



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
8 July 2016
English
Original: Arabic
Arabic, English, French and
Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Sixteenth session

15 August–2 September 2016

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Examination of reports submitted by States parties to the
Convention pursuant to article 35**

List of issues in relation to the initial report of the United Arab Emirates*

Addendum

Reply by the United Arab Emirates to the list of issues

[Date received: 7 June 2016]

* This document has been issued without official editing.



Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

List of issues in relation to the initial report of the United Arab Emirates

A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

- 1. With reference to the outcome of the 2005 census, please explain the low proportion of persons with disabilities in the State party and why this proportion is much higher among non-citizens. Has any new census of persons with disabilities been conducted since 2005?**

The number and proportion of persons with disabilities in the United Arab Emirates is shown by the general population census undertaken in 2005. These figures and proportions have a high degree of credibility; the reason for the low proportion of disabled persons may be attributed to a number of factors, including the following:

- The high level of health awareness of inhabitants of the United Arab Emirates and the development of primary health care and care for newborn children;
- The fact that all children in the United Arab Emirates are covered by an advanced system of vaccinations for measles, polio, and other vaccinations against diseases which cause disabilities;
- Intensive care for pregnant women and the provision of an advanced range of health services, care and monitoring during pregnancy, which significantly reduces the number of disabilities that occur as a result of pregnant women being affected, or of poor health care for mothers during pregnancy;
- The high economic and income levels of United Arab Emirates families and hence the absence of a number of disability-causing factors or diseases occurring during pregnancy, such as anaemia or malnutrition;
- The fact that all girls in the various levels of education are covered by pre-marital inoculations (for instance against German measles and tetanus) has given good results in reducing the number of disabilities that arise as a result of the mother contracting measles;
- Awareness-building programmes for mothers during pregnancy, in particular with regard to complaints which may cause disabilities in children, have played a role in lowering the number of children with disabilities;
- Advanced, modern early intervention programmes have contributed significantly to ensuring that cases of arrested development in many cases do not lead to permanent disability;
- Most non-citizens are either investors or persons coming for work; for the most part they have no disabilities and are in good health; most of them are young persons (19 years old and above);
- Traffic accident awareness-building programmes and the reduction of accidents have helped to lower the number of disabilities arising from traffic accidents.

Since 2008, in implementation of Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Community Development (Ministry of Social Affairs) has been issuing cards to persons with disabilities; 12,000 such persons have been registered thus far, and the Ministry has compiled a database of persons with disabilities registered under this scheme. There has been no new population census since 2005.

2. Please provide a timetable for bringing all laws in line with the Convention and for replacing the medico-legal approach to disability with a human rights model of disability.

Specific objectives were included in the strategic plan to harmonize all laws concerning persons with disabilities in force in the United Arab Emirates under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A draft amendment has been prepared to Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities in the light of that experiment. Work is under way on updating other laws in order to move from a medico-legal approach to a rights-based model. The Ministry of Community Development's plan for 2017–2021 includes preparation of a higher policy on disability at the level of the United Arab Emirates, in addition to preparation of a National Disability Strategy for 2017–2021.

3. Please indicate the steps taken to eliminate derogatory terminology in laws, policies and government discourse referring to persons with disabilities as being of feeble or unsound mind, insane or deaf and dumb.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates issued Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on persons with special needs, the title of which was amended in 2009 to “on persons with disabilities”; the law guarantees all rights and types of care to persons with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

No kind of legislation or laws in the United Arab Emirates contain negative content or unsuitable references to persons with disabilities in general, and work is under way on harmonizing all other laws to bring them into line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ensure that any unsuitable terms or designations are deleted. Preparation has been completed of a standardized guide to disability terms, in partnership with the Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and to replace all terms with negative connotations with terms which are in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

4. Please explain how the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations is guaranteed in all decision-making processes that affect their lives.

With regard to the involvement of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes that affect their lives, four committees were established to enforce the rights stipulated in Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities — each of these committees includes at least one person with a disability — in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are catered to in legislation and policies implemented or to be adopted. A technical committee was established to check buildings and public transport facilities in the United Arab Emirates and assess the extent to which they comply with the needs of persons with disabilities, including the accessibility of buildings and the possibility of receiving services offered to the broad public in such premises. The technical committee includes three persons with physical, hearing and sight disabilities. When preparing the national report on the application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, three persons with disabilities were members of the preparatory committee.

B. Specific rights

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

- 5. Please indicate the steps taken to incorporate a definition of reasonable accommodation within the law, including the explicit recognition that the denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes disability-based discrimination.**

Nothing in Federal Laws discriminates between persons with disabilities and other persons. Similarly, Federal Law No. 29 (2006) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. With regard to arrangements to ensure reasonable accommodation, consideration will be given to including them in a draft amendment to the law on the rights of persons with disabilities and its executive regulation; article 3 thereof reads: “The State shall guarantee to persons with disabilities equality with persons without disabilities and non-discrimination on the basis of disability in all legislation, and shall also ensure that that is observed in all economic and social development policies and programmes, and take appropriate measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability.” This shall also apply in the provisions of the above-mentioned law, and in particular in articles 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 thereof.

Examples of other laws which do not discriminate on the basis of disability are Law No. 3 (2016) on the rights of the child (“Wadeema’s Law”) and Federal Law No. 35 (1992) and amendments on judicial procedures and other laws.

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

- 6. Please indicate the steps taken to amend the law on personal status and to ensure that women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, enjoy rights within the family on an equal basis with men.**

There is no text in the law on personal status or any other law which discriminates between women with disabilities and other women in terms of rights. The texts relating to custody and guardianship of persons with mental disability are concerned with protecting their financial rights and property in legal acts transferring ownership, such as the sale or donation of property, and the management of their assets in such a way as to preserve and develop them.

Similarly, all laws and legislation in force in the United Arab Emirates prohibit such discrimination completely. By way of example, the law on social security grants financial benefits to women with disabilities on a completely equal footing with men with disabilities.

- 7. Please provide information on State programmes promoting equal rights for women and girls, notably the National Strategy for the Empowerment and Advancement of Emirati Women (2015–2021), and explain how these programmes have contributed to improving the situation of women and girls with disabilities.**

The National Strategy for the Empowerment and Advancement of Emirati Women (2012–2015) includes the empowerment and inclusion of persons with special needs, by which is meant the removal of all cultural, legislative, social, economic, political, administrative, architectural and other obstacles which may prevent or hamper the participation of women who are weak and have special needs in various sectors and reduce their opportunities for development and life. “Weak categories of women in society” refers to any women who need more protection and care, such as divorced women, aged widows who are family providers, homeless women, women with disabilities who have learning difficulties or who suffer from retarded mental or physical development, or poor women and weak women with regard to their ability to attain positions of power; such categories are considered those in greatest need of empowerment and inclusion programmes for comprehensive sustainable development.

The Strategy includes gender gaps and emerging needs, such as women with disabilities. While the everyday realities of women with disabilities are that institutions

provide care services to that category of women, it should be noted that education opportunities for that category are limited and concentrated in the main towns only.

Among the strategic objectives of the plan covering women with disabilities are the provision of protection, safeguarding and a supportive environment to women in these special categories, subdivisions of which are the empowerment of women with special economic needs and the inclusion of women with disabilities as an important human element in the community.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

- 8. Please explain how the State party involves children with disabilities in decisions that affect them and enables them to freely express their opinions. Please provide information on children with disabilities abandoned at birth and the measures taken by the State party in this respect.**

The rights of children with disabilities are currently governed in the United Arab Emirates by Federal Law No. 3 (2016) on the rights of the child ("Wadeema's Law") and the rights regime which it upholds for children, in accordance with the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose provisions cover all children without distinction between those with disabilities and those without, as is clear from article 1 of the law, which prohibits insulting, neglecting, mistreating children and using violence against them in general, and requires the relevant authorities in the United Arab Emirates, both federal and local, to protect children's basic rights, family rights, social rights, health rights, cultural rights and educational rights, and from the chapter on the right to protection, the establishment of mechanisms and measures for the protection of children in Chapters VIII, IX and X of the law. The law also imposes penalties of imprisonment and fines on those who violate the rights it prescribes, or on those who transgress its prohibitions. The rights of children are governed in the United Arab Emirates by numerous other laws, such as Law No. 1 (2012) on the rights of children of unknown parentage, which organizes the care of children of unknown parentage with their foster families or in care institutions. Not a single case has been noted of one or both parents abandoning children with disabilities when they are born.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

- 9. What measures are being taken by the State party to promote a positive image of persons with disabilities? Please also explain how public campaigns and training programmes are designed to eliminate disability-related prejudices and stereotypes and to move from a charity and medical approach to a human rights approach to disability.**

Quality standards have been prepared for the service of staff with disabilities in public institutions and service institutions. A training programme has been developed and is administered an average of 10 times every year to all those working in governmental and semi-governmental institutions and private companies serving those working with people with disabilities. There is also a training programme for personnel in the tourism and entertainment sector aimed at staff with disabilities. In addition, there are numerous public lectures and television programmes focusing on building public awareness of the rights of people with disabilities in the United Arab Emirates who work for local governments, concentrating on moving from a charity and medical approach to persons with disabilities to a rights-based approach. Furthermore, there are a number of brochures issued by the Ministry of Community Development. Finally, the disability card issued by the Ministry of Community Development is linked to a large number of services and rights that have been defined for persons with disabilities.

This is apparent from the provisions of Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities and from articles 3, 4, 9, 14, 19 and 20 of the law on the rights of the child.

Institutional framework of the efforts of the Ministry of the Interior in favour of persons with disabilities

Ministry of the Interior centres for the rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities

Registration and assessment

The Ministry of the Interior Department of Centres for the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities receives applications for training and rehabilitation from persons with disabilities; the number of applications received to join the Centre since it was established until 2015 is 1,909, both male and female from various emirates of the United Arab Emirates, including 59 in the current year, as shown in the following table:

Category	Male	Female	Total
Trainees	31	13	26
Graduates	11	12	23

Recruitment

With a view to achieving the objectives of the Ministry of the Interior Centres for the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, jobs are provided to graduates with disabilities by means of companies in the government and private sectors; the total number of persons recruited in government and private sector institutions in 2015 was 15: 10 men and 5 women.

Training

The total number of persons with disabilities who have benefited from training programmes since the establishment of the centres in 2002 is 680 persons with various disabilities. The number of graduates of either sex is 609. The following table shows the numbers of trainees and graduates in 2015.

Category	Male	Female	Total
Trainees	13	13	26
Graduates	11	12	23

Accessibility (art. 9)

- 10. Please provide information on binding accessibility requirements and on measures taken to render public transport accessible throughout the country. Please also provide information on legal sanctions for non-compliance with accessibility standards and guidelines and on cases where these sanctions have been applied during the past three years.**

A set of technical guidelines has been drawn up on appropriate public transport specifications for persons with disabilities and are in force in a number of cities of the United Arab Emirates such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, where means of public transport are equipped to receive and serve persons with disabilities. The Dubai metro system is one of the best equipped public transport systems for persons with disabilities, and there are a number of maritime public transport systems which have been adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. In the federal plan to link the various emirates of the United Arab Emirates by rail a preliminary concept has been drawn up which ensures that they will be geared to persons with disabilities. Work is under way to draft legislation to ensure that public transport is adapted to persons with disabilities. No cases have been noted of failure to comply with accessibility standards or guidelines.

This is apparent in the provisions of Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities and articles 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 thereof.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

- 11. What steps are being taken to repeal legislative provisions that make it possible to restrict and deny the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, notably those contained in Federal Act No. 29 of 2006 as amended by Federal Act No. 14 of 2009, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Criminal Code and the Federal Act No. 28 of 2005? Please indicate the time frame for abolishing the concept of male guardianship.**

There is no denial of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities in the laws on this topic, except for limits to the protection of their financial interests for certain types of disability which require full mental capacity and an understanding of the consequences of acts.

Access to justice (art. 13)

- 12. Please indicate what procedural accommodations exist in the justice system, including professional sign language, interpretation and information in easy-to-read and Braille formats. Please also indicate the measures taken to address the challenges faced by women, especially non-citizen women, in accessing justice when they report having experienced violence. What training is available and has been conducted for law enforcement and judicial officers?**

The laws in force in the United Arab Emirates, including Federal Law No. 29 (2006) require the presence of a sworn sign language interpreter in any court, investigation or legal interrogation in which one of the parties is a person with hearing disabilities who relies on sign language. Ministerial Decision No. 619 (2015) sets standards for the licensing of professional sign language interpreters and the various categories of sign language interpreters, including legal sign language interpreters, who work in courts and security institutions in matters in which one of the parties is a person with hearing disabilities. The same applies to persons with sight disabilities, for whom audio versions or printed Braille versions of all documents and official contracts shall be provided. The websites of service institutions are currently being assessed by an institution concerned with electronic publishing for persons with disabilities.

This is apparent in the provisions of Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular, articles 5, 7 and 31 thereof, and in articles 12 and 13 of the law on the rights of the child.

Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15)

- 14. Please indicate the steps taken to abolish the provisions of Federal Act No. 10 of 2008 on medical liability and of other laws that allow guardians or legal representatives to consent to medical research or experiments on behalf of persons with disabilities.**

Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities stipulates that persons with disabilities shall not be isolated, have their freedom limited or fail to be integrated in the community. For persons with disabilities who suffer from severe or special health conditions, the Ministry of Health and the various health authorities apply a system of house nursing care and mobile medical units, provide health services to persons with disabilities at home for people who so require, and finance home nursing care to that category of persons with disabilities.

Federal Law No. 10 (2008) on medical liability does not specifically refer to allowing guardians or legal representatives to consent to medical research or experiments on behalf of persons with disabilities; the implementation regulation specifies the procedures for obtaining permission to undertake medical research or experiments, and

these include the authorization of the person on whom the research or experiments are to be performed, without, however, making specific reference to persons with disabilities; it does specify that the research shall be done in accordance with internationally recognized standards, and that the rights and dignity of the persons on whom the research is to be carried out shall be respected and that their health shall be preserved, such that the authorization shall be rejected if these conditions are violated.

Work is currently under way to revise the said law and its implementation regulation to make the legislation in this regard compatible with the best world standards in the field.

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

- 15. Please indicate the steps taken to: prohibit and criminalize the corporal punishment of children, including children with disabilities, in all settings; to criminalize marital rape; and to repeal the right of husbands to “chastise” their wives, including those with disabilities.**

Federal Law No. 3 (2016) on the rights of the child (“Wadeema’s Law”), in particular in articles 33 to 37 thereof, provides a broad umbrella for the protection of children, with or without disabilities, from all forms of physical or verbal violence, from being subjected to insults of whatever kind, from attacks against their psychological or physical integrity, from upsetting their emotional equilibrium, and from using children for purposes which are immoral or contrary to the values of the community.

- 16. Please provide information on accessible complaints mechanisms and victim support services that are available throughout the country, including to children and adolescents with disabilities. Please also provide information on training activities organized on preventing and addressing violence against persons with disabilities.**

A special hotline (5999) has been set up for persons with disabilities: this is a telephone line which links persons with disabilities directly to the operations room in the Ministry of the Interior Centre whenever necessary. The hotline is aimed above all at the deaf, a category characterized by the enhanced use of assistive technology in their daily lives and the promotion of alternative means of communication. This category may also communicate with the operations room by means of SMS texts with a view to protection from exploitation, aggression and violence.

All police institutions have special units on human rights which are in direct communication with persons with and without disabilities; they provide legal assistance and protection where needed, and they work in cooperation with other authorities in the United Arab Emirates to provide care and shelter to victims of family violence or human trafficking. A number of training courses have been held on ways of recognizing children with disabilities who have been subject to physical, psychological or sexual violence. Awareness-building campaigns have also been run by the Ministry, and articles have been published in newspapers and magazines.

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

- 17. What steps are being taken to amend article 13 of Federal Act No. 10 of 2008 to prohibit the forced sterilization of all persons, including women and girls with disabilities, as well as sterilization with the consent of a third party?**

Children in general and children with disabilities have been protected from the practices referred to above in various national laws and legislation; this is apparent from the provisions of Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities, Federal Law No. 3 (2016) on the rights of the child (“Wadeema’s Law”), whose provisions have been referred to above.

In addition to the Federal Penal Code, which penalizes any attack against the life or physical integrity of persons, their reputation, their honour, or their dignity, in accordance with the penalties specified therein in this field.

Similarly, in Law No. 5 (2012) on information technology crimes, which protects everything relating to privacy and the reputation, correspondence, medical examinations and electronic data of individuals from crimes committed by electronic means.

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

- 18. Please provide data on the nationality status of Bidouns, including those with disabilities, and their access to services, including social protection. What percentage of Bidoun children with disabilities have a birth certificate and are able to exercise all their rights under the Convention?**

There is no one in the United Arab Emirates who is without a nationality; all individuals, with or without disabilities, have access to educational and health services and social protection.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

- 19. Please indicate the measures taken to build up community-support services enabling independent living and to ensure that those who so require can have access to personal assistance. Please provide data on the number of persons with disabilities living in care and rehabilitation centres and on the number of persons who have moved from such centres to live in the community during the past three years.**

There are care and rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities and treatment units for them. The State encourages persons with disabilities to remain with their families. All education and rehabilitation programmes are provided through a system of day-care centres, and there are programmes and forms of assistance to enable persons with disabilities to live independently in housing programmes run by the Ministry of Community Development and all bodies working in the field of disability. Numerous initiatives have been launched by the Ministry and relevant bodies concerned which are working for the comprehensive social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities by involving them in all national occasions, holidays and official celebrations. With regard to training to live independently and in a manner which is consonant with the customs and traditions of the country, the last stage of vocational training in government rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities is devoted to personal training to enable such persons to live independently according to their general means and abilities. The Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme and other housing programmes and the Ministry of Public Works allocate a specific proportion of housing projects to persons with disabilities, and give them priority in government housing programmes. A set of technical guidelines has been developed on an enabling environment for persons with disabilities in public spaces and in housing.

For example, the relevant authorities and care providers have taken appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access with others to their physical surroundings, means of transport, information and communication, including information and communication technologies and systems, and other facilities and services available or provided to the general public in urban and rural areas equally. Such measures include the following:

- Apply the Abu Dhabi international standards for buildings, roads, and means of transport, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- Apply environment creation standards in the Housing Board in order to help persons with disabilities get a housing scheme which is geared to their type of disability and living requirements;
- Department of Municipal Affairs to provide training to engineers and technicians in the relevant authorities with regard to access issues for persons with disabilities;
- Department of Transport and Municipalities in Abu Dhabi to provide signs in Braille and other forms which are easy to read and understand in buildings of government authorities and public facilities open to all, such as the Corniche and main streets.

The Ministry of Community Development, the Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs and Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, together with the relevant authorities and the private sector, endeavour to provide services through day-care and rehabilitation centres, from which persons with disabilities return home at the end of the day, and through their families, who offer services to them by providing facilities according to the needs of the person with disabilities. Disability benefit cards are provided by the Zayed Higher Organization offering various services, including treatment and rehabilitation services at home. It also provides various types of equipment, such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, and custom-made splints free of charge to enable them to live more independently. The relevant authorities have launched initiatives aimed at ensuring social and economic inclusion to persons with disabilities by involving them in national occasions and holidays and in cultural programmes in the community and sporting programmes through clubs for persons with disabilities. With regard to training to live independently, in accordance with the customs and traditions of the country, government care and rehabilitation centres in all the emirates of the United Arab Emirates offer a vocational training programme to persons with disabilities on living independently in accordance with their general potential and abilities. The Zayed Higher Organization also offers for vocational rehabilitation a programme of agricultural rehabilitation and livestock raising for students with disabilities aged 15–36, under which the stage of independent living for individuals begins at the age of 18, when persons with disabilities, especially mental disabilities, begin to work and receive a salary from the Zayed Agricultural Centre for Development and Rehabilitation, which offers them all types of training and protected work in an environment which is geared to them. The Recruitment and Environment Creation Unit of the Zayed Higher Organization searches for suitable jobs according to the assessment of the person with disabilities with government authorities or in the private sector, and job seekers with disabilities are linked to an electronic system to search for employment opportunities by the Human Resources Bureau. The relevant institutions endeavour to ensure a life of dignity to them by means of a marriage programme which helps them to get a marriage subsidy and start their family life in the community with support from the authorities. Furthermore, the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme and other housing programmes together with the Ministry of Public Works offer a limited number of housing projects for persons with disabilities, and gives them priority in government housing programmes. A number of technical guidelines have been developed on an enabling environment for persons with disabilities in public spaces and places of residence.

The State also endeavours to ensure a life of dignity for persons with disabilities throughout the United Arab Emirates. The Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs has opened a guesthouse for persons with special needs in the region of al-Mafraq in order to provide them with long-term shelter and continuous support and care. A total of 120 persons with various disabilities are cared for in Abu Dhabi in a safe internal environment for such persons, aged between 9 and 70. The centre also provides medical, nursing, treatment and rehabilitation services with support from the Abu Dhabi Health Authority. Recently, the centre began to offer treatment to 120 persons with various disabilities, aged between 9 and 70 years. The centre provides to its residents, students and visitors medical services, such as treatment of children, both nerves and bones, and makes available nursing services 24 hours a day, and therapy and rehabilitation services, including physical therapy, conversational therapy, vocational therapy, in addition to rehabilitation services and various workshops, in which students are trained in basic carpentry, electronic repairs and candle-making.

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

- 20. Please indicate the measures taken to consult with the deaf community in the process of unifying sign languages in the Arab region. Please provide information on steps taken to develop augmentative and alternative communication in the State party and to support certification and training for sign language interpreters.**

The United Arab Emirates exerts great efforts in the field of standardizing sign language for persons with hearing disabilities, and participates in all Arab meetings and

bodies dealing with the deaf with a view to standardizing sign language. Standardized Arabic sign language dictionaries have been printed containing all standardized hand signs agreed upon by the Arab countries. A local sign language dictionary has also been printed containing hand signs used locally within the United Arab Emirates in associations of persons with hearing disabilities. There is close cooperation between the United Arab Emirates Deaf Association and the Ministry of Community Development concerning sign language courses and sign language interpretation. Over the past year, a total of 100 training courses have been held on sign language for a large number of persons working in government and private institutions.

The Sign Language Unit of the Ministry of the Interior Centres for the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities holds a number of training courses on basic sign language and for the interpretation of training courses in sign language for staff with hearing disabilities in the Ministry of the Interior with a view to overcoming problems facing the deaf in dealing with them, breaking the fear barrier that they may not find employment, and ensuring communication between persons with hearing disabilities and their colleagues. Since 2012, the Sign Language Unit has been participating in the Committee for the Compilation and Documentation of the United Arab Emirates Sign Language Dictionary, whose production is being supervised by the Zayed Higher Organization. The following indicators demonstrate the achievements of the Unit in 2015.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>
Number of basic sign language courses held	4	<p>Course for members of the general leadership of the Sharjah Police</p> <p>3 courses provided to persons registered from the community (Ministry of the Interior Department for Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities)</p>
Number of (female) participants in sign language interpretation	6	<p>Second Ajaman Jobs Fair</p> <p>Sports Festival for Persons with Disabilities, general leadership of the Abu Dhabi Police</p> <p>Scanning legal materials, al-Ain Municipality</p> <p>Interviews for the recruitment of deaf persons, general leadership of the Abu Dhabi Police.</p> <p>Interpretation of ceremonies, Zayed Higher Organization, Deaf Week.</p> <p>Interpretation for a training course on creativity and innovation skills for personnel of police units for the deaf.</p>

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

- 21. Please indicate the steps taken to repeal legislation that restricts marriage on the basis of disability and to abolish the requirement to undergo a prenuptial medical examination in order to receive a financial assistance grant. Please explain what steps the State party is taking to provide adequate support to families of children with disabilities or adults who require a high degree of support.**

In the United Arab Emirates there is no legislation which prohibits marriage for reasons of disability or on the grounds of disability. The State encourages persons with disabilities to get married and found families. This takes the form of collective marriage campaigns for persons with disabilities, which are held annually, with the State and other federal and local governmental institutions bearing all the costs of the marriage campaigns and providing financial subsidies to each spouse from the Marriage Fund. Recipients are

required to agree to undergo a prenuptial medical examination, the sole purpose of which is to avert genetic diseases in the blood, such as thalassemia and metabolic diseases; the purpose of such examination is not connected with any disabilities.

The State provides monthly financial allocations through its social security programme, which are paid to persons with disabilities or to their guardians. The amount of such allocations increases in accordance with the number of persons in the family and with the financial obligations of the person with disabilities. A total of 5,517 persons with disabilities received monthly financial assistance in 2015. The average amount received by each person with disabilities was AED 5,200 (Emirati dirhams) or US\$ 1,500. The average total of monthly allocations to persons with disabilities is AED 30 million (US\$ 8.5 million).

Education (art. 24)

- 22. What measures have been taken to redirect resources from segregated education to quality, accessible and inclusive education and to ensure the compulsory training of all teachers on inclusive education and teaching children with disabilities, as an integral part of core teacher training curricula in universities.**

Seven special education support centres have been established: one centre in each geographical area; their chief objective is to assess and diagnose students with disabilities and learning difficulties, and monitor them in schools, in accordance with the best criteria and using modern methods, instruments and tests, and to provide guidance and training to their guardians and teachers. These centres are equipped with appropriate furniture and tools, and ministerial decisions have been adopted for the work of these centres and the support of special education.

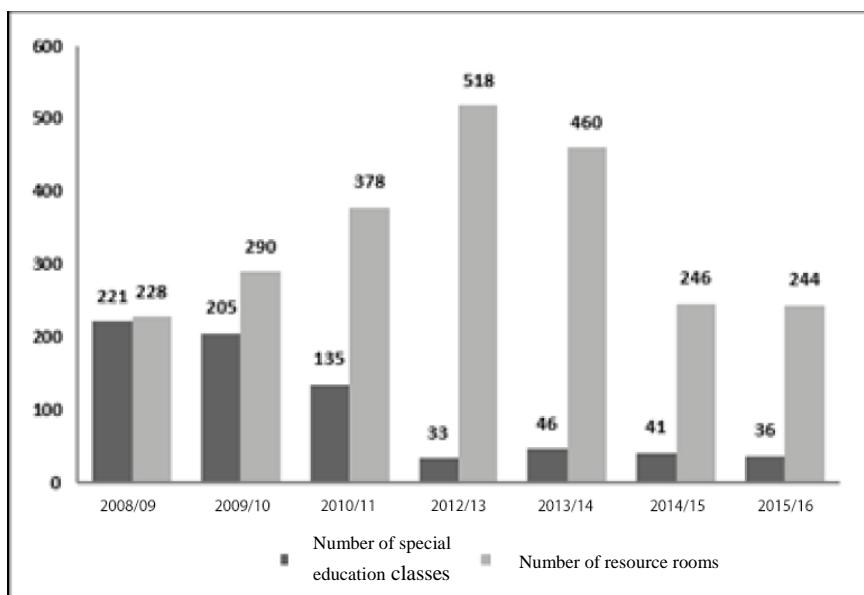
Provision of assistive equipment and technologies for special education students, classrooms, resource rooms, and support centres, at an approximate annual cost of AED 2–4 million, such as the provision of computers for victims of strokes, educational tablets and software, screen-reading programmes, electronic educational toys, interactive whiteboards, Braille printers, OCR+ Ibsar screen-reader, hand-carried digital enlargers, flexible lenses, direction and movement stick, speaking computer, CCTV, educational difficulties packages, abacus, FM equipment for students with hearing disabilities, sensory and functional skills development packages, and annual provision of robots and smart whiteboards for resource rooms (gifted and excellent students' programmes).

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
AED 4 061 761	AED 3 346 544	AED 2 696 766

School environment: Installation of 82 elevators in schools out of a total of 412 governmental schools.

Sources: Annual provision and distribution of special education brochures and reference materials in all government schools covering the twin categories of students with disabilities and gifted students.

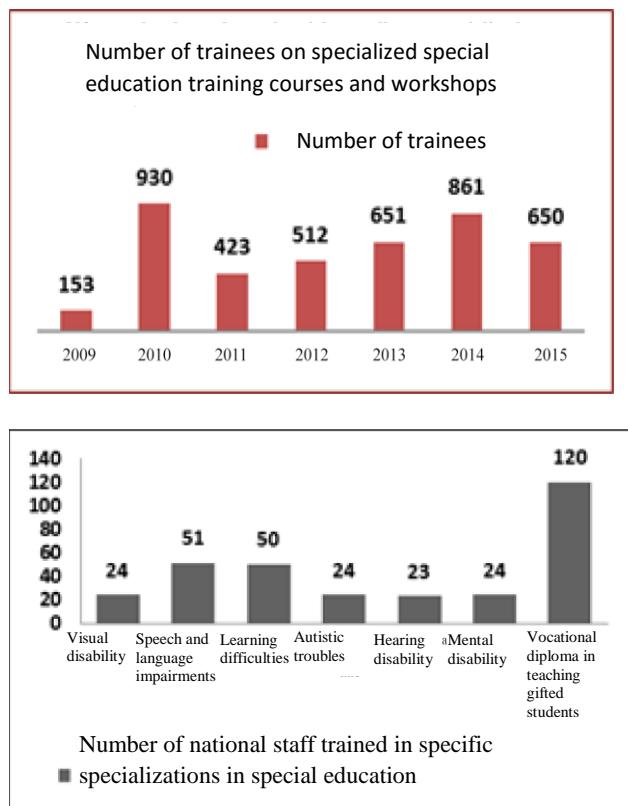
Classes and resource rooms: provision of special education services in special education and ordinary classes and resource rooms (see table).



Staff and training

- Preparation of training materials on the basics of inclusion (20 hours of training) in accordance with global standards, consisting of 10 basic topics: general rules for special education programmes, working teams and complementary roles, categories of students with special needs, strategies for individualizing teaching, individual educational plan, curricular amendments and adaptations of the school environment for special needs pupils, learning difficulties, strategies for strengthening positive behaviour, and review of successful cases and experiences, with training having been carried out since 2009 in the following manner:
 - Training of teachers of subjects and guidance counsellors in schools on training materials — fundamentals of inclusion: 66 per cent have received such training; 34 per cent still to be trained;
 - Training of children's sports teachers on training materials — fundamentals of inclusion: 73 per cent have received such training; 27 per cent still to be trained;
- Annual identification in the field of special education needs, using the most needed programmes in the field of disabilities, learning difficulties, giftedness and excellence. Training is provided to subject teachers, guidance counsellors and specialists in various special education subjects, by specialized houses of expertise from within the United Arab Emirates and abroad or by specialists in the Ministry;
- National special education teachers were trained in specialized fields of special education: learning difficulties, visual disabilities, hearing disabilities, pronunciation and language, and autism, by the centres specialized in these fields; also training of 120 persons helping gifted students (vocational diploma in the education of gifted students) (Table 1);
- Numerous meetings and conferences were held on inclusion and gifted students, with the participation of local institutions; teachers attended numerous training courses and specialized workshops in the field of special education (Table 2).

Sending three female students to study precise specializations in special education in the United States of America

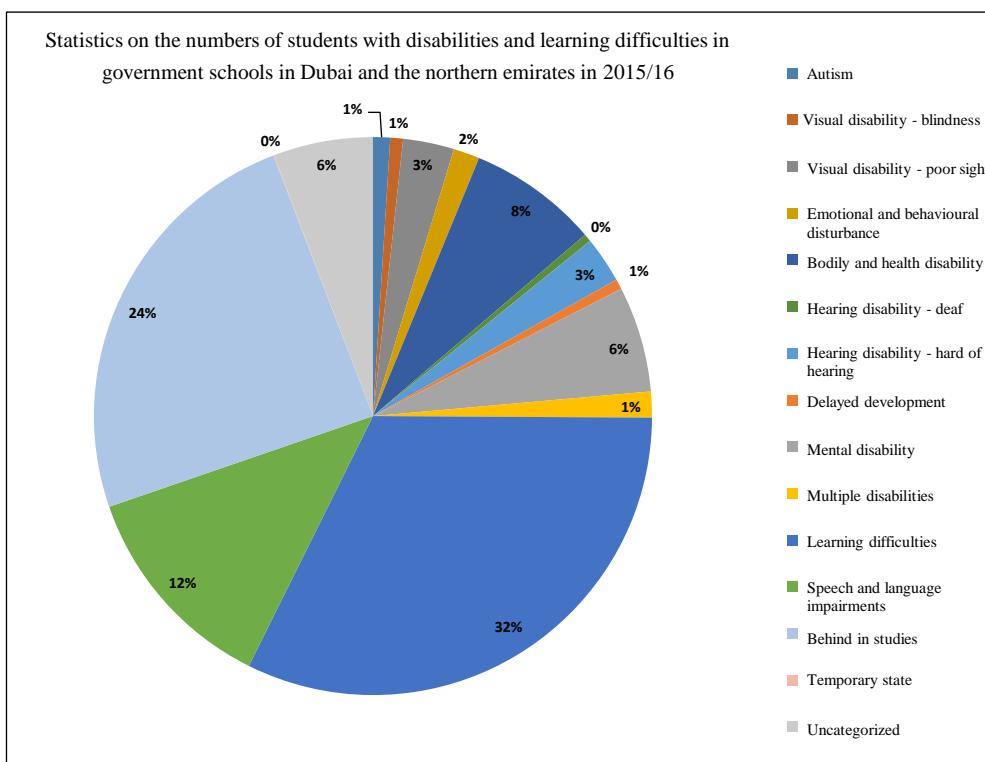
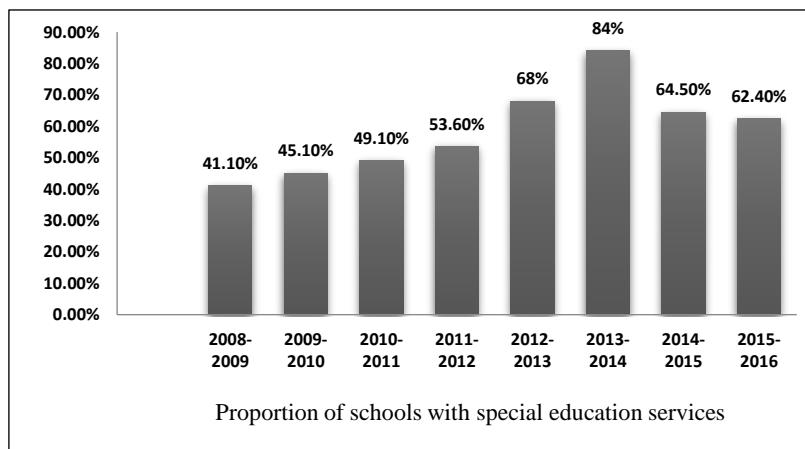


Coordination and cooperation with other authorities

A number of partnerships have been concluded with government and private institutions to benefit from the experience and expertise available in order to develop programmes and services for students with special needs (disability/giftedness), such as Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, Al-Jalila Cultural Centre for Children, Hamdan Prize, Zayed University, Awladouna Center, Manzil Special Needs Center, and Samsung International Company (al-Jalila). These institutions have held popularization and awareness-building lectures for teachers, guardians and students, and have participated in the training courses provided to the educational and administrative bodies of some of the schools, and thus helped to inform the teaching community about disability issues.

Statistics on the number of students with disabilities

The number of students with disabilities enrolled in government schools in Dubai and the northern emirates in 2015/16 was 5,447 male and female students, or 3.7 per cent of the total number of students.



Curricula and results of students

The curricula for students with disabilities and learning difficulties are harmonized by applying the individual education plan (IEP): there is a version of the IEP for all levels, both paper and electronic, which is distributed every year to the schools that have students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Those concerned are given IEP training, which consists of everything the student needs to learn or acquire during his or her time at the school. Students with disabilities or learning difficulties have individual abilities or skills which are different from any other person, and that is why an IEP is developed for them which includes all the necessary subjects and skills in accordance with their needs and abilities, which are assessed. Regular decisions are taken on how to apply it by all parties in the school and the region, in coordination with the authorities concerned in the Ministry.

Results of students with disabilities and learning difficulties in government schools

In the 2014/15 school year, the Ministry of Education undertook a study for a period of three school years from 2012/13 to 2014/15 of a random sample of 3,280 students with disabilities or learning difficulties whose particulars were recorded in the students' programme, with a view to ascertaining how much the students benefited from their IEP. The results were as follows:

School year	Number of study samples	Number who achieved 50% or more of IEP objectives	IEP success rate within the same sample
2014/15		3 075	94%
2013/14	3 280	3 136	96%
2012/13		3 202	98%

Evaluation and diagnosis

- Provision of numerous instruments and tests for special education and gauge mental abilities (e.g. Wechsler Intelligence Scale, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale, Leiter Nonverbal Intelligence Test, Joint Action Routines (JARs) Autism Scale, learning difficulties scales, Bracken 3 for Kindergartens, etc.);
- Training of 22 psychology specialists on all the above tests;
- Current development of a tool to reveal gifted students in coordination with the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance;
- Assessment and diagnosis of students by a multidisciplinary team;
- Coordination with the Ministry of Community Development on initial diagnosis, referral of cases and preparation of reports.

Health (art. 25)

- 23. Please provide information on the measures taken to repeal legislation that violates the right of persons with disabilities to free and informed consent in relation to medical treatment and to enact legislation that explicitly recognizes this right for persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.**

Federal Law No. 29 (2006) on the rights of persons with disabilities guarantees all rights to this category, and in particular, provides that their freedom shall not be restricted, and also guarantees their right to receive health services and rehabilitation. This law abrogated all provisions that were contrary to it or at variance with its provisions; as a result, the United Arab Emirates has no violations of the right of persons with disabilities to obtain free and prior consent to receive health services.

The United Arab Emirates provides completely free of charge medical and health services, assistive equipment, surgical operations, support treatment services, treatment abroad for all persons with disabilities of United Arab Emirates nationality pursuant to Federal Law No. 29 (2006). In 2015, Council of Ministers Decision No. 231/9/2015 was issued which provides free health insurance and offers health services and comprehensive health care to all foreign residents in the United Arab Emirates with disabilities. Every person diagnosed as having a disability is entitled to receive such services.

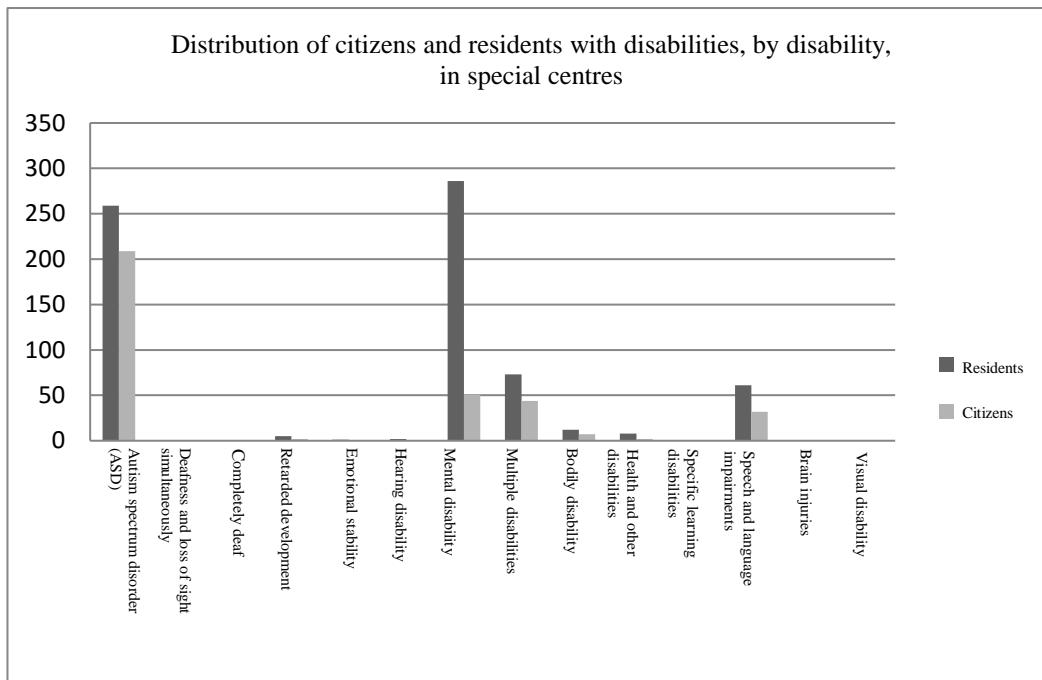
Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

- 24. Please provide information on the degree to which non-citizens with disabilities, including Bidouns, have access to health, rehabilitation and support services and to technical aides and assistive devices, and the cost of accessing such services and devices for non-citizens.**

The special centres licensed by the Ministry of Community Development serve non-United Arab Emirates nationals with disabilities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, who account for 67.3 per cent against 32.6 per cent, who are United Arab Emirates nationals of the total number of persons with disabilities in the Emirate.

Care and rehabilitation services are provided to a not insignificant number of residents free of charge in view of their inability to pay day-care centre fees. Government and private authorities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi provide support to them, such as a

number of plots of land free of charge for three private care and rehabilitation centres, including the Gulf Autism Center and the private Al-Noor Centre for Care and Rehabilitation for Special Needs, whose building costs to the Government of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi were nearly AED 3 million, enabling sustainable provision of services to all residents of the United Arab Emirates.



Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

- 26. Please explain the availability of social protection programmes and housing for non-citizens with disabilities, including Bidouns, in the State party. Please clarify whether social protection programmes and benefits cover the cost of personal assistance services.**

The Law on Social Security provides an umbrella of social protection to persons with disabilities, who receive more than US\$ 1,500 in monthly payments. Furthermore, housing projects give priority to persons with disabilities in obtaining subsidies to build housing or to find ready-to-move-in accommodation.

The health authorities issue an “Aounak” (helping you) health card to all non-citizen persons with disabilities and orphans in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, which complements the health insurance programmes of Abu Dhabi. They also provide complete treatment free of charge. The Aounak health card offers bearers comprehensive care and is issued by the Aounak Health Card Authority to persons with disabilities and orphans who are not citizens in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and covers all residents. The Aounak health card complements the health insurance programmes of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and offers comprehensive treatment free of charge.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

- 27. What steps are being taken to remove restrictions on and guarantee the right of all persons with disabilities to vote? Please provide information on the measures taken to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in civic and political processes.**

There are no restrictions on the participation of persons with disabilities in all elections held in the United Arab Emirates, including elections to the National Assembly, for both nominations and elections. In the most recent elections, two persons with disabilities were candidates. Care is taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have easy access and movement in premises where voting takes place.

C. Specific obligations

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

- 28. Please provide information on plans to improve the collection and dissemination of national data systematically disaggregated by disability, sex, age and nationality on the situation of all persons with disabilities across all areas, including in respect of violence.**

The “disability card” issued by the Ministry of Community Development ever since 2008 provides integrated statistical information and a database on persons with disabilities, including type of disability, age, gender, place of residence, work or study, and other information which is used in planning for services provided to persons with disabilities.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

- 29. Please provide information on the appointment of an independent national monitoring body within the State party and indicate how organizations of persons with disabilities have been involved in that process.**

The competent authorities for the protection of persons with disabilities have devoted great attention to the analysis of issues of protection of persons with disabilities at the strategic and operational levels. This is apparent in the careful discussion of the issue of protection in the report analysing the situation of children in the United Arab Emirates in 2010, which was prepared by the General Women’s Union in full coordination with the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood and UNICEF, and which shed light on the details and important issues relating to protection of persons with disabilities. In the strategic plan for childhood and motherhood prepared by the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, all possible attention was devoted to the protection of persons with disabilities, which was included in all clauses and discussions on the protection of persons with disabilities as an inseparable part of the protection of any child. It has not escaped those who prepared the strategy how important it is to analyse policies and strategies on violence and to analyse the legal texts, which should help to develop a comprehensive and methodical plan to combat the phenomenon of violence against persons with disabilities, and not only to alleviate it, as noted in the objectives of the strategy.

The Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs participated in the tasks of the Consultative Committee for the Assessment of Social Services in Abu Dhabi in 2014, which is one of the committees established by the Executive Council to monitor and assess social services in Abu Dhabi. This was done by using 13 different strategies and methods for assessment, measurement and monitoring. The Committee was aimed at monitoring services provided to six main categories: women, men, children, young people, old people, and families. The situation of persons with disabilities was gauged as a subgroup of all main categories: women with disabilities, men with disabilities, old people with disabilities, and children with disabilities. A number of strategic recommendations were made, such as the establishment of an observatory on the protection of children, training for the protection team, and the consolidation of relations with the Ministry of the Interior in this regard.

Among the programmes concerned by the strategic plan for 2016–2020 of the Zayed Higher Organization is the adoption of the strategic Project for the Protection of Children with Disabilities, which includes the following strategic outputs:

Preparation and implementation of a documented and codified service for the protection of children and related documentation of enacted and documented model operations for the physiotherapy programme, in full coordination with the relevant authorities, all in accordance with the specifications of International Organization for Standardization ISO 9001: 2015 for control of operations. Enhanced application of the law on protection of children by drawing up internal regulations enforcing the provisions of the law within the institution and by providing specialized programmes to prevent families with

disabilities from disintegrating as a result of the presence of one or more disabilities in the household. This is to be done by expanding family advisory services, providing training to enable people to live with the requirements of disabilities, helping persons with disabilities to perform their roles by protecting them from violence, exploitation and aggression, designing quality preventive programmes for awareness-building among specialists and persons with disabilities on ways of protecting that category of persons from exploitation, harassment and aggression, and designing a specialized training programme for a group of families as support teams to families recently affected by disabilities.

Within the same framework of strategic plans, the Zayed Higher Organization has set the strategic objective of designing a strategic plan for persons with disabilities for 2017–2021 in which protection of the child is to be a principal theme.
