



NIHR's Statement on the International Day of Democracy

Manama- 15 September 2013

Coincides with the celebrations by the United Nations of the International Day of Democracy observed on September 15 of each year. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly at its 62nd session and in its Resolution A/62/7 (December 13, 2007) to encourage governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy through increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation. The celebration of the International Day of Democracy reflects the common aspirations of people all over the world, as democracy is considered an indispensable means for achieving overall human development.

The values of freedom and respect for human rights, and the principle of honest rotational public elections are essential ingredients of democracy. These values are stipulated in Article (1), Paragraph (E), of the Bahraini Constitution, which states: Bahraini citizens, both males and females, have the right to participate in public affairs and enjoy political rights, including the right to elect and be elected according to this Constitution and the terms and conditions stipulated by law. No citizen may be deprived of the right to elect or be elected unless in compliance with the law." These values are also stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article (21), Paragraph (3), which states: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." Moreover, they are mentioned in detail in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establishes a set of human rights and civil liberties that would support positive democracies.

In its statement, NIHR stressed the importance of democratic values and growing impact on all political, social, economic and developmental aspects in



the Kingdom to ensure continuity of the democratic march, reform policies and institutional modernization adopted by the wise leadership.

NIHR lauded the efforts exerted by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al- Khalifa regarding the comprehensive reform process in terms of consolidating the state of institutions and the law and the people's democratic participation so as to achieve the people's aspirations.

On this occasion, NIHR partakes in the celebrations of the International Day of Democracy, which is a cornerstone of the democratic process in the Kingdom of Bahrain, by boosting, developing and protecting human rights and values, spreading awareness thereof, and ensuring the practice thereof in compliance with Royal Decree No. 46 for the year 2009 (as amended by Royal Decree No. 28 for the year 2012). NIHR congratulated the Kingdom of Bahrain's political leadership and people on this international occasion, affirming the importance of collective efforts aimed to consolidate the values of democracy and attain development in all fields through legal and peaceful means.

Further, NIHR urged all the participating sides at the table of the National Dialogue (ND), being a democratic tool, to positively consider the existing opportunity and comply with constitutional frames and national consensus as a civilized representative pulpit to contribute to constitutional channels and promote homogenous pluralistic society. NIHR also calls to ensure a successful political dialogue as a democratic means that can help the country get out of the crisis it faces.

Third: Demands the government to always observe its international promises and commitments stressing the respect for human rights. It also demands the government to take into accounts the application of the law in line with the Constitution and National Action Charter.

Fourth: Calls upon all concerned parties to exercise self- restraint, to assume national responsibility to protect the national gains and constants, and to work to make all the people line up alongside their leader and ensure internal unity.



Fifth: Calls upon wise people in society to face violence and terrorism by taking unified and effective positions and measures to stop all illegal acts, and to resort to all available means to reduce them.

Sixth: Stresses the importance of continuing to heal the rift and dissent experienced by the Kingdom as a result of these illegal acts. This can be realized through the efforts of all parties, both formal and informal, and through the emphasis on the role of civil society organizations in this respect in order to continue the construction process and internal reform, stress on the national constants, and support the reform process pursued by His Majesty the King in this context. This is also aimed to show respect for Human Rights to life and live in a healthy environment without any threats to his security and stability. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly stated in Article 3 that: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." The NIHR stresses the Kingdom's ability to overcome the crisis through national unity and activation of the role of law in the consolidation of security and national stability, both at the security and social levels, without allowing any abuses in this context.

For its part, the NIHR emphasizes the respect for human rights and commitment to the international conventions and treaties. It closely monitors domestic developments without prejudice to any of its responsibilities and tasks provided for in Royal Decree No. 46 for the year 2009 as amended by Royal Order No. 28 for the year 2012 on the Establishment of NIHR.