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**Joint Social Action**

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The joint social action includes several sides: Woman, Childhood and family; individuals of special needs and cooperation with the regional and international organizations. Efforts of cooperation and joint work are run in coordination between the Secretariat-General and the Executive Office of the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs, which exercises its activity according to its by-law with a view to achieving coordination, cooperation and exchange of experience. The following are the most important aspects of the joint social work within the framework of the GCC:

**I. Development of Woman's Condition**

The aspects of the social work have been the focus of attention of their Majesties and Highnesses, leaders of the GCC States. The Supreme Council (23rd session, Doha, March, 2002) instructed its Consultative Commission to propose recommendations on the means of developing woman's position at the GCC States and assert her economic, social and familial role. The Commission has studied the subject and submitted its proposals to the Supreme Council. Proposals addressed several areas: The first was the enhancement of woman's contribution and role and enabling her active and influencing participation in the movement and development of society and maximizing her participation in the leading decision-making positions, while emphasizing the Islamic and Arab values and principles that achieve integration of the roles of man and woman. In addition to the need to continuously discuss the matters relating to woman and developing statistical and research databases that would provide support information for formulating policies and plans in the field of woman. The Commission has also stressed the role of the national supreme councils at some Member States, and called for establishing similar councils representing all agencies involved in the field of woman and family, and accelerating the formation of a coordinating committee for woman across the GCC States.

In the economic area, the Commission recommended that woman should be economically enabled to enhance her social and familial role, increase her participation in the labor market, and focus on training and development of the required skills, along with improving work conditions and developing the social insurance and civil service laws, which would help increase her economic participation, and utilizing technology with a view to creating new employment opportunities. The Commission has also recommended that a joint fund be established to support woman-related projects, particularly developing nurseries and small-size projects.

In the social area, the Commission recommended improvement of the living conditions of poor women, helping her involvement in social life, protecting her from all types of violence and eradication of illiteracy among girls and women through a long-term plan as well as

development of woman-related laws and regulations in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic law (shariah). In addition to increasing the awareness of woman, in general, particularly legislative and professional rights and duties as set forth in the Islamic law.

In the family area, the Commission recommended that society should be aware of the importance of family's role according to the Islamic teachings, along with improving the family living conditions through the development of the sources of income and proposing the best means for utilizing from such income. The Commission has also stressed the importance of the informative message addressed to the family, the awareness of parents and community of the adverse consequences of discrimination between children, facilitating access to new information, dissemination of knowledge and education, eradication of household illiteracy, caring for nurseries and kinder gardens, encouraging field research about family changes and constructing appropriate databases.

## **II. Promotion of Childhood**

The promotion of childhood represented an important aspect of the Council's activities. Efforts have been made with UNICEF with a view to identifying priorities and methods for promotion of childhood. The meeting held by the Secretariat in coordination with UNICEF recommended that a coordinating committee specialized in the field of children is to be established. The committee was composed of members representing relevant official and private institutions (Dubai, 1989).

A study on children welfare services and promotion thereof at the GCC States was also conducted in cooperation with UNICEF office in the region. The purpose of the study was to take necessary actions for the development of those services. The GCC States are inter-coordinating the cooperation efforts being made with the institutions and agencies involved in the field of children at the GCC level and the Arab and international levels and organizing relevant activities. The first conference of children entitled "Childhood is a Common Responsibility" was organized at Dubai in March 2006 in cooperation with the Administration of the Prize of Sheikha Latifah Bint Mohammed for children creativity. A mechanism is currently being developed for coordinating and organizing the activities of the councils and organizations involved in family affairs at the GCC States. The proposal submitted by a committee formed for this purpose (Doha, June, 2006) calling for establishing a common ministerial committee is still under study pending the establishment of national bodies for coordination and follow up between the agencies involved in the issues of family, woman and children at each Member State. The establishment of such national bodies will certainly enhance women's work at Each Member State, particularly in the field of coordination and cooperation between the existing women's societies, and encourage the establishment of new women societies that meet the needs of family and society.

## **III. Service of Individuals with Special-Needs**

**In the field of the Service of special-needs individuals, a coordination committee was formed for this purpose. The committee convenes periodic meetings for following up the coordination and cooperation activities among Member States. In addition, several activities, financed by Thomas Cook Traveler's Checks Group, were organized through the Secretariat to support the programs and services of special-need individuals at the GCC Member States; a portion accounting for 1% of the company's profits was deducted for the period from 1997 to 1999. An amount of SR 20,000 was allocated for supporting the GCC sport team of the special-need individuals at one of its overseas competitions, and another amount of SR 100,000 was allocated for supporting the special-need individuals at the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman, SR 50,000 each, and an amount of SR 19,000 was allocated for printing a book entitled "Basic Skills for Teaching Special-Need Individuals".**

**Prizes for the sport activities of the special-need individuals are periodically offered in coordination with the organizing committee of the special-need individuals' sports at the GCC States (based in the Kingdom of Bahrain). The Common Coordination Committee of the special-need individuals at Member States is examining a proposal for developing strategies for employment of the special-need individuals.**

#### **IV. Cooperation with the International Organizations**

**Coordination among the GCC States is also made for signing international agreements, organizing external conferences related to woman at the GCC States, such as the conference entitled " Woman at the GCC States" that was held at Sweden ( December 2004) and coordinating the relief efforts through establishing a coordinating commission for women's work at the GCC States.**

**As regards cooperation with the international organizations, coordination is currently being made with the UN High Commission for Refugees' Affairs for organizing seminars on the international relief in coordination with the Secretariat and participation of Foreign Ministries' officials, Coast Guards and Frontier Guards at the GCC States.**

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