

Kuwait Transparency Conference kicks off

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(MENAFN - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)) Kuwait Transparency Conference kicked off here Monday, with the participation of several Arab and international figures.

Addressing the two-day conference, co-organized by the Kuwaiti Transparency Society and the Transparency International, Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said in a speech he delivered on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the conference sponsor, that the Kuwaiti government made much headway in diverse reform areas, chiefly political reform, which was strongly launched last year, as well as economic and administrative reforms.

Kuwait was one of the first countries that signed a UN anti-corruption agreement, which was initiated in 2003, he said, noting that the Kuwaiti National Assembly approved the agreement in November 2006.

The Kuwaiti government is determined to meet its commitments towards the international anti-corruption deal in the near future out of its belief in the significance of national reform, he added.

The government also spurs and encourages civil society organizations to play their parts in the national reform process as the Kuwait Transparency Society was established in March 2006 as an impressive step towards this way, he said.

It would also stimulate civil society in general and the transparency society in particular to help fight corruption and notch up reform ends, the minister added.

For his part, Salah Al-Ghazali, chairman of the society, said the current level of corruption in Kuwait needs to be combated as soon as possible in a bid to avert its impacts on development.

Kuwait is in need of a national strategy involving all state components in executive, legislative and judicial authorities, civil society organizations, the private sector and free mass media, he added.

He expressed hope that the executive authority, backed by the legislative authority, would meet Kuwait's commitments towards the international anti-corruption agreement, mainly an agency to fight financial fraud and an administrative control organization.

He, further, called for combating financial and administrative crimes, pointing to the role of judiciary in this respect. He wished that he could see corrupt officials appearing at court for trial and punishment.

For his part, Transparency International Chief Executive David Nussbaum addressed the gathering by hailing it as an opportunity to discuss with officials from Kuwait and other countries on the optimal way to fight corruption.

He added that if genuine steps were taken in this respect, this would improve Kuwait's position on the international corruption index