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## UN development official on visit to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia



Helen Clark

18 April 2010 – The top development official at the United Nations heads to Bahrain today to discuss human development in the Arab world and to find ways to speed up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in a country that is leading the way in the region.

United Nations Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) Administrator Helen Clark, accompanied by Amat Al-Alim Alsoswa, the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, is due to meet with Government officials, members of civil society and other UNDP partners to discuss how continue to support Bahrain's development.

Bahrain ranks 39th out of 182 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) scale, placing it in the high human development category.

Miss Clark will also discuss ways to strengthen UNDP's relationship with the Persian Gulf country.

Last month, Bahrain contributed \$1 million to UNDP as part of its recovery efforts in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. A portion of the funds will be used for the cash-for-work programme which has provided 75,000 Haitians, particularly women, with temporary employment, such as clearing debris or sorting reusable materials.

Miss Clark will also discuss female empowerment with officials. Bahrain took part last month in an event in New York, co-hosted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (a href="http://www.ohchr.org">OHCHR) and the non-governmental organization (NGO) known as Equality Now, to mark the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration on the rights of women.

Adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive global policy framework to achieve the goals of gender equality, development and peace.

While in Bahrain, Miss Clark will also chair the annual regional meeting of UNDP's resident representatives in the Arab region under the theme "Delivering Results that Count."

The meeting – to be held in the capital city of Manama from today through Wednesday – will focus on UN development programming plans for the coming year.

At issue is the "delivering as one" initiative, which focuses on how the UN can deliver aid and provide services on the ground in a more coordinated and efficient way. The meeting agenda also includes climate change and the MDGs.

Yesterday, Miss Clark made history in Saudi Arabia, by becoming the first UNDP Administrator to visit the country.

In a meeting with King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, they discussed Saudi Arabia's expanding support to global development efforts, particularly its assistance to humanitarian and post-crisis recovery, including a recent pledge to recovery efforts in Haiti.

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