

# Introductory letter

## Introduction

For the first time in the history of Kuwait, four women were elected for the parliament after only 4 years of women's obtaining the rights to participate in parliamentary elections. A new Government was appointed on 30 May 2009 and the Amir (Prince) of Kuwait, in his speech of June 09, requested both the Government and the Parliament to focus on: Promoting efficiency and growth in various fields, diversifying sources of national income and removing looming obstacles and impediments. Also allowing the private sector to lead the national economy with the purpose of providing/creating jobs and invite for an increase in foreign capital and high technology, improving/revamping the vital services sectors, to benefit citizens. The health care system, education and housing areas and the private sector will be granted a larger role in this respect, protecting public money and administrating anti-corruption.

Now Kuwait Development Challenges are: Absence of an approved and endorsed National Strategic Development Plan by the parliament since 1997, economic dependence on Oil as its single source of income, over employment in the Public Sector (90% of nationals in public sector). So far the Government is the main source in providing for services, all creates social dependency on the State. As the Environmental deterioration: Damaged marine environment, air pollution, water scarcity. The Civil Society participation is still limited to philanthropy assistance; human-rights based organizations continue to face operational challenges, mainly institutional discrimination between Kuwaiti citizens and expatriate labour in terms of human rights. The Civil society involved in policy and economic affairs is still shackled by stringent laws and by its inherent weakness in organization, management and advocacy skills. Charitable organizations are active but confine their activities to the area of charitable assistance.

## Summary on Progress in UN Reform

We provided technical assistance to NGOs, Governmental institutions, private sector, etc...& including, training, intervention, and outreach experts.

UNDP had made tremendous efforts in preparing the new CPAP 2009-2013 that is in parallel with Kuwait 5 years development plan. UNDP efforts contributed to the current Law approved in the National Assembly regarding persons with disability and the need to establish a Public Authority for Persons with Disabilities. A continuing project on the area of disability under the new CPAP is approved.

- UNDP participated in advocacy campaigns for women political empowerment which contributed to four women reaching the parliament.

- The Government of Kuwait offered us an amazing piece of architecture to host all the UN Agencies in Kuwait, the new UN House. It was inaugurated by the Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon in January 2009 and we moved in April 2009. Now the UNCT started implementing the common services practice to have a healthy work environment.

The Resident Coordinator chaired many events and workshops organized by NGO's, Universities, Societies and Associations with the presence of the UNCT, and delivered speeches and presentations for creating more awareness on the challenges that Kuwait is facing on the environment, gender, education, Human Trafficking, etc...

The UNCT celebrated the UN Day on the 25th of October. a large number of dignitaries and members of the diplomatic corps, ambassadors, journalists and representatives of various government and non-government organizations attended the event.

- A Gender Thematic group was established of members from UNDP, ILO, IOM, UNHCR. A gender mainstreaming training was conducted for all UNCT staff.

- UNCT Organized a training for the Kuwait key Media Reporters how to report on UN activities and news, to have a better impact in the Country.

## Summary on Progress towards UNDAF Outcomes

Kuwait has only one Excom Agency (UNDP), therefore there is no common or jointly agreed UNDAF activities. However, the UNCT agencies have had several joint activities and events in 2009. They were successfully covered by the local newspapers and mass media.

The State of Kuwait has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); those pertaining to the environment and political empowerment of women remain among the most pertinent.

UNCT had a joint programme in planning our Urban Future workshop on the UN-Habitat day celebration, and 3 joint events with IOM, celebrating IOM Day as well as a workshop for training National Cadres to Qualify a Team of National Trainers, and training on Essentials of Migration Management (EMM) for Kuwait officials in MOI. A Labor Migration Dialogue and Information Sharing between Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Middle East were conducted. The purpose of the Labor Migration Dialogue and Information Sharing project is to support the effort of the Indonesian government in overcoming current and future migration challenges. The general aim to be achieved is to contribute to enhancing Indonesia's capacity to manage its workforce and to enhance cooperation between Indonesia and the various countries in Asia and the Middle East, including Malaysia, Singapore, Bahrain, Kuwait and Egypt.

IOM Workshop on Enhancing Management of Temporary Foreign Labour in Kuwait: An Orientation Course for Government and Civil Society Representatives: aimed to increase relevant Government and civil society representatives' knowledge of migration management foundations, with a specific focus on the authority and responsibilities of states as well as the rights and obligations of mobile populations.

ILO celebrated its 90th anniversary and all the UNCT participated in the UN Day celebration.

On the security side, all CSMT members had timely monthly meetings to get updates on the security status and situation of the country, and two trainings were organized for the UNCT on first aid exercise and fire drill evacuation exercise.

In 2009, collectively the UNCT members published 30 articles/news stories on UN Agency's activities in Kuwait that have been added in the UNCT website, including contributions from all 5 UNCT member agencies.

## **Key Aspects of the Proposed 2009 Workplan**

2010 work plan will focus on core objectives, such as launching the CPAP projects, and continue to provide full support to our counterparts, especially the GSSCPD. It will encourage joint programmes between UNCT to deliver as one and have more presence in the country, work on the areas that are critical to the mandate of the UN Agencies in Kuwait and on key areas where Kuwait needs support by providing expertise in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015.