

Private Sector Emirati Employees to Get Public Sector Benefits

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4 February 2010

ABU DHABI — The Ministry of Labour has drafted a bill granting private sector Emirati employees privileges similar to those extended by the public sector.

They include Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and Children Allowance, Labour Minister Saqr Gobash said. This is to attract more Emiratis to the private sector.

“The proposed law has been submitted to the Emiratisation Council for consideration and issuance,” Gobash said in reply to a *Khaleej Times* question on his ministry’s efforts to plug the gap in incentives between the two sectors.

“Acting on the Cabinet’s instructions to conduct a study on Emiratisation in the private sector, the ministry has finalised an integrated bill that will fill the existing gulf,” the minister said.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the 15th annual conference of the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research on Education and the Requirements of the GCC Labour Market.

Gobash said the situation had caused a drop in Emiratisation rate in private companies to 0.4 per cent. Job localisation rate is 20 per cent in Bahrain, 13.3 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 14.4 per cent in Oman and 0.6 per cent in Qatar.

“UAE nationals prefer to join the public sector to get higher salary, favourable work environment, pension and other retirement benefits. This makes Emiratisation in the private sector one of daunting challenges we face,” he said.

“The more privileges the private sector offers, the greater the chances of achieving a higher Emiratisation percentage,” the minister said.

The evidence is that Emiratisation is higher at firms granting privileges similar to the government sector such the oil companies. Sectors with low salaries, like building and construction, have lowest percentage of national workforce, he said.

The bill would boost Emiratisation drive by developing appropriate policies and striking a balance between curricula and development requirements.

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