

## V. Timeline

---

### Select Developments in the Labor Market Across the GCC: 2000-2015

---

#### 2000

May 28 – Kuwait passes the National Labor Support Act specifying national labor quotas and extending social allowances to privately employed Kuwaitis. A 2.5 percent tax is mandated on the net profits of Kuwaiti companies listed on the Kuwaiti Stock Exchange to fund the cost of training Kuwaitis in the private sector.

---

#### 2002

September – The Workers Trade Union Law (Law 33/2002) permits private sector workers to form and join unions and establishes the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions.

---

#### 2003

Female labor participation rate in Kuwait reaches 45 percent, the highest participation rate to date and a 12 percent increase from 1990.

April 26 – Oman promulgates Royal Decree No. 35 which covers leave entitlements available to employees working in the country, but exempts civil servants, military, security or police personnel, or domestic service/household employees.

---

#### 2004

December 21 – The GCC passes The Unified Law of Insurance Protection law, extending the coverage of insurance protection in each GCC state for its citizens working in any GCC state other than their home state.

---

#### 2006

May 31 – Bahrain establishes the Labor Market Regulatory Authority which assumes responsibility of visa and foreign work regulations from the Ministry of Labor. In addition, the LMRA assumes responsibility for introducing labor market reforms and drafting policy on national and expatriate workers.

November 2 – Oman issues Ministerial Decision 294/2006 which authorizes workers to form unions independent of the government and permits collective bargaining.

---

#### 2007

The participation of the Qatari female labor force rises to 35 percent compared to 27 percent in 2001, with the growth highest in the health and social sectors. Additionally, the unemployment rate amongst Qatari women decreased from 22 percent to 6 percent between 2001 and 2007.

---

#### 2009

May 4 – Bahrain's vow to scrap the required sponsorship system of foreign workers by August 1, 2009, is met with mixed reviews by business and trade unions. The initiative was modified and foreign workers are currently sponsored by the Labor Market Regulation Authority. The new law would have permitted foreign workers to change employers or terminate their obligations.

July 20 – The UAE enacts the Wage Protection System routing all payments through monitored financial institutions. The system claims to safeguard labor interests by improving worker-employer relationships, improving transparency, and limiting disputes related to wages.

---

### 2011

January 1 – The UAE loosens conditions in which foreign workers will have the authority to take up new jobs without the consent of former employers or the no-objection certificate upon the completion or legal termination of a labor contract. Workers previously were required to complete three years and obtain a no-objection letter to avoid a six month work ban.

June 11 – Saudi Arabia introduces *Nitaqat* Law, favoring the employment of national citizens over expatriate workers. The initiative establishes quotas across 41 labor sectors and sets penalties for non-compliant companies, including the non-renewal of expatriate worker visas.

March 18 – Saudi Arabian King Abdullah seeks to appease dissatisfied Saudis through a package of reforms and wage raises, as well as an allocation of 300,000 public sector jobs.

June 16 – The International Labor Organization ratifies a convention on domestic work which guarantees daily and weekly rest hours, entitlement to minimum wage, and a place where they may live and spend their leave. All GCC member-states vote in support, but have yet to ratify and implement the conventions key articles.

October 9 – King Hamad of Bahrain issues a decree amending Law 33/2002 to allow the establishment of more than one trade union in a company and more than one trade union federation in Bahrain.

---

### 2012

August 2 – Bahrain partially extends its labor law (Law No.36) to domestic workers under terms in line with private sector employees.

---

### 2013

March 25 – GCC draft law on domestic workers ready. The GCC countries hope to have a common law regulating domestic work, including a unified work contract.

---

### 2014

April 23 – Despite efforts on behalf of the kingdom to encourage the employment of women in the private sector, unemployment of Saudi women increased to 34 percent, the highest in the GCC.

May 14 – Qatar officially announces proposed changes to its *kafala* system which would make it easier for expats to exit the country or change jobs.

October 20 – GCC reconsiders plan to reduce the number of expat workers in region.

November 26 – GCC labor ministers agree on unified contract defining rights of maids. The contract includes a weekly day off, the right to live outside their employer's home, a six-hour working day with paid overtime and the right to travel at any time.

## V. Timeline

---

November 27 – Kuwait hosts the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue where participants agree to adopt the “Pilot Project on Skill Development, Documentation and Recognition” initiative. The GCC motion aims to improve training, certification, and documentation to empower workers and serve the countries of origin in expanding their qualified labor pools.

July 1 – New law goes into effect in Oman that no longer permits expatriates to freely move between employers without two year absence.

---

### 2015

January 14 – The UAE national labor law undergoes revision in applying work standards to employees in special economic zones and extending leave benefits to private sector employees as well as subsidizing private sector wages.

June 24 – The Kuwaiti parliament adopts a landmark law for domestic workers. Seen as a major breakthrough in the GCC by human rights organizations, the law provides enforceable rights to this category including a weekly day-off, 30 days annual paid leave, a 12-hour working day with rest, and an end-of-service benefit.