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# Private sector takes lead on Bahrainisation process

**Nirmala Venkatesh**  
Staff Reporter

IN AN effort to offer solutions to the main challenges of developing Bahrain's workforce, the two newly formed committees held their first meeting at the Employment Services Bureau (ESB) at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

As a result of the successful symposia held between the private sector and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, two committees comprising private sector employers were formed last week.

The two way communication between the private sector and the government has been welcomed by the employers who see it as a positive development towards arriving at workable solutions to the issue of localisation.

For the first time employers and the Ministry personnel have come together in a cohesive partnership using their joint expertise to the benefit of the whole community.

Earlier laws were implemented without talking to employers, but the employers saw this as a fresh change and an element of choice given to

the people it would directly affect. The two committees were formed to tackle issues and come up with ideas on how to deal with maximising work and training opportunities for Bahrainis.

The direct involvement of private sector employers in finding mutually acceptable plan of action is the positive fallout of Bahrain At Work symposia held earlier this year.

It resulted in the participation of employers and the symposia, the first of its kind allowed the government to hear directly from the employers, their concerns and fears. It was also an opportunity given to the employers to voice their suggestions at a common platform and allowed for an exchange of ideas and solutions.

Employers who took part in the symposia offered help in finding solutions, which they felt would work to achieve the Ministry's objectives.

"I am delighted to see private sector employers showing such commitment to developing the workforce of Bahrain and by working together in this way, we can help the nation's development and lead other Gulf states by our example," said

Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.

At the conclusion of the two symposia, the employers got back to the ministry with their suggestions and an outline of key issues to be addressed. A meeting held last week between businessmen and the Minister, was an immediate follow up to the symposia.

Among the important matters that according to the employers need attention, include improving the attitude at the work place and human resources management. The interpretation of the labour law and the policies of Bahrainisation are the other key issues.

The committee dealing with the issue of Improving Attitudes and Human Resource Management Processes will be chaired by Bharat Jashanmal and the committee, chaired by Mazen Al Umran, will evaluate the Labour Law interpretation and look at Bahrainisation, percentage requirements and policies.

It was decided at the first meeting that the committees would meet regularly. They were offered the full support and help from the ESB, who would provide the required

factual and statistical information to the committees.

Draft proposals are expected to be submitted to an overall working group by September end, to be presented to the Minister on 26 October.

The Minister has said that he is willing to be flexible in dealing with the private sector on these issues, by actively encouraging the participation of employers and would listen to any ideas for a workable solution which the committees may present.

The volunteers who will be part of the two committees are: Abdul Hussain Faraj, Abdulla Al Ansari, Ahmed Al Dain, Shukri A W Qarooni, Stephen Ide, Maurice Burke, Bharat Jashanmal, Mohammed Janahi, Tariq Al Saffar, E. Peter Hansen, Chris Jenkins, Adel M Mattar, Sylvia Burdon, Afnan Al Zayani, Aqeel Raees, Mohammed Mansour, Yousif Awadi, Ali Birch, Jan Byland, Mohammed Hasani, Aziz Juma, Zeenat Dawani, Mazen Al Umran, Siddharth, Kishore Mathur, Sami Engineer and Ismail Kazerooni.