

# **The UAE National Report**

**Presented**

**In accordance with Article 15 (a) of the Appendix to the Decision of the  
Human Rights Council 1/5**

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How this report was prepared:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Report creation plan:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1 – The political system</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1-1 Supreme Council of the Federation</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1-2 Federal President and Vice President</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1-3 Council of Ministers:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1-4 Federal National Council:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1-5 Federal Judiciary:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2 – Guarantees for enhancing and protecting human rights:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2-1 Constitutional guarantees:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2-2 Legal guarantees:</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2-3 International agreement guarantees:</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>3 - International cooperation with international and regional organizations:</b>	
<b>3 – NGOs and national organizations concerned with human rights</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>4 – Efforts of the United Arab Emirates to enhance and protect human rights:</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>4-1 Enhancing political participation</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>4-2 Women:</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>4-3 The police and human rights:</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>4-4 The media:</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>4-5 Imported labor:</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>4-6 Combating human trafficking:</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>5 – Accomplishment and best practices:</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>5-1 Education</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>5-2 health care:</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5-3 Social care:</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>5-4 housing:</b> .....	<b>24</b>

<b>5-5 Remote areas development projects:</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>5-6 The Marriage Fund:</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>5-7 Spreading the human rights culture:</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>List of enclosures:</b> .....	<b>27</b>

**Introduction:**

This report was prepared in accordance with Article (5/e) of United Nations General Assembly Resolution (251/60) regarding the establishment of a council for human rights, and in accordance with the general guiding principles authorized by the Human Rights Council that reflect the United Arab Emirates’ commitment to respect and apply all principles, charters, and agreements related to human rights that maintain human dignity and achieve equality, social justice, and equal opportunities among individuals, as well as provide a better life, a stronger stability, and a higher international standing. This report was created with the participation of national agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to present the efforts made by the United Arab Emirates in the field of human rights and the degree to which it abides by national laws and ratified agreements and charters, and to present the actual state of human rights in observance of the mechanism of Universal Periodic Review.

**How this report was prepared:**

Government agencies, NGOs, and national institutions participated in preparing this report. The committee compiled the information and data provided by all competent entities and, after studying them, included them in the report.

**Report creation plan:**

In observance of the mechanism for Universal Periodic Review in accordance with the standards and rules for presentations and the objectives and principles determined by the Council for Human Rights, the State emplaced an agenda to prepare a report that reflects primarily the commitment and efforts exerted to fulfill its international obligations by applying the best practices to uplift human rights to wider horizons and to work freely and responsibly in cooperation and expanded partnership with all classes of society and interested parties of concern.

The agenda includes the following:

- Forming a committee headed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, with the membership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Federal National Council, the Women’s Union, the Press Association, and the UAE Human Rights Association.

- Presenting the mechanism for Universal Periodic Review to interested competent parties in the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches; governmental and non-governmental organizations; and media organizations active in the field of human rights, with the goal of including them in the preparation of the national report through consultation and collection of opinions by way of corresponding with these entities to request data and information related to human rights in the State, each according to their specialty.
- The committee studied the data and information related to human rights and included them in the report according to the standards set for that purpose.
- The committee reviewed related United Arab Emirates reports related to human rights previously submitted to the United Nations committees related to agreements to which the state is party, and reviewed the recommendations issued by the committees concerned with the execution of international agreements.
- The committee conducted practical activities through field visits and communicating with local and national human rights entities.
- A number of committee members were selected to attend some of the sessions conducted by the Human Rights Council to discuss other countries' reports in order to familiarize them with the procedures followed during interactive discussions in the council.
- Organizing workshops for interested agencies to provide opportunities for all to present their points of view and remarks on the information and data in the report.
- Creation of a website ([www.mfnca.gov.ae](http://www.mfnca.gov.ae)) that includes information about the Universal Periodic Review and other information related to preparing the national report in order to provide the opportunity to all parties to express their opinions or to remark upon human rights in the State at the following address: ([uae\\_upr@mfnca.gov.ae](mailto:uae_upr@mfnca.gov.ae)).
- The committee prepared a booklet that includes the Human Rights Council procedures, the national agenda, and the requirements for preparation of the report. The booklet was issued in Arabic and English and was distributed to all competent agencies and posted on the website (enclosure 7).
- Emplacing a mechanism for monitoring and implementing the recommendations issued by the Human Rights Council.

## **1 – The political system**

The United Arab Emirates was established on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 1971 as a federal state comprising seven emirates: Abu-Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah. The state is located in the continent of Asia in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It is delimited to the north by the Arabian Gulf, to the West by the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to the south by the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to the east by the Gulf of Oman.

The constitution of the United Arab Emirates determines the goals and criteria for the Federation; it explains that the Federation exercises sovereignty over all lands and territorial waters inside the international borders of the member emirates. The member emirates exercise

sovereignty over their respective lands and territorial waters in all matters not concerning the Federation in accordance with the constitution. The people of the Federation are a single people, and are part of the Arab Nation. Islam is the official religion of the Federation, and the official language is Arabic.

The constitution states that authority is to be split among federal and local authorities; Article (120) of the constitution limits federal authorities to legislation and execution, and Article (121) of the constitution determines the areas that are the exclusive domain of the federal authorities regarding legislation. With the exclusion of these areas, all others are the domain of the member emirates.

In accordance with the constitution, the federal authorities in the United Arab Emirates are:

### **1-1 Supreme Council of the Federation**

The Supreme Council of the Federation is the highest authority in the State. It comprises the rulers of all emirates of the Federation or their deputies charged with performing their roles in their respective emirates during their absence. Each emirate holds one vote in the council's deliberations. The Supreme Council of the Federation creates the general policy in all matters within the domain of the Federation and reviews all matters pertinent to the accomplishment of the Federation's objectives and the common interests of the member emirates.

### **1-2 Federal President and Vice President**

The Supreme Council of the Federation elects a President and a Vice President of the Federation from among its members. The President of the Federation exercises a number of powers, including: presiding the Supreme Council and directing its discussions; signing federal laws, decrees, and decisions which the Supreme Council has sanctioned and is promulgating; appointing the Prime Minister of the Federation, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers, and receiving their resignations and relieving them of office in accordance with a proposal from the Prime Minister of the Federation. The Vice President of the Federation exercises all the powers of the President in the event of his absence for any reason.

### **1-3 Council of Ministers:**

The Council of Ministers of the Federation consists of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and a number of ministers. The Council of Ministers, in its capacity as the executive authority of the Federation, and under the supreme control of the President of the Federation and the Supreme Council, is responsible for dealing with all domestic and foreign affairs which are within the competence of the Federation according to the constitution and federal laws. The Council of Ministers assumes, in particular, a number of powers, including: supervising the implementation of the Federation Government's general domestic and foreign policies; initiating drafts of federal laws and submitting them to the Supreme Council of the Federation; drawing up the annual general budget of the Federation; and supervising the implementation of Federation laws, decrees, decisions and regulations by all the concerned authorities in the Federation, as well as international agreements to which the state is party.

### **1-4 Federal National Council:**

The Federal National Council is composed of forty members from the member emirates, distributed as follows: Abu Dhabi: 8 seats, Dubai: 8 seats, Sharjah: 6 seats, Ras Al-Khaimah: 6

seats, Ajman: 4 seats, Umm Al Quwain: 4 seats, Fujairah: 4 seats. Drafts of federal laws, including drafts of financial laws, are presented before the Federal National Council before submission to the President of the Federation for ratification. The Federal Government informs the Federal National Council of international treaties and agreements signed with other states and various international organizations, including an appropriate explanation. The Federal National Council is entitled to discuss any general subject related to the affairs of the Federation and to express its recommendations.

### **1-5 Federal Judiciary:**

Article (94) states that justice is the basis of rule , the judiciary is independent . In performing their duties, judges shall be independent and not subject to any authority but the law and their own consciences .

The federal judiciary system is made up of federal courts of first instance and federal courts of appeals with varied specialties with regards to civil and commercial, criminal, administrative, and Sharia cases. Additionally, there is a Federal Supreme Court consisting of a President and a number of judges appointed by decree issued by the President of the Federation after approval by the Supreme Council.

In addition to the federal judiciary authorities, the United Arab Emirates has local judiciary authorities. Article (104) of the Constitution states: “The local judicial authorities in each emirate shall have jurisdiction in all judicial matters not assigned to the federal judiciary in accordance with the constitution.” Local judiciary authorities apply the constitution, as well as federal and local laws not in conflict with the constitution and federal laws. There are three levels of local judiciary authorities: First Instance, Appeals, and Cassation. The local judicial authorities in each emirate shall have jurisdiction in all judicial matters not assigned to the federal judiciary in accordance with this constitution. The Constitution also states that the Federation shall have a public prosecutor who shall head the Federal Prosecutor’s Office, which is in charge of prosecution of offenses, as set forth in the federal Penal Code and the code of criminal procedure.

The Judicial Coordination Council was formed pursuant to Council of Ministers Decree number 77/3 of 2007. The Judicial Coordination Council is chaired by the Minister of Justice and with the membership of presidents and directors of federal and local judiciary authorities and the directors of judiciary institutes in the State. The Council coordinates and cooperates with federal and local judicial authorities to exchange expertise, study problems and challenges shared by the two judiciary systems, suggest solutions to them, and work to standardize legal principles and rulings issued in similar cases before the two judiciary systems.

## **2 – Guarantees for enhancing and protecting human rights:**

### **2-1 Constitutional guarantees:**

In line with a number of standards adopted by the international community in the field of human rights, Part III of the Constitution is dedicated to Liberties, Rights, and Public Duties, in which is set forth a number of texts (articles 25 to 44) that guarantee the protection of these liberties and rights. In addition, Part II of the constitution includes the “Fundamental Social and Economic Basis of the Federation.” It also included a number of human rights principles, as follows:

- **The principle of equality:** The Constitution affirms the principle of equality by stating in Article (14): “Equality, social justice, ensuring safety and security and equality of opportunity for all citizens shall be the pillars of the Society. Co-operation and mutual mercy shall be a firm bond between them.” In Article (25) the Constitution affirmed that “All persons are equal before the law, without distinction between citizens of the Federation in regard to race, nationality, religious belief or social status.”
- **Personal liberty:** In Article (26), the Constitution affirms that “Personal liberty is guaranteed to all citizens. No person may be arrested, searched, detained or imprisoned except in accordance with the provisions of law. No person shall be subjected to torture or to degrading treatment.” In affirmation of the human right to security, Article (27) affirms that “Crimes and punishments shall be defined by the law. No penalty shall be imposed for any act of commission or omission committed before the relevant law has been promulgated.” The Constitution then affirms the guarantees and checks of this right by clarifying in Article (28) that “Penalty is personal. An accused shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty in a legal and fair trial. The accused shall have the right to appoint the person who is capable to conduct his defense during the trial. The law shall prescribe the cases in which the presence of a counsel for defense shall be assigned. Physical and moral abuse of an accused person is prohibited.”
- **Freedom of opinion and guarantee of the means to express it:** In Article (30), the Constitution affirms that “Freedom of opinion and expressing it verbally, in writing or by other means of expression shall be guaranteed within the limits of law.”
- **Freedom of movement and residence:** Article (29) affirms that “Freedom of movement and residence shall be guaranteed to citizens within the limits of law.”
- **Freedom of religion:** The constitution affirms the freedom to exercise religious worship in Article (32): “Freedom to exercise religious worship shall be guaranteed in accordance with established customs, provided that it does not conflict with public policy or violate public morals.” The State has permitted the establishment of places of worship for the revealed sects and religions, and has provided land free of charge for the purpose of building houses of worship.
- **Right to privacy:** This right includes the inviolability of dwellings and the confidentiality of communications. In Article (36) the Constitution affirms that “Habitations shall be inviolable .They may not be entered without the permission of their inhabitants except in accordance with the provisions of the law and in the circumstances laid down therein .” In Article (31), the constitution affirms that “Freedom of communication by post, telegraph or other means of communication and the secrecy thereof shall be guaranteed in accordance with law.”
- **Family rights:** The Constitution affirms that the family is the first basis of society; Article (15) states: “The family is the basis of society. It is founded on morality, religion, ethics and patriotism. The law shall guarantee its existence, safeguard and protect it from corruption.”
- **Right to social care and social security:** Article (16) states: “Society shall be responsible for protecting childhood and motherhood and shall protect minors and others unable to look after themselves for any reason, such as illness or incapacity or old age or forced unemployment. It shall be responsible for assisting them and enabling them to help

themselves for their own benefit and that of the community. Such matters shall be regulated by welfare and social security legislations.”

- **Right to education:** Article (17) of the Constitution affirms that “Education shall be a fundamental factor for the progress of society. It shall be compulsory in its primary stage and free of charge at all stages within the Federation. The law shall prescribe the necessary plans for the propagation and promotion of education at the various levels and for the eradication of illiteracy.” The legislature placed the burden of fulfilling this obligation upon the federal State.
- **Right to health care:** In order to guarantee a healthy society, Article 19 of the Constitution states that: “Medical care and means of prevention and treatment of diseases and epidemics shall be ensured by the community for all citizens. The community shall promote the establishment of public and private hospitals, dispensaries and cure-houses.”
- **Right to work:** Article (20) of the Constitution states that “Society shall esteem work as a cornerstone of its development. It shall endeavor to ensure that employment is available for citizens and to train them so that they are prepared for it. It shall furnish the appropriate facilities for that by providing legislations protecting the rights of the employees and the interests of the employers in the light of developing international labor legislations.” Article (34) of the Constitution states that “Every citizen shall be free to choose his occupation, trade or profession within the limits of law. Due consideration being given to regulations organizing some of such professions and trades. No person may be subjected to forced labor except in exceptional circumstances provided for by the law and in return for compensation. No person may be enslaved.” The Constitution guarantees the right to take public office; Article (35) states: “Public offices shall open to all citizens, on the basis of equality of opportunity in accordance with the provisions of law. Public offices shall be a national service entrusted to those who hold it. The public servant shall aim , in the execution of his duties , at the public interest alone .”
- **Freedom of assembly and establishing associations:** Article (33) of the Constitution states that: “Freedom of assembly and establishing associations shall be guaranteed within the limits of law.”
- **Right to property:** The Constitution guarantees the right of property to serve the interests of the individual and the community simultaneously. Article (21) states that: “Private property shall be protected. Conditions relating thereto shall be laid down by Law. No one shall be deprived of his private property except in circumstances dictated by the public benefit in accordance with the provisions of the Law and on payment of a just compensation.” In confirmation of the right to property, the legislature prohibited general confiscation of property; Article (39) states that “General confiscation of property shall be prohibited. Confiscation of any individual’s possessions as a penalty may not be inflicted except by a court judgment in the circumstances specified by law”.
- **Right to complain and address the general authorities:** The legislature affirms the guaranteed protection of the rights and liberties in Article (41): “Every person shall have the right to submit complaints to the competent authorities, including the judicial authorities, concerning the abuse or infringement of the rights and freedom stipulated in this Part.”

The tradition of open councils held by the rulers of the emirates and high-ranking officials continues. The *Diwans* of the rulers and the councils of high-ranking officials are considered a meeting place for citizens and others to discuss and talk about public matters. Rulers often, and in a semi-regular fashion, visit citizens in their districts and in their homes to review their conditions. This continues in the State, and is the traditional means that operates in parallel to modern channels of representation and participation.

## **2-2 Legal guarantees:**

In execution of the general principles set in the Constitution, the State has emplaced a number of laws that protect rights and liberties, including:

- **Federal Penal Code No. (3) of 1987 amended by Federal Law No. (34) of 2005:**

This law contains a number of basic principles that serve to preserve and maintain human rights. These principles include the stipulations that no act shall be considered an offense, nor shall it be punished, without a legal text; the accused is innocent until proven guilty; penalty is personal; criminalization of acts related to the abuse of status and authority; not arresting, beating, or searching individuals in conditions other than those determined by law; prohibition of use of force or threats against an individual to force a confession; prohibition of insulting revealed religions; and all actions against human life, physical safety, and dignity.

- **Criminal Procedure Law No. (35) of 1992, amended by Federal Law No. (29) of 2005:**

This law determines the procedures that the courts must follow when handling criminal lawsuits to ensure that the accused receives a fair trial; it guarantees the accused the right to defend himself in person or through an attorney during the course of questioning, during the investigation, or during trial. The law also set the procedures that permit the accused to appeal sentences before courts of various levels.

- **Federal Law No. (43) of 1992 on Penal Correctional Facilities:**

Federal legislature regulates penal facilities with regards to individual punishment and inmate emplacement and classification. It guarantees prisoners health care, social care, education, and correction. It also regulates inmate release and rehabilitation. The most important rules in this law deal with inmate rights and protection and the rights of members of the Office of the Public Prosecutor to enter penal and correctional facilities at any time in order to verify the proper enforcement of laws and regulations. Every inmate has the right to meet the member of the Office of the Public Prosecutor during his presence at the facility and to present complaints to him. In addition, every inmate has the right to submit a complaint to the Minister of Interior, the Public Prosecutor, or the manager of the competent department or facility. The law also affirmed the right of diplomats and public interest associations concerned with human rights to visit prisons and to review the inmates' conditions with the written permission of the competent Office of the General Prosecutor.

- **Federal Law No. (8) of 1980 on Regulation of Labor Relations:**

The labor law includes a number of principles that guarantee the rights of workers, such as equality of employment and profession, wage protection, working hours, vacations, worker safety, health and social care, compensation for work-related injuries and disease, and

resolution of work-related individual or group disputes. The law does not discriminate between persons with regards to the right to employment or continued employment for any reason related to race, gender, social group, or creed; all are equal before the law except with regards to job requirements and adherence to the work standards of the organization. The State continues its efforts to improve these laws to assist the competent international organizations. The Ministry of Labor is currently discussing an action plan for the State, in cooperation with the International Labor Organization, to conduct a full review of the State's labor systems and procedures.

- **Federal Law No. (51) of 2006 on Combating Human Trafficking Crimes :**

The State promulgated Federal Law No. (51) on Combating Human Trafficking Crimes . The United Arab Emirates is at the forefront of regional states who have issued legislation in this regard. This demonstrates the attention that Emirati legislature gives to fighting human trafficking crimes and other forms of human exploitation, especially of women and children. The first article of the Human Trafficking Law defines Human Trafficking as: "recruiting, transporting, transferring, or receiving persons by means of threat or use of force or any other forms of coercion, kidnapping, deceit, manipulation, misuse of power, exploitation of others' weaknesses, or giving or receiving financial funds or advantages to win the support of a person having influence over another person with a view to exploiting him. Exploitation includes exploitation for sex, engaging others in prostitution, servitude, forced labor, enslavement, quasi-slavery practices, or detachment of organs."

- **Federal Law No. (28) of 2005 on Personal Affairs:**

The United Arab Emirates promulgated Federal Law No. (28) of 2005 on Personal Affairs ( family Law ), which contains the newest and most flexible standards in the field of personal affairs. The law applies to all citizens of the United Arab Emirates so long as the non-Muslims among them do not have rules specific to their sects and religions, and applies to non-citizens so long as they does not insist on applying their law.

- **Federal Law No. (9) of 1976 on Delinquent and Vagrant Juveniles:**

In accordance with international standards, Federal Law No. (9) of 1976 on Delinquent and Vagrant Juveniles regulates the management of criminal justice for juveniles, based on the need of juveniles to fair and humane treatment during the procedures of legal pursuit, questioning, and trial, which themselves are based upon measures that do not limit freedom. According to this law, a juvenile is a person who is not older than eighteen years of age. The law prohibits punishing juveniles with imprisonment, death, or financial penalties. In addition, repeat offense rules do not apply to juveniles. In 2003, specialized departments and offices of the Public Prosecutor were established to handle juvenile cases.

- **Federal Law No. (15) of 1980 on Printed Matters and Publication:**

The rules of the Federal Law of Printed Matters and Publication regulate and guarantee the freedom of the press. The law enforces restrictions against the use of the Minister's administrative authority to prevent him from abusing them by confiscating the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of expression. The law recognizes the right of the press to publish what it sees fit.

- **Federal Law No. (15) of 1993 on Regulating Human Organ Transplants:**

Federal Law No. (15) of 1993 on Regulating Human Organ Transplantation regulates the procedures to remove human organs from the body of a living or dead person and transplanting them in the body of another person, and the conditions and restrictions for donating human organs. Among the most important provisions are the items in Article VII, which prevent purchasing and selling human organs by any method whatever, or the receipt of any material compensation for them. Article X of this law sets deterrent penalties for violating its rules: imprisonment and a fine not to exceed 30 thousand dirhams or imprisonment for three years.

- **Federal Law No. (2) of 2008 on *Pro Bono* Associations and Institutions:**

In the framework of organizing NGOs and *pro bono* institutions, the State promulgated this law that determines the rules for establishing and managing associations, the competencies of their general assemblies, and the terms and conditions, duties, and rights of membership. It also requires them to keep records and books with regards to revenue and expenditures, which are required to be backed with documents.

- **Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 on Social Security:**

This law was promulgated to achieve and guarantee the basic requirements for a dignified life. The law regulates social assistance and the classes deserving of such assistance and cases of urgent humanitarian aid in disasters and catastrophes.

- **Federal law No. (7) of 1999 on Pensions and Social Security :**

This law renders it mandatory for public and private sector employers to participate in the General Authority for Pensions and Social Security to insure citizens employed in the two sectors, defined by the law as “the insured.” Thus, the law created the umbrella that guarantees for the insured of the deserving among their families a dignified living in the event that employment ends for one of the reasons set by law, most importantly death, disability, unsuitability for service for health reasons, and reaching retirement age.

- **Federal Law No. (24) of 1999 on the Environment Protection and Environmental Development :**

This law essentially serves to protect the environment and maintain its quality and natural balance, combat the various forms of pollution, prevent any damages or adverse effects resulting from the various development plans and programs, and to protect the community and human and other living beings’ health from all environmentally harmful activities and actions.

- **Federal Law No. (29) of 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Special Needs:**

The law seeks to protect the rights of persons with special needs and to provide them with all services within the limits of their abilities and capabilities. The State guarantees this class equality with other members of society with regards to legislation and economic and social development programs. The State takes the measures necessary to prevent discrimination against them on the basis that they are persons with special needs.

**2-3 International agreement guarantees:**

From its establishment, the United Arab Emirates has sought to include in its Constitution and laws the basic principles of human rights set in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has also worked to gain membership in and to ratify international agreements on basic human rights as a participant in enhancing the international community's concepts of human rights. It joined the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1974, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1997, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2004, and the Convention against Corruption in 2006, as well as the Geneva Conventions for international law for humanitarian concerns.

The State also signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including its optional protocol. Additionally, it ratified nine International Labor Organization agreements on working hours, forced labor, work inspections, nocturnal work (women), equal pay, minimum age, and the worst forms of child labor.

The State also bolstered its regional cooperation in this field and ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights adopted at the Tunis Summit of 2004. Additionally, it ratified two Arab Labor Organization agreements.

The State is currently working to complete the constitutional amendments necessary to join the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The State is also considering joining the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

#### **2-4 International cooperation with international and regional organizations:**

Since joining the United Nations on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1971, the United Arab Emirates has been working to support the organization's international activities in support of the Charter of the United Nations and international laws and conventions, and out of belief that the United Nations represents the best mechanism to enhance international relations and achieve sustainable development.

The State has also worked to support its membership in specialized United Nations organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO); the International Labor Organization (ILO); the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and to advance its cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The United Arab Emirates has cooperation agreements with more than 28 of the United Nations' international organizations, which are conducting more than 80 consulting and technical tasks in the State for a number of ministries, institutions, and federal and local departments.

In addition, the State, a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, works to support the organization to enable it to perform its role in advancing Islamic action in a manner beneficial to Islamic countries.

Since its admission to the League of Arab States and its specialized institutions and organizations, the State has also sought to enhance and support all its regional activities and programs in a manner that strengthens and supports Arab action.

Additionally, the United Arab Emirates is a founding member in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and has participated since the birth of the council in Abu-Dhabi on 25 May 1981 in deepening the ties between the member states, in integrating with them in a multitude of fields, and in coordinating positions and foreign and economic policies.

In the framework of its absolute support for the activities of organizations of the United Nations, the State signed a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2005 as part of a program that seeks to monitor and socially and psychologically rehabilitate the child camel jockeys and to repatriate them and reintegrate them with their communities. The State has allocated 30 million dollars to providing programs to care for the children in their home countries, and is still carefully following the real world accomplishments of these programs with the countries of concern and UNICEF.

A cooperation agreement was also signed with UNICEF on the global campaign against HIV AIDS, which aims to prevent the spread of the disease.

In the framework of cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and in support of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, the State gave 15 million dollars to support the efforts of the United Nations Office in fighting and preventing human trafficking and organizing training courses for the technical team and those supervising the enforcement of the law. The State also provides support to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

The State also cooperated with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) by organizing a number of programs such as the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in the United Arab Emirates, and the Project to Enhance the Performance of Women in Parliament.

### **3 – NGOs and national organizations concerned with human rights**

**Emirates Human Rights Association (EHRA):** Established in accordance with Federal Law No. (6) of 1974 and its amendments regarding pro bono associations, EHRA aims to spread awareness among individuals and to explain their rights and duties toward the community. It works within the boundaries of law and in cooperation with government agencies to entrench the principle of respecting the rights of the individual, to limit the violations to which he is subjected, and to maintain equality and non-discrimination on the basis of origin, religious and philosophical beliefs, color, gender, and ethnicity among members of the community. EHRA also works to help improve the conditions of detainees and inmates in accordance with international standards and human rights principles, and to help the weak, the unfortunate, and persons with special needs.

**General Women Union (GWU):** The GWU was established on 27 August 2008, and includes its founding women's associations (Abu Dhabi Women Association, Dubai Women Association, Sharjah Women Union Association, Ajman Um Al Mo'mineen Women Association, Umm Al Quwain Women Association, and Ras Al Khaimah Women Association). The Union performs a principal role in setting the general policy for women and the plans necessary for advancing women's affairs in all fields, as well as plans and programs that guarantee integration of women in comprehensive development plans and enable them to perform their roles in life without discrimination.

**Jurists Association:** The association was announced on 25 September 1980. It aims to enhance human rights; affirm liberties and the rule of law; advance jurists professionally, educationally, and socially; and cooperate with Arab and International juristic associations and institutions related to the goals of the association.

**UAE Sociological Association:** Announced in 1980, the association aims to spread sociological awareness and culture by all available means with the goal of realizing the highest possible cohesion, stability, and social integration in cooperation with official agencies, and to participate in offering social care and technical expertise to individuals and groups that need such care, especially the disabled, juveniles, and the elderly.

**Journalists Association:** The Journalists Association was announced on 30 September 2000. It aims to advance Emirati journalism to truly express the state of the United Arab Emirates and the defender of journalists' rights and interests so as to enable them to perform their roles; to work to entrench the principle of the freedom of the press; to advance the profession; maintain the rights of all members in cases of arbitrary termination, illness, or disability by resorting to the competent agencies; and to cooperate with the competent public and private agencies to advance the profession of journalism and journalistic work.

The Journalists Association participated as a founding member in the Press Emblem Campaign in Geneva, Switzerland, and was selected as a regional headquarters for the Gulf States, the Middle East, and North Africa. In 2004 the association joined the International federation of Journalists.

**The General Department of Human Rights Care (GDHRC) within the Dubai Police Headquarters:** Established on 30 September 1995, the GDHRC is concerned with caring for human rights, accepting complaints submitted by the public about violations of human rights and individual liberties and addressing them, caring for the inmates of correctional and penal facilities and helping their families, and spreading the culture of human rights among all layers of society.

**The Dubai Charitable Foundation for Women and Children care:** Established in 2007, the foundation aims to provide direct assistance to the victims of violence, including the victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and child abuse including providing safe houses, training opportunities, and rehabilitation services in accordance with international conventions and in support of human rights protection.

**The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT):** the NCCHT was established in accordance with Federal Law No. (51) of 2006 against Human Trafficking, which updated the State's legislature in this important and vital field. The establishment of the NCCHT is a demonstration of the State's commitment to its international obligations in the field,

including the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which it ratified. The NCCHT is competent, in accordance with the law, to study and update legislature pertaining to matters relating to trafficking in humans in order to provide them with the protection they need in accordance with international requirements. The committee also prepares reports about the measures taken by the State and follows their progress; coordinates between the various competent state agencies including ministries, departments, institutions, and authorities with regards to combating trafficking in humans; and spreads institutional and societal awareness of matters related to such crimes.

**Social Support Center at the Abu Dhabi Police Headquarters:** The Social Support Center was established in 2003. The idea behind establishing the center is based on a number of principles and values, foremost among which are respect for human rights in accordance with the Sharia and the rule of law. In accordance with Article VI of the center's regulations, the center is specialized in handling cases related to domestic violence that do not require filing official reports, cases related to school violence, cases related to children missing from family homes not reported to the police, non-felony simple juvenile delinquency cases, and simple disputes and altercations between neighbors that do not require official reports.

**The Zayid Charitable Foundation:** The Zayid Charitable Foundation is a charitable foundation founded in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in 1992 that aims to perform charity work inside the State and abroad, especially with regards to participating in establishing and supporting cultural centers, scientific research centers, and public awareness institutions, in addition to building and supporting hospitals, clinics, and health rehabilitation centers, as well as orphanages and assisted living centers. The foundation also participates in providing humanitarian relief to areas affected by natural and social disasters.

**United Arab Emirates Red Crescent (UAERC):** UAERC was established in 1983. It is a volunteer NGO that aims to perform a humanitarian mission to protect human life, guarantee respect for humanity, and reduce suffering in coordination and cooperation with the competent and concerned authorities inside and outside the State by a variety of means the most important of which are providing medical attention; organizing and executing rescue operations by providing the needed assistance; establishing charitable projects; caring for social cases of widows, the elderly, and persons with special needs; and reuniting dispersed families. Inside the State, the UAERC accommodates persons who are sick, wounded, and displaced from areas affected by disasters, providing them with food, medicine, treatment, and psychological support.

**Family Development Foundation (FDF):** Established on 10 May 2006 by a presidential decree, FDF focuses on implementing social legislature and making recommendations to develop it to guarantee the rights of women and children, and creating programs to achieve sustainable development for families and women. The FDF, in cooperation with local and federal agencies and specialized NGOs, aims to develop and provide comprehensive care for families in a manner that advances families, women, and children; find mechanisms and methods for providing care for families; coordinating efforts to achieve qualitative support for families and the community; exchange information and expertise; develop and coordinate fields for participatory efforts; adopt the best practical practices; and study and analyze phenomena, problems, and challenges facing families, women, and children now and in the future.

**Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation:** A foundation for charitable and humanitarian work that provides assistance to all who need it in the United Arab Emirates, both in remote and urban areas. The foundation also provides assistance abroad to those who need it

around the world. It is an independent institution with the legal foundation it needs to accomplish its goals.

#### **4 – Efforts of the United Arab Emirates to enhance and protect human rights:**

##### **4-1 Enhancing political participation**

The United Arab Emirates' progress from the establishment of the Federation has been marked by its balanced and firm steps that have accomplished major successes and qualitative transformations through the development of avenues for political participation and adopting a gradual election system that strengthens the authorities of the Federal National Council and empowers its role. In order for the progress to be fruitful, the state adopted a clear timetable of gradual steps so that each stage may be evaluated independently and built upon before moving to the next stage, as outlined in the speech of HH the President of the State in 2005.

The first stage, launched in 2006, included the formation of an electoral council whose members were selected by the rulers of the emirates. The council elected half of the members of the Federal National Council, and the other half was appointed by the rulers of the emirates. The second stage aims to increase the members of the council and expand its authorities. The third and final stage will include full general elections for half of the members of the Federal National Council.

##### **4-2 Women:**

Women enjoy a place of distinction in the United Arab Emirates. The State has cared, from its establishment in 1971, to improve their conditions and to prepare them to be effective and productive in society through positive participation in the various aspects of life. Legislative and legal measures in the United Arab Emirates have moved toward removing discrimination on the basis of gender; the State has adopted a number of policies to guarantee advancing the position of women and that they enjoy all constitutional and legal rights. (Enclosure 3)

The Constitution affirms the principle of equality of rights between men and women, such as the right to work, social security, pension, property, business management, money, and to enjoy all services related to education, health, housing, and equal pay, as well as privileges such as maternity leave and child care guaranteed by the civil service law.

Ratification by the United Arab Emirates on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its membership in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on Social Development of the Economic and Social Council are positive indicators of the State's care to take all measures that will provide opportunities to women to participate effectively in sustainable development. According to the Human Development report for 2007-2008, the United Arab Emirates came in the 29<sup>th</sup> out of 177 in the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).

In the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Arab Emirates and its women's institutions, in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), have created a document to empower the role of women and their positive participation in the various fields entitled the *National Strategy to Advance Women in the United Arab Emirates*. This strategic document's objectives and mechanisms are based on a number of

societal pillars, most significantly: the State Constitution and all provisions therein that provide guarantees and rights to women, support the societal fabric and maintain identity, and accomplish an effective and fruitful investment of human resources—both men and women.

The State also took another effective step in March of 2006 when it launched a national initiative to integrate women in development issues in the United Arab Emirates and all governmental and nongovernmental sectors; strengthen the concept of gender equality in policies, programs, projects, and legislature; support sustainable development; and improve the abilities and build capabilities of women's organizations and develop their partnership with state institutions and society. This step was greeted with international esteem and support, and a partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

In participation in strengthening the political participation of women, the General Women Union launched the Enhancing the Role of Arab Women Parliamentarians program as part of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) strategy and 2004-2008 work plan focusing on the best practices and current and future lessons learned from working with Arab women parliamentary case studies and the issues related to legislature in participating Arab countries.

In 2006, the Emirati society witnessed a tangible enhancement of women's political empowerment, when women were appointed to two ministerial portfolios (later increased to four in 2008). Nine women (elected and appointed) became members of the Federal National Council (22.5% of the Federal National Council's members), which confirms the focus on empowering women as the responsibility of all members of society, and as a part of reform and development plans.

The United Arab Emirates is making a strong effort to eradicate illiteracy and to achieve gender equality with regards to the ability to read and write among adults and youth. As a result of these efforts and the cooperation of civil society institutions, the indicator among adult women (older than 15 years of age) and young men (ages 15-24) reached approximately 93% and 97% respectively in 2005. To enhance gender equality and empower women, the United Arab Emirates is seeking to eradicate the differences between the genders in the first and second educational stages by no later than 2015. Educational statistics show that the ratios of females to males in the first and second stages are 94.8% and 92.6% in 2005, respectively. The ratio of females to males in secondary and university education is approximately 106.7% and 181% in 2005, respectively.

Legislature in the State provides equal rights to men and women in the workplace. Participation of women in the Emirati work market is essential and vital, so the State is taking all measures to increase the participation of Emirati women in the work market. Women's participation reached approximately 59% of the indigent work force, including 30% of top ranking decision making positions. Women fill approximately 60% of technical positions, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and teaching, as well as approximately 15% of faculty seats at the University of the United Arab Emirates. Eight women have been appointed to deputy minister and associate deputy minister positions in the institutions of the State, according to figures from September 2005. The State has encouraged women to enter the diplomatic and judicial professions, and female citizens have been appointed as diplomats by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; in 2006 there were 45 female diplomats, 10 of whom were employed at State embassies abroad. Female prosecutors and judges have also been appointed.

Nor has this been restricted to government jobs; women have come to participate effectively in the private sector as businesswomen. The investment in women-run businesses is estimated at some 14 billion dirhams administered by more than 11 thousand women across the nation.

#### **4-3 The police and human rights:**

The police is an organized civil authority responsible for keeping the peace and general order in the State. The Ministry of Interior places human rights at the forefront of its priorities as part of its strategy, the goals and vision of which are based on justice, equality, integrity, and protection of human rights as the means to achieve security and stability and to increase the sense of security in a multicultural society. To enhance ethical conduct in respect of human rights, a document entitled *Rules of Police Conduct and Ethics for Ministry of Interior Employees* containing 33 rules of conduct was adopted, which every new employee of the Ministry of Interior must sign and commit to apply before assuming his responsibilities. These rules make it mandatory for employees, as official representatives of the State in law enforcement, to serve the community; preserve morality and ethics; protect rights and liberties; realize justice; protect the rights of suspects, convicts, and victims of crime; deal with all members of society without favoritism or discrimination on the basis of color, sex, nationality, religion and creed; language, age, or social status; and to forebear at all times from all forms of cruel or humiliating treatment. (Enclosure 4)

The organizational structure of the Ministry of Interior contains a number of administrative units tasked with monitoring police performance and to receive complaints from the public at each command and general departments of the police, in addition to the office of the Inspector General, which is considered an independent monitoring agency that reports directly to the Minister of the Interior. Channels of communication with the public are open to receive complaints about errors that may be committed by members of the police, and to take action to address them, to enhance the societal concepts of policing and justice, and in order to provide the best quality of service to society.

The Ministry of Interior provides diplomatic and consular missions with lists of their respective citizens held at penal facilities through state-authorized diplomatic channels. Statistics show that the number of visits made by embassies and consulates to penal facilities in 2007 and the first half of 2008 was 1,273 visits, whereas the number of visits made by organizations, agencies, and the Red Crescent to state penal facilities in 2007 and during the first half of 2008 was 121 visits. (Enclosure 6)

#### **4-4 The media:**

A National Media Council was established to supervise media affairs. Media institutions in the United Arab Emirates have worked to accomplish a qualitative leap in professionalism, technical quality, and outstanding journalistic performance; seven Arabic and four English newspapers are published in the State, in addition to dozens of magazines and specialty periodicals. Television channels have also undergone a rapid evolution by entering into satellite broadcasting. The number of specialized companies operating in the free zone at the Dubai Media City has risen to more than 1,213 companies, including 60 television agencies that operate and broadcast some 150 television channels and more than 120 publishing houses that publish some 400 publications.

A charter of honor and professional ethics was created and signed by the editors-in-chief of the newspapers. The charter includes the basic standards for journalistic work and the ethical rules that ought to be followed when dealing with news and sources. The Journalists Association

studied the draft of the law on printed matters and publications, and has submitted their comments to the National Media Council.

The decision of the Vice President of the State to prohibit the imprisonment of journalists if they err while performing their duties has had a favorable response in all milieus concerned with human rights and the profession of journalism. The 2007 report of Journalists without Borders put the United Arab Emirates at position no. 65 out of a total of 169 states, which is a clear move forward from its position in the year 2006.

#### **4-5 Imported labor:**

The United Arab Emirates has one of the highest percentages of imported labor in the world; 3,113,000 foreign workers of more than 200 nationalities are employed by 250,000 employers. This large number of work opportunities participates in creating an open social environment in the country, in addition to strengthening ties with the surrounding countries and societies. (Enclosure 2)

**Improving working conditions:** The United Arab Emirates believes that human beings have the right to enjoy suitable living conditions, including the temporary contract labor class. Therefore, the Vice President of the State, the Prime Minister, and the Ruler of Dubai issued a number of instructions to achieve a continuous improvement in the living conditions of the workers, significantly: providing adequate housing to the workers in accordance with international standards, providing suitable means of transportation, forming federal labor courts specialized in labor disputes, guaranteeing freedom of movement to the workers. In addition to the provisions of the Labor Law and regulating decisions that guarantee the rights of both employer and worker, the Ministry of Labor has set a number of measures in the area of improving working conditions, such as requiring companies that have 50 or more employees to provide lists every three months signed by an authorized legal accountant proving that wages had actually been delivered to the workers. In 2008, the Ministry decreed that employers must pay workers' wages through banks and other financial institutions.

In light of the extremely high temperatures in the summer, since 2005 the Ministry of Labor has prohibited working under direct sunlight from June to August in the afternoon from 12:30 o'clock to 15:00, and enforces a penalty against companies that violate this restriction of up to 30,000 dirhams and denial of new work licenses for a period of up to a year. The Ministry has also given care not to grant group work permits to construction and other companies until it has been verified that the employer provides adequate housing to the workers. As the government has tended to increase the number of labor inspectors, the Ministry has increased inspection campaigns in accordance with the Labor Law and international agreements. In 2007, the Ministry's inspectors visited 122,000 facilities, resulting in penalties against 8,588 of them for violations related to working conditions and workers' rights violations.

**Labor disputes:** Labor disputes submitted by the laborer or the employer are resolved through a specialized legal investigator within 14 days of the date of the complaint. If the dispute is not settled, it is referred to the courts (without burdening the worker with any during any of the stages of litigation.) In 2007, 22,000 cases were resolved, 3,949 of which were referred to the courts, equivalent to 18% of the total number of cases. The legal investigator reviews requests to withdraw escape reports and, in cases where withdrawal is approved in which the report is judged to be malicious on the part of the employer, the Ministry boycotts the company for a year and levies a fine of 10,000 dirhams.

**Labor courts:** State-level courts were established to review urgent labor cases. Fees are waived for pleas submitted before these courts at all stages of litigation and execution. Resolution of labor disputes has been added to the duties of reconciliation committees in order to facilitate reviewing such cases as an alternative to normal litigation procedures.

**Workers' health insurance:** Each worker is issued a health insurance card that affords him access to treatment without costs. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi has created a mandatory comprehensive insurance policy that covers all workers including domestic servants at the expense of the employer. Abu Dhabi's insurance system will be expanded to the rest of the country.

**International cooperation and initiatives to protect the rights of workers:** As part of the United Arab Emirates' efforts to advance, care for, increase the awareness of, and prevent the exploitation of workers in the country of origin, ten memorandum of understanding were signed in the period from December 2006 to December 2007 with the Asian labor exporters (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, China, Mongolia, and Indonesia).

The United Arab Emirates also hosted a Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labor for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia, (the Abu Dhabi Dialogue) and the Gulf Forum on Temporary Contractual Labor in January 2008. Participants in these two events included the Council of Labor and Social Affairs Ministers of GCC Countries, the International Labor Organization, and the Arab Labor Organization. The Abu Dhabi meeting affirmed the joint responsibility of labor-exporting and labor-importing countries for enforcing compliance of export companies and all agencies engaged in employing temporary contractual labor with the national laws regulating sending workers, and therefore participating in protecting workers' rights. It also affirmed the joint responsibility of labor-exporting and labor-importing countries to monitor the compliance of export companies and all agencies engaged in employing labor with the national laws regulating sending workers.

**Domestic help workers:** The matter of domestic servants and laborers receives much attention in from the United Arab Emirates. In April 2007, the United Arab Emirates issued a mandatory unified work contract for domestic help and the like at the federal level. The unified work contract regulates the employment of domestic workers in a manner appropriate to the nature of the work and supporting jobs. It also covers other areas such as health care, wages, and contract duration. The contract requires that the workers be given adequate rest periods and health care in accordance with the health care system of the State. The wages are determined by agreement between the two parties, and the first article of the contract states the total wages due at the end of every month, and that the two parties are required to sign the payment list written in both Arabic and English to prove that payment has occurred. The payment list is to be kept by the sponsor to produce when necessary.

The State is currently preparing a draft law on domestic help that includes domestic servants and similar. The necessary constitutional action for promulgating the law will be taken in order for the law to be promulgated as soon as it is prepared.

**Clubs and expatriate community associations:** The State has given attention to following the best practices and providing means of dignified living for those residing within its borders. In the United Arab Emirates, a group of associations, clubs, and trade councils for expatriates have

become commonplace, which has had the effect of strengthening the relations between those residing on national territory.

#### **4-6 Combating human trafficking:**

In light of the United Arab Emirate's desire to maintain its position as an active and committed member of the international community, it has worked to implement a strategy based on four main pillars:

First: Developing the legislature relevant to human trafficking cases. The State issued federal Law no. (51) of 2006 on Combating Human Trafficking Crimes , which was the first of its type in the Arab World. The law provides for a maximum penalty up to life imprisonment, and covers all types of human trafficking, including the various forms of exploitation, child labor, and trading in human organs.

Second: Enabling the agencies of concern to enforce deterrent procedures. The Federal Government and local governments have worked to expand the scope of enforcing antihuman trafficking laws. Reports show that ten cases related to human trafficking were documented until the end of 2007, and convictions were made in five cases in which the defendants faced sentences ranging from three to ten years in prison.

Third: Guaranteeing protection and support for those harmed by human trafficking. The State has established a number of shelters to protect and support persons harmed by human trafficking in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and is working to expand the experiment to the other emirates.

Fourth: Expanding all horizons of bilateral and global cooperation to combat human trafficking crimes. In the last two years, the United Arab Emirates signed agreements with a number of countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Thailand, and the Philippines to regulate the flow of labor from them. Other bilateral and global agreements include cooperating with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to make the Emirati Police Administration outstanding in the region in law enforcement and information dissemination, and in encouraging partnerships with NGOs for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of combating human trafficking. (Enclosure 5)

#### **5 – Accomplishment and best practices:**

The international Human Development Report for 2008 issued by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) listed the United Arab Emirates in the 39<sup>th</sup> place out of 177 countries included in the report, and describes the United Arab Emirates' position in human development in which the State has come a long way in all relevant fields. The strategy of the United Arab Emirates (Enclosure 1) enhances these accomplishments, some of which are as follows:

##### **5-1 Education**

**Public education:** The United Arab Emirates has implemented a number of strategies to establish an advanced and up to date educational system that keeps up with the times and its educational technologies, and advances students to higher levels of education. The State has guaranteed free public education to the university level for all citizens in order to spread education in society and to eradicate illiteracy. The progress of public education has gone through a number of successive leaps since the State was founded; the number of public and

private school in the 2007/2008 school year reached 1,259 including 759 public schools and 500 private schools, which are attended by more than 648,000 male and female students in various stages of education. The general rate for school enrollment reached 98% for males and 95% for females. The illiteracy rate fell below 5% thanks to literacy and adult education centers.

The State has also dedicated a large effort to advance education and social integration for the disabled through spreading centers for education and rehabilitation of the disabled in all areas of the State, and has worked to provide all of the centers' requirements by benefiting from the international experience and experiments in this field.

The State is working to develop its educational programs, in the knowledge of the importance of this portion of development. The Ministry of Education has worked to develop and update the educational curricula to keep up with international developments in the area; to promote education in all areas of the country; and to establish modern schools. The State has also afforded the opportunity to the private sector to partner with the government in bearing the responsibility for promoting education and providing educational opportunities to all residents of the State.

The Ministry of Education started in the school year 2007/2008 to implement (ALGHAD) Schools project and program in the framework of the Ministry's policy to benefit from the experiments and learning institutions of other countries. The Ministry follows the best international practices and student-centric teaching methods and applies modern teaching technology in teaching English, mathematics, science, and computer science.

In application of the principles of decentralized government, education councils were established in each of the emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. These councils create the educational plan for the emirate within the framework of the general educational policy adopted by the Ministry of Education, and upon which the educational system in the State is based. These councils have participated in accomplishing the comprehensive educational renaissance and in applying the principle of decentralization. They have also launched important initiatives, projects, and programs to develop the educational system.

**Higher education:** The State has focused on higher education; it established the University of the United Arab Emirates in 1977 as the State's first institution of higher learning. Several other universities and state-owned institutions of higher learning were later opened in all the areas of the State that offer opportunities for free education, in addition to 44 accredited private institutions of higher learning, in which 46,519 male and female students were enrolled in school year 2007/2008.

From the date of its establishment, the State has also sent its students to the best universities in the world to study and benefit from their educational expertise. The number of undergraduate students sent to study abroad in 2005/2006 was 110 students, in addition to 65 male and female students sent to acquire master's degrees and 29 to acquire doctorates.

## **5-2 health care:**

The State has given much care to providing health services to citizens and resident aliens as part of the State's development plans from the establishment of the State. A number of state-owned hospitals and clinics were built across the State to offer treatment to all people. The number of public hospitals in 2006 was 33, and the number of clinics and health center was 192, with a total of 6,490 beds. The State also permitted the private sector to build hospitals and clinics in the

emirates in order to enhance the advance in health services; a number of hospitals were built in cooperation with international medical centers. Worthy of note is the establishment of Dubai Healthcare City, which drew a number of international medical institutions. Some of the State's emirates have also issued a mandatory health insurance system for citizens and resident aliens.

As a result of the advance of healthcare services, the fertility rates have risen and the and mortality rates have declined, which has reflected on life expectancy at birth, which reached 75 years in 2006. The decline in the infant mortality rate was much more pronounced; it was reduced to less than 7 per 1,000 live births in 2006, and less than 12 per thousand for children under five in the same year. Polio has been eradicated from the United Arab Emirates; a final document declaring it polio-free was prepared during 2007 and was submitted to the international certification committee for certification. The United Arab Emirates was also certified malaria-free by the World Health Organization's international certification committee on 12 March 2007.

### **5-3 Social care:**

**Social security:** The State gives monthly financial assistance to 16 classes, at the top of which are the elderly, the handicapped, orphans, widows, and divorced women. The program benefits 37,848 families; 4,478 children, including 1,389 orphans; 2,951 handicapped persons; and 138 children of unknown parentage. Starting in 2008, the sums issued to the beneficiary families were more than doubled from one billion dirhams to 2.2 billion dirhams.

**Handicapped care:** Three thousand, three hundred and thirty nine handicapped persons regularly attend 33 centers including 15 public sector centers and 18 private sector centers. Special education classes attached to regular Ministry of Education schools include a number of students with learning difficulties. The Ministry of Interior has adopted a program for the rehabilitation and employment of persons with handicaps where they are trained and offered opportunities for employment in the emirate where they live; the Emirate of Sharjah's initiative for humanitarian services whose targets include rehabilitation and employment of handicapped persons; and the establishment of sports clubs for the handicapped, currently five; and three NGOs directly concerned with the handicapped.

**Senior Care:** The State follows a policy that guarantees the elderly care and services and the ability to remain in the family environment through financial assistance and mobile units. There are 11,171 seniors who receive social assistance is. Additionally, shelters and day clubs are made available to provide services to the elderly without the requirement for residence, out of a concern to keep the elderly with their families. Mobile units that include a nurse, a physician, and a social worker provide health, social, and psychological care to the elderly at their residences.

**Child care:** The State has given much care to childhood, enplacng legislature that regulates children's rights to health care and upbringing. It also implemented a number of plans related to health care, social care, and education to enhance childhood. Because the family and child care are the first building blocks in child upbringing, the State has focused on giving care to the family in order to enable it to perform its role in child upbringing through programs that care for and habilitate families and increase their education, and prepare those soon to be married and educate them regarding the essential bases for building a family life.

The State established a number of childcare centers and kindergartens in all towns and villages to encourage early learning. The centers offer the highest international levels of educational and psychological care. In 2007, 202 childcare centers were established. The Council of Ministers issued Decree no. (19) of 2006, which included the establishment of childcare centers at ministries, establishments, public institutions, and government offices and *diwans* that provide health care for the children of female employees employed at those agencies from the age of two months to four years in order to provide social stability to the child.

The State also provides support for children with disabilities and special needs, including providing them with all educational and training needs to integrate them into society. It established numerous care and habilitation centers as well as sporting clubs throughout the State to provide educational and health care, in addition to professional, vocational, and athletic training.

To care for juveniles and delinquents, the State established specialized homes to care for and shelter juveniles of both sexes that offer means of social care, education, correction, and vocational training. The after-care program guarantees supervision of juveniles with the aim of reintegrating them into society. The juvenile social education establishments received 752 juvenile delinquents, including 82 females.

#### **5-4 housing:**

The State has given importance to providing and preparing adequate housing to citizens through the following local and federal agencies:

**The Ministry of Public Works:** During the last five years, the Ministry completed more than 17,040 residential units at a cost of approximately two billion dirhams. It also completed a number of additions to expand existing houses according to the size of the family, and replaced old houses with new ones whose life expectancy had expired.

**Shaikh Zayid Housing Programme:** The program was established in 1999 to be an important addition to the State's efforts in the field of housing. The program's basic idea is that the federal government allocates 640 million dirhams per year to finance housing projects for limited-income citizens who have monthly incomes of less than 15,000 dirhams. The program offers housing loans of approximately 500,000 dirhams to be repaid over 25 years, interest free. The program also offers grants and non-returnable assistance to the needy. Since its establishment, the program has implemented a number of housing compounds in the emirates of Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain, and Ajman, to the benefit of thousands of persons with limited incomes. Some 1,400 applications for grants and financial assistance were approved by the program in 2007.

**Abu Dhabi Housing Loans Authority:** In 2006, the Government of Abu Dhabi launched a modern vision for citizen housing based on the concept of integrated housing compounds as an alternative to the popular housing concept; it built 18,000 housing units in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi at a cost of some 33 billion dirhams. The Real Estate and Housing Allocation Committee gave priority to housing requests made by the elderly, limited income large families, humanitarian cases, and widows. In 2006, 665 homes and 7,210 parcels of land were distributed to citizens in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and the Western Region. The Executive Council authorized the largest batch of housing loans that reached 4 billion dirhams to finance the 12<sup>th</sup> batch of applications received by the Loans Authority.

**Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment:** The Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment was established in 2005 with a capital of 12 billion dirhams to replace the Program to Finance private Housing established in 1993. The establishment purchases land and real estate and builds and rents it. It also manages financial operations related to housing loans or contracting with financial and institutions, as well as designing and building housing units. The Establishment issues up to 1,800 loans every year, valued at 1.35 billion dirhams.

**The Sharjah Department of Public Works:** The department was founded in 2006 to build three new residential areas in Sharjah City and its suburbs at the cost of 2 billion dirhams. The department is currently executing projects for 700 public sector housing units for citizens in the central and eastern regions at a cost of 420 million dirhams.

### **5-5 Remote areas development projects:**

The State has given attention to developing remote areas by implementing a number of vitally important projects. To that end, HH the President of the State issued instructions in June 2005 to form a committee to study the infrastructure needed in the State's remote areas to improve the living and social conditions of the residents of those areas, and assigned to the committee the task of supervising the projects required to develop the areas. The committee's work plan included the implementation of the projects related to roads and the construction of buildings, services, health centers, schools, kindergartens, and homes to serve the local populations, as well as the maintenance of some. The plan also includes building and equipping hospitals with the latest devices and appliances, and building civil defense centers and police stations in order to offer all means of comfort and safety to the local residents.

### **5-6 The Marriage Fund:**

The Marriage Fund was established in accordance with Federal Law no. (47) of 1992. It aims to encourage marriage of citizens to other citizens, provide financial grants to citizens of limited means to help them to bear the costs of marriage, participate in achieving familial stability in the society, and to conduct cultural, social, and behavioral awareness campaigns. The Fund gives grants of no less than 60,000 dirhams to the deserving among young Emirati adults.

### **5-7 Spreading the human rights culture:**

The United Arab Emirates is aware that teaching and spreading the concepts of human rights is a basic human right. To this end, the Ministry of Education emplaced a system that unifies the various concepts of human rights and prepared a document for the implementation of human rights education for grades 1-12 to be taught within the required curricula.

Academic curricula at colleges of law and police academies include a requirement for two credit hours to be dedicated to a human rights course. This course aims to familiarize students with the nature of human rights; the international and regional system of human rights, group rights, inmates' rights, and human rights in the United Arab Emirates; the role of the police in human rights and how to fulfill the duties of police officers with recognition for human rights and basic liberties; and teaches international humanitarian law. The State has also given great importance on both the federal and local levels to preparing and continuously training judges; a federal institute for judicial training and studies has been established. Similar institutes have been established at the local level in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Curricula at these institutes study human rights treaties and agreements, procedures of international human rights organizations, and international resolutions pertaining to the subject.

Additionally, a number of campaigns and seminars are organized, and publications and legal periodicals are published by state institutions and NGOs seeking to enhance the human rights culture.

### **Conclusion:**

Respect for human rights and basic liberties is a strategic choice of the United Arab Emirates to keep up with urgent considerations and needs, so as to avoid being isolated from the global current. This choice has been confirmed through the inclusion in the United Arab Emirates' Constitution and legislature the principles of human rights and basic liberties. From this point on, the State's road to advancement, growth, and stability included a real commitment to protect human rights and safeguard the basic liberties. The United Arab Emirates is committed to continue to work to preserve what has already been accomplished in the field of human rights, and to continue to diligently work to improve by following the best international practices in this field. There is no doubt that the United Arab Emirates, like other countries of the world in general and the region in specific, suffers from the number of challenges and difficulties that it is seeking to deal with in order to enhance the status of human rights, but there is a number of challenges that the State is working to deal with.

Among these challenges are the following:

- Providing more mechanisms to protect human rights, keeping up with national and international developments, and updating laws and systems;
- The State's expectations with regards to building national capabilities and deepening efforts for education on human rights and basic freedoms through a national plan. The State is working to keep up with the side effects of the developmental surge that requires the extensive use of temporary foreign labor and placing the State in a state of continuous work in cooperation with the international organizations concerned with workers in order to reach the best possible methods and practices regarding the situation of workers in the country.
- Working to regulate the relationship between employers and workers in a framework that preserves dignity and rights, and is in harmony with international standards, especially with regards to domestic help.
- Despite what has been accomplished for women, the larger challenge is increasing the empowerment of women's role in society, increasing opportunities for involvement in a number of fields based on their skills and abilities, supporting their participation in economic activity, and dedicating policies that will increase and support their abilities and encourage them to fulfill their responsibilities as essential partners in development.
- The State is working to confront human trafficking crimes by reviewing the best international practices in the field, working to update and improve the State's legislature in accordance with international standards, working to establish institutions and agencies to confront human trafficking crimes, and working to support the foundations of international cooperation with international organizations and institutions.

**List of enclosures:**

1. Strategy of the Federal Government
2. *Protection of the Rights of Workers in the United Arab Emirates* - Annual Report 2007, issued by the Ministry of Labor
3. *Women in the United Arab Emirates*, a report prepared by the Ministry of State for National Assembly Affairs, 2008
4. *Rules of Police Conduct and Ethics for Ministry of Interior Employees* document, authorized by ministerial decree no. (645) of 2005
5. *Fighting Human Trafficking* report for 2007
6. *The United Arab Emirates' Experience in Entrenching the Principles of Human Rights in Penal and Correctional Work*
7. *National Work Plan* booklet

-- End of Report --