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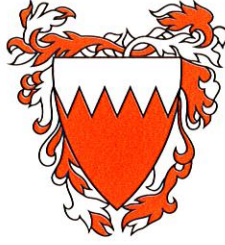
from

Mr Rashed ABUNAJMA
Secretary General of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain

on

Adaptations to the exercise of constitutional duties by Parliaments

Zoom Session
February 2021



Your Excellency Mr. Martin Chungong - Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU),

Excellencies, Secretaries General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

It is an honor to participate with you today in the meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), as these meetings constitute a fundamental foundation for joint parliamentary action, to review together the experiences of the General Secretariats of Parliaments in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts.

Therefore, this situation required us to address it as greatly as its seriousness, either to stand idly and allow the pandemic to hold us back from giving, working and producing (which is an unacceptable option for us), or to create solutions that are in line with the new situation and contributes to sustained action and development (it's the choice that we sought to achieve).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Council of Representatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain has had a pioneering and outstanding experience in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts. Probably, the allotted time is not enough to talk about all the efforts and challenges, but I will try to stick to the time as much as possible.

We sought to support the efforts of the Bahraini Team, through the Bahrain Parliamentary Team, by drawing on the vision of our wise leadership; insistence and determination to continue giving while limiting the spread of the virus at the same time. We, in the Council of Representatives and under the direct guidance of Her Excellency Mrs. Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal, the Speaker of the Council of

Representatives, have taken a number of precautionary measures since the beginning of the pandemic that have ensured the continuation of the constitutional work. This is without compromising the provision of precautionary measures for everyone, while the Council continues to perform its legislative, oversight and diplomatic role. Although this was important in normal circumstances, but it became of greater importance in such exceptional circumstances.

The most prominent efforts of the General Secretariat of the Council of Representatives in supporting the constitutional action are summarized as follows:

- The Council of Representatives continued to hold meetings of Parliamentary Committees remotely through smart virtual meeting platforms. Whereas, the Standing, Select and the Inquiry Parliamentary Committees held a total of 114 virtual meetings through videoconference, during the period from May 19, 2020 to February 16, 2021.
- The Bureau of the Council has held 12 virtual meetings since the introduction of working remotely took place in March 2020 and up to date. Whereas, 10 meetings were held in person, by considering precautionary measures.
- The Council of Representatives has set up a technical system that guarantees the Parliament's exercise of all its constitutional roles, including submitting questions, proposed laws, proposals and draft laws.
- The Parliamentary Inquiry Committees continued their meetings virtually or through field visits, by considering precautionary measures.
- The Parliamentary Studies and Training Center at the General Secretariat organized nearly 170 virtual training programs and workshops through videoconference.
- There was an increase by more than 50% in Parliamentary diplomatic work, through increasing the number of meetings and conferences held at the international level in various regional, Arab, Islamic and international forums. Whereas, the Parliamentary Group of the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in approximately 45 remotely events and meetings.
- The technological development in the legislative authority contributed to the increase in coordination meetings between the legislative and executive authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, which enhanced the constitutional work in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are certain that we will overcome this pandemic with our solidarity and cooperation, and that the international system is able to create opportunities for

cooperation that will contribute to the continuity of institutions and bodies in performing their work no matter how long this virus lasts. We also hope that the upcoming days will be better.

We are looking forward to further cooperation with our brothers and friends in the General Secretariats of Parliaments to strengthen our constitutional roles in support of the work of our Councils and our continuity in providing parliamentary support in all its forms within our genuine national duty.

In conclusion, my heartfelt wishes for the success of this meeting, and to achieve the objectives of building on the reviewed experiences in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.
