



Statement by NIHR on World Health Day

Manama on 7 April 2018

On April 7 every year, the World Health Day is celebrated by countries all the world to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. On this day, a theme is selected which relates to a priority area of health in the WHO hierarchy, to be highlighted and to allow all individuals in all communities to mobilize their efforts to improve the health of everybody, through holding awareness campaigns and various activities. In this year, which marks its 70th anniversary, the WHO calls upon world leaders to honor the commitments, which they made when they agreed on Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, and to commit themselves to taking concrete steps to improve the health of everybody.

The 1946 Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) is the first official international document explicitly providing for the right to health, which it defines as “a state of complete physical, mental and social integrity, not merely the absence of illness or disability”. This was followed by Article (25) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which asserted that one of the most important elements of the right of an individual to an adequate standard of living is his/her enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, as Article (1) thereof stipulated that “everyone is entitled to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and his/her family, including nutrition, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, as well as an adequate standard of living in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other loss of livelihood as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control”.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified the theme of “Universal Health Coverage: Everyone and Everywhere” as the title for its World Health Day 2018. Comprehensive Health Coverage means that all people and all communities have access to the health services they need without financial difficulties. This enables everybody to access the services that target the treatment of the most important causes of illness and death, while ensuring the high quality of such services that contribute to improving the health of people who receive them.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) seizes this opportunity to praise the Kingdom of Bahrain’s wealth of outstanding achievements in this area under the Reform Project of His Majesty the King, may Allah protect him. This is emphasized by Article (8) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which guarantees the right to health, as Paragraph (A) stipulates that “every citizen has the right to healthcare, and the State is concerned with public health and ensures the means of prevention and treatment by the establishment of various hospitals and health institutions”. In addition, Paragraph (B) states that “individuals and institutions may establish hospitals, clinics or treatment houses under the supervision of the State and in accordance with the Law”. The



indicators and international reports in the area of health and medical care further confirm the commitment by the Kingdom of Bahrain to the highest international standards for raising the standard of health of the Bahraini citizens and residents alike. The concept of the health insurance system, which is expected to be implemented in 2018 in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is a strategic option for a radical development of the health system in the Bahrain, through the provision of high quality medical services, which is in line with Bahrain's great interest in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals since the adoption thereof in 2015.

The NIHR affirms that it is working with its broad mandate under its Incorporation Law in accordance with the Paris Principles to follow-up the commitment to the international conventions and treaties ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain on the protection and promotion of the right to health, and to follow-up and monitor the commitment by the Kingdom of Bahrain to the international conventions and treaties ratified by it in this area, with a view to develop the quality of medical services and place them among the top priorities in the service of Bahraini citizens and residents alike in order to achieve the 3rd Sustainable Development Goal, namely "to ensure that everyone enjoys a healthy lifestyle and well-being at all ages".