



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Fourth periodic report submitted by the United Arab
Emirates under Article 18 of the Convention, due in 2019***

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Introduction

1. The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance to fulfilling its regional and international obligations. That is in keeping with the overall policies of the Government of the United Arab Emirates and its vision for increasing the country's competitiveness in all fields. The State considers women's empowerment a major issue, on which it works in partnership with federal and local agencies and civil society institutions to become more competitive.

2. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is one of the main international references on which the State relies when reviewing its legislative system, policies and services to ensure a balanced gender perspective and equality between women and men. For that reason, the United Arab Emirates has been diligent about submitting its periodic reports under the Convention and accommodating the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for improving its policies and programmes in the area of women's empowerment and leadership.

3. The 2015–2019 period since our third report monitoring implementation of measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women has seen numerous gains in women's empowerment in the State. That has included progressive Government efforts to achieve gender balance in all areas having to do with implementation of the articles of the Convention. The Government has also taken into account the concluding observations and recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined second and third reports of the United Arab Emirates.

I. Methodology for preparing the report

4. The United Arab Emirates takes a participatory approach to planning the development process. The General Women's Union led the report preparation team. It formed a working group that included 52 members representing 35 federal and local agencies around the country, as well as women's organizations and civil society organizations (see annex 1). All took part in the preparation of the State's Report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was put together in a way that transparently presented the facts on the ground and the challenges with a view to coming up with recommendations for areas of potential improvement.

5. The committee that prepared the report made use of the report-writing guidelines provided by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It also took into account the Committee's final observations on the combined second and third reports of the United Arab Emirates.

II. General information about the United Arab Emirates

• Geographical location

6. The United Arab Emirates is situated in the north-eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It occupies a triangular area bordered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the south and west, and the Sultanate of Oman to the north and east. The United Arab Emirates has a coastline along the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

- **Area**

7. The State extends over a landmass of around 71,023.6 km², which includes a group of islands in the Arabian Gulf. The area of its territorial sea is roughly 27,624.9 km².

- **Population**

8. As of 31 December 2017, the United Arab Emirates had a population of 9,304,277, according to administrative records. The figures indicated that the total population had grown by 2 per cent since 2016, and that males accounted for 69 per cent of the population, or 6,415,942 people, compared to 31 per cent for females, or 2,888,335.

- **Sustainable development indicators**

9. Since its founding, the United Arab Emirates has paid close attention to the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. Indicators show that the United Arab Emirates jumped 17 places in the 2018 Sustainable Development Goals index. It climbed to 1st place regionally and 60th globally, compared to 77th globally out of 156 countries in the 2017 report. The report confirmed that the United Arab Emirates was on track to achieve superior results with regard to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, after achieving a 69 per cent performance rate. The report noted that the United Arab Emirates is the regional leader in several of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 17 on partnerships, Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. On Goal 9, it scored 6.2 out of a possible 7 on infrastructure, 4.1 out of a possible 5 on quality of trade and transportation infrastructure. The United Arab was at the top of the list of safest countries to live under Goal 16.

III. Policies and strategies for empowering women in the United Arab Emirates

10. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women 2015–2021 is the reference framework for Government and civil society institutions in applying best practices for women’s empowerment. The Cabinet confirmed this when it met in extraordinary session at the headquarters of the General Women’s Union on 4 December 2018 and launched a package of women’s initiatives revolving around three main themes: legislation and policies, services, and international representation. The goal was to increase women’s participation and representation in all fields, locally, regionally and internationally.¹ The Office of the Prime Minister was charged with accelerating implementation of these initiatives in coordination with the General Women’s Union. They included the following:

(a) Study increasing women’s presence in diplomatic corps and State missions to international organizations;

(b) Study increasing the employment of women at the level of federal courts in the State;

(c) Propose enacting a federal act on combating domestic violence, in implementation with the Cabinet’s decision to adopt mechanisms to implement the State’s Human Rights Action Plan, which recommends drafting a law on domestic violence against women and children;

¹ Al-Bayan Newspaper; <https://www.albayan.ae/across-the-uae/news-and-reports/2018-12-04-1.3426091>.

(d) Study a range of incentives to increase women's participation in the business sector, including the development of the national policy on entrepreneurship for Emirati women that would provide special facilities for entrepreneurship and self-employment licences for women, and review the Sponsorship Act with a view to allowing women to issue licenses and employment visas in order to encourage the launch of private enterprises;

(e) Develop the State's policy on women's participation in the labour market to take advantage of the capabilities of non-working women and address the challenges and reasons why they are not on the labour market;

(f) Study a proposed gender balance policy aimed at strengthening the global gender balance in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to develop the global standards and best practices;

(g) Promote women's participation in the advanced sciences;

(h) Provide compulsory specialized health care services for women before, during and after childbirth, including postpartum follow-up and care services and an online platform to provide new mothers with information on how to care for their health and the health of their child after birth and at all stages of life;

(i) Study how to make women's health services inclusive of women senior citizens who are people of determination (special needs) and facilitate their access to treatment and health services in all the emirates through nursing services and home care providers, such as the "My Care" service and elderly home care;

(j) Study providing family counselling and mental health services to women at all stages of life through primary care centres and health facilities;

(k) Raise the proportion of women ambassadors in the diplomatic corps and State missions abroad by increasing the appointment of women gender-equality ambassadors at the United Nations and peace envoys through the United Nations initiative on women in peacekeeping, and including Emirati women in international peacekeeping missions;

(l) Establish an international media observatory to highlight the successes of Emirati women in the foreign media;

(m) Form a coordinating council for family policies to provide the foundations for a good quality of life for the core of Emirati society and bring about the integration required for the development and implementation of family policies and projects in the State.

A unified national vision and strategy for the family in the State has been established that meets and anticipates challenges and builds relationships to ensure coordination among all parties involved in developing and implementing family policies.

11. The United Arab Emirates has issued its first guide to gender balance in the workplace (see attached copy) to spread awareness at all levels of the importance of achieving gender balance and eliminating discrimination. It also launched the Gender Balance Index, which measures the compliance of employers with implementing gender balance and non-discrimination. Three categories have been created for honouring federal, local and private entities through three initiatives to incentivize entities and individuals to support gender balance in the United Arab Emirates. These are the Emirates Gender Equality Seal to certify supporting efforts, the Balance Medal, and the Best Gender Balance Initiative award.

12. Under Decree No. 14 (2017) concerning motherhood, maternity and childcare leave for female employees in both the federal Government and the local governments of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, maternity leave in the United Arab Emirates was changed

to 90 paid days, starting from the date of delivery. An employee may request that this leave start up to 30 days before the expected date of delivery, provided that the period is continuous.² Maternity leave may be combined with periodic leave and also with leave without pay up to 120 days from the beginning of maternity leave. In addition, breastfeeding breaks were extended to two hours instead of one for one year. A three-day paternity leave was adopted. Part-time work and remote work were approved for women in order to enable them to balance their family and professional responsibilities and to increase women's participation in the labour market.

13. In 2019, the Cabinet adopted a family protection policy aimed at protecting and maintaining the integrity of the family. The policy specifically serves women, children, the elderly, men and people of determination, and protects them all from violence and abuse in all their forms (see Annex 5).³

IV. Response to the main observations and concerns of the Committee

14. The United Arab Emirates appreciated the final observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined second and third reports. It circulated them to the relevant institutions to guide them in their ongoing development and improvement. The State is considering lifting reservations to the extent that that does not conflict with national sovereignty or the Islamic sharia. The Committee confirmed that the practices of the State guarantee women's rights and non-discrimination against them. That is part of the approach and vision of the Government of the United Arab Emirates. It has resulted in the establishment of the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council, which launched the Gender Balance Index in Government agencies with the aim of measuring the performance of Government agencies in achieving balance. It does so by using a set of criteria that include the development and optimal implementation of policies in support of women and equal opportunities for men and women in leadership and decision-making positions, and the launch of initiatives that to provide outstanding services in the workplace, such as the formation of women's committees to serve women.

V. Follow-up on implementation of the articles of the Convention

15. Ever since it ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Arab Emirates has been committed to accommodating the provisions of the Convention and the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and advancing women's empowerment. The following are the most important developments in the State with regard to the provisions of the Convention and the response to the Concluding Observations on the second and third combined reports.

Articles 1–3

16. These articles focus entirely on the definition of discrimination against women and legislative frameworks to ensure that women are not discriminated against in any fields, and particularly in the social, economic and political fields.

² Federal Authority for Human Resources: <https://www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/fb6e2823.pdf>.

³ Emirates Today; <https://www.emaratalyom.com/online/follow-ups/2019-11-11-1.1272463>.

17. National legislation does not discriminate between citizens on the basis of sex. In 2015, the State established the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in all institutions. The State has also adopted the Government accelerators approach with a view to finding and implementing solutions to challenges that require rapid intervention.

18. The 2015–2019 period saw a review of the supportive and enabling legislative environment for women, with a view to developing existing legislation or enacting new legislation, including the following:

(a) On 10 April 2018, the Cabinet adopted a draft of the first-ever salary gender equality legislation, demonstrating that there are no exceptions when it comes to providing equal opportunities for the sexes under our Constitution, which guarantees equal rights and duties between the sexes.

(b) Article 53 of the Penal Code, regarding a husband punishing a wife, has been repealed. That eliminates justification on the basis of legality in cases of domestic violence.

(c) Federal Act No. 10 of 2019 on protection against domestic violence was enacted. It aims to correct harmful behaviours and protect the family, women and children.

(d) Amendments have been made to the provisions of the federal act on countering discrimination and hatred, which defines discrimination as any distinction, restriction, exception or preference between individuals or groups based on religion, belief, denomination, confessional community, sect, race, origin or ethnicity or gender.

(e) Amendments have been made to the Federal Act regulating labour relations, article 7, which reads as follows: “It is prohibited to engage in any discrimination that limits equal opportunity or diminishes equal access to jobs, continuing employment or eligibility for benefits. It is also prohibited to discriminate in tasks assigned for the same job”. Article 30 has been amended to read as follows: “It is not permitted for an employer to terminate the services of a woman employee or give her notice because she is pregnant. Termination of service under such circumstances shall be considered arbitrary under article 122 of this Act”.

(f) The Personal Status Code has been amended, including article 30, which reads as follows: “(1) Capacity for marriage includes being of sound mind and having reached maturity. Marriage age is 18 for anyone who has not been legally deemed to have reached maturity earlier. (2) A person who has been legally deemed to have reached maturity but is not yet 18 may only marry in accordance with guidelines to be issued by decision of the Cabinet based on the proposal of the Minister of Justice”.

19. Federal Act No. 10 (2017) guarantees women domestic servants the right to have recourse to justice and effective redress mechanisms as follows:⁴

(a) Domestic workers have the right to file a complaint with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, which is the ministry responsible for regulating domestic work in the State, in the event that a worker has any complaint concerning their relationship with their employer. This includes complaints of any form of violence, discrimination or forced labour, which are practices that the Act criminalizes in article 3/3, which provides for stiff fines of up to 100,000 dirhams (over \$27,000). It also includes complaints of noncompliance with granting rights provided for by law.

⁴ Report of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

(b) The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has established a new institutional framework and entity devoted to administering domestic labour called the Domestic Employment Division. It includes departments for labour relations, labour disputes and labour inspection, for both domestic workers in accordance with the provisions of the law and for recruitment offices, as well as for work permit departments.

(c) “Reconciliation” service centres have been established to receive and investigate complaints from both private sector and domestic workers and try to mediate and reconcile worker and employer. The centres are required to summon the parties (worker and employer) within two weeks of the date of filing of the complaint, and to provide translation services and legal assistance to workers to mediate with a view to settling disputes amicably. If the centre fails to reach a peaceful settlement or if the dispute concerns amounts of less than \$5,000, the complaint is referred to the One-Day Court, where the labour judge hears the complaint and hands down a ruling on the same day. If the worker’s financial benefits or claims exceed \$5,000 in value, the matter is referred to the competent labour court, where labour cases can be filed without fees and translation and legal aid services are available free of charge upon request.

(d) Labour inspectors are entitled under the Act to enter the residences of employers (their homes) in the event of a complaint from the worker or reasonable evidence of violations of the provisions of the Act and related implementing decisions. The law also punishes the employer or anyone else who obstructs or prevents an official in charge of enforcing the provisions of this law from carrying out their work, or attempts to do so, whether that person is a labour inspector or some other law enforcement authority. The penalty is up to six months in prison plus fine of between 10,000 and 100,000 dirhams.

20. The Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs and the Secretariat of the Council are strategic partners in following up implementation of the Convention. They work in accordance with authorities granted to them to review the relevant legislation and submit questions to ministers to ensure women’s rights. The new session of the Federal National Council has seen the proportion of women increase to 50 per cent, which will increase women’s contributions to decision-making.

21. The United Arab Emirates is keen to protect women and vulnerable groups in society by providing mechanisms that enable these groups to access justice, from providing reporting hotlines and shelters to ensuring recourse to the courts.

22. The relevant institutions provide free legal counselling services as well as assistance with legal fees for financially strapped segments of society. For example, the Human Trafficking Act, article 13, exempts victims of human trafficking from fees in civil cases. The State works through special centres to provide livelihood, health and rehabilitation services for victims.

23. Under the 1975 act that established it, the General Women’s Union is the official representative of women in the State. It is therefore the agency responsible for drawing up strategies and programmes for the advancement, empowerment and leadership of women in the United Arab Emirates. The General Women’s Union works collaboratively with federal and local institutions, civil society and the private sector. In reinforcement of the mandate of the General Women’s Union, a National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women has been adopted by the Cabinet and is being implemented by the relevant State institutions. The extraordinary Cabinet session held at the headquarters of the General Women’s Union on 4 December 2018, underscored the status of the General Women’s Union and the importance of the role it plays in Emirati society.

24. The General Women's Union follows up implementation and monitors the efforts of institutions to implement the strategy through an electronic portal. It also holds regular follow-up meetings with institutions. It should be noted here that the Cabinet has instructed its Office to coordinate directly with the General Women's Union to implement and accelerate women's empowerment initiatives. The Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs has authorized the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs to coordinate with the General Women's Union to increase women's participation in the Federal National Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The General Women's Union also chairs the team that drafts the State's reports on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. All this reinforces the General Women's Union's mandate as the State's official representative for women.

25. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women has set the 2015–2021 period as its timetable, and divided that period into two implementation stages, the first being 2016–2018 and the second being 2019–2021. The Strategy includes 4 priorities with 14 strategic objectives assigned to institutions. Each strategic goal has an agency assigned primary responsibility for it along with supporting agencies at the federal and local levels. The relevant agencies undertake to draft operational plans every three years and incorporate them into their strategic plans according to a schedule that includes performance indicators. The plans and programmes drafted are then adopted by the Cabinet and the executive councils of each emirate. The General Women's Union holds periodic meetings with the relevant agencies to follow up and assess progress in implementing the plans and propose amendments if necessary to ensure achievement of the desired goals within the specified timetables. An electronic portal and observatory have been established to follow up implementation of the Strategy.⁵

26. The NAMA Foundation for the Advancement of Women was established in December 2015, by an amiri decree issued by His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, a member of the Supreme Council and the Ruler of Sharjah. It focuses on promoting and advancing the role of women in the economic, professional and social sectors. The United Arab Emirates is considering the establishment of a national independent human rights commission along the lines of the Paris Principles. It is currently finalizing a draft act establishing such a commission.

27. Federal Act No. 2 (2008) on civic associations and institutions that serve the public interest regulates the process of founding and establishing civil society organizations, including women's associations and human rights associations. Under that Act, such associations have the right to conduct their activities in accordance with their statutes. There is an Emirates Human Rights Association in the United Arab Emirates, as well as five women's associations and associations for expatriate communities and professional and specialized associations.

Article 4: Special measures

28. The United Arab Emirates has taken advantage of article 4 of the Convention to promote equal opportunities for the sexes. It has taken a number of measures, including the following:

29. The United Arab Emirates continuously strives to develop a system of policies, legislation and services aimed at women to ensure equal opportunities between them and men. In that connection, in 2015, the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council was established with the aim of reducing the gap between males and females

⁵ General Women's Union; <https://www.uaew.ae/#page5>.

in the State employment sector, working towards gender balance in decision-making positions and strengthening the role of women in all areas of life as key partners in the industries of the future. One of the most important initiatives launched by the Council was the publication in 2017 of the Gender Balance Guide: Practical Steps for Institutions in the United Arab Emirates, the first of its kind in the world. It is a comprehensive tool that outlines the measures and steps that both the public and private sectors must take to bring about gender balance and reduce the gender gap.⁶

30. The State believes in the importance of special measures in eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. Alongside previous decisions such as the Cabinet decision on increasing the participation of women in boards of directors, companies and federal institutions and the Cabinet decision requiring childcare facilities in Government workplaces to support working women, on 8 December 2018, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, directed the Federal National Council to increase the representation of Emirati women to 50 per cent by the 2019 session, in an effort to support women's political participation. On 10 April 2018, the Cabinet adopted the draft of the first-ever gender pay equality legislation, demonstrating that there are no exceptions to providing equal gender opportunities as required by our Constitution, which guarantees equal rights and duties to both sexes, and making the United Arab Emirates one of the world's leading countries in wage and employment equality.

31. The package of initiatives launched by the Council of Ministers on 4 December 2018 included studying how to increase the participation of women in diplomatic representation and in State missions to international organizations, increase the involvement of women in judicial work at the level of federal courts in the country, and increase the proportion of women ambassadors in the diplomatic service and foreign representation within State missions, including through recruiting women gender-equality ambassadors at the United Nations and women peace envoys through the Women in Peacekeeping initiative of the United Nations, and including Emirati women in international peacekeeping missions. The Office of the Cabinet is working in cooperation with the General Women's Union to accelerate implementation of these initiatives, which can be considered special measures to promote gender equality.

32. The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation launched an initiative in implementation of the National Human Resources Employment Strategy 2017–2021, which was adopted by the Prime Minister's Office. It began its implementation of the plan by working on a "working remotely policy" for the year 2017. This policy supports women in Emirati society by creating employment opportunities for unemployed women in remote areas of the country by encouraging private sector employers to offer multiple options for remote work for qualified women. It also encourages employers to increase access to partially employed or fully untapped groups such as gifted people living in remote areas or caregivers for the elderly and children.

33. In 2018, in implementation of the strategic operational plan mentioned in paragraph 31, work was done on a flexible work policy that seeks to add elements to the employment programme that are appropriate for Emirati women. That included a Self-Employment Programme, an initiative that supports men and women citizens to find jobs commensurate with their ideas, experiences and educational and training levels. It does so within a framework that supports men and women citizens to begin and invest in self-employment by establishing an online platform that connects them with different companies and entities that have projects and are in need of temporary

⁶ The United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council collaborated with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in preparing the guide: <file:///C:/Users/al-lamki/Downloads/OECD%20Gender%20Guide-Arabic.pdf>.

human resources. This platform allows citizens to create their own files and upload their resumes so that companies can look at them and choose whoever meets their job requirements.

34. In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation began preparing a policy to support the participation of Emirati women in the private labour market in implementation of Cabinet Decision No. 57 *mim/11 waw* (2018) on studying the current challenges facing women in the labour market and a mechanism for addressing them. Accordingly, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation launched the Absher service pursuant to Cabinet Decision No. 63 *mim/11 waw* (2019). That service is a kind of umbrella that will include all programmes that promote alternative employment options for Emirati women in the private sector while taking into account their specific needs and taking advantage of their capabilities.

Article 5: Cultural stereotypes

35. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women devotes attention to highlighting examples of pioneering Emirati women with a view to changing stereotypes of women's roles in society. The General Women's Union has established the Emirati Women's Encyclopedia and a media observatory for the achievements of Emirati women, which it disseminates via social media.⁷

36. In 2015, the United Arab Emirates for the first time instituted an Emirati Women's Day, to be observed on 28 August every year, with the aim of highlighting the achievements of Emirati women in various fields, supporting the women's empowerment strategy within the development process, and highlighting their important community role and achievements made under wise leadership.

37. The United Arab Emirates has moved beyond stereotypes of women. Emirati women have taken up non-traditional leadership positions. Here are some examples:

(a) Emirati women have taken on and are overseeing major non-traditional Cabinet portfolios, including the following: Minister of State for International Cooperation, Minister of State for Food Security, Minister of State for the Advanced Sciences, Minister of State for Happiness and Quality of Life, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Minister of Community Development and Minister of State for Public Education.

(b) Emirati women have served as President of the Federal National Council (Parliament) and as Council members.

(c) Women work in the diplomatic service and take part in representing the State abroad.

(d) Emirati women are entrepreneurs and business leaders. There are also programmes to support small businesses.

(e) Emirati women are 40 per cent of the total staff of the Emirates Space Agency, where their roles include senior management, project leadership, engineering, studies, data analysis, communications, education, training and legislation. Women also enrich and contribute to the development of many different disciplines in space science, technology and astronomy.

(f) Emirati women make up 78 per cent of all women working in the General Civil Aviation Authority.

⁷ The e-portal of the Encyclopedia of Emirati Women <https://www.uaew.ac/#page1> and its Instagram account <https://www.instagram.com/euaew/>.

(g) Since its founding, the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development has taken on responsibility for supporting and empowering women as an important and active element of society in the same way that it engages with men in supporting the pace of development in the State. It supports women writers by providing a printing and publishing service through which to support women's literary talents, enhance their creative capacities and help them develop their literary gifts and become professionals. In 2016, the Ministry published a collection of books and literary publications by 16 Emirati women writers and authors. In 2017, the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development published 10 publications by Emirati women writers.

38. The United Arab Emirates believes that educational curricula are a crucial part of upbringing. The Ministry has worked hard to standardize educational materials and plans used in both male and female schools, consolidating content into three components: knowledge, values and skills. It uses examples and models that exhibit gender balance. It chooses drawings and pictures that show females and males equally without one sex predominating. It also selects a balance of texts, articles and content that treat scientific and human subject matter equally applicable to both sexes. Writers are chosen on the basis of quality of output without regard to sex.

39. The State believes that the media has an important role in changing stereotypes about women's roles in society. We therefore find that the various media – written, audio and visual – contain many programmes that highlight the pioneering role models of Emirati women in different sectors. Anyone monitoring the media sector in the United Arab Emirates will note the prominence of Emirati women in the media and on social media sites. Many women occupy influential positions in the media sector in the State, are active members of media clubs and associations, and contribute to drafting their policies.

40. The General Women's Union, the official representative of women in the United Arab Emirates, has established a programme of cooperation with the National Media Council, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Abu Dhabi Media Corporation, and is about to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Dubai Media Council to highlight the achievements of Emirati women in local, regional and foreign media, including in combatting stereotypes.

Article 6: Violence against women and human trafficking

41. The State attaches great importance to women's empowerment based on its conviction that women are strategic partners in development and equal to men in rights and duties. That is something that is affirmed in the Constitution of the State and legislation in all areas. Equal opportunity is guaranteed in all fields, and the State has taken many measures to empower and protect women.

42. Legislation in the United Arab Emirates strives to provide a legislative environment that is supportive of women and protects them from violence and the violation of their rights. That includes Federal Decree-Law No. 10 (2019) on protection against domestic violence, which was issued on 29 August 2019.

43. Federal Act No. 3 (1987), as amended by Act No. 34 (2005) and Act No. 52 (2006), is the basic reference for criminalizing acts that damage the family, crimes against persons, violations of human life and physical integrity, attacks on liberty, endangerment, and crimes against honour. We note that article 53 of the Penal Code regarding a husband punishing a wife has been repealed. That eliminates any justification on the basis of legality in cases of domestic violence.

44. The Government of the United Arab Emirates is mindful that circumstances can make women – especially migrant women – reluctant to file complaints against their

employers. That is especially true of migrant women working in private homes, who might fear violence, loss of employment or loss of residence (housing). The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has adopted a policy that revolves around the following:

(a) It provides many channels for receiving workers' complaints (in both the private and domestic sectors) while ensuring that complaints are confidential. Complaints can be lodged via the following means:

- Free telephone line;
- The website of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation;
- The "My Salary" app;
- Registering with the aforementioned reconciliation centres.

(b) It ensures that a shelter or alternative housing is available for women workers when needed. For female domestic workers, there is Federal Act No. 10 (2017) concerning domestic workers and Ministerial Decision No. 762 (2017) concerning the establishment and licensing of the Tadbeer service centres for domestic workers. Those centres recruit and provide temporary employment for domestic workers and provide decent housing for domestic workers that takes into account the needs of women workers. They are provided with three meals a day for as long as they need to remain at the centre. The Act requires the Tadbeer centres to house domestic workers in cases where there is a labour dispute and the worker has filed a grievance or expressed a desire not to remain in the workplace (the house).

45. There is an effective no-cost mechanism for mediation and arbitration between the two parties to the labour relationship to settle disputes within a set period of time through the aforementioned reconciliation centres. We note that workers are granted temporary work permits to find alternative employment while the dispute is being referred to the labour court.

46. Chapter 5 of Federal Act No. 3 of 1987 promulgating the Penal Code (articles 354-370) regulates offences against honour. The Penal Code considers harassment of women, whether by word or deed, to be a crime, punishable by one year's imprisonment plus a fine of up to 10,000 dirhams. In the case of touching of a woman or an attempt at a physical attack by force, this offence is considered to be an attempted rape, punishable by life imprisonment or 25 years' imprisonment. If the act of rape is actually committed, in some cases the penalty is death. Chapter 6 (articles 371-380) of that same Act regulates crimes against reputation, slander, insults and betraying secrets. It considers stalking a crime that violates the private life of a woman, for which a perpetrator can but punished by up to 15 years imprisonment.

47. The National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women in the United Arab Emirates provides a framework of reference for all institutions that have the strategic objective of providing protection and preventive measures to battered women and facilitating the access of battered women to support and assistance. The General Women's Union follows up on implementation with the relevant institutions, and holds a training workshop for workers in the Ministry of Interior in this field. The Strategy also includes the goal of strengthening women's capacities to meet emerging social challenges and phenomena by building women's capacities and qualifications to enable them to deal with problems at various stages, providing guidance and counselling support services, and designing preventive and therapeutic strategies for phenomena endemic to society.

48. In confirmation of the State's commitment to protecting women, the package of initiatives launched by the Prime Minister's Office at its meeting at the headquarters of the Women's Union in December 2018 included a proposal to issue a federal act

on combating domestic violence. That was in keeping with the Cabinet's decision to adopt implementing mechanisms for the State's Human Rights Action Plan that recommend drafting a law on domestic violence against women and children. The competent parties in the State are currently drafting a law on domestic violence for submission through constitutional channels. It would protect women within the family. The State has been keen to establish institutional mechanisms that provide support, protection and assistance to women in all areas, including awareness-raising, counselling and other initiatives. The most important of these institutions are as follows:

- The Emirati Council for Gender Equality;
- The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood;
- The Family Development Foundation;
- The Dubai Foundation for Women;
- The Supreme Council for Family Affairs;
- Shelters for women and children;
- The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children and the Aman Centre for Women and Children in Ras Al Khaimah;
- The social support centres at the Ministry of the Interior;
- The General Directorate for Protection and Crime Prevention at the Ministry of the Interior;
- The Child Protection Department at the Ministry of the Interior;
- The Children and Women's Protection Department of the Dubai Police;
- The Emirates Human Rights Association;
- The Women and Children's Protection Foundation in Ajman;
- Women's associations.

Alongside existing institutions and shelters, the General Women's Union, through the Government Accelerators Team in implementation of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women, has accelerated operationalization of the Khalifah Home for Family Care being set up by the Ministry of Community Development as the first such model home at the federal level for providing care, shelter, rehabilitation and social, psychological and legal counselling services to ensure that protection and care services are provided to all segments of Emirati society in accordance with international human rights conventions and without regard to ethnic, religious or national considerations.

49. There are several free telephone numbers that women and girls can use in the event of any violence, including the following:

(a) There are a number of hotlines for reporting the most serious security incidents, crimes and assaults to security institutions in the United Arab Emirates, including the Abu Dhabi Police Secure Line, the Dubai Police Secure Line and the Sharjah Police Emergency Service.

(b) The hotline at the Women's Protection Centre of the Sharjah Department of Social Services is 800800700. The Centre was established in 2011 to ensure the protection of battered women in the Emirate of Sharjah, to provide them with a decent life, to make them aware of their rights, and to enable them to live independently and with dignity by providing shelter and follow-up services.

(c) The hotline of the Women and Children's Shelter is 8007283. The Centre was established in Abu Dhabi in 2008. It provides relief, care, rehabilitation, follow-up and prevention services. The main focus is to protect victims of human trafficking. The center has a branch in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah.

(d) The hotline of the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children is 800111. The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children is the first licenced non-profit shelter and humanitarian care facility in the United Arab Emirates to care for women and children victims of domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking. It was founded in late 2007 to provide victims with immediate shelter, protection and support services consistent with international human rights instruments.

50. It should be noted here that the Ministry of Community Development at the federal level and community development agencies and departments at the local level provide psychological and social care services, rehabilitation programmes and other activities to ensure the recovery and reintegration of battered women into society. It offers them medical, educational and professional services, provides for their food and personal needs, and offers recreational programmes and social and psychological support.

51. Federal and local Government and civil society institutions have been keen to hold workshops and seminars as well as participate in regional and international events to enhance the capacity-building of workers in the area of violence against women. For example, the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children has trained and developed workers in various institutions that provide victims with social, psychological, health, legal and other services to increase workers' knowledge and help them acquire expertise and skills to enable them to provide services with professionalism. From 2015 to 2017, eight workshops were organized in the following areas:

- Play therapy;
- Parental evaluation in cases of family breakdown;
- Cognitive behavioural therapy workshop for depression;
- Psychological first aid;
- Post-traumatic stress disorder;
- Cognitive behavioural therapy for borderline personality disorder.

52. The United Arab Emirates takes part in the annual Orange Campaign that the United Nations conducts every year for the 16 days following the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women from 25 November to 10 December. That is in keeping with its belief in the importance of combating violence against women, which it does so through the relevant institutions that raise awareness of the manifestations not only of physical violence but also of verbal or psychological violence to which women might be subjected without the perpetrators feeling that it is violence. That can happen especially when it is associated with customs and traditions that are deeply ingrained in certain societies, relating to delayed marriage, childbearing, child-rearing, divorce, weight, external appearance and women's employment. The campaign has met with widespread participation and positive reactions from various segments of society.

53. The United Arab Emirates has made considerable and significant progress in the fight against organized crime in general and human trafficking in particular. That has been thanks to the efforts and perseverance of the relevant parties that work hard to support victims of human trafficking against traffickers, both nationally and internationally.

54. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking was established by a decision of the Cabinet in 2007 with the aim of facilitating coordination among strategic partners. It has established several institutional mechanisms to coordinate and reinforce efforts to combat human trafficking crimes. They have been established within the law enforcement structure as regulatory units or committees to support the State's efforts to strengthen coordination at the State level in order to combat this crime, enhance the capacity of workers and educate society about its dangers.

55. Federal Act No. 51 (2006) on combating human trafficking, as amended by Act No. 1 (2015), represents the legal framework for dealing with human trafficking cases. Since it entered into force, it has contributed to raising awareness of this crime among members of society, which helps to combat it. Under that Act, a penalty of life imprisonment is applied if the crime committed by deception, or accompanied by the use of force, threats of death or physical abuse, or physical or psychological torture. The Act, which consists of 16 articles, imposes strict penalties on human traffickers that range from one year to life imprisonment and fines ranging from 100,000 to 1,000,000,000 dirhams.

56. The amendments contained in Federal Act No. 1 (2015) on combating human trafficking are applicable to Federal Act No. 51 (2006) and were made for the benefit of victims of human trafficking in line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The amendments were as follows:

(a) Victims and witnesses shall be informed of their legal rights in a language they can understand and granted an opportunity to express their legal and social needs.

(b) If it becomes clear that he or needs it, the victim shall be taken to any medical facility to receive psychiatric or physical treatment and placed in a medical or psychiatric rehabilitation centre if necessary. (This is what shelters do after a victim is placed in them. Victims are taken to the relevant medical facility and psychological support is also provided to the victim. If the victim's mental state requires that they be transferred to a medical facility, that is done immediately.)

(c) The victim shall be placed in a shelter or other accredited institution if he or she is found to need it. (That is done by law enforcement agencies, who refer the victims to the shelters).

(d) Victims and witnesses shall be provided with the necessary security protection when they need it.

(e) Victims and witness shall be permitted to remain in the State if the investigation or trial requires it, pursuant to the order of the Office of the Public Prosecutor depending on the situation.

(f) Most victims being housed in shelters for victims of human trafficking are not legally resident in the State. They come on business visas and are supposed to be issued residence permits subsequently. That doesn't happen however. Instead, they are exploited before action can be taken to legalize their status. The visa on which they entered expires and they become violators. Others enter on tourism visas. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking has taken this into account and set forth regulatory procedures that define the roles of strategic partners. Victims are exempted from any fines they might incur for illegal residence in the State until litigation proceedings are concluded. If they wish, they may depart prior to the conclusion of litigation proceedings provided that their presence is not required by the competent law enforcement agencies for any subsequent stage of litigation.

(g) The court may appoint a lawyer for the victim at his or her request. The court sets the lawyer's fees. Its decision on this matter is final. The fees are paid by a certificate given to him by the court, which pays the fees.

(h) In terms of application of the penalties provided for by Act No. 51 (2006) on combating human trafficking crimes, we can tell you that in 2018, according to the 2018 Annual Report of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking Crimes, the penalties included the following: life in prison, deportation, five years in prison, a fine of 100,000 dirhams, confiscation of seized goods, deportation, imprisonment for one year, a fine of 100,000 dirhams, imprisonment for one year, deportation, confiscation of seized goods, deportation, imprisonment for one year, deportation, confiscation of seized goods, 10 years in prison and deportation. A number of cases are still pending in various courts.

57. The Ministry of Interior has worked to implement this law on the one hand and to disseminate it and create the necessary mechanisms to imbue among law enforcement workers with a culture of combating human trafficking crimes, respect for the dignity and humanity of victims, and protection. The Ministry of Interior also issued administrative decision No. 21/2016 concerning linking the crime of human trafficking with the proceeds of that crime through legislation in force and the signing and ratification of bilateral and regional agreements. That was to provide protection for society against trafficking crimes. It has also taken an active part, along with many Government and civil society institutions, in establishing human rights standards and combating human trafficking as it exists on the ground. To date, some 33 agreements have been signed and ratified by the State, and the Ministry of the Interior is a party to some 14 memorandums of understanding. The Ministry of the Interior has also created interview rooms for victims and vulnerable groups, including women, with the aim of preserving women's privacy during the interrogation phase.

58. The Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the relevant international organizations, has worked to train and rehabilitate those working in the field of combating human trafficking crimes with the aim of dealing with this crime with professionalism and diligence. Its training strategy includes organizing and taking part in many training programmes at the national and international levels to enable workers to combat this crime. A number of training programmes have been held by the Human Trafficking Crime Control Centre in the Emirate of Dubai to enhance the capabilities of those working in the fight against human trafficking crimes. It conducts inspections, oversight patrols and other relevant measures and procedures.

59. The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has worked to develop its electronic monitoring systems to improve mechanisms for monitoring facilities so it can observe any indications of possible violations related to crimes of human trafficking and forced labour. Those electronic systems include a wage protection system, a salary complaint system, a labour housing system, a self-assessment system and a smart inspection system that is used to determine priorities for inspection visits. There are also other control systems that have helped to make inspections more efficient. These innovative systems have received considerable regional and international attention.

60. A Human Trafficking Diploma programme has been instituted. It was in its fourth year in 2018. A number of the initial graduates, representing various agencies, have been trained as trainers for future such programmes at the national level, in coordination with local and international partners in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

61. Best practices have been adopted to facilitate the movement of passengers entering and departing via the country's ports of entry. Here, we mention the following:

(a) The Consolidated Criminal System and the Interpol 24/7 system are used to check on persons at ports.

(b) Eye recognition and fingerprint technology are used to identify wanted persons who are wanted or prohibited from entering or leaving the country. Facial recognition is used to ensure that the traveler's photo matches his or her personal photo on the passport.

(c) State-of-the-art devices are used to detect forgeries at ports.

(d) Entry permit rules and sponsorship criteria have been set forth. A record is made of degree of kinship or purpose for which the foreigner is visiting to the State, thus preventing opportunities for exploitation in human trafficking cases.

(e) Children are not put on their parents' passports and are required to have their own passports so that their identities can be verified when entering or leaving the State in order to further protect them from exploitation.

62. The Ministry of Interior, the Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship and the Emirates Human Rights Association provide continuous training to border security workers through courses and workshops.

63. We can tell you that the return of victims of human trafficking to their homeland is voluntary. That is to say, it is done in accordance with their wishes. There are women who do not wish to return to their countries for reasons of honour (if they are pregnant) or because of wars, natural disasters or any of the other reasons a victim might fear returning home. In such cases, the shelters for victims of human trafficking contact with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to find an alternative country for such victims. It also contacts that organization to find alternative countries for victims under the age of 18, if they were trafficked by their parents or siblings (family), out of fear that they might be victimized again, and an alternative country is sought.

64. The relevant institutions help victims who wish to work in the State. They try to create employment opportunities for them that allow them to stay in the country legally and with a source of livelihood that will help them provide for their families in their home countries.

65. Victims who violate residency laws are not held accountable. They are exempted from any fees that might result from their violation of residency laws. That is in no way linked to their ability or willingness to cooperate with the legal authorities.

Articles 7 and 8: Political and public life

66. In keeping with the belief of the United Arab Emirates that women are a strategic partner in development, the National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women in the United Arab Emirates for 2015–2021 includes the strategic objective of increasing women's participation in various areas and representation in positions of power and decision-making. In that light, the State has taken a number of measures to ensure active participation by women in political and public life. We mention the following:

(a) The United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Guide classifies institutions at different levels by how much attention they pay to gender gaps and encourages institutions to become competitive and improve their performances.

(b) The number of women in the Cabinet has increased. The Cabinet includes nine women ministers, or 29.5 per cent of the total number of ministers.

(c) Women made up 50 per cent of the new 2019 Federal National Council following the President's decision to increase women's representation in the Federal National Council to 50 per cent.

(d) Some provisions of Federal Act No. 3 (1983) concerning the federal judicial authority that have to do gender balance in the judicial corps have been amended. The draft has been accepted and is currently undergoing implementation.

(e) The Cabinet issued a decision to increase the role of women on boards of directors in 2012. That was followed by the decision of the Ministry of Economy in 2015 to increase the role of women in financial market companies

(f) A Government accelerator was introduced as part of the fifth round of accelerators to increase the number of childcare facilities operating in the State in implementation of the 2006 Cabinet decision to require childcare facilities in Government workplaces in order to support working women.

(g) The United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council launched the "Women on Boards" initiative with the aim of enhancing women's representation on boards of directors in the public and private sectors, in coordination with the relevant agencies. That was in line with the directives of the wise leadership of the State regarding developing governance practices in accordance with the best internationally accepted standards, increasing transparency (especially with regard to the appointment of institutional leadership), and increasing women's representation. It was done in support of that initiative and in implementation of the decision to increase the representation of women on the boards of directors of publicly owned companies to 20 per cent by 2020, with a view to realizing the State's vision for the empowerment of Emirati women.

67. At the same time, the General Women's Union, in cooperation with women's associations, organizes numerous training programmes that aim to build women's leadership capabilities and highlight women leaders to serve as role models for future generation.

Article 9: Nationality

68. The United Arab Emirates has amended Federal Act No. 17 (1972) on citizenship and passports with Decree-Law No. 16 (2017). An article 10 bis was added, providing that "citizenship may be granted to the male and female children of a female citizen married to a foreigner no less than six years after the date of birth, provided that the mother had citizenship from the time of birth through the date of application for citizenship in accordance with rules set forth in the implementing regulations".

69. In 2019, there were 3,354 instances of persons being granted citizenship as part of a new wave of children of women citizens who met the criteria. The Cabinet submitted a package of decisions for the benefit of the children of women citizens, who are such an important part of the fabric of Emirati society. That included the issuance of work permits, in addition to allowing them to enrol in higher technical colleges on the same terms as their fellow citizen who are children of male citizens married to foreigners.

Article 10: Education

70. The United Arab Emirates devotes special attention to education and the cultivation of its human resources without discrimination on the basis of sex. In keeping with the State's belief in the importance of providing education to all, in 2012, the Council of Ministers approved a proposal for compulsory education at all levels for all children (females and males) in the country through the age of 18,

citizens and residents alike. The children of expatriates, whether female or male, receive the same support and privileges for the education of their children under conditions set by the Ministry of Education.

71. Female students in United Arab Emirates schools receive the same quality education as male students. The State makes every effort to provide all the resources needed to develop the educational environment in terms of quality and quantity. The United Arab Emirates follows a participatory approach, including brainstorming sessions led by the country's leadership to discuss innovative ideas in the field of education. Those sessions have been taken part in by several women representing various disciplines and sectors in the field of education and health. A number of female students have also taken part.

72. In 2016, the Ministry of Education was merged with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research into a single ministry called the "Ministry of Education". It was headed by the Minister of Education assisted by two ministers. A woman Minister of State for Public Education was appointed, and a large number of women leaders were appointed to take on positions and functions within the Ministry of Education.

73. Students of both sexes are treated equally at all levels of education in the State, including kindergarten, primary school, middle school and secondary school. The capacities of every age group are nurtured in classes containing both sexes. Standard assessment tools are used for individuals in the same class without regard to sex.

74. In 2016, the Ministry launched the "Emirati School" initiative, which focuses on bringing about a fundamental transformation in the content and form of education in the State. The Ministry aims to establish Emirati schools for both males and females on the basis of globally recognized specifications with the latest global curricula, so that students of both sexes can acquire advanced reasoning skills and be capable of constructive criticism, debate, analysis, thought and accurate decision-making. It is trying to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education and learning process and ensure that high quality educational outcomes are realized. Those outcomes should be reflected in the capacity of graduates of both sexes to enter the labour market in the public and private sectors alike and the ability of students to keep up with changes in the global labour market. The Ministry has also created four new educational tracks, which are as follows: general, advanced, professional and elite. Both sexes enrol in these tracks according to the affinities and talents of the student. No distinction is made between females and males. No track is assigned only to males.

75. The Ministry has worked hard to standardize educational materials and plans used in both male and female schools, consolidating content into three components: knowledge, values and skills. It uses examples and models that exhibit gender balance. It chooses drawings and pictures that show females and males equally without one sex predominating. It also selects a balance of texts, articles and content that treat scientific and human subject matter equally applicable to both sexes. Writers are chosen on the basis of quality of output without regard to sex.

76. With regard to persons with special needs (persons of determination), female students have access to the same services as male students. In 2018, some 5,469 female students were mainstreamed into public schools, compared to 7,217 males. Females in these schools receive the same services as male students.

77. Statistics indicate that in the academic year 2017–2018, there were 1263 public and private schools with 1,084,066 students at all levels of study. That is according to statistics from the data centre of the Ministry of Education for the year 2017–2018. The total number of students in public education at different levels of education was

298,142, of whom 51.9 per cent were female. The State also allows resident expatriate communities to set up their own schools.

78. The Ministry has implemented a National Innovation Strategy and has embraced the principles of entrepreneurship and enhancement of the scientific research and innovation capabilities of students and workers of both sexes. It has implemented a number of initiatives and programmes aimed at promoting and spreading a culture of innovation in education and guiding students towards future specializations without gender discrimination.

79. The formation of the most recent Cabinet included the appointment of a woman as Minister of State for Advanced Sciences as a model for girls. In April 2018, the Government of the United Arab Emirates launched the United Arab Emirates Advanced Sciences Agenda 2031 and its accompanying Advanced Science Strategy 2021. Both aim to employ the advanced sciences to develop and innovate solutions to future challenges and support the Government's efforts to achieve the goals of United Arab Emirates Vision 2021 and United Arab Emirates Centennial 2071 by supporting the sciences and sectors associated with science and technology outputs. That includes building national capacities in this field by encouraging citizens, female and male alike, to enrol in advanced scientific studies. Indicators published in the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council report, for example, indicate that girls make up 56 per cent of information technology, engineering and mathematics graduates.

80. The Cabinet's package of initiatives for women launched during its special session at the headquarters of the Women's General Union in December 2018 included the development of a policy proposal to promote the participation by Emirati women in the advanced sciences. Women's associations in the State organize training workshops to enhance women's innovation and creativity skills.

Article 11: Employment

81. The United Arab Emirates considers women to be strategic partners in development. It strives to create a supportive working environment for women. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Guide has been issued in collaboration with OECD to support the State's policies for increasing women's participation and ensuring equal opportunities with men.

82. A guardian's consent is not required to hire a woman under human resources laws regulating employment procedures. A woman going out to work is not considered a violation of due obedience to her husband.

83. Women make up 65 per cent of all workers in the Government sector. In 2018, women working in the federal government accounted for 44 per cent of all civilian jobs in the federal Government, 41 per cent of leadership positions, 69 per cent of educational and assistant educational positions, and 73 per cent of medical and assistant medical positions.⁸

84. Women contribute to the economic sector through their work in the private sector and entrepreneurship. The Gender Balance Council established by decision of the Council of Ministers works in accordance with the powers granted to it to ensure equal opportunities between women and men in all institutions.

85. The United Arab Emirates has attached great importance to the issue of the Emiratization by providing employment opportunities for its citizens of both sexes. In the fourth quarter of 2019, the Government approved the creation of 20,000 jobs

⁸ *Al-Khaleej* newspaper, 18/09/2018, <http://www.alkhaleej.ae/alkhaleej/page/91a2f48e-1de5-4481-9e08-ae7b55bb411e>.

in the banking, aviation, communications, insurance and real estate sectors over the next three years. A fund of 300 million dirhams has been approved to train 18,000 citizens. A portion of tax returns are allocated to support Emiratization by training 8,000 citizens annually in the private sector with government-subsidized compensation.

Women domestics

86. Federal Act No. 10 (2017) concerning domestic workers in the United Arab Emirates regulates the contractual relationship between domestic workers, recruitment offices and employers in accordance with international standards applied by the State to promote the values of equality and non-discrimination. The provisions of that Act are consistent with International Labour Organization Convention No. 189 and Recommendation 201 on decent work for domestic workers. Article 12 provides for the daily working hours and rest breaks of domestic workers. Daily breaks for such workers must amount to at least 12 hours per day, with one break of eight consecutive hours. The employer is obliged to sign an employment contract with the worker in accordance with the model adopted by the Ministry. The contract must be written in four copies, one of which is given to the worker and another to the employer. The third is deposited with the recruitment office and the fourth with the Ministry. Wages are to be determined as stipulated in the standard signed contract and paid within 10 days of their due date. Domestic workers have the right to paid weekly time off, and annual paid leave of 30 days.

87. The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation is currently considering including remittances and collection by domestic workers of their wages in the Wages Protection System. That system was established by Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation Decision No. 739 (2016), which requires all establishments registered with the Ministry to pay their employees' wages on their due date through the Wages Protection System. That provides a mechanism by which the Ministry can monitor and follow up on any wage discrimination.

88. Under the Domestic Workers Act, both male and female domestics can change employers legally and transfer to a new employer if their contract expires, if the two parties agree to end the contract, or if the contract is cancelled. The worker may then move to another employer with a new contract. Either of the two parties to the labour contract may cancel it unilaterally by going through the appropriate legal procedures. If the contract is cancelled by the employer for a reason not connected with the worker, the employer is required to provide the worker with a travel ticket to return to his country. He must also pay compensation equivalent to a month's wages and any other amounts owed to the worker by the employer plus any compensation awarded by the court. If the contract is cancelled by the worker for his own reasons after the six-month probationary period, the worker is responsible for the cost of returning to his country and must also pay compensation to the employer equivalent to a month's wages, any other amounts owed to the employer by the worker plus any compensation awarded by the court. In all cases of the employment relationship ending, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has the authority to grant the worker a new work permit in accordance with rules determined for such matters and bearing in mind the provisions in force in the State.

89. The Domestic Workers Act guarantees measures that provide domestic workers with protection against discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion or political opinion, as well as protection against sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical. It imposes deterrent penalties against violators while ensuring the same access to dispute resolution mechanisms available to workers in other sectors. Under the law, judicial police officers empowered by the Ministry of Human Resources and

Emiratisation have the right to inspect recruitment offices, workplaces and worker housing in the event of a complaint from the worker or an employer.

90. The Tadbeer centres have been established as centres licensed by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation. They are founded on the principle of partnership between the Government and the private sector to engage in mediation activities and to provide temporary employment for this category of workers by third parties. The Decision defines the nature of the services provided by the centres, the conditions of their licensing and the legal duties and conditions that must be adhered to.

91. The Tadbeer centres operate under the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation. They conduct the same activities as recruitment offices for domestic workers and have replaced them. To date, 14 Tadbeer centres have been launched; they are being operated in all the emirates and in various regions. The Tadbeer centres provide a range of services related to the requirements of recruitment and employment, starting with the appropriate employment visas, advice, guidance and appropriate training for domestic workers. They open a file for the client, issue work permits and contracts, renew and cancel them, give notice of separation from work with the option to withdraw such notice, and conduct all official activities related to issuance of documents for domestic workers. That includes medical exams, health insurance, identity cards and proof of residence. They also greet domestic workers upon their arrival in the State and ensure their comfort prior to going on to their place of work.

92. The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation recently put out a Guide for Domestic Workers. The Tadbeer centres were required to distribute it to domestic workers after they attended awareness workshops and training courses at which they were informed of their rights and obligations under the Act regulating domestic labour in the State. The Ministry set aside a toll-free number for calling the Ministry's communications centre in the event of that employers abuse them or threaten deportation because they demanded what was owed to them, or violate legal requirements.

93. Forced labour is prohibited and criminalized in the State. Article 3/3 of Federal Act No. 10 (2017) concerning domestic workers prohibits discriminating between workers or subjecting them to any practice involving forced labour or human trafficking. It also prohibits verbal or physical sexual harassment against domestic workers. The Act criminalizes such practices and provides in its article 30 for deterrent penalties against employers, recruitment offices or any perpetrators of such practices.

94. The Act prohibits any abuse by domestic workers of their employer or any of the employer's family members, which might be considered a violation of his rights and constitute grounds for terminating the employment contract. Neither the employer nor the Tadbeer centres have the right to force a domestic worker to do any work without his or her consent. Any threats to deport a domestic worker or withhold what he or she is owed is considered a crime punishable by law. If a domestic worker leaves his or her place of work, he or she must contact the Ministry within 48 hours to ensure access to another employment opportunity and avoid putting themselves in violation of the law (interruption of work).

Article 12: Health

95. The rate of birth under the care of a health practitioner rose to 99.9 per cent between the years 2006 and 2016.

96. Some 124 Government health centres and health units to care for mother and children have been established.

97. The Ministry of Health and Prevention, through its facilities, offers awareness-raising to all members of society about reproductive health, including awareness-raising for women during the pre-natal, childbirth, post-partum and pre-marital stages.

98. Legal and health regulations criminalize abortion except in certain cases. They include incest, rape and endangering the health of the mother. It should be noted that legislation medical liability legislation grants doctors discretion to perform abortions in the event that the pregnant woman's life is at risk or there is a fetal deformity. Health care is also available for all patients who turn up at the health centres and hospitals, and for emergency cases, without discrimination. That includes cases of abortion or miscarriage. In addition, legal and health regulations do not accuse women of abortion when pregnancy fails. On the contrary, health institutions provide the necessary health support in such cases to ensure the woman's health and safety.

99. Procedures for the recruitment of domestic workers require an employer to issue a health insurance card to every worker to complete the residency procedures. The law guarantees health care for domestic workers. The same superior health care services are provided to them as to any patient without discrimination by medical staff trained on the latest fundamentals and global practices.

100. Adolescents receive age-appropriate lessons through the School Education Guide for Family Health, which covers family planning and pregnancy, lessons on female and male puberty, and accompanying behaviours and practices.

101. The United Arab Emirates has seen qualitative jumps in various global health indicators:

(a) The State ranked number one globally in having the fewest health problems that prevent individuals from engaging in the same normal life activities as their peers, based on the results of the Gallup World Poll.

(b) The United Arab Emirates ranked number one in DPT triple vaccine coverage. That is an indicator that measures the number of children who receive three doses of the triple vaccine between the ages of 12 and 23 months. These conclusions appeared in Prosperity Index in the results of the latest Global Competitiveness Report.

(c) The United Arab Emirates is number one in the world in measles vaccine coverage. It has the highest percentage of children between the ages of 12 and 23 months who received vaccinations before 12 months.

(d) The United Arab Emirates is among the countries with the lowest incidence of HIV-AIDS among the adult population, according to World Bank statistical data,

(e) The United Arab Emirates ranked number one globally in having the lowest number of laboratory-confirmed cases of malaria cases per 1,000 people at risk, according to the latest World Health Organization statistics.

(f) According to the 2019 Global Talent Competitiveness Report, the United Arab Emirates ranked first in the world along with several other countries in sanitation coverage (both private and shared), which effectively prevents human, animal and insect contact with waste.

(g) The United Arab Emirates jumped from fifth to second place globally – behind Singapore – in health care satisfaction in the Gallup World Poll, which measures populations' satisfaction with the availability of quality health care in their city/region.

(h) The United Arab Emirates ranked best in the Gulf and eighth in the world in health infrastructure, according to the Executive Opinion Survey of the World Competitiveness Yearbook, which measures the availability of health facilities and resources for the population,

(i) The United Arab Emirates has the highest healthy life expectancy in the Gulf.

102. The Ministry of Health and Prevention and local health departments are diligent about providing comprehensive and innovative health services that meet international standards for women. The maternal mortality rate in the State is 2.05 per 100,000 live births.

Article 13: Economic and social participation

103. Attention to women's economic and social empowerment in the United Arab Emirates is very much on the Government's agenda. Women's participation in public sector jobs is over 66 per cent. They make up 25 per cent of the national labour force, 15 per cent of self-employed labour, and 30 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises. Women's savings amount to 50 billion dirhams. The proportion of women-owned businesses that exceed \$100,000 in earnings is 33 per cent.

104. The businesswomen's councils have developed strategic plans to support women's investment projects by establishing integrated and innovative business incubators. The role of incubators is being enhanced to support the concept of innovative entrepreneurship. That has included the launch of an online portal with an online guide on investment opportunities in entrepreneurship, training women how to make such investments and benefit from them, and the launch of the Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak International Award for Innovative Entrepreneurship.

105. Women's social empowerment is also among the priorities of institutions involved in social development at the federal and local levels. There are a number of active initiatives in that regard. Athletic clubs provide opportunities and encouragement for women to take part in national, regional and international competitions, including through the Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies' Sports Academy.

Article 14: Rural women

106. The United Arab Emirates takes care to ensure the quality of services provided to citizens and residents wherever they are. We note that the concept of rural areas is not applicable to our country due to environmental and geographical conditions. However, as a rule, the State has Government development and services agencies in remote areas, which today, given urbanization, are now integral parts of the major cities.

Article 15: Equality before the law

107. The legislative environment supporting women is one of the main pillars of women's empowerment in the United Arab Emirates. The Constitution provides for equality among citizens without discrimination on the basis of sex. It should be noted here that Emirati women enjoy full capacity to conclude commercial contracts and are financially independent.

108. We note that the General Women's Union, through its institutional partners, works to educate women about the rights and duties provided for by various legislation. The National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women 2015–2021 has a strategic objective that calls for periodic review of legislation to ensure that it keeps pace with the needs of women and guarantees them equality and protection.

109. Article 25 of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates provides that all individuals are equal before the law. There can be no discrimination among its citizens because of origin, nationality, religious belief or social status.

Article 16: Family relations

110. The Personal Status Code was amended in 2019. That included articles 30, 56, 71, 72, 75, 118, 120 and 121. Those amendments included making capacity for marriage contingent on being of sound mind, having reached maturity and being 18 years of age.

111. The Personal Status Code regulates the relationship between women and men in marriage and the family system. It tries to establish stable families by ensuring that both parties can handle the burdens of marriage with affection and compassion. Islamic law is the primary reference for that Code law in most matters. The Code contains a number of provisions guaranteeing women's rights, including the following:

(a) Article 18 provides that the dowry is to be returned in the event that one of the parties breaks off the engagement and causes harm to the other party. Article 50 provides that the dowry is the property of the bride, to dispose of as she wishes.

(b) Article 20 gives the woman the right to set conditions for the marriage contract.

(c) Article 39 states that even though there is a male guardian, the woman or girl's consent is required for a marriage contract. The women must sign the contract before a sharia marriage official to confirm her consent and approval, and to ascertain that the contract meets all the conditions set by the woman under article 20.

(d) Article 55 specifies the rights of the wife with respect to the husband. They include that he should provide her with upkeep, not prevent her from completing her education, not prevent her from visiting her ascendant and descendant relative and her siblings, not interfere with her personal assets, not harm her physically or morally, and treat her fairly with respect to his other wives if the husband has more than one wife.

(e) With regard to divorce, it is regulated by the Code, which takes into account the specifics of the woman's situation and grants her the right to ask for a divorce, and also gives the judge discretion to dissolve the marriage.

(f) Although article 156 specifies the age up to which the mother has the right to custody of the children, the article also provides that custody might be extended until the male or female reaches maturity or is married if the court considers that to be in the best interests of the child.

Data collection and analysis

112. The National Strategy for the Empowerment and Leadership of Women 2015–2021 includes the strategic objective of strengthening the capacity of Government (both federal and local) and private institutions to adopt gender-sensitive policies, legislation and budgets. In that regard, it stresses the importance of providing disaggregated statistics and indicators that reflect the needs of women in all segments of society.

113. The statistical agencies in the country collect and disaggregate data according to gender indicators. The Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority follows up with a view to improving the State's performance in a number of competitiveness reports, including with regard to the Gender Equality Index and the Sustainable

Development Goals indicators. In that regard, the State publishes 44 gender indicators relating to 11 global competitiveness reports. For more details, see Annex 2.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

114. The United Arab Emirates is represented by national women's mechanisms on women, such as the General Women's Union, which relied on the Beijing Platform in developing the National Strategy for Women's Empowerment. It provides periodic reports relating to the Platform. The State also makes efforts through the competent authorities to take part in specialized workshops on the Beijing Platform organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia or the Arab Women's Committee of the League of Arab States in order to benefit from experiences in implementing the Platform at the national level.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development

115. The National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Arab Emirates was formed by the decision of the Cabinet in January 2017. The Committee is chaired by Her Excellency Reem Bint Ibrahim Al Hashimi, Minister of State for International Cooperation. The Vice-Chairs are held by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre and the secretariat of the National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals. Committee members include the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and 15 Government agencies at the federal level. They all share responsibility for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, including those that have to do with women, and in particular Goal 5 on gender equality. The General Women's Union and the Gender Balance Council follow up on those efforts, and also produce the voluntary national review, which monitors progress on those goals. The State presented its first voluntary national review at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 16 July 2018, where it highlighted progress made on implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.⁹

Circulation

116. The State has published and circulated the Convention and the Concluding Observations to all the relevant institutions so that they can incorporate action programmes that contribute to implementing the Committee's recommendations into their operational plans. The Convention is published on the website of the General Women's Union.

Conclusion

117. The vision and strategy of the Government of the United Arab Emirates is based on the principle of looking ahead to the future and working to ensure the sustainability of achievements for future generations, including women, as enshrined in the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women.

118. The General Women's Union, in its capacity as the national women's empowerment mechanism, has established an electronic observatory to monitor implementation of the strategy so that it can become involved and coordinate with the relevant authorities to ensure that the desired performance is achieved within the required time frame in accordance with the highest standards. It should be noted here that the Women's Union, in cooperation with the Government accelerators

⁹ https://www.un.int/uae/statements_speeches/uaes-voluntary-national-review-un-high-level-political-forum-sustainable.

department, has launched a series of Government accelerators with the aim of accelerating implementation of certain strategic objectives, including the following:

- (a) Issuing a guide to procedures for operating shelters in accordance with international best practices to ensure the protection and care of women who might be subject to abuse, as well as stepping up preventive measures to reduce cases of abuse of all kinds;
- (b) Providing health services for mothers and children in populated and isolated areas;
- (c) Increasing necessary health services for female persons of determination;
- (d) Enforcing gender balance standards in various sectors.

119. The philosophy of the United Arab Emirates is continuous development by supporting Government efforts with innovative models and best practices. It develops flexible strategic plans that can be adapted to changing circumstances. It takes into account various future trends and challenges with a view making a qualitative leap in the system of legislation, policies and services provided to women. The Government of the United Arab Emirates works hard in cooperation with national women's mechanisms to continuously develop the system of legislation, policies and services provided to women. It should be noted that the State has announced that 2020 will be the year of preparations for the coming 50 years, which will no doubt include the empowerment of women.

Annexes

Annex I

Partners involved in the preparation of the report

| Federal Ministries | National machinery for the advancement of women |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation 2. Ministry of the Interior, Human Rights Department 3. Minister of Community Development 4. Ministry of Justice 5. Ministry of Education 6. Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs 7. Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development 8. Ministry of Youth 9. Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation 10. Ministry of Health and Prevention | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Women's Union 2. United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council 3. Shelters for victims of trafficking in persons 4. Dubai Foundation for Women and Children 5. Family Development Foundation 6. The Dubai Foundation for Women 7. Aman Shelter for Women and Children |
| Federal and local authorities | Civil society organizations (during the consultative process) |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre 2. Central Bank 3. General Sports Authority 4. Justice Department 5. Knowledge and Human Development Authority, Dubai 6. Community Development Authority, Dubai 7. Dubai Health Authority 8. Federal Authority for Government Human Resources 9. National Media Council 10. National Consultative Council | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Emirates Human Rights Association 2. Dubai Women's Association 3. Sharjah Women's Union 4. Umm Al Moumineen Association, Ajman 5. Umm al-Qaywayn Women's Association 6. Nahdah Women's Association, Ra's al-Khaymah |

Annex II

Women's empowerment indicators for the United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates believes that women are strategic partners in development. In keeping with that belief, one of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women for 2015–2021 is to increase women's participation, quantitatively and qualitatively, in various areas and women's representation in positions of power and decision-making. Accordingly, the State has taken several measures to ensure the effective participation of women in political and public life, including, inter alia, the following:

(a) The Gender Balance Council was established in 2015 with the aim of ensuring that men and women have equal opportunities to participate in the sustainable development process, realize the vision of the State and influence gender-balance issues at the local, regional and international levels. The country has been ranked first among Arab countries and 26th internationally in respect of gender equality (attached are some relevant electronic publications).

(b) The number of women ministers in the Cabinet has increased to nine, or 29.5 per cent of all Cabinet ministers, while the number of women in other leadership positions has also increased.





Annex III



Annex IV

Competitiveness indicators for the State in certain sectors

The United Arab Emirates has been ranked first in several gender indicators that were published in various international reports. Following are the most significant of those statistical indicators, which are monitored regularly. The Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre produces 44 international indicators to measure the country's competitiveness in several areas. The following illustration shows the number of State-produced gender-related indicators that are used in international reports.



The United Arab Emirates was ranked first in several global reports in the period 2017–2018.

| Report | Year of issuance | Indicator |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Global Human Capital Report | 2017 | Secondary education enrolment gender gap (under 15) |
| Legatum Prosperity Index report | 2018 | Gender-equality of property rights |
| Global Gender Gap Report | 2018 | Sex ratio at birth |

The United Arab Emirates was ranked first regionally and fifth at the international level in an index of the most competitive countries in the world, ahead of such countries as the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. It rose 23 rankings in the 2019 Global Competitiveness Yearbook report published by the International Institute for Management Development (Lausanne, Switzerland), one of the world's leading specialized institutions in this field.

Annex V

Summary of the family protection policy

سياسة حماية الأسرة

Detailed summary about the family protection policy

تستهدف السياسة الحفاظ على سلامة وكيان الأسرة باعتبارها اللبنة الأولى للمجتمع: حيث تخدم بشكل خاص المرأة والطفل والمسن والرجل وأصحاب الهمم لحمايتهم جميعاً من العنف والإيذاء بشتى أشكاله

The policy aims to preserve the integrity and well-being of the family as the first building block of society, it specifically serves women, children, the elderly, men and people of determination to protect them all from violence and abuse in all its forms

المحاور الرئيسية في السياسة

Main themes of the policy

تنظم السياسة إجراءات وآليات العمل في المؤسسات العاملة في مجال العنف الأسري

The policy regulates the procedures and mechanisms of work in institutions working in the field of domestic violence

الدراسات والبحوث والإحصائيات

Studies, research, and statistics



تعزيز التكامل والشراكات بين قطاعات الدولة المختلفة

Enhancing the integration and partnerships between different sectors of the country

تطوير التشريعات والقوانين لحماية الأسرة

Developing legislation and laws to protect the family

التدريب النوعي للعاملين

Qualitative training for workers

السياسة الوطنية للأسرة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

National Family Policy in the United Arab Emirates

أسرة إماراتية متماسكة مسؤولة تنعم بالاستقرار في ظل الحياة المعاصرة

A cohesive, responsible Emirati family that enjoys stability in a contemporary life

Annex VI

United Arab Emirates institutions for the protection of women



Annex VII

38/43

حقوق عمال الخدمة المساعدة

Rights of Domestic workers

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| إجازة سنوية مدفوعة الأجر مدتها 30 يوماً A 30-day paid annual leave | يوم واحد للراحة أسبوعياً، مدفوع الأجر One day rest per week, paid | الأجر/الراتب في غضون 10 أيام Wages/ salary within 10 days |
| إجازة طبية مدتها 30 يوماً في السنة A medical leave of 30 days per year |  | ألا تقل الراحة اليومية للعامل عن اثنتي عشرة ساعة The daily rest of the worker must not be less than twelve hours |
| مكان لائق للسكن A decent place to live | | توفير التأمين الطبي على نفقة صاحب العمل Providing medical insurance at the employer's expense |
| الملابس اللازمة لأداء العمل، إن لزم Clothes necessary to perform the work, if necessary | | تذكرة سفر على نفقة صاحب العمل مرة كل سنتين A travel ticket at the employer's expense every two years |
| خيار التقدم بشكوى لدى الوزارة The option to file a complaint with the Ministry | | حيازة المستندات الشخصية الثبوتية Possession of supporting personal documents |
| | | وجبات طعام لائقة على نفقة صاحب العمل Decent meals at the employer's expense |

Annex VIII

Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation initiatives to educate domestic workers

Guide for domestic workers

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation published the guide for domestic workers in 2018. The guide includes information that all domestic workers must be aware of before travelling to the United Arab Emirates in order to work.¹⁰ This guide consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, workers are informed of their work-related rights and obligations, how they can guarantee enjoyment of those rights and what they must do to fulfil their obligations. This chapter contains advice for workers before traveling and entering the country, as well as information about the working environment, living conditions, climate and social habits in the United Arab Emirates, the Labour Code, work contracts and related rights, how complaints are handled and the authorities to which workers can turn in case they need to file a complaint. The second chapter covers the rights and obligations of domestic workers vis-à-vis their employers and recruitment offices with regard to wages, weekly and daily rest, annual leave, cash allowances, travel tickets, sick leave and end-of-service payments. The third chapter addresses the procedures that must be followed if domestic workers encounter any problems, such as failure to meet residency requirements, and provides additional advice in that regard.

The Tadbeer app

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation is developing the Tadbeer app, which will be available for Android and iOS devices. The app will allow users to search for Tadbeer centres and obtain information on ways of getting in touch and the various types of domestic work. Workers and employers will be able to file complaints through the app, which will also enable users to create, renew and cancel work contracts and permits. The app sends alerts and guidance to workers and employers, and users will be able to obtain answers to any questions they might have regarding administrative procedures and regulations.

Smart Guidance Initiative

Launched in 2015, the Smart Guidance device is the first remote smart device to provide guidance and deliver legal information in a simple and accessible way to workers at all levels. The devices are placed in locations frequented by workers across the country, including airports and the preventive medicine centres operated by the Ministry of Health and Prevention. They have also been installed on Sa'diyat Island. The devices have a touch screen and are connected to the Internet. Workers, after entering their personal data or swiping their identification cards, can use the devices to watch a 20-minute video that provides a wealth of information, in a language they understand, regarding their rights and obligations. The video is available in eight languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Chinese, Malayalam, Filipino and Vietnamese. When the worker has finished reading the provisions of the law and watching the video, the device prints a certificate indicating that the user has completed the electronic training. The device recognizes the name of the worker and the company for which he/she works by checking the user's passport or worker number, or by reading the user's identification card.

The devices have helped educate many workers' about their rights and duties pursuant to the Labour Code and the country's regulations. Approximately 28,800

¹⁰ The Arabic and English versions of the guide are attached.

workers have obtained a Smart Guidance certificate since the launch of the initiative. The Smart Guidance devices have saved Guidance Office inspectors time and effort. Previously, inspectors had to use a report generated by the labour market regulatory authority in order to search for the company that was sponsoring the new workers. The inspector would then have to visit the facility and educate the workers in the language spoken by the inspector. The device, on the other hand, allows the user to choose a language from among those that are typically spoken by workers, thereby making it easier to receive information clearly and directly.

Know Your Rights initiative

The Know Your Rights initiative was launched in order to educate workers arriving in the United Arab Emirates through the airports of Dubai. The first phase began in February 2016, with the Minister of Labour greeting arriving workers on the first day of the campaign at a Ministry of Labour kiosk. Following are some of the activities that have been carried out as part of the initiative:

(a) Guides in five languages (Arabic, English, Hindi, Urdu and Malayalam) have been distributed to workers. The guides include legal advice that is useful to workers before and after they reach the country. Workers are made aware of their work-related rights and responsibilities, and they are provided with guidance on the procedures that must be followed if they want to terminate their contracts or if a labour dispute arises and instructions on how to change employers. The Arabic and English versions of the Know Your Rights Campaign guide are attached.

(b) Information about the Smart Guidance device is displayed on digital signs at the airport.

(c) As part of the programme to educate workers who are leaving their countries, the relevant actors communicate with the authorities and agencies that provide guidance to workers in source countries in order to familiarize them with the labour market management policies that were developed recently by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

(d) Some 17,000 copies of the guide were distributed to officials of the various source-country ministries responsible for safeguarding the rights of expatriate workers who participated in the meetings of senior officials at the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in May 2018.

Educational workshops for employers organized in cooperation with the General Women's Union in 2017

The Guidance Department of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, in cooperation with the General Women's Union, organized an educational workshop for 139 employers (heads of household) on the roles of the family and domestic workers and how they complemented each other. Participants were reminded of the importance of the family and the fact that it is the cornerstone of every society. In addition, participants were given an explanation of the role of domestic workers in the home; shown some short awareness-raising videos on good treatment of domestic workers and erroneous behaviour towards them; educated about rights and responsibilities; given an overview of employment centres and the services that they provide and an introduction to the new Domestic Worker Act; had their questions answered; and given an introduction to the smart app.

Training of domestic workers at the Tadbeer Centres

The Guidance Department conducted the first training workshop for domestic workers at the Tadbeer centres, with a view to educating them about the customs and

traditions of Emirati society, and their legal rights and obligations under the Domestic Workers Act (No. 10) of 2017. The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has provided training and education at Tadbeer centres to domestic workers on that Act. A total of 1,453 workers were trained over three months in 2018.

Workshops for call centres

The domestic worker departments of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation conducted an introductory workshop for staff members of the Ministry's call centres for domestic workers. Participants were familiarized with the various types of domestic work and the requirements of each, such as the price list, the requirements for domestic professions and the documents required for each type. In addition, they were given information about the various stages of the application process and an explanation of the mechanism for receiving complaints, with an emphasis on the need to obtain essential information from the client/complainant, such as the domestic worker's name, date of unemployment, salary, the employer's request and the name of the recruitment office. A presentation was given on some of the complaints received by the call centre that was followed by a discussion of legal issues and a question/answer period. Finally, it was announced that the domestic worker app had been launched and was available in app stores.

Cooperation between the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation and the Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities of Dubai in 2018

Over a six-month period in 2018, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, in collaboration with the Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities of Dubai, developed an awareness-raising plan that included various educational activities aimed at employers.



دائرة الشؤون الإسلامية والعمل الخيري
Islamic Affairs & Charitable Activities Department



إدارة التثقيف والتوجيه الديني
Edification And Religious Guidance Department

| المسؤول عن تنفيذ النشاط | مكان النشاط | تاريخ النشاط | نوع النشاط | عنوان النشاط |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| د. قطب عبد الحميد قطب | مساجد إمارة دبي | 15/6/2018 | خطبة جمعة (الخطبة الثانية) | أحسن إلى خادمك |
| الوعاظ + المرشدات | مساجد إمارة دبي | 4/7/2018 | ندوة دينية | معاملة الخدم والعمالة المساعدة في ضوء الإسلام |
| د. قطب عبد الحميد قطب | توزيع عن طريق وزارة الموارد البشرية | 30/8/2018 | مطوية إرشادية | إليك أيها الخادم (رسالة توجيهية) |
| الوعاظ والأخصائيون | المدارس والجامعات والدوائر الحكومية | 2-3/9/2018 | محاضرات عامة | صور مضيئة من معاملة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم للخدم |
| الشيخ / عبد الله موسى | وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي | 5/9/2018 | مقطع مرئي | صور مضيئة من معاملة الصحابة للخدم |
| الوعاظ | مساجد إمارة دبي | 1-4/10/2018 | دروس المساجد | آداب قرآنية ونبوية في معاملة الخدم والعمالة المساعدة |
| الشيخ/عبد الرحمن الملا الشيخ / عبد الله موسى | طلاب المدارس | 1/11/2018 | ورشة توعوية | كيف نعامل الخدم والعمالة المساعدة |
| الشيخ / محمد حسن الطاهر | توزيع عن طريق وزارة الموارد البشرية | 16/12/2018 | كتيب | فتاوى في التعامل مع الخدم والعمالة المساعدة |

Strengthening international cooperation and information-sharing with countries of origin

The United Arab Emirates participates in the Abu Dhabi Dialogue process. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue was launched in 2008 as a forum for dialogue and cooperation among the Asian countries that are sources of workers and the countries that receive

those workers. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue is a voluntary consultative mechanism, the work of which is guided by its member States. Its membership consists of seven Asian countries that receive temporary migrant workers (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia) and 11 Asian source countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam). Representatives of the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the private sector and civil society also participate as observers. The United Arab Emirates serves as the permanent secretariat of the Dialogue, which is currently chaired by Sri Lanka.

Bilateral agreements

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, when it participates in bilateral meetings with States and in the work of bilateral negotiating committees, has redoubled its efforts to promote what the State has done to protect workers' rights and the proactive role that it has played in protecting workers' rights from being violated in any way. The Ministry is negotiating memorandums of understanding with source countries that will strengthen bilateral relations with regard to labour and migrant workers. Laws and regulations have been outlined in those memorandums of understanding. The negotiating parties form joint technical committees that are responsible for seeing that the memorandum of understanding enters into effect and that the procedures relating to worker transfer are improved. At these bilateral meetings, information on the number of migrant workers is exchanged and the most significant issues that such workers face in the United Arab Emirates are discussed. Following are some of the measures taken by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, acting through its Bilateral International Relations Department, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

(a) In order to ensure that foreign workers coming to the country are not are not victimized by recruitment agencies in source countries that employ deceptive practices or offer fictitious work contracts, the Bilateral International Relations Department holds consultations with source countries and strives to ensure that they have adopted the standard contract that was developed for workers, whether they are employed by the private sector or as domestic workers. The Department makes every effort to ensure that memorandums of understanding contain clauses which provide that the United Arab Emirates and source countries must cooperate in order to ensure that employment agencies in both countries commit to using the standard contract.

(b) Memorandums of understanding concerning private sector workers and cooperation protocols concerning domestic workers are drafted so as to ensure that the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, which is responsible for regulating the labour market in the country, and the authorities responsible for regulating the labour market in the source countries take effective measure to establish electronic links with each other, with a view to ensuring that both sides monitor the recruitment and hiring processes and ensure that all actors comply with the law. A clause has been added which provides that the two States must cooperate with each other and implement joint programmes in order to ensure that workers are not subject to any form of discrimination or exploitation and that their rights are not violated. In addition, these memorandums pave the way for the development of a binding legal framework that regulates the relationship between employment agencies in the source country and employment agencies in the United Arab Emirates through the conclusion of contracts between them. In both countries, only agencies that comply with the law can engage in recruitment activities. To that end, source countries must provide information on authorized and licensed employment agencies, so as to facilitate the conclusion of contracts with those agencies, in accordance with memorandum of understanding signed by the countries, and prevent agencies that

violate the law or are unlicensed from engaging in recruitment. The United Arab Emirates allows source countries and the Governments of countries that have signed memorandums of understanding or cooperation protocols with it to peruse job offers and employment contracts through open data that are available on the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation website.
