

Local

Food waste increased significantly in Kuwait in recent years: Food Bank

Food bank official suggests passing laws to reduce waste

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: A recent report indicated that an individual in Kuwait wastes 95 kg of food annually. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti families waste 397,700 tons of food every year, according to the food waste index report for 2021 issued by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and partner organization WRAP. The report shows that most of this waste comes from households, which dispose 11 percent of the total food available in the consumption stage in the food chain, while food service establishments and retail outlets waste five percent and two percent respectively.

Meshal Al-Ansari, Vice President of Kuwait Bank for Food and Relief, told Kuwait Times the bank had submitted a project proposal to relevant authorities to establish a factory that recycles surplus food to produce chemical fertilizer and animal feed. "Food waste has increased signifi-



Meshal Al-Ansari

cantly in Kuwait in the past few years due to a lack of awareness by individuals and food service establishments, which requires a strong pause to study the laws and legislation that should be set to reduce food waste," Ansari stressed.

Kuwait ranks 20 on the list of top food-wasting countries in the world, according to the report, with 931 million tons of food wasted annually in the world,

which is equivalent to 17 percent of available food. The Food Bank for Food and Relief is a charitable organization approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor that was established with the aim of fighting hunger and poverty, as well as reducing food waste through awareness and guidance.

Bank's activities

Regarding the food bank's mechanisms that are being implemented to reduce or take advantage of surplus food, Ansari pointed out the bank has made an agreement with a volunteer team called "Al-Issa Endowment" to distribute surplus cooked meals from restaurants, hotels and home banquets to needy families in Kuwait. "Meanwhile, the food bank, in cooperation with the ministry of education, has started a campaign that educates and guides school students to learn ways of reducing food waste. It boosts awareness of the

negative effects of food waste and the damage it causes to the individual and society," he said.

"As for the direct role of the food bank, we do not deal with unpacked materials. Our direct work is only related to canned products that have a validity of not less than three months," Ansari said. "Co-ops and companies have a list of monthly sales and have knowledge of monthly surpluses. They allocate a percentage of the surplus for donation, playing a community role and preventing food waste." Ansari pointed out there are companies that refuse to donate surplus food and prefer to waste it, saying they have commercial goals and try to maintain prices. However, "community participation and donation of the surplus returns to the company as double profits," he said.

Ansari strongly agreed on the importance of setting laws and legislations to reduce wastage. "We have income from oil

that covers the costs of wasted food, but now after a big rise in food prices globally, it has become a burden on families and forces them to only buy basic foodstuffs," he said. "With the presence of legislations and regulations that regulate food waste and security, it will help the country to reduce food waste, as well as save huge amounts of money wasted annually."

Ansari warned not to rely on the current food price rise to reduce food waste. "With the rise in prices, people are forced to buy less food, but we must have continuous projects for the future and not think about a reaction to the current situation, because prices may fall in the future or the price of oil will rise, along with lifestyles, which will lead us back to food waste," he said. A special committee should be established by people involved in the food sector to find radical solutions to implement goals and keep up with international communities that work on reducing food waste.

Kuwaiti academic named among 20 'rising stars' in pharmaceutical sciences

KUWAIT: The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has picked Kuwaiti academic Dr Dalal Al-Taweel among 20 women pharmaceutical scientists and pharmacy educators as the first FIPWiSE Rising Stars, said Kuwait University. "The FIP Rising Stars list aims to promote, encourage and inspire women in the fields of pharmaceutical sciences and education," Kuwait University said in a press statement on Saturday. It is a new feature of the Women in Science and Education (FIPWiSE) initiative established by FIP in 2000 to champion and enable women to achieve their fullest potential and to attract female students and young professionals into these fields.



Dr Dalal Al-Taweel

Dr Dalal Al-Taweel is Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs at Kuwait University's College of Pharmacy. The FIP's list comprises 20 women pharmaceutical scientists and pharmacy educators from 13 countries. The criteria for FIPWiSE Rising Star nominations include demonstrated achievements, innovations and significant impacts in pharmaceutical sciences or pharmacy education, being a "pathfinder" in the profession despite challenges, and going "above and beyond" for the pharmacy profession. — KUNA

Sheikh Mubarak honors outgoing Australian envoy

KUWAIT: Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah stressed the importance of the serious endeavor to move Kuwait towards alternative energy, in light of many circumstances that encourage this trend, which has become an inevitable choice with the rapid rise in fuel prices in the world, pointing to the need to benefit from Australia's distinguished experience in relying on alternative energy. He pointed out the trend in developed countries to transition from traditional to renewable energy, noting that Kuwait can use solar power as an effective way to produce clean energy instead of heavy reliance on burning fossil fuel to generate power. Sheikh Mubarak expressed his regret that Kuwait is last among the Gulf countries in this field.

Sheikh Mubarak made those statements while receiving the Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Jonathan Gilbert on the occasion of the end of his four-year tenure in Kuwait. Sheikh Mubarak honored the ambassador and praised his efforts during his tenure, which he said was "full of hard work, strengthening bilateral relations between two friendly coun-



KUWAIT: Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah presents a commemorative plaque to the Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Jonathan Gilbert.

tries that share distinguished relations at all political, educational and economic levels." Sheikh Mubarak pointed that Kuwait invests \$16 billion in total annual investments in Australia. Furthermore, he noted that Kuwait also encourages the development of educational relations through the Australian Colleges of Kuwait. Sheikh Mubarak was at the forefront of supporting Kuwaiti students on scholarships to Australia, and he also expanded his economic activity in the field of investment and tourism in Australia, whether through hotel or investment activity in various forms. Sheikh Mubarak discussed with the ambassador the opportunities of development and cooperation in different forms, as well as support

for joint educational activity.

The two sides also stressed the need to support trade cooperation between Kuwait and Australia with the unprecedented Australian vegetable harvest this year and in light of the repercussions of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which affected wheat prices internationally, especially since Australia is one of the friendly countries that supports Kuwait in maintaining its food security, whether in wheat or barley and other basic materials.

Sheikh Mubarak thanked the ambassador for the years he spent in Kuwait as he was accepted by all segments of the society. The ambassador, in turn, praised Sheikh Mubarak's role in promoting cooperation between the two friendly countries. At the end, souvenirs were exchanged.

Charging spots pop up around Kuwait as electric cars become more popular

KUWAIT: The global push for cleaner modes of transportation had a great leap with electric vehicles becoming more popular in recent years. In Kuwait, one might be able to spot electric cars roaming around with said vehicles using electric charging spots, which started to pop-up in several locations throughout the country. Being environment friendly and aware is perhaps the main driving force behind electric vehicles with several car companies now providing this option for eager clients. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A fully designated parking spot for electric vehicles. — KUNA photos



Electric charging post with the iconic Kuwait Towers in the background.



An electric charging station located at The Avenues Mall.



A sign for a special parking to charge electric vehicles.

local spotlight

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination



By Atyab Al-Shatti

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Article 70 of the Constitution of Kuwait, states "If the Amir approves conventions by a decree and refers them to the National Assembly for ratification, then to be published in the official gazette as a pillar point to announce the date of commencement of these provisions. After this fundamental legal procedure, conventions shall have the power of national laws and supersede national laws with regards to implementation in case of any conflict."

Through this constitutional principle, conventions' provisions become effective in the legislative system and the national judiciary, but in terms of practice, most of the verdicts issued by the court rely only on national laws as a source of laws and provisions. It is rare to have these verdicts based on conventions which Kuwait has signed, ratified and have become nationally binding. Also, it is rare to find verdicts issued according to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). This reflects the need to implement provisions of international conventions ratified by Kuwait in general and CERD in particular.

Today, it is crucial to harmonize national legislations with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, considering the fact that Kuwaiti law combats discrimination and racism, yet does not define discrimination specifically to combating discrimination. Such a legislative vacuum creates a serious gap between the definition of discrimination as stated in our national regulations and the definition in article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which Kuwait has signed and ratified.

Many relevant national legislations were not harmonized with the convention, particularly labor laws such as law 6/2010 concerning work in the private sector which does not ban direct and indirect discrimination based on reasons mentioned by International Labor Organization (ILO) convention no. 111/1958 concerning discrimination in employment and occupation in respect of all aspects of work, particularly prohibition of sexual harassment and discrimination on multiple grounds, like the sponsor (kafeel) system, lack of social security for female migrant workers and a shortage of providing an appropriate mechanism to help them get their legal rights.

The abovementioned law hasn't been amended since it was enacted in 2010 with respect to discrimination in employment, occupation and the sponsorship system and its mechanisms. Civil service law no. 15/1979 hasn't been amended to prohibit discrimination in employment according to gender, origin, language and religion. Moreover, a number of regulations and administrative decisions restrict the rights stipulated in certain laws, like law no. 15/1979. Article 2 of this law defines the employee as anyone who holds a civil job at a government authority regardless of the nature of their job, title, or being a citizen or migrant worker.

Non-Kuwaiti employees and migrant workers are usually appointed by contracts according to circular no. 6/1979 concerning the rules and provisions of temporary appointment. Such contracts restrict the rights granted to them by the Civil service law. For example, migrant teachers are appointed according to the second contract (B), therefore their salary is fixed based on item B of article 4 of circular no. 6/1979. So, the salary will not be raised periodically and there is no promotion to supervisory positions.

Finally, we trust the humanitarian sense of our authorities to help amend these legislative gaps and enact just laws.