



UNITED NATIONS
KUWAIT



ONE UN

REPORT 2023



United Nations
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United for Peace, Rights and Development for All





ONE UN

REPORT 2023

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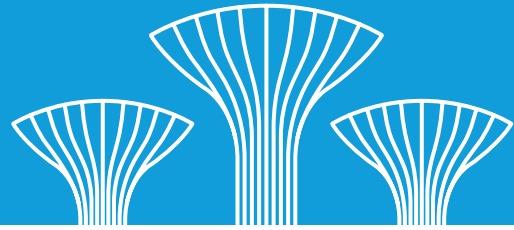


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FOREWORD

BY THE UNITED NATIONS
RESIDENT COORDINATOR



On behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the State of Kuwait, I am honored to present the 2023 Annual Results Report. This comprehensive document not only highlights the significant development achievements made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Government of Kuwait and the UN Agencies in Kuwait but also offers valuable insights into the evolving development landscape. Moreover, it illustrates Kuwait's impressive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscoring the country's prominent role on the global stage as a leader in international humanitarian and development cooperation.

Kuwait continues to make remarkable strides in its pursuit of Agenda 2030. As a high-income country with a per capita income exceeding USD 44,000, Kuwait's progress against many SDG targets remains consistently positive, even amidst the global uncertainties driven by recent geopolitical developments and disruptions in international trade. These global challenges have exerted upward pressure on prices and have dampened the level of investments crucial to revitalizing the global economy. Despite these obstacles, Kuwait has maintained its steady trajectory toward achieving sustainable development.

The New Kuwait Vision 2035 serves as a strategic blueprint for the country's development aspirations. Central to this vision is the creation of a diversified economy where the private sector plays an increasingly dominant role, supporting Kuwait's transition to a greener economy driven by knowledge-based industries, green manufacturing, and low-carbon services. Kuwait has the potential to set an example for other oil and gas-producing nations, demonstrating that a green transformation can benefit the planet, people, and the economy alike.

In addition to supporting Kuwait's inclusive and just transition to a green economy, the UN in Kuwait is well-positioned to assist the country in expanding its already commendable role in international development. The State of Kuwait has generously funded a range of regional humanitarian and recovery programs, as well as numerous global development initiatives. Given the extensive programs and expertise that the UN has deployed worldwide, there is significant potential for expanding trilateral cooperation between Kuwait, the UN, and partner countries. The UN system can provide valuable insights and resources to help Kuwait identify and capitalize on new opportunities for broadening its development partnerships.

Since assuming the role of UN Resident Coordinator in Kuwait in 2023, I have had the privilege of witnessing the vibrancy and dynamism of Kuwaiti society firsthand. My interactions with policymakers, private sector leaders, and civil society representatives have revealed the wealth of innovative ideas that Kuwaitis bring to addressing complex challenges. As Kuwait's trusted partner, the UN remains fully committed to working closely with our Kuwaiti counterparts, harnessing the ingenuity and creativity of the Kuwaiti people to shape a better, more sustainable future for all.

MS. GHADA ELTAHIR
RESIDENT COORDINATOR
UNITED NATIONS IN KUWAIT

UNITED NATIONS

TEAMS IN THE STATE OF KUWAIT



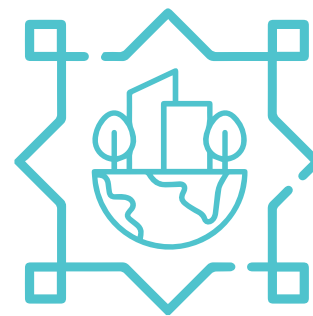
CHAPTER 01

SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE



SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

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1.1 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Kuwait is a high-income country with a population of around 4.7 million, of whom close to 68 percent are non-Kuwaiti nationals.¹ Kuwait has made remarkable progress since achieving independence in 1961. In 1963, Kuwait became the 111th member of the United Nations. Between 2002 and 2022, the gross domestic product (GDP) increased from USD 63.2 billion to USD 114.8, an 82 percent increase. In current terms, Kuwait's aggregate GDP amounted to USD 175 million, with a per capita income of over USD 41,000 in 2022.



However, annual GDP growth over the last decade has hit several highs and lows, reflecting the price volatility of oil and gas and the state of the global economy affected by the pandemic, conflicts, disruptions in supply chains, and inflationary pressure. After solid growth (8.9 percent) in 2022, the economy contracted by 0.1 percent in 2023.² Falling global energy prices, OPEC's oil cut quotas, and a general global economic slowdown contributed to Kuwait's GDP deceleration. While growth in the oil economy fell by 3.8 percent, the non-oil GDP increased by 3.3 percent in 2023.

There was less inflationary pressure as consumer prices continued to moderate in 2023. At the end of 2023, the annual inflation rate was 3.3 percent, almost a percentage and a half point lower than in April 2022, when it peaked at 4.7 percent.³ With upward pressure on prices easing, the Central Bank of Kuwait has kept the policy rate unchanged at 4.25 percent since July 2023.⁴ If inflation continues to fall, it is likely that the Central Bank of Kuwait may start cutting down the policy rate as part of an expansionary monetary policy, which, in turn, will stimulate consumer demand and investments.

Bank lending in 2023 fell by 1.7 percent after a 7.7 per cent increase in 2021. With lower interest rates, bank credit will increase in

2024. The easing of OPEC+ production quotas, expansionary monetary stance, and lower inflation will help the economy grow between 2.2 and 2.8 percent in 2024.⁵ In the meantime, the current account surplus is likely to fall slightly to 30 percent of GDP, but that is still relatively high.⁶ Kuwait also has adequate reserves to cover at least four months of imports.

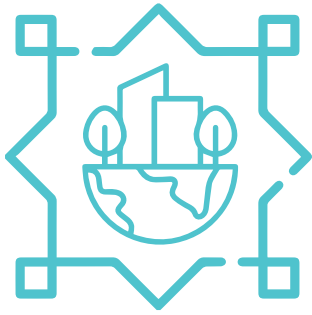
A drop in oil revenue and a concurrent increase in public expenditure is estimated to result in a Kuwaiti Dinar (KWD) billion 6.8 budget deficit for the fiscal year April 1, 2023- March 31, 2024. This follows a surplus of KWD 6.4 billion in the previous fiscal year.⁷ Apart from the last year, Kuwait has been running a budget deficit since 2019. The state budget for 2024-2025 projects the fiscal deficit to drop by 13.5 percent. Oil income is expected to cover around 87 percent of the total budget revenue. With an anticipated drop in state revenue, the planned expenditure has also been reduced. Close to 80 percent of the planned expenditure is salaries and subsidies, while 9.3 percent has been allocated for capital investments. Subsidies amount to a quarter of the total budget expenditure.



A stable macroeconomic situation mirrors positive developments in the labour market. The unemployment rate in 2023 was 2.3 percent.⁸ However, the unemployment rate among young people (15-24 years) was much higher (8.9 percent) than the national average. Among young women, the unemployment rate was nearly 29 percent. Also, the labour force participation among men is much higher (87.8 percent) compared to females (<50 percent).

A large proportion (59 percent) of Kuwaiti nationals employed in the public sector are females, while the proportion is less (48 percent) in the private sector. The New Kuwait Vision 2035 underlines the need to increase the footprint of the private sector in an economy

1. https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics_en?ID=67&ParentCatID=1
2. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=KW>
3. https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics_en?ID=34&ParentCatID=3
4. <https://www.cbk.gov.kw/en/monetary-policy/market-operations/main-indicators>
5. Economist Intelligence Unit, Kuwait Country Update, January 2024
6. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/65cf93926fdb3ea23b72f277fc249a72-0500042021/related/mpo-kwt.pdf>
7. <https://www.mof.gov.kw/MofBudget/mofBudget2.aspx>
8. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>



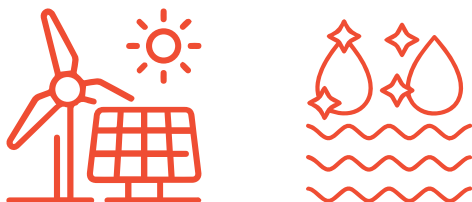
SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

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that is more diversified and less reliant on hydrocarbons. The extractive industry tends to be capital-intensive. Although it can be a source of income for the state, the oil sector contributes in a limited manner to more decent jobs.

Besides a growing economy, Kuwait continues to improve its social welfare system. The State of Kuwait is fully committed to advancing human development and the well-being of people.⁹ There have been noticeable development gains. Although there has been an increase in non-communicable diseases, access to public health is universal, and the undernourishment rate is below 2.5 percent. There are provisions for free education and social nets to protect the vulnerable in society. Kuwait has also made visible progress in reducing gender inequality and improving access to opportunities for women. More women are in leadership roles.

Nearly all the people have access to clean drinking water and sanitation. However, recognising the growing demand for drinking water, the Government of Kuwait plans to expand water desalination programmes in the country. While energy consumption in Kuwait remains very high, the government is exploring ways to reduce it. A three-pronged strategy is being pursued, including greater energy efficiency, investments in renewable energy sources, and reducing fossil-fuel subsidies. The government has established a National Committee on Preparedness and Response to the Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters in Health to respond effectively to natural hazards.



Looking ahead, policies for diversifying the economy, increasing the share of the private sector, and the social welfare of the people will remain key priorities for Kuwait. Climate change and the phenomenal growth in digitalisation are shaping production and consumption patterns, and the economy has to adapt to these changes. An inclusive economic policy will require

strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate, as well as harnessing digitalisation and artificial intelligence. Transitioning to a low-carbon economy, expanding renewable energy sources, and investing in human capital are vital for future success. With its wealth and oil resources, Kuwait has the fiscal space to invest in a greener and human-centric future.

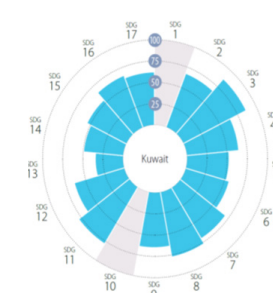
1.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

With a score of 64.4, Kuwait is ranked 108 out of 166 countries on the Global SDG Index. The metric aggregates progress across various SDG targets based on available data and ranks countries accordingly.¹⁰ Kuwait has already reached SDG 6, “clean water and sanitation.” Universal access to clean water and basic sanitation has also been achieved. Kuwait is on track to meet many SDGs by 2030, such as SDG 3, “good health and well-being,” SDG 8, “decent work and economic growth,” SDG 9, “industry, innovation and infrastructure,” and SDG 17, “partnerships for the goals.”

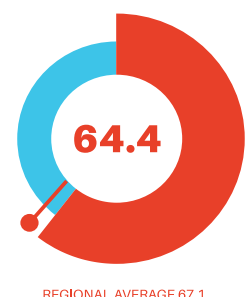
OVERALL PERFORMANCE



AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



COUNTRY SCORE

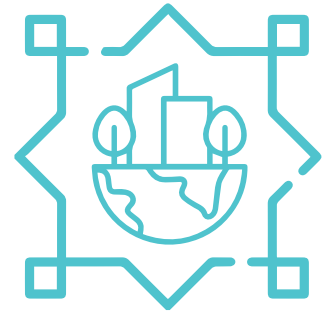


9. Voluntary National Review, 2023

10. The graphs have been copied from the SDG Index Dashboard. For more details about the SDG Index and country profile, click <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/kuwait>

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However, progress has been relatively limited in some SDGs. Although the literacy rate is high, improvements are needed in the quality of education and learning outcomes to enable Kuwait to meet the needs of a growing economy centred around knowledge and innovation. The prevalence of undernourishment and stunting among children is relatively low (SDG 2: zero hunger). However, the prevalence of obesity in adults has increased (30 percent).

While all of the population has access to electricity, CO2 emissions are rising, and the share of renewables in the total energy consumption is still very low (0.1 percent). Although more data is available to measure progress against different indicators, there are still gaps. The lack of data for several indicators makes it challenging to construct a complete picture and do an in-depth analysis of gaps disaggregated by population segments and spatially.



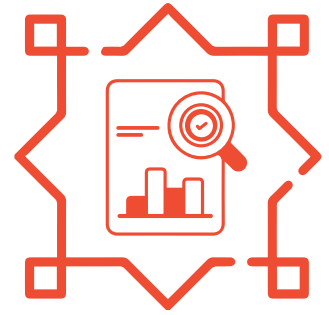
CHAPTER 02

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS



OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

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2.1 EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

The State of Kuwait presented its Second Voluntary National Report (VNR) at the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2023. The Second VNR provides an update on progress towards the SDGs and discusses challenges and opportunities for Kuwait to achieve Agenda 2030. The report also underlines the commitment of the Government of Kuwait to further accelerate the progress towards the SDGs. The UN in Kuwait supported the process and provided technical advice and guidance. During the preparation of the VNR, the Government of Kuwait adopted a Whole-of-Nation Approach to solicit views from a cross-section of national stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, and civil society.

Working in partnership with the Anti-corruption Authority (Nazaha), the UN in Kuwait provided assistance in including Kuwait in the Rule of Law Index. Monitoring the progress of this index will help policymakers identify areas that require attention to improve public governance and well-being. Inclusion in the Rule of Law Index helped the State of Kuwait to improve its ranking from 77 to 63 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.



State of Kuwait - 2nd Voluntary National Review Report 2023



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TO
63

Kuwait's Ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index

The UN in Kuwait supported the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) in organising a conference on including Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) Goodwill Ambassador participated and delivered a keynote speech at the event. The conference resulted in a set of recommendations to promote the inclusion of PWDs in the media, entertainment, and health sectors.

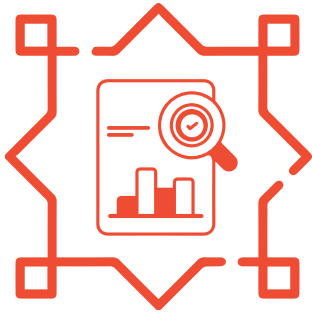
The UN in Kuwait conducted a digital maturity assessment for the Central Agency for Information Technology. The assessment investigated 14 digital domains in the public sector. Based on the assessment, several recommendations were provided, drawing from global best practices that, if adopted, would help Kuwait

achieve a higher level of digital government maturity.

The need for a digital governance strategy and the development of a roadmap and projects for digitalisation were highlighted as critical areas for action.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the UN in Kuwait organised a five-day training on 'Combating Human Trafficking' in February 2023. The training helped improve the capacity of national counterparts to prevent trafficking, identify potential victims, and provide them with the necessary assistance, including legal support. The UN is supporting the efforts of the Government of Kuwait in the implementation and roll-out of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The system will enable government officials to develop knowledge and skills for identification and referral for the victims of trafficking. An effective system and capacities will ensure improved protection services for vulnerable migrant workers.

In collaboration with the Permanent National Committee, the UN in Kuwait organised awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. These campaigns were organised to mark the 'World Day Against Trafficking in Persons' (WDATIP). The campaigns raised awareness of trafficking and provided information about the State of Kuwait's commitment to combatting trafficking in persons. The UN in Kuwait further



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deepened cooperation with the Permanent National Committee in Kuwait concerned with the Implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (TiP/SoM). The UN in Kuwait (provided advice and reviewed the National Legislation on Combating TiP/SoM to ensure that it aligned with international standards, norms, and best practices. A national symposium on “Policies to Combat TiP/SoM: Regional and International Experiences” was also organised.

Together with the Integrated Community Centre, the UN in Kuwait commemorated International Migrants Day. Participants discussed their experiences, challenges, prospects, and opportunities. The event, organised and funded through private sector donations, highlighted the resilience of migrant workers, their contribution to the host countries, and the social and cultural diversities they bring.

During the reporting period, the UN has worked with Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) and the private sector on training for identifying cases of forced labour and trafficking where three workshops were held in addition with the private sector on forced labour and human rights for the business community.

In the reporting period, the UN in Kuwait explored technical collaboration with the Narcotic and Psychotropic Laboratory of the Criminal Evidence Directorate, Ministry of Interior, on laboratory and scientific services, international collaborative exercises, and an early warning system. As a result, forensic experts from Kuwait participated in a study visit, alongside counterparts from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the National Arab University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) to the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Services in Vienna.

In early November 2023, Kuwait state demonstrated its influential role in international relations and the MENA region by taking decisive diplomatic actions in response to the Gaza crisis. The Kuwaiti National Assembly’s special session on November 1 resulted in 13 recommendations supporting Palestinian rights, including the establishment of a Gaza Reconstruction Fund. The foreign Minister also highlighted in his speech Kuwait’s leadership in advocating for humanitarian efforts and regional stability, while reinforcing its commitment to supporting Palestinian rights and international law.¹¹

UN Agencies in Kuwait jointly coordinated an inter-agency capacity development course for junior diplomats at the Saud al Naseer Diplomatic Institute. The course covered the mandates of different UN organisations, funds, and programmes. It enabled young diplomats to better understand the mandates, functions, and ongoing work of the UN System across the political, humanitarian, and development streams. Besides that, in collaboration with the National Security College, the UN in Kuwait delivered one week of training for government officials from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence on emergency preparedness. A course on statelessness for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also organised in partnership with the Sanremo International Institute of Humanitarian Law.

2.2 PROSPEROUS ECONOMY AND PRODUCTIVE HUMAN CAPITAL

A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Kuwait Finance House (KFH), the first bank established in 1977 that operates in accordance with Islamic Sharia rulings. The UN in Kuwait organised a workshop for the senior managers of KFH to assist them in moving towards sustainability by increasing their knowledge and understanding of SDGs and sustainable finance, thematic and green sukuk, impact measurement, and benchmarks. The workshop helped the KFH management explore ways of expanding sustainable and socially impactful financial services and products.



11. <https://www.kna.kw/News/NewsDetail/5/22/1033>



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The UN in Kuwait co-organized the 4th Knowledge Economy forum with the GSSCPD, focussing on the “4th Industrial Revolution”. The forum shed light on the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on specific industries and sectors and the future of education and lifelong learning in the knowledge economy. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is the widespread impact of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Unlike physical capital in the past, knowledge, digital connectivity, analytics, and data play a crucial role in shaping the global economy. More countries are harnessing expertise and technology for promoting sustainable development and addressing global challenges.

Complementing the work on digital and industrial transformation, the UN in Kuwait also raised awareness and organised policy dialogues on a “just transition” in collaboration with PAM and GSSCPD. Technological changes have always played a crucial role in diversifying the economy and improving productivity and social welfare. However, adopting new technology in the production process can be disruptive and result in job losses, at least initially. Combined with digitalisation, the climate crisis has created an urgency for countries to move away from fossil fuels. Many countries are exploring ways of reducing their dependence on hydrocarbons and investing in renewable sources of energy such as solar, thermal, and wind, to name a few. While there is a recognition that new technologies yield benefits in the longer term, they can cause a lot of disruptions in the labour market in the short term.

It is critical, therefore, that job losses resulting from technology are minimised, and those who end up losing their jobs receive the necessary support to learn new skills so that they can find decent employment in the emerging sectors of the economy. In this regard, a high-level event was organised in partnership with GSSCP and the European Union Delegation in Kuwait to promote just transition and decent work. The UN in Kuwait also launched a flagship regional report on “Social Protection for Migrant Workers in the GCC”. The study notes that while a lot of progress has been made, there are still several challenges that affect the provision of social protection to migrant workers in the GCC.

Following a request from the PAM, the UN in Kuwait provided technical guidance on the End-Of-Service Indemnity (EOSI) system reform for expatriate workers and organized a tripartite workshop to explore policy solutions hosted at the premises of the GSSCPD. A workshop was organised to solicit views on the current EOSI system and to identify appropriate policy solutions to bring it on par with international standards and best practices. The current system provides inadequate protection to workers and places more financial burden on the employers. The objective is to engage with all the relevant stakeholders, such as the government, employers and workers, to agree on a set of policy actions to reform the current system.

The UN in Kuwait, through its collaboration with the Public Authority for People with Disabilities and the Human and Social Development Association, has played a crucial role in the „Partners for Employment „ initiative, initially launched in 2018. This programme aims at integrating people with disabilities into the labour market, creating job opportunities mainly in the private sector such as banking and finance institutions and the oil sector, while providing specialized training and establishing convenient work ecosystems. This programme helped four batches of PWDs (approx.158 persons) among which 112 were fully integrated into the job market within the private sector (The banking segment particularly). A significant aspect of the campaign is a research study conducted with the banking sector to measure its impact on people with disabilities, their guardians, employers, and society. The fifth cycle of the campaign, launched on October 29, 2023, marks the culmination of five years of collaborative efforts, solidifying the integration strategies developed over this period.

Through awareness raising and advocacy about people with disabilities and women’s empowerment principles (WEPs), the UN in Kuwait increased the number of private sector partners who are WEPs signatories in Kuwait. A joint initiative between UN Women and the UN Global Compact, the WEPs are a set of principles offering guidance to the business community on measures to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. The UN in Kuwait continued to provide direct assistance to

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migrants and stranded people and build the capacities of national stakeholders. As part of its global resettlement programme, including the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), the Canadian Resettlement Programme, and the UK Family Reunification Resettlement Programme, the UN in Kuwait provided assistance to 105 applicants through resettlement and family reunification services. The applicants received help filling out their application forms, interviews, submission of medical files, country exit permits, flight arrangements, and assistance at the point of departure.

The UN in Kuwait also screened and repatriated 13 vulnerable migrants under the Humanitarian Assistance Fund for Stranded Migrants (HASM) and the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (AVRR). The work was coordinated with the Embassy of Sierra Leone in Kuwait. UN in Kuwait also distributed food packages to many vulnerable migrants during the holy month of Ramadan. The food distribution was funded through private sector donations.

The UN in Kuwait has been advocating for the citizenship rights of newborns with non-citizen fathers. Several meetings were held with NGOs, citizen associations, academia, and legal professionals to discuss the steps needed to reform the citizenship laws. To generate more evidence, a study has been commissioned to review national laws, decrees, and compliance with international standards. The analysis will help to review progress and to come up with specific recommendations.

The UN contributed to develop capacities and approaches on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) for the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in Kuwait, in close cooperation with the National Commission for Education, Science and Culture at the Ministry of Education.

The UN, in collaboration with PAM, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and the Kuwait Trade Union Federation organized a campaign on Labour Day May 1 to raise awareness about the work of its tripartite constituents in promoting decent work in Kuwait and international labour standards.

2.3 SUSTAINABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

The Government of Kuwait and the UN hosted a sub-regional workshop on the interlinkages between Climate Change, Migration and Health. The workshop brought together participants from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, and Labour from

across the Gulf countries and other stakeholders, including academia, the private sector, civil society organisations, and diplomatic missions from the countries of origin. The participants discussed good practices, challenges, and lessons learned in addressing climate-induced risks on occupational health among host societies and temporary contractual workers. This exchange among the Gulf States will contribute to long-term resilience and adaptation strategies focusing on migration policies and promoting inclusive health services and occupational safety.

Furthermore, during the MENA Climate Week in October 2023, representatives from the Ministry of Health took part in a panel discussion on “Addressing the Health Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Segments of the Society with Particular Focus on Migrants and Other Mobile Populations in the MENA region”. In partnership with the Embassy of the Philippines in Kuwait, the UN organised a webinar on “Migration, Development, and Gender” to shed light on issues related to migration and gender. The webinar marked 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a UN Global Initiative.

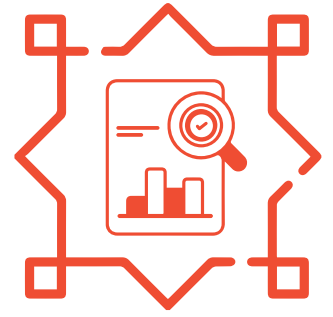
In 2023, the UN in Kuwait launched the fifth edition of the “Greening Kuwait” campaign, organized by UN in partnership with the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) where UN sister agencies and several diplomatic missions were invited. The campaign highlighted the importance of greening for achieving carbon neutrality. The 2023 campaign focused on sustainable agricultural practices using local plant species. Planting native trees ensures environmental sustainability and nurtures local ecosystems. The annual campaigns have significantly contributed to local environmental efforts and have promoted public and private sector engagement in sustainable practices.

In response to the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation, the UN in Kuwait launched a project, “Improved Resilience against Transboundary Sand and Dust”, in collaboration with the Governate of Iraq and funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). The initiative aims to help better understand the origins of sand and dust storms, their impact on public health, and ways to promote ecosystem restoration in areas where such storms originate. It is the first-of-its-kind initiative underscoring cross-border and bilateral cooperation between the two countries. It also highlights the long-term environmental and economic benefits of collaboration in the GCC region.

In partnership with GSSCPD, the UN in Kuwait also organised a “Kuwait Cities” forum highlighting the importance of urban development and sustainable growth. More than 30 governmental

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and private entities took part. A series of “Urban Breakfast” dialogues were arranged so that participants could learn more about measures to promote the sustainable development of cities in Kuwait.

The United Nations in Kuwait, in collaboration with the UAE embassy, organized two significant initiatives in Kuwait focused on COP28. These events were held at the UN-House and the Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute, affiliated with Kuwait’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The initiatives drew high participation and attendance from various UN sister agencies, the diplomatic corps, and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim was to shed light on the most pressing issues of COP28, challenges, and expectations of different world regions from the summit.

Moreover, the UN collaboration with the UAE embassy for climate change action in Kuwait’s urban areas included planting mangrove saplings in the Jahra Nature Reserve’s Sea. This initiative saw participation from both UN Agencies and the diplomatic corps.

2.4 HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE



The UN in Kuwait has been working closely with the Ministry of Health to support the national health system and improve public healthcare for all. Health personnel have participated in dedicated training courses delivered with support from leading global health institutions. The training focussed on data management,

systems thinking, and strategic planning. The UN in Kuwait is also helping national counterparts tailor primary health services for the elderly population. The UN in Kuwait helped the Ministry of Health adapt the Global Aging Population Survey for a national rollout.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) claim millions of lives around the world. A combination of genetic, physiological, environmental, and behavioural factors is contributing to an increase in NCDs. The UN in Kuwait has joined hands with the Gulf Federation for Cancer Control in campaigns. The week-long campaign in 2023 focused on preventive measures, such as early cancer screening. These campaigns aim to raise awareness among people and policymakers to design programmes as part of a responsive public health system.

UN in Kuwait is partnering with local authorities to develop a climate change and health research agenda. At the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health Global Forum, the Ministry of Health underlined Kuwait’s commitment to low-carbon health systems. The Environment Health Department in the Ministry of Health has established working groups tasked to conduct a climate change and health vulnerability assessment, which, when completed, will feed into the national adaptation plan for health.

As part of the ongoing efforts of the UN in Kuwait to support Early Childhood Development (ECD), training was provided to ECD workers. Under the Baby-Friendly-Hospitals Initiative, 36 breastfeeding counsellors were certified through a structured training that the Ministry of Health, and the UN jointly delivered. Moreover, 12 in-person workshops and training courses for policymakers and professionals covered several ECD topics. Additionally, in partnership with the Ministry of Health’s School Health Department, the UN in Kuwait conducted a set of trainings for 300 preschool teachers on early screening and support for children who have not yet reached key development benchmarks.

Social and behavioural change continued to be a key strategy of the UN’s approach to ECD. An estimated 300,000 were reached through nationwide campaigns in Kuwait. These campaigns promoted breastfeeding, healthy diets, cognitive development, and early learning for children. The UN in Kuwait provided technical advice to the Ministry of Health to secure funding for implementing the Parenting for Lifelong Health Programme, a global programme to be implemented in 2024. The UN in Kuwait also supported a local NGO in designing and delivering more than 30 face-to-face training events for parents and caregivers, focusing on newborn care, breastfeeding, early play, stimulation, and the mental health of parents.



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Within the UN in Kuwait, different UN Agencies complement one another to advance early childhood development in Kuwait and the region. Currently, the UN in Kuwait works to promote a comprehensive approach to early childhood development, applying the Global Nurturing Care Framework (NCF). The UN in Kuwait supports the Ministry of Health in developing and delivering training to sensitise partners on the NCF and to certify medical professionals who provide support, advice, and counselling to the families of young children with terminal and chronic illnesses or severe disabilities.

A key milestone in 2023 was reached to advance the child protection agenda in the GCC region by convening the first regional conference on child well-being, focusing on child protection. Around 130 participants from the GCC attended the conference. The initiative has created a unique platform for learning, sharing best practices, and exchanging lessons learned to improve and strengthen child protection systems. The conference will be a biannual event providing a platform for sharing experiences and crafting more effective strategies for child protection.

As part of “healthy city” mandate, several campaigns were organised by the UN in Kuwait in collaboration with various entities. These campaigns included blood donation drives, beach cleaning initiatives and saplings planting efforts, all aimed at raising awareness and improved public health.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The UN in Kuwait continues to seek opportunities to strengthen partnerships with the government to promote its role as a strategic partner in international development cooperation. The UN in Kuwait is exploring ways to further expand triangular

cooperation between the Government of Kuwait and development countries where the UN, through the UN Resident Coordinator Offices, can play a facilitative role.

The UN and NCF have already signed a memorandum of understanding to support the development, humanitarian, and peace nexus. The UN in Kuwait aims to build on this partnership to help KFAED identify critical investment opportunities in developing countries that can promote sustainable economic and social outcomes. KFAED is active in 105 countries and has provided over 1,000 loans valued at over 6.8 million Kuwaiti Dinars.¹² With local knowledge and presence in several developing countries, the UN can facilitate the transfer of knowledge, expertise, and investments between Kuwait and other countries.

The Government of Kuwait demonstrated significant support for UN humanitarian relief operations worldwide. In 2023, the Government of Kuwait donated a total of USD 97.6 million to various UN humanitarian agencies to aid earthquake victims in Türkiye and Syria. This financial assistance included funds for shelter, essential non-food items, contributions to the earthquake response appeal, and addressing health emergencies and broader earthquake response efforts. The aid bolstered the UN’s emergency response, enabling the delivery of critical health services such as trauma support, essential medicines, disease control, mental health services, and emergency support for children. Additionally, a public fundraising campaign with the Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society, a local foundation, raised around USD 422,000 for educational activities in Yemen, reflecting Kuwait’s commitment to addressing health emergencies and supporting disaster-stricken communities through the United Nations’ efforts.

The United Nations in Kuwait played a significant role in addressing the Gaza situation during the UN Day 2023



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OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

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celebrations on October 30. This event served as a platform for the UN in Kuwait to reinforce the UN Secretary-General's call for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian pause in Gaza. The UN in Kuwait emphasized the importance of respecting International Humanitarian Law and protecting civilians amidst the conflict. The event was attended by key government officials, including Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who expressed gratitude for the UN's efforts and reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian assistance.¹³

In addition to the UN Day activities, the UN in Kuwait has been actively involved in ongoing humanitarian efforts. On October 28, 2023, the UN ramped up its calls for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, highlighting the severe impact of continued hostilities on civilians and healthcare facilities. The UN Secretary-General also engaged in diplomatic efforts with regional leaders to facilitate humanitarian aid and address the escalating crisis.

Kuwait's Relief Society has been actively responding to the Gaza crisis since October 7, 2023, with the support of local and international partners, including coordination with UN agencies. By December 6, 2023, the Society had dispatched more than 44 humanitarian aid bridge/flight, delivering over \$18 million in aid to Gaza. The United Nations, particularly through agencies like United Nations Relief and Work for Palestine refugees in near east (UNRWA), has been instrumental in coordinating humanitarian efforts, ensuring that the aid reaches those in need, and supporting infrastructure projects critical for the survival of over a million Palestinians affected by the conflict.¹⁴

The Government of Kuwait hosted a dedicated climate change and health session at the COP28 National Pavilion. The purpose of this session was to highlight the importance of building resilient health systems in light of the effects of climate change on morbidity. The event underscored the State of Kuwait's commitment to public health and working closely with the international community.

Besides its contribution at COP28, Kuwait participated in the 5th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which was split into two meetings: one in New York and followed by another in Doha, Qatar. Many LDCs are falling behind and racing against time to meet the SDGs by 2030. As a major contributor to humanitarian and development efforts, the State of Kuwait can play a crucial role in raising awareness and helping narrow the financial gap for the LDCs.

Along with representatives of the national committees for combating trafficking in persons in the GCC countries, Egypt and Jordan, as well as representatives from the American Embassy in Qatar and the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office of the United Kingdom, the Permanent National Committee concerned with the Implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking into Persons and Smuggling of Migrants of Kuwait actively engaged in the discussions of the fourth edition of the Intergovernmental Forum to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Middle East. This year's forum focused on the theme "Combating Trafficking in Persons During Sessions of Peak Tourism: The Example of Sports". The forum was co-organized by the UN in Kuwait, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) of Bahrain acting as permanent secretariat of the forum, and the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons of Qatar as host.

Together with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (NAZAHA), the UN in Kuwait facilitated a study visit for a Libyan delegation comprised of senior officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to learn from the experience of Kuwait in integrating ethics and anti-corruption modules into Kuwait's education system. The study visit included meetings with NAZAHA and the Ministry of Education of Kuwait, as well as a school visit.

12. <https://www.kuwait-fund.org/wekfund>

13. <https://kuwait.un.org/en/251895-un-day-2023-speech-unrc-ghada-el-taher>

14. <https://kuwaittimes.com/article/17534/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-relief-society-spends-18-mon-humanitarian-work-in-gaza-strip/>

CHAPTER 03

UN WORKING AS ONE





UN WORKING AS ONE

3

3.1 DELIVERING AS ONE

The Kuwait UN House hosts 11 UN resident agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, RCO, IOM, UN-HABITAT, WHO, UNDSS, ILO, UNICEF, OCHA, and WFP) and 13 UN non-resident agencies (UN-Women, UNDOC, UNESCO, The World Bank, UNFPA, ESCWA, UNICs, UNOPS, UNHRC, IMF, FAO, UNEP, and UNV). The Government of Kuwait is responsible for the structural maintenance of the UN House. Common services are covered through a pooled budget to which all the resident UN agencies contribute. There are long-term agreements for cleaning, security, IT services, and utilities. The contribution of agencies is determined according to the space they occupy. In 2024, the total budget of the common premises was estimated to be USD 443,033, and it was divided proportionally among all the resident agencies.

The total estimated cost avoidance using common services starting from 2019 is expected to reach USD 1.4 million. Already, USD 969,000 has been “saved” in cost avoidance. Notably, while the costs incurred have been reduced, the common services continue to improve. The Operations Management Team (OMT), chaired by UNDP, meets periodically to discuss operational matters. OMT Working Groups were also established to look into further improvements and continuously assess the quality of services provided.



3.2 PARTNERSHIPS

The UN in Kuwait and the Government of Kuwait are finalising the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). It will be a significant milestone and mark the evolving partnership between the Government and the UN System. The UNSDCF is a long-term commitment that articulates the programmes and areas of cooperation between the UN and the Government of Kuwait. It further formalises the partnership to jointly promote sustainable development in Kuwait.

The Government of the State of Kuwait is committed to carbon neutrality and has shown strong interest in strengthening partnerships with the UN system to reduce its carbon footprint. Given the shifting priorities, more investment firms are seeking green investments and compliance with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. The Central Bank of Kuwait has issued guidelines on sustainable finance to local banks. The Capital Markets Authority also requires listed companies to report on ESGs. Given the vast experience that the UN system brings in green and development finance, these positive developments are another opportunity for the UN to engage more with the private sector.

The election of the State of Kuwait to serve on the UN Human Rights Council for 2024-2027 has renewed interest in the government to engage with various UN Agencies on advancing human rights, such as in the field of combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. A partnership between the Government of Kuwait that cuts across humanitarian, development, and normative dimensions will broaden the spectrum of engagement. UN in Kuwait is also broadening its partnerships with other national stakeholders such as civil society organisations and academia. UN in Kuwait is also engaging more with the media to promote advocacy for people with disabilities and gender equality.

3.3 OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

More cross-agency coordination on humanitarian and development initiatives will further strengthen the UN system’s coherence and programming response in Kuwait. A One UN approach can help successfully navigate the increasingly dynamic development challenges and provide tailored and demand-driven support to its counterparts in Kuwait.

The Six Transitions and Engine Rooms should guide the partnership and the rollout of the UNSDCF. In Kuwait, a high-income country, the UN can play a crucial role as a knowledge bank and an objective broker, helping Kuwait connect to cutting-edge knowledge, share its experiences with the rest of the world, and play a more active role in international development.

Internally, this will require necessary investments for the UN in Kuwait to build capacities in data analytics, innovation and digital transformation, strategic foresight, performance and



UN WORKING AS ONE

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results, and behavioural science. These form the pillars of UN 2.0, Quintet of Change, identified as new capabilities that the UN needs to become more agile and offer more system-wide solutions to partners facing the challenges of the 21st Century.

The joint field missions that various UN Agencies have organised with the Kuwaiti counterparts to countries receiving financial assistance from Kuwait have been very effective in assessing the situation on the ground and the impact of the programmes. These visits have enabled Kuwaiti delegations to see the positive impact that Kuwait is making by funding humanitarian and recovery efforts in the region.

There are also opportunities for the UN in Kuwait to promote trilateral development cooperation. As mentioned, the State of Kuwait is already scaling up its bilateral development assistance to developing countries, providing them access to long-term financing through KFAED. The United Nations operates in over 193 countries, providing inclusive support for humanitarian aid, development, and crisis response worldwide. Its mission tackles diverse global challenges like poverty, education, and gender equality. In Kuwait, the UN's deep local knowledge enhances development cooperation and strengthens global partnerships.

This unique position allows the UN in Kuwait to effectively contribute to international efforts and promote inclusive global progress.

Engagement with the youth is another area of convergence and opportunity for joint collaboration between the UN and the State of Kuwait. Considering the country's demographic structure, young people will increasingly play a vital role in its future development. The energy and fresh thinking that youth bring can be harnessed to positively shape Kuwait's development trajectory. Greater engagement with the youth can help identify ways to support the diversification of the economy and usher in a green economic transformation.

Lastly, without a signed UNSDCF, it has been challenging for several UN Agencies to develop long-term programmes. A UNSDCF is a vital programme document that captures key results that the Government of the State of Kuwait and the UN aim to achieve. Without a formally signed UNSDCF, there have been delays in project initiation and implementation. Without the UNSDCF, technical assistance can become fragmented. UNSDCF enables the UN and the Government to implement programmes underpinned by strategic goals. It also promotes continuity and programming activities anchored in results.



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UN WORKING AS ONE



3.4 COMMUNICATING AS ONE

In 2023, the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) in Kuwait made significant strides in enhancing coordination and amplifying joint messaging and advocacy, as laid out in the Communications and Advocacy Strategy 2020-2025. UNCG played a pivotal role in shaping narratives and promoting the understanding of the UN's work in Kuwait. A cohesive „One UN“ approach was adopted on digital platforms, resulting in a substantial increase in social media engagement, including a 20 percent growth in the number of followers.

As part of an effort to raise awareness of the UN's work in Kuwait, the strategic UNSDCF priorities were effectively showcased through localised digital campaigns. A set of communication products was developed to promote the “Delivering as One” agenda in Kuwait. Several audiovisuals and human-interest stories were also publicised to highlight the UN's work in Kuwait. Through targeted joint advocacy, greater public awareness of development priorities was raised.

The celebration of UN Day in 2023 also marked Kuwait's 60th anniversary with the UN, highlighting six decades of partnership. The event, held on October 30, 2023, was hosted by the United Nations Office in Kuwait under the patronage of Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with notable attendees including the UN Secretary-General's Representative in Kuwait, Ghada Eltahir. The activities of the event focused on reflecting the long-standing partnership between Kuwait and the United Nations across various sectors, including humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, and development support. These activities were a testament to Kuwait's significant contributions to global humanitarian efforts.

This event, along with other activities, underscores international collaboration in promoting sustainable development and youth empowerment. Key initiatives included an awareness campaign highlighting Kuwait's Voluntary National Review (VNR) on its progress with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the launch of the YOUNGO initiative “Youth & Education on Climate Change” in partnership with the German Embassy and AIManakh, which aimed at promoting climate change consciousness and sustainability awareness among university students in Kuwait, as well as encouraging the involvement of women and youth in climate action. The program focuses on creating positive attitudes toward climate action through education, interactive workshops, and real-life research opportunities.

The UN in Kuwait jointly organised various high-level events and campaigns focusing on education, women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities, health, and climate action. UNCG continued to engage with the international community, including the Young Ambassador Programme, which was launched in collaboration with the embassies of the UK and Canada. The programme focused on climate diplomacy and climate justice. Partnerships were also established with youth groups, small businesses, and research institutions.

Additionally, the UNCG supported internal coordination, knowledge-sharing, and the dissemination of quarterly newsletters. Regular updates on the geopolitical situation were shared with the UNCT. More content was uploaded on UN social media channels such as YouTube, X, and Instagram. Lastly, the UN in Kuwait continued to further strength the cooperation with the Ministry of Information and different media outlets in the country.





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