



وزارة الخارجية
والتعاون الدولي
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
& INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

MOFAAIC Brief on Emirati Women Empowerment on the Occasion of International Women's Day

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The United Arab Emirates will join many countries around the world in celebrating the "International Women's Day" which occurs on 8th of March every year.

The world is celebrating this Day as an appreciation and recognition of women for their effective role and contribution in the political, cultural, social and economic development process. The Day has become a global opportunity to discuss and review the achievements made by women and their future aspirations for further progress, as equal partners, and active members of their communities.

Since the UAE was established, the Emirati women played their natural role of participating in the construction and development process. The late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, strongly believed in women's capabilities, and significance of their role as partner of men in building the country. He has supported women from the very beginning. The Women Empowerment Strategy is based on specific plans with clear objectives for the present and the future, which is reflected by the enormous successes made by women and their active presence in the political, economic, social, security, military, and cultural fields.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is leading the woman empowerment march to enable them to occupy the highest positions in all areas, and continue implementation of the UAE strategic plan targeting women since the UAE establishment. The Strategy has, at that time, focused on education and empowerment of women, as they are responsible for raising the generations and are effective co-actors in the construction and development process. Women assumed ministerial portfolios, became president and member of the Federal National Council, representing their country as ambassadors abroad, as well as becoming members of the judiciary.

The Empowerment process launched by His Highness the President of the UAE, targets the UAE nationals in various workplaces, enabling them to better play their role in the UAE's development and construction process. The parliamentary work has received the care, attention and guidance of the political program announced by His Highness in 2005, where women have participated as voters and members of the parliament, the number of electoral authorities has increased from circa seven thousand in 2006 in the first electoral experience, to approximately 224 thousand voters in 2015.

Emirati women celebrate this Day for making great achievements within the last few years. Women were able to effectively cope with life pace and changes at homeland, thanks to the support and encouragement by Her Highness Sheikha

Fatima Bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union, the Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation, President of the Motherhood and Childhood Supreme Council.

The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates stipulates that women shall enjoy equal rights with men. The constitution included clauses stressing the principle of social equality and women's equal right to education, employment and posts just like men, and the Constitution adopted all the precepts of Islam pertaining to women's rights to inherit and claim titles. This issue was in force before the establishment of the Union and the Constitution has come to foster the same.

The UAE has enacted a number of legislations and laws providing legal protection for women and punishing anyone who infringe upon their dignity, such as the anti-trafficking law, which is an important effort to protect women.

The UAE placed more importance, provided care and support to women in various fields. The UAE has integrated women in the development process, leading to significant achievements in various fields and their participation in political decision-making. Emirati women today efficiently assume prominent leadership positions and posts. The UAE's far-reaching and comprehensive vision on women empowerment, does not only focus on the present time, but also on the future, according to the " UAE Vision 2021 " aiming to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world by UAE's 50th national day anniversary. All the indicators, particularly the ones pertaining to women empowerment, emphasize that a good progress is being made towards achieving this objective.

The new federal government witnessed the largest structural changes in its history. Among the 29 ministers comprising the new government, eight are female ministers, one of the highest ratios in the region and the world, reflecting the position reached by the Emirati women. Undoubtedly, this was due to the remarkable efforts made by the wise leadership to empower women. Therefore, the UAE has well-deserved and entitled to be ranked top country in the world in the women respect index by the World Economic Forum in 2014.

Perhaps one of the most important feature characterizes the new government is its structure, where new globally unprecedented ministries were created, the most important of which are ministries of tolerance and happiness, both ministries are chaired by two Emirati women. Both ministries are created due to the significant development of the UAE in areas of happiness and tolerance, thanks to the efforts

of the wise leadership that prioritizes happiness of the UAE people at the top of its concerns, the youngest minister of youth affairs in the world appointed in the UAE.

In a move strengthening the UAE position to be ranked top among developed countries in supporting women participation in political life and parliamentary work, His Highness the President of the UAE's decree number "6" of 2007 concerning formation the Federal National Council in the 14th legislative chapter, stipulated the appointment of eight women. One female candidate in 2006 elections was elected for the membership of the Council in the first electoral experience in the UAE.

Her Excellency Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi, has been elected as president of the Federal National Council, marking her the first woman to chair a parliamentary institution at the Arab level. H.E Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi was the first Emirati women to be a member of the Federal National Council through legislative elections, in the first electoral experience to be held in 2006 and the first Emirati woman to chair an FNC session. She is also the first woman in the Gulf region to be a member in a legislative institution through the ballot box, reflecting the success of Emirati women and their active participation in decision-making, as well as the keenness of the UAE leadership to empower women and harness all the capabilities to strengthen their participation in all walks of life.

The UAE places great importance to the participation of women in the diplomatic corps, having opened the doors for appointment of Emirati women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to hold positions as diplomats, and in creating new procedures to ensure balance between women's familial duties and their careers in the political arena.

The number of Emirati women in the diplomatic and consular corps at the Ministry headquarters is 175 in addition to 42 women working in the diplomatic corps at the UAE missions abroad.

There are currently four women ambassadors in the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation namely: Her Excellency Dr. Hessa Abdullah Ahmad Al Otaiba, the UAE Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain, Her Excellency Hafsa Al Ulama, UAE Ambassador to Montenegro, Her Excellency Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the UAE to the United Nations in New York, and Her Excellency Noura Juma, the UAE Consul General in Milan.

Women also hold high-level positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in addition to their work in the UAE missions abroad. One of the diplomatic achievements of women is the appointment of Amna Al Muhairi, Deputy Director of Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as the first Arab female member of the Committee for Arab Charter on Human Rights.

Amira Al Hefeiti was elected member of the UAE representative mission to the UN - New York by members of the UN women Executive Board for 2016, as deputy head of the Executive Office of the United Nations women entity for 2016.

Hind Al Owais was appointed as first Emirati woman to be the senior consultant of the Authority of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Reem Al Falasi, Secretary-General of the Motherhood and Childhood Supreme Council, was nominated by Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak to become the UAE member in the High-Level Advisory Panel on the every woman every child initiative. In addition to the Global Strategy for women's, children's and adolescents' health, in the framework of the sustainable development agenda 2030.

Women's work in the UAE has started since 8th February 1973; i.e. after less than two years from the establishment of the Union. "The Renaissance of Abu Dhabi Women Association" was the first women's caucus in the UAE. The foundation of the association thereafter began in different UAE emirates until Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak envisioned the need to cope with the unitary ideology of the late Sheikh Zayed founding father of the UAE renaissance. Therefore, the General Women's Union was founded in 1975 joining all women associations in the UAE.

Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, is considered the leader of women's movement in the UAE, and it was thanks to Her Highness that the General Women's Union was founded. The approach put forward by Her Highness in the field of Women's work is featured by balancing between the pursuit to openness for modernization and the preservation of Arab and Islamic traditions, believing that preservation of cultural privacy is the only way to achieve the desired progress. Sheikha Fatima is a supreme example for Emirati women to try to emulate, and be guided by, due to Her Highness's humility, open-mindedness, quietness, and patience to achieve the greatest works ever. Since initiating the establishment of the General Women's Union, Her Highness has managed to

achieve a quantum leap in Women's business, development efforts and future plans are still aim to make other achievements.

One of the most important aspects of excellence in women empowerment strategy of the UAE is that it is based on specific plans, with clear objectives for the present and future, to be implemented by effective institutions illuminating the great successes achieved by women with their active presence in various fields.

Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union, the Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation, President of the Motherhood and Childhood Supreme Council "Mother of the Nation" has launched "the national strategy for Emirati women's empowerment and leadership in the UAE, 2015 - 2021" on the International Women's Day, coinciding the 8th of March each year. Her Highness referred in this occasion to the vital issue related to the core excellence of the UAE both in terms of improving the status of women or other areas, which is the strong will to overcome obstacles and problems whatever their extent of severity or complexity.

The most important features of the national strategy for Emirati women's empowerment 2015 - 2021 is that it includes strategic priorities and specific milestone targets verifiable on ground. The strategy contains four basic priorities; maintaining the sustainability of the Emirati women's achievements and continue achieving further gains; maintaining the social fabric and cohesion through integrating the roles between men and women in order to build a strong and cohesive society able to cope with emerging changes; providing a decent and safe social welfare based on high quality foundations for women, and developing the spirit of responsibility and strengthening the position of UAE women in regional and international fora.

These four strategic priorities will be implemented on two stages; the first will be from 2015 to 2018 while the second from 2019 to 2021. In every stage, there will be specific objectives to be achieved through clear policies.