

**Peace and stability as a prerequisite for  
the promotion of economic development  
in Africa and the Arab world**

**A work-paper presented  
by the Delegation of  
Shoora Council of Bahrain**

As you are fully aware, peace and stability are of high importance in promoting economic development of individuals and society at large, and that political stability is the key to progress and development, as it affects all aspects of security, economic and social development in a community.

The impact of political instability on the security of communities is evident, as societies, which are politically unstable, are experiencing unrest and security changes. This is because insecurity is an inevitable result of instability. Man, being political by nature, seeks to live in a humane society where security, stability and harmony away from conflicts and wars.

Therefore, the blessing of security and stability is reflected on economic development, which is a lifeline for any society. Hence, security and stability have direct, long-term effects on the creation of a sound, competitive economic environment that have positive impacts on citizenry and society as a whole.

Therefore, we must strengthen security and stability in Africa and the Arab world to improve the living standards of their citizens on the one hand, and to push the country forward towards economic development in order to build up learned generations capable of steering the affairs of their home countries and catching up with the developed countries.

Peace-building in Africa and the Arab world, both home to communities and different nationalities and religions, is the normal responsibility of both the state on the one hand and citizens and their national culture on the other. No country can develop and grow economically without peaceful coexistence among its population. Individuals are the pillar of any country's economic development.

So all political spectra in a country should reconsider opening up avenues of serious dialogue with other parties to enable to co-exist with partners in their homeland and to come up with judicious decisions for the betterment of the country. This of course would contribute more to the improvement of services and scientific development as well as to the creation of job opportunities that provide monthly income for citizens; this can never take place without security.

We should focus on the individual being the target and means of reforms. Reform programs do focus on the individuals to develop their abilities, assert themselves and utilize their own faculties properly in order to lead a dignified life.

Of course, this can never be attained without security and stability which are regarded as a precondition for the achievement of comprehensive development. Phasing out economic reforms is a prerequisite for the timely introduction of such reforms without bringing about radical changes into the existing conditions to which people were accustomed for a long time.

Economic reforms are considered as a ceaseless process, which has many positive effects, such as complacency, sense of belongingness on the part of citizens, reduction of crimes and social violence, which in turn enhances national security in such a way that promotes development and creates a favorable investment environment. This would induce local enterprises and attract foreign investments, the driving force of economic development.

Thus, economic reforms and political reforms should go hand in hand in order to attain their ultimate goals. To this end, there should be adopted a clear strategy and far-sighted vision acceptable to all social segments.

**Now let us review the experiences of the Kingdom of Bahrain in creating political stability in the light of the Arab Spring and managing political crisis through dialogue:**

We should draw lessons from the events we witnessed in the past period. The pace of reforms have moved since the historic consensus was reached on the National Charter that ushered in a new era of Bahrain's history, an era of comprehensive development and dignified life. This move paved the way for popular representation and participation in the decision-making in such a way that builds up the present of the Bahraini people and charts a course for their future.

Reforms brought about better development in Bahrain, while, at the same time, maintaining stability, progress and prosperity. The national consensus initiative

was taken by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Essa Al Khalifa in order to achieve national harmony that attains the hopes of Bahrainis for peace and justice.

Dialogue was launched to achieve national consensus on several issues in a way that pushes forward the pace of development in the country in the shadow of national unity of the Bahraini people and their social values.

The national accord dialogue represents a starting point for a more constructive talks following the unfortunate events Bahrain has seen. Dialogue , which emphasizes the importance of reforms, enabled all stakeholders to exchange views and ideas regarding reforms. A host of politicians, thinkers, parliamentarians, clerics , civil society organizations, intellectuals and media persons were involved in the talks.

Out of keenness to make the national dialogue a success, the internal front should be strengthened by committing to the principles of national unity, uniting ranks , and enhancing national identity , the sense of belongingness and national allegiance. Institutional dialogue amongst the executive , the judiciary, the legislature ,the media and civil society should be reinforced. Further, dialogue should be adopted as a means of communication and problem-solving.

### **Bahrain's foreign policy calling for peace in the region and the world:**

Bahrain is an Islamic Arab country which is located in a strategic area of vital importance to the global economy. A study on the policy of the Kingdom in its interaction with the international environment must be given epistemic carefulness, equivalent to its roles in the region. Bahrain is characterized its active and intensive presence, both in the regional and international levels, where its diplomatic behavior is characterized by its continuous efforts in order to play the roles in the Gulf region and the Middle East, through an effective and balanced policy , in which the national and nationalist interest is considered as a top priority.

An economic dimension forms a mainstay for the reform project aimed at creating the right climate to achieve sustainable development in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and of establishing modern and diverse economic structure that will be able to face all internal and external challenges, as well as , the establishment of balanced

economic and trade relations with the various countries of the world, in order to attract foreign investments and encourage national capitals, improve the living standard of citizens and increase social welfare.

Despite of the constant and inevitable decline of the importance of production of oil in the Bahraini economy, the economic performance is still in a great sensitivity to fluctuations in the world oil markets. The government of Bahrain managed diverse resources of income thanks to the policies pursued in all previous years, was able to reduce reliance on oil, through the guidance of development policies towards stimulating the role of sectors and other economic activities, and this is what became obvious in the GDP report.

Those who follow the economic developments in Bahrain will find that the Kingdom of Bahrain on the way towards prosperous economy, where it developed the infrastructure and raised the level and quality of services provided to citizens and foreign investors, in addition to providing an appropriate climate to attract local, regional and global investments to Bahrain; this is achieved by expanding and diversifying the economic base, and thus will lead to sustaining the growth rates of economic returns, creating new jobs, raising the living -standard, and providing safe and prosperous life for the citizens.

Kingdom of Bahrain pursued a policy of free market and openness to global markets, that has resulted in the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States of America in 2004, which is considered as the fastest agreement held by the United States with any country in the free trade area. So that Bahrain is considered as the third Arab country after Jordan and Morocco and the first in the Arabian Gulf region that held this agreement .

The economic activities confirm the importance of this agreement as it is the most important economic project Bahrain achieved over the past years ; it offers many advantages that will benefit the Bahraini economy, and will contribute to the development and improvement of the productivity of the private sector, and development processes. Accordingly , thus will benefit large sector of investments in Bahrain.

The foreign policy of the Kingdom of Bahrain is a balanced and effective policy, that puts the national and nationalist interests as a top priority, and it is keen to support and promote the unity and integration of Arab and Islamic nations in order to achieve the interests and aspirations of their people. It Highlights the importance of cooperation between nations and peoples, in the context of commitment to the rules and principles of international legitimacy, sticking to the need to settle all international disputes by peaceful means and the prohibition of the use of force, to undermine the territorial integrity of any State or political independence and respect other countries' sovereignty and prevent interference in their internal affairs and their right to self-determination ; It calls , also , to regional and global peace as a strategic objective. In addition , it considers cooperation among the countries in various fields as the basis for a more stable world and for the well-being of people and development .This gives Bahrain an outstanding prestige in the international arena in the light of the regional and global appreciation for the balanced policy of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Bahrain has balanced foreign policy in its various departments, starting from Gulf countries relations and passing through the Arab and Islamic relations and the international arena . Bahraini has paid great attention to the development and support of its relations with various countries of the world in accordance with the principles of mutual respect and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. At the same time , it enhanced its relations with allied and friendly countries, especially the Gulf states. In this regard, the leadership of Bahrain has been keen to strengthen its cooperation with the Gulf countries in order to achieve the best possible level of economic and social development of the countries and peoples of the region. Perhaps , the political , economic and cultural agreements signed by the Kingdom with many of these countries, is clear evidence of the success and rationality of that policy, and has been internationally welcomed.

Finally, peace is the basis of development and development is the basis of peace. The development and economic growth which are based on clear scientific basis and a sophisticated strategy, can only be strengthened by prevalence of security and political stability, which is consistent with the requirements of the citizen to get to the privileged position of development and progress.