

# OUTGOING GERMAN DIPLOMAT PRAISES BAHRAIN HOSPITALITY

GERMANY'S Charge d' Affaires Alfred Gerth will be trading one island nation for another when he leaves next week for his new post in Malta.

Mr Gerth said he and his family will deeply miss Bahrain, which has been their home for the past four years.

"Bahrain has been the most hospitable posting we have had," said Mr Gerth.

"The people here are quite friendly, and the social life has been most amiable for both me and my wife, Angelika, as well as for our 15-year-old daughter, Angela."

The couple also have a 22-year-old son, Dirk, who is currently studying at the University of Bonn.

Mr Gerth said he is looking forward to his new responsibilities in the Mediterranean island nation.

"Malta is set to join the European Union next year, so there will be many immediate challenges to ensure a smooth transition," explained Mr Gerth.

During his Bahrain posting, Mr Gerth was a key player in opening the Bahrain Embassy in Bonn two years ago.

Members of the German business community here also say he is responsible for increasing com-

By RICHARD MOORE

mercial ties between both countries, notably in closing several major German construction and engineering consultancy contracts for major industrial expansion projects in Bahrain.

Mr Gerth is the second German Charge d' Affaires to have been posted to Bahrain since his country opened an embassy here in 1986. He also is the last.

Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will post its first resident ambassador to Bahrain on June 1.

A German Embassy official said that while the ambassadorial appointment reportedly has been made, the Ministry will make an official announcement before May 1.

Vice-consul Mario Haas will serve as temporary charge d' affaires until the new ambassador presents his credentials in June.

Mr Gerth has been with Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for more than 22 years.

After completing the Ministry's three-year education and training programme in 1977, the



■RECEPTION ... More than 100 guests including ministers, ambassadors and senior officials attended a farewell reception last night at the Diplomat Hotel's Grand Ambassador Suite for Mr Gerth and his wife, Angelika. At the reception are, Electricity and Water Minister Abdulla Juma, second from left, Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala, centre, UAE Ambassador Al Asri Saeed Al Dhahiri, left, with Mr Gerth, third from right, and guests.

44-year-old diplomat spent seven years in Africa.

"My first posting was the German Embassy in Nairobi where I was economic corporation officer for four years," explained Mr Gerth.

"I served for three years as economic and cultural affairs officer in Freetown, Sierra Leone."

In 1983, he was appointed Press and legal affairs officer at the German Embassy in Dublin where he served for more than five years.

Mr Gerth returned to Bonn in 1988 where he served as a ministry planning officer until his posting to Bahrain.