

# Meeting on key global issues

ISSUES of global security, peace and economy are to be discussed in the annual plenary meeting of the InterAction Council set to convene in Manama on Thursday.

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, the two-day meeting will bring together nearly 20 former heads of state and government, leading academics and policymakers.

They will deliberate on four main themes: the present state of the world, the water-energy nexus, bridging the religious divide and nuclear non-proliferation.

"The Middle East is experiencing a period of rapid change – some changes for the good and some changes that threaten to destabilise the entire region – making this a critical time for a group such as the InterAction Council to meet here," said Thomas Axworthy, InterAction Council Secretary-General.

"Our mandate is to look at some of

the most pressing regional issues as they affect the global community and make recommendations to current world leaders and policymakers on how the international community can best respond.

"We hope that through this meeting we can contribute to the global conversation on very serious issues facing the Middle East and the world in a meaningful way."

The opening ceremony will feature a keynote speech by former Prime Minister of Jordan Dr Abdel Salam Majali, entitled, "Uprisings in the Arab World: The Reality Beyond the Failure of Politics and Policies."

InterAction Council members expected to attend include former Chancellor of Austria and Council Co-Chair Dr Franz Vranitzky; former Prime Minister of Canada and Council Co-Chair Rt. Hon. Jean Chrétien; and Nobel Prize Laureate Dr Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica.

High-level experts include Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); Dr. Majid Al Moneef, Secretary-General of Saudi Arabia's Supreme Economic Council; Lord Michael Lothian, Chairman of the Global Strategy Forum; and religious scholar and best-selling author Dr Reza Aslan.

In addition to the roundtable deliberations, participants will visit some of the cultural treasures of Bahrain.

The InterAction Council holds its meetings in a different country every year and last met in the Middle East in May 2009 for its 27th Annual Plenary Meeting in Saudi Arabia.

For 31 years, the council has been at the forefront of many prominent issues, most notably the 1997 drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities; the 2010 Hiroshima Declaration and the 2012 report, The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue.