

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
UN COUNTRY RESULTS
REPORT 2020



UNITED NATIONS
BAHRAIN



**THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO THE FRONTLINE
HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

Cover picture by Shreyas Krishna, who won first place in the UNICEF/ UNEP “Reimagining a Better Future for Every Child” art competition held to mark World Children’s Day. See page 25 for runner up Basmala Naser’s entry, and page 22 for third place, Ghazlan Mattar.



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FOREWORD BY RESIDENT COORDINATOR



2020 was an extremely difficult year. What began as a health crisis that cost millions of lives evolved into a full-blown socio-economic crisis that claimed millions more livelihoods around the world. COVID-19 brought the world to its knees, exposing and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities that will likely remain for some time to come. Here in the Kingdom of Bahrain, there have been more than 120,000 cases of COVID-19 and over 450 deaths registered since the first cases were reported in February 2020. On the economic front, growth in 2020 is estimated at -5.4 percent, and sectors such as travel and hospitality are some of the hardest hit in the region. Such statistics, however, only tell one side of the story.

Thanks to its early preparedness and close partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Health and the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus were able to mitigate the worst effects of COVID-19. Under the stewardship of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, crucial socio-economic measures and economic stimulus packages were put in place to safeguard households and enterprises against the impact of the pandemic. By the end of March 2021, early signs of economic recovery are evident, and Bahrain has vaccinated over 500,000 citizens and residents, making it one of the global leaders (per capita) in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

As this report outlines, the United Nations spared no effort to rapidly reposition its support behind Bahrain's response and recovery efforts. While ensuring the WHO advisory and technical assistance to the Government in meeting the challenges of the

health crisis head-on, the UN country team developed the *Joint United Nations COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework*, a whole-of-system initiative offering multidimensional support services to respond to and recover from the impact of the pandemic. Despite disruptions caused by COVID-19, progress was made in several key areas related to the UN's work on human rights, labour and migration, public health, sustainable urban development, the environment and food security, to name but a few.

Across programmes and projects, the UN country team had to adjust to a virtual world. Plans, proposals and frameworks were revised to align with COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and key national counterparts, the UN developed the *Strategic & Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework*, which outlines a comprehensive statement of UN support for Bahrain's emergent development priorities.

In Bahrain, as elsewhere, the impact of COVID-19 will be felt for years to come. But there is light at the end of the tunnel. 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, sparking a global conversation on the role of multilateral cooperation in building the future we want. Amidst the greatest global health crisis the UN has seen in its 75-year history, here in Bahrain the UN75 campaign demonstrated clearly the key role that the UN has to play, not only in responding to crisis situations, but in working with Governments and partners around the world to *Build Back Better*.

As we turn our attention to 2021, and focus our collective efforts on the promise to Leave No One Behind, on behalf of the entire UNCT, I want to express our deep appreciation to the Government of Bahrain and to our invaluable partners across the country, without whom the work of the UN would not have such a meaningful impact.

Mohamed El Zarkani
United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i



UN COUNTRY TEAM

The Bahrain UN Country Team (UNCT) comprises 21 UN entities, including UN system agencies with a physical presence in Bahrain, and UN system agencies supporting Bahrain from regional offices or headquarters.

RESIDENT UN AGENCIES



NON-RESIDENT UN AGENCIES



CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT



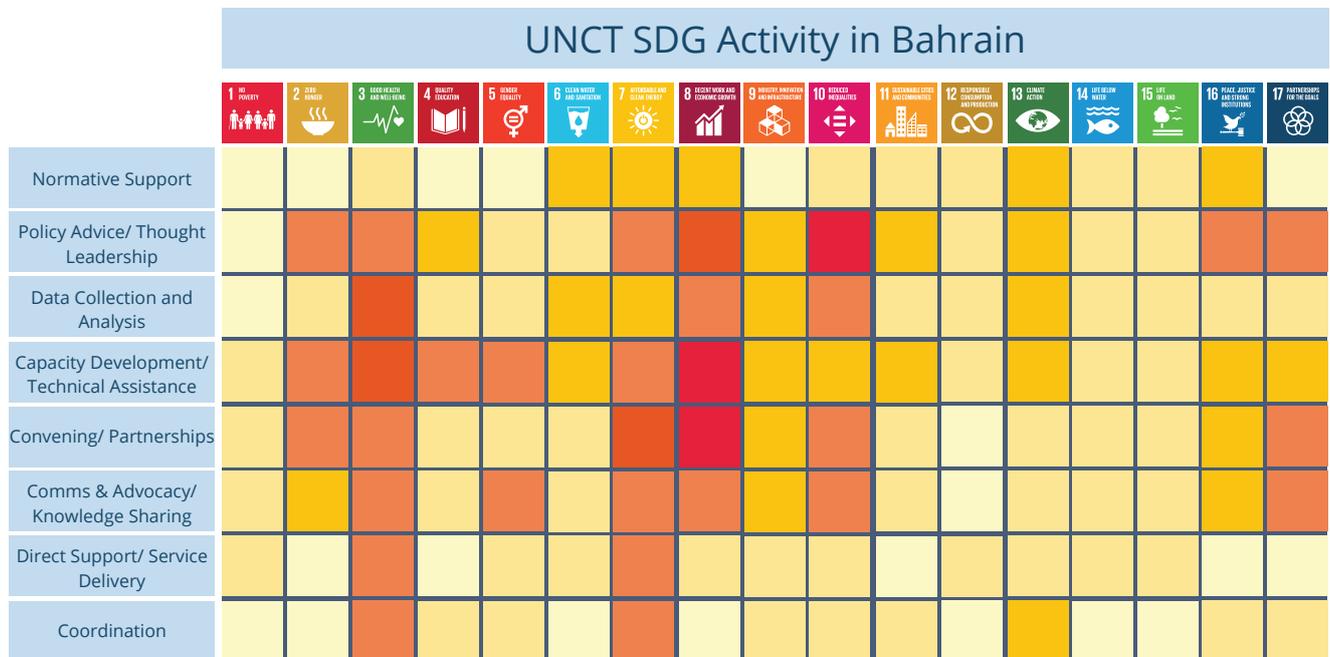


CHAPTER 2

**UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
SUPPORT TO NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK RESULTS

Coordinated through the Strategic Partnership Framework, the UNCT's work in 2020 supported a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals, and encompassed several modalities of engagement, including policy advice, capacity building and technical assistance, for example. The below heatmap captures an overview of the key areas of UNCT support in 2020:



Source: UNCT survey on SDG engagement

In 2017, the Government of Bahrain and the United Nations signed the *Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) 2018-2022*. The latest milestone in an enduring partnership, the SPF was founded on the principles enshrined in His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's *Economic Vision 2030* – sustainability, fairness, and competitiveness – and the priorities outlined in the 2030 Agenda. The Strategic Partnership Framework centres on 5 Strategic Priorities:

- 1 Promote security and stability, the democratic system and foreign relations
- 2 Establish a strong and diversified economy and a stable financial system and currency
- 3 Empower Bahrainis to raise their contribution to the development process
- 4 Sustainable management of strategic resources and ensuring sustainable urban development
- 5 Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government performance

In response to the approval of Bahrain's new Government Action Plan 2019-2022 (see page 7), and in an effort to keep Bahrain's evolving developmental priorities at the centre of its work, the UN collaborated closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

key national partners to undertake a review of the Strategic Partnership Framework. As this review coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this work resulted in the development of the new *Strategic & Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2022*, a comprehensive and coherent statement of UN system support for Bahrain's emergent development priorities. The Cooperation Framework encompasses analysis of and proposed support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has been submitted to Cabinet for approval.

While consultations geared towards the preparation and development of the *Cooperation Framework* were ongoing, COVID-19 had a disruptive impact on UNCT strategic planning and project implementation, particularly for UN entities without a physical presence in Bahrain. The measures designed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic – including several lockdowns – made travel to Bahrain and face-to-face meetings difficult to organize. In addition to logistical challenges, prospective multi-stakeholder partnerships were slow to materialize, as collaborative plans and proposals were delayed across the board. Nevertheless, progress was made in several key areas of the UN's work, including human rights, labour and migration governance, public health, sustainable urban development, the environment and food security.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1. PROMOTE SECURITY AND STABILITY, THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

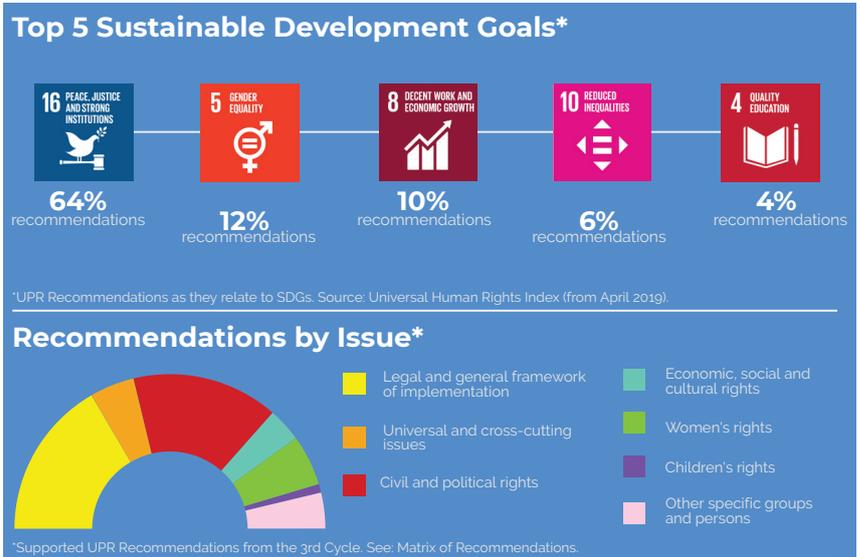
Human Rights



Bahrain underwent its third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2017, receiving 175 recommendations, of which 139 were supported. The UN system continues to support Bahrain in the implementation of these recommendations, contributing to greater connectivity in laws, policies, and plans between Bahrain's human rights commitments and progress toward achievement of the SDGs. A renewed emphasis on the centrality of the UPR in broader human rights advocacy efforts has characterized the UNCT's response to the Secretary General's *Call to Action for Human Rights*.

In 2020, the RCO and OHCHR led efforts to support the Government of Bahrain in the preparation of its first *Human Rights National Action Plan*. Together, the UNCT geared its support for the National Action Plan towards offering guidance on both the process and outcome to address potential challenges, including: prioritization of objectives; agreement on implementing and monitoring responsibilities, coordination and ownership among relevant actors; and division of labour among duty bearers. The National Action Plan is an opportunity to promote linkages with other national programmes, notably the ongoing efforts of Bahrain towards the implementation of recommendations emanating from the UPR, achieving the SDGs, and fulfilling the mandates of the Bahrain National Human Rights Institution and the High Coordination Committee.

The RCO worked closely with OHCHR and a wide range of UN agencies and experts to support a series of consultative workshops led by the Government, aimed at laying the foundation for the *National Human Rights Action Plan*:



The role of the legislative authority in protecting and promoting human rights and preparing the National Human Rights Action Plan	
The role of the media and the press in caring for human rights	
The rule of law and the safeguarding of rights in the administration of the justice system	
The role of the national institution and civil society organizations and the preparation of the national human rights action plan	
Human rights diplomacy in the plan to promote and develop human rights	
Labor rights in the human rights system	
Promote the rights of children, persons with disabilities and the elderly through the National Human Rights Plan	
The role of educational institutions in preparing the national human rights action plan	
Promotion of human rights in the advancement of Bahraini women and family stability	



Counterterrorism



In May 2020 UNCT organized a Virtual Capacity-Building Workshop for Bahrain on “Countering the Financing of Terrorism”. Chaired by H.E. Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Under-Secretary for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and attended by 114 officials from Bahrain’s relevant ministries and national agencies, private sector institutions and NPOs, the 2-day capacity-building workshop covered examples of best practices and priorities that could best help Bahrain’s NPO sector develop safeguards against the threat from terrorism financing. Next steps include the preparation of a formal risk assessment for Bahrain’s NPO sector by UNOCT in collaboration with relevant experts.

A second Virtual Capacity-Building Workshop was held in August on “The Role of Mutual Cooperation between the Private and Non-Profit Sectors in Suppressing the Financing of Terrorism”. Attended by 161 officials, this workshop centered on countering the financing of terrorism related to Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendation 8 on the protection of the NPO sector from terrorist abuse. Presentations covered strategic elements of partnerships between non-profit organizations (NPOs) and the private sector, as well as sharing best practices on Public-Private Partnerships. The event exhibited a strong gender perspective with close to full gender parity amongst registered participants. The workshop was preceded by bilateral talks between the CFT Unit and the Bahraini Ministry of Labour and Social Development on the topic of further UNCT-Bahrain cooperation, and followed by bilateral talks between the USG and Under-Secretary of Bahrain on International Affairs.

Additionally, UNODC trained 37 lawyers to support the implementation of the national legal framework to combat money laundering terrorist financing, in partnership with the Judicial & Legal Studies Institute. As a result of the training, the participants better understand their role in preventing money laundering terrorist financing and thereby in supporting the implementation of the national AML/CFT legislation, particularly in their capacity as Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) (specifically FATF recommendation 4). This contributes to the Kingdom’s overall efforts to meet its international obligations to combat money laundering and terrorism financing (as a State Party to both UNCAC and UNTOC, as well as in accordance with the FATF recommendations, among others), and relates to SDG target 16.4.

Strengthening democratic system and foreign relations



Since 2014, UNDP has supported operationalization of the SIU with advisory services and capacity development support for the application of international frameworks in line with the Istanbul Protocol. UNDP facilitated access to expertise, including high-level judicial experts to advise the formation and development of SIU, provide an assessment of forensic services and procedures, and ensure that the operational structure of the unit met international standards and practices. UNDP also supported development of a media and communication strategy for SIU, to strengthen its public outreach capacity. Workshops were organized to strengthen the capacities and technical procedures of the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies, the Ministry of Justice, and the Public Prosecution Office, in cooperation with the UK Embassy and its IOPC, and the Government of Italy.

UNDP collaborated with BIPA continuing the work of past years to promote the Public Service Innovation Lab. Twenty-five Bahraini “Innovation Advocates” were identified, representing numerous government entities, who participated in a multimodal innovation and design thinking training programme that culminated in 5 inter-ministerial teams to design and promote innovative, relevant, and impactful solutions for capable and efficient public administration. One of those teams from 5 different governmental entities (Min. Health, Min. Interior, Supreme Council for Environment, EDB, and BIPA), was awarded first prize in the regional Ideathon organized by the World Bank and UNDP Kuwait, out of 77 other proposals from across 17 Arab States.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2. ESTABLISH A STRONG AND DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY AND A STABLE FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND CURRENCY

Economic Diversification



In 2020, UNIDO ITPO (Investment and Technology Promotion Office) Bahrain organized 37 global events engaging over 4,000 entrepreneurs, SMEs, experts and youth from Bahrain and abroad. These events focused on issues related to promoting domestic investment, leveraging foreign direct investment, green financial inclusion, trade, heritage, and women’s economic empowerment, and were organized with a range of partners, including, for example, the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum, the Union of Arab Chambers, and the Regional CSR Network. The number of Bahraini entrepreneurs supported in 2020 reached 246; thus, leading to an estimated investment generated in the value of \$122 million.

Four virtual Enterprise Development & Investment Promotion Program (EDIP) programs were held for entrepreneurs in Bahrain with the participation of 60 entrepreneurs. In addition, UNIDO has developed two new initiatives, namely the *Global Entrepreneurs Program (GEP)* and the *Virtual Mentoring Program (VMP)*. GEP aims at supporting well established entrepreneurs to grow and expand their businesses globally from Bahrain; which in turn leads to facilitating joint ventures and partnerships in the form of access to finance, technology sourcing, know-how

and market access. VMP currently being piloted in Bahrain, supports entrepreneurs/investors to be engaged with foreign partners through sharing knowledge, expertise and networking. The mentors are well-established entrepreneurs and experts in different fields and sectors from Bahrain, Tunisia, Lebanon, Russia, and Sudan. Capitalizing on its success, UNIDO plans to expand support to entrepreneurs abroad while also growing its pool of mentors to include a wider range of expertise.

Through a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Tourism, the Supreme Council for Women, Tamkeen, and the Bahrain Development Bank, UNIDO ITPO organized the School Olympiad competition under the theme of *Entrepreneurship and Innovation: To Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 2030*. The Olympiad aims to educate students on the SDGs and prompt them to think of innovative solutions to address world challenges through the lens of one or multiple Goals. Through this program, UNIDO ITPO equipped over 600 teachers from 50 public and private schools in Bahrain with tools to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3. EMPOWER BAHRAINIS TO RAISE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Partnering for the SDGs



In December 2020, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs for the 3rd edition of the *King Hamad Award for Youth and SDGs*. Launched in 2017 and open to nominations from all countries, the annual King Hamad Award recognizes youth initiatives that contribute to the well-being of their communities, environmental sustainability, and other SDG-related principles. Every year UNDP has ensured full cooperation with other UN bodies to strengthen the Awards process. In particular the 2020 edition of the King Hamad Award sought strong partnership with other UN agencies, to populate the technical jury. To achieve that goal UNDP reached out to the whole UNCT, to populate a jury that included, besides UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, and the RCO. In addition, the Award identifies institutions that help and enable youth to thrive while also accelerating the SDGs. With over 4,000 applications from more than 100 countries, this the 2020 year's edition of the award included in the criteria recognized recognition of projects that focused on resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the UNDP-led *Youth Leadership Programme* held 12 dynamic sessions with 27 dedicated young participants over a period of seven weeks, and was assisted by 24 facilitators and speakers.



Working closely with Regional Advisors for SDGs and Innovation, UNDP provided support to the University of Bahrain in developing a plan for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Agenda in their 4-year University-wide strategy. Three workshops were designed to assist University administrators in developing the content of the strategy, two of which were held in 2020 (15 participants, 47% women), and the third in 2021.

Volunteerism



UNV partnered with UNFPA and the Arab Voluntary Union (AVU) to organize the 3rd edition of the Mohamed Ben Fahd International award, a regional award for distinguished volunteering initiatives in education, economic empowerment, water and environment, health, culture and art, media and communications, with a

total value of \$180,000. 22 awarded projects acknowledged and celebrated the outstanding contribution of thousands of volunteers around the world who willingly gave their time and skills to their communities, enriching lives through volunteerism. All 356 submitted projects across 41 countries contributed to promoting the spirit of voluntary work for development, including supporting underprivileged individuals and groups. UNV partnered with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to mark International Volunteer Day in Bahrain, acknowledging national initiatives to support COVID-19 response and promoting the culture of volunteering in time of crisis and emergency.

Public Health



UNDP, WHO and the United Nations Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) partnered with the Gulf Health Council (GHC), and the Ministry of Health to develop an *Investment Case for Non-Communicable Diseases in the Kingdom of Bahrain*. The four main non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases – cause 75% of deaths in Bahrain, and nearly one in five adults dies from NCDs before the age of 70. The premature death, morbidity and disability associated with NCDs are more than just a health issue. They negatively affect socio-economic development and long-term fiscal sustainability of government and public services. The investment case in Bahrain showed that NCDs cost the national economy \$1.4 billion, equivalent to 3.8% of GDP (2019), and kill around 2,000 Bahraini citizens per year. However, by investing in four cost-effective and proven policy packages, Bahrain would, over the next 15 years save 15,000 lives and reduce the incidence of disease. The investment case also addresses air pollution, the food system, urban design, and implementation of other cost-effective interventions such as bans on trans fats and health taxes on sugar and other health-harming products, as well as integrated responses to NCDs and COVID-19.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF STRATEGIC RESOURCES AND ENSURING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Environment



UNEP Regional Office for West Asia supported the Supreme Council of the Environment in conducting a *Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)* assessment, which would help set a baseline for proceeding with the development of a Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan for Bahrain. UNEP also supported Bahrain's submission of its *Third National Communication* to the UNFCCC, highlighting the nation's progress on climate change and the ongoing challenges to adaptation faced by various sectors.



Partnering with the National Oil and Gas Authority, UNEP is leading on Bahrain's first Green Climate Fund project, *Enhancing the Climate Resilience of the Water Sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain*. The Water Resources Management Unit was established to act as the technical unit to the Water Resources Council and will further support the development and implementation of project outputs and effective coordination between Ministries. Through a combination of technical and institutional capacity building, knowledge management, revision of policies and legislation, and increased public awareness on climate change threats, and the promotion of water saving and reuse, the project will create an enabling environment for the use of innovative technologies to mitigate the effects of climate change on Bahrain's water sector. This integrated approach and solutions to mitigating climate risks facing the water sector will ultimately promote the sustainable use and production of water in the country and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly SDG 6, SDG 12, SDG 13. Additionally, the project will indirectly contribute to SDG 5 – through the empowerment of women.



UNEP supported the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) in developing the National Air Quality Management Strategy. Once adopted, the Strategy will aim to reduce air pollution and improve public health. UNEP also developed draft inventories for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) from industries, pesticides, and unintentional releases through a series of capacity building workshops, leading to the development of a national implementation plan for the Stockholm Convention to limit the spread of these hazards. UNEP continues to lead the implementation of the HCFCs Phase out Plan in Bahrain (HPMP), to achieve full compliance with the Montreal Protocol requirements on substances depleting the Ozone layer and is now in its 10th agreement with the SCE.



Through UNDP's Sustainable Energy Unit Project (SEU), the Sustainable Energy Authority supported the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance and National Economy in the process for developing the first batch of Solar Plants for Government Rooftops (3MWac), through the National Tender Board of Bahrain. A pilot scheme was designed for its launch, which included proposals to support the uptake of renewable energy technology in industrial facilities, and several national events to promote market stimulation through awareness raising. The SEU also supported the Economic Development Board in assessing sustainable energy services and products offered by international companies against local needs, and the Ministry of Agriculture in undertaking a feasibility study of renewable energy into greenhouse project.



Food Security



FAO submitted a draft National *Food Security Strategy 2020-2030* for review in April 2020. The strategy formulation was participatory and in close partnership with the Government of Bahrain and with wide consultation with stakeholders including government and private sector. The Strategy focuses on economic and environmental sustainability and provides responses to anticipated changes and uncertainties in global socio-economic dynamics and climate. The core components of the food security strategy are domestic food production, investment (both domestic and abroad), trade, national strategic reserve management, food waste, nutrition, food safety, as well as policies and regulations to promote food security. The Strategy also addresses cross-cutting issues related to data and information systems, climate change, natural resource management and sustainability, and includes an action plan to facilitate implementation and monitoring.

In May 2020, FAO launched a project on the *Sustainable Development of the Aquaculture Sector*, to support the National Mariculture Centre in improving broodstock management and hatchery facilities, diversifying aquaculture products and delivering targeted training. Initial work focused on hatchery design and introduction of innovation for fish breeding (photoperiod control) and microalgae production.

Starting in February 2020, FAO worked with the Directorate of Animal Wealth at the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning on a project to eradicate animal disease and zoonosis, as well as to characterize, conserve and sustainably use farm animal genetic resources in Bahrain. FAO provided capacity building and designed field project surveys to support the project and is designing a strategy to improve production and productivity of local breeds through modern techniques in genetic improvement, improved health care, feeding, husbandry management, and improved cost structure of locally-produced animals and animal products.

In February 2020, FAO launched the development of the *Strategic Plan for Agriculture Statistics (SPAS)*, a five-year plan to improve statistics for food security. The SPAS aims to strengthen the agricultural statistics system in Bahrain to enhance national agricultural policies and monitoring of SDGs, including through the development of a crop and livestock production survey using the AGRIS Survey Methodology also used by the 50x2030 Initiative, and in alignment with the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics Methodology.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5. ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Digital Development



At the request of the Information and eGovernment Authority, UNDP undertook a study to analyze the gaps in the digital sector in Bahrain. This study supported the preparation of the *National Digital Strategy* to take place in 2021 Through an international consultancy and in collaboration with UNDP's Singapore Global Centre for Technology, Innovation and Sustainable Development, the Gap Analysis report shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the digital economy and A.I. as a precursor to a

new *Digital Transformation Strategy* expected for 2021. ESCWA also supported the Government of Bahrain in formulating a national plan for transformation towards the digital economy through artificial intelligence and other new technologies.

In 2020, ESCWA developed several valuable statistical tools, including the SDG Gateway, track country progress against all SDGs. This is a vital tool in monitoring progress toward achieving the SDGs and addressing gaps. It provides key insights and data to support Bahrain and its partners in targeting policies and programmes. ESCWA provided a personalized profile for the Bahrain UNCT on the ESCWA Data Portal, allowing UN entities to access data sourced from the Information and eGovernment Authority of Bahrain.



LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Operationalizing the commitment to Leave No One Behind compels us to combat discrimination, including gender discrimination, and rising inequalities and their root causes. Grounded in the UN's normative standards that are foundational principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and national legal systems across the world, the UNCT supports the efforts of Bahrain to mainstream human rights in policies and programmes. In addition to support for the development of Bahrain's first *Human Rights National Action Plan*, the UNCT routinely advises on and advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups such as migrants, women and stateless persons:

Migrant Workers



In 2020, the UNCT operationalized a national *United Nations Network on Migration*. Co-chaired by IOM and the ILO, the Network is comprised of ten UN resident and non-resident agencies including UNODC, OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO and the RCO in Bahrain. The Network ensures UN coordination and synergies on key migration issues, such as, trafficking in persons; migration and development; labour mobility governance, including policy and legislation on admission, protection and safe and dignified return of migrant workers; health of migrant workers, including universal health coverage and reproductive health and rights; as well as the impact of COVID-19. The network provided coordinated UN support to the Government of Bahrain in preparation of the voluntary national report for the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and regular migration.



In partnership with the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), UNODC and IOM completed a series of training modules for the *Regional Center of Excellence for Capacity Building in the Field of Combatting Trafficking in Persons* in Bahrain. Developed in close coordination with the LMRA these materials include comprehensive and tailored Standard Operating Procedures accompanied by detailed training curricula, designed to capacitate a range of relevant frontline actors. They include specialized airport staff, medical personnel in hospitals and clinics, judges and prosecutors, staff responsible for shelter management, labour inspectors, and media representatives. The modules are used for training of trainers at the national and regional levels. In addition to increasing the capacity of Bahraini officials

and frontline workers to adopt a victim centered approach to combatting human trafficking, this intervention has solidified Bahrain's status as a regional hub for expertise in this area of Trafficking in Persons.



With the participation of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the ILO launched the ILO-International Organization of Employers Toolkit for Construction Companies in the Middle East, focusing on protection of workers. Also with ILO support, the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) Secretariat created the Migrant Workers Committee, comprised of 13 migrant workers from seven expatriate communities (Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka), which works on organizing and protecting migrant workers in Bahrain, and contributed to a rapid assessment study of the construction sector (in cooperation with BWI) and domestic workers (in cooperation with ITUC). Based on a previous assessment of the national labour inspection system, conducted by the ILO, and to ensure the protection of labour rights, including those of migrant workers, the ILO also conducted some activities for strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social development on modern labour inspection procedures, including mainstreaming gender in labour inspection.

Women



The UNCT continued to focus its support on empowering the Supreme Council for Women, the country's high-level advisory body to the Government, to lead the nation on women's issues, particularly for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. In November, the acting Resident Coordinator joined the Supreme Council for Women in raising awareness of violence against women, one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of women reporting violence increased precipitously around the world. The Secretary-General urged countries to prevent and redress violence against women and girls as a key part of their COVID-19 response plans. As the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women coincides closely with Bahraini Women's Day, the Supreme Council for Women seized the opportunity to energize citizens, civil society, and the United Nations family in Bahrain in support of global action to end violence against women and girls.



Stateless Persons

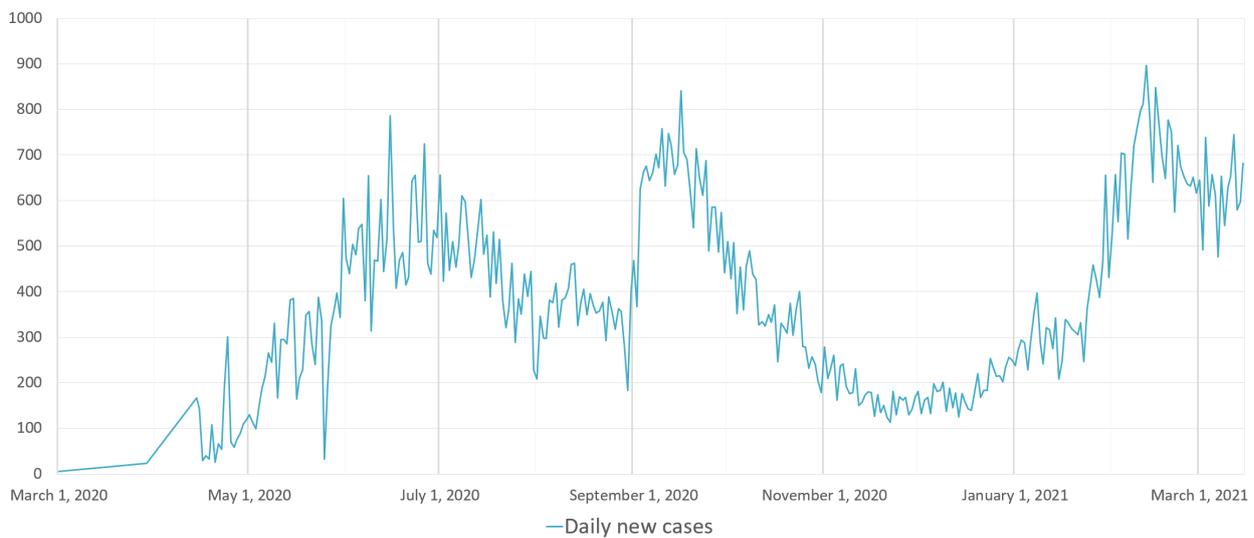


In 2020, UNHCR signed an agreement with Bahrain on data sharing to enhance protection capacity, mainly regarding persons of concern emanating from Iraq and Syria. Since the onset of

the COVID-19 pandemic, persons of concern to UNHCR and their families in Bahrain have experienced the same challenges to health, livelihood and personal well-being as the general population, prompting UNHCR to adapt programmes accordingly and deliver social protection and assistance to vulnerable people. The data sharing agreement allowed the Government of Bahrain and UNHCR to provide coordinated assistance to registered asylum seekers and refugees in Bahrain.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

COVID-19 daily new cases in the Kingdom of Bahrain



Thanks to early preparedness and partnership with the WHO, Bahrain has demonstrated good capacity to respond to COVID-19. By actively enforcing precautionary public health measures across key sectors, Bahrain began to mitigate impacts of the pandemic and demonstrate early effective epidemiological surveillance, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation. The health system provided free medical treatment to all residents, citizens and expatriates, whether in hospitals or intensive care units. Even though the COVID-19 infection rate initially peaked at relatively high levels, Bahrain also managed to achieve a high rate of recovery and a very low case fatality rate throughout the pandemic.

The WHO and the Government of Bahrain embraced a Leave No One Behind approach to public health. Specifically, this meant ensuring equal and affordable access to healthcare services, prioritizing human rights through the inclusion of workers and migrants, and ensuring safety and well-being of healthcare workers, especially for frontline responders. Bahrain was among the first countries to provide vaccination to both citizens and residents alike and, as of March 2021, had approved five vaccines for emergency use. As of March 30, there have been 143,574 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 517 deaths, while the number of individuals who had the 1st and 2nd vaccine doses administered are 502,541 and 253,008, respectively.

- 
HEALTH FIRST:
Protecting health services and systems during the crisis
- 
PROTECTING PEOPLE:
Social protection and basic services
- 
ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY:
Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector workers
- 
MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION
- 
SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



The WHO supported Bahrain in adopting and implementing a number of innovative strategies in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:



Forming a national multidisciplinary team in January 2020 (before the discovery of the first case in Bahrain) to keep pace with global developments, adapt guidance and protocols, and identify the needs of medical, preventive and therapeutic supplies and financial support packages for various economic sectors.



Leading national efforts in controlling the pandemic, reducing transmission and the number of deaths, including epidemiological investigation, infection control, contact tracing, and effective public messaging.



Building capacity in the field of laboratory capabilities, equipping several labs with the latest internationally accredited devices for the screening of the virus, and training personnel on genome sequencing.



Establishing screening centers and equipping hospitals, isolation centers and intensive care units to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.



Executing medical therapeutical care and case management protocols that contributed to reducing COVID-19 mortality to 4 per 1,000 (10% of the global average) and recovery rates of more than 95%.



Approving five COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Sinopharm, Sputnik V, and Johnson & Johnson) for emergency use, and providing them to all citizens and residents alike.



Ensuring the continuity and sustainability of essential healthcare services during the pandemic, including maintaining high rates of coverage of routine vaccinations (over 95%), continuing maternal and child healthcare services, developing "telemedicine" services to provide consultations through visual communication technology, following up on chronic non-communicable diseases, and introducing a service to deliver medicines for patients to homes.

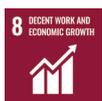
As in most programme countries, the UNCT in Bahrain faced unprecedented challenges throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Projects were interrupted, events were cancelled, and longer-term planning was challenged by the prospect of protracted uncertainty. Nevertheless, the UN family demonstrated flexibility in adapting its plans and working modalities to meet the challenge. In July 2020, the UNCT introduced the *Joint United Nations COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework in the Kingdom*

of Bahrain, an interagency initiative offering a multidimensional socio-economic review outlining actions, initiatives, and services from the UN geared towards supporting national authorities to respond (short-term) to and recover (medium-term) from the impact of the pandemic. While Bahrain demonstrated good capacity to respond and mitigate the negative effects, the UNCT repositioned quickly to offer flexible and innovative solutions across all programmatic areas.



As part of the *Joint Framework*, the Government of Bahrain sought support from UNDP in undertaking a *COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA)*. The initiative took off as a collaboration between UNDP and the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat), the most prominent national think tank in Bahrain. Funded through UNDP's Rapid Response Facility, a global vertical funding window targeted to COVID-19 response work, the SEIA was set up as a dynamically structured platform implemented through a joint DERASAT-UNDP team of experts, with mutually enforcing products, including surveys, analytical reports, interviews, and roundtable discussions with multiple stakeholders. A national household perceptions survey on COVID-19 was carried out, highlighting migrant workers' and women's economic hardship. The survey polled migrant workers living in Bahrain, particularly Bangladesh nationals, who represent the lowest skilled expatriate workers. The results showed with unprecedented clarity how these groups have been hit the hardest economically from the pandemic and the related restrictions and economic contraction.

Under the SEIA, the technical team also analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on financial transactions and consumer behavior, the private sector, and mental and physical health. Particular credit is due to private sector actors who contributed to these studies, including 3BL Associates, Bahrain Airport Company, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance, Bahrain SMEs Society, Central Bank of Bahrain, and KPMG Bahrain. UNDP ensured the UN's technical contributions to the SEIA analyses by reaching out and obtaining valuable inputs from UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women, IOM, and WHO, who provided technical support and advice on the quality of surveys and studies carried out under this project.



IOM developed a protocol for the establishment and management of temporary accommodation facilities for foreign workers in support of the Government's efforts to decongest labour accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, IOM developed a medically enhanced voluntary returns protocol that was utilized by the Government of Bahrain to manage returns of foreign workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons contributed to the identification of good practices to ensure continuity of services for victims of trafficking in persons during the pandemic, namely by participating in information and experience sharing activities with other national committees in the region, under the aegis of UNODC.

As in other programme countries, the UN in Bahrain pivoted to online engagement, holding a wide range of webinars and virtual multi-stakeholder meetings. UNDP partnered with the University of Bahrain to produce a webinar series on COVID-19 and SDGs. As UNDP designed this webinar series, it ensured drawing on the broader UN's knowledge, obtaining essential technical input from UN agencies who enthusiastically lent their expertise to these webinars, particularly those dedicated to the global COVID-19 response (UNDP), the environment (UNEP/UNDP), education (UNESCO/UNICEF), and health (WHO). A 3-day virtual workshop for the Arab region titled "Investing in the SDGs through South-South and Triangular Cooperation beyond COVID-19" was co-organized by the UN Office on South-South Cooperation, UNDP and MENAPAR under the patronage of Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The three-day workshop was attended by 33 speakers representing diverse stakeholder groups from 18 countries from the Arab region and beyond. The end product of the workshop is the development of a comprehensive research paper on "SSC Trade, Investment and Regional Integration" which compiles inputs from previous similar South-South investment workshops held jointly by UNOSSC and UNDP in Africa, Asia, Europe and CIS and Latin America.



In August 2020, the UNEP Regional West Asia Office organized a virtual ministerial meeting on COVID-19 and the environment, hosted by the Supreme Council of the Environment in Bahrain. The meeting shed light on approaches used by environment ministries and authorities in the West Asia region, and resulted in a ministerial statement that included recommendations for enhancing environmental priorities and actions in the context of COVID-19.



UNIDO ITPO engaged with young entrepreneurs in Bahrain, conducting a nationwide survey on how COVID-19 impacted on start-ups and entrepreneurs. UNIDO partnered with MedPoint and Shaikha Noora Al Khalifa, a popular social media influencer, to promote gender equality and co-organize the first online *Global Women Virtual Fashion Forum & Show* with participants from around the world, which embraced topics such as women's empowerment. Lastly, a four-day virtual event was co-organized with the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum titled *Young Women Entrepreneurs as Drivers of Sustainable Development Goals*, which also served as a platform for discussion around the ecosystem, financial inclusion and economic infrastructure for supporting women entrepreneurs.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

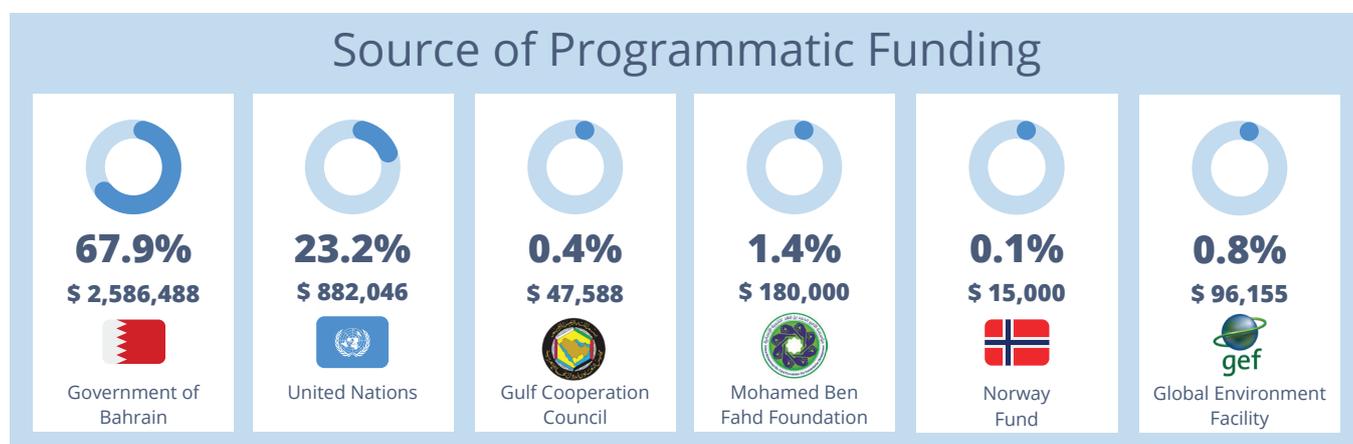
The Kingdom of Bahrain is a high-income country with high levels of human development and development indices equivalent to OECD countries. Accordingly, Bahrain is classified as a net contributor country, or a programme country that exceeds a certain per capita gross national income threshold, the main implication being that Bahrain finances nearly all in-country UN support through the national budget. This ensures that UN support is fully responsive to nationally-determined priorities and enjoys broad ownership by a range of national stakeholders.

The UN in Bahrain works in close partnership with the national authorities and all relevant stakeholders for the achievement of country priorities, the SDGs, and other internationally agreed development goals. It aims to support national institutions in securing the changes that will help the people of Bahrain live longer, healthier, and more prosperous lives. In that regard, it is committed to supporting the national vision for sustainable development, including by emphasizing balanced economic growth, diversification of resources for project funding, and raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the government sector and its services, in accordance with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Government Action Plan 2019-2022. The UN in Bahrain strives to be the partner of choice in mobilizing international cooperation, access to efficient and effective (including cost-effective) policy advice, and technical advisory services to support the implementation of new policies and best practices.

UNCT	2020 Total ¹ Expenditure	Received ² Resources in 2020	Source of Funding
FAO	\$ 203,023	\$ 7,449	Government of Bahrain
UNDP	\$ 1,818,364	\$ 1,461,000	Government of Bahrain
		\$ 100,000	UNDP Rapid Resource Fund
UNEP	\$ 828,039	\$ 15,000	Norway Fund
		\$ 96,155	Global Environment Facility
		\$ 47,588	GCC
		\$ 669,296	UNEP Environmental Fund
IOM	\$ 183,190	\$ 364,476	Government of Bahrain
UN Women	\$ 41,563	\$ 41,563	Government of Bahrain
ILO	\$ 82,000	\$ 82,000	United Nations
UNOCT	\$ 13,750	\$ 13,750	United Nations
UNODC	\$ 175,000	\$ 352,000	Government of Bahrain
		\$ 5,000	United Nations
UNV	\$ 192,000	\$ 180,000	Mohamed Ben Fahd Foundation
		\$ 12,000	United Nations
UNIDO	\$ 360,000	\$ 360,000	Government of Bahrain
Total	\$ 3,896,929	\$ 3,807,277	

Despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNCT was able to continue implementation of many programmes and projects and achieve results. The following chart captures the profile of UN programmatic funding in Bahrain for 2020. However, it should be noted that programmatic work is only one dimension of UNCT support in Bahrain, which also includes the provision of technical assistance, capacity development and policy advice.

As a Net Contributing Country (NCC) and a high-income country, UN activities in Bahrain are mainly funded by the host government and, consequently, its programmes are fully demand-driven and owned by the national government. However, the UNCT also engage in projects and activities that are funded beyond national government funds.



¹ This column presents UNCT programmatic and in-kind operational expenditure to support programme implementation for 2020. The RCO is entirely funded through the Special Purpose Trust Fund and not included in the table.

² Resources received includes both programmatic funding and/or annual allocations.



UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Delivering as One

Despite challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNCT in Bahrain continued to enhance collaboration towards delivering more coherent and joined-up support to the Government of Bahrain. In part due to a fully capacitated Resident Coordinator's Office, the reform of the UN development system has shown positive results for enhancing and integrating the work of UN entities, funds and programmes that do not have in-country presence. The effect has created new opportunities for joint approaches and, ultimately, more efficient and effective support to national authorities. Examples of the UNCT working more and better together include:

The Joint United Nations COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Framework in the Kingdom of Bahrain; an interagency initiative offering a multidimensional socio-economic review and outlining actions, initiatives, and services from the UN geared towards collaborating with national authorities to respond (short-term) to and recover (medium-term) from the impact of the pandemic.



UNDP drawing on the resources and expertise of the broader UN system in the preparation of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment with contributions by UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women, IOM, and WHO, as well as the organization by UNDP of technical webinars on "COVID-19 and the SDGs", including technical contributions by UNEP, UNICEF, WHO, and UNESCO.



UN Habitat, FAO and UNDP working closely together to develop a project on climate resilient green landscapes in urban areas.



UNDP brought together seven UN entities - including UNFPA, UNIDO, UNDP, UNEP, UNWOMEN, UNICEF, RCO - to participate in the technical jury for the 2020 King Hamad Award.



The RCO and OHCHR coordinating UNCT support to the Government in developing a Human Rights National Action Plan, through consultative workshops and capacity building around the Universal Periodic Review.



The operationalization of the United Nations Network on Migration, co-chaired by IOM and ILO, comprised of ten UN agencies including UNODC, OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO and RCO.



Business Operations Strategy

The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) is a results-based framework that focuses on joint business operations with the purpose of eliminating duplication, leveraging the common bargaining power of the UN and maximizing economies of scale. The BOS focuses on common services that are implemented jointly or delivered by one UN entity on behalf of one or more other UN entities. In 2020, and in line with the Secretary-General's UN reform targets, Bahrain designed and submitted its BOS (2020-2022) to support a more effective programme delivery on the 2030 Agenda. Nine UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP, FAO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UN Habitat and UNODC) committed to collaborate in the areas of Common Administration services, Common Finance services, Common ICT services, and Common Procurement services. As a next phase, the UN in Bahrain will further enhance the quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of operations resulting in cost avoidance and working as one UN, thus allowing for consolidation of resources across agencies.



Communicating as One

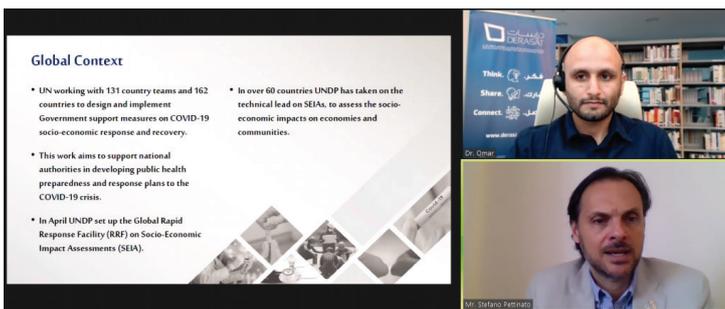
The UN75 campaign afforded exciting opportunities for new interagency collaborations with national counterparts and partners. The UN family supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in marking this important anniversary through producing a documentary video which showcased Bahrain's relations with the United Nations. The documentary, which is available online, includes remarks from UN officials at the highest level, including from the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed; Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; Director-General of UNESCO, HE Audrey Azoulay; Director-General of UNIDO, HE Li Yong; Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), HE Houlin Zhao; Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, HE Vladimir Voronkov; High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), HE Miguel Ángel Moratinos; President of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, HE Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande; Director of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific Division IAEA, Dr. Jane Gerardo-Abaya; and Regional Representative of UNHCR, Khaled Khalifa.



The year concluded with a large campaign under the slogan “Have Your Say”, designed to coincide with Bahrain's National Day and showcase the UN75 Global Survey. The UNCT collaborated with private public and private sector partners and set up a UN75 booth in one of Bahrain's busiest malls to engage with the public. An SMS campaign was also launched to spread the word.



The UNCT also collaborated to mark important international days with key stakeholders in Bahrain. UNICEF partnered with UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) to celebrate the World Children's Day under the theme “Reimagining a Better Future for Every Child”. To mark the day itself, a “kids' takeover” was organized where children from two schools joined the Director and Regional Representative of UNEP ROWA, and the CEO of the Bahrain Supreme Council of Environment, to discuss future solutions and pledge the use of reusable bottles and bags. UNICEF and UNEP then collaborated to launch an art competition, where children were encouraged to reimagine a better future for the world they live in, with a focus on sustainability, the environment, and climate change. Overall, more than 45 submissions were received from children across the Region, ranging between 10 and 18 years old.



CHAPTER 3

UNCT'S KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR NEXT YEAR



ANNEX I - KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Al Baraka Group	x				x			x		x							
Al Hikma School				x	x			x									
Arabian Gulf University				x	x			x	x	x							
Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities				x	x			x			x						
Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry	x				x			x		x		x					x
Bahrain Customs Affairs								x		x		x				x	
Bahrain Polytechnic				x	x			x	x	x	x	x					
BNP Paribas								x	x		x						
Capital Governorate	x	x		x	x			x		x	x	x					
Derasat			x	x					x		x					x	x
Economic Development Board								x	x	x	x	x					x
Electricity and Water Authority						x	x				x						
General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI)								x	x		x						x
Information & eGovernment Authority		x							x		x						x
Institute of Public Administration				x					x							x	x
Isa Cultural Centre				x	x												x
Labour Market Regulatory Authority	x	x	x		x			x		x						x	x
Medpoint			x	x					x								
Microsoft	x			x				x	x								
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	x				x					x						x	x
Ministry of Education	x			x	x			x	x								
Ministry of Finance and National Economy								x	x								
Ministry of Health			x														
Ministry of Housing											x				x		
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism	x							x	x			x					
Ministry of Information Affairs											x						x
Ministry of Interior			x					x	x	x						x	x
Ministry of Labour and Social Development	x	x			x			x		x							x
Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning		x				x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x		
Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs	x			x	x			x	x								
National Institute for Human Rights								x		x						x	x
General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU)	x	x					x		x								x
Sustainable Energy Authority							x				x						
Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf																x	x
Supreme Judicial Council																x	
Attorney General's Office																x	
Special Investigations Unit																	x
Inzaj				x				x	x								
UMatter			x														
Smart Way Consulting											x						
Bahrain Institute of Banking & Finance				x				x	x								
Supreme Council of Environment		x				x					x		x	x	x		





UNITED NATIONS
BAHRAIN

