Outputs of the Second National Conference for Bahraini Women
"Mainstreaming Women’s Needs in Development ... Review and Evaluation"

October 23, 2013
Supreme Council for Women (SCW)
Kingdom of Bahrain
Introduction

The experience of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) in the field of mainstreaming women’s needs in development started along with the first National Conference in November 2010. The conference highlighted the role of national efforts to mainstream women’s needs, thus resulting in the launch of a national model with specific areas of work, in line with the economic, social and cultural framework of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The second National Conference took place in October 2013, to portray the experience of implementing the first national model, through presenting the lessons learned and the accumulated expertise, as the foundation for the second national model, which was launched at the end of the conference, with the objective of achieving development at the local and international levels.

Conference Objectives

The conference took place with the following main objective:

To follow-up on the implementation of the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development and to highlight the most prominent achievements and challenges as basis for the future vision, taking into consideration the local and global realities. This is achieved through the following sub-goals:

• To monitor the national (both governmental and civil) efforts to implement the model.
• To review of the achieved outcomes of the national model to mainstream women’s needs in development, as well as the obstacles with that regard.
• To highlight the role of partners and the mechanisms to put this role into effect.
• To highlight the challenges facing the efforts to mainstream women’s needs in development and the different methods to address them.
• To move to the second phase of the national model to mainstream women’s needs in development.
The conference sessions tackled two key topics. Each one has three sub-topics, as per the following:

1. First Topic: “The results of implementing the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development”, including:
   - The experience of the SCW in supporting national efforts to implement the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development.
   - Results of implementing the national model “Role of executive authority”.
   - Role of the judicial authority in implementing the national model.

2. Second Topic: “Societal partnership to raise awareness and implement the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development and the international perspective”, including:
   - The role of the private sector in implementing the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development.
   - The role of civil society organizations in raising awareness and implementing the national model.
   - The international perspective regarding the implementation method of the national model.

3. Concluding Session: “Mechanisms of the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development and lobbying at the regional and international level”.

Following is a summary of the main points covered by the conference working papers:
"The experience of the SCW in implementing the national model, in the context of societal partnership, to achieve justice and equal opportunities between men and women"

Working paper presented by: H.E. Mrs. Hala Mohamed Al-Ansari
Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW).

The working paper portrayed the journey of the SCW since its establishment, starting with setting the strategic planning foundations and the clear vision. The development perspective of the SCW relies on institutional framework based on the principles of the national work charter in the constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The working paper pointed out the efforts of the SCW in implementing the national model for mainstreaming women’s needs based on mechanisms of strategic perspectives included in the model, with the objective of advancing the status of women through justice and equal opportunities. The working paper assured that SCW is keen to rely on the principle of partnership with the executive and legislative authorities, private sector and civil society organizations, as well as relevant regional and international organizations to implement the national model.

Based on the role of the SCW in following up on the implementation of the national plan on a local level, the working paper presented national efforts in establishing equal opportunity units as institutional mechanisms at the executive authority to achieve the principles of justice and equal opportunities with regards to employment, promotion and training in these institutions through achievements in services, cultural, media and social areas of work. Based on the importance of budgets responsive to women’s needs, the paper revealed the results of the partnership and cooperation with the ministry of finance which led to agreement among the two parties to approve the basis of equal opportunities in setting the governmental budgets. This was the initial phase towards to more improvement in the mechanisms of setting the governmental budgets on the basis of equal opportunities between women and men.

On the other hand, the paper pointed out the mutual efforts with the legislative authority to ensure more mainstreaming and equal opportunities, as well as to activate monitoring instruments in ministries and governmental institutions as per the national model.

Following this, the paper discussed mainstreaming opportunities in the private sector according to the initiatives of some private sector institutions, which reflects the level of societal awareness supporting this policy.

The paper concluded with the potential areas for SCW to be involved in implementing the second national plan to be launched at the end of the conference.
The reality of mainstreaming women’s needs in ministries and governmental institutions according to the principles of justice and equal opportunities

Based on constitutional foundations and international treaties, the paper tackled the reality of women in ministries and governmental institutions, highlighting their presence in these institutions as productive workforce and drawing attention to ministries in which the presence of women is limited. Following that, the paper analyzed this reality through portraying the gap between men and women in their different positions, pointing out that the gap is larger in higher positions. On the other hand, the paper presented statistics regarding the equal training opportunities for men and women, and called for providing efforts to decrease the gap between them in leadership positions.

The paper assured the importance of the trend towards setting budgets responsive to women, through financial programs, mechanisms and tools, which reflect the governmental activities and programs leading to the achievement of justice and equal opportunities between men and women. Furthermore, the paper focused on the experience of the Ministry of Social Development as a model for mainstreaming women’s needs in development, through establishing one of the first equal opportunity units, with the appropriate resources, including budgets, training courses and the issuance of the necessary decisions. On the other hand, the paper illustrated, the reality of women in the Ministry of Social Development, which indicates the higher percentage of women comparing to that of men.

In addition, the paper discussed the efforts of the Ministry in this area, as well as its future programs to implement the national model and to achieve equal opportunities, portraying the challenges and obstacles facing ministries in this regard. Also, the paper tackled the most prominent features of progress in which the ministry foresees, and the targeted role of the equal opportunity units in raising awareness with regards to mainstreaming women’s needs in development, as the main incentive for the positive efforts towards achieving justice and equal opportunities. In conclusion, opportunities of progress and recommendations were discussed, in order to achieve the targeted objectives.
Efforts of the legislative authority in implementing national model in mainstreaming women's needs in development

The paper discussed the role of the legislative authority in implementing national model in mainstreaming women's needs in development, through the following three key points:

1. Legislative references of the parliamentary movement towards mainstreaming women's needs in development: The paper emphasized the importance of the efforts of parliamentarians to enhance mainstreaming women's needs in development through employing the legislative and monitoring instruments according to the principles of the national work charter in what concerns personal freedoms and justice as well as the constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and international conventions.

2. The relevant outcomes of the first national conference with regards to the work of the legislative authority as per the provided constitutional rights: The paper highlighted the role of the legislative authority in following up the implementation of the two processes stated by the national model in terms of setting the budgets responsive to women's needs, such as setting and monitoring governmental expenditures and establishing effective equal opportunity units at the ministries and institutions.

3. Areas of implementing the national model for mainstreaming women's needs in development as per the specialization and mandate of the legislative authority, through the legislative and monitoring role in partnership with the SCW and the establishment of equal opportunity units at the Nuwab and Shura Councils (Chambers of parliament): The paper highlighted some areas of implementation followed by the legislative authority as per the monitoring and legislative role. The paper mentioned the legislator's duty in eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, which requests the commitment of the national legislations to adhere to the principles of equality and equal opportunities. In this regard, the paper underlined some issued legislations including the proposed draft law on granting the nationality to the children of Bahraini women married to non-Bahrainis and the proposed draft law regarding the issuance of family law (part 2).

The paper highlighted the role of the legislative authority in setting the general budget of the state; providing justifications and motives regarding the needs to mainstream women's needs to the Nuwab and Shura Councils' finance and economic committees. With regards to the monitoring mandate, the impact of monitoring and evaluation of the government work was emphasized through a set of monitoring mechanisms.

In what concerns the challenges facing the legislative authority, the parliamentarians' knowledge of the mainstreaming concept and its implementing obligations by the Kingdom's general policies, as well as the necessity of setting a national strategy for the women and child affairs committee at the Nuwab and Shura Councils, and the continuous training and updating of statistics.
Areas of implementing the course of the national model to mainstream women’s needs in development in the private sector

The private sector plays a vital role in economic development, being the key driver to achieving economic growth. The private sector also provide numerous work opportunities, although many of these positions are filled by foreigners, which reflects the necessity to implement Bahrainization, particularly taking into consideration the presence of women in this sector.

The paper was based on statistics and data of the General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI), which shows an increase of 14% in the number of Bahraini workforce during the last three years. On the other hand, the statistics show an increase of the foreign workforce during these three years equivalent to five times the growth of the Bahraini workforce in most positions. This indicates a large number of offered jobs which can be filled by Bahraini women and men. The paper portrays the status of Bahraini women contribution which does not exceed 5% in this sector.

The paper highlighted the challenges facing women in the private sector, including:

- The lack of implementing the principle of equal opportunities in employment and promotions
- Incompatibility of average wages between men and women as a result of limited presence of women in higher positions
- The long working hours
- The lack of supporting services offered to women

The paper summarized the results of the field study on the reality of women in the private sector in terms of educational level, age, position and participation in training courses. The study showed that the average age of women Bahraini workers is 36 years old. As for the qualifications, it was revealed that it varies between High School Certificates and Higher Education, with the majority of women holding a Bachelor Degree. The paper also pointed out that women are mostly present in lower and medium positions and lack of presence in managerial and leadership positions. On the other hand, statistics show women’s limited participation in training opportunities abroad.

The paper recommended the continuation of efforts to empower women and to enhance their role in the production process of the private sector, as a potential sector able to accommodate a great number of women in several fields, ensuring equal training opportunities offered to women and men. In addition to that, the paper recommended providing supporting services to enable women to achieving the balance between family duties and the work requirements of the private sector.
The role of civil society organizations in mainstreaming women's needs in development

This paper tackled the importance of civil society organizations as a key partner in mainstreaming women's needs, especially with the increase in the number of these societies and the diversity of their areas of work, along with the beginning of the reform project of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the King of Bahrain. It was pointed out that the partnership between all sectors is essential towards achieving sustainable social development, stressing the role of women in this regard. The reality of women's representation in civil society organizations was also portrayed, as statistics show the lack of women's participation in this sector and in the societies' Boards, with the exception of women's societies. As for the results of the field study, it was shown that 84% of participants mentioned the presence of women affairs committees in their societies which reflects the supporting societal awareness towards women's issues. On the other hand, the study also revealed the challenges resulting in the lack of effective participation of women in voluntary work conducted by civil society organizations, including commitments and difficulty to achieve balance between family duties and voluntary work in addition to a number of societal and political factors.

With regards to the civil society organizations' areas of work, it was shown that these societies focus on providing awareness, training and financing programs.

In order to achieve greater efficiency in the work of civil society organizations, it was recommended to increase raising awareness programs regarding voluntary work and to amend women-related laws.

In terms of the challenges facing societies, these can be demonstrated through the phenomenon of limited participation in voluntary work, lack of financial resources, lack of strategic planning and coordination mechanisms as well as lack of interest in media policies to promote the societies' activities.

The paper recommended civil society organizations to participate in implementing the national model for mainstreaming women's needs, taking into consideration their social responsibilities. This is achieved through the enhancement of partnership and coordination between these societies and the public and private sectors, while attracting and encouraging volunteers, particularly youth.
International perspective regarding the implementation course of the national model for mainstreaming women's needs

Working paper presented by: Dr. Shirin Jabir Shukri
Senior Advisor at the UN Women Arab States Regional Office

This working paper aims to evaluate the implementation course of the national model for mainstreaming women's needs in the Kingdom of Bahrain; particularly, the role of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW). The paper is based on the method of evaluating through discussions held with the relevant parties, as well as convening and analyzing the available statistics and data.

The evaluation results show the SCW's comprehensive experience in the field of mainstreaming women's needs, taking advantage of the available opportunities in the public sector, legislative authority, private sector and civil society organizations, through the following two key work methods:

- Budgets responsive to women's needs.
- Establishing units in ministries and governmental institutions to achieve equal opportunities, based on the SCW's vision to attain equal partnership to build a sustainable competent society.

The paper pointed out the key role of the constitutional reform in the Kingdom of Bahrain to achieve equal opportunities between men and women, which demonstrate the importance of the legislative authority's role in adopting priority women's related issues, thus enhancing their social and family stability.

Although Bahrain is considered one of the most distinguished countries in terms of the economic and social participation of women and the high percentage of educated women, the equal opportunities' indicator shows a gap between men and women. Therefore, it is essential for justice and equal opportunities to become priorities in achieving economic development for the benefit of the Bahraini society. Based on the analysis of the implementation course of the national model for mainstreaming women's needs in development of the previous phase and its outcomes in terms of expertise and specialized cadres and the practical lessons learned, it is expected that the coming phase will be more developed with a greater impact in raising awareness of mainstreaming women's needs and the principle of equal opportunities. Therefore, the process of benefiting from the previous results requires clear processes, plans and programs, as well as specifying the roles of the relevant entities, in order for them to lead the progress and development path in partnership and coordination with the SCW. In order to attain the required impact from the national model for mainstreaming women's needs, it is vital to enhance the mutual responsibility among the three authorities, the private sector, civil society organizations and the SCW.

It is also fundamental to highlight the national efforts in the field of mainstreaming, at the regional and international levels, through initiating regional and international work plans with the relevant entities.
The second national model for mainstreaming the needs of women and men in development

Based on the analysis results regarding the reality of mainstreaming women’s needs in development in the previous phase, as well as the progress opportunities and the recommendations of the working papers and discussions held, a preliminary version of the national model for mainstreaming the needs of women and men was presented. The preliminary model focused on the qualitative progress and the comprehensive areas of work, specifying roles and responsibilities of the different sectors in the context of the national responsibility to attain a sustainable impact with regards to mainstreaming the needs of women and men, and achieving justice and equal opportunities.
Implementation mechanisms in light of compatible partnership and national responsibility

The following represents a simplified guide for the expected roles of all parties concerned with implementing the national model; legislative and executive authorities, civil society, the private sector, SCW and the relevant regional and international organizations.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Legislative Authority</th>
<th>Executive Authority</th>
<th>Civil Society</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Supreme Council for Women (SCW)</th>
<th>Regional &amp; International Organizations</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• Amending legislations. • Employing monitoring tools to follow-up on the status and</td>
<td>• Integrating the principles of equal opportunities in all policies and national</td>
<td>• Establishment of women committees. • Amending internal rules and regulations in</td>
<td>• Establishing equal opportunity units in private sector institutions. • Initiatives supporting equal opportunities. • Setting systems and mechanisms to follow up on the national efforts in the field of mainstreaming. • Planning for supporting cultural awareness.</td>
<td>• Setting general policies to put into effect and follow up national trends. • Exchange of expertise • Promoting the Bahraini model</td>
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<td>implementation of the strategic plans in ministries in accordance with the principles of</td>
<td>strategies. • Putting into effect the order on the establishment of the units.</td>
<td>line with the principle of equal opportunities. • Setting systems and mechanisms to follow up on the national efforts in the field of mainstreaming. Planning for supporting cultural awareness.</td>
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<td>mainstreaming. • Following up on the activation of equal opportunity units.</td>
<td>• Establishment of central units in some ministries to follow up and monitor the work of equal opportunity units.</td>
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<td>Responsive Budgets</td>
<td>• Employing legislative mandate to ensure equal opportunities as a key criteria for the</td>
<td>• Approving a system to set and implement the state’s general budget in order to increase the gaps between the resources and expenditures, in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities between men and women.</td>
<td>• Raising societal awareness to support the policy of responsive budgets. • Implementing responsive budgets while setting projects budgets.</td>
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<td>general budget.</td>
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<td>Knowledge Management</td>
<td>Institutional knowledge management and transfer ensuring the sustainability of equal</td>
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<td>• Adopting the method of budgets responsive to the needs of men and women. • Following the criteria of equal opportunities in supporting civil society programs and projects.</td>
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<td>opportunities methods: • Institutional structure. • Capacity development. • Studies.</td>
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<td>• Initiating and developing comprehensive and categorized database.</td>
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<td>Measuring Impact</td>
<td>• Employing monitoring instruments to ensure the correct implementation of the national</td>
<td>• Employing quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the impact of</td>
<td>• Employing mechanisms to measure performance to monitor and follow up on women’s participation as per equal opportunities for the benefit of the sector.</td>
<td>• Improving monitoring and following up methods in line with the requirements of the second phase of the national model</td>
<td>• Adopting the national models path in measuring the impact at the regional and international levels</td>
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<td>model as per the principles of mainstreaming and equal opportunities.</td>
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<td>• Following the appropriate methods to monitor and follow up the implementation of equal opportunities as per the specialization.</td>
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Recommendations of the second national conference for Bahraini women

The outcomes of the conference included comprehensive recommendations specifying roles and responsibilities of the relevant entities as per the following:

**Executive authority’s recommendations**

- The importance of the sustainability of (women) as a component in the government work plan and the general budget through setting the needs of women and men as one of the strategic planning opportunities at the national level to ensure implementation.
- To analyze the budget according to categorization based on the needs of women and men.
- To conduct studies in order to measure the integration of the needs of women and men in national programs and projects.
- To establish central units to follow up the work of equal opportunity units, through coordinating with the Civil Service Bureau and the Ministry of Finance (for the public sector), Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (for the private sector and entrepreneurship) and the Ministry of Social Development (for civil society organizations).
- To enhance partnerships for capacity building to achieve interdependence with academic and training entities in order to conduct training programs in mainstreaming women’s needs with the Bahrain Institute for Public Administration (BIPA) (for the public sector), Higher Council for Vocational Training, Bahrain Institute for Banking and Finance (BIBF) (for the private sector), and the Ministry of Social Development (civil society organizations), as well as the University of Bahrain to include the concepts of mainstreaming in the curricula.

**Legislative authority’s recommendations**

- The importance of launching a working method to mainstream women’s needs in the national legislations and budgets in a clearer and more efficient manner.
- To put into effect the monitoring role of the legislative authority members, to serve the national recommendations towards mainstreaming.
- To improve the working system of the coordinating committee with the legislative authority, to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations, ensuring the required legislative and organizational framework to mainstream women’s needs through the tools and mechanisms available to its members.
Private sector's recommendations

- To monitor and follow up, ensuring the implementation of best practices, taking into consideration the incentives available for the private sector to adopt equal opportunity methods.
- To initiate methods and initiatives, in order to encourage the private sector to demonstrate and highlight success stories.
- To invest corporate social responsibility to support civil society organizations, in order to support mainstreaming the needs of women and men in development and the culture of equal opportunities. Also to support the vocational societies in this regard, to reach the interdependence between the national efforts.

Civil society organizations' recommendations

- The importance of improving the provided issues to mainstream women's needs, through clear methods to enhance equal opportunities principle in the organizations internal rules and regulations and plans.
- To put into effect the available tools to support women's issues, particularly in what concerns the specializations of civil society organizations, as lobbying organizations.
- To raise the awareness, build the capacities and conduct the required training programs targeting the.

International organizations recommendations

- To set clear methods for the sustainability of expertise exchange and transfer.
- To adopt the experience of the Kingdom of Bahrain in achieving the perspectives of equal opportunities and mainstreaming women's needs.
- To present the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) as a national house of expertise in the field of women related affairs.
- To approve the documented information and data issued by governmental entities to integrate in international reports.