

From: Mission of Bahrain

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البعثة الدبلوماسية للمملكة العربية السعودية
 لدى الأمم المتحدة
 جنيف، فيينا

Geneva, 27th October 2014

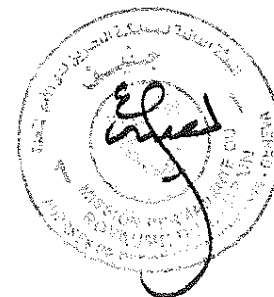
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The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and wishes to refer to its note verbale Ref. **OHCHR/RRDD/DESIB/HRESI Section**, dated 15th August 2014, regarding the OHCHR report on better investment in the rights of the Child pursuant to Human Rights Council's resolution 25/6 on the rights of the child.

In this regard, the Mission has the honour to enclose herewith the report by the Ministry of Social Development of the Kingdom of Bahrain in response to the requested information related to the aforementioned subject.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

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**Kingdom of Bahrain Report: OHCHR report on better investment in the right of the child-
Human Rights Council Resolution 25/6**

Question One

Please provide information on the main challenges related to the mobilization, allocation and spending of resources for children. Please provide examples of good practices undertaken to prioritize resource mobilization, allocation and spending towards child-focused sectors, such as health education, social protection, child protection and child rights in your national policy and/or overseas development assistance strategy

One of the main challenges related to the allocation of specified budget based on the rights of the children is that this concept is new in the area. A sufficient national budget is allocated so that children can enjoy their rights under the different ministries and government entities. However, there seems to be a need for more overall sensitization of the Convention to the higher management in ministries, to the personnel in the Ministry of Finance and those in charge of the designing of the budget in the relevant ministries, together with raising awareness on the importance of a conscious budget distribution, with a special focus on children.

The national budget is categorized as per each ministry. Each ministry provides services within the boundaries of its competence for both, children and others from different age groups. For instance, the Ministry of Health, a big part of its budget is allocated to provide health care services to children including pregnant women and new born babies. The budget of Ministry of Education is by default allocated to children, as its mandate to provide educational services to the age group (7-18). In both instances, children enjoy their rights stipulated in the convention, and budget is allocated for ensuring that children enjoy their rights, but not under explicit headings.

Under the Ministry of Social Development, the headings are more obvious. There is a sub-budget allocated for child protection and child and adolescent recreation.

A big step forward was the organization of a workshop in 2007 by the ad-hoc Woman and Child committee in the 'shura' council (one of the two chambers of the parliament), targeting the parliamentarians and Ministry of Finance personnel on how to design a child friendly budget. The outcomes of the workshop were;

- Produce a child friendly budget and identify the priorities needed to support childhood programs and ensure that financing policies options are included in the budget,

- Establish a Social Control Office to follow up, audit, and ensure the resources allocated to achieve child's best interest,
- Establish Social Policy Consultant Office at the Ministry of finance and both Social Control Office and the National Committee for Childhood to determine its duties,
- The government to provide financial support to this initiative,
- Establish general secretariat at the Ministry of Social Development to implement the initiative
- The joint projects between the government and the international organisations to be prioritized by the state

During the workshop, the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee at the 'Shura' Council recommended that the state should benefit from the experience of countries who took the lead in such initiatives, while preparing the State Budget. It also recommended that the state should produce a child-friendly budget and support the resources allocated for childhood sector to move children projects, and plans forward to increase the services available to marginalized and vulnerable children.

The Ministry of Finance has never been represented in the National Committee for Childhood. Similarly, the Ministry of Finance in all countries is rarely a part of the delegation to discuss the State's periodic report with the CRC Committee.

Question Two

Please indicate how your national laws and policies provide opportunities for children to access budget information and participate in budget and fiscal processes. Please specify the extent to which resources spent on children are visible, and whether budget data is disaggregated by child rights related programmes, and/or age (0-18), in budget documents. Are any child friendly versions of budget information produced?

The budget is allocated biannually to the different ministries. It is published and can be accessed online on the Ministry of Finance site. It is accessible to everybody including children.

The budget is allocated to all ministries and government entities, which include those rendering services to children. And although the budget is not disaggregated by rights, the children in Bahrain participate in organised activities and programmes for the enjoyment of their rights.

Representatives of the various groups of children participated in activities related to budgetary allocation during the development of the National Strategy (NSC) for Childhood, through:

- Focus Group Discussions: comprised multi ethnic children and parents of different social and economic backgrounds together with representatives of government entities concerned with childhood sector. The objective was to identify children needs and priorities.
- Based on the results of the focus group discussions and the recommendation of Situation Analysis of children study (Sit-An) (2011-2012), an Action plan, with a detailed budget needed for the implementation process, was developed.

An annual audited account on ministries expenditure is reported to the parliament, published and posted on their websites. Below are the links of the main ministries concerned with childhood sector;

- Ministry of Education http://www.moe.gov.bh/financial.aspx#.VA_1gPmSxic
- Ministry of Health
<http://www.moh.gov.bh/AR/aboutMOH/aboutMinistry/Budget.aspx>
- Ministry of Social Development <http://www.social.gov.bh/theministry/budget>

There is no special report published yet on resources spent specifically on children however, by the end of the year 2017, a report on of the National Strategy for Childhood (NSC) budget will be published to evaluate the implementation process of the strategy. The government of Bahrain allocated 5 million Bahraini Dinar (approx US \$13 million) for its implementation.

Question Three

What are the mechanisms in place to ensure transparent, effective and efficient utilization of public resources for the realization of children's rights in line with Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Each ministry submits an annual report audited by the National Audit Office on its expenditure. Although the National Committee on Childhood is considered the coordinating mechanism for all child related planning, however, it is not within its mandate to supervise the utilization of public resources for the realization of children's rights.

The National Committee for Childhood includes representatives from government entities, NGOs and private sectors. It was created in 1999. However, the Ministry of Finance is not represented in it.

(This is a good exercise to include a member of the MoF in the Committee).

Question Four

What mechanisms are in place to assess the impacts of fiscal policies and budgets on children? Are human rights and child rights impact assessments conducted in relation to budget planning and execution? Please indicate measures in place to identify the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable children, and formulate targets that assess the impact of public spending on these groups.

Assessing the impact of the general national budget is done through the assessment of the implementation of the plan of action of each ministry. We have to state here that human right and child right are not explicitly reflected in the assessment of budget planning and execution per se.

However, the Kingdom of Bahrain pays special attention to vulnerable children; the orphans being one category. The Royal Charity Foundation provides social care to children who lost their father, children born out of wedlock and families of low income. It allocates budget to support this group by providing them with homes, monthly financial aid and financial support to cater for special occasions such as the celebration of Eid, opening of school year...etc. this support continues until they finish their university studies. Widows with children are also included in the mandate of this foundation. They are also on the regular pay sheet of the Ministry of Social Development.

Question Five

What systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure that private sector contributes, rather than undermines, state efforts to improve public spending on children? Please also indicate if systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure, that public resources are spent well also when government funded children's rights programmes/projects are outsourced to private sector.

The private sector and non government organisation are key player in conducting programmes and activities for the development and protection of children. They complement the state's efforts in this regard. The state however doesn't outsource programmes or projects to the private sector.