

GCC plans common strategy on expat workers

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Gulf States are moving towards a common strategy to address the socio-economic impact of the region's foreign workers.

The first 'Doha Declaration' has been issued on the subject after Qatar's Planning Council and Permanent Population Committee finalised the set of recommendations that came out of a 3-day regional symposium on foreign workers, hosted by Qatar earlier this month.

They have labelled these recommendations as a 'Doha Declaration' on foreign workers in the GCC, and this presents the next steps towards establishing a common regional strategy.

The recommendations were developed during the regional symposium, where high-ranking government representatives, academics and decision makers from GCC countries, as well as international and regional experts in population, labour and migration issues, came together to discuss a common way forward on issues relating to the region's foreign/migrant labour force.

The Chief of Migration Section, United Nations Population Division, Bela Hovy, said of the symposium: 'This was an encouraging event, where overall it has been good to see the desire to come together, share best practice and learn from international experience'.

The Doha Declaration recommends the importance of strengthening cooperation among the GCC States, and calls for further integration of their policies in relation to foreign workers through continued exchange of relevant information and technology from each other, as well as from international agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations (UN).

Many of the recommendations focus on the need for a more formal assessment of the situation the region finds itself in with regards to its workforce trends, a press statement said yesterday.