



وزارة الخارجية
والتعاون الدولي
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
& INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

MoFAIC Brief on the Occasion of Emirati Women's Day

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The empowerment of women has been one of the notable success stories of the UAE. The UAE firmly believes that progress on issues relating to women's rights is essential for building a tolerant and modern society. Since the very foundation of the United Arab Emirates on December 2, 1971, women have been recognized as equal partners in national development by the UAE's leaders, and the Government continues to pursue a strategy of empowering women in all fields. The UAE's society has comfortably accepted this approach, in a way that has made women real partners and drivers in the country's ongoing development process.

Throughout the UAE's history, the leadership of the country has invested heavily in women. The founding father of the UAE, the Late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, made the cause of women's empowerment a top priority of the UAE Government. In this respect, every possible effort, was, and continues to be made, to support the talents of Emirati women and to develop social conditions, which encourage women to fully participate in public life. Sheikh Zayed once said: "The woman is half of the society, any country which pursues development should not leave her in poverty or illiteracy. I am on the woman's side; I always say this in order to uphold her right to work and participate in the building process of her country".

The UAE Government has successfully delivered on this objective by offering women education, employment, and training opportunities, and by introducing forward-thinking and progressive laws and legislation that have paved the way for women's empowerment.

The Constitution of the UAE guarantees equal rights for both men and women. Under the Constitution, women enjoy the same legal status, claim to titles, access to education, the right to practice professions, and the right to inherit property. Women are also guaranteed the same access to employment, health and family welfare facilities.

Furthermore, the UAE has enacted a range of legislation and laws that provide legal protection for women, and punish anyone who might compromise their dignity or personal safety. In this context, The UAE has signed all international treaties on protecting the rights of women. Among these are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, (2004), the

Hours of Work (Industry) Convention (1982), and the Equal Remuneration Convention (1996).

Since His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan came to power in 2004, the issue of women's empowerment has gained only further momentum. His Highness Sheikh Khalifa has led national efforts aiming to create permanent and positive changes in women's lives. He has done so by offering more education and training opportunities that would enhance the role and contribution of women in the public sphere.

Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai has also been at the forefront of encouraging women's empowerment in the UAE. For instance, during the Government Summit in Dubai in 2015, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed announced the formation of the "Emirates Council for Gender Balance" which aims to bridge the gender gap and boost the UAE's efforts to evolve and enhance women's role as key partners in building the future of the nation.

While in March 2015, Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union, Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation and President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, launched the National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirati Women in the UAE 2015-2021, which provided a guiding framework and reference for all federal and local governmental institutions and civil society organizations in developing plans and work programs to empower women in all areas.

The UAE is a recognized leader in terms of gender equality in the region. This achievement comes from the fundamental belief that women and men are equal partners in society. Through a series of public and private sector initiatives, women are playing an increasingly stronger role in all facets of Emirati society.

Women graduates in the UAE excel in government, engineering, science, health care, media, computer technology, law, commerce and the oil industry, amongst other fields. Eight women serve in the UAE Cabinet—including Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of State for Tolerance, and a 22-year-old Shamma Al Mazrui, who serves as Minister of State for Youth Affairs. Nine women hold seats within the Federal National Council (FNC), a consultative parliamentary body, accounting for nearly one-quarter of the FNC's membership. In November 2015, Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi became President of the FNC, making her the first woman in the region to

lead a national assembly. She previously had made history in 2006 as the first elected female to the FNC and in 2011 was appointed deputy speaker of the FNC.

Women make up 20 percent of the diplomatic corps, and there are also several women Ambassadors. Currently, the UAE Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Lana Nusseibeh), the Ambassador to Spain (Hessa Al Otaiba), the Ambassador to Montenegro (Hafsa Abdullah Mohammed Sharif Al Ulama), and the Consul General to Italy in Milan (Noura Mohammed Juma) are all women.

Today, Emirati women constitute 66 percent of the national UAE labor market in fields as diverse as engineering, science, healthcare, media, computer technology, law, civil and military aviation, commerce, university lecturers, government and the oil industry. Around a third of Emirati women hold senior-level positions, and 15 percent of women work in highly skilled technical fields.

Emirati women have also made great strides in the world of business and investment. The UAE Businesswomen Council, a nationwide network of business, professional, and academic women, was set up in 2002. Emirati businesswomen are running investments worth more than AED 12 billion (USD 3.26 billion) in various fields, including trade, industry, finance, real estate, tourism, fairs and exhibitions, construction and services. While in the banking sector alone, 38 percent of employees are Emirati women.

In conclusion, Emirati women, who account for 49.3 percent of the national population, are today at the cutting edge and forefront of UAE economic, political, and social life. Aided by the government's unwavering commitment to empowering women and providing equal opportunities, the status of women within the UAE has flourished in parallel with the country's growth since the federation was established in 1971. It is evident, that this process will only continue apace, and women will remain an ever important cornerstone for not only the UAE's present, but also its future.