

# Comprehensive census system necessity for GCC unified policy on issues: Sahar

Staff Writer

**KUWAIT:** Head of Statistics at the Census Department Dr. Abdullah Sahar has confirmed that the process of developing statistics work in Kuwait requires cooperation, coordination and strengthening professional relationships with regional and international organizations to benefit from their experiences in this field.

He made this statement at the opening session of the 24th meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Committee for Undersecretaries and Heads of Census Departments.

Dr. Sahar highlighted the active participation of GCC census departments in International Comparison Program (ICP) in 2005 which was organized by the World Bank under the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) regional umbrella. He pointed out that the important applications of the ICP includes recalculating prices and currency exchange in a realistic way which contributes to pushing future efforts toward agreement on GCC unified currency. He added that the preparations have begun for 2010 session in which all GCC countries will take part.

Dr. Sahar highlighted the development of census systems by GCC countries to meet the requirements of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) adopted by International Monetary Fund (IMF) which aims at achieving quality and transparency of data.

Dr. Sahar stressed the keenness of political leadership in GCC countries on food security, stressing the importance of focusing on unifying environment and demographic statis-



Undersecretaries and Heads of Census Departments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries meet in Kuwait for the 24th meeting on Saturday, May 15, 2010. (Al Watan)

tics. He said that there are special apparatuses specialized in food security which provide the necessary database, adding that the leadership is keen on ensuring food security for the region and the basic needs of people as well.

Dr. Sahar said that the International Census Program (ICP) in 2010 is one of the most important census conducted by all census apparatuses in the world and an important source of data that serve social and economic development

process in the State and also benefit researchers and those interested in population studies. He added that the development of a unified strategy for GCC countries requires addressing the difficulties and challenges facing census work, stressing the need for a serious stance to evaluate the current census system in GCC countries.

Dr. Sahar cautioned of the seriousness of lack of coordination and conflicts amongst apparatus carrying on the statistics gathering, calling for removing all obstacles that prevent cooperation and coordination among these apparatuses.

For his part, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Mazroui said that agenda of the event will shed light on many issues related to economic statistics gathering which will be conducted by member states.

He added that it will approve the unified guide for economic activities in GCC countries as well as developing agricultural census and will also discuss recommendations of head of census centers and departments within the GCC region. He noted that they will also prepare a unified mechanism for government statistic gathering from official records which are considered the main source of data for any census apparatus. He further pointed out that they will discuss the procedures taken to implement the unified census project for GCC countries and the suitable mechanism for analyzing the outcome. He concluded by saying that the agenda also includes discussing the framework of the unified general census strategy for GCC countries and other related issues.

## Kuwait, a key player for inter-Arab reconciliation: Secretary General of Arab Parliament

**DAMASCUS:** His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah plays a highly constructive role in achieving inter-Arab reconciliation, Secretary General of the Arab Parliament Adnan Omran said on Saturday.

"The State of Kuwait has a long history of contributions to the Arab joint action, especially under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah," Omran, former Minister of Information of Syria and former Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the occasion of the Kuwaiti Amir's forthcoming visit to Syria within a tour to Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon to start today.

"I have witnessed the active role of His Highness the Amir in solving the disputes among the Arab countries over the last 15 years during my tenure as Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League," Omran affirmed.

Omran said he had pinned high hopes on the Arab tour of His Highness the Amir, saying, "We need to capitalize on such summit-level contacts in building an integrated strategy for Arab cooperation and translating the previously-reached agreements into action." He added, "His Highness the Amir's visit to Damascus will give a strong impetus not only to Syrian-Kuwaiti bilateral ties, but to the inter-Arab ties because the two countries share a concern for the Arab causes," he underscored.

His Highness the Amir is the rotating President of the Arab Economic Summit and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

"The Palestine question and Israeli aggressive policy are expected to feature prominently on the agenda of the talks His Highness the Amir plans to hold with Syrian leaders," Omran said, noting that the visit had a regional nature beside its bilateral one.



Secretary General of the Arab Parliament Adnan Omran speaks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday, May 15, 2010. (KUNA)

Praising Kuwait's support to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, he said he was honored to attending the first Arab Economic Summit, hosted by Kuwait in January 2009.

"I was greatly pleased to see the success of the summit which lived up to the aspirations of the Arab nation. Yet, we need more efforts to realize the full integration among all Arab countries," he went on to say.

Omran voiced confidence that the Arab countries would be able to overcome all points of disagreement, adding that all Arab countries shared the desire to achieve fair, permanent and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and contribute to international peace and cooperation. -KUNA

## 15 percent of population affected by Diabetes: KDCP

Jamal Al-Rajhi  
Staff Writer

**KUWAIT:** Director of Al-Nahdah Health Center and member of Kuwait Diabetes Care Program (KDCP) Dr. Mohammed Al-Otaibi stated, on the occasion of Diabetic Foot Awareness Week held by KDCP at Menahi Sanhat Al-Osaimi Health Center on Friday, that according to recent statistics by the World Health Organization (WHO) the percentage of diabetics in Kuwait has reached 15 percent, and the expected number of diabetics worldwide will reach 380 million by the year 2025.

Dr. Al-Otaibi added that diabetes is one of the main causes of foot problems, 84 percent of the amputation cases can be attributed to this disease. Diabetic Foot is a complication that affects 15 percent of diabetics and is the biggest reason behind diabetics being admitted into hospitals due to nerve inflammation and arteriosclerosis.

He noted that neglecting precautionary measures will cause inflammation and ulcers and diabetics might end up getting an amputation.

He indicated that 5 percent of diabetics, in industrial countries, suffer from foot related complications and 40 percent of the health budget allocated for diabetic patients is spent on foot related complications. He explained that keeping sugar level in blood close to normal and educating patients to take care of their feet, by doing annual medical tests under supervision of specialized doctors, will reduce complications by 85 percent.

Dr. Al-Otaibi added that diabetic patients should follow preventive measures such as regulating sugar level in the blood and conducting daily check up on their feet in order to discover wounds, scratches or dryness. "Feet should be washed daily and dried thoroughly, using water with normal temperature while avoiding the use of extremely hot or cold water," he concluded.

## Incidence of celiac disease on the rise in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Researcher Suad Al-Furaih revealed that there are over 8,000 people in Kuwait who suffer from celiac disease, according to studies conducted by international agencies.

The researcher, who suffers from the same disease, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disease that requires a lifelong diet free of gluten from wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt.

She pointed out that the incidence of celiac disease has increased recently and the persons who are expected to be infected with the disease are the relatives of the people who have celiac disease. She noted that the risk is higher for patients who suffer from both Down and Turner Syndrome and the best solution for the

disease is early diagnosis.

She called for the State to take interest in this issue and exert all possible efforts for supporting the patients of celiac disease. She noted that there is a shortage of information on this disease in Arabic and substitutes for wheat that may cause this disease, in the local supermarkets.

Al-Furaih appealed to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to force all factories to paste a warning message on products that may cause allergies to patients of celiac disease.

Symptoms of this disease include abdominal cramping/bloating, abdominal distention, acidosis, increased appetite, back pain, muscle cramping, constipation, decreased ability to clot blood, dehydration, diarrhea, edema, elec-

trolyte depletion, energy loss, weight loss and fatigue. Other symptoms include depression, disinterest in normal activities, irritability, mood changes and inability to concentrate.

When working with a physician to diagnose and/or confirm celiac disease, three major steps are taken. First, a thorough physical examination is conducted, including a series of blood tests, sometimes referred to as the Celiac Blood Panel. Second, a duodenal biopsy is performed with multiple samples from multiple locations in the small intestine. And third, the gluten-free diet is implemented. When the patient shows a positive response to the diet - symptoms subside and the small intestine returns to its normal, healthy state - the diagnosis of Celiac Disease is confirmed. -KUNA

## Sources: Plans to better distribute scholarships to US-bound Kuwaiti students

Mubarak Al-Shemmari  
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**KUWAIT:** Sources at the Ministry of Higher Education said that the reason behind the policy of blocking a number of universities on the list of scholarships, arose in order to select reputable universities all over the world where Kuwaiti students study. They added that the policy has been applied to many countries where Kuwaiti students study.

The sources said that there the block policy has not been applied to any American universities, however they noted that there is a strategy in the works.

The sources elaborated further by noting that there are 2,500 universities in the United States, yet most Kuwaiti students focus on a number of them; this has compelled the Ministry of Higher Education to impose a quota on universities where there are more than 50 Kuwaiti students.

The sources said that the number of universities does not exceed 200 in each Arab and European country; however, the policy was applied because there are 2,500 universities in the US and thus required a streamlined approach. They further stressed that the ministry applied the policy in order to better distribute Kuwaiti students among these universities.

They pointed out that the policy has been applied since the 1970s and added that the ministry seeks to expand the scholarship plans to include more countries and universities in order to get the best education for Kuwaiti students.

## Quality education report to be submitted during the week

Khalifa Al-Rabeea  
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**KUWAIT:** Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education at the Ministry of Education Mona Al-Logani will submit during this week the final report compiled by a taskforce charged with promoting quality education at public schools.

The taskforce reportedly held a series of sessions involving the sampling of the opinions of at least 760 headmasters and headmistresses across Kuwait.

The Chair of the sessions who is the Intermediate Schools Supervisor at the Kuwait City Education Zone Adel Al-Rashed said that he had reviewed numerous relevant experiences and mainly focused on strategic planning as well as defining quality based on specific criteria.

According to the official, the report is based on a Kuwaiti vision that includes a certain number of criteria and indicators that will enable Kuwait to take its rightful position among advanced countries. He

added that the vision is consistent with the State's 2025 Education Strategy.

Al-Rashed said the report recommends, among others, that workshops be organized in order to draft the vision and the mission as well as identify school values.

He further said that the report includes the opinion of educators in the field and the requirements for the upcoming period.

"The taskforce will conduct visits to certain schools to assess quality," he explained, adding that the final report has been submitted to the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education, who will in turn raise the report to the Minister of Education Moudi Al-Homoud and her undersecretary.

In a related development, Female Teachers Department at the Kuwait Teachers Society is scheduled to hold a meeting aimed at discussing the latest developments regarding the concept of quality education.

The meeting is slated for Tuesday evening.

## Holiday packages booking on Internet next month: Kuwait Airways

**KUWAIT:** Commercial State carrier, Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC), is set to offer Internet booking next month for its holiday packages for the summer, a senior member of staff said here Saturday.

Head of the Holidays Department at the airline Khalaf Al-Manea told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the booking for the package tours will be open to travel agencies in June and customers in August, noting that the carrier was the first to make such a move in the Middle East. The packages include a Kuwait Airways ticket and hotel accommodation at any one of the airline's selected destinations. Al-Manea expected 60 percent of sales to be conducted via travel agencies. He also said that this year's deals will start earlier in May, due to the short summer holiday period as a result of the holy month of Ramadan which starts in August.

In this regard, closer destinations in Gulf and Middle Eastern countries have been selected for these deals like Alexandria, Sharm El Sheikh and Cairo, in addition to Umra (mini-pilgrimage) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which has received a highly unprecedented customer turnout. The packages will offer lucrative and competitive prices, he said. Al-Manea also expected travel to Europe to increase, due to the drop of the euro and the pound sterling and the end of fears concerning the swine flu epidemic.



Head of the Holidays Department at Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) Khalaf Al-Manea speaks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday, May 15, 2010. (KUNA)

The packages will also offer trips to the South East Asia region, with very good deals to countries like Thailand and Malaysia. -KUNA