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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### Information received from Kuwait on follow-up to the concluding observations on its third periodic report\*

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **Information submitted by the State of Kuwait on follow-up to paragraphs 17, 23 and 35 of the concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its third periodic report**

### **I. Introduction**

1. In paragraph 46 of its concluding observations on the third periodic report of Kuwait, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights asked for information on the action taken by the State party to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 (discrimination against illegal residents), 23 (migrant domestic workers) and 35 (right to education) of the concluding observations. The requested information is provided below.

### **II. Follow-up information**

#### **A. Response concerning paragraph 17 of the concluding observations**

2. At meeting No. 54/2010 held on 4 November 2010, the Council of Ministers of Kuwait adopted Decision No. 1612, in which it “took note of the report submitted by the Supreme Council for Planning and Development regarding the regularization of the status of illegal residents and the comments made by ministers and members of the Council, and decided to adopt the report and the principles, proposals and recommendations contained therein and to treat it as a road map to guide the work of the Central Agency” [for Regularization of the Status of Illegal Residents].

3. At meeting No. 15/2011 held on 6 March 2011, the Council of Ministers adopted Decision No. 409, in which the Government undertook to continue to provide humanitarian, social and civil benefits, services and facilities, free of charge, to illegal residents on an equal footing with citizens. This includes medical treatment, education, ration cards, disability care, and access to birth and death certificates, wills and inheritance documentation, marriage documents, divorce certificates, driving licences and work permits.

4. On humanitarian grounds, Kuwait provides services in addition to those listed in Decision No. 409 through governmental and private charitable committees and through the delivery of material and in-kind assistance.

5. As the above demonstrates, in its efforts to resolve the issue of illegal residents, the Government is following a clearly defined road map adopted by the Council of Ministers. The road map is designed based on key norms and principles such as those of justice and equality. It reflects a humanitarian approach to the treatment of illegal residents, to whom all the rights set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are guaranteed.

6. A bill has been submitted to the National Assembly with a view to resolving the issue of illegal residents in Kuwait.

#### **B. Response concerning paragraph 23 (a) of the concluding observations**

7. According to the Domestic Workers Act (Act No. 68 of 2015), the Public Authority for Manpower is responsible for implementing international human rights law, preserving the human dignity and protecting the rights of domestic workers, and providing legal protection to the three parties to a domestic labour contract (the worker, the employer and domestic labour recruitment offices and companies).

8. The Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers at the Public Authority for Manpower is working to remove all the obstacles that can prevent domestic workers from gaining access to remedies or from submitting complaints to the competent authorities by e-mail, at a local embassy or in person. The Department processes all

complaints as quickly as possible: after a complaint has been reviewed by investigators, a decision on the matter must be taken within two weeks, in accordance with article 34 of the implementing regulations of Act No. 68 of 2015.

9. Article 36 of the Domestic Workers Act states that domestic workers who are plaintiffs in domestic labour cases are exempt from paying legal fees at all levels of adjudication.

10. The Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers provides legal advice to all those in need and cooperates with national organizations operating in the non-governmental sector to provide free legal representation to domestic workers.

11. The Department uses social media and the official website of the Public Authority for Manpower to publicize the avenues of complaint available to domestic workers.

12. The Authority promotes awareness of the legal rights and obligations of the parties to a domestic labour contract, including via social media. On 1 May 2024, the Authority, working in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, will broadcast an event from a shopping mall to celebrate International Workers' Day. Videos will be screened on the rights and duties of workers and employers, and brochures will be distributed in several languages so as to reach as many workers as possible.

13. The Public Relations Department of the Public Authority for Manpower and the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers have jointly designed and printed brochures to sensitize domestic workers to their rights and obligations. The brochures, which are available in Arabic, English, Filipino, French and Urdu, have been distributed to embassies representing the countries of origin of domestic workers.

14. The Public Authority for Manpower has run educational campaigns to raise awareness of the rights and obligations of domestic workers and of the parties to a domestic labour contract (the domestic worker, the employer and the recruitment office manager). These campaigns were publicized online, including via social networking sites and on the Authority's official website. These efforts help to increase awareness of the law applicable to domestic workers and to educate the parties to contractual relationships about their legal rights and obligations. The aim is to build trust between them.

15. The Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers conducts periodic inspections of recruitment offices and companies to ensure compliance with the Domestic Workers Act. The Department also follows up on all complaints submitted by domestic workers and employers, to whom the Act also applies. If complaints cannot be resolved amicably, the Department refers them to the competent court.

16. To facilitate the application of the Domestic Workers Act, the Government has issued model bilateral and tripartite work contracts for the recruitment of domestic workers, which have become binding since the adoption of Ministerial Decision No. 2 of 2020 on 20 February 2020.

17. The implementing regulations of the Domestic Workers Act have been revised to boost the effectiveness and relevance of the Act. On 21 April 2022, the Government adopted Decision No. 22 of 2022, containing the implementing regulations for the Act, which provide for additional legal protections for the rights of domestic workers and other contracting parties to a domestic labour contract.

18. With regard to legal deterrents to discourage employers from violating domestic workers' rights, the Domestic Workers Act contains numerous provisions on the rights and obligations of domestic workers, the protections available for those rights and the penalties applicable to employers who violate them. The senior management of the Public Authority for Manpower monitors the situation continuously and is considering the possibility of amending or revising the Act to provide even greater deterrents.

19. Articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Domestic Workers Act define the penalties applicable to persons who violate the rights of domestic workers in their employ.

20. Article 30 of the Act states: “If the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers upholds a complaint made against an employer, the issuance of entry visas to the employer shall be suspended for the period specified in the implementing regulations.”

21. Article 32 of Decision No. 22 of 2022, containing the implementing regulations for the Domestic Workers Act, states: “If the competent entity upholds a complaint made against an employer pertaining to a violation of the employer’s obligations under the Act, or if the employer fails to provide adequate justification for failing to collect a domestic worker from the recruitment office, or if the employer fails to attend an investigation hearing when summoned to appear, the competent entity shall have the right to suspend the issuance to the employer of entry visas for domestic workers for a period of six months. The penalty shall be doubled in the case of repeat offences.”

22. To reduce language barriers and help complainants explain their case, the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers ensures that an interpreter or a representative from the embassy of the domestic worker’s country of origin is present during all investigation hearings held to discuss complaints. The specialized legal investigators responsible for such cases take prompt action to deal with them, referring cases to the competent judicial authority when an amicable settlement cannot be reached.

### **C. Response concerning paragraph 23 (b) of the concluding observations**

23. With regard to raising awareness among the public in general, the Public Authority for Manpower is responsible for providing social protection in accordance with international laws and treaties and for ensuring that protection is provided to all workers in Kuwait, including migrant domestic workers. The role of the Public Relations and Media Department is to disseminate information relevant to workers in general and to raise awareness among migrant domestic workers in particular of their rights and obligations. It takes various actions to that end.

- The Department distributes brochures on the rights and obligations of workers and on the services provided by the Migrant Worker’s Shelter, which is operated by the Public Authority for Manpower. It also produced a brochure on the Domestic Workers Act, which is available in Arabic, Bangla, English, Hindi, Sinhala, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu. Brochures are distributed to embassies and diplomatic missions and at events targeting migrant domestic workers. To ensure that they are accessible to all, these brochures are also available in PDF format on the official website of the Authority.
- Officials from the Department conduct interviews in the press and on television and radio to raise awareness and provide clarifications on issues relating to domestic workers, the problems that they face and any new applicable laws and decisions.
- To reach as many domestic workers as possible, the Department periodically runs a social media campaign on the rights and duties of domestic workers, consisting of more than 30 advertisements in eight different languages, including English, Bangla, Hindi, Sinhala, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu.
- The Department raises awareness of the domestic labour dispute service, through which employers and domestic workers can register complaints using an online form. It advertises the service through all available means, including on social networking sites and in traditional media.

### **D. Response concerning paragraph 23 (c) of the concluding observations**

24. As the entity responsible for protecting migrant workers and their rights, the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers cooperates on these matters with all relevant authorities, including the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice (in particular the specialized labour courts), the Ministry of Health, the Labour Relations Department of the Public Authority for Manpower, the Migrant Workers’ Shelter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the embassies representing the countries of origin of

domestic workers. The Department engages in ongoing cooperation and coordination with all relevant entities in order to strengthen the mechanisms available for monitoring compliance with, and the application of, labour laws on the protection of migrant domestic workers.

#### **E. Response concerning paragraph 23 (d) of the concluding observations**

25. To ensure the effectiveness of the process for regulating and licensing recruitment and employment agencies, article 2 of the Domestic Workers Act, supplemented by its implementing regulations, defines the standards and requirements which must be met in order to be eligible for a licence to recruit domestic workers from abroad. In addition, article 4 of the Act defines the obligations of domestic labour recruitment offices. As part of the procedures that are in place, a specialized section in the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers audits all recruitment offices before they are granted a domestic worker recruitment licence.

26. The Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers, as represented by its specialized inspectors, conducts an ongoing and intensive programme of continuous inspections of domestic labour recruitment offices and companies in order to identify violations of the Domestic Workers Act and impose penalties and administrative measures in line with articles 24 and 25 of the Act and article 11 of Ministerial Decision No. 22 of 2022, containing the implementing regulations of the Act.

27. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department also continuously monitors foreign employment offices and agencies with Kuwaiti accreditation located in the countries of origin of domestic workers in order to ensure that they comply with the relevant standards and laws and that they are not exploiting migrant domestic workers in any way.

#### **F. Response concerning paragraph 23 (e) of the concluding observations**

28. The Domestic Workers Act includes provisions to protect domestic workers' entitlements with regard to working hours and rest periods. Article 22 of the Act states that domestic workers are entitled to weekly and annual paid rest.

29. Paragraph 7 of the model recruitment contract (on general provisions) also states that domestic workers are entitled to weekly paid rest periods and annual paid leave.

30. Article 22 of the Domestic Workers Act states that the maximum working hours are 12 hours a day, to be interspersed with rest breaks. Paragraph 7 of the model recruitment contract (on general provisions) further states that domestic workers cannot be obliged to work for more than 12 hours a day or for more than five consecutive hours. It also states that each continuous period of work must be followed by a rest period of not less than one hour and that domestic workers are entitled to a nightly period of rest of at least eight consecutive hours.

31. The Public Authority for Manpower is considering a proposal for submission to the competent minister on amending or revising the Domestic Workers Act to include sick leave entitlements and protections, subject to the relevant legal procedures and the transmittal of the proposal to the official channels.

#### **G. Response concerning paragraph 23 (f) of the concluding observations**

32. Officials of the Public Authority for Manpower and other entities are looking into the possibility of the State ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization.

## **H. Response concerning paragraph 35 (a) of the concluding observations**

33. Education is a universal right in Kuwait. Article 13 of the Constitution of Kuwait stipulates that education is a fundamental prerequisite for the advancement of society and is guaranteed and promoted by the State. The concept of Education for All has become the frame of reference for the educational process overall. A scientific methodology has allowed for the establishment of goals, policies and mechanisms for implementing an Education for All plan that is aligned with the current situation and ambitions of the country.

34. In making primary and intermediate education compulsory, Kuwaiti law supports the right to universal education. Article 1 of Act No. 11 of 1965 on compulsory education, as amended by Act No. 25 of 2014, provides for compulsory education. Under the Act, the State is required to provide school buildings, books, teachers and all other material and human resources necessary to ensure the success of compulsory education. In order to ensure that all children are afforded the right to education, if a child is absent from school for more than two weeks without a reasonable excuse, the child's guardian can be punished in accordance with article 38 of the Children's Act (No. 21/2015) and article 10 of Decree-Law No. 4/1981 on the eradication of illiteracy through compulsory education.

### **Free education for non-Kuwaitis**

35. As part of its efforts to provide equal access to education for all, the State allows the children of many non-Kuwaitis to enrol for free in State-run schools. Over the years, a number of ministerial decrees regulating enrolment have been issued.

36. Ministerial Decree No. 504/2010, issued in 2010, establishes the rules on free enrolment of non-Kuwaiti students in State schools. Decision No. 115/2016 lists the 16 categories of non-Kuwaiti nationals who may be enrolled under those rules, namely: children of Kuwaiti mothers married to non-Kuwaitis; children of citizens of a member State of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf; children of the Yemeni Arab community; children of diplomats; children of non-Kuwaiti martyrs; children of technical instructors and teachers who work for the Ministry of Education; children of teachers of undetermined nationality who work for the Ministry of Education; children of faculty members of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training; children of faculty members of Kuwait University; children of faculty members of the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences; children of faculty members of technical institutes within the Ministry of Higher Education; children of faculty members of the Arab Open University; children of researchers at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research; children of specialists, social and psychological researchers, science lecturers and librarians working at State schools; children of undetermined nationality born to military personnel who are serving in the army or police, who are retired or whose service was terminated as a result of death; and children of administrative staff working for the Office of the Ministry of Education, central administrative departments dealing with educational matters, including private, specialist and religious education, the General Secretariat of the Kuwaiti National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, the Arab Centre for Educational Research for the Gulf States, the General Secretariat of the High Council for Education, the Regional Centre for Motherhood and Childhood, and the Office of the Ministry of Higher Education.

37. In addition to the above-mentioned categories, in Decision Nos. 114/2016 and 175/2016, further categories of persons eligible for free State education are listed, namely the grandchildren of military personnel of undetermined nationality serving in, or retired from, the army or police, the grandchildren of non-Kuwaiti martyrs and the grandchildren of Kuwaiti nationals. Furthermore, several decisions have been issued to allow the children of non-Kuwaiti imams and muezzins to enrol in State schools run by the Ministry of Education.

### **Free education for illegal residents**

38. Students residing illegally in the country receive the same standard of education and study the same curriculum as Kuwaiti students. They also share school facilities, classes and activities with Kuwaiti nationals, and they have the right to enrol in State schools in accordance with the ministerial decisions regulating their admission.

39. To support access to free education for illegal residents and for the categories of children eligible for free education listed in Decision No. 115/2016, the Ministry of Education issued ministerial Decisions Nos. 224/2014 and 225/2014. According to those Decisions, children of undetermined nationality who are born to Kuwaiti mothers and are resident in Kuwait and children of undetermined nationality born to military personnel who are serving in, or retired from, the army or police can enrol in general education schools.

40. In addition, pursuant to Decision No. 116/2016 issued by the Ministry of Education, children of undetermined nationality who are born to Kuwaiti mothers and are resident in Kuwait are entitled to enrol in general education schools at all levels (kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary). This expands on previous plans, which would have excluded kindergarten education from the free education provision for this group.

41. The following two tables show the number of migrant students who were studying in State schools in Kuwait in the 2020/21 academic year and the number of non-Kuwaiti students as compared with Kuwaiti students who were enrolled in general education schools, religious schools, special education schools, adult education centres, literacy centres and homeschooling in the 2021/22 academic year. At certain levels in some types of education, the number of non-Kuwaiti students reached nearly half the number of Kuwaiti students.

**Number of migrant students studying in State schools in Kuwait, by level of education, for the 2020/21 academic year**

<i>Level</i>		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>General education</i>				
General education	Kindergarten	168	215	383
	Primary	6 518	6 478	12 996
	Intermediate	4 793	4 626	9 419
	Secondary	2 890	2 796	5 686
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>14 369</b>	<b>14 115</b>	<b>28 484</b>
<i>Special education</i>				
Special education	Primary	43	22	65
	Intermediate	33	15	48
	General secondary	16	5	21
	Special needs	31	19	50
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>184</b>
<i>Religious education</i>				
Religious education	Religious intermediate	285	244	529
	Religious secondary	233	173	406
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>935</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15 010</b>	<b>14 593</b>	<b>29 603</b>

**Total number of students at each level of education, by type of education, for the 2021/22 academic year**

<i>Type of education</i>	<i>Level of education</i>	<i>Kuwaiti</i>			<i>Non-Kuwaiti</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	
General education	Kindergarten	20 613	20 898	41 511	1 132	1 192	2 324	43 835
	Primary	64 195	68 738	132 933	14 128	14 424	28 552	161 485
	Intermediate	52 028	56 780	108 808	10 848	10 800	21 648	130 456
	Secondary	36 393	41 197	77 590	6 890	7 137	14 027	91 617
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>173 229</b>	<b>187 613</b>	<b>360 842</b>	<b>32 998</b>	<b>33 553</b>	<b>66 551</b>	<b>427 393</b>

Type of education	Level of education	Kuwaiti			Non-Kuwaiti			Total
		Male	Female	Subtotal	Male	Female	Subtotal	
Religious education	Religious intermediate	627	417	1 044	275	265	540	1 584
	Religious secondary	589	559	1 148	316	230	546	1 694
	Religious secondary for adults	982	780	1 762	135	246	381	2 143
	Religious homeschooling	20	62	82	25	19	44	126
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>2 218</b>	<b>1 818</b>	<b>4 036</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>1 511</b>	<b>5 547</b>
Special education	Primary	109	88	197	54	42	96	293
	Intermediate	86	54	140	53	33	86	226
	General secondary	97	67	164	44	20	64	228
	Intermediate for adults	8	10	18	5	2	7	25
	Secondary for adults	23	7	30	4	5	9	39
	Special needs	305	189	494	113	67	180	674
	Literacy centres	2	3	5	4	-	4	9
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>630</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>1 048</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>1 494</b>
Adult education centres	Intermediate for adults	1 385	1 426	2 811	539	798	1 337	4 148
	Secondary for adults	11 623	5 575	17 198	1 833	1 686	3 519	20 717
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>13 135</b>	<b>7 498</b>	<b>20 633</b>	<b>2 528</b>	<b>2 913</b>	<b>5 441</b>	<b>26 074</b>
Literacy centres	Literacy centres	127	497	624	156	429	585	1 209
Homeschooling	Homeschooling	263	283	546	40	97	137	683
<b>Total</b>		<b>1 894 752</b>	<b>197 630</b>	<b>387 105</b>	<b>36 594</b>	<b>37 492</b>	<b>74 086</b>	<b>461 191</b>

### Charitable Fund for the Care of Needy Students

42. The Private Education Department manages the Charitable Fund for the Care of Needy Students, which provides free State school education to persons of reduced financial means who are not otherwise eligible for free education. The child's guardian must submit a special file, containing the child's basic data, the name of the school, the grade and the education level.

43. Since its establishment during the 2004/05 academic year, the Fund has covered the education costs of the children of illegal residents who are registered with the Executive Committee for Illegal Resident Affairs at the Central Agency for Regularization of the Status of Illegal Residents, as well as the children of residents of all nationalities who meet the eligibility conditions for assistance.

44. In the 2016/17 academic year, the Ministry of Education allocated 6.5 million Kuwaiti dinars (KD) to the Fund. It also signed an agreement with Zakat House to secure an additional KD 750,000 for the Fund in 2019 in order to enhance community participation in line with the principle of education for all.

45. In the 2016/17 academic year, the Fund covered the cost of education at private Arabic-language schools for 18,253 students, both male and female, for a total amount of KD 6,082,013.600 (equivalent to \$20,010,000).

46. In the 2016/17 academic year, the Fund covered the education costs of 15,754 illegal residents, both male and female, for a total amount of KD 5,292,065.670 (equivalent to \$17,411,000).

47. In the 2017/18 academic year, the Fund covered the education costs of 16,300 illegal residents, for a total amount of KD 6 million (equivalent to \$19,740,000).

48. In the 2018/19 academic year, the Fund covered the education costs of 17,876 students, both male and female, for a total amount of KD 6,467,000. The following table shows the breakdown of assistance provided for that academic year.

**Assistance provided by the Charitable Fund for the Care of Needy Students, by level of education, for the 2018/19 academic year**

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
Value of tuition fees per student	KD 290	KD 349	KD 426
Number of students per level	7 485	6 190	4 201
<b>Total amount paid out per education level</b>	<b>KD 1 870 843</b>	<b>KD 2 520 381</b>	<b>KD 1 816 729</b>
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>17 876</b>		
<i>Total amount paid out for tuition</i>	<i>KD 6 207 953</i>		
Estimated cost of books	KD 121 440.239		
Subtotal	KD 6 329 393.239		
Value of additional payments	KD 4 085.500		
<b>Final total</b>	<b>KD 6 333 478.739</b>		

49. In the 2019/20 academic year, the fund covered the education costs of 17,503 students, both male and female, for a total amount of KD 7,651,000. The following table shows the breakdown of assistance provided for that academic year.

**Assistance provided by the Charitable Fund for the Care of Needy Students, by level of education, for the 2019/20 academic year**

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
Value of tuition fees per student	KD 290	KD 349	KD 426
Number of students per level	7 258	6 074	4 171
<b>Total amount paid out per education level</b>	<b>KD 2 104 820</b>	<b>KD 2 119 826</b>	<b>KD 1 776 846</b>
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>17 503</b>		
<i>Total amount paid out for tuition</i>	<i>KD 6 001 492</i>		
Estimated cost of books	KD 150 000		
<b>Final total</b>	<b>KD 6 151 492</b>		

50. In the 2020/21 fiscal year, a total of KD 6,850,000 was allocated to the Fund. In the 2020/21 academic year, 13,324 students of undetermined nationality received support.

51. In addition to students of undetermined nationality, students of 28 different nationalities have received support from the Fund. In total, 2,955 students of these other nationalities received support, including 2,032 students of Syrian nationality who required assistance as a result of events in the Syrian Arab Republic.

52. Pursuant to Ministry of Education Decision No. 39/2020 on restructuring the education provisions and conditions of eligibility for the Charitable Fund for the Care of Needy Students, students enrolled in model schools are now also eligible to have their education costs covered by the Fund; previously, only students enrolled in private Arabic-language schools were eligible.

53. Pursuant to the Decision, the Fund can cover category B tuition costs for students enrolled in private Arabic-language schools and in model schools who meet the eligibility requirements. The Fund can also cover category A tuition costs for students in private Arabic-language schools, subject to the availability of sufficient funding in its budget or in other budgets and resources allocated to the Fund. Moreover, the funding must be disbursed in accordance with a set of general rules and criteria.

54. On the basis of the foregoing, it is clear that the Government is committed to delivering the right to free education for all nationals and residents in Kuwait, regardless of nationality, including illegal residents.

## **I. Response concerning paragraph 35 (b) of the concluding observations**

55. Kuwait is a leader in child welfare within the Arab world. It was one of the first States to have made significant progress in its provision of age-appropriate, needs-based pre-primary education. Since 1952, Kuwait has paid great attention to all aspects of kindergarten education. Many kindergartens have been built, including Al-Muhallab Kindergarten and Tariq Kindergarten, which were established in the 1954/55 academic year for children of both sexes aged between 4 and 7 years.

56. To keep pace with global changes and technological developments, the Ministry of Education is committed to creating state-of-the-art schools in which modern, international approaches to kindergarten education can be applied, harnessing the full range of material and human capabilities offered by teachers, psychologists, sociologists and educational supervisors. The Ministry is developing specialized curricula across the fields of linguistic, cognitive, social and health development. Aligned with international standards and with the needs of all learners, these curricula promote the development of communication, reading and writing skills through daily interactive activities that systematically include core themes, in addition to internal and external visits for children.

57. To put these efforts into context, in the 2021/22 academic year there were more than 200 kindergartens in Kuwait. The kindergartens are found in all residential areas, in proportion to the population density, and provide free education for all groups, in line with the relevant conditions.

58. According to Act No. 11 of 1965, kindergarten education is not mandatory. Consequently, only between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of children are enrolled in kindergartens each year. To increase the kindergarten enrolment rate, the Ministry of Education is working on various fronts to bring the topic of compulsory kindergarten education before the legislature. It is currently updating and finalizing the relevant procedures.

## **J. Response concerning paragraph 35 (c) of the concluding observations**

59. To teach in Kuwait candidates must meet certain criteria, the most important of which is possession of a degree in education from a university accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education. The Development Department of the Ministry of Education provides training courses and workshops for teachers, under the auspices of the Head of Education Affairs and in line with quality standards. The objective is to add value and enable teachers to exchange experiences. Furthermore, school buildings are equipped with the latest tools and with all necessary facilities, such as libraries, laboratories, gyms and theatres.

60. The Education Department of Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education oversee teacher training, using a globally accredited roster of graduates in each discipline. All trainee teachers must pass a practical module, which is classroom-based and lasts a semester. They are supervised by a specialized mentor, whose role is to develop graduates' skills and prepare them for teaching.

## **K. Response concerning paragraph 35 (d) of the concluding observations**

61. The education system in Kuwait was affected by the regional health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Schools were closed, and teaching moved from traditional in-person classes to online classes (both live and pre-recorded). This led to a learning gap, which became evident upon students' gradual return to the classroom. Various strategies and tools were introduced to support students who were struggling academically:

- Intervention plans were developed in cooperation with the parents of struggling students.
- Evening support classes were provided.
- Pre-recorded tutorials were provided, including recordings of televised sessions.
- Curriculum plans were drawn up to identify the basic knowledge and learning concepts for each grade and subject.
- An online platform was launched to facilitate open communication between teachers and students.

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