

# Annual Report 2013



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# Kingdom of Bahrain

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs Annual Report 2013

### INTRODUCTION

The achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain have kept gaining momentum throughout 2013 thanks to the directives of the wise leadership. The year 2013 has substantially reinforced Bahrain's local, regional and global position and brought it tremendous results standing once again as living proof on the ever-evolving Royal reform project which was inaugurated by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa over a decade ago.

This reform plan which the wise leadership has kept revamping, laying down its legal foundations and completing its political and human rights elements while boosting the performance level of the government bodies, testifies to the usual key role being played by the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people. The role it plays within the Gulf region in general and the GCC cooperation states in particular as well as on the global level as a peace-loving country that advocates international peace and stability, owing strength to its strategic geographic position and deep-rooted history.

By chairing the weekly cabinet session on December 29, 2013, His Majesty the King wanted to clarify that within the government action his Royal vision is based on constant follow up of local, regional and global developments and incessant call for preserving the values of magnanimity dialogue and democracy in Bahrain.

Bahrain has taken those values as a model through which its seek guidance, His majesty said urging all sides to assume their roles, promote the culture

of national unity, shy away from violence and terrorism and unify ranks as a top priority, wishing Bahrain further achievements in 2014.

The diplomatic activity of the Kingdom of Bahrain

The diplomatic activity of the Kingdom of Bahrain during the year 2013 has been characterized by an active movement at different Gulf, Arab and international levels. This actually stems from the constants and credibility that have characterized the Kingdom of Bahrain and its wise leadership based on the principles of balance, tolerance and respect for other nations' sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal affairs.

As an embodiment of this policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its capacity as a mirror that reflects the Kingdom of Bahrain and its image to the outside world, has been keen to interact positively with the Gulf, Arab and international issues to achieve security and international stability and sustainable development in line with the directives of the leadership of the country represented by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain and his wise government led by His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister and the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

### **The GCC cooperation March**

Based on the Royal directives of His Majesty the King -May God protect him- to fully activate the integration between the GCC countries at all political, economic and social levels, the Ministry has been keen to achieve a significant presence on the Gulf scene. This was best illustrated when Bahrain chaired the 2013 GCC Ministerial Meeting. The success of the Bahraini diplomacy in presiding over the mentioned session was inspired by the presidency of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain- may God protect him- which was a clear indication of what the presidency of His Majesty over the GCC summit represents.

On December 10, and during the opening of the 34th session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held in Kuwait, His

Majesty the king confirmed the aspirations of the Gulf nations to create the necessary conditions to achieve integration and desired union in one capable of meeting all the expectations and aspirations of the GCC leaders and peoples. His Majesty added that union is what brings about goodness, protects us from all evils, secures our “collective security and common interests, protects our gains, maintains the sovereignty of our countries and guarantees non-interference in our internal affairs”

### **The 126th session of the GCC Ministerial Council Meeting**

Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Chaired the 126th Session of the GCC Ministerial Council, in presence of Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani. The Session was held at the headquarters of the Council’s General Secretariat in Riyadh on March 3rd, 2013.

At the outset of the meeting, Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmad bin Mohammed Al Khalifa delivered a speech in which he welcomed the participants and stressed that the GCC Member States look forward to better relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

'Unfortunately, Iran still intervenes in the GCC internal affairs and occupies the UAE islands 'Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs'. Iran rejected any discussion or peaceful solutions through negotiation and international arbitration, pointing out that this calls upon our countries standing against these interventions as well as international and regional challenges,' Sheikh Khalid said. He stressed the importance of principle of good neighborliness as a basic rule committed by the states in the region in accordance with the international laws and norms.

### **The GCC Supreme Council's Consultative Commission**

Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa affirmed that cohesion of the GCC countries was a crucial factor in surmounting obstacles, mainly in the current decisive period which requires constant stances to boost security and stability in the GCC member states.

He stressed in his speech at the opening of the first meeting of the 16th session of the GCC Supreme Council's Consultative Commission that the GCC country's unity is based on common destiny, dialogue and reciprocal respect.

"Consultation and dialogue is a faith and conduct in our life," he said, underlining the positive impact of the recommendations of the GCC Supreme Council's Consultative Commission on the GCC march and in translating the leaders' aspirations to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the GCC citizens.

He pointed out to the consultative commission's recommendations that were endorsed by their Highness and Excellencies at the previous session of the Supreme Council regarding Youth and citizenship, and employment Strategy in public and private sectors which reflect directly on the GCC citizens' life and future.

### **The GCC Ministerial Council Session in Jeddah**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa chaired the 128th GCC Ministerial Council Session held in Jeddah, on the 10th of September 2013.

The Ministerial meeting reviewed a number of topics on its agenda that related to areas of joint cooperation in all areas, alongside strategic dialogues with other international countries and economic blocs, as well as regional and international issues of common interest to GCC States

### **Bahrain-Kuwait Supreme Cooperation Commission**

Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa led the Kingdom's delegation to the 7th Session of the Bahrain-Kuwait Supreme Cooperation Commission that was opened on April 7th, 201 in Kuwait.

He stressed deep-rooted historic relations bonding Bahrain and Kuwait, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Amir Shaikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He asserted both countries' resolve to promote cooperation and undertake the necessary steps and procedures towards meeting the goals of the joint commission.

### **A letter to the Amir of the State of Kuwait**

On 4 November, 2013, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa delivered a letter from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to his brother, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al -Jaber Al- Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

### **Ministerial Meeting – The State of Kuwait**

Shaikh Khalid participated in the third joint ministerial meeting of the foreign ministers of GCC member states, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Delegate Minister at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also participated at the joint meeting of the GCC-Yemen foreign ministers meeting, and the joint ministerial meeting with Dr Shaikha Mariam bint Hassan Al Khalifa, president of the GCC Supreme Council Consultative Commission and its members.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa conveyed the greeting of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to His Highness Shaikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, and their wishes to him for good health.

This came during a meeting of His Highness the Emir of Kuwait with the Foreign Ministers of the GCC on the occasion of the preparatory meetings of the 129th Session of the Ministerial Council for the 34th Session of the GCC Supreme Council, which was held in Kuwait on November 27th, 2013. However, the Joint ministerial meeting with Morocco and Jordan agreed on the importance of the specialized teams completing their meetings to

implement the joint action plan (2013-2018) on cooperation, covering the following areas: economic, agriculture and food security, transport, communication, environment, renewable energy, natural resources, tourism, archeology, high and technical education, scientific research, social development, culture, media, youth and sports, law, judiciary, and political cooperation.

Regarding Yemen's development at a joint meeting of the GCC-Yemen foreign ministers, Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, highlighted the latest development of the Gulf brokered initiative, its executive mechanism and the outcome of the National Consensus Dialogue.

The ministerial council signed the agreement of the GCC States intellectual property rights centre between Kuwait and the GCC General-Secretariat on the sidelines of the 129th Session of the Ministerial Council in the presence of their Highnesses and Excellencies the GCC states foreign ministers

### **The Supplementary ministerial preparatory meeting for the GCC 34th Session**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, took part in the supplementary meeting of the ministerial council for the 129th preparatory session of the 34th session of the Supreme Council that was held in the State of Kuwait in December 2013, in continuation of reviewing the recommendations being presented to the GCC leaders at the Summit.

The council discussed a number of important decisions and recommendations related to joint Gulf work in all political, economic, military, security, social and cultural fields as well as projects related to the youth aimed at consolidating and developing the Gulf identity and citizenship among young people in the GCC.

This is in addition to items related to major developmental projects such as the railway network and water security among others, all of which are in the interest of economic integration among member states.

The ministers also discussed the latest developments in regards to the joint Gulf market and strategic economic negotiations with a number of states and major economic blocs across the world.

### **The United Arab Emirates' Visit**

On December 18, 2013, Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai received Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, in the framework of his official visit to UAE.

Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa conveyed the greetings of HM King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa to UAE Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, too.

Bahrain extended congratulation to UAE on the occasion of hosting Expo 2012.

Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa met his Emirati counterpart Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Discussions focused on ways of boosting historical bilateral cooperation and the importance of developing these relations in various fields.

Regional and international issues of mutual interest were also present on the agenda of Bahrain - UAE Higher Committee for Bilateral Cooperation.

Both sides also signed the Joint Supreme Committee's minutes and Memoranda of Understanding to bolster cooperation in the parliamentary, social development and media fields.

### **The Joint Bahraini-Omani Cooperation Committee meeting in Muscat**

The Joint Bahraini-Omani Cooperation Committee convened its 4th meeting co-chaired by the Kingdom of Bahrain's Foreign Affairs Minister, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa and the Sultanate of

Oman's Minister in-charge of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah in Muscat on February 18th, 2013.

During the meeting, three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) have been signed by both sides pertaining to general and higher education, and fisheries. The two sides asserted the importance of boosting cooperation between both foreign ministries by studying the signing of a memorandum of understanding between both ministries regarding diplomatic studies, research and training.

The two sides also signed the minutes of the 4th meeting of the joint cooperation committee between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman which sets out the action plan to boost bilateral cooperation relations in various fields and also the relevant implementation mechanisms.

In conclusion of the meeting, a joint communiqué was issued which reiterated the existing excellent, deep-rooted historic bilateral cooperation relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the sisterly Sultanate of Oman and close familial relationship between both brotherly peoples.

The joint communiqué praised the level of their constantly increasingly-growing bilateral cooperation relations and emphasized its continual progress in order to accomplish the objectives and aspirations of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and his brother HM Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed. Those objectives called for enhancing and supporting cooperation in the fields of economic development and investment, sustainable development, encouragement of innovation and tourism exchange among other agreed areas.

It also called on convening of regular meeting of the Joint Work Groups in areas covering: Financial and Economic Sectors.

The first meeting of the Joint Bahraini – Omani Business Council shall be held later in Muscat. The aim is to promote joint investment projects,

particularly, in the field of food security, financial investment, insurance, and to benefit from their Free Trade Agreement with the USA.

### **Visit to Qatar**

Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa visited Qatar On Feb 23, 2013. He expressed Bahrain's thanks and appreciation to Qatar's firm historical stances that stem from their firm belief in the joint goals and common destiny between the two countries and people.

The Foreign Minister's visit culminated in several outcomes the most important of which was the signing of a framework agreement between the two brotherly countries regarding the State of Qatar's contribution into the Gulf Development Program.

He pointed out that Qatar's support to Bahrain's development programs aim is to consolidate cooperation and integration among GCC States to face the rapid challenges and changes in the region for the progress and prosperity of its people.

The accompanying businessmen delegation held a number of meetings with their Qatari counterparts to discuss ways to bolster bilateral economic and investment cooperation in the private sectors, the need to conduct more reciprocal visits, and benefit from investment opportunities in both countries.

### **At the level of Arab Cooperation**

Based on the great importance of the Arab depth as well as the ties of brotherhood and common destiny of the Kingdom of Bahrain with the brotherly Arab countries and thanks to the conscious approach and balanced Bahraini diplomacy planned by His Majesty the King –may God protect him, the position of the Kingdom of Bahrain has become clear to the Arab brothers. This was reflected positively in the Arab solidarity with Bahrain against the attempts to discredit its Arab identity by some regional parties and its refusal to interfere in its internal affairs.

In line with the directives of the wise leadership on reinforcing the Arab depth of the Kingdom, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has given great

importance to communication with brotherly countries and active participation in all Arab political events at various levels.

The Bahraini political leadership-May God protect them- had a significant presence in 2013 and an active participation in different Arab and Gulf summits like the Economic Summit in Riyadh and the Arab Summit in Doha as well it exchanged many visits and hosted many events, conferences and personalities such as the Yemeni President, deputies of the National Assembly of Kuwait, the Jordanian monarch, the Secretary General of the Arab League and the Arab-Turkish Dialogue Forum and the Arab parliament speaker.

### **Arab Socio-Economic Development Summit**

On behalf of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, participated in the concluding session of the 3rd Arab Socio-Economic Development Summit in Riyadh, KSA today on January 22nd, 2013.

The Summit issued a resolution welcoming the initiative of HM the King regarding supporting the private sector project of launching the Common Arab Bourse.

### **Financial Assistance to the Syrian Refugees**

Representing His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander, with participation of H. E. Foreign Minister, attended the opening session of the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held in Kuwait City on 30 January 2013.

In support of the conference, HRH Crown Prince announced the Kingdom's pledge of US\$20 million that will be allocated to projects conducted by the Royal Charity Foundation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in aid for the people of Syria. This is in addition to an earlier donation of US\$5 million that was previously pledged to build four schools and 500 shelters for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

He also emphasized the strategic importance of unifying efforts to meet the objectives of the conference, and to bring this dreadful and tragic situation to a peaceful and sustainable resolution for the sake of all Syrians.

### **Friends of Yemen Group**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa took part in the 5th Conference of the Friends of Yemen, held in London under the joint Chairmanship of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Britain. During the meeting, the implemented pledges of the previous donors' meetings, in order to achieve Yemenis aspirations in progress and development, in Riyadh and New York in September 2012 were also discussed.

The participants also discussed the latest security developments in brotherly Yemen, the restructuring of the Yemeni Army, and ways of combating the threats of terrorist groups and foreign interference in order to promote security and stability across the country.

### **The Arab Summit – Doha**

Addressing the 24th Arab Summit held in Doha on the 26th of March 2013, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa underscored the keenness of Arab leaders on the importance of strengthening the Arab national security in light of Arab close and fraternal relations.

His Majesty stressed that the Arab world is facing new realities and significant challenges that have direct impact on the Arab countries and peoples which makes them even more determined to press ahead with closer coherence and cohesion.

He pointed out the need to develop means of cooperation and joint Arab action in order to enhance the unity of the Arab nation, their hopes and aspirations based on pragmatic approach.

He expressed his hopes that the summit could set a landmark in order to achieve the desired goals by enhancing the ties of brotherhood, protecting the Arab interests and opening wider areas for fruitful cooperation between the Arab countries.

### **Meeting with Algerian President**

At the beginning of April 2013 and out of desire to enhance Arab cooperation, the President of the Republic of Algeria, received Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs while paying official visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

During the meeting, the Foreign Minister conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and those of Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister to President Abdulaziz Bouteflika, and expressed his thanks and appreciation for Algeria's supportive stances towards the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Foreign Minister also expressed his wishes for continued good health and happiness to President Abdulaziz Bouteflika and further progress and prosperity to the brotherly Algerian people.

### **Visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

On 9 April 2013, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid a visit to the Jordanian capital, Amman, in the framework of an official visit intended to underline the keenness of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to strengthen and consolidate the historical relations between the two countries and peoples in all fields, and to discuss and exchange views on current developments at the regional and international levels.

### **The Arab Ministerial Delegation**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa took part in the Arab League delegation met with Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry on April the 28th, 2013 to confer on the latest Palestinian issue and ways to move forward the Middle East stalemated peace process.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined the crucial need to come to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict based on the international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. He welcomed US' efforts in this respect.

### **The Arab League Meetings**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, participated at the meeting of the 140th session of the Arab Ministerial Council, which was held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Arab League in Cairo on 1st September 2013.

The council approved the request of the Kingdom of Bahrain to host the headquarters of the Arab Court of Human Rights, and welcomed the hosting of Bahrain for the meeting of foreign ministers of Arab countries and South America in 2014.

The Council also supported all nominations of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the positions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, which include nominations for the membership of the UN International Telecommunication Union, a membership for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and a membership of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as the nominations of the Kingdom of Bahrain for each of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme (IFAP), which all confirm the prestigious representation of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the international and regional levels.

On May 23rd, 2013, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ghanim bin Fadhul Al-Buainain led Bahrain's delegation to the extraordinary meeting of the Arab ministerial committee in charge of the Syrian Crisis. He also participated in Arab Ministerial Meeting to review the development of the Syrian Conflict on June 5th, 2013.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs had participated on 17 July 2013 in the Meeting of the Arab Ministerial Delegation of the Follow-up Committee for the Arab Peace Initiative, with the US Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry, which was held in Jordan. He also participated in Arab Ministerial Meeting to review the development of the Syrian Conflict held in Cairo on 3 November 2013.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs had participated on in the extraordinary Arab League Ministerial Council Meeting in presence of the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abass on 21 September 2013.

#### **Ministerial delegation - Rome**

On 8 September 2013, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the meeting of the Arab ministerial delegation tasked by the Arab Peace Initiative Committee to contact the U.S. administration in the person of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Rome to discuss the best ways of providing the necessary support for the success of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. All this comes within the framework of the high interest accorded by the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Palestinian case.

#### **Ministerial delegation – Paris**

In the same vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the meeting of the Arab Peace Initiative follow-up committee with the US Secretary of State in Paris on 21 October 2013 where Kerry briefed the Arab ministerial delegation on the latest developments and the course of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations so that the Arab countries remain supportive of the negotiations and their results. The Paris meeting was the fourth between Kerry and the Arab ministerial delegation since the resumption of high-level peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel at the end of last July after nearly a three year of hiatus.

On April 7th, 2013, the minister of state for foreign affairs participated in The International Donors' Conference (IDC) for rehabilitation of Darfur and Arab Peace initiative Ministerial Meeting in Doha.

On December 5th of 2013, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs signed a memorandum of cooperation to promote training and vocational development programmes between the governments of Bahrain and Morocco.

### **At the level of international cooperation**

Seen the importance of cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the international community in the interest of both sides, the Bahraini leadership, may God protect him, has had an active tangible role at the regional and international levels. This was best exemplified by the fruitful visits of His Majesty the King to America, Britain and Turkey as well as hosting many of the personalities, events and conferences such as the representatives of the NATO Military Committee, the foreign communities, representatives of faiths, UNIDO Director, European Parliament Delegation, participants in the ministerial meetings of the GCC and the European Union, Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Manama Dialogue and the prime ministers of Korea and Japan. To put it in a nutshell, the Kingdom of Bahrain was the host of regional and international events during the year 2013.

In addition to that, we can mention the international movements of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister who have played an important role in promoting the image of the Kingdom through their visits to India, Japan, Malaysia and the United States, and meetings with delegations, officials and ambassadors. During these visits, they have discussed bilateral relations and ways of enhancing them in all fields, in addition to discussing joint efforts to serve the security and stability in the region and to exchange views on the current developments on the regional and international arenas and issues of common interest. Being keen to deepen the policy of openness to the world according to the Royal vision of effective communication regionally and internationally, the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs had active international activity and hosted many important international events in 2013.

### **The International Donor Conference to Aid Mali's Development**

On Jan. 29, 2013, The Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa conveyed the greeting of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to H. E. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe. This came as he participated at the International Donors Conference on Mali.

He announced that Bahrain is to pump \$10 million into the United Nations' two support funds for the Malian defence and security forces and the Forces of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

On May 13, 2013, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs headed Bahrain's delegation to participate at Ministerial level Contact Group Conference in Jeddah.

The 12th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

On behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Foreign Affairs Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa took part in the 12th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), themed: "The Muslim World: New Challenges and Expanding Opportunities," held in Egyptian Capital Cairo on February 6th, 2013 in presence of Islamic countries' leaders and heads of delegations.

### **Foreign Affairs Minister meets with his US counterpart**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, met with the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, in the Saudi Capital, Riyadh.

Talks between the Kingdom's Foreign Affairs Minister and his US counterpart explored progress and developing of strategic historic bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, asserting the importance of boosting bilateral cooperation areas by opening new horizons of cooperation in a number of aspects which reflect positively on bolstering existing bilateral relations between both friendly countries.

The two sides also explored current and latest Arab developments notably the situation in Syria and the Middle East peace process and current tensions and instability in the Arabian Gulf region due to Iran's meddling in the internal affairs of the GCC States besides the US position vis-à-vis Iran's nuclear dossier.

### **Bahrain-UK Joint Working Group's Inaugural Meeting**

On March 11, 2013, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, hosted the inaugural meeting of the Bahrain-UK Joint Working Group, welcoming to Manama Mr. Alistair Burt MP, British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East and North Africa.

Shaikh Khalid and Mr. Burt underlined the close and open relationship between Bahrain and the UK, and discussed a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, including cooperation on key trade and investment opportunities.

Co-operation and assistance on security and counter-terrorism also featured, as did Bahrain's reform programme, including UK support on the implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report and UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review.

Officials from both governments will work together, monitoring and evaluating areas of co-operation and assistance, between now and the next meeting, expected within six months.

### **Bahrain-UK Joint Working Group Meeting**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa met the British Minister for Middle East and South Asia, Hugh Robertson as they Co-chaired the Bahrain-UK Joint Working Group meeting held on 11 September 2013 at UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Major General Tariq Hassan Al Hassan, head of the Public Security also attended the meeting.

“The Joint Working Group is a demonstration of the strong relationship between the UK and Bahrain. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss a wide range of areas of co-operation. They exchanged views on regional and bilateral issues including co-operation and assistance on security and counter-terrorism, as well as key trade and investment opportunities.

They also discussed progress with Bahrain’s reform programme, including UK support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report and UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review.

On September 11th, 2013, His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa was the guest of honor of the annual meeting of the Bahrain-British friendship society – The Bahrain Society, in London.

Shaikh Nasser addressing the attendees reiterated the importance of the historical deep rooted bilateral ties.

The celebration was attended by a number of UK ministers, and HE Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, minister of Foreign Affairs.

Brigadier Peter Sincock, President of the society, called for Iran not to interfere in the internal affairs of Bahrain.

### **Sir Bani Yas Forum**

On 15 November 2013, the Foreign Minister participated in the fourth Sir Bani Yas Forum from 15 to 17 November hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in collaboration with Chatham House. The Sir Bani Yas Forum is an annual high-level strategic gathering hosted by Shaikh Abdullah

bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the UAE, and annually brings together a group of one hundred foreign ministers and eminent opinion leaders from around the world to discuss critical issues facing the Middle East.

On 10 March 2013, the Minister of State Foreign Affairs participated in the press conference of the exhibition of the Soka Gakkai International at the UN House. He also headed the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Asian Dialogue Conference which was held in Tajikistan on 29 March 2013. He also participated in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Donor Conference to Finance the Strategic Plan for the Development of Quds.

On December 9, 2013, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs participated in the 40th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Conakry and on 4 February, he participated in the Ministerial Meeting on the new approaches to reforming the Security Council.

### **Africa-Arab Summit**

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister headed Bahrain's delegation to the Third Arab-African Summit, hosted by Kuwait on November 19 and 20, 2013 .

His Royal Highness stated that he was delighted to be in Kuwait to participate in the Summit, and to convey the greetings of His Majesty to the leadership of Kuwait.

His Royal Highness further stated the pride of His Majesty in the long historical ties between the two countries that continue today to develop and progress across a number of fields.

His Royal Highness went on to relay His Majesty's best wishes for the success of the summit and for outcomes that contribute to enhancing joint Arab-African cooperation, particularly in developmental sectors.

## **Bahrain Participation at the 68th Session of the United Nation General Assembly**

### **Cooperation with international organizations**

The year 2013 witnessed a distinctive and active Bahraini diplomacy in the UN corridors. At the sidelines of the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, headed the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its sixty-eighth session. The corridors of the United Nations witnessed an intense Bahraini diplomatic activity in the framework of bilateral relations and international cooperation and interaction with the global issues at the Bahraini and GCC levels. The speech of the Kingdom of Bahrain delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in front of the General Assembly of the United Nations came to clarify the positions of Bahrain on various regional and international issues.

Indeed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that Bahrain, which is located in the Arabian Gulf-a region of great strategic importance and which has been the meeting place of civilizations of the world since the dawn of history- is now living one of its new brightest eras in building a community based on development and justice in all its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, thus putting it at the forefront of countries according to standards of human development.

He also stressed the keenness of the leadership of the Kingdom of Bahrain through its modern history spanning more than two centuries on interaction and dialogue with his people and his keenness to respond to their expectations at every stage with full transparency and commitment. Since His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa came to power, the Kingdom has continued its constant approach to lay the foundations of the modern national sovereign independent state based on the objectives of sustainability, competitiveness, justice and constitutional and legislative reforms.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs renewed Bahrain's firm stand against terrorism, extremism and violence in all its forms and manifestations- whatever the motives, justifications, and origins are. He also confirmed Bahrain's firm belief in the necessity of the link between peace and development and its commitment to achieving the National Millennium Development Goals.

The minister asserted that one of the basic pillars of Bahrain and the Gulf Cooperation Council is the keenness to adhere to the principles of good neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states as well as respect for the principles of international law and international conventions and peaceful coexistence.

He called on Iran to stop interfering in the affairs of the countries in the region and put an end to its occupation of the three United Arab Emirates Islands and said he was looking forward to a new rhetoric, clear and positive statements and initiatives and concrete actions from the Islamic Republic of Iran, leading to the elimination of tension and instability in the region.

He also called for the need to reach a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in the framework of the Arab peace initiative, put forward by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz and endorsed by the Arab summit in Beirut in 2002. "We look forward to going beyond the stage of war and hostility. The Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews have lived for centuries in this region and woven its history together in a framework of coexistence and tolerance." HE added.

His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs also confirmed support of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to the current diplomatic movement to destroy chemical weapons the Syrian regime and to the agreements reached in Geneva between the United States and the Russian

Federation. He called on the United Nations and the international community to assume their responsibilities to take deterrent measures to stop the suffering of the Syrian people due to serious violations.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also expressed Bahrain's keenness to play an active role in all honesty and sincerity and responsibility in achieving international cooperation and strategic partnerships with the international community. "Bahrain is always looking forward to a better future," he said. Upon arriving to New York, The Minister of Foreign Affairs has confirmed in line with the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, Bahrain accords high importance to the role of the United Nations in dealing with international problems and is committed to supporting the principles of peace keeping and maintenance of security and international cooperation.

On the sidelines of the meetings of the UN General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs chaired on September 22 the Coordination Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States and expressed the determination of the GCC countries to move forward towards strengthening fraternal relations and consolidating ties with international organizations and countries and friendly groups and work with them to reinforce security and peace in the region.

On September 23, the Minister of Foreign Affairs chaired the delegation of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Troika meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Wan Yi Minister of the People's Republic of China. During this meeting, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs lauded the ever-growing political and economic relations between China and the GCC, pointing to the importance of the recent visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, to the Republic of China which opened new horizons in the Sino-Gulf relations.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs received Hugh Robertson, the British Minister for the Middle

East and North Africa; both sides reviewed the support and development of relations between the two countries.

In the context of strengthening Bahrain's international relations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received in New York Monaco's Foreign Minister Jose Padilla on 23 September. Both sides have announced the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations.

During the reception organized by the U.S. President in honour of the participating delegations in the meetings of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs conveyed the greetings of His Majesty the King to President Barack Obama.

Within the framework of Arab coordination, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in a meeting of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level, held at the headquarters of the United Nations on September 23, and discussed the latest developments in Syria and the developments of the Palestinian issue.

At the level of the Gulf region, the Minister of Foreign Affairs presided on September 23 over the meeting of the delegates of the Cooperation Council at a luncheon meeting that brought together the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and William Hague Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom.

He also met Marty M. Natalegawa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and expressed appreciation for the good bilateral relations that bind the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Indonesia.

In the context of the Gulf- international cooperation, the Foreign Minister chaired the meeting of the GCC Gulf countries at the level of Troika with Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in the United Nations and pointed to the importance of boosting relations between the GCC countries and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the economic and political fields.

On September 23, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the opening ceremony of 68th Session of the UN General Assembly in the presence of several heads of state and heads of delegations.

He also attended the luncheon held by His Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki -moon.

On the sidelines of meetings of the 6th Session of the UN General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran and insisted that the bilateral relations between the two countries should be based on mutual respect for the sovereignty of states and adherence to the principle of good neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs. “We hope that the election of President Hassan Rohani to head the Islamic Republic of Iran will contribute to the opening of a new chapter and a new discourse between the two countries for the achievement of their shared interest,” he said.

The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed his country’s respect for the sovereignty of Bahrain and the importance of its stability welcoming the National Dialogue in Bahrain.

At the Arab level, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Yemen which was held on September 25 on the sidelines of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly.

He also attended a luncheon held by the Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia for a number of foreign ministers at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Turkey.

Within the context of strengthening Bahrain’s relations with the international community, the Foreign Minister met with Villy Søvndal Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Underlining Bahrain's commitment to join international conventions as an effective member, the Foreign Minister deposited two instruments of accession of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and expressed his happiness over its accession to such important conventions.

At the pan-Arab cooperation level and interaction with the Palestinian cause, the Minister of Foreign Affairs conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain and His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister to President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine and confirmed their emphasis on the constant position of Bahrain towards the Palestinian issue and the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on their national soil with East Quds as its capital. This came as the Minister of Foreign Affairs visited the Palestinian President at his residence in New York on the sidelines of the participation of the two brotherly countries in the activities of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Minister of Foreign Affairs also chaired the GCC delegation to the Troika meeting between the GCC countries and Pak Ui-Chun Korean Foreign Minister, held on September 25 in New York.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also attended the reception held on the sidelines of the Clinton Global Initiative which discussed critical political and economic issues in the presence of a number of heads of states.

He also participated in a breakfast meeting held by the Foreign Minister of Norway to exchange views on the latest Palestinian developments.

In the context of strengthening Bahrain's international relations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs signed in New York an agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

And within the context of Bahrain's interaction with the events of the United Nations, the Foreign Minister met with Mrs. Helen Clark, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Programme. The Excellency the Minister praised the role played by the Office of the Program in the Kingdom of Bahrain through the support of development projects.

He also met with Anifah Aman, Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and discussed ways of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, especially after the visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister to Malaysia last March.

On the sidelines of the meetings of the UN General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with HRH Prince Mohamed Balkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Sultanate of Brunei- Darussalam during which he conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister to their His Majesty Haji Hassanal Al Balkiah Sultan of Brunei-Darussalam.

On September 26, the Kingdom of Bahrain received the presidency of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) during the annual working meeting of the foreign ministers of the ACD member states in New York where the Minister of Foreign Affairs discussed the concept paper submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, entitled "Promoting Tourism among Asian Countries". He said that tourism in essence a means of great value in strengthening bonds of friendship and understanding between peoples as well as it constitutes a solid foundation for cooperation in various fields.

On the other hand, Bahrain hosted the 12th ministerial meeting of the ACD held in Manama on the 25 of November 2013.

His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs also met with His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Latvia Edgars Rinkēvičs. During the meeting the two ministers signed a memorandum of understanding on political consultation between the two foreign ministries.

In the Gulf framework, the Minister of Foreign Affairs also presided over the meeting of the GCC foreign affairs ministers with the US Secretary of State and the US Secretary of Defence and discussed a number of bilateral security issues in the context of the GCC-US Strategic Cooperation Forum with view to increasing the capacity of the centre for maritime security in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In the context of international cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders on political consultation between the two foreign ministries.

He also signed a similar memorandum of understanding with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta and chaired the meeting of the GCC countries with Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida.

At the level of the troika, the Minister of Foreign Affairs chaired the meeting of the GCC foreign ministers with Sergey Lavrov Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation. During this meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said he was looking forward to exchanging views with the Russian foreign minister, especially on the Syrian crisis.

At the level of the Syrian crisis, HE Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the Ministerial Meeting of The Friends of Syria Core Group which was held in New York on September 26, where the participants discussed developments in the Syrian file.

At the United Nations headquarters, the Bahraini Foreign Affairs Minister also met with Mankeur Ndiaye, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal as well as Dr Maia Panjikidze Foreign Minister of New Zealand.

At the level of Arab coordination, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with Houshyar Zebari, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq where the two ministers exchanged views on regional and international issues.

At an invitation by Foreign Minister of Singapore Mr. Shanmugam, the Minister of Foreign Affairs attended a reception held by the Singaporean Minister and reviewed with him aspects of cooperation between the two countries.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also met with a delegation from the American Jewish Committee and praised the freedom of religion and the spirit of tolerance among all components of the Bahraini society.

At the Gulf level, The Minister of Foreign Affairs presided over the meeting of the GCC Foreign Ministers with John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, and discussed ways of invigorating political, economic and security relations between the two sides.

Within the framework of the U.S- Bahrain relations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received in New York, Elizabeth Jones, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs where the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain has pursued a policy of tolerance and moderation which led to the emergence of a society that believes civilized interaction, respect towards the other and coexistence between all its components. He said “what was is happening in Bahrain today is violence and radicalization by terrorist groups targeting the security of Bahrain. Ms. Jones praised Bahrain’s attainments at the levels of reform and dialogue.

In New York, the Minister of Foreign Affairs also met with Mr. Nabil Fahmi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Egypt, and asserted Bahrain’s

support to Egypt at all international forums, expressing full confidence that the Arab Republic of Egypt will regain its Arab and regional role in the defence of the issues of the Arab and Islamic nations.

At the level of international cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received Surapong Tovichakchaikul, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and praised the high level of bilateral relations between Bahrain and Thailand in all domains.

He also met with the Philippines Foreign Minister Albert Ferreros Del Rosario and discussed ways of strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

In the framework of the Arab cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received Saad-Eddine El Othmani foreign minister of the Kingdom of Morocco and underlined the depth of the historic relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Morocco.

### **Events Convened in Bahrain**

#### **The 12th Asian Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting.**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa chaired The 12th Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting in Manama that was hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain from 23 to 25 November, 2013. Manama was nominated to be the First Asian Tourism Capital for 2014.

#### **The meeting issued the Manama Declaration that reads:**

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; the Kingdom of Bahrain; the People's Republic of Bangladesh; the Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam; the Kingdom of Cambodia; the People's Republic of China; the Republic of India; the Republic of Indonesia; the Islamic Republic of Iran; Japan; the Republic of Kazakhstan; the Republic of Korea; the State of Kuwait; the Kyrgyz Republic;

the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; the Sultanate of Oman; the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; the Republic of the Philippines; the State of Qatar; the Russian Federation; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the Republic of Singapore; the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; the Republic of Tajikistan; the Kingdom of Thailand; the Republic of Turkey; the United Arab Emirates; the Republic of Uzbekistan; and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

Having met in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, for the 12th ACD Ministerial Meeting on 25 November, 2013;

WELCOMING the Republic of Turkey as a new ACD Member State;  
EXPRESSING our appreciation for the Kingdom of Thailand's initiative in 2002 to establish the ACD to promote intra-Asian cooperation, coordination and development across various mutually-agreed fields, and of Thailand's role as ACD Coordinator;

UNDERLINING the continued importance and relevance of the ACD and its values in engaging Asian states in mutually-beneficial cooperation to address contemporary challenges and opportunities;

WISHING to build further upon the successful outcomes of the previous ACD Ministerial Meetings and the First ACD Summit;

RECOGNISING the moral, political and economic necessity of ensuring sustainable development and prosperity throughout the region and the world, and underlining the importance of intra-Asian cooperation in achieving these goals;

REITERATING our adherence to and promotion of the core values of the ACD, namely, positive thinking, informality, voluntarism, non-institutionalization, openness, respect for diversity, the level of support of Member States, the evolving nature of the ACD, positive work and participation of Member States in various cooperation programmes;

AFFIRMING the importance of cooperation and the rule of law to ensure stability and security as the necessary foundations for achieving sustainable development;

NOTING the growing importance of Asia in the modern world in light of its geographical scope and its outstanding human and natural resources and noting in this regard the opportunities to increase intra-Asian trade, investment, and economic cooperation;

AFFIRMING the importance of people-to-people contact in fostering understanding, amity and cooperation among Asian nations;

RECOGNISING the role of tourism in contributing to interaction of people across national borders as well as to economic growth and employment generation;

UNDERSCORING the need to promote synergy in cooperation and partnership links between regional organisations and dialogue fora in Asia;  
DO HEREBY DECLARE:

1. We endorse with appreciation the theme of this 12th Ministerial Meeting, namely promoting intra-Asian tourism, and note in particular the importance of tourism not only in promoting economic growth, but also in establishing and nurturing bonds of cooperation and enhancing people-to-people connectivity. We urge ACD Member States to work closely together to take forward the steps outlined in the Concept Paper, and to continue to develop long-term and ongoing cooperation in tourism and related fields;
2. We therefore greatly appreciate the ongoing work of the Co-Prime Movers on Tourism, and it is in the context of these efforts

that we have positively discussed the proposals set out in the Concept Paper, which we welcome and endorse.

3. We look forward to cooperation among the appropriate government and non-government tourism agencies in our countries, and with the provisional ACD Secretary-General, to implement the proposals, and in particular to the nomination of the First Asian Tourism City and welcome the nomination of Manama as a First Asian Tourism Capital for 2014.

### **ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Ministerial Meeting - Manama, 26 November, 2013**

The Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held their 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Tuesday, November 26, 2013, in Manama, Bahrain.

The Ministers agreed that the Kingdom of Bahrain will be the GCC's country coordinator for GCC-ASEAN relations for the next three years.

The meeting discussed the establishment of cultural Institution to be called: "The Institute of GCC - ASEAN Cooperation" to be hosted by Bahrain and reiterated the importance of the strategic partnership.

HE Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa said the meeting yielded axes great strategy, noting that the Kingdom of Bahrain as a "coordinator" on the part of the Gulf Cooperation Council, will coordinate the relationship with ASEAN countries to develop a mechanisms of dialogue during the next three years, in partnership with Malaysia as a current ASEAN coordinator.

The meeting reviewed the three pillars that have been agreed upon including: a "conclusion of economic framework agreement between the two regions, Free Trade Agreement, and the conclusion of agreements in education and culture field."

The Foreign Minister added that the meeting discussed a number of important issues related to food and energy security as well as re-considering the mechanisms for joint action in order to formulate recommendations in the best interest of the two regions in the future and in a manner that is consistent with the aspirations and needs of both sides. He pointed out that the next summit will be held at "the presidency in South East Asia", the State of Myanmar before the end of next year.

In response to a question about the development ties with the Far East, the Foreign Minister said that cooperation with the countries of Asia does not mean a change or shift in our foreign policy, noting that there had been a meeting between the European Union and the GCC last summer, reiterating that this cooperation extended for more than 20 years.

He pointed out that this does not mean that we do not seek to form partnerships and alliances with emerging countries, especially Asia, a continent with a promising future.

### **Launching of the Report of “Water Governance in the Arab Region”**

The United Nations Development Programme launched its Report: “Water Governance in the Arab Region: Managing scarcity and securing the future” under patronage of H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa on 28 November 2013.

Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa expressed his great pleasure to share with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Ms. Helen Clark, in presence of a number of ministers, parliamentarians, and a bunch of diplomats, academia and researchers, this important event; the launch of the report.

He highlighted that the Arab region faces many challenges, particularly the challenge of sustainable development so as to ensure the interests of present and future generations, and to achieve their ambitions and aspirations.

He explained that Bahrain has noticed over the last decades drought in a lot of underground springs, which were considered a haven to enjoy and contribute to a refreshing climate that bring joy and happiness to those who reside in their surroundings, but unfortunately it has become memories of the past the elderly talk about because many of those flowing springs have dried up and the new generations know very little about.

He pointed out that the same problem is facing many Arab countries such as Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq which increases the risks these countries have to endure, and makes it necessary to develop strategic plans for the future management of water, particularly the rationalization of use and increase the reserves in the GCC and Bahrain in particular.

He explained that researchers and scientists predicted; the wars of the future - God forbid - will be centered on the issue of water and securing water for agriculture and human use in various areas of daily life, including use in industry and tourism.

He underlined that in his responsibility in the Kingdom of Bahrain and in the framework of the strategic vision of the kingdom put forward by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, in the futuristic political vision; he would like to refer to the three issues which he thinks are central and essential in this area.

The first issue is the issue of water security and as all know that security in today's world is no longer a matter of a narrow concept belonging to a specific Ministry or department, but has become a holistic concept.

It is necessary to operate the various organs of the state in order to achieve the concept of security in its fullest capacity. Water security has become a matter associated with diverse natural phenomena, particularly the phenomenon of climate change, greenhouse emissions and the resulting sea and ocean level rise, floods and storms, and also the emergence of cases of drought in some famous rivers as well as the consequent of desertification and drought.

As the water issue is also a relevant issue of the sovereignty of nations and borders and relations with its neighboring countries. The management and governance of water became a matter an integral part of the concept of comprehensive security.

The second issue is the need and the ways to provide financial and human resources to accomplish the integrated management of water and to draw plans and programs necessary to do so. In this area, we find that the GCC countries are in a privileged position because of the availability of financial resources significantly, but on the other hand they are in a need for more work and effort in relation to human resources, competencies and expertise in this specialized field, so the concept of regional water security is the one that can be achieved through integration and interdependence among the GCC countries.

The third issue is that the issue of water scarcity is not an issue for one specific state or a limited group of countries, but belongs to the whole Arab region which calls for concerted efforts on the Arab level in the framework of the management of funding through government and private and joint banks such as the Arab-African Bank or the Islamic Development Bank. This is in addition to the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme.

### **Manama Dialogue**

Over 50 foreign ministers, ministers of Defence, and Staff Chiefs, as well as a number of key security and intelligence staff, diplomats, politicians, and academia converged in Bahrain to attend the 9th edition of Manama Dialogue on 6 December 2013.

The delegations discussed key issues relating to regional security and conflicts, in addition to military, security and intelligence cooperation. US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel addressed the First Plenary Session focusing on: 'Global Security Priorities for the US' and other issues relating

to conflicts and outside powers, the regional impact of the Syria conflict, and the stability of the Middle East.

The 9th Manama Dialogue 2013 highlighted the regional impact of the Syria conflict, the dangers of sectarianism and extremism in politics, the shifting regional balance and outside powers, and changing energy markets and Middle East security.

Manama Dialogue demonstrates the leading role of Bahrain in hosting dialogues, forums, and symposiums as platform to exchange views and experiences in various issues and topics of common concern.

The Manama Dialogue has come of age, becoming one of the major platforms to address security in the Arabian Gulf region and the Middle East and debate security challenges.

Since its inception, the forum has contributed to reducing high seas piracy, combating cyber wars, money laundering, intellectual property violations, drug and human trafficking, illegal immigration, sectarian tainted policies and other key topics.

The previous editions highlighted major issues – particularly the impact of the Arab-Israeli Conflict on regional security and stability and the role of regional and international players in security and political upheavals.

Manama Dialogue 2013 convened amid mounting regional security and political tensions which overshadowed the discussions- particularly the Syrian crisis and the negotiations on the controversial Iranian nuclear programme.

Organized annually, the Manama Dialogue provides a forum for the national security establishments of the participating states to exchange views on regional security challenges.

### **The GCC-EU Dialogue**

Bahrain hosted the Joint GCC-EU Ministerial Meeting in Manama on 30 November 2013. The meeting was Co- chaired by Minister for Foreign

Affairs, H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa and the EU High Commission for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mrs. Katherine Ashton and attended by their Highnesses and their Excellency, GCC foreign ministers, as well as a number of EU foreign ministers.

The meeting discussed ways to enhance cooperation between both sides and regional and international issues of common concern.

### **Workshop on trafficking in persons concluded**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) jointly organized in Manama on 10-11 June, 2013 a workshop on “National Capacities Building and raising awareness in Controlling Trafficking in Persons”.

The Royal directives of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Premier, HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister and Princess Sabeeka bint Ibra-him Al Khalifa, wife of His Majesty and President of the Supreme Council for women, have called for intensifying efforts in fighting trafficking in persons, and protecting the individual as the corner stone of the Bahraini society.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the National Committee on Combat Trafficking in Persons, Ambassador Abdullah Abdullatif Abdullah's speech included the Kingdom's achievements and efforts to combat trafficking in persons, among of the prominent efforts are the establishment of the National Committee on Combat Trafficking in Persons by the Foreign Minister's decisions No. 1 for the year 2008 and No. 1 for the year 2009, instituting special programs in this regard , implementing an awareness campaign in fighting the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, discussing the national plan on combating trafficking in persons with the private sector's representatives, launching a hotline service, providing psychological support service and providing shelters for victims of human trafficking.

### **Participation in the Institutional Excellence Programme**

In August 2013, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has organized a consultative meeting with the Bahrain Centre for Excellence expert Dr. Mohammed Jassim bu Hajji, ahead of its plan to participate in the institutional excellence programme. During the meeting, Dr. bu Hajji outlined the necessary steps required for joining the programme by determining the top-priority projects stemming from national indicators adopted by the Bahrain Centre for Excellence and recently approved by the cabinet, including the themes of national economy, quality of life, life-long learning, knowledge-based economy and sustainability of natural resources.

He highlighted the importance of starting with change steps that lead to tangible results and make an impact, pointing out to the role of embassies abroad in pushing the national economy forward through improving mechanisms of diplomatic work and transfer successful behaviours and practices of other societies.

The Ministry's officials discussed the programme with the expert, expressing eagerness to involve all employees in its implementation.

### **Second Conference of Ambassadors**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the second annual Ambassadors Conference on 28 November 2013 under the in line with the directives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa and those of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ghanim bin Fadhl Buainain. The purpose of this conference was to better acquaint the ambassadors with the latest economic and social developments, human rights and cultural rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain so that they can convey those achievements to foreign and Arab countries and promote the image of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The conference included meetings with officials in the Kingdom, notably the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Minister of Culture, Minister of

State for Transport, Supreme Council for Women and the grievances Secretariat of the Interior Ministry and the Economic Development Board.

The conference touched on issues related to human rights in the international arena to make the ambassadors constantly updates on such issues so as to be able to face the fast-paced international changes, as well as create constitute an opportunity for exchange of experiences among ambassadors and share practical experiences with other diplomatic missions.

### **Consular Affairs**

In addition to rendering services to citizens, resident and visitors and easing the obstacles they may face, the Bahrain embassies and consular sections abroad have taken assumed a number of tasks and activities to primarily serve the interest of the Kingdom and reinforce its cooperation and economic ties with other countries, attract more investors and representative offices.

In this context, they helped in holding economic and trade forums to introduce the available investment opportunities and the facilities being offered by the Kingdom of Bahrain to investors. They have also made the necessary contacts with corporate and bank managers and offered them facilities to launch ventures in Bahrain, which has established itself as a financial hub in the region.

Among others, our missions undertake the following activities

- Holding technical and tourism exhibitions to market Bahrain as a holiday destination and attract tourism delegations.
- Arranging visits of official, trade and parliamentary delegations and holding colloquy on the latest developments in the Kingdom of Bahrain, notably those pertaining to politics, the institution, freedom

of press and expression, Bahraini women's role and reinforcement of human rights culture. They issue monthly newsletters to project a true and comprehensive image of the political, rights and democratic reality in Bahrain and to shed light on the most important attainments, made within the Royal reform plan of his Majesty King Hamad, for the good benefit of the nation and its citizens.