Kuwaiti representative sheds light on national development experience at forum

DEAD SEA, (Jordan) Dec 17 (KUNA) -- The regional forum, themed "economies of the Arab spring," got underway here on Monday to discuss ramifications of the "spring" events in the Arab world, with the representative of Kuwait affirming that the Gulf state coped well with ripples of the historic events.

Addressing the opening session, the representative of Kuwait shed light on the Gulf country's democratic experience and the administrative system contribution to ensuring political stability of the state.

The State of Kuwait "has been experiencing a democratic spring since its establishment, in shadow of a democratic political system that clearly contributed to boosting political stability and a constitution that became a patriotic option for the ruler and the ruled," said Dr. Bader Othman Malallah, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Planning Institute, speaking at the opening session of the forum.

Malallah was addressing the inaugural session on behalf of the Minister of State for Planning and Development, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Dr. Rola Dashti. The two-day gathering is organized by the Kuwait-based institute, in coordination with the technical secretariat of the Arab council of ministers of social affairs.

Shedding some light on how the State of Kuwait acted in shadow of fallouts of the Arab spring, Malallah noted that the political leadership, headed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jabar Al-Sabah, had taken a series of steps in this regard, namely formation of a supreme economic consultative commission that produced a comprehensive program for reforms -- adopted by the government.

Malallah, addressing the statement on behalf of the minister, indicated that the forum constituted an opportunity for decision makers to ponder experience of the Arab spring and take steps for sustainable development.

Development gap between Arab countries and advanced nations expanded over the past years, with mounting rates of unemployment particularly among the young, the Kuwaiti representative added.

In remarks to KUNA on sidelines of the forum, Malallah re-stressed that Kuwait "was an exceptional case for it has been living a spring since it was proclaimed," praising HH the Amir's initiatives at the social and economic levels.

For his part, the secretary general of Jordan's ministry of planning, Saleh Al-Kharabsheh, said, during the opening session, that the Arab spring states are currently facing diverse problems, such as sluggish growth, growing budgets' deficit, deteriorating tourism, falling investments, depletion of reserves of foreign currencies, soaring inflation in shadow of greater demand for food and fuel.

Losses related to the Arab spring events are estimated at USD 120 billion, in shadow of dropping foreign investments, in the range of 24.2 percent.

Direct investments in the Arab countries were estimated at USD 50 billion in 2011, compared with USD 66 billion in 2010. These investments were expected not to exceed USD 53 billion this year.

Tareq Al-Nabulsi, the representative of the Arab League, expressed regret that focus of the majority in the Arab world has been on political affairs, rather than vital issues in the social and economic arenas -- which in fact constitute roots of the uprising. (end) ab.rk KUNA 171221 Dec 12NNNN