

# 'Go green' call to businesses



■ Bahrain is making efforts to protect its biodiversity, including dugongs

By REBECCA TORR

BAHRAIN'S business community has been urged to join a worldwide United Nations campaign to help protect biodiversity.

Last October the UN General Assembly declared 2011-2020 the UN Decade of Biodiversity and Bahrain was among 193 countries that committed themselves to a new set of targets and goals for the next 10 years to reduce biodiversity loss.

Bahrain has 229 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles, according to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Of these, 0.9 per cent are endemic, meaning they exist in no other country, and 5.2pc are threatened.

Bahrain is home to at least 195 species of vascular plants.

The country has already ratified various environmental proto-



■ Ms Klaimi, sitting, second from right, with club members

cols, including the Convention on Biodiversity, and has declared six protected areas. However, the United Nations Global Biodiversity Outlook report highlighted the rate of loss in species in the region, including extinction in fish and birds.

"The Gulf region is under pressure from urban growth and development and they are drivers of biodiversity loss," said United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia programme officer for biodiversity and ecosys-

tems Diane Klaimi.

"Biodiversity loss has reached 1,000 times more than it used to be 50 years ago, we are trying to bring these figures to policy makers and the business sector and see how they can implement biodiversity conservation.

"There are ways the business community can lend their support to protecting biodiversity and invest in ecosystems and find ways to preserve them and raise more gains and have financial stability in the long term.

Ms Klaimi said Bahrain was committed to protecting biodiversity and had drawn up its own strategy with a set of goals and targets to preserve marine resources, birds, habitats and agriculture. She said the government had specialists working on various conservation programmes including those aimed at preserving dugongs (sea cows) and migratory birds.

It is reported that there are around 100,000 dugongs left in the world, with 7,300 in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea.

Ms Klaimi was speaking to the *GDN* prior to her talk at the Rotary Club of Adliya's weekly meeting at The Officers Club, Elite Resort and Spa.

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