

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Zain launches three inclusion initiatives to accelerate WE ABLE 2030 vision

● **Bader Al-Kharafi:** “Redesigning how we hire, develop, procure, and advocate, so that accessibility and disability inclusion are built into every decision we make”

● **First telecom in MENA to partner with Business Disability Forum**

● **Opening applications for a new GROW batch and personalised individual development plans for employees with disabilities to ensure career progression and growth**

Manama

Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has launched three strategic disability inclusion initiatives to mark the International Day of Persons



with Disabilities on December 3rd. The initiatives advance the company's WE ABLE 2030 vision, powered by its '4WARD - Progress with Purpose' strategy, embedding disability inclusion as a core business and talent differentiator across its footprint.

Together, these three initiatives translate WE ABLE 2030 from vision into action across Zain's entire ecosystem, from how the company buys, hires, and develops, to how it advocates and shows up in the community. They include a new strategic partnership with Business Disability Forum to embed accessibility into procurement; the opening of applications for a new GROW program batch tailored for graduates with disabilities; and the introduction of personalized Individual Development Plans for employees

with disabilities.

Launched earlier this year, WE ABLE 2030 is Zain's long-term vision to ensure people with disabilities are safeguarded and empowered as co-creators of the technologies and experiences shaping the future. It focuses on inclusive hiring and retention practices, accessible products and services, global recognition for storytelling and advocacy, and clear pathways to career progression and leadership for persons with disabilities.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, commented: “Accelerating our WE ABLE 2030 vision through these three initiatives are part of a deliberate effort to redesign how we hire, develop, procure, and advocate, so that accessibility and disability inclusion are built into every decision we make. We

are moving from commitments to systemic shifts to operationalize our vision across the entire value chain.”

Al-Kharafi added: “By partnering with global leaders, investing in future graduates with disabilities, and personalizing development paths for our own people, we are signalling the kind of region we want to help shape. WE ABLE 2030 is about inside-out transformation. It brings our purpose of ‘Better Lives, Lasting Connections.’ to life by ensuring persons with disabilities are not only included but are leading and influencing the next chapter of digital progress.”

Strategic partnership with Business Disability Forum (BDF)

Zain has become the first telecom operator in the MENA region to partner with BDF, a leading international membership organization. This strategic collaboration advances the Accessible Products and Services pillar, as Zain Group's procurement team are integrating accessibility criteria into supplier evaluation processes. The partnership also strengthens the Global Recognition pillar, by opening access to BDF's global network of more

than 600 organizations.

Opening applications (zain.com/en/grow) for a new GROW program batch for graduates with disabilities:

As part of the Inclusive Hiring and Retention Practices pillar, Zain is inviting graduates with disabilities to apply for a three-month specialized training and internship track that will be rolled out in 2026 across four Zain operations. The program, designed specifically for graduates with disabilities, will provide equitable access to high-quality learning and a structured internship opportunity at Zain premises.

Personalized Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for employees with disabilities:

To ensure employees have tailored development plans and reinforce clear pathways to career progression and leadership. Each IDP is built from a comprehensive 34-question internal survey, capturing individual aspirations and specific support needs.

From commitments to systems change

These three initiatives deep-

en the implementation of the WE ABLE 2030 vision and complement Zain's broader efforts, including its long-standing commitments to accessible infrastructure, inclusive training, and assistive technologies.

The impact of the WE ABLE vision is also reflected in significant achievements over the past year, including the global publication of two case studies by PurpleSpace and Be My Eyes, highlighting Zain and WE ABLE's role in driving meaningful change in the region. Throughout the year, more than 20 disability etiquette sessions were delivered to hundreds of employees by Zain personnel with disabilities across the group. Furthermore, Zain employees volunteering on the Be My Eyes platform completed over 1500 successful calls during 2025.

By aligning its disability inclusion agenda with its '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy, Zain is working to set a new regional benchmark where accessibility is not an afterthought, but a catalyst for innovation, value creation, and more inclusive growth across the MENA region. Graduates with disabilities are invited to apply for GROW: zain.com/en/grow

Al Baraka Islamic Bank Celebrates Bahraini Women's Day



Manama

Al Baraka Islamic Bank, one of the leading Islamic banks in the Kingdom of Bahrain, recently held a special event at its headquarters in Bahrain Bay to celebrate Bahraini Women's Day, recognising the invaluable contributions of Bahraini women and their vital role in national development and in the Bank's growth and achievements.

The event reflects the Bank's ongoing commitment to sup-

porting Bahraini women and organising programmes and initiatives that contribute to their empowerment while broadening their professional horizons.

The celebration brought together the Bank's female employees in a friendly and engaging atmosphere, followed by a panel discussion featuring leading Bahraini women from various economic sectors. During the session, the speakers shared insights from their professional and leadership journeys, along



Dr Adel Abdullah Salem, Chief Executive Officer of Al Baraka Islamic Bank

with their perspectives on enhancing women's participation in decision-making roles and strengthening their presence within the national economic landscape.

The panel was organised as part of the Bank's dedication to providing interactive platforms for knowledge exchange, enabling its female staff to benefit from the success stories of Bah-



rain's distinguished leaders and entrepreneurs.

On this occasion, Dr Adel Abdullah Salem, Chief Executive Officer of Al Baraka Islamic Bank, commented: “Bahraini Women's Day is a national occasion through which we express our pride in the remarkable accomplishments of women who have helped enhance the Kingdom's standing and leadership. Today's event reaffirms our appreciation for the outstanding efforts of our female employees, who play an essential

role in driving the Bank's progress and supporting its strategic ambitions. Our female talent has demonstrated a strong and impactful presence across various departments, contributing significantly to performance development and service quality.”

He added: “We are proud to have hosted the distinguished female leaders who shared inspiring experiences and success stories that enrich the development of our employees and offer them new perspectives for continued growth. Women's em-

powerment remains a core pillar at Al Baraka, and we are committed to providing an environment that supports their advancement and enables them to contribute effectively across all fields.”

The CEO concluded by stating: “As we have been dedicated to for a long time, we will continue to expand initiatives that support women and create further opportunities for them. This is driven by our belief in the vital role they play in the Bank's success and sustainable growth.”

Bahrain EDB Signs MoU with MISA during fourth meeting of Bahraini-Saudi Coordination Council

Manama

On the sidelines of the fourth meeting of the Bahraini-Saudi Coordination Council co-chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB) and the Ministry of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (MISA) aimed at promoting direct investment.



The MoU was signed by H.E. Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development, Chief Executive of the

Bahrain EDB and H.E. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Investment.

Under the agreement, Bahrain EDB and MISA will work together to enhance collaborative efforts in promoting direct investment through the exchange of statistical data on investment flows, existing business prospects, key policies, legislation, and regulation related to direct investment opportunities as well as the broader investment landscape in both countries. The MOU additionally outlines a drive to raise awareness on potential investment opportunities across diverse economic sectors with areas of mutual interest and synergy.

Moreover, this milestone agreement seeks to further facilitate the increased exchange of information on public-private partnership initiatives, increase joint promotional efforts in targeting developers, investors, and potential financiers. In order to deepen collaborative efforts towards direct investment, the MOU outlines mechanisms such as organising exhibitions, workshops, conferences, alongside key events, including hosting an annual Saudi-Bahraini Investment Forum in the first half of 2026, with the aim of showcasing investment opportunities in both countries and inviting companies interested in investing in either market.

Commenting on the occasion, H.E. Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development, Chief Executive of the Bahrain EDB, said: “The Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia benefit from a deep-rooted legacy of robust economic and investment ties, which continue to evolve under the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The MoU signed between Bahrain EDB and MISA not only strengthens our longstanding relationship, but also represents a transformative shift

towards greater public-private sector partnerships between our two nations. We highly value and welcome Saudi investments in Bahrain's key economic sectors, which continue to play a vital role in further advancing Bahrain's sustainable development journey.”

As of year-end of 2024, cumulative direct investments from the Saudi Arabia into Bahrain reached approximately USD 10.13 billion, representing 21.9% of Bahrain's total cumulative direct investment stock for that year. These investments span across several key sectors, including financial services, insurance, industry, and information and communication technology.