managers and officials;

- Bahrain Media Correspondents Club;
- Telecommunications Regulatory Authority;
- Al Watan;
- Al Ayam;
- Al Wasat;
- Akhbar Al Khaleej;
- various journalists;
- The Parliament; and,
- The National Commission.

In fulfilling their mandate, the Media Experts made the following recommendations:

**a) The Creation of the High Media Board:**

The Media Experts recommended the creation of an independent entity, the High Media Board (*HMB*), comprised of individuals appointed by the His Majesty for a four-year term. The Media Experts recommended that the HMB be responsible for ensuring that various principles are respected: application of ethical rules relating to content, respect for the guiding principles, oversight of the professional activities of journalists, monitoring advertising, and the receipt and processing of complaints. It was recommended that the HMB would have the power to enforce penalties of varying severity on media players.

**The GoB has accepted this recommendation and will soon begin implementation with the help of international experts as set out below.**

**b) Media Law:**

The creation of the HMB would lead to a reform of the laws governing the media by transferring the supervisory and regulating power of the IAA to the HMB. This reform will be carried out by modifying the current draft laws relating to the press and audio-visual media and consolidating the two current projects into one law (the Media Law). The Media Law would also create the HMB.

**The GoB has accepted this recommendation and has begun implementation as set out below.**

**c) Training, Code of Ethics and Professional card:**

The experts recommended the creation of a world-class educational institute to train future journalists and other communication professionals; this institute would also help increase Bahrain's international prestige. The GoB is considering this long-term proposal. In the meantime, concrete steps have been taken to increase the training of media professional.

In order to protect and promote journalism as a profession, the experts recommended that the journalists' Ethical Charter be incorporated in the Media Law and its implementation be the responsibility of the HMB. The experts also recommend the creation of a professional card for journalists issued by a joint professional committee of the media outlets' representatives and representatives of the journalists.

**The GoB has accepted this recommendation and has begun implementation as set out below.**

**d) National Reconciliation Measures:**

The Media Experts have also recommended other supporting measures relating to radio and television broadcasts to provide opportunities for discussions and expressions of all opinions that promote national reconciliation.

For example, in order to learn from past events, it was suggested that all of Bahrain's journalistic community be invited to participate in a conference and workshops, run out of each media outlet, that address the more thorny ethical issues arising in times of civil unrest. Each journalist would need to reflect on his own individual contribution. The organization of the conference and workshops would be entrusted to the International Journalist Association.

**The GoB has accepted these recommendations as set out below and it has already begun implementation by commissioning television programmes that provide opposition groups with a greater voice in the national media.**

**e) Other Supporting measures:**

The Media Experts also recommended certain supporting measures. These are currently under consideration and will form part of the continuing reforms undertaken by the GoB to liberalise the media sector in Bahrain.

## II. The Media Reform Plan

### A. National Legislative Media Reform

#### 1. Creation of High Media Board by law

##### Guiding Principles

The creation of the HMB will be established by law as an independent authority. It will guarantee the freedom of communication for all electronic and printed press and publications, in accordance with conditions defined in the proposed Media Law. The HMB would guarantee the independence and impartiality of all media. The role of the HMB will not extend to imported media content.

The driving principles in determining the method of appointment was to guarantee a plurality of views and opinions, and to strengthen the independence of the appointed members.

##### Appointment and composition

The HMB will be composed of seven members, appointed by His Majesty to a four-year, once renewable, term:

- Four members, including the president, would be directly appointed by His Majesty;
- One member would be appointed by His Majesty on the proposition of the Prime Minister;
- One member would be appointed by His Majesty on the proposition of the President of the Shura.
- One member would be appointed by His Majesty on the proposition of the President of the Council of Representatives.

The members of the HMB will be “qualified” individuals. “Qualified” individuals will be defined in the Media Law as people with diverse and extensive professional experience—not necessarily in the media sector, but, for example, in the university, cultural, and various other sectors. Furthermore, the members of the HMB will not be permitted to have any conflicts of interest.

Finally, the members of the HMB will be adequately financial compensated so as to reduce all risks of temptations or justifications to obtain remuneration from other impermissible sources.

Role and Power:

The HMB will be entrusted with the responsibility to ensure the respect of pluralistic expression of ideas and opinions in radio and TV programmes, particularly regarding political information programmes. It will ensure that objectivity and freedom of expression of political opinions and ideas are respected in the printed press and publications, in accordance with the provisions of the Media Law, subject to the penalties outlined below. During electoral campaigns in coordination with the High Committee for Elections, the HMB will establish the rules relating to the conditions of production, programming, and broadcasting of programmes to guarantee fair access to all media outlets.

The HMB will, in particular, ensure that there is no incitement to hatred, violence, and intolerance on the grounds of race, religion or sect, gender, or nationality. The HMB will ensure that religions and cultures are respected in radio and TV programmes, newspaper articles and publications. The HMB will contribute to actions that support social cohesion and fight discrimination. It will, in particular, intervene with the publishers of audio-visual communication services, given the nature of their programmes, to ensure that the programming reflects the diversity of Bahraini society.

The HMB will be empowered to make recommendations to editors and distributors of communication services that relate to the principles stated in the Media Law. The HMB will ensure that the ethical codes of all media professionals are respected. The GoB may refer to the HMB to make recommendation on draft legislation. Furthermore, the GoB may request the HMB to opine on any requests for a licence.

Pursuant the principles set out above, which will be incorporated in the Media Law, the HMB will have the power to supervise and control, by all appropriate means, the subject matter, content, and programming modalities of advertising programmes broadcast by the audio-visual communication services, as well as advertisements published in the printed press in Bahrain and on internet services. Furthermore, the HMB will receive and process any complaint from any natural or legal persons relating to media content. The HMB will benefit from appropriate support of administrative services placed under the authority of its President.

The HMB may decide the following sanctions on editors and distributors of communication services and satellite networks:

- a) warning by letter; or
- b) warning, with the obligation to publish a communiqué, or for a communiqué to be read out on a radio or TV station; or
- c) other sanctions, including financial sanctions when appropriate.

The HMB would publish these formal notices.

A decision to issue a sanction (other than (a) and (b) above) will be subject to an appeal before national courts within 30 days. Any appeal will suspend the enforcement of the decision of the HMB.

The Media Authority will prepare a public report once a year that will present its activities.

International experts are assisting the IAA in drafting the relevant sections of the law governing the creation of the HMB.

## **2. Relaxed censorship in existing laws**

The GoB has proposed to Parliament the alleviation of criminal liability for felonies arising from publications in newspapers, as part of the GoB's amendments of Decree Law 47 for 2002 on the regulation of journalism, printing and publishing, currently under review by the Parliament, and in particular the removal of the penalty of imprisonment of journalists. This should open broader avenues for freedom of the press, and safeguard the journalist's right of expressing his/her opinion freely, safely and independently, without any pressures or threats.

## **3. Creation of new legislation**

### **a) TV Audio-visual draft law**

A draft TV Audio-visual law has been proposed by the GoB and is being currently reviewed by Parliament. This draft includes provisions and rules governing the broadcast and re-broadcast of audio-visual programs, with the aim of developing and regulating the audio-visual media sector and the creation of an investment climate in this sector. This draft upholds the principles of freedom of expression and pluralism. The regulation of the content of these audio-visual broadcasts will be under the supervision of the HMB.

### **b) Internet Regulation**

As part of the amendments on the Press Law, the Government has proposed provisions enabling the IAA to regulate internet media content in accordance with the same provisions and principles of freedom of expression as set out in the Press Law. The content of these publications will be under the supervision of the HMB.

The IAA is working on the formation of a joint committee consisting of representatives of the IAA and the TRA to develop specific standards on the regulation of websites.

c) Regulation of Newsletters

The IAA has prepared a draft ministerial resolution to extend the obligation to obtain a licence to news bulletins, newsletters, as well as the broadcast of audiovisual products via electronic media. The content of these publications will be under the supervision of the HMB.

**4. Consolidation of all media-related law into one law (*Media Law*)**

The IAA is currently reviewing the preparation of the Media Law integrating draft laws related the creation of the HMB, the draft Press amended law, and the TV Audio-visual draft law, as well as the draft ministerial resolution on electronic publishing, to enhance freedom of opinion and expression under the recent constitutional amendments, and in accordance with international law on constraints and standards, in light of the Kingdom's accession to international conventions. International experts are assisting the IAA in this regard.



## **B. Professionalization of the Media**

### **1. Creation of a joint professional committee and the Professional Journalist card**

The HMB will be in charge of defining the creation and the management of the Joint Committee composed of journalists and employers of journalists. The Joint Committee will regulate the rules governing journalists. In particular, it will supervise the implementation of the Ethical Code for all journalists. It will use as a first draft for discussion the “Journalism Code of Honor” issued on 20 January 2011 by the Bahraini Journalists Association. This code emphasizes the importance of the role of free and honest expression and objective opinions in the development of society, in consolidating national unity, and in unifying the media on the basis of mutual respect and amicable sentiments, in order to promote journalistic and media performance, uphold professional ethics, and protect the rights of journalists and society under the rule of law.

The Joint Committee will create a professional card for journalists that will guarantee adhesion to the Ethical Code and certain standards of professionalism. This card will attest to the journalist’s status as a media professional and provide professional recognition. The Joint Committee will also determine the rules governing the necessary training and academic credentials for journalists to obtain this card.

The journalists will be allowed to appeal to the HMB against any decisions of the Joint Committee.

### **2. Codes of Ethics for both press journalists and TV media personnel**

As set out above, the Joint Committee will issue an Ethical Code binding on all journalists under the supervision of the HMB. In addition, the IAA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Management Consulting Center of Excellence to prepare a Media code of honour for Bahrain Radio and TV, to ensure the respect of a media code of conduct, within a framework of pluralism, neutrality, credibility, rule of law, and preserving national unity.

### **3. Increase in training programs**

Finally, the GoB is committed to increasing the training of media personnel and journalists. For example, the IAA signed of a memorandum of understanding with the University of Bahrain on 21 February 2012 to use the (Bahrain Media Facilities Center) to organize training courses, to positively promote standards in the media profession. Furthermore, the IAA has entered into agreements to train Bahrain Radio and TV personnel through BBC (TwoFour54 in Abu Dhabi, UAE) and Radio France programmes. The GoB s also considering a long-term plan that would establish a world-class educational facility.

## **C. Liberalization of the Media**

### **1. Opening access to all on Bahrain Radio and TV (*BRTV*)**

The IAA has committed itself to opening access to all on Bahrain Radio and TV under the supervision of the HMB. In particular, the HMB will oversee that Bahrain Radio and TV will:

- Increasing the percentage of political content in Bahrain Television programs, to express the views of all segments of the Bahraini people.
- Increase the participation of all associations and political powers in radio and television programs and the coverage of their events, in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution and Laws.
- Prepare and broadcast new radio and television programs focusing on issues related to politics, democracy, and human rights, with the participation of various political and social powers, such as: (9 PM), (National Forum), and (Issues and Views), on Bahrain Television, in order to enrich the dialogue and analytical content in news broadcasts and radio talk programs, in addition to the existing programs.

In particular, the IAA has requested the assistance of an international organisation called "Search for Common Ground" from Washington, USA, to provide guidance in assembling television programmes which will ensure the representation of all of Bahrain's society and political views. Their first visit to Bahrain will take place on 4-5 March 2012. TV talks shows (both social and political) and soap operas are currently being considered by the IAA.

### **2. Creation of a Media City**

IAA is endeavouring to establish an integrated media city to attract Arab and international radio and television media companies, to develop Bahraini media in partnership with the private sector and pave the way for the establishment of private satellite channels, following completion of the appropriate legislative and regulatory framework. On 2nd February 2012, H.E. President of the IAA signed two memoranda of understanding to make Bahrain the headquarters of the Arab News Channel, and the corporate head office of Rotana Network, effective as of 12 December 2012.



### مبادرة التسوية المدنية

انطلاقاً من التوجيهات الملكية السامية بسرعة معالجة الأضرار الناتجة عن الأحداث الأخيرة بتعويض المتضررين منها.

وفي ضوء الرغبة في الإسراع بتنفيذ توصيات اللجنة البحرينية المستقلة لتقصي الحقائق وخصوصاً ما يتعلق منها بالفقرتين (ي) و(ك) من التوصية رقم ١٧٢٢

وتجاوباً مع توصيات اللجنة الوطنية المعنية بمتابعة تنفيذ توصيات لجنة تقصي الحقائق في هذا الشأن

وحرصاً على تيسير إجراءات حصول المتضررين على التعويض المناسب دون تأخير، وفي ضوء التكليف الحكومي بهذا الخصوص، فإن وزارة العدل تعلن عن إطلاق مبادرة التسوية المدنية، والتي يتم من خلالها صرف تعويضات للمتضررين مباشرة بشكل رضائي في إطار تسوية المطالبة المدنية، بما يوفر السرعة في إجراءات التعويض التي يتفق عليها، دونما إخلال بحق من لا يقبل من المتضررين بالتسوية المطروحة باللجوء إلى القضاء المدني، وبما لا يؤثر على أية مسؤولية جنائية.

#### المستفيدون من المبادرة:

- ١- عائلات المتوفين حسبما ورد في تقرير تقصي الحقائق
- ٢- حالات الإصابات الجسدية.
- ٣- أية حالات أخرى ترى الوزارة بالتشاور مع الجهات المعنية إدخالها.

#### القواعد المنظمة للتسوية:

- ١- التسوية رضائية يتوجب على القبول بها النازل عن المطالبة القضائية بالتعويض مدنياً
- ٢- القبول بالتسوية لا يخل بأي مسؤولية جنائية.

#### آلية التسوية:

- ١- تشكل لجنة بوزارة العدل تضم عناصر من المتخصصين
- ٢- يتقدم الراغبون في التسوية إلى اللجنة بطلباتهم عشوية بما يؤيدها من أوراق
- ٣- تقوم اللجنة بدراسة الطلبات مع الجهات ذات العلاقة
- ٤- في حال تقرر قبول التسوية، يتم تقدير التعويض لكل حالة على حدة طبقاً لما استقرت عليه أحكام المحاكم المدنية في هذا الشأن

خالد بن علي بن عبد الله آل خليفة  
وزير العدل  
والشؤون الإسلامية والأوقاف

Kingdom of Bahrain  
Ministry of Justice & Islamic Affairs & Waqf  
Minister's Office

### **The Civil Settlement Initiative**

Based on the royal directions to address the damage caused by the recent events to compensate the victims effected by them; and in light of the willingness to expedite the implementation of the BICI recommendations and in particular recommendations 1722 (j) and (k), and in response to the National Commission charged with the recommendations of the BICI report:

In order to facilitate the procedures for the victims to get the appropriate compensation, and in light of the governmental mandate in this regard, the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Waqf announces the launch of The Civil Settlement Initiative, in which the compensation will be given to the victims directly in a consensual manner, in the context of the settlement of civil claims

This will expedite the compensation procedures agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of those victims who refuse to accept the proposed settlement to resort to the civil courts and without affecting any criminal responsibility.

#### **The beneficiaries of the initiative:**

1. The families of the deceased victims as mentioned in the report.
2. Those with physical injuries.
3. Any other case that the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Waqf agrees to include after consultation with the concerned authorities.

#### **Rules governing the settlement:**

1. Consensual settlement consequent on the acceptance to waive the judicial claim for a civil compensation.
2. Acceptance of the settlement does not affect any criminal responsibility.

#### **The Mechanism of the settlement:**

1. Create a commission in the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Waqf which includes specialists.
2. Those who wish to apply for the settlement should submit their applications supported with the necessary documents to the commission.
3. The commission will study the applications with the relevant authorities.
4. If the settlement is accepted, the compensation of each case will be estimated individually and in accordance with the provision of the civil court.

[Signature]

Khaled bin Ali bin Abdallah Al Khalifah  
Minister of Justice  
and Islamic Affairs