



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention

Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2004

United Arab Emirates* **

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.
** The annex can be consulted in the files of the secretariat.

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Introduction¹

1. The State of the United Arab Emirates joined the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 11 November 1997. On 31 May 2002, it submitted its first report, which appears in CRC/C/78/Add.2. The present report covers the period of 2002 to 2012. It was prepared in the framework of the United Arab Emirates' implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child pursuant to the guidelines issued on 23 November 2010 regarding the form and content of periodic reports to be submitted by States parties under article 44, paragraph 1 (b), of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, National Statistics Centre and other federal and local institutions and public welfare associations collaborated in preparing the present report. They did so in coordination with the Department of Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to produce the final version of the report according to the procedures of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

3. The present report takes into account the concluding remarks prepared by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 7 June 2002, which appeared in document CRC/C/15/Add.183. The authorities concerned with children in United Arab Emirates continue to strengthen protection of the rights of the child by enacting national legislation, updating strategies concerning the child and strengthening institutional structures. The Government of the Emirates is keen to ensure that domestic legislation on the rights of the child in each emirate remains consistent with federal legislation and international standards in this regard. The Federal Government is the authority with primary responsibility for implementing all national legislation and international conventions to which the State accedes.

4. The present report presents key achievements and measures adopted by the Government of the Emirates during 2002-2012 in the area of children's rights, including the most important national mechanisms established by the Government to strengthen and protect children's rights in different areas. The present report also explains key initiatives and best practices developed by the Government of the Emirates to ensure the fulfilment of its international obligations in the area of children's rights in particular and to highlight the record of its achievements in strengthening and protecting human rights in general.

Section I – National context

The State of the United Arab Emirates

5. The United Arab Emirates was established on 2 December 1971 as a federation of states, which include Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.

1. Location

6. The United Arab Emirates occupies an area located on the Asian continent in the eastern portion of the Arabian Peninsula between 22°50' and 26°N and 51° and

¹ A special annex of explanatory tables and statistics was prepared according to the guidelines issued for this purpose.

56°25'E. It is bounded by the Arab Gulf in the north, by the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the west, by the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the south and by the Gulf of Oman in the east.

2. Area and topography

7. The total area of the State is 83,600 square kilometres. Most of the land, particularly in the western interior areas, consists of desert interspersed with several well-known oases – such as Ain and Liwa, which is located about 20 km west of Ain and now includes more than 60 new cities – in addition to fertile pastureland around Zafrah, where groundwater is plentiful. To the south of these areas lie sand dunes that form the boundary of al-Rub‘al-Khalil (the Empty Quarter).

8. Mt. Hafit marks the southern boundary of the Buraimi Oasis, where the city of Ain is found, and is approximately 1 220 metres high. In addition, the Hajar mountain range, which is 80 kilometres long from north to south and approximately 32 kilometres wide, cuts across the Musandam Peninsula, then enters the Sultanate of Oman and runs down to the eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The city of Ras al-Khaimah stands at the foot of the northern flanks of this range, which reach an altitude of around 2 438 metres at their highest point. On the western flanks are a number of large valleys and ridges, some of which are used for agriculture.

9. The State has hundreds of islands scattered in the waters of the Gulf, including 200 islands in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the most important of which are: the island of Sir Bani Yas, which has been transformed into a green oasis of forests and fruit trees of various types and a nature preserve for wildlife and rare birds; the island of Dalma, which is famous for its ancient past and is a centre of pearl oyster diving; the island of Umm al-Nar, which is a key oil facility in the State; the island of Das in Abu Dhabi, which is considered the fortress of the oil industry; and the island of Abu al-Abyad, which is the largest of the islands and located about 100 km west of the capital, Abu Dhabi. The islands of Abu Musa and Sir Bunair are in Sharjah. The islands of the Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Hamra’ are in Ras al-Khaimah, and the island of Siniyah is in Umm al-Qaiwain.

3. Climate

10. The United Arab Emirates is in the tropical dry zone extending across Asia and North Africa. It is also affected by local environmental factors because of its position on the shores of the Arabian Gulf and of the Gulf of Oman, which is linked to the Red Sea through the Mandeb Straits.

11. High summer temperatures are associated with high humidity rates, and there are marked differences in climate between the coastal, inner desert and mountainous zones which together make up the topography of the State. The State is buffeted by seasonal and non-seasonal winds of two different kinds, which pick up strength in the spring and late summer. It receives little rainfall, and in variable quantities, between November and April.

4. Population

12. The composition of the United Arab Emirates’ population is of special note. Population growth is affected significantly by economic factors, especially in periods of accelerating booms, as in 2005-2010. The population of the State rose from 2.4 million in 1995 to 4.1 million in 2005 according to the 2005 general

population census. By end-2009, the population totalled an estimated 8 199 996 persons according to official estimates issued by the National Bureau of Statistics based on data of the administrative registers of official State sources.

5. General framework of the political system

13. The United Arab Emirates was established on 2 December 1971 as a federation of states – Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al Khaimah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.

14. The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates defines the goals and basic structures of the Federation. It states that the Federation exercises its sovereignty throughout the territory and territorial waters inside the international borders of the member Emirates, while the member Emirates exercise sovereignty in their territories and territorial waters over all matters for which the Federation does not have competence under the Constitution. The people of the Federation are one people and are part of the Arab nation. Islam is the official religion of the Federation and Arabic is the official language.

15. The Constitution defines the division of powers between the federal and the local authorities. Article 120 sets out the legislative and executive powers of the federal authorities, while article 121 defines the legislative functions which are exclusive to the federal authorities. Other functions are carried out by the member Emirates.

Constitutional institutions

16. The federal authorities comprise:

- Supreme Council of the Federation: This is the highest authority in the State and consists of the rulers of all the Emirates comprising the Federation or the alternates of the rulers in the event of a ruler's absence. Each Emirate has one vote in Council proceedings. The Supreme Council of the Federation formulates general policy on all issues for which the Federation has responsibility and considers all matters pertaining to the furtherance of the Federation's goals and the mutual interests of the member Emirates.
- President and Vice-President of the Federation: The Supreme Council of the Federation elects the President and Vice-President from among its members. Under the Constitution, the President of the Federation discharges a number of functions, most importantly: presiding over the Supreme Council of the Federation and guiding its deliberations; signing federal laws, decisions and decrees that are approved and promulgated by the Supreme Council; appointing the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federation, as well as Government ministers, accepting their resignation and releasing them from their duties upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister of the Federation. The Vice-President of the Federation exercises all the powers of the President when the latter is absent for any reason.
- Federal Cabinet: It consists of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and a number of ministers. In its capacity as an executive organ of the Federation, and subject to supreme oversight by the President of the Federation and the Supreme Council, the Cabinet deals with all internal and external affairs for which the Federation has competence under the

Constitution and federal law. It performs a number of particular functions, most importantly: following up on the implementation of the Federal Government's general domestic and foreign policy; proposing draft federal laws and transmitting them to the Federal National Council; preparing the draft federal budget and overseeing the implementation of federal laws and decisions, as well as the international treaties and conventions to which the State is a party.

- **Federal National Council:** The Council consists of 40 members from the member Emirates with seats assigned as follows: Abu Dhabi: 8; Dubai: 8; Sharjah: 6; Ras al-Khaimah: 6; Ajman: 4; Umm al-Qaiwain: 4; and Fujairah: 4. Draft federal laws, including finance bills, are submitted to the Federal National Council before being transmitted to the President of the Federation for presentation to the Supreme Council for ratification. The Government informs the National Council of the international treaties and conventions which it signs with other States and various international organizations, and it provides The National Council with relevant background information. The Federal National Council may debate and make recommendations on any general subject relating to federal affairs.
- **Federal judiciary:** Article 94 of the Constitution stipulates that justice is the foundation of Government, the judiciary is independent, and judges are subject to no authority other than the law and their own conscience in discharging their duties. The federal court system consists of federal courts of first instance and federal appeal courts with diverse responsibilities for civil, commercial, criminal, administrative and sharia cases. In addition, the Federal Supreme Court, consisting of a president and a number of justices appointed by a decision of the President of the Federation, following approval by the Supreme Council, discharges a number of functions as assigned to it under article 99 of the Constitution, including: verifying the constitutionality of federal laws, interpreting the Constitution; and hearing cases concerning offences that bear directly on the interests of the Federation.

In addition to the federal courts, the United Arab Emirates has local courts, as provided in article 104 of the Constitution, which states: "Local judicial bodies in each Emirate shall have jurisdiction over all legal matters which are not assigned to the federal courts under the Constitution." The local courts apply the Constitution, federal laws and local laws which are not incompatible with the Constitution and federal laws. The local courts operate on three levels - first instance, appeal and cassation - without prejudice to the functions vested in the Federal Supreme Court under the Constitution. According to the Constitution, the Prosecutor-General of the Federation is the head of the Federal Prosecutions Department, which prosecutes offences under the Federal Criminal Code and Federal Code of Criminal Procedures.

6. Economic and social indicators

17. The development policy which the United Arab Emirates has adopted has resulted in high growth rates in all economic and social sectors. Gross domestic product rose from 599 billion dirhams in 2006 to 977.3 billion dirhams in 2010. The nonoil sectors' GDP share totalled 670.5 billion dirhams in 2010. Per capita GDP at the State level rose from 147 thousand dirhams in 2006 to 196.1 thousand dirhams in 2008. Per capita share of GDP (nonoil) rose from 56.6 thousand dirhams in 2001

to 123.8 thousand dirhams in 2008, which points to the success of the State's income source diversification policy.

18. Since its inception, the United Arab Emirates has experienced rapid economic and social growth such as is rarely achieved in developing or even advanced, societies. It has used its growing revenue from oil sales to supply the basic needs of society. The State has positively impacted the international community through its generous donations of aid and assistance to Arab States and other developing countries across the world. Following are some of the State's most important achievements:

- The establishment of a majority of the existing infrastructure projects;
- The establishment of educational and health institutions and the delivery of educational, health, social and cultural services;
- The procurement of production and investment materials and equipment for the creation of different types of industries;
- The enactment of laws and regulations and the creation of a modern structure for the administration of the State;
- The enactment of a flexible policy to facilitate recruitment of foreign labour and supply the necessary manpower to meet the requirements of different development projects;
- The use of modern technologies tailored to the real needs of the State;
- The encouragement of women's participation in the workforce and in development efforts;
- The creation of channels for economic, commercial, political and cultural cooperation with the outside world in furtherance of the mutual interests of the State and of friendly and fraternal States and peoples.

19. The United Arab Emirates pursues a liberal economic policy which is based on free trade, commercial exchange and the free flow of capital and services. This policy is geared towards developing the national economy and diversifying income sources. The Emirates also seeks to achieve balanced economic and social development for the State as a whole and in each member Emirate of the Federation, endeavouring to strike a balance between social development and economic growth. As a result of its development policies, the United Arab Emirates is among the leading countries of the world. The 2011 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme gave the State a positive ranking, placing it in thirtieth position out of the 187 States covered by the report and first among the Arab states. The report shows that the State has achieved real progress in respect of the Human Development Index's measure of gender equality, obtaining thirty-eighth place worldwide in respect of the Women's Empowerment Index. The report also shows that the State enjoys a high standard of living in general and that the incidence of poverty and deprivation has fallen to a record low, while adult literacy rates have risen. The advances made in health services are clearly reflected in all the health indicators, pointing, for example, to a fall in the infant and under-5 mortality rates, a decline in the percentage of babies with low birth weight and a decline in the maternal mortality rate. The number of children over the age of 1 who have been fully vaccinated against tuberculosis and measles has risen, and the

number of physicians per 1 000 of the population has likewise risen. The report points to an increase in expenditure on healthcare services in 2010 to 33.7 billion dirhams.

20. Regarding education, the State has made considerable efforts and has continued to increase his expenditures on education, whereby 16.5 per cent or 7.2 billion dirhams comprising total budgetary allocations for 2010 is allocated to education. There have also been major quantitative and qualitative improvements in landline and mobile telecommunications and in Internet use thanks to the growing development and expansion of services.

7. The Emirates and international indices

21. Following are the rankings of the Emirates in a number of international indices:

- a. Human Development Report: In The Human Development Report for 2011, the United Arab Emirates ranked first in the Arab world and thirtieth among 187 countries. It ranked thirty-eighth in the Women's Empowerment Index.
- b. Gender Equality Index: The United Arab Emirates was ranked first in the Arab world in the Gender Equality Index published by the World Economic Forum in 2011.
- c. Happiness and satisfaction index: The United Arab Emirates was ranked first in the Arab world and seventeenth in the world in the 2012 report on the first United Nations Survey of Happiness and Satisfaction among Nations.
- d. Rule of Law Index: The United Arab Emirates was ranked first in the Arab and Middle East region and thirteenth in the world in the index on the rule of law and judicial transparency (2011) developed by the World Justice Project.
- e. Index on transparency and combating corruption: The United Arab Emirates was ranked second in the Middle East and North Africa region in the 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index developed by Transparency International and was ranked twenty-eighth in the world, out of 183 countries listed, which was a step higher than its ranking in 2010.
- f. Competitiveness Index: The United Arab Emirates was ranked fifth in the world on the indicator of Government efficiency, which is a sub-index in the Global Competitiveness Report of 2011–2012 published by the World Economic Forum.
- g. Network readiness index: the Global Information Technology Report of 2011-2012 ranks the United Arab Emirates third in network readiness among the Arab countries and thirtieth among the 142 countries listed.

8. Cultural and social framework

22. The United Arab Emirates uses oil wealth for social development consistent with the principles on which the State was founded, as stated in the general development goals for 1974, namely, that people in the Emirates must be the beneficiaries of development and social services. As a result of this policy, the State

has succeeded in helping its people escape the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and disease and has improved their economic and social welfare. This policy has facilitated a high average income, developed remote areas, established social guarantees and provided citizens with free services inter alia in the areas of education, health, housing, culture, sanitation and infrastructure.

23. As a result of various developments, family life in the Emirates has changed significantly over the past few years with the shift from Bedouin and nomadic life to a more sedentary existence and the shift from extended families to nuclear families. The roles played by men and women in society have continued to evolve based on the complementarity of their respective roles and responsibilities, as men and women have different responsibilities and duties towards the family and society.

24. A number of social phenomena have arisen within Emirati society under the influence of developments in the State, openness to various media offerings, the information and technology revolution and the foreign labourers required by the labour market to meet economic development needs. That notwithstanding, Emiratis constantly strive to combine the new with the well-established. Individuals and institutions in the Emirates constantly research and study these phenomena to evaluate their pros and cons and to develop them consistent with the State's values and its social and cultural legacy.

9. The State's foreign aid and contributions

25. The World Bank estimates there are 95 developing countries in the world. During 1993-2009, the United Arab Emirates provided foreign aid for infrastructure development in remote areas, food security, the delivery of the right to education, health-care services, humanitarian assistance and access to clean water and sanitation. The United Arab Emirates contributed 2 029 242 820 dirhams in foreign aid to 51 countries representing 53.7 per cent of the world's developing countries.

26. The sectors targeted by the eighth Millennium Development Goal include basic education, primary health care, nutrition and water and sanitation. Emirati foreign aid for these sectors totalled 1 115 042 989 dirhams.

27. In addition, in 2007, the United Arab Emirates launched the largest ever charitable campaign to support education. The "Dubai Giving Campaign" supports children's education in the Middle East, Asia and Africa by providing basic education opportunities to needy children. This initiative seeks to strengthen the humanitarian aspect of education and to reflect positive concern for the children of the world who are living below the poverty line. The campaign operates in coordination with UNICEF and has provided assistance to 7 million children in 28 countries in the five years since it was launched.

28. In 2008, the Noor Dubai campaign was launched. It is a charitable initiative to combat and treat blindness and treatable low-vision. The initiative seeks to treat various eye diseases, especially in children, and to restore the blessing of vision through the efforts of a medical team specialized in performing surgical operations at no cost for the needy on different continents of the world.

Section II – National measures to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child

I. General measures of implementation (articles 4, 42 and 44, paragraph 6, of the Convention)

A. General legal framework and the protection established for rights and freedoms

29. The Constitution of the State of the United Arab Emirates is the primary source for all laws promulgated in the State to regulate the relationships of individuals and institutions in the State and for the promulgation by the federal and local authorities of laws regulating various civil, commercial, criminal and judicial domains. The State has been keen to join regional and international organizations and to ratify a number of international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well the following for example:

- a. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1997).
- b. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- c. International Labour Organization Convention 111 (1958) concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.
- d. International Labour Organization Convention 130 (1973) concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.
- e. International Labour Organization Convention 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

30. Article 125 of the Constitution stipulates the following: “The Governments of the Emirates shall take the appropriate measures to implement the federal laws and the international treaties and conventions concluded by the UAE, including the enactment of the local laws, regulations, decisions and orders necessary for such implementation. The federal authorities may supervise the implementation by the governments of the Emirates of federal laws and decisions, international treaties and conventions and federal court judgments. The competent administrative and judicial authorities in the Emirates shall provide to the federal authorities all possible assistance in this connection.”

31. In its final report appearing in CRC/C/15/Add.183, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child urges the Government of United Arab Emirates to make every effort to implement the recommendations contained in the committee’s concluding observations on the initial report of the Emirates, specifically regarding the following issues: reservations, the mechanism for international coordination and cooperation, and juvenile justice. The present report addresses these concerns in the relevant sections below.

B. The United Arab Emirates’ reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

32. The State of the United Arab Emirates has complied with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child since joining the Convention on

15 December 1996 while expressing the following reservations to several articles of the Convention that conflict with national legislation:

- a. The State expressed a reservation to article 7 concerning the registration of a child in the child's name immediately after the child's birth and the right to acquire nationality. It did so, because the State regards the acquisition of nationality as an internal matter regulated by the rules and conditions laid down in its national legislation. However this does not diminish the rights of the child, because a child in the State of the United Arab Emirates, from the time of the child's birth, is registered and granted a birth certificate by the Ministry of Health, which also grants the child residency based on sponsorship of the child's parents if the parents lack Emirati nationality. The child also enjoys primary health care.
- b. The State expressed a reservation to article 14 of the Convention concerning freedom of thought and religion, because the article conflicts with the principles of the Islamic sharia. Freedom to profess a religion and to worship is available to all. No child in the United Arab Emirates is subject to any discrimination because of the child's religion or creed.
- c. The State expressed a reservation to article 17 of the Convention, which concerns a child's freedom to access information and materials from a diversity of national and international sources. The State's reservation is based on its desire to avoid violating the cultural traditions and values of society. It protects children from cultures and information that harm their upbringing and expose them to deviance.
- d. The State expressed a reservation to article 21 on the right to adopt a child. Islam, which is the official religion and main source of legislation of the United Arab Emirates, does not permit the adoption method. However, this does not deny the rights of children of unknown lineage or parentage. The State provides for an appropriate role for the care and upbringing of such children and acts to provide all their needs. It has also established rules for alternative families. Children of unknown parentage obtain social assistance under the Social Security Act.

C. Legislative, administrative and judicial measures (article 4)

33. Legislation in the United Arab Emirates seeks to provide for the general rights for citizens in general and children in particular, as elaborated below.

1. The Constitution

34. The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates entrenches the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. Under Article 16 of the Constitution, "Society shall care for mothers and children and shall protect minors and other persons who are unable to care for themselves for reasons such as sickness, infirmity, old age or involuntary unemployment. It shall assist and rehabilitate such persons for their benefit and for that of society."

35. Regarding the right to education, under article 17 of the Constitution, "Education is a fundamental factor in social progress. It is compulsory at the primary stage and free of charge at all stages in the Federation. The law shall

establish the necessary plans for the dissemination of education at its different stages and for the eradication of illiteracy.”

36. Under Article 32 of the Constitution, “The freedom to perform religious observances in accordance with established traditions is safeguarded, without prejudice to public order or public morals.” This provision conforms with article 14 of the Convention regarding freedom of opinion and expression. Article 30 of the Constitution guarantees this right, stating the following: “Freedom of opinion and of oral, written and other forms of expression is guaranteed, subject to the limits laid down by law,” which conforms with articles 3 and 4 of the Convention.

2. National laws and legislation

Federal Personal Status Act No. 28 of 2005

37. The Personal Status Act contains a number of provisions concerning protection, care and services for children to ensure that they develop normally and receive all their material and nonmaterial needs, particularly the legal right to the establishment of parentage. The act covers child custody requirements and the award of custody. It guarantees child maintenance, requiring the maintenance of an indigent child by his father or, if the father is indigent or unable to pay child maintenance, by his mother if the mother has means. It requires the State to provide maintenance for a foundling of unknown parentage.

Federal Act No. 29 of 2006, concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, as amended by Federal Act No. 14 of 2009

38. The act guarantees all rights for persons with disabilities on a par with nondisabled persons. It provides for the prohibition of discrimination due to disability in all legislation. It guarantees the right of a disabled person to: freedom of expression and expression of opinion using braille, sign language and other means of communication for the blind and deaf; request, receive and transmit information on a par with others; education in all educational, vocational training and adult education institutions and ongoing education in mainstream classrooms or special classrooms if necessary; work and hold private-sector positions; and engage in cultural, athletic and recreational life. The provisions of the act are consistent with article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants

39. The Juvenile Act guarantees the rights of the child pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The act defines a juvenile (child) as being below the age of 18 at the time of the child’s commission of a liable act. It stipulates that criminal proceedings may not be brought against a juvenile delinquent under the age of seven and that neither capital punishment nor imprisonment may be imposed on a juvenile. The act replaces capital punishment wherever it is established as the penalty for an offense with imprisonment. It provides for the placement of juveniles in rehabilitation, treatment or educational facilities.

40. Article 7 of the Juvenile Act entitles a judge to impose measures as he deems appropriate on a juvenile (child) between the ages of seven and 16 who has committed an offense punishable under the Penal Code or any other law, regardless of the penalty. Article 8 requires a judge, in the case of a juvenile (child) who has

reached the age of 16, to impose measures as the judge deems appropriate instead of the penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law.

Federal Social Security Act No. 2 of 2001

41. The State of United Arab Emirates has been concerned with protecting children since promulgating the first Social Security Act in 1972. That act included children among the beneficiaries of social assistance, as does Social Security Act No. 2 of 2001. Under Article 4 of the aforesaid act, the social assistance beneficiary categories include widows, divorcees, persons with disabilities, orphans and children of unknown parentage. The act provides them with a decent life, ensuring that they receive their living requirements and that their honour in society is upheld.

42. The aforesaid article is clearly intended to assist and protect children indirectly by assisting their widowed mothers and directly by assisting the children themselves as an incapable, needy social group.

Federal Labour Relations Act No. 8 of 1980, amendments thereto and decisions issued to implement its provisions

43. The Labour Relations Act stipulates a number of measures that protect children. For example, it prohibits the employment of juveniles below the age of 15. It also requires employers, before employing any juvenile, to obtain a birth certificate, certificate of medical fitness to perform the required work and written consent from the juvenile's guardian.

44. The aforesaid act prohibits employing juveniles to work at night in industrial enterprises and in in jobs that are hazardous or harmful to their health. It restricts the daily work hours of juveniles to six hours, interspersed with one or more breaks totalling at least one hour. It prohibits assigning juveniles to work overtime hours or requiring them to work beyond their set work times and during their breaks.

Federal Act No. 5 of 1983 regulating the activities of crèches

45. Act No. 5 of 1983 sets forth a number of requirements that must be met to establish a crèche. These requirements are conducive to achieving the objective of childcare and sound child-rearing. They cover: selection of an appropriate site away from noise; selection of a building that meets appropriate health requirements in regard to toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting and air conditioning; and the availability of space for various activities. The act also establishes a number of requirements that must be met by the persons in charge of crèches.

46. The act assigns responsibility for supervising crèches to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry is responsible for ascertaining that crèches comply with the provisions of the act and do not harm children physically, mentally, religiously or socially, consistent with the provisions of article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

47. The Cabinet issued Decision No. 19 of 2006 providing for the establishment of crèches in State institutions, Government departments and administrative offices.

48. The aforesaid crèches have been granted many facilities and privileges to achieve their objectives. Many of the ministries and establishments have opened such crèches, which have proven their competence in caring for children. The Ministry of Social Affairs is acting to expand this experiment to include all ministries, establishments and administrative offices.

Federal Decree-Law No. 11 of 2008, concerning human resources in the Federal Government

49. Federal Decree-Law No. 11 of 2008, articles 53 and 54, provide for full welfare and care for working mothers, granting them maternity leave and time for nursing during work and granting fathers paternity leave to be near their new-born children, so that new-born children obtain the care and psychological and social attention needed to foster a secure childhood in a family environment.

Federal Act No. 51 of 2006, concerning the suppression of human trafficking offences

50. Under Federal Act No. 51 of 2006, article 2, “Any person who commits any offense of trafficking in persons stipulated in article 1 of this act shall be punished by imprisonment of no less than five years.” Under article 2, paragraph 2 of the act, the punishment is increased to life imprisonment if the victim is a child. This provision highlights the protection provided to children under the act, which seeks to deter the commission of such offenses against children to prevent them from becoming victims.

Federal Act No. 15 of 2009, prohibiting the sale or supply of tobacco to persons below the age of 18 years

51. Federal Act No. 15 of 2009 prohibits the importation of tobacco and tobacco products into the State unless the requirements and standard specifications observed in the State are met. Such requirements and specifications include the placement of clear warning labels on tobacco packages and a prohibition on all forms of advertising, publicity, promotion or sponsorship concerning any tobacco products.

52. The act also prohibits: smoking on public transportation and in enclosed public places; the licensing of coffee houses or similar establishments that offer any types of tobacco or tobacco products in or near residential buildings or neighbourhoods; and smoking while driving a private vehicle carrying a child under the age of 12.

53. The act contains several articles that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to persons below the age of 18 years, the cultivation of tobacco and the importation and sale of confections and toys that resemble tobacco or tobacco products. The act provides for regulations to deter violators and ensure that all individuals and companies comply with the provisions of the act to ensure a healthy climate in public places and residential areas and to spare non-smokers the damage and annoyance caused by the smoking and consumption of tobacco products of various types.

Federal Act No. 18 of 2009, concerning the regulation of the register of births and deaths

54. Federal Act No. 18 of 2009 regulates the mechanism for recording births and deaths. Births and deaths that occur in the State are reported to the Ministry of Health, Department of Preventive Medicine. Births and deaths that occur outside the State are reported to the State’s diplomatic missions. The Preventive Medicine Department issues a birth certificate for each live new-born.

55. The aforesaid act also establishes penalties for any person who fails to report a birth or death or provides inaccurate statements with the intent of registering a birth or death in the birth and death records.

Federal Act No. 1 of 2012, concerning care for children of unknown parentage

56. Federal Act No. 1 of 2012 regulates mechanisms for dealing with persons of unknown parentage in order to safeguard their rights. The act regulates and defines the responsibilities and rights relating to the care of such persons by federal and local government institutions. It arranges for the care for such persons in the State through the establishment and development of care facilities and the foster care system.

Cabinet Decision No. () 2012, concerning compulsory education in the United Arab Emirates

57. The cabinet has approved the promulgation of a federal act mandating compulsory education in the United Arab Emirates from the age of six years until the age of 18 years or until the completion of education, whichever comes first. The act establishes specific mechanisms for enforcing compulsory education and imposes appropriate penalties to deter violations to address the problem of students dropping out from school.

Children's Rights Bill

58. The Ministerial Committee on Legislative Matters completed its discussion of the Children's Rights Bill. The bill contains 72 articles on subjects such as child care, children's rights and the entities responsible for monitoring children's rights. The bill regulates the exercise of children's freedoms and rights, including family, health, cultural, social and educational rights. It also covers a number of prohibitions designed to protect children as well as mechanisms and measures for providing such protection and penalties for violation of the provisions of the bill.

Federal bill concerning juvenile delinquents

59. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Justice are studying a federal bill concerning juvenile delinquents. The bill is intended to replace Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants.

D. National mechanisms for the coordination of policies on children's rights

1. Government agencies and institutions concerned with the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Ministry of Social Affairs

60. Based on the provisions of Cabinet Decision No. 5 of 1990, the Ministry of Social Affairs functions as the authority concerned with achieving family stability and cohesion, protecting childhood and guiding youth. The Ministry's organizational structure includes a number of departments concerned directly or indirectly with protecting children's rights, including the:

- Family Development Department: It supports the building of families on sound foundations and buttresses the family's Arab and Islamic fundamentals, identity and values. It prepares and implements programmes to raise awareness in respect of the family. It creates a suitable climate for maintaining the family's cohesion and stability and strengthens and expands the participation of women in the work place and public life.

- **Producing Family Department:** It works to revive the country's heritage and provide training in industries linked to that heritage. It promotes the exploitation of natural resources and the use of family members' free time to develop the family's production capacity and create income sources for the family. It supervises programmes to increase household income. It plans and supports programmes by creating appropriate financing sources and encourages household savings and the control of consumption.
- **Department of the Child:** is concerned with childhood and assuring the basic rights of children. It proposes plans and programmes that serve the interests and care of children and develop their capabilities and talents. It issues licenses for the establishment of crèches and children's institutions and provides technical and educational supervision of such institutions.
- **Department of the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities:** It instructs, rehabilitates and trains persons with special needs according to established principles and objectives; implements technical and administrative guidelines and instructions; provides a supportive, positive climate for the development of a holistic, sustainable instructional environment for persons with disabilities; develops the behaviour of persons with disabilities to promote their mainstreaming, participation and self-confidence and society's confidence in them; organizes and implements comprehensive social and psychological care programmes for students; manages social protection; and develops activity by networking with entities relevant to the department's activity and assigned tasks. The department has three divisions: a juvenile care division, which supervises social education institutions that provide comprehensive care to boys and girls under the age of juvenility; an aftercare division, which monitors follow-up care of juveniles, released inmates and recovered addicts; and a division of social education, which supervises the care of orphans, persons of unknown parentage and foster care children.

Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood

61. The President of the State issued a federal decision in July 2003 establishing the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, which was launched in 2009. The Council: coordinates the State's efforts in the domain of motherhood and childhood; promotes care and concern for motherhood and childhood affairs; supports mothers and children in all fields, particularly the educational, cultural, health, social, psychological and child-rearing fields; works to achieve safety and security for children and mothers; monitors and evaluates development plans to achieve the desired level of welfare; and encourages studies and research and the dissemination of a culture of childcare. The Council, in cooperation with civil society organizations, participated in developing the first national strategy for motherhood and childhood in the United Arab Emirates. The Council is also a strategic partner of UNICEF in the Arab Gulf region. The partnership focuses on the following areas:

- a. Formulation of policies to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the United Arab Emirates.
- b. An information system for storing and updating indicators concerning health, education and protection of children in the United Arab Emirates.

The system will strengthen policies, strategies and legislation consistent the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- c. Analysis and review of all legislation on childhood to ascertain the extent to which the provisions of laws and international standards on children's rights are observed; and submission of proposals for legislative amendments in cooperation with legislators and decision-makers.
- d. A cooperative programme during 2010-2012 to expand the cooperation partnership between the Council and UNICEF.

62. Key outcomes of the Council's activity in 2012 include: the provision of accessibility to better educational and care opportunities to enable children and adolescents to develop and enjoy a healthy, socially responsible life; and the expansion of the scope of engagement and alliance among children.

63. The Council also held a number of workshops and courses on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with the attendance of organizations concerned with childhood as well as women's associations, to familiarize them with the provisions of these two conventions.

Ministry of Interior

64. The Ministry includes the following entities:

- Human Rights Department: Established in 2008 to contribute actively to all activities designed to protect and promote human rights, so as to ensure that the security best practices of the Ministry of the Interior are followed and that action is taken to follow up on issues relating to the protection of the rights of individuals in society in accordance with the Constitution, the laws of the United Arab Emirates and relevant international treaties. The department has a Division of Women and Child Protective Affairs. The division monitors the rights of women and children, protects women and children from all forms of exploitation, monitors violations against them and prepares reports in this regard.
- High Committee for the Protection of the Child: Created in May 2010 under Ministry of Interior Decision No. 240 of 2010, it is studying the establishment of a Child Protection Centre concerned with all offenses committed against children, all phenomena that encourage the exploitation of children and solutions and initiatives to ensure that children are protected.
- Social support centres in police department commands: These centres handle domestic violence cases where there is no need to file an official complaint. They also deal with violence in the schools, unreported runaways; juvenile misdemeanours, and disputes and fights between neighbours that need not be formally reported.
- Committee to Combat Human Trafficking Offences in the Ministry of Interior: Established by Ministry of Interior Decision No. 422 of 2009, its functions include: commenting on and updating the laws on human trafficking; coordinating with institutions to raise awareness of the gravity of human trafficking offences; and coordinating with homes for victims of human trafficking to help safeguard and protect the persons in their care.

- Office of the Culture of Respect for the Law: It spreads the culture of the law among individuals and segments of society, including labourers in general and domestic labourers. The office implemented a number of initiatives to familiarize labourers with their rights and duties, enhance their awareness of the culture of respect for the law and engage them in the ongoing development process occurring in the State.
- Child Protection Centre of the Ministry of the Interior: Under Ministerial Decision No. 347 of 2011, issued on 28 June 2011, a unit was created at the level of a division with the designation “Child Protection Centre of the Ministry of Interior” in the Office of the Culture of Respect for the Law in the General Secretariat of the Office of His Highness the Minister for Interior. The centre includes three administrative branches: (a) Investigation and Coordination Follow-Up Branch; (b) Social Support Coordination Branch; and (c) Protection, Awareness-Raising and Guidance Branch.
- Police departments in the general police commands: They receive reports from the public on human rights violations in general, particularly violations against children. They provide assistance, care and protection to children and collect evidence based on the reports they receive. They refer cases to the public prosecutor for investigation and referral to the competent court.

Ministry of Health

65. The Ministry of Health, particularly the Mother and Child Welfare Department, acts to provide comprehensive health and medical treatment services during pregnancy and birth, after-birth care and all essential inoculations based on World Health Organization and health-care guidelines. The Ministry also provides care for persons with disabilities and essential medical care free of charge.

Ministry of Education

66. The Ministry strives to provide the best, most advanced educational services from nursery school through twelfth grade, which is the last stage of free education. Educational curricula are offered according to the best international systems that grant children and young people freedom of creativity and thought. In this regard, UNESCO guidelines are followed. The cabinet has approved the promulgation of a federal act mandating compulsory education in the United Arab Emirates from the age of six years until the age of 18 years or until the completion of education, whichever comes first. The decision establishes specific mechanisms for ensuring the application of compulsory education and imposes appropriate penalties to deter violations in order to address the problem of students dropping out from school.

Ministry of Culture and Community Development

67. The Ministry inculcates the values and customs of a Emirati society in Emiratis, educates expatriates and visitors about the heritage of the Emirates, supports and organizes cultural seminars and social theatre for adults and young people, and supervises theatres in the State and the Federal Authority for Youth and Sports, which regulates the activity of the sports and cultural clubs to develop children and youth athletically and socially.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

68. The Human Rights Department was set up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010 to ensure that the Emirates is able to meet its obligations vis-à-vis human rights treaty bodies and to strengthen bilateral and international cooperation with a view toward promoting and protecting human rights in general. The department provides recommendations, decisions and studies issued by international organizations and machineries concerned with children to State institutions concerned with children's affairs to enable them to take into account international considerations in this regard in their work.

2. Agencies concerned with children's affairs at the local level of each emirate

69. The lead institutions in each emirate's local government provide a range of social services concerned with child protection and care. These institutions include:

- **Supreme Council for Family Affairs:** The council works to achieve a number of objectives, some of which include protection of children's rights, by promoting the role of the family in society to enable the family function according to new developments to thereby ensure the holistic development of children and girls consistent with the cultural values of Emirati society. The council also promotes services provided to children.
- **Community Development Authority of Dubai:** The authority was established under Local Law No. 12 of 2008. A human rights sector was established in the authority. It seeks to assist, advise and educate members of society regarding human rights in general and children's rights in particular. It follows up on children's issues with the competent agencies.
- **Homes for victims of human trafficking:** These were established in 2008 under the auspices of the National Red Crescent Society to provide protection and psychological, medical and legal assistance to victims of human trafficking. Their remit was widened following the opening of new homes in Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.
- **Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs:** The organization was established under Act No. 2 of 2004 of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The organization provides training, education, vocational training, medical, psychological and family guidance services to prepare persons with special needs for social mainstreaming. It provides educational and athletic support activities. Twelve special needs care centres are spread throughout the Emirate of Abu Dhabi under the auspices of the organization's Special Needs Sector. The organization also runs the Zayed House for Family Care, which works to create a sound rearing environment for orphans that builds a wholesome personality capable of adapting and participating in mainstream society.
- **Family Development Foundation:** The foundation was established on 10 May 2006 to develop and foster the family in its holistic concept to thereby promote the family, women and children. The foundation is concerned with the implementation of social legislation. It proposes legislative amendments to guarantee the rights of women and children. It also studies and analyses current and future phenomena, problems and challenges confronting the family, women and children.

3. National committees concerned with children's affairs at the federal level

70. These committees include the following:

- National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking: Established pursuant to Federal Act No. 51 of 2006, the committee studies and updates legislation on combating human trafficking to provide the requisite protection. It coordinates the State's efforts to combat human trafficking and protect victims, particularly women and children. The committee includes representatives of federal and local governmental bodies and civil society institutions in the State.
- National Committee on International Humanitarian Law: Established to coordinate the State's efforts to strengthen and protect international humanitarian norms, it was among the first committees established at the regional level. It seeks to strengthen the observance of international humanitarian law by promoting awareness of it and by reviewing relevant national legislation to provide appropriate recommendations thereon.
- Standing Committee to Follow up the Universal Periodic Review Report: Established under Cabinet Decision No. 51/4/2 of 21 March 2010, the committee implements acceptable recommendations concerning children. The committee's members include a number of federal and local government agencies and civil society associations.

4. Public welfare associations concerned with children's affairs

71. Given the effective role of civic associations as partners that support the Government's efforts to develop civic activity and promote participation and a sense of civic responsibility among members of society in the United Arab Emirates, Federal Act No. 2 of 2008, concerning public welfare associations and institutions, was promulgated to create a stable regulatory framework for the activities of these entities. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides funding of 3.6 million dirhams per year to the 143 associations and institutions registered in the State. Following are examples of a number of associations concerned with children's affairs in the United Arab Emirates:

- Juveniles Education and Care Association: Established in 1991, it performs a primary educational and guidance role. It prepares special training, qualification and care programmes for juveniles and provides a hotline that helps families solve problems affecting them and their children through on-the-spot counselling provided by family guidance and social workers.
- Emirates Association for the Talented: Established in 1998, it provides various types of sponsorship and services for its members to enable them to creatively apply their academic and cultural talents. The association seeks to create an appropriate environment for talented persons, monitors their development and guides them in their creative pursuits.
- Association of the Orphan Child: Established in 2001, it provides social, psychological, educational and vocational services for orphaned children and financial assistance to foster families. It monitors orphaned children until they reach majority age.
- Emirates Human Rights Association: Established in 2006, the association is concerned with the basic rights of citizens and residents, including children

and persons with special needs. It works to protect them, educate individuals and explain their rights and duties toward society.

- Student councils: The State's schools provide for student councils. There are 600 such councils in the various school districts. The bylaws of these councils permit them to examine issues concerning school students, instruction and administration. The councils may submit requests for the consideration of the Ministry of Education.
- Parent councils: Students are represented in the 700 parent councils. The student representative is entitled to attend the sessions of the concerned parent council and to discuss and present the viewpoints of students in the councils.
- Student Parliament: A Student Parliament has been formed in the Emirate of Sharjah. It meets periodically to discuss children's issues. Its sessions are attended by representatives of the media (newspapers and magazines) and its proceedings are televised live. The members of the Student Parliament are elected freely by the school students in Sharjah. The emirates are currently moving to form a student parliament that represents all children of the State.

5. Entities concerned with following up and addressing complaints concerning violations of children's rights

72. The aforesaid entities include the following:

- Ministry of Interior: The Ministry has seven free telephone numbers for receiving complaints and reports, including reports of domestic violence and child abuse. It also has an emergency messaging service (SMS messages) for receiving reports from persons with special needs.
- Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor: It performs its role together with the Ministry of Interior. The police investigate complaints and refer substantiated complaints to the Public Prosecutor's Office, which conducts an investigation and, if an accusation is proven, refers the matter to the competent court.
- Ministry of Education: It performs similar functions through the social service system in the schools. The social service system monitors violations of children's rights, such as domestic violence, battery and abuse.
- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children: It is concerned with the care of children of unknown parentage. It provides them with protection, shelter and social and legal services and maintains a call centre that services cases around-the-clock seven days a week through a hotline (800111), SMS (5111), fax (00971-4-2871177) and email (help@dfwac.ae).

E. National policies and strategies

73. The State has established a set of interrelated national strategies and visions for regulating the activity of Government ministries and institutions to ensure full enjoyment of human rights norms and the safeguarding of human dignity, human rights and basic human freedoms. The visions and strategies adopted by the United Arab Emirates consist of the following:

- Emirates Vision 2021²: The Vision comprises four components: an ambitious and confident people, a strong federation, a competitive economy and a nurturing and sustainable environment for quality living. The approach adopted by the government to realize the Vision accords absolute priority to improving education, health and housing services, developing human resources and developing remote areas throughout the country.
- Strategy of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2011–2013³: The strategy is based on seven general principles. The overarching priority is to provide citizens with the best possible standard of living by improving the education and health-care systems, focusing on community development and developing Government services.
- National Strategy for Motherhood and Childhood: The strategy affirms the United Arab Emirates' commitment to international human rights conventions, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It covers four integrated aspects of children's rights: survival, development, protection and participation. The strategy serves as a fundamental reference on children for decision-makers in the United Arab Emirates in ensuring an appropriate environment in the Emirates for all children and adolescents and their right to survival, development, good health, education, capacity building, effective participation in issues affecting them and protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Strategic plan of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking⁴: The strategy is founded on four pillars: developing legislation on combating human trafficking; enabling the concerned authorities to take measures to deter and prevent human trafficking; protecting and supporting human trafficking victims, particularly women and children; and supporting international cooperation.
- National Strategy for the Advancement of Women: This strategy allows the United Arab Emirates to meet the commitments it has made under international treaties on women and the Beijing Conference and Declaration of 1995. It was developed in response to the need for a national plan that provides a road map for overcoming difficulties and empowering women in eight main areas: education, health, the economy, law-making, the environment, the social domain, information, political participation and decision-making.

² His Highness Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai launched the Vision in February 2010 under the heading "The United Arab Emirates aspires to be the best state in the world by 2021," which is the year of the State's Golden Jubilee celebration. For further information see the Cabinet's website at <http://www.uaecabinet.ae>.

³ The strategy establishes the foundations for achieving the Emirates Vision 2021. It seeks to ensure that all Government efforts are consistent with a set of guiding principles, so that the Government focuses primarily on citizens. The strategy is flexible, innovative and forward-looking. For further information see the Cabinet's website at <http://www.uaecabinet.ae>.

⁴ For additional details on the strategy, see the attached annex, Report of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking 2011-2012.

F. Making the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known (article 42)

74. Institutions concerned with children's rights and issues in the United Arab Emirates have acted to disseminate the legal culture of children's rights in general by discussing relevant topics in conferences, seminars and academic meetings and in the media. State institutions have disseminated and discussed the Convention through presentations in the print, broadcast and audio-visual media and in public lectures.

75. The Ministry of Justice and the General Women's Federation, in cooperation with many organizations, launched a "National Campaign to Raise Awareness of Children's Rights" at an academic seminar on 25 October 2011. The campaign, which lasted until 3 November 2011, introduced and explained the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and national laws providing for the rights and protection of children. The campaign's activities encompassed all emirates of the State.

G. States Parties' making of their reports widely available to the public (article 44, paragraph 6)

76. The information and data contained in the present report are available to the public and are broadcast and published in various media and in reports issued by the State – including the Report of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Report of the Ministry of Health and Report of the Ministry of Economy – and in studies and research prepared by various institutions concerned with children's issues.

H. Human rights institution

77. Regarding the Committee's recommendation (in 2002) to establish an independent human rights institution according to the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134) to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the Convention at the national and local levels, the United Arab Emirates reports that the Government is currently studying the establishment of a human rights institution, as it declared in the voluntary commitments which it made during the review of its national report by the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review in December 2008.

II. Definition of a child (article 1 of the Convention)

78. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 1, defines a child as follows: "For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." Legislation in effect in the United Arab Emirates for the most part agrees with this definition, as follows:

- In the United Arab Emirates, Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, defines a "juvenile (child) as being below the age of 18 at the time of the child's commission of a liable act."
- The Social Security Law, article 1, defines a child as follows: "The definition of the family shall include: a son up to the age of 18. That notwithstanding, a son above this age shall be regarded as being under the aegis of the family if it is established that he is continuing his education until he completes his

education or is employed, and a daughter shall be regarded as being under the aegis of the family until she completes her education, as long as she remains unmarried and unemployed.

- Federal Act No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years.”
- Personal Status Act No. 28 of 2005, article 30, sets the age of eligibility to marry at 18 years of age.
- Under the Children’s Rights Bill, the term child is defined as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless the age of majority is attained [earlier] under special provisions.”

The preceding shows that the definition of a child in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is consistent with the definition of a child in Emirati laws promulgated before or after the United Arab Emirates signed the Convention.

III. General principles (articles 2, 3, 6, and 12)

A. Non-discrimination (article 2)

79. The State respects the rights of the child. It records all forms of discrimination against children. The National Constitution of the State enshrines equality in respect of rights and duties, consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All national laws prohibit any discrimination between children and establish legal protection for children regardless of sex, race, language or religion. Article 25 of the Constitution stipulates that “all persons are equal before the law, and there shall be no discrimination between citizens of the Federation on the basis of origin, place of residence, religious belief or social status.

B. The best interests of the child (article 3)

80. The Government seeks to care for the interests of children and provide care and protection to children in respect of various health, social, psychological and cultural aspects. National legislation regulates children’s rights and provides for health and educational services for children as well as social, psychological and physical protection. Under the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates, article 16, “Society shall be responsible for protecting childhood and motherhood and shall protect minors and others unable to look after themselves for any reason... It shall be responsible for assisting them and enabling them to help themselves for their own benefit and that of the community. Laws on public assistance and Social Security shall regulate these matters.

C. Right to life, survival and development (article 6)

81. The State seeks to provide the best health services and care to individuals in hospitals and health clinics that are equipped with the latest medical equipment and technology. The Ministry of Health and Government medical departments provide the best means of care for children from pregnancy to adulthood. They monitor health and provide inoculation treatment services to eliminate diseases. They provide advice and social guidance and premarital examination services for persons interested in marrying, thereby reducing child mortality. Under the Constitution,

article 19, “Society shall guarantee citizens health care and the means to prevent and treat diseases and epidemics.”

82. Statistics show that the infant mortality rate fell to 6.7 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2009, down 2.2 per cent from the figure for 1990. This means that the target of 3.8 set for 2015 is not only achievable but could be exceeded if progress continues to be made at the current rate.

83. As of mid-2012, there were 295 crèches in urban areas and villages in the United Arab Emirates caring for children below the age of four. These institutions provide children with health, social, educational and psychological services. They teach them skills and organize recreational activities and programmes for them. The Cabinet issued Decision No. 19 of 2006 providing for the establishment of crèches in State institutions, Government departments and administrative offices to look after the children of female employees and to offer their children a measure of social stability. Thirty-two crèches have been established pursuant to this decision.

84. Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, prohibits the imposition of the death penalty on a person (child) under the age of 18 years. Article 9 of the act states that “a juvenile shall not be sentenced to capital punishment, imprisonment or financial penalties.” The legislator also protects unborn fetuses from abortion, which is an offense under the Penal Code, articles 339 (3) and 340.

85. The legislator also protects the lives of sick persons. Federal Act No. 10 of 2008, concerning medical liability, stipulates, “The life of a sick person may not be ended for any reason, including the request of the sick person or his guardian.” The same act, article 30, stipulates the penalty for a perpetrator of this offense: “Any person who violates the provision of article 9 of this act shall be punished by imprisonment of at least 10 years.”

D. Respect for the views of the child (article 12)

86. Educational curricula for all educational levels has been developed to promote the child’s freedom to discuss and express his view and to educate the family regarding the importance of developing a spirit of expression in the child and strengthening the child’s participation in matters relating to his personal interest. The schools’ student councils, Scouting associations and theatrical troupes play a role in this regard, as do television programmes for children on the State’s various television channels, which grant children the freedom to express their personal views.

87. The Ministry of Social Affairs is preparing to launch a children’s parliament comprising 40 children between the ages of 8 and 18, who will be elected from the different school districts across the country. The aim is to promote participation in parliamentary life and give children the chance to express their views. A committee representing the various parties concerned was set up to develop the project. The Cabinet will determine which body will oversee the parliament; the committee responsible for developing the project has proposed that the Federal National Council perform the oversight function.

IV. Civil rights and freedoms (articles 7, 8, 13-17, 19, 28, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)

A. Name and nationality (article 7)

88. A child, immediately after being born, is entitled to a name, which is registered in the birth certificate issued to the child by the competent agencies. Federal Act No. 17 of 1972, amended by Act No. 10 of 1975, concerning nationality, stipulates the following:

“A child shall be considered an Emirati to citizen in the following cases:

“(a) A child born in the State or abroad to a national father by law;

“(b) A child born in the State or abroad to a national mother by law and whose affiliation to the father is not legally established;

“(c) A child born in the State of unknown parents. Unless otherwise established, the foundling shall be deemed born in the State.”

89. Thus, the Ministry of Health issues a birth certificate for a child after the child is named by his parents. The father records the birth certificate on the extract of the entry lodged with the Nationality Department. A child born to foreigners in the State is granted a birth certificate. Then, the Embassy of the child's country in the United Arab Emirates issues an identity card to the child. The child acquires residency with his relatives under the Foreign Residency Act. In addition, Federal Act No. 18 of 2009, concerning the regulation of the register of births and deaths, has been promulgated.

B. Preservation of identity (article 8)

90. Regarding the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations, under the procedures followed in the civil courts, a child's name may be changed with the consent of his parents to be consistent with the names that are customary in Emirati society. Generally, the Government is concerned with strengthening identity. His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the President of the State, declared 2008 as National Identity Year. The observance of National Identity Year included programmes and activities designed to strengthen the components of identity. After 2008, his Highness the President declared that concern for national identity will continue.

C. Freedom of expression and the right to seek and receive information (article 13)

91. The child has the right to express his own views freely in all matters affecting the child in the United Arab Emirates. All competent agencies give requisite consideration to the views of the child according to the child's age and maturity. This right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information orally, in writing or in print, and in the form of art. The United Arab Emirates' Constitution, article 30, affirms the right of freedom of expression: “Freedom of opinion and of oral and written expression and all other means of expression is guaranteed within the limits set by law.” This provision applies to all segments of society, including children.

92. Concern with the freedom of expression of children in United Arab Emirates can be seen in the hearing given to the views and recommendations of children in the context of the “Children’s Consultative Parliament of Sharjah.” The aforesaid parliament is a model of the practice of democracy and freedom of opinion and expression among children. It trains children in consultation, exchange of views and ideas and discussion of children’s issues and topics concerning their daily lives. The General Women’s Federation and UNICEF organized a discussion group with children in the United Arab Emirates in March 2010 to hear the children’s views on all issues concerning them.

D. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 14)

93. The United Arab Emirates is an Islamic state. Islam is the official religion of the State. Mosques are located throughout the State, making it possible for all Muslims to practice the Islamic rites. The State guarantees everyone, including non-Muslims, the freedom to practice their religious rites under the protection of the law. Many churches and temples exist throughout the territory of the State for the sects of expatriates to ensure the practice of their religious rites. National legislation also guarantees the expression of thought within the limits of the law and the customs and culture of society.

94. The Constitution, article 32, affirms the freedom to practice religious rites: “The freedom to perform religious observances in accordance with established traditions is safeguarded, without prejudice to public order or public morals.”

E. Freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (article 15)

95. Under the Emirati Constitution, article 33, “Freedom of assembly and association is guaranteed, subject to the limits laid down by law.” Given the universality of the legal rule in society, this provision applies to all, including children, guaranteeing them freedom to form and join associations and freedom of assembly.

96. A child may join Scouting, heritage, athletic and social clubs for support and motivation to pursue hobbies and engage in activities. Children are entitled to form student associations in schools and to engage in cultural activities in the school environment. They may also establish student councils in all school districts in all Emirates of the State to discuss their educational problems and related matters, which represents a type of freedom of thought, assembly and opinion.

F. Protection of privacy and reputation (article 16)

97. National legislation protects the privacy of the child. It does not permit arbitrary or unlawful interference with the child’s privacy, family, or correspondence or damage to the child’s honour and reputation. This article the Convention points to the need for concern with the child’s environment and relationships within that environment. The child’s environment should be stable and provide for social security, health, education and protection from physical, moral and economic exploitation. Under the Constitution of the State, article 26, “Personal freedom is guaranteed to all citizens. No person may be arrested, searched, detained or imprisoned except within the framework of the law.”

G. Access to information from a diversity of sources (article 17)

98. Despite the United Arab Emirates' reservation to this article, Emirati society guarantees the child's right to access to information and materials from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. Many national libraries located throughout the State offer the latest cultural publications for children. Internet services, which are widespread in the State, permit access to information from international sources.

99. In addition, television and radio channels, magazines provide children access to various types of scientific and cultural information. There is also a trend to publish periodicals concerned with children's affairs, e.g. in the form of annexes to police periodicals published by the various general commands of the police in the United Arab Emirates. The media ban applies to children only in respect of media materials that harm children, threaten their safety and security and endanger their upbringing.

H. Encouragement of international cooperation in matters related to education (article 28, paragraph 3)

100. The strengthening and support of international cooperation in matters related to education has been affirmed in all countries of the world to promote scientific knowledge and modern education. Since 1993, the United Arab Emirates has been providing social development assistance in four sectors, including basic education, to a number of less-developed countries. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ranked the United Arab Emirates as the fourteenth most giving donor country in respect of foreign aid in 2010.

101. In 2007, the United Arab Emirates launched the "Dubai Giving Campaign" initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to support children's education in the Middle East, Asia and Africa by providing basic education opportunities to needy children. The campaign seeks to strengthen the humanitarian aspect of education and to care for the needy children of the world. It has assisted five million children in 24 countries, trained more than 20,000 teachers and distributed 1 million books in local languages.

102. The Ministry of Education shares educational expertise with advanced and developing countries. It participated in several workshops held in February 2012 on the fringes of the Fourth Education World Forum and the Gulf Educational Supplies & Solutions exhibition, held in the United Arab Emirates yearly, under the slogan "Teaching and Learning in the Knowledge and Technology Era." A total of 35 workshops were held. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the UNESCO office in Jordan and Doha, held a workshop in October 2010 on global issues affecting children's rights, e.g. poverty, hunger and unemployment.

I. The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including corporal punishment (article 37, paragraph a)

103. Under the Emirati Constitution, article 26, which applies to children, "A person may not be subjected to torture or degrading treatment." Under Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, "capital punishment,

imprisonment and financial penalties may not be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.” The legislator has also sought to create appropriate alternatives for the punishment of juveniles so as to balance punishment with the desire to rehabilitate juveniles and guide them toward a return to normal life. Federal act No. 9 of 1976 also prohibits bringing a criminal action against a juvenile (child) below the age of seven, and it entitles a judge to adopt measures in lieu of established penalties as he sees fit.

J. Measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims (article 39)

104. Social education institutions have adopted many such measures based on social and psychological research and studies on juveniles. They have developed plans for evaluating and treating juveniles in various settings and instituted behaviour modification. They provide care for neglected children and develop and implement programmes and activities that help them solve their problems. They are also concerned with vocational training, creating programmes in educational institutions to teach trades suited to the proclivities and abilities of juveniles. They also facilitate the admission of juveniles to training centres.

105. The Social Support Centre of the police of Abu Dhabi, Ain and the Western Region plays an important role in dealing with children victims of violence by developing programmes for treating children exposed to violence, helping their families and raising awareness through lectures and seminars.

V. Family environment and alternative care (articles 5, 9-11, 18 (paragraphs 1-2), 19-21, 25, 27 (paragraph 4) and 39 of the Convention)

A. Family environment and parental guidance (article 5)

106. Under the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates, article 15, “The family, sustained by religion, morality and patriotism, shall constitute the cornerstone of society. The law shall guarantee the integrity of the family and shall safeguard and protect it against corruption.” The State respects the rights and duties of parents. It makes intensive efforts through governmental and non-governmental institutions to promote the upbringing and nurturing of children and the guidance of parents to use socially sound methods for rearing children, including children with disabilities. The Emirati family is bound to the traditions and heritage of society, which are based on children’s respect for and emulation of their parents.

B. The common responsibilities of the parents (article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2)

107. The parents are responsible for soundly guiding their children. Both parents bear responsibility for child-rearing, which is extremely important given the differing social roles of the father and the mother. This responsibility is contingent on the supremacy of the child’s interests. If the family is unable to perform its duties, the State is responsible for rendering appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians to perform their child-rearing responsibilities. Such assistance consists of the rendering of health, educational and recreational services.

C. Separation from parents (article 9)

108. The child has a natural right to develop and live securely with his parents. The law fully protects the child and separates a child from his or her parents against the child's will solely in accordance with a judicial decision and then only as a protective measure. The Personal Status Act stipulates that a legal action may not be admitted until after it is submitted to the family guidance committee and the committee finds that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child, as in the case of parents' abuse or neglect of the child or the child is in a situation that exposes him to deviance or endangers his health, security and upbringing. The breakup of a family due to differences between the parents, or the loss of one or both parents due to death, divorce, separation or travel, has extremely adverse effects on the psychological, emotional and social development of the child.

D. Family reunification (article 10)

109. The competent agencies in the State examine – in a positive, humane manner – requests submitted by a child or his parent to enter or leave the State for the purpose of family reunification, provided such reunification does not entail adverse consequences for the child and the members of his family.

E. Recovery of maintenance for the child (article 27, paragraph 4)

110. The Emirati Personal Status Act requires the maintenance of an indigent child by his father or, if the father is indigent or unable to pay child maintenance, by his mother if the mother has means. It requires the State to provide maintenance for a foundling of unknown parentage.

111. Thus, under the Personal Status Act, maintenance of the child must be paid by the father or by other persons having responsibility for the child. Such maintenance is urgent and must be paid immediately in the case of the wedlock or separation of the parents. Payment of maintenance continues until the child is able to work, earn a livelihood and develop self-reliance. If this is not feasible and the child has no supporter, the State provides material assistance to the child. The Social Assistance Act categorizes a child as eligible for social welfare if it is proven that the parents lack adequate income or cannot maintain the child.

F. Children deprived of a family environment (article 20)

112. Some children are subjected to circumstances beyond their control, including separation from their family in the case of orphans and children of unknown parentage. Social welfare institutions in the State provide various psychological, social, health and educational services for the care and upbringing of such children. These institutions include the Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs, Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation for Humanitarian Works, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, Sharjah Social Empowerment Foundation and a number of other public welfare foundations and associations.

113. The Ministry of Social Affairs liaises with public welfare associations to promote cooperation in supporting and caring for orphans. A Social Responsibility Fund was established to support financing for social development and welfare programmes and projects. Governmental and nongovernmental centres, foundations and associations operating in the social domain participate in such programs and

projects. The fund helps them develop their capacities and human resources to enable them to become self-sufficient and to manage their programmes effectively. Support is also given to governmental and private bodies for the implementation of joint welfare and social development projects and establishment of social development institutions to ease human suffering, strengthen social solidarity and cohesion in society and protect the environment and public health.

G. Periodic review of placement (article 25)

114. Placements of children are subject to periodic review. Placement is considered a social treatment method under Act No. 9 of 1976 concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, which stipulates such a review. A child placed in an in-patient institution for care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health is entitled to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to the child's placement. This permits the child to receive the care which he or she requires. The Social Education House, an educational institution for correcting juvenile deviance, prepares social, psychological educational, health and other care programmes and vocational training. If vocational training is not successful, the institution provides other training. It also prepares reports on the child's status and changes in the child's behaviour.

115. Under Act No. 9 of 1976, article 22, "If it becomes evident to the court that a juvenile has committed an offense or vagrancy due to a mental illness, the court may order placement of the juvenile in a treatment shelter or a medical facility designated for this purpose until the juvenile recovers." The court may decide to release the juvenile thereafter based on the medical reports of the persons supervising treatment of the juvenile. A juvenile may not be released by a medical facility or supervising physician. A judge possesses the authority to place a juvenile in a permissible treatment centre or facility. The judge may rule to place the juvenile in the custody of the juvenile's guardian or to place the juvenile in a treatment shelter or medical facility.

H. National and inter-country adoption (article 21)

116. The United Arab Emirates' heritage, culture and identity are rooted in the Islamic religion. The Emirati Constitution, article 7, stipulates that "Islam is the official religion of the Federation and the sharia is the main source of legislation. The official language of the Federation is Arabic." Thus, inasmuch as the Islamic religion prohibits adoption and urges the sponsoring of orphans, adoption is prohibited in the United Arab Emirates.

I. Illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad (article 11)

117. The State has taken the necessary measures to protect children and prevent the transfer of children to abroad except in accordance with judicial judgments concerning custody. The State's laws and regulations permit children to enter the State and to obtain visas to visit their relatives who are legally in the State. Federal Act No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking stipulates sentences up to life imprisonment to deter human trafficking offenses. The act covers all types of human trafficking, including servitude. It stipulates penalties for sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking in body parts. Article 2 of the act imposes imprisonment on any person who commits any of the human trafficking offenses mentioned in

article 1 of the act. If the victim is a female, child or person with disabilities, the penalty is life imprisonment.

J. Abuse and neglect (article 19)

118. The State makes clear efforts to protect children from abuse, domestic violence and neglect, all of which adversely affect the child's cognitive, psychological and social development, with effects varying from one child to another. In 2005, the Ministry of Interior established a number of social support centres in Abu Dhabi, Ain and the Western Region. The centres handle, resolve and treat marital disputes, domestic violence, absences from the home, molestation and intimidation. They also: provide services dealing with child abuse, family neglect, sexual and physical assaults against children and abuse of persons with disabilities; provide preventive and treatment programmes to contain family problems; provide support for victims of crime; provide psychological rehabilitation for shelter residents; and prevent crime and protect society by providing support and protection for children subjected to violence.

119. The State has developed a policy of conforming to a cognitive, methodological, scientific framework for programming children's rights (including the right to protection) and for supporting the child and his/her family through social institutions. Public welfare associations provide workshops, lectures and seminars to explain the effects of family violence on children and protection of children from neglect. The media (newspapers and television programmes) cover this issue to protect children and raise the family's awareness of its role in protecting children from violent behaviour. The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children was established to provide safe shelter and medical and psychological care to women and children harmed by inhuman practices, oppression or deplorable, coercive conditions.

K. Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (article 39)

120. The child's right to physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration is promoted through religious, cultural, social and health education directed at children in the educational system and to young persons interested in marrying. This is accomplished through programmes organized by educational, family and community institutions to raise awareness children and young people of the optimal method for participation in the family and to prepare them to bear their social responsibilities.

VI. Disability, basic health services and care (article 6 (2), article 18 (3) articles 23, 24 and 26, article 27 (1-3) and article 33)

121. The State's health situation has advanced significantly. All components of the health sector and the services and care which it provides have been supported and reinforced, as attested by regional and international bodies and organizations. As a result, comprehensive health care is provided to citizens and residents, which has affected the health situation of the population of the United Arab Emirates.

A. The rights of disabled children (article 23)

122. Federal Act No. 29 of 2006 on the rights of persons with special needs guarantees all rights of this group on a par with their counterparts and does not

discriminate based on disability. The act guarantees persons with disabilities the right to: express their views using braille, sign language and other means of communication for the blind and deaf; request, receive and transmit information on a par with others; education in all educational institutions and admission to training and qualification programmes; jobs suited to their conditions; and cultural, athletic and recreational life. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for the care, education, training and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. It provides such persons with opportunities for medical, psychological and social treatment and care, education and the acquisition of knowledge in various mainstream and special education settings. It also works to expand areas of training and vocational qualification for them and to enable their social integration.

123. Seven Government centres for the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities have been established in addition to the local centres in the emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah and private centres for disabled persons that have been licensed to operate in the emirates. The Sharjah Government has inaugurated Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services to provide services to persons with disabilities, including both citizens and foreigners. There are a total of 56 Government, nongovernmental and private centres providing medical, educational and vocational training services. They use the curricula adopted by the Ministry of Education, with the minor modifications required to meet the needs of persons with sensory (deaf, dumb and blind) and motor disabilities (e.g., sign language and braille). Vocational and craft rehabilitation services are provided for all children over 14 years of age, particularly those suffering from mental disability, to provide them with vocational skills, especially in traditional handicrafts, which enables them to lead a productive lives and facilitates their social integration.

124. The centres offer day care instead of boarding facilities to facilitate social integration, so that disabled persons are not isolated from their social environment. The Special Categories Welfare Department always endeavours to make its services available to the largest possible number of persons with special needs at their places of residence and in their geographic and social environment.

125. Governmental and private centres participate actively in all public national, religious and social events and in local, Arab and international sports and Olympic competitions, Scout activities and camps. Given the importance of education, the Ministries of Social Affairs and Education cooperate to ensure that persons with disabilities are integrated in public education.

B. Survival and development of the child (article 6, paragraph 2)

126. Health is a primary right of the child. Consistent with the Islamic sharia, the State has promulgated a law prohibiting abortion and harm to a foetus unless the pregnant woman's attending physician establishes a medical danger or risk to her life. Children are entitled to health care and to participate in matters concerning them. The State has achieved a measure of success in providing health care and services and preventive treatment programmes by establishing various specialized hospitals and children's health centres throughout the State, including in remote areas. Children should begin their lives under the best conditions. This means providing health care, sound nutrition and clean drinking water to ensure their healthy growth. The process begins with the mother's health and early childhood health care, which is one of the best, most efficient ways to ensure the child's health

subsequently. The family and environment are also vital factors in ensuring the rights of the child. The goals of the State's plan in this regard are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The plan adopts a comprehensive approach in dealing with all civil, political, social and cultural rights as an integrated, indivisible package.

C. Health and health services, particularly primary health care (article 24)

127. Since its establishment, the United Arab Emirates has dedicated special concern to health services and needs at the national level and to providing services to all Emirati citizens. An extensive network of hospitals, health centres and diagnostic facilities has been established to provide all aspects, stages and specialties of health care to all parts of the country. The State has sought to establish first-rate procedures and standards to ensure the provision of high quality medical services at the State level.

128. The State provides treatment, preventive and follow-up health services. It implements strategic programmes to combat chronic and communicable diseases and to provide care for children and mothers. The allocations for health services in 2010, excluding the budgets of the local governments to their health authorities and major private sector investments, exceeded 2.644 billion dirhams. In 2010, health expenditures totalled 33.7 billion dirhams, distributed to the large budgets of the Ministry of Health and the Health Authority in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and major private sector investments.

129. There are 65 hospitals in the United Arab Emirates, of which 15 are federal institutions, 150 primary health-care centres and clinics, 11 school health centres, 10 centres for mothers and children and 110 special units for mothers and children in hospitals and primary health-care centres. This compares with 7 hospitals and 12 health centres when the Federation was established in 1971.

130. The rise in the educational level and awareness of individuals has been the biggest factor in the success of the State's efforts to promote its citizens' health, as indicated by declining disease and mortality rates, particularly among infants, and higher birth rates and life expectancy.

131. The figures show that the infant mortality rate fell to 6.7 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2009, down 2.2 per cent from the figure for 1990. This means that the target of 3.8 set for 2015 is not only achievable but could be exceeded if progress continues at the current rate.

D. Social Security services (article 26)

132. The Social Security Act, promulgated in 1972, provides for the allocation of social assistance to orphans and children of unknown parentage. Under Federal Social Security Act No. 2 of 2001, 16 indigent, needy and vulnerable groups – including orphans, persons with disabilities, divorcees, etc. – are eligible for assistance. The value of social assistance has doubled since 2008. The increase followed a study that determined the needs of an Emirati family and set the poverty line. Monthly assistance is provided to an eligible family in the amount of 4400 dirhams (1200 dollars) for the first family member, 2600 dirhams (710 dollars) for the second family member and 1300 dirhams (355 dollars) for the third member and each member thereafter. Families with no income are given full

assistance. Families in the physically disabled group whose income is less than the aforesaid sums are given partial assistance. This group includes retirees and limited-income persons. Close to 10 per cent of the citizens of the United Arab Emirates benefit from the Social Security Act. The figure is 15 per cent in developing regions of the country.

133. Social security data show that 39 798 citizens at the State level receive 2 299 500 000 dirhams in social assistance annually, while the data issued by the Social Security Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs indicate that 83 964 individuals receive social assistance, of whom 33 292 or 39.9 per cent are children.

Right of children of working parents to benefit from child-care services and facilities (article 18, paragraph 3)

134. The Emirates have taken measures to guarantee the right of children of working parents to benefit from child-care services and facilities. Cabinet Decision No. 19 of 2006 affirms the need to establish crèches in the main offices of the ministries, authorities, public enterprises, governmental departments and administrative offices. Such crèches have been granted facilities and privileges to perform their role. Many of them have been established in the ministries and enterprises for the benefit of children whose parents work therein. The Ministry of Social Affairs has expanded this trial to include all ministries, enterprises and administrative offices.

E. Standard of living and measures taken to provide material assistance (article 27, paragraphs 1-3)

135. The United Arab Emirates has in recent decades seen increases in standards of living, per capita GDP and per capita private final consumption in general. These increases have facilitated stable sustainable growth and boosted all components of social well-being. Economic data indicate that per capita GDP rose by an average rate of 4.7 per cent per annum during 1990-2010, from 68 000 dirhams in 1990 to 132 300 dirhams in 2010.

136. Per capita private consumption rose significantly during 1990-2010, from 26 000 dirhams to 78 600 dirhams per annum, growing at an annual rate of 10.1 per cent, which is one of the highest rates regionally and internationally.

137. The State bears child welfare costs. It has enacted legislation to provide services to enhance the lives, standard of living, health, education and recreation of children.

138. The State's welfare policy counts many accomplishments concerning children's rights. It has provided 100 per cent of the country's drinking water, increased life expectancy from 53 to 74 years and lowered infant mortality to 6.7 per thousand in 2009, down 2.2 per cent from 1990. The State also provides educational, health, recreation and social services. It has improved the standard of living of needy families, enabling them to provide their children's needs and protect them from economic exploitation. The State also imposes fines for child abuse.

F. Measures to protect children from substance abuse (article 33)

139. The State has taken a number of legislative measures to protect children from substance abuse, including the promulgation of Federal Act No. 1 of 2005 on

combating narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The act criminalizes the illicit use of narcotic drugs. In addition, the concerned governmental institutions have launched media campaigns to increase awareness of the risks of narcotics among all members of society, including children.

VII. Education, recreation and cultural activities (articles 28, 29 and 31)

140. The United Arab Emirates has implemented progressive strategies to establish an advanced, cutting-edge educational system that preserves the national culture and identity. The Arab Human Development Report for 2008 states that the United Arab Emirates achieved significant progress in human development over the past three decades, including the tripling of the literacy rate thanks to a large increase in enrolment in education. Since 2005, the Ministry of Education has applied a new educational strategy that seeks to create good citizens able to participate effectively in the economic, social and cultural life of the country and in the global knowledge economy and to deal with contemporary problems and challenges. In addition, at end-2007, it was decided to allocate 30 per cent of the total state budget to education each year.

A. The right to education, including vocational education and guidance (article 28)

141. Educational policy in United Arab Emirates aims to nurture students according to the fundamentals and values of the Islamic creed, strengthen the national identity, provide high-quality educational services and keep pace with and absorb new global developments in educational and teaching methods. The Government attaches the utmost importance to education at all levels. Education is compulsory at the basic level and free at all levels.

Compulsory education

142. Under article 17 of the Constitution, "Education is a fundamental factor in social progress. Within the Federation, it shall be compulsory at the primary level and free of charge at all levels. The law shall establish the requisite plans to expand and universalize education at all levels and eradicate illiteracy." The State is studying legislation to increase the compulsory education period to age six through age eighteen.

Levels of education

Preschool education

Role of the crèche

143. The Children's Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs supervises crèches to ensure they meet the establishment requirements stipulated in Federal Act No. 5 of 1983 on Crèches and in Cabinet Decision No. 1 of 1989 on the act's implementing regulations, which serve as the basis for the Ministry of Social Affairs' licensure, coordination and supervision of crèches and the establishment of childcare standards.

144. The Ministry has promoted crèches and the provision of complete care and services that are appropriate for children. Article 2 of the aforesaid act stipulates, "In applying the provisions of the law, a crèche shall be considered any appropriate place designated for the care of children up to the age of four, including crèches subordinate or attached to a school."

145. Article 3 of the act specifies the services provided by crèches as follows:

The crèche shall be established to provide the following services in order to soundly rear and care for children:

Temporary accommodation as requested by the concerned person

1. Development of the children's feelings and emotions based on the teachings and values of Islam and social customs.
2. Provision of full health care.
3. Provision of the necessary meals.
4. Training of Arab children to speak Arabic properly.
5. Training of children in songs and games appropriate to their ages.

Placement of children in crèches according to age group

146. Crèches accept children from birth until the age of four. In a crèche, a child is considered an infant if he is less than two years of age and a non-infant if he is older.

Kindergarten

147. Kindergarten is a key stage in shaping the child's personal characteristics. The Ministry of Education has been keen to nurture the creative energies of children, give them skills and knowledge and develop their personalities from all standpoints. Kindergarten is an integral part of the educational system. The Ministry has established kindergartens for the care of children from the age of 3 ½ to the age of 5 ½ with a view toward promoting holistic, balanced growth at the kindergarten level. The Ministry has also established advanced kindergartens based on the self-learning approach and has taken the following measures to develop kindergartens:

- Preparation of special curricula consistent with new educational developments.
- Training and development of kindergarten teachers.
- Provision of educational means and educational games.
- Provision of appropriate buildings to house kindergartens.

Primary education

148. Schools have been established in all urban and nomadic areas in the United Arab Emirates, and there is no gender discrimination. Adult students may complete their education by transferring from general education schools to adult education schools starting in the fourth grade. This decision applies equally to citizens and foreigners and males and females.

149. The primary schools provide special education and rehabilitation services for persons with special needs, including gifted students and slow learners. The Ministry does not discriminate among citizens in providing services. There is no discrimination based on religion, sex or ethnicity. The Ministry provides remedial education to enable special needs students to acquire basic skills, overcome academic problems and advance educationally to the extent permitted by their abilities (see Table 5).

150. The Ministry of Education and Youth has shown considerable concern for gifted and outstanding students at all academic levels, as can be seen from the following:

- Programmes and plans have been formulated to promote the welfare of gifted students and encourage them to display their talents and capabilities through a series of activities and exhibitions at which they can win prizes and awards of merit
- Their welfare is promoted through resource rooms
- Psychological and social services are provided with a view to the early discovery and encouragement of gifted and outstanding students. Each case is monitored at the social and family level, and attempts are made to overcome any obstacles impeding the individual's progress.

151. The Ministry of Education provides technical supervision services to instructors at centres for persons with disabilities subordinate to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry strives to completely or partially mainstream students with disabilities in regular academic classrooms to ensure equal educational opportunity. It encourages mainstream and special education instructors, parents and students to cooperate to meet the special education needs of students with disabilities.

Secondary education

152. Primary education lasts for three years. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research have cooperated to implement a joint programme in order to dispense with the remediation programmes at the college/university level. Thus, secondary school graduates are able to advance to higher education without having to first complete remedial academic programmes at the college level. Secondary students in the twelfth grade are administered proficiency examinations in English to qualify them for higher education based on their abilities. Religious instruction is provided at both the primary and secondary level, starting in the sixth grade.

Educational indicators

153. Educational indicators are designed to measure the attractiveness of the educational environment. To this end, the Ministry of Education has sought to:

- Formulate standards and specifications for the design of schools at different educational levels consistent with the instructional requirements at each level and taking into account the characteristics specific to the students' developmental stage. The Ministry also establishes specifications for school furniture and instructional equipment, taking into account security and safety standards and functionality.
- Complete and develop existing school libraries and information resource centres as a primary resource and source of support for the academic curriculum and a means to facilitate independent learning, continuing education and the development of the skills needed for excellence and innovation.

- Introduce the use of computers as instructional mains to general education to improve the quality of education and facilitate independent learning by students.
- Develop curricula, teaching methods and teacher competence.
- Develop educational enrichment activities to promote the ability of students to interact with their communities and to discover and develop their capacities and talents.

154. The Ministry of Education takes measures to curb absenteeism and encourage regular attendance. It has issued an educational code of behaviour that establishes the permitted number of absences and the requirements for excusable absences. The Ministry also takes measures to ensure the maintenance of order in schools consistent with the child's human dignity. For this purpose, it has issued rules for guiding student behaviour in school. The rules promote positive behaviour and address negative behaviour. They stipulate the need to define the parties involved in the educational process – namely the instructor, student and parent – in school rules and regulations and to develop and implement programmes and activities that instil mutual respect, cordiality and humane relationships between students and school staff (see Table 6).

155. Special education in the United Arab Emirates has evolved significantly. The number of special education schools and educational, technical and administrative bodies has grown steadily to absorb the number of students requiring special education. This is reflected in the Ministry's concern with special education as a parallel branch of public education activity. Special education schools absorb students, provide educational services to broad segments of society (including citizens and expatriates) and help achieve progress and prosperity. They are located throughout the State and licensed and supervised by the Ministry of education. They use international educational curricula (British, American, Australian, Canadian, French and German).

Support of education by public welfare associations

156. Public welfare associations undertake the following in support of education:

- The Teachers Association, which is a public welfare association in the State, organizes professional, specialized courses for learners and training courses and enrichment lessons for students.
- Women's associations in the State provide literacy instruction in adult education centres which they run under the Ministry of Education's supervision. They also hold educational seminars, courses and lectures for teachers and students.
- Charitable associations in the State facilitate education by providing school supplies and financial and in-kind assistance to low-income students. The associations also help pay the educational costs of needy students.

B. The objectives of education (article 29)

157. State policies on educational objectives focus on education as a fundamental component of sustainable development. Education is the primary factor in developing human capital, which is both the instrument and objective of

development. This approach emerges clearly in the Emirates Vision 2021. The vision seeks to develop the knowledge of all Emiratis to enable them to contribute to the country's growth. Citizens enjoy equal access to modern education based on a policy and strategy that builds citizens' capacities and shapes educational outputs consistent with labour market needs. Efforts are made to achieve a creative balance that keeps pace with social, economic and other developments and changes. The following objectives have been established:

1. Design of a modern curricula and assessment methods and tools that meet international academic standards to help create an educational environment in which students are the central focus of the education process.
2. Establishment of a modern technology infrastructure for all levels of education for use by schools to manage and conduct their activities in the education process.
3. Development of human resources policies and systems to enhance the qualitative performance of public education institutions, education administrators, teachers and other employees.
4. Development and improvement of school buildings and facilities and supply of them with equipment and resources that meet modern educational standards to enable schools to provide progressive curricula and activities.
5. Improvement of vocational development schemes and programmes for all education employees (administrators, teachers, technicians) to enable them to implement the Ministry's strategy.
6. Development of systems that enable parents to monitor their children's academic performance and provide stakeholders in society with full information about the performance of the education system.

158. Based on its strategy for the coming years, the Government is continuing to develop the educational system so that it is on a par with the educational system in the industrialized countries. The necessary funds are allocated to achieve the Government's objectives under the Ministry of Education's strategic plan, expand the number of model schools, improve teacher training and support and create an attractive environment for business investment in secondary and higher education to benefit all of society. Table 7 in the annex attached to the present report shows key education indicators in the United Arab Emirates during 1990-2009.

Net primary school enrolment

159. According to educational indicators, net primary school enrolment rose from 97.1 per cent in 1992 to 98.3 per cent in 2009 at an annual rate of 0.07 per cent. To reach the target rate of 100 per cent, net enrolment must grow by 0.20 per cent between now and 2015. This and other indicators were affected by demographic changes in the State during the years covered by the evaluation.

Percentage of students who complete fifth grade

160. The percentage of students who complete fifth grade rose from 95.5 per cent in 1990 to 99.5 per cent in 2009 (0.15 per cent annual growth rate). According to these figures, the State will be able to reach its target of 100 per cent by the start of 2015, the date set for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The United Arab Emirates has instituted compulsory education until the ninth grade to eliminate dropping out before that level is completed. The State has achieved major progress

in providing school places for every student in the country. This highlights the possibility of achieving universal education at the next educational level by the start of 2015, after it is achieved at the first level.

161. The Emirates Vision 2021 also emphasizes “lowering the dropout rate and instilling the values of learning and work.” This involves strengthening the participation of parents and the community in the educational process, encouraging extracurricular activities, improving guidance and counselling in the schools, strengthening the culture of self-education and the values of work and education, and encouraging sports and athletic competitions in the schools and universities.

C. The cultural rights of children who belong to minorities (article 30)

162. In view of the culture of tolerance that pervades Emirati society, all foreign groups are granted the freedom and right to express their culture as long as doing so does not conflict with public order. Federal Act No. 2 of 2008, concerning civil public welfare associations and institutions, regulates these rights. It entitles expatriate communities to obtain permits to engage in their cultural and national activities. The expatriate communities’ organizations and clubs are intended to hold cultural activities and programs, which generally consist of athletic, cultural and literary activities, Ramadan breakfasts, celebrations of their national holidays, art festivals, safaris and programs for women and children.

D. Rest, play, recreation, leisure and cultural and artistic activities (article 31)

163. The State attaches the utmost importance to the social and cultural cultivation of children. This is accomplished through centres and activities run by the Ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Health and Culture and Community Development, the General Authority of Youth and Sports and other volunteer organizations concerned with children. In addition, indirect means such as the family and schools (inside and outside the classroom) seek to identify the special abilities of children, develop their talents and give them various skills. In this regard, there are specialized libraries in different regions of the State that are concerned with cultivating children, including the following:

Libraries for children

Cultural Academy Library

164. In 1986, the Children’s Library was established in the Cultural Academy. The library has more than 17,000 titles, most of them in the Arabic language as well as in English and French. It has a large collection of international stories, nonfiction works in all branches of knowledge, encyclopaedias and atlases. It acquires weekly and monthly children’s periodicals published domestically and in the Arab world. In 2007, it attracted more than 12,000 children. The library periodically hosts students visiting from Government and private schools and schools for persons with disabilities to kindle a love for reading among young people.

Library of the Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan Religious and Cultural Centre

165. The Future Generations Library is the first library in the city of Ain. It seeks to be a cultural beacon for knowledge dissemination and enrichment among children and youth. It enables children and youth to develop their reading and study skills. It

enhances their language and knowledge attainments, occupies their free time and mobilizes their capacities, enabling them to meet the challenges of cultural globalization and to be an influential force in promoting the country's cultural renaissance.

Libraries of the children's and girls' centres of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs

166. The children's centres provide libraries brimming with books in various fields of science and knowledge to help children acquire information. The centres have also launched the following programs:

- The "Gold Book Prize" for publishing houses to encourage them to publish children's books.
- The holding of a children's book exhibition as part of the activities of the first Sharjah Children's Reading Festival. The exhibition was devoted to children's books to ensure the ongoing publication of new books in children's literature and studies on childhood.

Establishment of the "Let Us Read" website (www.letusread.ae)

167. The site opens the doors of culture and reading to visitors of various ages. It contains many portals, the most salient being the "Dialogue Club," which presents topics of concern to readers as well as the input of site visitors concerning the topics. The site offers many competitions, including the festival competitions, reading competitions, literary creativity competitions and contests for all of its courses. The results of competitions are presented on the site. There is a special "Guide" link to important cultural books in the collections of state institutions and libraries and a link to the publications of the children's and girls' centres.

Publication of specialized non-school books for children

168. The Ministry of Social Affairs has published a book entitled *Children in the Emirates in the Light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (in Arabic). The book presents and explains the provisions of the Convention and the State's efforts to provide appropriate services for children under the Convention.

169. The Ministry of Social Affairs has distributed the aforesaid book widely through its offices, the social development centres and the centres for disabled persons. The book is also accessible on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (www.mosa.gov.ae).

170. A conference on "The Rights of the Child – between International Conventions and Regional Visions" was held during 25-26 April 2006. Conference participants included 14 states and a large number of international and regional organizations (League of Arab States, Council on American-Islamic Relations, European Institute of Human Sciences, Arab Council for Childhood Development (the Arab organization for the rights of the child), UNICEF, International Islamic Council for Da'wah and Relief, Defence for Children International-Iraq and the International Association of Lawyers).

171. The Sharjah Government's Supreme Council for Family Affairs issued a book entitled, *Children of the Emirates – Rights and Duties* (in Arabic). The first and second editions appeared in 2002 and 2005 respectively.

172. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs in Sharjah created a mural with a length of 380 meters on the rights of the child to deepen social and humanitarian awareness of children's rights.

173. The Ministry of Social Affairs/Department of Care and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons publishes a quarterly academic journal dealing with the world of the disabled entitled *My World – "This is me, this is my world"*. The first edition was published in May 2008. The journal treats persons with disabilities, rehabilitation services and educational and vocational services for the disabled.

174. The Ministry of Social Affairs coordinated with the various media to familiarize the public with the rights of children, particularly children with disabilities. These rights were treated in many television segments produced for this purpose.

Publications of the children's and girls' centres

Prize of Literary Creativity

175. The Prize of Literary Creativity is awarded to 13 gifted children for stories they write. The stories are published in a collection. They reflect the innocent spirit of child storytelling and inspire children to dream of a good future. The first edition was published in 2005.

Cultural activities

Cultural Academy in Abu Dhabi

176. The Cultural Academy in Abu Dhabi was established in 1981 to develop culture, enrich thought, encourage fine arts and highlight the national Arab and Islamic cultural heritage. One of the Academy's main roles is to make culture widely accessible to the Abu Dhabi community. In this regard, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage places a priority on making culture accessible to young people. Hence, the Free Atelier for the Fine Arts and the Children's Centre seek to develop cultural awareness and encourage creative thought in society, especially among youth.

Talent and Creativity Centre

177. The centre opened in January 1986 under its former name, the Children's Centre, to promote culture for children, nurture their artistic and cultural talents, occupy their free time and satisfy their urge to engage in hobbies. The centre's mission is to benefit children in every way in respect of culture and the contemporary arts. The centre initially attracted children between the ages of six and twelve. In 2006, when its name was changed to the Talent and Creativity Centre, it began serving children between the ages of six and fifteen. At least 160 boys and girls between the ages of six and fifteen benefit from the centre each month (1600 students/year). The centre offers courses in heritage, art, personal development and cultivation, languages and computers.

Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs

Cultural activities and programs provided by the Persons with Disabilities Sector

178. These activities and programs consist of the following:

- The sector launched an awareness raising campaign in 2008 to familiarize the public with disabilities and explain ways to limit them. The program has greatly enriched the knowledge of the local community.
- The Global Forum on Autism organizes a series of activities in April to familiarize society with autism. The activities are designed to spread awareness of autistic persons' needs. It emphasizes importance of social mainstreaming for them and providing them with opportunities to give expression to their capabilities. World Autism Day coincides with the Abu Dhabi Autism Championship hosted by the sector.
- An annual Conference on Persons with Disabilities is held in March for the presentation of papers on various disabilities and the latest special education strategies. Top world experts participate in the conference, which is intended to promote the development of services for persons with disabilities, their families and the organizations concerned with mainstreaming them.
- White Cane Day is observed globally in December. All care and rehabilitation centres participate in a series of activities to raise awareness of the importance of the white cane in helping limited vision persons to identify themselves and navigate.
- Universal Children's Day is observed in January pursuant to a United Nations General Assembly resolution. The sector participates in this occasion through multiple ceremonies and activities focusing on the educational, cultural, social and religious rights of special needs students.
- Gulf Child Day is observed annually at centres for persons with special needs. The day brings these children together in an atmosphere of family togetherness with their relatives and teachers.
- The sector publishes a yearbook in December. The yearbook documents, in photographs and reports, all achievements, activities and programs of the special needs sector during the academic year.
- The Blind Forum is a camp for persons with vision challenges. It is the first project that encompasses persons with disabilities at the State level. It is designed to achieve the social mainstreaming of persons with special needs.

Children's magazines

179. Children's magazines include the following:

- *Majid* magazine: The Emirates Media Corporation began publishing this magazine on 28 February 1979. The magazine is among the most broadly circulated children's magazines in the Arab world. It seeks to develop the child's connection with his religion, homeland and nation and to encourage the child to join the procession of scientific advancement. It is oriented toward children between the ages of eight and 14, though it has succeeded in becoming a magazine for the entire family. In previous years, *Majid* has published many books series for children, foremost of which are the Knowledge Circle Book Series Zakiyah al-Dhakiyah, Kaslan Jiddan series, Momentous Arab Events series, Forensics Team series and other publications.
- *Al-Adhkiya'* magazine: Khaleej Press, Printing and Publishing House issued the trial issue of this monthly on 1 January 1996 and the first issue on

9 January 1996. The magazine, which comes out on the first Tuesday of each month, is an educational magazine for children. It features simple, academic topics and instructive, educational stories inspired by world, Arab and Islamic history. It seeks to anchor the child's identity, increase his knowledge and expand his awareness. It includes recreational – instructional material to develop the knowledge and skills of the child through questions, riddles, drawings and pictures that may be coloured. It offers artistic competitions and includes a variety of sections to achieve its goals, including serial stories with pictures, heritage stories and photographs. It inspires belief through its inclusion of verses from the Noble Koran and Hadiths and Islamic stories. It also features photographs, intelligent writing, science pages, reader input pages, the "Question Mark" feature and the "Do-It-Yourself" feature.

- The Ministry of Interior's *Khalid* magazine has been published by the Dubai police since 1992. It is a comprehensive traffic safety, educational and cultural magazine concerned with education and raising awareness. Since 1990, the Sharjah police have published the monthly *Junior Policeman* magazine, which is intended to promote safety and safety awareness among children and school students. The Ras al-Khaimah police have published the *Our Loved Ones* magazine since 1997. This magazine seeks to raise the awareness of children and is a special annex to the "Vigilant Eye" magazine. All of these magazines continue to be published.

Children's culture theatres

180. These theatres include:

- Children's Night Theatre: This theatre was established under Cabinet Decision No. 242 of 1984 on 22 November 1984. The theatre seeks to cultivate talents, instil praiseworthy values and lofty concepts and strengthen identity and heritage preservation.
- Children's City Theatre: The theatre is located in Children's City, an educational attraction. It offers instructional workshops, entertainment programs, films and concerts for schools students, children and their family members.

The encouragement of children's creativity

The Latifa bint Mohammed Award for Children's Creativity

181. The Latifa bint Mohammed Award for Children's Creativity was created in 1998 under Decision No. 7/1998 of the Nahdah Women's Association in Dubai with the generous sponsorship of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Since the seventh season (2004-05), the award has also encompassed children of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. The award is designed to stimulate creativity in a number of areas that develop the thinking and culture of children.

Award levels

182. The award covers the following levels:

- First level: It covers non-special needs children in the 8-18 age group. The age groups may be adjusted depending on the field.

- Second level: It covers children with special needs in the 8-18 age group. The age groups may be adjusted.
- Third level: This level is for the organization, institution, centre or school that best cares for mainstream and special needs children.

Award areas

183. The award areas include the memorization and recitation of the Noble Koran, literary creativity, studies and research, artistic creativity and the photography competition.

Literary Creativity Award

184. The Centre for Children and Girls in Sharjah held the fourth round of the literary creativity competition in 2007 in the area of the story. The award is intended to stimulate creativity in children and give free rein to their faculties of expression and revelation in refined literary frameworks. Participants in the competition included the 9-13 age group (79 participants) and the 14-17 age group (36 participants).

Gold Book Award

185. This award is given to publishing houses to encourage them to publish children's books.

Recreational activity

186. The Free Atelier for the Fine Arts in the Cultural Complex offers classes in drawing, oil painting, pottery, sculpture, calligraphy and photography. In 2005, 1000 young people participated in classes at the Atelier, which are offered weekly in the morning and evening. The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage also provides special programming to allow the community to access to the Emirates' culture. It holds courses for children and presents demonstrations of the handicrafts and popular dishes of the Emirates.

Children's City

187. The Children's City was opened on 5 March 2002 as the first educational city for children ages 2-15 in the United Arab Emirates. It encourages children to explore through play to learn useful information. It was designed to allow children to engage in hobbies through organized school visits or family visits. The city contains different exhibitions, e.g., the natural sciences (the human body, electricity and nature centre) space exploration (including a planetarium), computers and communication, life as lived by people in the Emirates and the lives and cultures of other peoples. It has a section devoted to small children and offers instructional workshops throughout the year in its various exhibits or in halls dedicated for this purpose. It also offers recreational programs for school students, children and their families.

Children's and girls' centres run by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs

188. The centres are concerned with child development and enabling children to practice their hobbies according to their proclivities. They provide an appropriate environment for creativity and excellence in the areas of culture, science, information and art. Prominent concern is given to deepening and strengthening the

child's religious faith. These centres are open throughout the year, six days a week. There are four levels:

- Blossoms for children ages 6-18 years.
- Children's centres for children ages 9-12 years.
- Girls' centres for girls ages 13-17 years.
- Sports centres for children and girls. They focus on sports activity and are equipped with gymnasiums, swimming pools and outside playing fields.

Activities of the children's centres

189. The children centres are educational institutions that develop the capabilities and talents of their members. They are open throughout the year in the evening for children to participate in activities, which include Islamic education and cultural, scientific, computer, artistic, musical and drama activities.

Activities of the girls centres

190. These activities include:

1. Islamic educational activities for girls.
2. Cultural activities to familiarize girls with local and world cultures, societies and civilizations through multimedia.
3. Life skill activities to help girls acquire the information, skills and orientations needed to deal with the tasks and responsibilities of family life and make sound decisions.
4. Computer activities to develop technical skills and provide an outlet for the abilities and creative tendencies of girls in the digital realm with a view to preparing the upcoming generation to make technological contributions.
5. Artistic activities to develop the aesthetic and artistic sense and knowledge of the technique needed for creative endeavours and the use of art to provide an outlet for the creative, artistic energies of girls.
6. Athletic activities to instil sound athletic concepts, awareness and values in girls and to develop their physical abilities and kinaesthetic skills to achieve a high degree of physical fitness and to engage in diverse athletic activities.

Sports centres

191. There are 16 children's centres, sports centres and centres for girls with 3590 members ages 6-12. These athletic facilities were designed and built according to the engineering specifications and requirements for athletic activity. The sports facilities include the following:

- Multi-purpose athletic facility: Its measurements are suited to children's ages. It includes basketball courts, volleyball courts and handball courts and gymnastics equipment.
- Swimming pool: It is built to specifications that take into account the needs of children, safety and risk avoidance. Swimming activities help prepare skilful swimmers.

- Outside playing fields: Each sports centre has a series of outside playing fields for football, basketball, handball, volleyball and tennis. All are equipped with up-to-date regulation equipment, so that children can practice these activities according to the sports centre's plan, which is prepared in advance, to achieve the desired objectives.

The activities of the sports centres include:

- Team sports: The children play team sports according to offensive and defensive plans. Each player has a defined role and calculated action in the framework of game plans prepared by the coach.
- Individual sports: Individuals practice the sports based on their physical strength or agility.

Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care and Special Needs

Persons with disability sector

192. Activities in this area include the following:

- Open day: an annual festival that takes place in January with the participation of a large number of care and rehabilitation centres, public school students, community members, parents and others.
- Summer program: an educational recreational program held during the summer break to mainstream children with disabilities with nondisabled students to permit them to get to know each other and to allow them to acquire experience, skills and new knowledge to advance academically and socially, be healthy and use their free time in a positive way.

VIII. Special protection measures (articles 22, 30, 32–36, 37 (b)–(d), 38, 39 and 40, and of the Convention)

193. The Emirati legislator provides for protection for all citizens, including children. The Constitution, article 10 provides for the protection of the rights and freedoms of the people of the Federation and the provision of a better life for all citizens.

A. child refugees (article 20)

194. There are no asylum-seekers or refugees in the United Arab Emirates, which is blessed with security and maintains peace with its surroundings. The United Arab Emirates has not joined the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Armed Forces do not permit children to join their ranks. A person wishing to join the Armed Forces or security forces must have reached the age of 18 years.

B. Children in armed conflicts (article 38), and physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (article 39)

195. The recruitment of children in armed conflicts is a global phenomenon. The United Arab Emirates enjoys internal and external stability, security and calm. Recruitment of children does not exist in the United Arab Emirates. Under Emirati law, the Armed Forces may not admit children. A person must be 18 years of age in order to join the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces have special programs and

courses for training their members in the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law and the protection and care of civilian victims, especially women and children. The United Arab Emirates has joined the four Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law. In 2004, it established a National Committee on International Humanitarian Law, the first of its type in the Arab region. The committee seeks to strengthen enforcement of international humanitarian law in the State by spreading awareness and reviewing and making appropriate recommendations on relevant national legislation. The United Arab Emirates has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross. As a result, the Diplomatic Institute in the United Arab Emirates has become a regional centre for training specialists from the Arab countries in international humanitarian law. The State has also assumed the task of disseminating and applying the provisions of international humanitarian law in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

196. The United Arab Emirates has also undertaken numerous initiatives to protect civilians and ease the suffering of victims of armed conflict without discrimination throughout the world. It makes ongoing efforts to provide humanitarian aid in disasters and accidents through its organizations and authorities – e.g. the Emirati Red Crescent and other governmental and private humanitarian organizations – to lay the foundations of peace, security and respect for human rights.

197. The State is currently examining the possibility of joining the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and a portion of the recommendations to which the United Arab Emirates committed in the framework of the first round of the universal periodic review process.

C. Economic exploitation of children (article 32)

198. Federal Labour Relations Act No. 8 of 1980 prohibits the employment of juveniles below the age of 15. It also requires employers, before employing any juvenile, to obtain a birth certificate, certificate of medical fitness to perform the required work and written consent from the juvenile's guardian.

199. Article 25 of the aforesaid acts restricts the daily work hours of juveniles to six hours, interspersed with one or more breaks totalling at least one hour, so that a juvenile does not work for more than four consecutive hours.

200. The Labour Relations Act prohibits employing juveniles at night from 2000 hours until 0600 hours and in jobs that are hazardous or harmful to their health. The Ministry of Labour in the United Arab Emirates does not grant work permits to juveniles (children). Thus, the Ministry's statistics do not show that any persons below the age of 18 have been employed since the Labour Relations Act was promulgated. In addition, the immigration laws prohibit importing persons below the age of 18 to work in occupations to which the Labour Relations Act does not apply, such as domestic workers, farmers and drivers in households, which indicates that there is no economic exploitation of children in the Emirates

201. To support the protection of children at the national level, the State has joined the following International Labour Organization Conventions:

- The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
- The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).
- The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

D. Use of illicit substances and the use of children in the trafficking of narcotics

202. The competent authorities in the United Arab Emirates are strict in combating narcotic drugs. Federal Act No. 6 of 1986 on combating narcotics and the like was issued. Federal Act No. 14 of 1995 on combating narcotic substances and psychotropic substances was amended by Federal Act No. 1 of 2005 on combating narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

203. The antidrug policy in the Emirates is based on two foundations: the strengthening of penalties; and the establishment of specialized units to treat and rehabilitate drug addicts. The law prohibits importing, exporting, manufacturing, extracting, separating, producing, acquiring and taking drugs.

204. The penalties for using and trafficking narcotics range from imprisonment of at least one year for using certain classes of drugs to four years' imprisonment for the use of certain other narcotic substances. A drug user who voluntarily admits himself to the addiction treatment unit is exempt from any penalty. A person who runs or prepares a place for the use of any narcotic substance is punished by imprisonment of 15 years. In addition to strong penalties, the authorities in the Emirates impose strict control on the entry of narcotic substances through the land, maritime and air portals of the Emirates. Statistics of the Ministry of Interior indicate that the authorities have thwarted many attempts to smuggle drugs into the State. Typically, the Emirates serves as a transit country for narcotic substances intended for re-export to other countries. This Emirates' policy has curbed drug use and trafficking significantly.

E. Sexual exploitation and abuse of children (article 34)

205. The United Arab Emirates strongly and resolutely opposes all forms of human exploitation for sexual or other purposes. The State's strategy is founded on four pillars: developing legislation on combating human trafficking; enabling the concerned authorities to take measures to deter and prevent human trafficking; protecting and supporting the victims of human trafficking offenses; and expanding bilateral and international cooperation to combat such offenses.

206. The State is currently examining the possibility of joining the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and a portion of the recommendations to which the United Arab Emirates committed in the framework of the first round of the universal periodic review process.

207. Federal Act No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking offenses is the first of its kind in the Arab world. The act imposes strong penalties on perpetrators of human trafficking offenses ranging from imprisonment of one year to life imprisonment and fines ranging from 100 000 dirhams to 1 million dirhams.

208. The competent authorities have adopted measures to protect children from exploitation. These measures include not permitting children from certain states to

enter the country if the children's names have been added to the passport of the family or relatives. The State requires a separate passport and separate entry visa to be issued for each child to ensure compliance with the regulations and to enable immigration and passport officials to identify children as they enter the country and subsequently ascertain that they return to their countries of origin with their families and relatives.

209. The police in the Emirates continue to monitor tourism companies that import women into the State. They impose many restrictions on the entry of unmarried females under the age of 30 years, as this group is the most vulnerable to human trafficking risks. The Government views women who are subject to sexual exploitation as victims requiring protection and support through counselling and rehabilitation programs. At the same time, the State seeks to punish any person who forces a victim to engage in prostitution.

210. The police departments provide shelter and counselling to such victims through social work support services in Abu Dhabi.

211. There are a number of institutions that care for victims of trafficking in the United Arab Emirates. The main ones are:

- The Dubai Association for the Protection of Women and Children, which was founded in 2007 to provide psychological support to all women and children, whether nationals or expatriates, who are victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, neglect, ill-treatment by an employer or other social problems.
- Shelters for victims of human trafficking: These were established in 2008, under the auspices of the National Red Crescent Society to provide protection and psychological, medical and legal assistance to victims of human trafficking. Their remit was widened following the opening of new homes in Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.

The General Command of the Dubai Police also established a centre for monitoring and handling all types of human trafficking offenses.

212. Cabinet Decision No. 5 of 6 May 2007 was issued to form a National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking Offenses. The committee is chaired by the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs. The committee members include one or more representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, State Security Agency, Red Crescent Organization and any other entity whose inclusion in the committee is decided by the cabinet.

213. Article 3 of the aforesaid decision states that the committee's purviews includes:

1. Studying and updating legislation on trafficking to provide victims with appropriate protection consistent with international standards.
2. Preparing, in conjunction with relevant State entities, reports on the measures taken by the State to combat human trafficking
3. Studying reports on human trafficking and taking the necessary follow-up action

4. Coordinating and monitoring efforts to combat human trafficking with the relevant State authorities, including ministries, Government agencies, institutions and authorities.

5. Spreading awareness of issues relating to human trafficking by holding conferences and seminars, issuing publications, conducting training and other measures to achieve the committee's objectives.

6. Participating with relevant State authorities in international conferences and forums on human trafficking, and representing the views of the State in these forums.

7. Carrying out any other activities assigned to the Committee in this connection.

214. Federal act No. 2 of 2006 on combating information technology offenses was issued to criminalize the use of current information systems of all types (Internet, mobile telephones, satellites) to advertise, promote, abet or facilitate the sexual exploitation of children.

215. Article 12 of the aforesaid act punishes production and distribution over the Internet that is liable to harm public morals. The penalty is increased if the concerned act is directed toward a juvenile (child).

216. Article 13 of the act "punishes by imprisonment and a fine any person who abets, lures or assists a male or female to commit prostitution or lewdness using the Internet or a means of information technology. If the victim is a juvenile, the punishment is imprisonment of at least five years and a fine.

217. The Labour Act prohibits granting work visas to any person below the age of 18. This mission has prevented trafficking in children for labour purposes.

F. Abduction, sale or trafficking of children (article 35)

218. The United Arab Emirates has adopted all measures, whether in the Constitution or laws, to provide special protection to children.

219. Federal Act No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking, article 1, defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transfer, removal or receiving of persons by means of the threat of the use of force or any other form of coercion, abduction, deception, deceit, abuse of authority, exploitation of a situation of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of sums of money or favours in order to obtain the consent of the person who has control of another person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes all forms of sexual exploitation, exploitation of the prostitution of others, bonded labour, forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of human organs."

220. The aforesaid act complements the protection provided by increasing the penalty from imprisonment of at least five years to life imprisonment if such acts are committed against a child or person with disabilities.

G. Protection of the child against all other forms of exploitation (article 36)

221. This article of the Convention concerns the protection of children against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the child's welfare. Article 16 of the Constitution provides for protection of minors, stating, "Society shall undertake to

assist and rehabilitate them in their own interests and the interest of society. The laws on public assistance and social security shall regulate these matters.”

222. Under the Constitution, article 34, “Every citizen is free to choose his own occupation, profession or trade, subject to the limits laid down by law and with due regard for the legislation regulating certain professions and trades. No one may be subjected to forced labour except in the exceptional cases provided by law and in return for compensation.” Under Article 34, paragraph 3, “No person may be enslaved.”

223. Under the Penal Code, article 344, “Anyone who abducts, seizes, detains or illegally deprives a person of his liberty by any other means or does so through another person shall be liable to a penalty of temporary imprisonment. The penalty shall be life imprisonment in a number of cases, including if the victim is a juvenile (child).”

224. To strengthen protection of the child, the Penal Code, article 327, stipulates the following: “A term of imprisonment shall be imposed for taking a new-born child from a legal guardian, concealing or swapping a child with another or claiming that a child belongs to persons other than the child’s real parents.”

225. The State has also sought to provide full protection to juveniles (children) under Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants. Under Article 42 of the act, “Anyone who exposes a juvenile to vagrancy by training, preparing, assisting or inducing the juvenile to engage in vagrant behaviour or facilitating the vagrancy of the juvenile in any way shall be punished by imprisonment of up to one year or a fine of 2000-5000 dirhams. The penalty shall be imposed even if the vagrancy does not legally materialize.”

226. The aforesaid article 42, paragraph 2, states that anyone who trains and prepares a juvenile to commit a crime, or who prepares a juvenile to perform an act that prepares for, facilitates or complements the commission of an offense, or who abets a juvenile’s commission of an offense, shall be punished by the same penalty mentioned in paragraph 1 of the article. Paragraph 3 of that article stipulates that a perpetrator who uses coercion or threat, or who is the parent or person responsible for rearing or supervising the juvenile, or received custody of the juvenile under the law, is to be punished by imprisonment of at least six months. The legislator thus provided for a stronger penalty, because those mentioned in the article are required to act in the interests of the juvenile. Thus, the United Arab Emirates’ Constitution and national laws clearly set forth guarantees and measures that provide for the needs of children, safeguard their honour and protect them from all types of exploitation. In addition, the Social Security Act provides children with financial assistance, such that children who receive assistance constitute 36.6 per cent of all social assistance recipients in the State.

H. Street children

227. Street children are a phenomenon in a number of countries. This phenomenon is absent in the United Arab Emirates thanks to the values of its Islamic culture. That culture has firmly entrenched the values of cohesion, solidarity, emphasis of the family, maintenance of family ties and care for children. Measures and procedures have also been adopted in this regard.

I. Administration of the juvenile justice system (article 40)

228. The law defines juvenile delinquents as being between the ages of seven and eighteen. The Emirates have established centres for the placement of juveniles who commit felonies or misdemeanours. These facilities are called “education houses.” They provide social welfare, education, vocational training and social guidance. There are five such facilities in the United Arab Emirates, including three for boys in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Fujairah and two for girls in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

229. The aforesaid facilities took in 1092 juveniles in 2009. As part of the social welfare treatment of each case, the facility submits to the court a social report that includes a study of the juvenile and the circumstances of the juvenile’s commission of the concerned offense as well as a psychological report on the juvenile prepared by a psychologist.

230. The juvenile justice system decides cases summarily and adopts the necessary measures regarding them. Generally, the court orders those measures that are best suited to the concerned juvenile (child). In addition, a special department has been established in the office of the juvenile prosecutor in each emirate of the State.

J. Children deprived of their liberty, including any form of detention, imprisonment or placement in custodial settings (article 37 (b), (c) and (d))

231 Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants contains a number of provisions that prevent the admission of a child to any detention institution. Article 7 entitles the judge to adopt measures as he sees fit if the concerned juvenile is between the ages of seven and sixteen. Article 8 allows the judge to order measures as he deems fit if the child has reached the age of 16.

232. Article 15 of the aforesaid law states that the “measures which may be adopted regarding a juvenile (child) are: reprimand; placement in the custody of the parent or on probation; injunction on frequenting certain places or engaging in certain work; obligatory vocational training; placement in a treatment shelter, rehabilitation institute, education house or reform institution depending on the case; or deportation from the country, which shall be limited to persons who do not possess United Arab Emirates nationality and are repeat offenders under the act.

233. The legislator has provided for graduated measures to be applied to each individual case according to the judge’s discretion. A judge may merely issue a reprimand in one case. In another case, he may rule to issue a reprimand and remand the juvenile to the custody of his guardian. Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, article 23, states that the court may order the juvenile’s placement in an appropriate rehabilitation institution or in a juvenile care and evaluation facility run or recognized by the State.

234. Under the aforesaid article, a juvenile may not be kept in such facilities upon reaching the age of 18.

235. There are five facilities for children under the age of 18. Juvenile offenders are pardoned on certain religious and national occasions to enable them to live their lives within their communities and continue their education.

K. Judgments issued against children (article 37 (a))

236. The legislator in the United Arab Emirates has adopted all measures to preserve the humanity and dignity of the child. Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, article 10 (1), stipulates, “In cases where capital punishment or imprisonment is the penalty established for an offense committed by juvenile, that penalty shall be replaced by detention of up to 10 years.” From a penal standpoint, it is recognized that detention differs from imprisonment. Detention is imposed for a misdemeanour. Imprisonment is imposed for a felony. The Emirati legislator reduces felonies to misdemeanours and juvenile cases. Moreover, no criminal record is established for first-time juvenile misdemeanour offenses. In this way, the legislator seeks to open the way for the reform of the juvenile offender. The same article, paragraph 2, “If a juvenile commits an offense punishable by detention, the term of detention to which he is sentenced shall not exceed half the maximum term prescribed for the offence in question. Such commutation is consistent with the Emirati legislator’s policy of seeking to reform the juvenile offender rather than to punish or take revenge on him.

237. Under Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, article 11 (1), “The recidivism provisions shall not apply to a juvenile.” This provision was enacted because stricter penalties for repeat juvenile offenders would be inconsistent with the Emirati legislator’s policy to reform the juvenile (child) offender and to commute, not strengthen, his punishment. Under paragraph 2 of the same article, “A juvenile shall not be subject to incidental or complementary penalties, excluding the seizure and closure of a store and dismissal from employment.” Thus, a juvenile offender is not subject to incidental and complementary penalties, e.g. fines, attorney’s fees, etc., excluding seizure and closure of stores and dismissal from employment. As is well known, this exception is not expansive. The seizure intended by the legislator is the seizure of any item obtained from and linked to an offense. Seizure may not be expanded to include the funds of a juvenile offender that are not the proceeds of a crime. The closure of a store is not intended to include the store belonging to the juvenile offender’s father or brother if the juvenile works therein. The intent is the juvenile offender’s exclusive property. If the juvenile is an accomplice of another person, the store may not be closed. The intent of employment in this context is public employment. If the juvenile works in a governmental job, he must be dismissed from it. However, a juvenile offender employed by a private company or business may not be dismissed.

238. Under Article 12 of the act, “If a juvenile commits another offense before he is sentenced to one of the offenses, he must be tried for the offenses as one unit and sentenced to the harsher of the penalties established for the offenses.” If a juvenile offender commits more than one offense before a judgment is issued against him in any of the offenses, the court must issue a judgment against him for such offenses as a single unit and sentence him to the harsher of the penalties established for the offenses. It should be noted that the Emirati legislator does not require linking the offenses together substantively or otherwise, as each offense occurred separately against different persons and not against the same person.

L. Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (article 39)

239. Under Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, article 21, “The vocational training obligation shall entail the court’s committal of the juvenile to a governmental occupational training centre, or to a

factory, commercial firm or farm that is willing to accept the juvenile for training for a period, which may not exceed three years.” The legislator requires the consent of the entity that trains the juvenile. The judge may not compel the entity to accept the juvenile. The entity’s refusal to train the juvenile bears no liability.

240. Under the aforesaid Act No. 9 of 1976, article 22, “If it becomes evident to the court that the offense or vagrancy of a juvenile results from a mental illness, the court may order placement of the juvenile in a treatment shelter or medical facility designated for this purpose until the juvenile recovers.” The court may decide to release the juvenile thereafter based on the medical reports of the physicians supervising the treatment of the juvenile.

241. Under article 23 of the aforesaid act, a judge may place a juvenile in an appropriate reformatory or educational and reform facility for the care of juveniles. The legislator does not require that the institution or educational facility consent to the rehabilitation and reform of the juvenile as stipulated in article 21 of the act. A juvenile may be released by the court based on reports submitted by the reformatory. A juvenile may not remain in such institutions upon reaching the age of 18.

M. Unaccompanied children

242. Federal Act No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking stipulates the adoption of strict penal measures up to life imprisonment. The act covers slavery, all types of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking of human organs. A National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking has also been formed with a membership comprising representatives of federal and local governmental bodies and civil society organizations. The committee plays an important role in coordinating the State’s efforts to combat human trafficking at all levels in the Emirates.

243. The State has spared no effort in dealing with and eliminating the problem of child camel jockeys, undertaking assiduous efforts and practical steps in this regard over the course of a number of years. It issued Act No. 15 of 2005, which prohibits the employment of persons under the age of 18 years in camel racing and establishes strict penalties for violators. The Ministry of Interior also formed committees to follow up on the implementation of the act. The State signed an agreement with UNESCO to rehabilitate child jockeys in their communities and improve their living standards, allocating 30 million dollars for this purpose in 2007. The United Arab Emirates also signed memoranda of understanding with four states considered sources of child jockeys (Sudan, Mauritania, Pakistan and Bangladesh). Under the memoranda, each child who participated in camel racing was provided material compensation. A committee was formed to follow up on the compensation, rehabilitation and integration of such children. The committee conducted 72 field visits in its efforts to conclusively eliminate the child camel jockey problem in the United Arab Emirates. On 6 June 2012, the committee responsible for following up on compensation payments held its final meeting, marking the closure of the dossier on child jockeys in the United Arab Emirates. The officials of the concerned Governments and international organizations and local community leaders in the concerned countries were honored. Currently, robotic jockeys are used during camel races.

N. Children belonging to minorities (article 30)

244. The United Arab Emirates protects the rights of foreign children and rejects any form of discrimination against them. This is highlighted by national laws which provide for the rights of foreign children, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, a child enjoys legal protection regardless of the child's sex, race, language or religion. Emirati society is pervaded by a culture of tolerance, is open to the countries of the world and respects the customs and cultures of other peoples.

245. This is seen clearly in government and private education, which provide health services and athletic, cultural and recreational activities to all without discrimination, as indicated by the presence of many foreign nationalities living in the State thanks to Emirati society's tolerance and acceptance of other peoples.
