



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Eighty-second session**

Summary record of the 1891st meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 21 June 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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* No summary records were issued for the 1889th and 1890th meetings.

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Ms. Haidar (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Fourth periodic report of the United Arab Emirates (CEDAW/C/ARE/4; CEDAW/C/ARE/Q/4; CEDAW/C/ARE/RQ/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the United Arab Emirates joined the meeting.*

2. **Ms. Bint Essa Buhumaid** (United Arab Emirates) said that progress in women's empowerment had been achieved in recent years at the federal and local levels through the adoption of progressive governmental measures and through the implementation of policies based on the provisions of the Convention.

3. The fourth periodic report was the product of cooperation and consultations among all parties involved in addressing issues affecting women. The large delegation participating in the current dialogue also represented a whole range of stakeholders. The vigorous action taken to implement the Committee's concluding recommendations on the combined second and third periodic reports had produced a positive impact and had raised awareness of the principles enshrined in the Convention. The resulting legislative, institutional and procedural reforms had contributed to the safeguarding of human rights in general and the elimination of discrimination against women in particular.

4. The Government was determined to ensure that everyone enjoyed the benefits of integrated social development and that no one was left behind. It had taken steps to bolster the normative, legal and political structures that supported the empowerment of women, the achievement of gender equality, the promotion of women's leadership roles and their full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development. During the period from 2019 to 2021, 11 new laws and a number of amendments to existing laws had focused on promoting women's rights and empowerment in all areas, as well as their role in the strategy for the next 50 years of the United Arab Emirates.

5. Federal Act No. 12 of 2021 had established the National Human Rights Commission on 30 August 2021 as an independent institution. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had provided technical assistance and legal advice for the drafting and adoption of the Federal Act, the articles of which were consistent with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). The Commission enjoyed financial and administrative independence and sought to promote and protect human rights and freedoms in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the legislation in force and relevant international treaties. It had been assigned the task of participating with the competent authorities in the development of a national action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights, proposing a mechanism for its implementation, raising awareness of the plan by holding seminars, conferences and discussion panels and submitting proposals, recommendations and advice to the competent authorities, for instance concerning the consistency of legislation with international human rights treaties. It also monitored human rights violations and reported them to the competent authorities, and it participated in international and regional human rights forums.

6. In 2019 the Government had issued Federal Decree-Law No. 10 on protection against domestic violence and had adopted the family protection policy, which sought to protect family members from abuse or threatening behaviour that resulted in physical or psychological harm. The policy identified six forms of domestic violence: physical violence, verbal violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, economic violence and neglect. It regulated the procedures to be implemented by institutions carrying out activities in the field of domestic violence and promoted interaction between such institutions and the authorities. The policy was designed to protect women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities from all forms of violence and abuse.

7. Female employees and members of public welfare associations and civil society institutions currently totalled 37,340, and women accounted for 26 per cent of employees in the sector.
8. The United Arab Emirates ranked first at the regional level and twenty-fourth at the global level in the 2021 Women, Peace and Security Index issued by Georgetown University in the United States of America. The index was based on economic, social and political inclusion, justice in terms of formal laws and informal discrimination and security at the individual and social level.
9. The Emirate of Abu Dhabi had adopted Act No. 14 of 2021 regarding the personal status of non-Muslim foreigners, which established a flexible and advanced judicial procedure for adjudicating their personal status. The Act addressed issues relating to civil marriage, divorce, joint custody of children and inheritance. The financial rights of the wife during divorce procedures were based on the number of years of marriage, the wife's age, the economic status of each spouse and other issues raised before the judge. At the federal level, recent amendments to the Personal Status Act permitted non-citizens to choose the laws applicable to their actions in matters relating to inheritance and bequests.
10. Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2022 prohibited all forms of discrimination in the workplace, on the basis of not only gender but also of race, colour and national origin. It also recognized women's right to receive equal remuneration for work of equal value and instructed the Council of Ministers to issue a decision specifying the applicable criteria and controls. The Decree-Law prohibited all forms of verbal abuse and physical violence, including sexual harassment, against women in the workplace.
11. The Decree-Law also guaranteed women's right to maternity leave and additional leave if they suffered any illness related to pregnancy or childbirth. Employers were not permitted to terminate a contract on the basis of pregnancy or childbirth. The provision granting fathers paid parental leave made the United Arab Emirates the first Arab country to grant such leave in the private sector. In addition, it was the first country to enact legislation granting equal wages and salaries to women and men in government agencies.
12. Recent legal amendments had abolished restrictions imposed on women employees, for instance the prohibition of night work and employment in arduous jobs.
13. A total of 80,025 licensed companies were currently owned by women and 32,000 businesswomen were managing projects valued at about 40 billion dirhams, which was equivalent to more than \$10 billion. The United Arab Emirates was ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa in the World Bank's report on Women, Business and the Law 2021.
14. Women's empowerment in education was reflected in the areas of science and technology, including scientific research and innovation. According to figures issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 61 per cent of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates in the United Arab Emirates were women. They had successfully contributed to the arrival in the orbit of Mars of the Hope Probe. Women had accounted for 34 per cent of the project's working group and 80 per cent of the scientific team. In 2021 Nora al-Matrooshi has been selected as the first Arab woman astronaut.
15. The Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Initiative had been launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Defence and the General Women's Union, with the support of UN Women. Its aim was to build women's capacity and to increase their participation in military and peacekeeping operations. The Initiative also promoted the strategic objectives of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The United Arab Emirates had launched a national plan for 2021–2024 for the implementation of the resolution.
16. On International Women's Day in March 2021, the General Women's Union had organized a virtual forum entitled Emirati Women's Digital Leadership, aimed at providing women with digital skills and building their capacity in science and technology. The forum had attracted more than 8,000 participants.

17. Twenty-seven per cent of the Council of Ministers and 50 per cent of the members of parliament were women. They also accounted for 24 per cent of the membership of the boards of directors in the federal and local authorities, 76 per cent of teaching staff in preschool to secondary education and 37 per cent of teaching staff in higher education. In the health sector, women accounted for 63 per cent of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and radiology and laboratory technicians. The proportion of females enrolled in preschool to secondary education was 50 per cent, and their proportion of enrolment in tertiary education was 45 per cent.

18. The main pillars and objectives of the 2026 United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Strategy were: economic participation, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, well-being, social and legal protection, leadership and international partnerships.

19. Emirati Women's Day was celebrated on 28 August each year. In August 2020, the Dubai Women Establishment, in cooperation with the Supreme Legislation Committee of Dubai, had launched the Women-Specific Legislations Laboratory with the aim of developing legislation that enhanced women's socioeconomic participation.

20. The United Arab Emirates ranked second in the world in terms of the rate of vaccination against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Vaccination was free of charge for all citizens and residents. Support for distance education was provided to schools and universities, government agencies offered a wide range of digital services, and a mobile pharmacy service delivered medicines to people's homes. Vulnerable population groups, including persons with disabilities, were encouraged to work from home. Cabinet Decision No. 27 of 2020 had made it possible for people to work remotely, including mothers of children with disabilities or children in the sixth grade or below and women who took care of older family members. A wide range of applications had been provided to support distance learning and online education for persons with disabilities.

21. As the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the gender gap in most sectors and in senior leadership positions throughout the world, the Government had taken vigorous action to promote gender mainstreaming in both the public and private sectors, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5. Private-sector companies had set the ambitious goal of increasing the level of women's representation in senior management positions to 30 per cent by 2025.

22. Women accounted for 53 per cent of the more than 40,000 people who had volunteered to provide services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Volunteer Programme, in cooperation with the General Women's Union, had launched a mobile clinic for women and children. A total of 650,000 free polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests had been provided for persons with disabilities at their homes, and a home examination guide had been distributed to parents.

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23. **Ms. Al-Rammah** commended the United Arab Emirates National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, the establishment of the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council and the achievement of 50-50 parity between men and women in the Federal National Council.

24. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to commend the measures taken by the State party to combat gender-based discrimination, the enactment in 2019 of the Federal Decree-Law on protection against domestic violence, the adoption of numerous amendments to the Labour Code and the achievement of parity in the Federal National Council.

25. As legislative reforms were based both on statutory law and on sharia law, the Committee welcomed the steps taken to reconcile religious norms with the emancipation of women and respect for their fundamental rights. It encouraged the State party to consolidate the status of international human rights law, to accord priority to the lifting of restrictions and to learn from the legal experience and tools of countries with a similar culture.

26. Given that the Constitution enshrined the principle of gender equality, she would be interested to hear about any initiatives aimed at guaranteeing compliance with that principle throughout the territory of the State party and in all components of its legislation, particularly

the Penal Code, as well as action to combat harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

27. The Committee encouraged further action to protect vulnerable groups, such as domestic workers, including through the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

28. She wished to know what measures were taken to promote the legal effectiveness of the Convention in the judiciary, to expedite the abolition of discriminatory statutory provisions, to ensure that reformative measures were not undermined by the discretionary authority of judges and to consolidate the status of victims, particularly in cases of domestic violence. She also enquired about initiatives aimed at raising judges' awareness of recently adopted protective measures for such victims. She asked whether the National Human Rights Commission had been explicitly mandated to monitor compliance with the Convention.

29. The Committee would be grateful for information on initiatives aimed at supporting action by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote women's rights and at protecting human rights defenders by recognizing their status and rights based on international standards.

30. **Ms. Bint Essa Buhumaid** (United Arab Emirates) said that, owing to conflicts with sharia law and other domestic legislation, the country had expressed a number of reservations when it had adopted the Convention. However, the Government was actively considering withdrawing them.

31. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Constitution provided for gender equality in social, cultural, educational and health-related areas and protected women against all forms of violence and discrimination. Legislation had been enacted and amended to promote the empowerment of women and repeal provisions that could have a negative impact on them. For example, obstacles to women's equal participation in the labour market and public life had been removed, and definitions of hatred and discrimination had been expanded to bring them into line with the Convention.

32. Other amendments had provided women and girls with improved access to justice and better protection of their rights and had aimed to ensure that they were not deterred from accessing the justice system. The law on judicial authority had been amended to allow women to work as judges and public prosecutors. Statistics on women's participation in the judicial system in Dubai and Abu Dhabi would be subsequently provided in writing. The Domestic Workers Act had also been amended.

33. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that female genital mutilation was increasingly rare and was not listed among the services provided by medical institutions. Medical professionals were required to abide by all relevant laws and standards, and violations of the law on medical responsibility could result in a fine of up to \$27,000.

34. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that Federal Act No. 10 of 2017 was in force to protect domestic workers. The rights of domestic workers were protected through bilateral memorandums of understanding concluded with their countries of origin, training activities and efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Immigration of domestic workers had been limited and a number of centres involved in arranging such immigration had been closed down for failure to abide by the relevant rules and legislation. In view of challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, measures had been taken to support domestic workers, for example by extending their work permits and providing them with free medical examinations.

35. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Ministry of the Interior was one of the bodies that received complaints of human rights violations. It had units dedicated to the protection of women and children, and it had established a number of channels to receive complaints and reports, including hotlines and electronic applications. The response rate for complaints was 94 per cent.

36. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that women had attended training programmes on the Personal Status Act, amendments to the Penal Code, credit and

banking-related matters, updates to the civil action law, the protection of minors and protection against domestic violence.

37. **Ms. Ameline** said that the Committee would appreciate examples of complaints lodged by domestic workers in recent years. It was important for the Penal Code to be adapted to reflect recent legislative reforms, including in the area of domestic violence. She encouraged the State party to ensure that all vulnerable groups had full enjoyment of their rights.

38. **Ms. Akizuki**, referring to the State party's potential withdrawal of its reservations to the Convention, said that, under customary international law, domestic law could not be invoked by a State to justify non-compliance with its international obligations. It would be useful to know whether the State party was considering withdrawing its reservations to articles 2 and 16 of the Convention, which were of particular importance.

39. **Ms. Al-Rammah** said that she wished to know whether the State party had amended article 27 of the Constitution on non-discrimination to include a reference to gender-based discrimination.

40. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that, over the previous two years, around 16,000 complaints had been lodged by domestic workers. Amicable settlements had been reached in the majority of cases, and the remaining ones had been transferred to the relevant courts. In Abu Dhabi, there was a prosecutor dedicated to issues relating to domestic workers. Recruiting offices for domestic workers were required to follow up on the situation of workers throughout their contracts. Insurance for domestic workers was to be paid by their employers; the insurance covered indemnity costs in the event of a missed salary payment, travel costs for workers to return to their countries of origin and end-of-service payments when the employer failed to pay them.

41. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Constitution called for the allocation of all resources needed to properly implement international instruments. The legal definitions of discrimination had been expanded to include discrimination on the grounds of gender and place of origin.

42. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the law on human resources expressly prohibited discrimination on the grounds of skin colour, race, disability or gender in the workplace. All laws concerning the labour market applied equally to men and women and were based on the principle of equal work for equal pay.

43. **Ms. Bint Essa Buhumaid** (United Arab Emirates) said that information on the potential withdrawal of reservations to the Convention would be provided in writing.

44. **The Chair** said that she would appreciate information on the mandate of the General Women's Union and on the composition and operations of the national machinery for the advancement of women. It would be useful to understand how the national machinery was linked to relevant federal ministries and women's institutions in the different emirates and how the amount of financial, technical and human resources of the Gender Balance Council were affected by its role, which appeared to be largely advisory. She wished to know whether the State party planned to create a parliamentary commission on gender equality that could exercise oversight and encourage efforts to incorporate international standards into national law and withdraw reservations to the Convention.

45. The Committee would appreciate information on the first year of operations of the new national human rights institution. She wondered whether it had an individual complaints mechanism to which women could report violations of their human rights. She encouraged the State party to give the national machinery for the advancement of women a greater role in the new 50-year development plan, in particular in setting benchmarks, assessing progress and ensuring accountability for non-compliance with the relevant standards in force.

46. **Ms. Bint Essa Buhumaid** (United Arab Emirates) said that the General Women's Union was responsible for implementing programmes and plans relating to women's roles in the workplace, civil society, the private sector and the Government. The National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women had been adopted and was being implemented by the relevant ministries. The General Women's Union monitored the

implementation of the Strategy through an electronic portal and held regular meetings with various institutions. The Council of Ministers was responsible for coordinating efforts with the Union to implement measures affecting women, and the Federal National Council was working to increase the representation of women in the legislative branch. The Union worked towards implementation of the Convention and was the official representative of women in the country.

47. The national human rights institution had been created in line with the Paris Principles and aimed to benefit from lessons learned in other countries. The institution had an administrative board composed of 13 members with expertise in civil society activities and academia and a governing body with gender parity among its members. Representatives of the General Women's Union were able to attend the institution's meetings but were not permitted to participate in its votes.

48. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that efforts had been made to protect women's constitutional rights and allow them to participate in decision-making on an equal basis with men. The General Women's Union and civil society organizations were among the bodies participating in legislative oversight and follow-up processes. Women accounted for 50 per cent of the members of the Federal National Council, which worked closely with civil society on legislative issues. Under the Constitution, all members of society had the right to participate in researching and drafting legislation, and civil society organizations were allowed to attend and participate in discussions on certain draft laws and other issues of governance. Seminars, discussions and meetings held nationwide also provided an opportunity for civil society to participate in legislative work.

49. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Emirati Council for Gender Equality had been created in 2015 in response to recommendations from international bodies on how to reduce the gender gap in the country. Other efforts had included the adoption of legislation in areas where discrimination against women remained an issue. The progress made had been reflected in the country's improved ranking in international indices. The Council cooperated closely with the General Women's Union, including on proposals to introduce and amend legislation.

50. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that federal legislation, including the Penal Code, the Personal Status Act and the Decree-Law on protection against domestic violence, were applicable throughout the country. Institutions monitored the implementation of federal legislation and related statistics.

51. **Ms. Gabr**, outlining the State party's recent progress in advancing women's rights, said that, in view of the country's federal nature, she would like to receive some clarification as to whether affirmative action steps were applied nationwide and whether Bedouin women, for example, benefited from them. She also wondered whether awareness-raising campaigns on women's rights covered the whole country, including remote areas.

52. Underscoring the difference between temporary special measures and affirmative action measures, she said that she wished to know whether temporary special measures were applied in areas such as health and education and, in particular, whether there were any such measures in place for women with disabilities. Information on any special allowances for women that had been set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic would be useful. Referring to the example of Egypt, where the law required that at least 5 per cent of jobs in all State institutions should be occupied by persons with disabilities, she said that she hoped to hear about any similar legislation in force in the United Arab Emirates. It would also be helpful to hear about any temporary special measures in place for older women, with particular reference to facilitation of travel and to any support that had been made available for them. She wondered what happened to women victims of violence or trafficking in persons once they had left State-run shelters and said that perhaps the Government should consult the national women's empowerment mechanism and the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council to find out what types of temporary special measures could be beneficial.

53. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that flexible work arrangements had been put in place since 2017 as a temporary special measure and were of benefit to women. In addition, schools had reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic and parents

could once again accompany their children to and from school. Women working in day-care centres were now guaranteed two hours per day in which to take care of their own children.

54. The Government strove to achieve gender balance in the measures it took for the benefit of older persons. The Federal Act on the rights of senior citizens had been enacted, imposing fines or prison sentences for violence against older persons. In 2018, the National Policy for Senior Emiratis had been launched to improve the services provided to older persons, covering areas such as health care, economic stability and quality of life. Centres offering older persons various forms of care had been set up, as had mobile health-care units. Where possible, the Government's measures benefiting persons with disabilities, which included the use of inclusive education and a policy to protect persons with disabilities against abuse, specifically addressed the needs of women. A rehabilitation centre had been set up in partnership with Irada Projects to provide training for persons with disabilities. The Ministry of the Interior strove to ensure that 5 per cent of its employees were persons with disabilities.

55. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that, since the maximum distance between settlements in her country was some 300 km, women in isolated and rural areas enjoyed the same services as the ones provided in cities. Women could also access e-services from anywhere.

56. **Ms. Gabr** said that, while she welcomed the delegation's clear answers on affirmative action measures, she hoped for written answers to her questions on temporary special measures.

57. **The Chair** said that it would perhaps be advisable for the Government to refer to general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures.

58. **Ms. Rana**, commending the State party on measures such as the passage of the Federal Decree-Law on protection against domestic violence, said that, in view of the Government's commitment to addressing all forms of discrimination prevalent in the country, the Committee held it to a higher standard than many others in the region. As such, she hoped to hear details of any steps the State party would take to amend the vague definition of domestic violence that was contained in that law. Information about the number and accessibility of shelters for victims of domestic violence would be useful, as would details of the services they offered. It was unclear whether civil society was engaged in operating those shelters. She wondered if there were plans to collect data regularly on the progress made in the implementation of the Government's various legislative and policy measures aimed at preventing domestic violence.

59. Some elaboration on the composition, authority and resources of the coordinating council for family policies would be helpful. She wished to know how it specifically addressed the stigma and gender stereotypes that women and girls faced. She would be interested to hear some examples of family-related strategies that had made an impact.

60. The Committee hoped to see the enactment of legislation completely prohibiting female genital mutilation. She would welcome information on the reduction in honour killings that had resulted from the amendment of the Penal Code in November 2020, and according to which the same punishment applied to such killings as to any other unlawful killing, or on any other impact of that amendment. She wondered what mechanisms were in place to document the impact of the COVID-19 response and to institutionalize long-term solutions protecting women against domestic abuse. Lastly, she hoped to hear how the State party planned to monitor the impact of its contribution to increasing women's meaningful participation in peace and post-conflict processes. Further to that, she wondered whether the Government was planning to increase its investment in that area with a view to making a meaningful impact.

61. **Mr. Safarov** said that, while the United Arab Emirates had a great deal of experience with prevention of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, it was unclear whether victims of gender-based violence benefited from the same shelter services as did victims of trafficking. Several hotlines were in operation; it was important for the Committee to know whether any of them were operated by the State, and statistics on their use in 2021 would also be welcome. He wondered whether there was any State support for NGOs that set up

shelters for victims of trafficking in persons and domestic violence. If that was the case, details of the kinds and numbers of such NGO-operated shelters would be useful. What was the State party doing to reform the *kafalah* system for the sponsorship of migrant workers, in particular in order to prevent trafficking in persons? It would be useful to the Committee if the delegation could describe the obstacles faced in the implementation of the national strategy to combat human trafficking and if it could outline the impact of the actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

62. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Federal Decree-Law on protection against domestic violence defined domestic violence as any act that caused physical or moral harm or any abuse that violated a family member's property rights. Protection orders were issued by the Office of the Public Prosecutor, either *ex officio* or at the victim's request. The Federal Decree-Law also allowed for reconciliation, which could be suggested to the victim; in cases of domestic violence, reconciliation was not an impediment to punishment of the perpetrator.

63. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that measures to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes included the implementation of the National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women, whose goals included maintaining the social fabric by supporting complementary roles for men and women and protecting women within their families. One of the six thematic areas of the National Family Policy related to women's roles and responsibilities within their families. Nine of the ministerial posts in the Government were held by women, and women occupied numerous other prominent posts, including the Chair of the Federal National Council, ambassadorships and positions of responsibility in business. Women accounted for over 40 per cent of the labour market across all sectors. The first female firefighters had recently taken up their posts.

64. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that all areas of the country had shelters for victims of violence and trafficking in persons, and that such shelters provided psychological and social services and legal support, among other things. The centres were monitored with closed-circuit television and staffed 24 hours a day. Victims were entitled to stay in the country and look for work or return to their countries of origin; in the latter case, the Abu Dhabi Centre for Sheltering and Humanitarian Care retained their contact details for two years in order to facilitate contact in case of need. Since some victims were unable to return to their countries of origin, the Centre worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to resettle them in third countries. In addition to any compensation to which they were entitled, victims also received money from the shelter and from the Human Trafficking Victims Support Fund of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking. So that they could support themselves in the future, they were offered training in various disciplines. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of trafficking victims had ranged between 25 and 51, and the number of perpetrators who had been charged each year had ranged from 40 to 77. In order to safeguard the rights of domestic workers, awareness-raising campaigns were carried out for them and for their employers.

65. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that, under the national strategy to combat human trafficking, the Ministry of the Interior had provided training to over 3,200 individuals on the crime of trafficking in persons and instructed them on how to assist trafficking victims. The Ministry used the I-24/7 global police communications system of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), fingerprints and biometric data in its activities to combat trafficking in persons. It had participated in three INTERPOL campaigns in 2021 and 2022, which had jointly saved some 800 victims from all over the world.

66. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the Government did not implement the *kafalah* sponsorship system. Labour market regulations protected employers' and workers' rights, and work visas were granted on the basis of supply and demand in the labour market. There had never been a requirement for workers to obtain "no objection certificates" in order to change employers or leave the country. Clear processes had been adopted for changing or leaving employment and a monitoring body upheld the rights of workers and employers. There was a range of routes to entry into the United Arab Emirates for the purposes of work, including self-sponsorship.

67. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the rights and roles of women were incorporated into activities to promote science and technology and into humanities, language and health curricula at boys' and girls' schools. Curricula were gender-balanced and provided positive examples, for example of the role of women in sustainable development. A national Emirati Women's Day was celebrated each year, and women held decision-making positions in initiatives to combat violence and in other significant projects.

68. **Ms. Al-Rammah** said that she wished to know whether women and health-care and education professionals had access to a unified hotline to report domestic violence and whether those professionals received training on the identification of victims with a view to reporting suspected cases. She would welcome information on the *wilaya* guardianship system, including whether it remained in use and, if so, what steps had been taken to ensure that such guardianship was not applicable to adult women.

69. **Ms. Rana** said that it would be useful to know whether the State party had launched any programmes targeting men and boys in order to dismantle the patriarchy and address gender stereotypes and whether it would consider increasing its investment in women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

70. **Mr. Safarov** said that clarification was required as to whether a national action plan had been adopted for the prevention of trafficking in persons. He wished to know how the State party addressed cyber trafficking and what steps had been taken to bring the terminology used in relation to forced labour into line with international standards.

71. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that by 2020, almost 4,500 complaints of domestic violence had been lodged via a hotline that was free of charge.

72. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that, in addition to the hotlines, reports of violence could be submitted via electronic messaging applications and social media. Complaints and reports were forwarded to the relevant body and the necessary measures were taken. Victims of violence could also use an electronic application to complete a questionnaire, the results of which were analysed to determine the urgency of the case and provide the contact details of appropriate sources of assistance. The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children ran a helpline and could receive complaints, and information was disseminated on the complaints submission procedure.

73. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the legal provisions on guardianship in the workplace and in marriage had been repealed and the Penal Code had been correspondingly amended. Consequently, women enjoyed full freedom to conduct their affairs. Judicial staff and police officers received training on legislation that promoted the rights of women.

74. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that a child protection unit had been established as part of a policy on the protection of children in educational institutions. All such institutions could report suspected cases of child abuse via a hotline, and a student database was used to locate victims. Reported cases, which had numbered almost 1,200 in 2021, were addressed by various bodies, including the Ministry of Education and the police.

75. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that a guide to gender balance had been issued; it raised awareness of the need to protect women in the workplace and provided tools to that end. Training was given to all human resources professionals in the public and private sectors with the use of the guide. Indicators to measure gender balance and protection for women in the workplace had been defined, and a council that had been created under the Ministry of the Interior had set out initiatives and strategies to make gender balance a reality.

76. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that improvements to the national strategy to prevent trafficking had been announced. International organizations such as the WeProtect Global Alliance had assisted in efforts to eradicate sexual violence against children, including online abuse.

77. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that child sexual abuse was criminalized in legislation that dealt with online crime. Online law enforcement operations monitored such activities.

78. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that a digital platform had been created to educate children on safe use of the Internet.

Articles 7–9

79. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that the State party's success in increasing women's participation in political life was commendable. The number of women in the Federal National Council, the Cabinet and the judiciary was impressive. She wished to know whether women were well represented in the police and, if so, what positions they held. Women comprised a very high proportion of workers in the education and health sectors, and it would be useful to know how many were directors of schools and hospitals, as well as how many occupied managerial positions in the engineering and science sectors, how many worked in civil society organizations and in which areas those organizations operated. Information on the results of the State party's efforts to increase the number of women in financial companies and on boards of directors would be welcome. She would also welcome statistics on the number of women from the United Arab Emirates working in international organizations.

80. **Ms. Akizuki** said that, while the Committee welcomed the State party's legislative amendments that allowed women married to foreigners to pass on their nationality to their children, it was concerned about the lack of true equality for women in nationality laws. Women were reportedly unable, for example, to pass on their nationality to foreign spouses. She wished to know whether there were plans to amend Federal Act No. 17 on citizenship and passports to grant citizenship at birth to children born to women married to foreign men and whether women would be allowed to pass on their nationality to foreign spouses. She would welcome information on how many children in the State party were stateless; how that status affected their access to health and education services; what steps were being taken to allow children born out of wedlock and to stateless parents, particularly in Bedouin communities, to obtain citizenship; and what plans the State party had to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

81. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that for the previous 17 years a pioneering programme had enhanced women's political participation, inter alia through online and offline awareness-raising activities at schools, universities and workplaces and among the general public, and by means of measures to increase women's representation in the Federal National Council and through legislative amendments. As a result, the proportion of women in the Federal National Council, including in its presidency, had increased significantly, and the country enjoyed the highest proportion of women parliamentarians among Arab countries. Women made up 40 per cent of the diplomatic corps, occupying 292 posts in foreign missions, including nine ambassadorships. The country's representative at the Security Council was a woman.

82. **A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that the initiatives implemented under a national programme launched in 2012 to increase women's representation in public and private companies and in the financial sector included a guide to the appointment of women to managerial positions and boards of directors. Of the country's board members, 200, or 24 per cent, were women, exceeding the initial target of 20 per cent.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.