

A Saga of Women Empowerment in the UAE over the Fifty Years

The Legislation and Laws in the UAE

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Institutional Work and Social Care

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Continuity and Development of Women's Rights

International Indicators in the Field of Women's Rights



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With the passage of fifty years since its foundation, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has transformed into a cultural edifice of which the citizens and foreign residents of the country are justly proud. From the outset, the UAE has pursued policies rooted in the ideas of tolerance and acceptance. Moreover, the UAE celebrates social diversity and what this brings to the modern state in terms of experience and the formation of a rich culture from which all residents of the state continue to benefit.

In this context, the UAE has embraced the issue of gender differences as an advantage and not an obstacle, so that the country's laws have come to emphasize equality and non-discrimination in all aspects of life. This includes the balance between professional careers and carrying out women's natural roles at the heart of the family, thus enabling them to engage in political, economic and social life without hindrance.

The UAE has also worked to strengthen the home from the inside, so it has passed laws appropriate to the environment of this newly established state, which are based on its history and its deep-rooted Islamic culture. It has sought to strike the right balance between sticking to values and opening future paths for development and creativity, and it has encouraged solutions to balance the needs of a traditional and religious society, where Islam holds a special place in the hearts of its citizens, and of a modern society open to the world and its diverse cultures.

The institutional work in support of the role of women in society varies to include all aspects of political, economic and social life and includes an integrated system that works to support, protect and preserve women's rights. UAE policy makers have also been proactive in creating spaces to empower women to engage in the fields of political and economic activities. These institutions work to create important channels of communication to monitor and study the natural development of women's needs and the possibility of supporting their lives through dealing with the development of society on the basis of an understanding of these needs and in-depth study to serve the community in general.

This journey has led to achievements at local and international levels, which clearly demonstrate the effort and concern that the state gives to this important issue for the citizens of the UAE and at the global level, and this can be seen through international reports that measure the extent of progress made in this field by the UAE.

Through this report, our aim is to highlight the developments that have occurred in the public policies and institutional structure that operate in the UAE that now empower women and protect their basic rights, and to provide an understanding of the political and social premises on which the state's philosophy is based in dealing with women's issues and protecting their rights.

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A Saga of Women Empowerment in the UAE over the Fifty Years

Introduction

This year, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrated its golden jubilee - fifty years since its foundation in 1971. The establishment of the UAE marked the start of its journey in consolidating the value of women's rights, starting with the declaration of the national constitution, and subsequent legislation. In addition, the procedures affirmed the connection between the modernisation of society and the assimilation of local values and Islamic culture in the form of legislation and the organization of women's rights within the state.

The UAE has not only consolidated the gains of women in the past fifty years through legislative and legal texts, but also it has made it possible for women across the UAE to participate in professional, cultural and social fields; thus enabling them to achieve many goals and to reach many senior positions of responsibility. This has led to the UAE winning many accolades in the field of women's empowerment and preservation of human rights.

The UAE has introduced laws, procedures, and programs aimed at creating a supportive

environment that enables women to fulfil their social, academic and professional aspirations. These laws are also intended to protect women's rights in society and in business, by providing all possibilities that promise them social welfare and a secure future, which include: education, health care and social security. This legislative framework is also intended to ensure that women are not subjected to physical or psychological abuse.

In the light of international advancements, the continuation of technological progress and the openness of the state to the cultures and people of the world, the decision-makers of the UAE seek to develop the legislative and governmental systems that also embrace Islamic culture and nurture the country's Muslim community. This is without losing sight of ensuring the progress of citizens and their integration with the opportunities provided by technological and societal advances. In addition to providing security and stability for women, whether they are citizens or foreign residents, this is in line with the UAE's culture and beliefs.

The Legislation and Laws Preserve Women's Rights in the UAE:

1. The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates:

The constitution is the main reference for the laws and legislations that manage the affairs of the state. Therefore, it guarantees the human rights provided by the state to the citizens of the UAE which comes at the highest legal levels. The constitution emphasized in its texts, the equality of rights and duties among the citizens of the state. The texts were free of any kind of differentiation based on gender as well. Hence, it stated that women are equal to men as citizens of this country. The constitution emphasised the principles of equality and social justice and the right of women to citizenship without any discrimination. Whereas, the second part “Article 14” of the constitution affirms “equality, social justice, equal opportunities, security and tranquillity for all citizens as fundamental pillars of society.”

The legislature considers women as an essential part of the family and the constitution has focused on the importance of her role in caring for childhood and motherhood, Article 16, Part Two states: “the society includes in its care childhood and motherhood. In addition to protecting minors and others who are unable to take care of themselves.” The second and third chapters detailed the citizen’s rights. It includes women’s right to education, health, work and care. It emphasized their economic and social rights without discrimination.



2. Personal Status:

The family in the UAE is considered a key component in the structure of society. Therefore, the state has put in place several laws that regulate social relations and ensure good coexistence by sound human nature. Moreover, women constitute a large segment of society and the laws of the state came to guarantee their rights as active individuals. Thus, personal status laws regulate marriage, divorce, child custody, dowry, and alimony. These confirm women's right to wills and inheritance in a way that achieves solidity and preserves their rights. Personal status laws are linked to noble Islamic law, which regulates the relationship between members of society. The citizens of the UAE are known for their commitment to the teachings of the tolerant Islamic Sharia. The laws that are compatible with Islamic Sharia are not only a governmental decision but rather a popular demand that is inevitable in the UAE.

In the first chapter of the constitution, "Article 7" affirms that "Islam is the official religion of the Union, and Islamic Sharia is a major source of legislation in it." Therefore, the state's laws are derived from the texts of Islamic Sharia, taking into account international laws, if they do not conflict with the Islamic religion. In such cases, the differences in religious sects are also taken into account. In the case of immigrants to the country, the judiciary decides on personal status issues according to specified international law, since the country hosts residents of different religions and beliefs on its territory.

UAE laws depend on the interpretations adopted in the UAE, which takes into account the Maliki and Hanbali schools of thought prevailing in the country. Since the first article of the UAE Civil Transactions Law stated that "legislative texts apply to all matters referring with these texts in their wording and content. Therefore, if the judge does not find a



suitable reference in these laws, a ruling will be made by Islamic Sharia, provided that he or she takes into account the choice of the most appropriate solution from the doctrine of Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. Otherwise, a ruling will be based on the interpretation of the school of Imam Shafi'i and Imam Abu Hanifa as the interest dictates. The judge then rules according to custom, without conflicting with public order or morals." Thus, Federal Law No. (28) of 2005 regarding personal status was enacted.

Believing in the importance of family stability and ensuring its dignity, the state established the Marriage Fund,

which provides the support for the establishment of a stable family that combines women and men with equal rights to obtain this grant. This is to encourage the establishment of the family and it was stated in Federal Law No. 47 of 1992 regarding the establishment of the Marriage Fund.

The UAE has amended some provisions of the Personal Status Law, Civil Transactions, Penalties and the Code of Criminal Procedure in the context of efforts to consolidate the principles of tolerance, promote women's rights and remove ambiguity from some texts that constituted a crime punishable by law as follows:

- **Allowing non-citizens to choose the laws that apply to them in matters of inheritance, wills and personal status.**
- **Decriminalization of acts that do not harm others in the Penal Code.**
- **Abolishing the article that gives mitigating excuses for the so-called "honour crimes", so that they are treated as murder crimes by the provisions in force of the Penal Code. This emphasizes the state's commitment to protecting women's rights.**
- **Changing the policies related to children born out of matrimony, whereby unmarried parents are allowed to obtain a form allowing them to apply for the birth certificate of their children out of wedlock. The amendments abolished the previous laws that made children ineligible for healthcare and education.**

3. Women's Rights at Work:

The UAE has empowered women and supported their career paths by enacting legislation that guarantees rights and preserves their dignity while taking their privacy into account. This ensures that they obtain all financial and moral rights in return for their work, on an equal footing with their male colleagues. These legislations protect women also from the risks that they may be exposed to as a result of working at night or in places that may be dangerous to them, such as factories, which require physical capabilities. The law also highlights preserving and safeguarding women's dignity at work. The following texts have been enacted to regulate women's work in the public and private sectors, also address the business sector in special laws that will be explained in the following section:

A. A. Federal Law No. (11) of 2008 regarding human resources in the federal government: It regulates the rights and duties of workers in the government sector. This law included women without discrimination in job grades, salaries, social security, health care, and vacations.

The law specified maternity and paternity leave and maternity leave after birth in Articles 48 and 53, where it stated that "the employee is entitled in a full-time job, to a paid maternity leave for sixty days. Moreover, female employees are permitted, after the end of the maternity leave, for four months from the date of return to work, to leave the workplace for two hours daily for breastfeeding ... this is with a paid salary." Article 56 also stipulates that a Muslim female employee shall be granted a mourning leave for four months and ten days from the date of death of a spouse, as required by Islamic Sharia.

B. B. Local laws, which include: Civil Service Law of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi No. 1 of 2006. Law of Human Resources Management of the Government of Dubai No. 27 of 2006. Civil Service Law of the Emirate of Sharjah No. 5 of 2001. Human Resources Law in Ras Al Khaimah No. 1 of 2013. These laws regulate the areas of work in the local government sector and they are compatible with the federal laws in their entirety and with some amendments that are compatible with the work environment in the local government agencies.

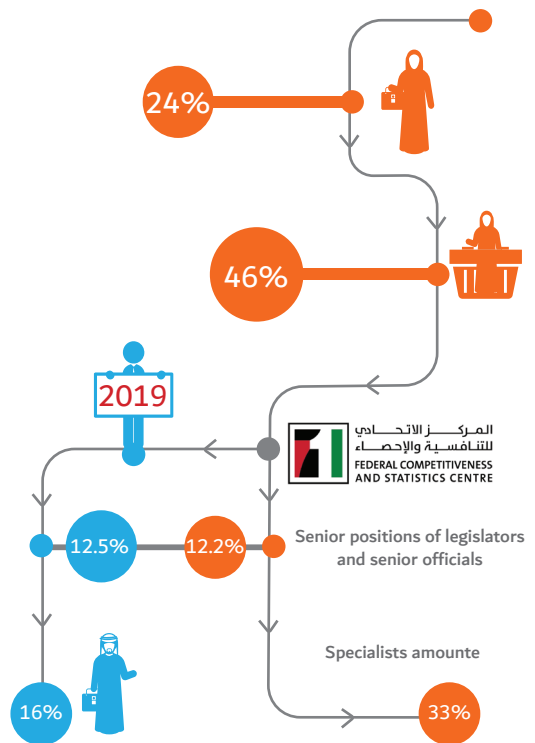
C. Amending Law 8 of 1980 by Decree No. 6 of 2020 to assure equal pay and the 2019 administrative decision on gender equality in salaries and wages in government agencies.



Women constitute a crucial role in the governmental and private business sector, where the participation of women amounted to 24% of the labour market in the country. Since they made up an important percentage in the boards of government administration, amounting to 46%.

According to the statistics of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Center, the participation of women in senior positions of legislators and senior officials for the year 2019 was 12.2% compared to males who held 12.5% of these positions. Meanwhile, the percentage of women's participation as specialists amounted to 33% compared to an average of 16.5% of men in the same field.

The UAE recognizes unpaid care work and domestic work for women. Thus, widows or those who have lost their breadwinner, or female citizens married to foreigners who cannot earn for reasons beyond their control, are entitled to a monthly allowance, by the applicable law.





4. Women in the Military and Security Services:

Women play an important role as members of the security services. Especially in the areas of communication, dialogue and the provision of protection. The presence of women in the security services provides security for women and children, due to their ability to communicate and understand issues related to these two groups. There is also a need for women to deal with cases that involve female victims who may need protection or be present at security institutions, in cases such as human trafficking, as an example. Therefore, the state saw the importance of the role of women in the security services and enacted laws that preserve their humanity and ensure their effective participation in practical tasks. The state has enacted the following laws to regulate work in the police and armed forces.

1. Federal Law No. (12) of 1976 regarding the Police and Security Forces.
2. Federal Law No. (7) of 2004 regarding Personnel Service in the Armed Forces.

Laws regulating police and military work refer to their affiliates without discrimination based on gender, and therefore laws related to career hierarchy, privileges, and duties apply to all members of the army and police without discrimination. The provisions relating to women have been added to this field of work, as labour laws have been amended by adding a special clause ensuring that women obtain a 90-day maternity leave by amending Federal Decree-Law No. (31) of 2019 and Amendment No. (6) of 1989.

Police and military colleges and institutes accept women in their courses and higher studies, as is the case in the Dubai Police Academy. Khawla Bint Al Azwar Military School was established in 1991, as it was the first military school for females at the state level and aims to include females in the ranks of the armed forces and works to prepare and train them to participate in military service.

5. Women in the Private Sector and Commercial Transactions:

The Labour Law in the country deals with aspects of the relationship between the employer and the employee, and it entrenches and establishes all the rights and duties of employers and employees in a way that benefits both parties. Besides, it ensures justice and equality between men and women in the workplace. In addition, it safeguards women by limiting their working hours and ensuring that they are not employed in “hazardous, strenuous or physically or morally harmful jobs. **The provisions are as follows:**

i. Federal Law No. (8) of 1980 regarding the regulation of labour relations.

ii. Ministerial Resolution No. (46/1) for the year 1980 determined the jobs in which women may be employed between ten o'clock in the evening and seven o'clock in the morning.

iii. Ministerial Resolution No. (47/1) for the year 1980 regarding the exclusion of some institutions from some provisions stipulated in the Law Regulating Labor Relations for the Employment of Juveniles and Women, and thus guarantees women work in areas of work that require night shifts, such as nursing.

iv. Ministerial Resolution No. (6/1) of 1981 in the matter of specifying work that is dangerous, arduous, or harmful to health or morals, in which women may not be employed.

v. Federal Law No. (18) of 1993 for Commercial Transactions, which allows women to manage their property and work without discrimination or lack of legal status.



The Central Bank issued a note to all banks, finance and exchange companies in the UAE confirming the principle of gender equality in banking and financial transactions “in support of the state’s goals aimed at achieving gender equality, and it requests banks and other financial institutions to provide their services to their clients and business owners of both sexes equally”.

The UAE Council for Gender Balance also announced that women constitute more than 43% of the investors in the Abu Dhabi Stock Exchange, comprising 14,000 women. Additionally, 23,000 women manage projects worth more than 50 billion dirhams, with 15% of them occupying positions in the boards of directors of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the country.

6. Social Security:

The laws related to social insurance and social security in the UAE take into account the protection of the family with all its members and the assurance of a decent life for them. They also foresee the changes that the family may be exposed to, such as retirement, occupational disability, or the death of its breadwinner, whether a man or a woman without discrimination. **The right to social insurance is detailed in the following federal and local laws:**

1. Federal Law No. (7) of 1999 regarding pensions and social security.
2. Law No. (2) of 2000 regarding civil retirement pensions and benefits for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
3. Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 regarding social security.

Married or divorced women with minor children, whether unemployed or without a breadwinner, are entitled to participate in the Social Security Fund which allocates a salary to her until her life circumstances change with the presence of a source of income or a wage-earner who helps in raising any children.



Also, the Law on Pensions and Social Security validates women to acquire 10 years of legal service, whereas it allows only 5 years to men. A mother is also entitled to a share in the pension of her deceased son if she is a widow or divorced, or if her husband was a dependent of a deceased son during his lifetime, and she did not have a salary or a pension.

Furthermore, unclaimed amounts from the son's or daughter's pension in the absence of other beneficiaries shall be transferred to the widow of the pensioner, provided that they share in this case exceeds three-quarters of the pension, and in the case of several of them, it is divided equally among them. Confirming the role played by women in caring for their family and emphasising that women in domestic work are deserving of all entitlements.

At the local level, the Emirates is also following up the enactment of special programs for the citizens of each emirate that guarantee them the provision of social care, rehabilitation of the residents with special needs of that emirate and enabling follow up on eligible cases directly at the local level. The majority of these programs focus on caring for needy families and women in particular. In many cases that require follow-up; such as abuse, divorced women or widows and those with limited income. Therefore, these programs have provided an appropriate space to delve into special cases and issues of concern to women.

7. Citizenship Rights, Civil Procedures and Social Welfare:

Acquiring citizenship is the first step to obtaining all the rights guaranteed by law to citizens of the state, as well as becoming aware of duties and obligations towards the country. Hence, women enjoy all their economic and legal rights with the issuance of a citizenship document. Gaining citizenship also guarantees her the right to review civil transactions to obtain her stipulated rights; whether within the scope of personal status, inheritance, ownership or work, including their right to enjoy the social welfare, education, health and housing provided by the state, as stated in the following organizing laws:

1. Federal Law No. (17) of 1972 regarding nationality and its amendments.
2. Federal Civil Transactions Law No. (5) of 1985, as amended by Federal Law No. (1) of 1987.
3. Federal Law No. (11) of 1992 issued the Civil Procedures Law.
4. Federal Law No. (11) of 1972 regarding compulsory education.
5. Federal Law No. (10) of 1999 regarding the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme.

About citizenship rights, the UAE has made reservations to Article (9) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women because “the acquisition of citizenship is an internal matter regulated and its conditions and are set by national legislation.”

The UAE law affirms the legal dependence of children on their fathers. This is required by the regulations of Islamic Sharia adopted as a basic source of legislation in the state, Therefore, the law decided to introduce some amendments to ensure that the children of female citizens are not deprived of their rights as children of citizens in the civil and humanitarian aspects. That is until they reach the age of eighteen, and thus they can claim the full right of citizenship and submit a citizenship application.

Despite the issuance of the law and the procedures regulating it, with regard to the recent amendments to the citizenship law in the UAE, these procedures need to be closely reviewed to ensure that the children of female citizens benefit from what is approved by the new law, while at the same time clarifying some procedures to facilitate the process of applying for citizenship. The law also establishes the right of a woman to retain her Emirati nationality, whether acquired by birth, naturalization or even with her marriage to a man of another nationality, unless she chooses to follow the nationality of her husband.



8. Women's Security and Protection:

As per the penal laws and their implementation, women are regarded as a part of society and the possibility of them being subjected to cases of abuse or accountability is acknowledged, which requires attention to some of the special needs imposed by gender.

The state has issued a law that holds anyone who infringes the rights of others accountable, and thus imposes penalties and enacts legislation to regulate women's access to their rights. For instance, if a woman is an aggressor, then she is held accountable in proportion to her nature; she is not to be imprisoned with men. The regulations also define the ways of dealing with female prisoners so that their dignity is ensured until the completion of their sentence and returns to society.



As a means to preserve the common sense of all and enact legislation that safeguards the family's social stability, safety and security, the penal laws work on the process of controlling interactions between members of society and protecting them from violations, by rejecting harmful practices without discrimination.

The laws also look after family relations between the husband, his wife and minor children in a way that guarantees the security and safety of all family members intending to prevent physical or moral aggression and punishing assaults accordingly and justly, without discrimination. Legislative changes in the amended Federal Decree-Law No. 2 of 2015 strengthened protection against domestic violence on combating discrimination and hatred to include faith, gender and guarantees for women.



The legislator took these considerations into the federal laws of Penal Code No. (3) of 1987, Law of Criminal Procedure No. (35) of 1992, and Law of Regulating Punitive Institutions No. (43) of 1992 regarding the organization and implementation of penal laws. On the other hand, the Anti-Human Trafficking Law No. 51 of 2006 and Child Rights Law No. 3 of 2016 regulate women's affairs and protect them from abuse and domestic violence.

A recent amendment of the Federal Penal Code in the year 2020, abolishes the mitigating article in the defence of honour crimes. Therefore, it is currently treated as a case of murder in line with the state's commitment to protect women's rights and to enhance the principle of the rule of law.

9. Declarations and International Agreements:

The UAE has signed a set of international laws & agreements regarding women's rights as part of its keen interest in working within the international system and its commitment to collective action to protect women since its establishment. Thus the exchange of information about violations that occur at the international level, such as human trafficking and discrimination against women is made easy. This aims to ensure the safety and protection of the rights of citizens and residents in the country. **The most important of these texts are:**

- A.** Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.
- B.** International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1974.
- C.** Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
- D.** International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women 2004.
- E.** Convention No. (89) regarding the nightly employment of women in the industry for the year 1984 and its amendments.
- F.** Agreement No. (100) regarding equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equal value.
- G.** The Protocol to Prevent and Suppress Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, complementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime .
- H.** The comprehensive and integrated international agreement to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the United Arab Emirates recently established the National Human Rights Authority, which reports directly to the head of state in an independent manner, and was tasked with following up the extent to which local legislation and laws are in line with international obligations ratified by the state. The authority is also considered a link between civil society and the decision-maker in the country to follow up on emerging issues and concerns in the Emirati society.

رئيس الدولة

يصدر قانوناً اتحادياً بشأن الهيئة الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان كجهة مستقلة

المقر الرئيسي:
أبوظبي، ويجوز فتح فروع ومكاتب في الإمارات الأخرى

الهدف:
تعزيز مكانة الدولة إقليمياً ودولياً في مجال حقوق الإنسان

الاختصاصات:
المشاركة مع الجهات المختصة في وضع خطة عمل لحماية حقوق الإنسان في الدولة واقتراح آلية تنفيذها.
العمل على نشر ثقافة حقوق الإنسان وتوعية أفراد المجتمع بها.
تقديم اقتراحات إلى السلطات المختصة حول مدى ملاءمة التشريعات والقوانين الدولية المعنية بها .

مجلس الأمناء:
لا يقل عن العضو، بمن فيهم الرئيس

مدة العضوية:
أربع سنوات قابلة للتجديد لمرة واحدة

Institutional Work and Social Care:

Emirates Council for Social Balance: Intending to monitor the progress in the field of gender equality in the government sector, the UAE Gender Balance Council was established, at the ministerial level, setting clear mechanisms and specific criteria. The most important objectives of the Council are to reduce the gender gap in all sectors of the state and to strive to achieve gender balance in decision-making positions. This is also attained by reviewing current legislation, policies or programs and making recommendations for amendments that achieve gender balance in the field of work.

مجلس الإمارات للتوازن بين الجنسين
UAE GENDER BALANCE COUNCIL



The Ministry of Health: The Ministry of Health offers free health care for women, guarantees them access to secure health care and takes care of their health needs even in remote areas. This is in addition to setting up educational mechanisms and programs that promote women's mental health at all stages of life.

until adulthood. The state also offers women an opportunity to complete their education at the university level, free of charge, if she wishes to complete any university studies.



وزارة التربية والتعليم

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



وزارة الصحة ووقاية المجتمع

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & PREVENTION

The Ministry of Education: Since its establishment, the state guarantees the right to education for girls and women, at all stages of their lives. Federal law also stipulates that education is a right of every citizen and it is completely free of charge in government schools and institutes. It has been made compulsory for everyone who has completed six years until the end of all levels of education for the second stage or with the child reaching the age of 18. Thus, the law preserves a woman's right to education

Women make up two-thirds of university graduates in the UAE. Moreover, with the increasing interest and high job openings in technological and industrial fields women's participation in them have brought commendable educational and professional development to them. Consequently, women constitute 77% of the graduates of the IT and 44% of the engineering sectors in the country.

The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, an official governmental institution concerned with women and child issues in the UAE which was established by Federal Decree-Law No. 1 of 2003 along with other centres for maternal and child care were established at the local level in Dubai and Sharjah, are concerned with women and studying their needs, so that appropriate policy for the community and its needs, based on its culture, is founded; thus facilitating care for this important segment of society.



Another non-profit humanitarian care home established (2007) to care for women and children who have been victims of domestic violence, abuse, and victims of human trafficking, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children provides shelter to victims and provide immediate support by state laws and international law in this regard.



The National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirfori Women:

The National Strategy for Motherhood and Childhood, launched by Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union, Supreme President of the Family Development Foundation, and President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood and approved by the UAE Cabinet as a basic reference for the decision-maker in this regard, promotes the right of children and mothers to comprehensive care within a sustainable healthy environment. The strategy also provides a framework for all governmental and private institutions to develop plans and programs of action, to provide a decent life for women.



This strategy was based on several basic pillars: the constitution, the federal government's vision 2021, the strategies of local governments, the values and a document of Conduct and Ethics for the Emirati Citizen, the Beijing Platform for Action, the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and relevant international agreements, Strategy for the Development of Arab women, and indicators of global competitiveness. .

International Pacts in the Field of Human Rights:

The UAE has always supported the right of females to education by supporting the UN Women, since its establishment in 2010, and has funded it with about 26 million US dollars to support efforts aimed at equality.

The state has also backed, through its membership in the Human Rights Council for the third time in its history (where it won membership in the Council from 2022 to 2024), to remove obstacles to women's education such as discrimination, traditions, religious considerations, or material conditions.

The UAE emphasised before the 41st session of the Human Rights Council, within the framework of the interactive dialogue on the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of violence against women, and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking of humans, especially women and children, **with the following:**

- ▶ **Calling on the Special Rapporteur to strengthen coordination of international efforts by unifying the contributions of United Nations agencies and mechanisms related to violence against women and providing technical means for their implementation and activation.**
- ▶ **Adopting a strict policy to combat violence against women based on three complementary axes: raising awareness as a preventive measure to address the phenomenon of violence, then tightening the punishment for perpetrators of violence, and providing the greatest possible protection.**
- ▶ **It also emphasized that the UAE relies on the provisions of Federal Law No. 1 of 2015 regarding deterring the crime of human trafficking and implementing the strategy of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, which is to strengthen, prevention, prosecution, punishment and strengthening cooperation in line with international standards.**

National Indicators of Achievements:

Aiming at promoting and empowering women, the UAE has achieved the following milestones during the past period:

- ▶ Emirati women rank eighteenth globally and first in the Arab world and the Middle East in gender equality indicators for the year 2020.
- ▶ The percentage of women's participation in the technology-leading "Hope Probe" project reached 34% of the work team and 80% of the probe's scientific team.
- ▶ In the field of nuclear energy, women constitute nearly 20% of the total employees of the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation and its subsidiaries.
- ▶ In the financial and business sector, women comprise 24% of the total workers whereas they constitute 46% of government sector employees.
- ▶ Emirati women occupy about 75% of positions in the education and health sectors and about 20% in social affairs.
- ▶ There are about 23,000 businesswomen managing investments and projects worth more than 50 billion dirhams.
- ▶ Noura Al Matrooshi, 28, was chosen as the country's first female astronaut for the country's space program. Commendably, women make up 80% of the scientific team behind the Emirati mission to Mars, according to the UAE Ministry of Advanced Sciences.



Emirati women rank **eighteenth** globally and first in the Arab world



project reached **34%** of the work team and **80%** of the probe's scientific team



women constitute nearly **20%** of the total employees of the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation



about **75%** of positions in the education and health sectors and about **20%** in social affairs



23,000 businesswomen managing investments and projects worth more than **50 billion dirhams**

International Indicators:

**The most important achievements and indicators in the field of gender balance in the region, as addressed by international reports and forums are as follows:
The country ranked:**

- First in the world out of 132 countries in the “Respect for Women” index in the 2015 Social Progress Index report.
- 35th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Program in 2018. .
- Eighteenth globally and first in the Arab world, in the gender equality index issued by the United Nations Development Program for the year 2020, thus, jumping 8 points in the index in just one year.



Conclusion

Continuity and Development of Women's Rights:

It is highly required to emphasise the three basic points that make up the approach taken to formulate the state's policy towards women's rights to understand the state of women's rights in the UAE.

1. Islam is considered the official religion of the UAE, hence Islamic Sharia is the major source of legislation. Moreover, the citizens of the state who adhere to this religion are committed to implementing its teachings. Accordingly, the state's obligations towards its citizens must be viewed through this basic principle and the popular demand of both males and females.
2. The principle of social welfare on which the federation of the UAE has been based since its establishment 50 years ago did not differentiate between gender, and included all citizens of the state without discrimination.
3. Certain social cases and issues that required a specific approach began to emerge with the development of society and its openness towards the world. Thus, we can see the interest in legal developments that dealt with issues of concern to women such as the issuance of the Human Trafficking Law, and the development of Labour Law that include articles regulating women's involvement in social and work life.

Most of all, commitment to human rights requires work on several levels, including the state that sets and implements the law. A civil society that abides by the laws is the link between the needs of the citizen and the government. Apart from the commitment and community awareness of the culture of human rights, it is also important to follow the interaction between these components to be able to comprehend the development in the field of women's rights in the UAE. This comes with a continued emphasis on improving the general human rights situation in the country, by the requirements of local needs and the imposition of international obligations.

By far, what women have achieved in the UAE is the beginning of what they aspire to, not the end, and therefore it is engrossing to continually find solutions to the challenges they face and ensuring decent life for them.



b'huth Centre

b'huth is an independent public policy research Centre founded in Dubai, UAE in 2002, that focuses on International Affairs, Geostrategic Affairs, Public Policy Studies and Public Opinion Research. We bring together experts in all these areas to work with us, to learn from one another and to foster creative thinking.

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