

FIRMS URGED TO EXPAND ROLE

By SOMAN BABY

MANAMA: Bahrain's private sector received a pat on the back yesterday for its positive contribution in the enhancement of human development projects in the country.

Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala also appealed to the business community and social organisations to further expand their positive role and areas of contributions to the society.

● 'One family spirit' key to success

"Bahrain has been able to win international recognition in terms of its achievements in human development indexes," he said.

"This was possible because of the one-family spirit displayed by the Government, the private sector, organisations and individuals."

Mr Al Sho'ala was opening a three-day seminar, which will review Bahrain's achievements in the areas of human development over the years and prepare the blueprint for a national hu-

man development report.

The seminar is being organised jointly by the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in co-operation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (Escwa).

The opening ceremony at the Bahrain Conference Centre, Holiday Inn, was attended by Health Minister Dr Faisal Al Mousawi, Education Minister Abdulaziz Al Fadhel, Bahrain University president Dr Mohammed Al Ghatam, Education



■ Mr Al Sho'ala

Under-Secretary Dr Hamad Al Sulaiti and top officials of the Labour Ministry and UNDP.

Mr Al Sho'ala said human development issues received the full attention of the Bahrain Government.

"The seminar is being held at a time when Bahrain has won the appreciation of the UN for its achievements in the areas of human development," he said.

"In its latest *Human Development Report*, the UN has rated Bahrain as number

Turn to Page 3, Col 1

Firms urged to play large role in society

► From Page One

one in the Arab world in terms of human development achievements.

"And worldwide, our position is 39th, out of 178 countries whose human development indices have been recorded."

Mr Al Sho'ala said Bahrain was proud of this great achievement.

"This presents us with the challenge of exerting more efforts to sustain the development and maintain the confidence of the international community," he said.

Outlining Bahrain's support to various resolutions adopted by international conferences, starting with the Earth Summit on development and environment held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, through the summit on social development held in Copenhagen last year, Mr Al Sho'ala said Bahrain shared the international community's concern on all issues related to human development.

"We consider human development as a pivotal issue that holds the key to our future destiny," he said.

"Human development is no more a slogan, but a national commitment. Man is at the centre of all our development activities."

Mr Al Sho'ala outlined some of the achievements made by Bahrain in the area of human development.

They are in the areas of health care (preventive and curative), education at all levels, training with all its requirements, provision of jobs, combating unem-

ployment, housing and municipal services, infrastructure development, environmental protection, sports and recreational facilities, social insurance and retirement benefits, social welfare programmes and the safety and security of the citizens.

"The human development aspects covering the different segments of the population, starting with children and focusing on the youth and the elderly, stem from our deep conviction in their welfare," said Mr Al Sho'ala, who also praised the contributions of various social institutions and clubs, which have been striving hard to complement the government's drive towards people's development.

"The private sector's contributions in this connection have been extremely commendable," he said.

Contributions

"The private sector has established educational, training and health service facilities. It has also opened centres, which care for the disabled and the elderly.

"We hope they will further enhance their contributions towards this successful human development march."

Mr Al Sho'ala said the initiatives taken and programmes implemented in the areas of human development received a great momentum and vitality because of the deep commitment and wise directions of HH the Amir Shaikh Isa bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Sulman Al Khalifa and Crown Prince and BDF Commander-

in-Chief Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The keynote speakers yesterday were Dr George Kossaiyf, head of social development at Escwa, and Dr Baqer Al Najjar, dean of the College of Arts at Bahrain University.

Six papers were presented on various aspects of development in Bahrain.

Head of social and psychological section at College of Health Sciences (CHS) Hooda Al Mahmood spoke on women's development, head of nursing at CHS Dr Naeema Al Gasseer on health services development and head of population and social statistics at Central Statistics Organisation Laila Radhi on the population structure.

Director of social development Faiza Zayani spoke on social welfare, head of economic section at the Bahrain Centre for Studies and Research Dr Abdulla Sadiq on the labour market and head of the English Language Centre at Bahrain University Dr Fatima Al Ahmed on educational development.

Six working groups will be set up to discuss the issues in detail.

Egyptian professor and planning expert Dr Usman Mohammed Usman will be the keynote speaker today.

Dr Usman, who is the head of the Macro-economic Development Centre at the National Institute for Planning in Cairo, will present Egypt's experience in preparing a national human development report.

The recommendations of the groups will be presented at the closing session tomorrow.