



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

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

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**Responses to the list of issues and questions with regard to
the consideration of the initial periodic report**

United Arab Emirates*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

Response to questions concerning the report of the United Arab Emirates (CEDAW/C/ARE/1) relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

General

- 1. Information on the process of preparation of the initial report of the United Arab Emirates, including whether nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), in particular women's associations, were engaged in this process.**

In order to prepare its report relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Arab Emirates formed a committee presided over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, the committee that prepared the report included members from such governmental organizations as the Ministry of State for Cabinet Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and a number of NGOs, including the General Women's Union, women's associations and several civil society institutions.

- 2. Government initiatives in place to ensure that the Convention becomes an integral part of the legal education and training of judicial officers, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors, particularly those working in the family court.**

Several governmental institutions have organized programmes and workshops that were intended to raise awareness of and provide training on the Convention. The General Women's Union organized several training workshops on the Convention that were attended by representatives of various Government bodies, including the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Department. The General Women's Union is also currently in the course of printing an introductory pamphlet about the Convention and recently launched the "Know Your Rights" programme, which includes a series of training workshops, to be held in all the Emirates, that focus on raising awareness in the United Arab Emirates of international conventions on women's rights, the Personal Status Law, the Civil Service Law and the Labour Law. The General Women's Union has issued a series of informative pamphlets entitled "Know Your Rights" that aim to educate women in a number of areas, including maintenance, childcare, women's consumer rights, CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In cooperation with the Judicial Department, the General Women's Union has also issued the Personal Status Law in audio-visual forms that will enable women to understand their rights and responsibilities under the law. A number of local and federal institutions arrange workshops on the Convention for their staff, and State study and research centres organize conferences and meetings.

- 3. The status of data collection on rural, minority and migrant populations in the country, and policies and programmes for achieving the equality of women and men.**

Generally speaking, there are no minority or migrant populations in the United Arab Emirates, because all workers in the State have temporary employment contracts that are approved by the Ministries of Labour and Interior.

Institutions concerned with federal statistics, including the Ministry of Economy Planning Department and the local statistics machinery, gather analytical data, patterns and studies on the population and residents in order to prepare strategic plans. They also collect data that is disaggregated by gender. The Ministry of Economy Central Statistics Department recently published a booklet about women and men in the United Arab Emirates. The General Women's Union, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched a project entitled "National Initiatives for mainstreaming Social Gender", as part of which a series of seminars and training workshops were held. Participants included representatives of Government ministries and institutions, civil society organizations and private companies. The aim was to raise awareness of the concept of gender equality and related indicators and of the data that are necessary thereto, as well as ways of mainstreaming that concept into institutional policies and programmes.

With regard to the second stage of that project, namely, the mainstreaming of gender equality issues into local and federal ministerial and institutional programmes and projects, in accordance with the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, the aim is to achieve the following goals:

- To increase knowledge of the importance of mainstreaming tools for the analysis of gender equality into development planning.
- To analyze social, economic and development projects from the standpoint of partnership between men and women.
- To raise awareness of the challenges that hinder the full integration of women into development and the feasibility of identifying future points of intervention that are necessary in order to optimally empower both men and women.
- To establish statistics and indicators within the institutions that produce statistics and data.

4. The scope of the State's reservations to the Convention on the basis of the norms of Islamic law, the impact of these reservations on the practical realization of the principle of equality between women and men, and the likelihood of those reservations being withdrawn.

Here, we should like to point out that the United Arab Emirates has no reservation with respect to article 2, paragraph (a), because it believes in the importance of making women full partners in the development process, both through participation in that process and by benefiting from the fruits of development projects.

Scrutiny of State development projects will therefore reveal that legislators in the United Arab Emirates have made the principle of equality of opportunity for men and women one of the main focuses of the Constitution, which is considered the primary reference for all State legislation.

Legislators are also careful to periodically review legislation, in order to ensure that it keeps abreast of developing needs and is in keeping with international commitments, while not conflicting with the Islamic sharia.

The United Arab Emirates became a party to CEDAW on 6 October 2004, pursuant to Federal Decision No. 38 of 2004 concerning State accession to the Convention. It expressed reservations with regard to articles 2, paragraph (f); 9; 15, paragraph 2; 16; and 29, paragraph 1, as set forth below:

- Article 2, paragraph (f), provides that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women. The United Arab Emirates believes that this paragraph conflicts with the provisions of the Islamic sharia concerning inheritance. It therefore expressed a reservation thereto and does not find it possible to comply with it.

- Article 9 provides as follows:

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the acquisition of nationality is an internal matter, conditions for which must be determined and regulated by national legislation. This article constitutes a clear violation of the national Nationality Law, which provides that a child shall acquire nationality through its father. The United Arab Emirates therefore stated a reservation to that article and does not find it necessary to comply with it.

- Article 15, paragraph 2, provides that States Parties shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

The United Arab Emirates believes that this article conflicts with the principles of the provisions of the Islamic sharia with regard to jurisdiction, testimony and the character of a legal contract under the sharia. It has therefore expressed a reservation to that paragraph of the aforementioned article and does not see the need to comply with it.

- Article 16 provides, inter alia, that men and women shall have the same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent; the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; and the same right to choose a family name.

The United Arab Emirates complies with this article insofar as it does not conflict with the principles of the provisions of the Islamic sharia. The United Arab Emirates believes that a husband is obliged to pay dowry and maintenance after divorce; a husband has the right to seek a divorce; and a wife has independent financial security and full rights to her own property. A wife is under no obligation to support her husband or herself from her own funds. The Islamic sharia limits a wife's right to seek divorce, stipulating that it should be at the discretion of a judge, when she has suffered injury.

- Article 29, paragraph 1, provides that any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The United Arab Emirates appreciates and respects the concerns of this article but has expressed a reservation thereto because it believes that any dispute should only be referred to the International Court of Justice with the agreement of all parties to the dispute. It therefore declares that it is not bound by this article.

5. Progress in respect of the establishment of a national independent human rights commission in the country, in line with the Paris Principles, with a mandate to receive and investigate complaints of violations of human rights, including the human rights of women and children, as well as gender-based discrimination.

A number of the relevant institutions have been involved in the preparation of a comprehensive study on the establishment in the country of a national independent human rights commission, on the basis of the provisions set forth in the Constitution, chapters two and three, with respect to numerous rights and freedoms that contribute to the achievement of social equality and justice and the protection and strengthening of human rights; on the basis of the Paris Principles regarding national institutions for the protection of human rights; and in accordance with the voluntary State undertaking that was annexed to the universal periodic review and submitted to the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 4 December 2008. Once the proposed body has been established, it will enjoy the status of an independent legal person and will put forward recommendations, proposals, formal legal opinions, reports and initiatives to the Governments, parliamentary councils and pertinent State machinery.

6. The establishment of women's associations and institutions with a view to the empowerment of women, and the legal status of non-governmental organizations, in particular women's human rights associations, and regulations relating to their activities.

The United Arab Emirates encourages voluntary work towards community development: Federal Law No. 6 of 1974 concerning public welfare associations identifies such associations as having regulations that govern them for a specific or indefinite period and consisting of natural or legal persons. Their aim is to carry out social, religious, cultural, educational or artistic activity; provide humanitarian services; achieve some charitable purpose; or provide other care, either through material or moral assistance or through technical expertise. All activities are for the benefit of the public alone, and not for profit.

After the promulgation of that Law, there was accelerated activity in the social work sphere, and associations were established representing various social groups, including women, religious associations, folk arts, community groups, humanitarian groups, and public service associations. Some of the most important women's institutions and associations include the following:

- General Women's Union

The General Women's Union was established on 27th August 1975, pursuant to Federal Law No. 6 of 1974, and presided over by Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak. In accordance with its charter, which was amended in 1977, the Union enjoys the status of a legal person, is able to own property and undertake the activities that are necessary in order to achieve the goals identified in its charter. The Union is considered to be the official and legal representative of the women's movement in the United Arab Emirates and is effectively the aegis for women's movement-related endeavours in the country, which it orients in order to best serve women in general and the women of the United Arab Emirates in particular. Members

of the Union include the following founding women's groups: Abu Dhabi Society for the Advancement of Women (Abu Dhabi and Al-Ayn); Women's Advancement Society, Dubai; Sharjah Women's Union; Umm Al Moumineen Association (Ajman); Umm Al Qaiwain Women's Association; and Association for the Advancement of Women, Ras al-Khaimah.

The General Women's Union uses all the resources at its command to strive for the advancement of women in the United Arab Emirates at all educational, social, economic and political levels and ensure that those women become a meaningful factor in the advancement of the country's sustainable development process. The Union has also made strenuous efforts to empower and qualify women for political participation, by organizing special conferences and seminars that have familiarized women with the experiences of Arab and other countries, particularly during elections. The Union was involved in launching a project that ran between 2004 and 2007, the aim of which was to reinforce the role of Arab women parliamentarians by raising awareness of the importance of women's political participation and improving the qualifications of a group of prominent women personalities.

- Abu Dhabi Society for the Advancement of Women

The Society was founded on 18 September 1974 and presided over by Ms. Amina Al-Tayyar. It is a public welfare association that works with understanding and discernment on the principle of effective management. It is an ideal way of achieving development for all groups and sectors of women. The Society has two branches, one in Khawanij and the other in Hatta.

- Sharjah Women's Union

The Union was established in 1973, presided over by Sheikha Noora Al-Qasimi. Through its eight committees, its work covers all women-related activities in the United Arab Emirates and strenuously endeavours to improve prospects for women. Union activities contributed to the formation of society's concept of and stance on the important role of women as an effective member of society.

- Umm Al Moumineen Association (Ajman)

The Association was founded in 1974 and is currently presided over by Sheikha Fatima Bint Zayed. Since its inception, it has striven to achieve the longings and aspirations of women and to provide essential services, including courses in computer, English and handicrafts. It also provides summer activities for female students and provides them with the opportunity to take part in various sporting and cultural activities during the holidays.

- Umm Al Qaiwain Women's Association

The Association was established in 1973, presided over by Sheikha Mariam Al-Mu'alla. Its main goal has always been to enhance the social position and awareness of women. It was the first women's association to publish a women's magazine, entitled "The New Age".

- Association for the Advancement of Women, Ras al-Khaimah

The Association was first established in 1976, and was formally incorporated in 1979 under the chairmanship of Sheikha Muhra al-Qasimi. It

undertakes various activities, the most important of which is the Adult Illiteracy Eradication Project, which was the first project of its kind in the United Arab Emirates. The Association continues efforts to increase the mental, cultural and social standards of women.

In general, all women's associations in the United Arab Emirates have similar goals and means of achieving those goals, which are normally restricted to empowering women, acquainting them with their rights and providing them with services, by means of seminars, lectures, competitions and meetings; the formation of working and study groups; the implementation of educational programmes; the organization of exhibitions and all types of festivals; the publication of printed materials, including those that are specific to an occasion and others that are related to studies and research carried out by the Association; the exchange of visits and organization of all types of trips; and the organization of and participation in conferences.

Those associations also monitor the social services which are provided by the State for its citizens, and encourage women to make use of them. They ensure that social welfare is available for women, particularly when they are ill, ageing or widowed. They give serious consideration to the social problems that are of concern to all women and put forward solutions thereto. They also participate in educational and social events that aim to provide child care throughout the State; help to provide care for orphans; organize fund-raising events for projects; study the problems faced by ageing and disabled persons in society and provide those persons with care, in cooperation with charitable and relief organizations, particularly when there are natural disasters. Those practices are compatible with the social and humanitarian goals that aim to affirm the appropriate social standing of women.

Legal status of the Convention, legislative and institutional framework, articles 1 and 2

7. The applicability of the Convention in the State legal system; whether its provisions may be invoked by national courts; and whether the Convention takes precedence over domestic laws.

In article 46, the Constitution provides that the Federal Supreme Council is the highest authority in the United Arab Emirates. It comprises all the rulers of each of the emirates that belong to the Federation or any person who has been delegated to replace them when absent or otherwise unable to attend. Each emirate has one vote in Council deliberations.

Article 47 of the Constitution, concerning the powers of the Federal Supreme Council, provides in one paragraph that the Council shall be responsible for accession to international treaties and conventions, accession to be confirmed by Decision.

Article 60 of the Constitution, concerning the powers of the Council of Ministers, provides in one paragraph that the Council shall be responsible for supervising implementation of the provisions of federal courts and the international treaties and conventions to which the federation is a party.

It is clear from the provisions of the Constitution that once the Federal Decision that affirmed accession to CEDAW had been promulgated, the Convention, having been published in the Official Gazette, had the force of law and is treated in the United Arab Emirates as a law. The relevant Decision

provides that the Convention shall be implemented and acted upon with effect from its date of publication in the Official Gazette. The Convention has therefore acquired the force of law in the State, and the Council of Ministers and the relevant minister are responsible for implementing its provisions. With regard to the connection between human rights principles and the suppression of discrimination against women as set forth in CEDAW and the constitutional principles of the State Constitution, the Convention enjoys additional protection in State laws because human rights principles are specifically provided for in the Constitution. The Convention takes precedence over domestic laws and no legal provisions run counter to provisions of the Convention.

National machinery for the advancement of women, article 3

8. Information on the national machinery in place that is mandated to implement the Convention and on the human and financial resources allocated to that body.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for social policies that focus on issues related to women and children and for providing those groups with care and protection.

In the United Arab Emirates, the General Women's Union is considered an effective national mechanism for the advancement of women. Domestically, it has strong and well-established connections throughout the country with various governmental and non-governmental institutions and, outside the country, with international organizations with common concerns, including the Arab Women's Organization in Cairo, the World Family Organization in France and the Arab Family Organization in Tunisia. The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in the United Arab Emirates, which was launched by the General Women's Union pursuant to the Beijing Programme of Action, is used by Government institutions as the basic reference in the field of the advancement of women.

Here, it is worth mentioning that, in addition to the General Women's Union, several other governmental and non-governmental institutions serve the interests of women, including the following:

- Family Development Foundation, Abu Dhabi

The Foundation implements social legislation; puts forward proposals for changes to such legislation that are necessary in order to guarantee the rights of women and children; and devises programmes for the sustainable development of the family and women. The goals of the Foundation are to care for and develop the family in general and women and children in particular, with a view to underlining the role of the family in social development; realize a comprehensive vision in the approach to issues relating to women and children; and achieve sustainable development for the family, thereby ensuring the creation of a society that has the capacity and knowledge to compete, and is continually developing its capabilities and skills.

- Women's Development Society (Dubai)

The Society works to strengthen the role of women in society by undertaking women-related projects and initiatives; participating in the formulation of policies aimed at promoting the employment of women and providing them with proper opportunities to assume leadership positions in both the Government and private sectors; and putting forward to the

Government proposals that contribute to the development of women-related legislation and policies.

- Dubai Women and Children Foundation

The Foundation provides support and refuge for women who are threatened with violence and provides opportunities for training and rehabilitation. It deals with women victims of violence in accordance with international norms and reinforces protection for their human rights. It provides protection for women who are oppressed and threatened with violence by members of their families or who are the victims of human trafficking.

- Supreme Family Council (Sharjah)

The Council endeavours to activate the role of the family within society and empower it to perform its functions in keeping with new developments; achieve the comprehensive development of children and young girls, in keeping with Islamic values and culture; ensure the healthy and full maturity of the developing personality, in order to provide future leadership; improve services for women and children and provide a comfortable and relaxing environment, sport and education; improve health and the environment; and improve the quality of life through community health initiatives.

Temporary special measures, article 4

9. Temporary special measures to achieve equality between men and women, particularly in the areas of employment, participation in political and public life, and the judiciary.

Federal Supreme Council Decision No. 4 of 2006 concerning the selection of United Arab Emirates representatives to the Federal National Council introduced a fundamental constitutional change, in the course of establishing democratic practice based on political participation, as a first step empowering the people of the United Arab Emirates to choose some members of the Federal National Council by election, while others are appointed.

The above-mentioned Decision, in article one, provided that half the members should be elected by an electoral college made up, for each emirate, of at least 100 times the number of its representatives, while article 2 provided that the remaining representatives of each emirate should be chosen by the ruler. That change in the selection process did not stop at giving United Arab Emirates citizens the opportunity to elect half the members of the Council, but also allowed women the chance to activate their political participation by entering the electoral college. The total number of members of that college is 6,688, of which 1,189 are women.

Albeit the elections that took place from 16 to 20 December 2006 were limited in scope, they may be considered as a positive step towards the wider political participation of all in the Federal National Council, particularly in view of the fact that those first elections resulted in the election of one woman to the Council, and, because so few women were elected, the Government, convinced of the importance of women's political participation, then appointed a further eight women, bringing the proportion of women representatives in the Council to 22.5 per cent.

Thanks to the support of the political leadership, United Arab Emirates women have been able to gain a prominent position in society and have been

appointed to several leadership positions in which they are able to put forward views and recommendations and take decisions. United Arab Emirates women have also entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic corps and two have been appointed as ambassadors to foreign countries and one as a consul general. One woman has the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary (First Class); three are second secretaries; 15 are third secretaries; and more than 56 are diplomatic attaches. United Arab Emirates women have, furthermore, entered the army and police corps: the rank of Brigadier is the highest a woman has yet reached in the armed forces. A woman has been appointed as secretary general to the Council of Ministers and 12 women are members of the boards of directors of chambers of commerce and industry. Several women have been appointed as advisors to the Ministry of Justice Directorate of Legislation and Legal Edicts and as notaries public in various State courts. In Abu Dhabi, two women have been appointed as district attorneys in the Judicial Department, while more than 10 women have been appointed to the same position in Dubai. Such women constitute the first wave, and will be followed by more every year.

Distribution of women in senior Government positions by institution and level

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Deputy minister</i>	<i>Assistant deputy</i>	<i>Special level</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>
Ministry of Education				10	208	2 646	9 949
Ministry of Health		1		49	298	369	827
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Social Development		1	1	1	8	6	27
Ministry of the Interior					4	6	7
Ministry of Public Works				20	32	8	29
Ministry of Environment and Water				7	4	23	26
National Transport Authority		1		1	1	2	2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs				4	3	9	30
Ministry of Justice				3	9	19	24
Ministry of Labour			1	41	58	18	66
Ministry of Finance and Industry		1	5	11	17	21	15
Civil Service Department		1		11	8	11	5
Ministry of Economy/Planning Section					6	10	12
Ministry of Economy/Economy Section				8	13	4	15
Ministry of Energy				1	4	4	3
Presidency of the Council of Ministers						3	
General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (Awqaf)						1	19
Ministry of Development for the Government Sector					1		
Department of Protocol and Hospitality					1		2
Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs			1				3
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research				2	5	8	8
Ministry of Social Affairs			12	47	74	59	122
National Media Council					11	11	17
Minister of State for the Council of Ministers Affairs	1						3
Total	1	5	20	216	765	3 238	11 213

Source: Civil Service Department, 15 April 2007.

United Arab Emirates women also represent the country at certain international organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme and the National Committee on Education, Science and Culture associated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and members of the Board of the United Nations Global Compact. They are also represented at the World Trade Organization.

The positions mentioned above are by way of example and not exhaustive: United Arab Emirates women have reached many leadership positions, if we take into consideration administrative positions in Government and private institutions at the individual emirate level. Mention should be made here of the experience of the Emirate of Sharjah in the area of promoting the political participation of women: the Advisory Council of Sharjah includes seven women members. In the same Emirate and in Dubai, women manage television and radio stations.

Employees in Federal institutions disaggregated by gender to 15 April 2007

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Ministry of Education	11 500	20 215
Ministry of Health	2 702	5 328
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Social Development	1 070	95
Ministry of the Interior	196	92
Ministry of Public Works	2 140	128
Ministry of Environment and Water	4 760	105
National Transport Authority	64	34
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	152	101
Ministry of Justice	633	171
Ministry of Labour	376	331
Ministry of Finance and Industry	277	124
Civil Service Department	76	70
Ministry of Economy/Planning Section	72	48
Ministry of Economy/Economy Section	99	68
Ministry of Energy	56	30
Presidency of the Council of Ministers	21	3
General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (Awqaf)	176	45
Ministry of Development for the Government Sector	9	2
Minister of State for Council of Ministers Affairs	26	9
National Media Council	176	55
Ministry of Social Affairs	150	459
Department of Protocol and Hospitality	59	7
Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs	11	7
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	27	36

Because of its belief in the importance of women's roles in society and the need to provide them with opportunities, the United Arab Emirates has taken an initiative that will have a positive long-term impact in respect of international representation: women have begun to occupy certain diplomatic positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Of a total of 31, one has the rank of Minister

Plenipotentiary (First Class); three are second secretaries; 15 are third secretaries; and 12 are diplomatic attachés.

Furthermore, women participate effectively in representing the country at international conferences and seminars and, provided they are properly qualified, there are no obstacles to such participation. The General Women's Union represents United Arab Emirates women through membership of a number of organizations, including the following:

- The Arab Women's Organization in Cairo
- The World Family Organization in France
- The Arab Family Organization in Tunisia
- UNDP, headquarters in New York
- The Arab Network for Adult Education, headquarters in Egypt

Stereotypes and discriminatory cultural practices, article 5

10. Information on social and cultural patterns affecting the enjoyment by women of their rights, and Government efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices.

In general, society in the United Arab Emirates respects and appreciates women, considering them the true partner of men in the family. Vigorous efforts have been made in the country to mainstream women's issues in development and translate that overall trend into policies that serve sustained economic growth. In addition to those mentioned above, women in the United Arab Emirates have made considerable social gains.

Set forth below are the most important social services provided to women by the United Arab Emirates:

- Social allowance for workers' children and housing allowance:

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in his capacity as ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, has issued two regulations, the first of which effects changes in some of the provisions of the child allowance, while the second amends some of the provisions of the housing allowance for civil servants and employees who are citizens of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The amendment to the child allowance regulation provides that the allowance shall be granted to a female employee for her children who are nationals if it is not paid to their father and that, in the case of divorce, the allowance shall be granted to the person providing support.

The amendment to the regulation on the housing allowance for civil servants and employees who are nationals provides that a woman employee who is a national shall be granted the housing allowance for the married category if she is married, widowed or divorced and is supporting a child.

- Establishment of day-care centres in ministries and public institutions

Assured of the importance of promoting women's participation in the labour market and assisting them in balancing family responsibilities and job demands, the Council of Ministers issued Decision No. 19 of 2006 concerning day-care centres in ministries, public institutions and Government offices and agencies, article 1 of which provides that in

ministries, Government departments and offices and other public agencies and institutions, day-care centres attached thereto shall be established in order to provide care for the children of women employees provided at least 50 married women are employed therein or the number of female employees' children in the age group ranging from newborn infants to 4 years is 20 or more.

- Allocation of housing for widowed and divorced women

State policy has been based on the principle of providing housing support and a number of mechanisms that are designed to enable citizens to obtain housing, including by providing citizens who possess no land on which to build their dwellings with free residential plots supplied with complete infrastructure, namely, streets, water, electricity, sanitation and other facilities.

Women have benefited extensively from that policy, inasmuch as a female citizen who is widowed, divorced, or married to a person who is not a national of the United Arab Emirates is entitled to receive a residence or residential land in addition to the finance necessary in order to build a residence.

In general, women in the United Arab Emirates enjoy their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights: there are no impediments to their entry to the labour market or travel abroad for recreational, tourist or medical purposes or in order to undertake official duties in representation of their country; they are free to drive cars, engage in business and manage their own financial affairs.

In the cultural sphere, women have the right to frequent cultural gatherings and to attend seminars and other such events. They have the same opportunity as men to join book clubs or other cultural and social groups.

Violence against women

11. Information on the incidence of various forms of violence against women; a strategy for dealing with such violence; and types of social service which are offered by the State party to victims of domestic violence.

There are not sufficient cases of violence against women in the United Arab Emirates to constitute a significant social phenomenon: there are only a few moderate cases and problems, as is confirmed by the fact that there are no clear statistics in that regard. Nevertheless, the State has established centres to provide support for women victims of violence, including social support centres run by the Ministry of the Interior and the Department for the Protection of Human Rights that is part of the Dubai Social Development Authority. Refuges are also provided for women and children victims of human trafficking or other forms of abuse.

Domestic violence, be it of a husband against his wife, or a father against his daughters, is not a phenomenon, merely a problem that requires resolution. The State has therefore provided hot lines that women can use in order to seek advice or intervention in order to solve a problem. Police consider domestic violence a crime.

State efforts to suppress violence against women may be summarized as follows:

- A marriage trust has been established with a view to providing training in successful marital relationships for couples who are about to get married.
- The various forms of the media are employed in order to raise awareness of family and marital relationships.
- Family guidance divisions have been established in State courts.
- In Abu Dhabi, a family court has been established in the judicial department.
- A department for the protection of human rights has been established; in 2008 its supervision was transferred from Dubai Police to the Dubai Community Development Authority. It provides technical and legal assistance to victims of abuse, who may have recourse to the social services divisions.
- In 2007, an agency for the care of women and children was established in Dubai, with a view to providing a secure environment, assistance and rehabilitation for victims of physical and psychological abuse and human rights violations.
- A refuge for victims of human trafficking was established in Abu Dhabi. Once that experiment has been evaluated, similar centres will be established throughout the country. The humanitarian mission of the refuge is to provide protection for women and children victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, alleviate their suffering and ensure respect for their humanity. The centre strives, in particular, to provide appropriate refuge for women and children and to provide various types of social, legal, psychological, medical, educational and professional care for those sheltering in the centre.
- The General Women's Union launched the "*ru'yaa*" (vision) initiative, which relates to human rights in general and those of women in particular. The aim of the initiative is to allow divorced women to see their children at Union headquarters and branches throughout the country rather than in courts and police stations. *Ru'yaa* offices endeavour to alleviate the psychological distress that the atmosphere of courts, police stations and public places causes to divorced women and their children, and to provide appropriate domestic settings.
- The social support centres managed by the Ministry of the Interior have been enlarged and improved with a view to providing appropriate psychological support for victims of crimes or attacks.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution, article 6

12. Measures and statistics relating to prostitution and mechanisms adopted by the State in order to prevent trafficking in women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Federal Law No. 51 of 2006 on the suppression of human trafficking, which was the first of its kind in the region, represents the legal framework in that field. Article 1 of that Law provides that trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, the abuse of authority or a position of vulnerability; or the receipt of payments in return for obtaining the consent of another person with the aim of exploitation. 'Exploitation' includes all forms of

sexual exploitation, the prostitution of others, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

That definition is very similar to that of the Palermo Protocol and other international laws. It covers all forms of trafficking in persons, not only overt servitude, but sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking in human organs. The law, which comprises 16 articles, provides severe penalties for criminals who engage in the trafficking of persons. Those penalties range from a one-year term of imprisonment to life imprisonment. Fines range between 100,000 UAE dirham and Dh 1 million, the equivalent of US\$ 27,500 and US\$ 275,000.

In addition to the law on human trafficking, other penal laws in the United Arab Emirates, including the Federal Penal Code, articles 364 and 365, provide protection against the crimes of slavery, prostitution and duress. Some articles of United Arab Emirates Law No. 39 of 2006 concerning international judicial cooperation concern the mutual exchange of accused or suspected criminals for trial or payment of the penalties to which they are liable. Mutual legal assistance is provided in respect of criminal issues, including trafficking in persons (articles 6-37). In 2007, such mutual legal assistance was provided in respect of at least seven cases.

Federal Law No. 51 of 2006, concerning the National Committee for the Suppression of Human Trafficking, sets out its mandate as follows:

1. To study and update legislation governing questions relating to trafficking in persons, thereby ensuring that victims thereof are protected in accordance with international requirements.
2. In coordination with the relevant State bodies, to prepare reports on the measures that have been taken by the State with a view to suppressing trafficking in persons.
3. To study reports on trafficking in persons and take the requisite action.
4. To coordinate between the various relevant State bodies, including ministries, departments, institutions and authorities, with respect to suppressing trafficking in persons and following up whatever action is taken in that regard.
5. To raise awareness of issues relating to trafficking in persons by holding conferences and seminars, issuing publications and providing training and any other activity designed to achieve the goals of the Committee.
6. Along with the relevant State bodies, to participate in and put forward the views of the State at international conferences and forums concerning the suppression of trafficking in persons.

As part of its domestic and international strategy to suppress the crime of trafficking in persons, the United Arab Emirates signed the 2005 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and in 2009 ratified the United Nations Protocol for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which is known as the Palermo Protocol and is one of the protocols supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The National Committee for the Suppression of Human Trafficking works to increase awareness of implementation of laws relating to that issue at both the

local and Federal levels. Official reports indicate that in 2008, 20 cases involving trafficking in persons were registered in accordance with Federal Law No. 51, of which 12 were in Dubai, three in each of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah and one each in Ajman and Ras al-Khaimah. In 2007, the comparable figure was 10, indicating that the process of suppressing that crime is steadily developing.

Set forth in the table below are the number of cases, victims and suspects involving trafficking in persons:

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Victims</i>	<i>Suspects</i>
20	32	43

It should be noted that cases of trafficking in persons are not restricted to the United Arab Emirates, and that Federal efforts to circulate information to all officials and raise awareness is beginning to bear fruit. Those efforts will certainly have a major impact when the State plan to launch a media campaign on trafficking in persons is activated in 2009. An official Internet site has already been set up on that campaign and will constitute an official information resource. That site (www.nccht.gov.ae) is expected to be an effective means of increasing public awareness and for communication between the Committee and the public.

Convictions have been obtained in at least six court cases, as against five cases in 2008. There has also been a significant change in the penalties imposed: while in 2007-2008 criminals convicted of committing, being an accomplice to or inciting those crimes were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to ten years, in 2008-2009, two of those convicted were sentenced to life imprisonment, one in Sharjah and the other in Ras al- Khaimah, and the others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The United Arab Emirates is endeavouring to augment the number of staff available to cover an increasing number of trials involving trafficking in persons. As part of its comprehensive campaign to raise public knowledge and awareness of the application of the relevant law and find effective means of curbing this crime, the National Committee for the Suppression of Human Trafficking, in cooperation with the relevant departments and ministries, arranges workshops which are attended by staff from the departments of migration and residence, the police and the office of the public prosecutor.

- In March 2007, in cooperation with the Security Services of the United Kingdom, Dubai Police arranged a workshop on the investigation of crimes involving trafficking in persons.
- In 2007, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Committee announced a detailed programme of training courses aimed at building capacities to apply the law. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, two workshops were held in September in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, one of which dealt with crimes involving trafficking in persons. The workshops were held in cooperation with the United States Johns Hopkins University, with the aim of improving current legislation in Gulf Cooperation Council States and discussing joint efforts to suppress such crime at the regional level.
- In January 2008, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, a lecture was arranged on the relationship between security and trafficking in persons.

- In the same month, a five-day training course was held on human rights and the application of the law, attended by police officers and pertinent parties.
- In February 2008, a training programme was held on the suppression of crimes involving trafficking in persons, and a further programme is planned to take place in 2009 on means of investigating such crimes.
- The final draft was formulated of a methodology for collecting data, with a view to establishing a central database for police officers and those working in the relevant areas.
- A group of national law school graduates was selected to undergo training programmes designed to increase their knowledge of Internet crime, organized crime, terrorist activities, human and other trafficking and human rights in the United Arab Emirates.
- From 16 to 29 November 2008, a training course was held in Belarus for persons working in the United Arab Emirates in the field of the suppression of trafficking in persons.
- On 28 January 2009, the first conference for persons working in the field of the suppression of trafficking in persons was held in Abu Dhabi in the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs.
- On 25 and 26 February 2009, a training course was held in Dubai Police Academy for persons working in the United Arab Emirates in the field of the suppression of trafficking in persons.

The United Arab Emirates uses its own system for controlling the issues of migration and passports, in order to monitor crimes involving trafficking in persons. That system comprises the following:

- Federal Law No. 6 of 1973 and subsequent amendments concerning the entry and residence of foreigners.
- The measures employed in order to control points of entry into the State, which include the following:
 - Refusal to grant entry to children from certain countries whose names have been added to the passports of family members or relatives. The aim of that measure is to protect them from exploitation. The United Arab Emirates concentrates on the need for such children to be granted their own passports, with individual entry permits, in order to ensure that regulations are observed and that migration and passport staff are able to recognize children when they enter the State and ensure that they return to their country of origin with their family members or relatives.
 - Control of the arrival of foreign arrivals by using retinal scanners.
 - Restrictions on the number of visas that are issued for visits to family and friends resident in the United Arab Emirates, in order to end abuse of that privilege.
 - The Committee has devised a memorandum of cooperation to be signed with relevant States concerning direct cooperation in trafficking in persons-related issues and the interchange of information in that regard.

- 13. Statistics on the number of women engaged in prostitution.**
- 14. Concrete steps taken to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.**

On 28 September 2008, pursuant to Federal Decree No. 71 of 2008, the United Arab Emirates ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Upon deposit by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the instrument of ratification to the Protocol, the United Arab Emirates became a party thereto.

Participation in decision-making and representation at the international level, articles 7 and 8.

- 15. Statistical information on the number of women in leadership positions.**

In February 2008, the number of women in ministerial positions rose from two to four: Minister of Foreign Trade, Minister of Social Affairs and two Ministers of State. That is the highest number in the Arab world.

Women hold 9 of the 40 seats on the Federal National Council. That proportion, namely, 22 per cent, is again one of the highest for women's representation in legislative institutions.

One woman has become a judge and 2 are district attorneys in Abu Dhabi, while 10 are qualified as district attorneys in Dubai.

The first two women ambassadors were appointed: to Sweden and Spain; and one woman is a Consul General in Shanghai, China.

Women occupy 66 per cent of Government sector positions, of which 30 per cent are senior leadership and decision-taking posts.

Women represent 15 per cent of the teaching faculty at the United Arab Emirates University.

Sixty per cent of all doctors, teachers, pharmacists and nurses are women. Women also work in the regular ranks of the armed forces, the police and the customs.

- 16. Steps taken to establish a supreme council on women and children; proportion of women compared to men in the council; principal activities; and proportion of non-United Arab Emirates women.**

The United Arab Emirates is taking action to ensure the entry into force of a Council of Ministers decision concerning the establishment of a supreme council on women and children. That council will aim to improve levels of care and follow-up of issues relating to women and children; provide support for that aim in all fields and, in particular, education, culture, health and social and psychological affairs; and achieve security and safety for children and mothers.

Nationality, article 9

17. Transference of nationality by United Arab Emirates woman to her children or foreign husband.

Through the specialized bodies, the United Arab Emirates is taking action to study the situation of children born to female citizens with foreign husbands. It has established a consultative committee to prepare a legal study on the granting of State citizenship to such children who bear their father's nationality and whose parents remain married. As a result of that study, a bill was prepared for amendment of the Nationality and Passports Law that will permit children born to female citizens with foreign husbands to acquire their mother's nationality, in accordance with the conditions that shall be set forth by the administrative regulation of that Law, which will be promulgated as soon as the necessary Constitutional procedures have been completed.

Education, article 10

The elimination of stereotypes in curriculums

The General Women's Union, through the National Gender Mainstreaming Initiative, has carried out an analytical study of stereotypes of women in educational curriculums and is currently coordinating insertion of the proposed amendments with the Ministry of Education.

Education from kindergarten to university is provided for male and female children in the United Arab Emirates. Education, including adult education, is free for citizens at all stages.

19. Percentage of primary, secondary and university graduates who are female. Please indicate what the dropout rates are for women at all levels of education, and the major causes leading girls and women to discontinue their education.

Percentage of female primary and secondary school graduates.

1. General-education schools

The table set forth below shows the percentage of girls and boys who graduated in academic year 2007-2008 from the first and second stages of education.

Educational stage	Class	Boys			Girls		
		Sat examination	Passed examination	Percentage	Sat examination	Passed examination	Percentage
Basic stage	Fifth	8 918	8 772	98.3	9 730	9 685	99.5
	Ninth	10 252	9 508	92.7	11 628	10 471	90.0
Secondary stage	Twelfth	7 117	6 691	94.0	10 263	9 684	94.3
Total		26 287	24 971	94.9	31 621	29 480	94.3

2. Adult education schools

Educational stage	Class	Male			Female		
		Sat examination	Passed examination	Percentage	Sat examination	Passed examination	Percentage
Basic stage	Fifth	422	274	64.9	470	427	90.8
	Ninth	511	417	81.6	552	430	77.8
Secondary stage	Twelfth	1 010	239	23.6	1 084	409	37.7
Total		1 943	930	47.7	2 106	1 266	60.0

3. Percentage of girls who drop out of school

The percentage of girls who dropped out of school at the end of the second stage for academic year 2007-2008 in general-education schools was 2.1 per cent, while the comparable figure for boys was 8.4 per cent.

The main factors causing girls to drop out of school at the end of the second stage are marriage, employment and illness.

4. Ability of non-United Arab Emirates nationals to enrol at school

Persons of any nationality resident in the United Arab Emirates are able to enrol at public and private schools and register for special education and home education.

Teacher training and its impact

The Ministry of Education, as part of its new administrative structure, has updated the staff and professional development department that is responsible for developing and training teachers in all fields.

Some of the many teacher training programmes available include the following:

- Teacher training in the use of advanced technology for practical and educational purposes.
- Teacher training in professional standards.
- The use of sophisticated educational curriculums.
- Educational and professional guidance.
- Evaluation and examinations.

In addition to the foregoing, there are other training programmes which have impacted positively on the professional development of teachers and improved their performance, thereby improving the standard of school leavers.

Scholastic textbooks and curriculums

The United Arab Emirates, as represented by the Ministry of Education, continues to reinforce the concept of women's rights and to uphold women's role and rights. It deals with discrimination-related problems by promoting skills and knowledge and by employing in its curriculum strategies that are based on justice, equality and respect.

Education statistics published by the Ministry of Economy in a 2008 report are set forth below:

<i>Item</i>	<i>2003/2004</i>	<i>2004/2005</i>	<i>2005/2006</i>	<i>2006/2007</i>
Ratio of girl to boy students in kindergartens	93.7	93.1	92.6	93.0
Ratio of girl to boy students in first stage	93.6	94.3	94.5	94.2
Ratio of girl to boy students in second stage	93.0	92.2	93.2	92.3
Ratio of girl to boy students in secondary education	108.0	106.7	105.4	104.2
Ratio of female to male students at university	181.1	153.3	159.2	156.2
Ratio of girl to boy students in special education	83.8	68.0	81.8	103.0
Ratio of female to male students in adult education	78.7	86.5	105.7	112.4
Ratio of female to male teachers in first stage	548.5	474.2	533.0	545.2
Ratio of female to male teachers in second stage	128.0	130.0	129.1	133.7
Ratio of female to male teachers in secondary education	120.0	125.4	118.0	118.6
Percentage of female students in Government schools	48.4	45.5	42.1	39.6
Percentage of female students in private schools	51.6	54.5	57.9	60.4
Class size in kindergartens	22.3	22.0	22.2	22.6
Class size in first stage	23.3	23.3	23.3	23.3
Class size in second stage	23.9	23.6	21.2	23.5
Class size in secondary education	22.4	21.2	22.0	22.3
Class size in special education	6.8	7.0	7.0	5.5
Class size in adult education	20.3	20.7	19.6	19.5

Employment, article 11

20. Equality of women in the area of employment and strengthening the role of women in the business sector.

The State offers equality of opportunity in respect of employment, and men and women earn identical salaries. There are no impediments to women entering the business sector: they are permitted to undertake all commercial activities. A number of businesswomen's associations throughout the country assist and encourage involvement as either full or sleeping partners in joint projects with companies and other sectors. They also develop relations between individuals and institutions, given the importance of networking for growth in all fields.

The most recent statistics indicate that the businesswomen's association has some 12,000 members who manage 11,000 investment projects worth some Dh 12.5 billion. At the same time, the proportion of women employed in the banking sector, which is considered to be the most important economic sector in the United Arab Emirates, is some 37.5 per cent.

The State has also launched initiatives that enable women to engage in commercial activity from the home, thereby empowering them to reconcile their domestic duties with the demands of such activity. Those initiatives include the following:

- The Abu Dhabi *mubdia'h* (productive woman) programme, which aims to strengthen the role of United Arab Emirates women, expand their participation in the economic and social development process, encourage

them to tackle the risks inherent in independent economic undertakings, and facilitate all the possible outcomes of such ventures. The programme makes it possible for 19 activities to be carried out from home.

- The *intilaq* licensing programme, operated by the Dubai Department of Economic Development, is a groundbreaking project that permits United Arab Emirates nationals to operate small businesses from their homes in Dubai. There is no need to hire an office or commercial premises, which encourages people to launch their projects and reduces start-up costs, thereby increasing their ability to compete.
- The *etimad* programme in Sharjah aims to encourage male and female citizens of the United Arab Emirates and, in particular, of Sharjah, to make good use of their time by becoming effectively involved in economic life. The programme targets those who wish to get involved in professional or trade activities from the home, but lack confidence or are unsure of how to begin, whether by themselves or in partnership with another person, because they lack sufficient experience to embark on commercial activity in the wider world.

State policy with regard to women's participation in economic activity is based on the belief that such participation is a developmental imperative, rather than mere talk about rights and freedoms, and an imperative from which all should benefit, without discrimination on grounds of gender. The social and economic changes that are currently taking place throughout the world have given the subject of women's involvement in employment important and palpable economic and social dimensions: comprehensive development cannot be achieved in all societies, whether they be developing or advanced, without the effective participation of women, who are fundamental and effective partners in the comprehensive and sustainable development process. Any society that forbids women from economic and social participation is depriving itself of the contribution that half its population could make to the development process.

On that understanding, legislation in the United Arab Emirates has been directed towards guaranteeing women's right to equality and removing any form of sexual discrimination. The State Constitution gives women constitutional and legal rights that secure their right to work, care and social security and to protection from all types of discrimination, as follows:

The right to equality and freedom from discrimination:

The Constitution affirmed the principle of equality when it provided in article 14 that the foundations of society should be equality; social justice; safety and security; and equality of opportunity for all citizens, and that cooperation and mutual compassion should be a firm bond between them. In article 25, it provided that all persons are equal before the law, without distinction between citizens of the Federation on grounds of race, nationality, religious belief or social status.

Right to employment:

In article 20, the Constitution stated that society should value work as a cornerstone of its development, endeavour to provide employment for citizens and ensure that they are adequately trained therefor. Appropriate conditions shall be ensured through legislation that protects the rights of employees and the interests of employers in the light of developing international labour legislation. In article 34, the Constitution provides that,

within the limits of the law, every citizen shall be free to choose his occupation, trade or profession, due consideration being given to the regulations that govern certain professions and trades. No person may be compelled to provide labour other than in exceptional circumstances that are provided for by the law, and must receive compensation for such labour. No person may be enslaved. The Constitution guarantees in article 35 the right to employment in public office, providing that such offices shall be open to all citizens on a basis of equality, in accordance with the provisions of the law. Public office shall be a national service entrusted to those who hold it. The only aim of the public servant, in the execution of his duties, shall be the public interest.

The principle of the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, and the right to employment without discrimination having been embedded in the Constitution as set forth above, means that those rights enjoy Constitutional protection.

In the same context, Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 concerning the regulation of labour relations and Federal Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning human resources in the Federal Government establish the right of women to equality, as follows:

Article 32 of the Labour Law provides that women shall receive the same rate of pay as men for the same work.

The Law provided for equality between men and women not only in respect of salaries, wages, bonuses and allowances but also with regard to all procedures involved in employment in public office, starting with appointment and ending with separation from service, termination benefits and pension.

The State has also ratified international labour conventions relating to equality and lack of discrimination in the field of employment in general and against women in particular. In February 1997, it ratified International Labour Convention No. 100 of 1951 concerning equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value, and in June 2001, International Labour Convention No. 111 of 1958 concerning discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

On the basis of the legal stance adopted towards the international conventions by the legal system of the United Arab Emirates, which is governed by the rules provided for in the provisions of the Constitution, namely, that any agreement or convention that has been ratified by the State is legally binding as soon as the relevant Federal Decree has been published, as is the case with the laws promulgated by the legislative authorities, such conventions must be directly and immediately applied and implemented by all State authorities, and all those authorities shall be bound by their provisions. Consequently, anyone who has been injured by failure to comply with those provisions has the right to seek the judicial redress appropriate to the type of infraction and determined circumstances, with a view to obtaining their rights.

21. Statistics on women's labour force participation in the official sector, including non-Emirates citizens, and services and protection available to women in that sector.

Women occupy 66 per cent of Government sector positions, of which 30 per cent are senior leadership and decision-taking posts, and represent 15 per cent of faculty members at the United Arab Emirates University. Some 60 per cent of all

doctors, teachers, pharmacists and nurses are women. Women also work in the regular ranks of the armed forces, the police and the customs.

The State provides a number of legal, social, protective and other services for women who work in the official sector, including the following:

Institutions have established nurseries for the use of working women, pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 19 of 2006, which called upon ministries, public institutions and Government offices and agencies to provide day-care centres when they had at least 50 married women employees or when such employees' children under the age of four years numbered 20 or more.

Pursuant to the Labour Law, article 29, women may not be employed in high-risk occupations: No women shall be employed in any job that is hazardous, arduous or physically or morally detrimental or in any other work that the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, after consulting the concerned authorities, may specify in a resolution. Article 27 of the same Law provides that no woman shall be required to work at night. The term "at night" refers to a period of not less than 11 successive hours, including the period from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Men and women are guaranteed the same wages by article 32 of the Labour Law, which states that a female's wage shall be equal to that of a male if she performs the same work.

The Law concerning human resources in the Federal Government grants women 60 days maternity leave, in addition to four months during which she may take two hours each day in which to breastfeed her child, both benefits being with full pay. Women workers also have the right to take paid study leave in order to gain higher educational qualifications.

Legal protection for women working in the official Government sector:

Federal Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning human resources in the Federal Government guarantees women working in the Government sector the following rights:

To take 60 days maternity leave on full pay.

Over a period of four months, on full pay, to leave the workplace for two hours each day in order to breastfeed her child.

To take special leave with gross pay for a period of four months and 10 days in the case of the death of her spouse.

To take special leave without pay in order to accompany her husband if his work requires that he moves outside the United Arab Emirates. A period of such leave shall be included for the calculation of seniority, salary and retirement benefits.

Legal protection for women working in the official private sector:

1. Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 assures women working in the private sector of employment protection, as follows:

No woman shall be employed in any job that is hazardous, arduous or physically or morally detrimental.

No woman shall be required to work at night.

A female's wage shall be equal to that of a male if she performs the same work.

Women shall have the right to 45 days maternity leave on full pay.

Women shall have the right to two additional periods in which to breastfeed children in the 18 months following delivery, with no reduction in pay.

2. Ministry of Labour initiatives in the field of protecting the rights of men and women workers:

The Ministry of Labour has launched a number of initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of men and women workers in the United Arab Emirates in general and of women workers in particular, on the grounds that they are the group most in need of protection. Some of the most outstanding of those initiatives include the following:

Wage Protection System

This is an electronic system created by the Ministry of Labour in partnership with the Central Bank. It affirms the concern of the Government to protect the rights of all productive sectors, including workers and employers, and underscores the importance of the principle of protecting the wages of both male and female workers. The System ensures that the Ministry receives all the necessary data and information on procedures for the payment of wages to men and women workers in the private sector, the extent to which institutions pay wages within the period specified and in the correct manner, and the promptness with which they take preventive measures to minimize wage-related worker disputes.

The employer chooses one or more of the agencies, including banks, exchange companies and service provision companies, which are licensed by the Central Bank to take part in the System.

Once the agent bank has received the sum that is destined for workers' wages, it sends the data to the System, which transmits to the agent the data on the worker wages to be paid. That information is sent simultaneously to the Ministry of Labour.

The System flags any establishments that are late in paying their workers' wages, thereby permitting the appropriate procedures to be taken against such establishments and an inspector to be sent to the premises. The Ministry allows each establishment a certain amount of time to become a part of the System, after which it may not benefit from any Ministry services unless it is a partner therein. Certain procedures may also be taken against non-participants.

22. **Conditions for women migrant workers and whether the amendment to Federal Labour Law No. 8 of 1980 will lead to the enforcement of mandatory employment contracts with the objective of protecting and safeguarding the rights of workers.**
23. **Working conditions and measures to protect the rights of women migrant domestic workers and steps taken by the State party towards ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.**

Wage Protection Office

The Wage Protection Office was established pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 988 of 2008, dated 21 October 2008, as a result of the Ministry's appreciation of the importance of wage protection and realization that wages determine the relationship between employee and employer.

The most important responsibilities of the Wage Protection Office include devising and implementing a comprehensive system to monitor protection of wages and working hours; implementing a system for worker remittances through banks and financial institutions; maintaining contact with establishments in order to prompt them to pay wages; and maintaining communications with male and female workers in order to receive complaints relating to whole or partial non-payment of wages when due.

Dealings with non-compliant establishments are conducted as follows:

All business is broken off with establishments where wages are two months overdue, and with all other establishments belonging to the same proprietor; they are pursued for payment; and the workers' sponsorship documents are transferred to another establishment.

All business is broken off with establishments where wages are three months overdue, they are pursued for payment, and the workers' sponsorship documents are transferred, with their approval, to another establishment. The penal case is transferred to the public prosecutor's office for penal measures to be taken against the establishment, while the employment case is referred to the department of labour relations for the workers' case to be taken to the labour court.

Wage service:

The Ministry, in order to affirm the principle of wage protection, has introduced a service that permits male and female workers in any private sector establishment to give notice of delay or non-payment of wages or illegal deductions. A special office for that purpose was set up in October 2008, and the wage service was launched on 1 May 2009. Workers can contact the Ministry without the need to attend in person, by using the free telephone number 800665 or on-line, at www.mol.gov.ae, and register their wage-related complaint with the labour inspector in complete confidentiality.

Measures taken when complaint has been received by wage service:

A text message is sent to advise that the complaint has been received and give a reference number for follow-up of the complaint.

The worker is contacted in order to take all the necessary information.

Responsibility for the complaint is given to an inspector and the requisite measures are taken to resolve the issue, either by calling the establishment owner or by visiting the workplace. If the establishment is found to be at fault, all the pertinent legal measures are taken.

800665 Call centre

Through this call centre, the Ministry is making every effort to make it possible for workers to contact it using a free telephone line and to access Ministry services that provide for their needs. That direct telephone link has helped to reduce the pressure on the Labour Office and save clients' time. The service is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., in several languages, including Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Hindi, Malayam, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu.

The call centre takes all calls relating to Ministry concerns, and also calls companies that operate in the country to advise them that they must regulate the situation of their employees or pay any fines that are due. It also advertises new services provided by the Ministry and a legal service that answers legal queries from male and female workers and employers. Between March 2007, when the service was launched, and end April 2009 the centre handled 956,473 calls.

In order to find a way for workers, employers and the Ministry to interact and meet their basic needs, the E-Tawasul service was launched. It provides employers with free, direct 24-hour access to basic information on all establishments, including, inter alia, personal data, establishment data, register of workers, status of the establishment, status of work permit and pay statement, together with reports relating to the establishment.

Male and female workers may also access the system in order to obtain and print out their personal work permit and contract details.

Since the service was introduced, some 1,693 employers have registered for the service. A total of 38,381 visitors to the site viewed data on workers with work permits, while 1,048 viewed data on workers without work permits.

Clients' grievance system

This initiative was launched in September 2008. It is a comprehensive management tool that is based on global best practices and specifications and designed to handle effectively complaints from clients. The system applies a specific mechanism for dealing with employers, male and female workers and Ministry clients and for reaching a final outcome. Complaints that are received are considered and dealt with and then used in order to improve performance. Finally, impact is evaluated.

There are a variety of ways of submitting a complaint, including at the client service counter, by contacting the 800665 call centre, visiting the www.mol.gov.ae website, and placing the complaint in a complaint box or sending it by fax to 042612720. In 2008, a total of 511 complaints were considered.

4. Questions concerning conditions for workers, in particular women migrant workers, who are contractually employed in the United Arab Emirates and whether the amendment to Federal Labour Law No. 8 (1980) will lead to the enforcement of mandatory employment contracts with the objective of protecting and safeguarding the rights of the contractually employed workers.

The State is working towards the promulgation of a law that will regulate the employment of that group.

Paragraphs 24 and 25

24. Access to maternal and child health-care services and health services for women and girls, including those from rural areas and non-United Arab Emirates nationalities.

The economic and social changes that have taken place in the United Arab Emirates have improved the quality of the population's health, including that of women. Those changes have supported women's health status and improved their social and educational situation. That is the result of the various programmes provided by the Ministry of Health, the variety of health services that have been made available throughout the country and the fact that health coverage is free. Standards of living and levels of education have risen and population patterns have changed. Those efforts have had a positive impact, including lower levels of illness and a consequent fall in mortality rates, particularly among infants. Fertility rates have also risen, as has life expectancy. In most sectors of society health awareness has increased in the population in general and among women in particular.

A strategy has been devised for the advancement of the health of women and girls in the United Arab Emirates which focuses on the problems to which that group may be exposed because of the changes that are taking place. The goals and the mechanisms it employs are set forth below:

Goal one: to maintain and protect women's health

Executive mechanisms:

1. To establish well-women clinics, the most important functions of which include the early detection of breast and cervical cancer, osteoporosis prevention services and support for sound nutrition for women.

2. To establish a health research centre, with the aim of following developments in the field of scientific progress in respect of safeguarding women's health and developing techniques relating to any pertinent new research and comprehensive health care for women of all ages.

3. To promulgate legislation that will guarantee the health rights of women and children. One very important piece of legislation concerned the right of working women to maternity leave of at least three months and to a one-hour breastfeeding break during working hours for a period of at least one year.

4. To provide health insurance for women working in the private sector and their dependants if they are the sole breadwinner.

5. To provide health services for rural women.

*Goal two: to improve the health of girls**Executive mechanisms:*

1. To increase the number of in-depth studies and field research in order to uncover causes and risk factors related to girls' health and, in particular, eating disorders.
2. To devise a national programme for dealing with those factors that will bring together preventive and remedial measures.
3. To provide the necessary means for devising a national programme that will include all aspects of health care in order to suppress or minimize risk factors.
4. To encourage young women to carry out breast self-examinations and report any changes that may take place.
5. To protect and improve the health of adolescent girls and young women, including their mental and reproductive health, by developing a national project for the protection of adolescent girls' health and activating and supporting existing programmes and activities.
6. To raise widespread awareness of the need to stay healthy in every way by including appropriate material in scholastic curriculums and relevant courses in schools and universities.

*Goal three: To support the child-friendly hospital initiative**Executive mechanisms:*

1. To endeavour to support current programmes and activities in order to encourage and support efforts to encourage breastfeeding.
2. To adopt the idea of child-friendly hospitals, which encourages breastfeeding in all hospitals and health institutes that provide mother and child services.

*Goal four: To raise levels of health awareness**Executive mechanisms:*

1. To improve health awareness in centres and through home visits.
2. To involve the official media in spreading health and environmental awareness and providing nutritional guidance.
3. To support activities that provide information on pregnancy and childbirth within the curriculums of preparatory and secondary schools and universities.
4. To develop awareness of domestic accidents and falls, and awareness of and training in the principles of first-aid in the home.
5. To support the activities of such public service groups as hospital visitor and consumer protection groups and encourage women to become involved in the voluntary activities of those groups, thereby transferring information to the rest of the community.
6. To make women aware of the various ways in which they may avoid the impact of environmental pollution on the health of themselves and their families.

7. To develop the health awareness of women in the United Arab Emirates by regularly holding seminars and conferences and, in particular, the annual Women's Conference, and selecting themes that reflect developments in priorities.

Goal five: Protection against genetic diseases

Executive mechanisms:

1. To establish fully equipped clinics for genetic diseases.
2. To increase the number of regular health education programmes and improve the training and qualifications of doctors and health staff.
3. To note and follow up all new developments relating to diagnosis, treatment, research and health care in order to make use of them in every centre that specializes in such diseases. Such centres will be opened in all parts of the country. This effort will include pre-nuptial health checks and the introduction of a national register for congenital defects.

Goal six: To encourage and train local women to participate in various health fields

Executive mechanisms:

1. To increase the number of women technicians and administrators in hospitals and health centres.
2. To make mothers and fathers aware that they should encourage their daughters to study medicine, nursing and other medical specializations.
3. To coordinate with the Ministry of Education with a view to encouraging girl students to define their health concerns in the pre-university stage.
4. To promote the participation of women working in the health field in drawing up health policy and, in particular, in respect of the health of women and children; in decision making; and in devising, implementing, revising and providing health plans; and to make it possible for women to assume leadership positions in all parts of the health field.

24. Access to general and mental health services for women and girls, including those from rural areas.

The Ministry of Health has accorded particular attention to preventive and enhancement services by developing strategies for controlling disease and through programmes that target specific population groups, including women, children and workers. Such programmes, which come under the umbrella of preventive health services, include infectious disease observation, control and immunization programmes, and have succeeded in eradicating polio completely. They cover malaria and such non-communicable diseases as diabetes, cancer, heart and vascular disease, high blood pressure and obesity.

Reference should be made here to the fact that the General Women's Union and the Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding on 19 April 2009 with the aim of strengthening cooperation in the implementation of strategic programmes related to the health of women and children, early detection of cancer and raising awareness of the health of women and children, thereby supporting the role of the family and society as a whole in shouldering that responsibility throughout the country, including rural areas.

25. Services provided by the State to elderly women, and efforts to strengthen adolescent health education.

Albeit care for the elderly is a new field in the United Arab Emirates, because the values and customs the society has derived from Islam dictate that parents should be cared for in their old age, the State has been careful to provide institutional services throughout the country for the care of that group. Such care may be provided through Governmental or quasi-governmental institutions, and include health, social and mental care.

Here, it is worth mentioning that the population in the United Arab Emirates is young: the majority of the population consists of youth or children and in contrast to the rest of the world, the proportion of ageing persons is small. Ministry of Economy statistics indicate that, according to the 2005 census, 1.6 per cent of the population, of which women represented 37.3 per cent, was aged over 60 years.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health share the provision of care for ageing persons by cooperating in health and social care for that group. There are a number of specialized clinics in the country, including the following:

- The Abu Dhabi Centre for Medical Training
- Shawwab Rest Home, Dubai
- Old people's home in Sharjah
- Old people's home in Sha'm, Ras al-Khaimah
- Geriatric ward in Al-Ayn hospital
- Geriatric ward in Sad hospital
- The geriatric care hospital that was constructed in Ras al-Khaimah at the expense of a businessman, which contains 162 beds for elderly men and women. Every care was taken to ensure that it was built in accordance with the most modern systems employed by large international geriatric hospitals.

Geriatric care in the United Arab Emirates is not restricted to the care provided by the relevant institutions: recently, the State has moved towards providing care for elderly people in their homes in all parts of the country. Such care includes mental, physical and social care in the presence of their children, which increases their sense of security and helps to enable them to take as much care as they can of themselves.

Geriatric care services in the United Arab Emirates is not restricted to health care, but includes the provision of social assistance that permits ageing persons to live with their families, in their own environment, and provides them with all they need.

With regard to efforts to strengthen adolescent health education, including reproductive health, in schools, we should like to note that the Ministry of Health provides scholastic health services: there are 372 school health clinics and nine centres throughout the country to provide health care for female students of all ages. In 2007, a total of 86,986 girls visited those clinics.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health Department of Health Education, the clinics run health education campaigns that include both males and females as part of the adolescent health programme that was launched in 1996. That

programme aims to develop the health of adolescents and youth and meet their most important health and mental needs. Some of its most important achievements include the following:

- A field study to seek the views of youth leaders on the most important health and social issues and priorities and propose the most appropriate ways of dealing with them.
- Training programmes on behaviour and mental well-being; adolescent health programmes and programmes for relevant personnel in the health, education and social sectors.
- Booklets on adolescent health and family guidance and a series of publications on health awareness directed at families, school and social specialists and youth.
- A pioneer project that aims to educate and protect male and female adolescents.

Protection against HIV/AIDS

The United Arab Emirates is bound by the United Nations 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. While the virus is not a major health problem in the country, the State has, since 1985, taken care to produce effective national strategies in that regard, including the provision of moral, material and social support and treatment and medication. It implements treatment protocols with complex medications and provides protection against the complications of the virus for those who are infected and protection for their families, which has kept levels of the virus low, as has recently been attested by a World Health Organization report.

The United Arab Emirates was one of the first countries to take positive steps to deal with the virus, in accordance with the global strategy that was prepared for that purpose. It promulgated the necessary health legislation in order to support efforts to suppress the disease, restrict its spread and enable early detection. It has ensured that medication is available and that those affected are provided with support in a climate of confidentiality, in order to respect the customs and traditions of the society.

The response of policymakers, concerned for the health and economic advancement that has been made by the country, to the far-reaching spread of the virus at the regional and international levels was to contain and protect against the disease, especially in the light of the number of foreign workers in the country from various continents. Programmes aim to prevent the spread of the virus within the country by means of primary protection, early detection and immediate treatment. The Ministry of Health cooperates with various other health bodies in supervising those programmes.

Programme focuses:

Programmes focus on three main components: legislation, protection and early detection through screening.

There are a number of regulatory laws that provide that the virus shall be placed on the list of notifiable diseases; that a central programme committee shall be established, comprising representatives of various Government and non-governmental sectors; that HIV/AIDS committees shall be established in the various regions of the country, with responsibility for following up and taking all

preventive measures to eradicate the virus. The law also provides for the complete confidentiality of test results.

Prevention: Prevention is considered one of the basic components in combating the virus. It includes health education and using every available means to spread awareness throughout the population.

Early detection: Blood and its derivatives are tested, groups of individuals are tested, periodic control is carried out, and all immigrant workers and holders of resident permits are tested.

This programme is comprehensive: treatment and medical and social care is provided to all residents of the country who test positive for the virus.

Ministry of Health statistics for 2007 indicate that the number of United Arab Emirates nationals who have HIV/AIDS is low in comparison with rates in the rest of the world. At the end of that year, 35 new cases had been registered, of which 29 were male and six female. Most were aged 25 years and above. Those new cases brought the total number of registered cases to 540. The Ministry of Health takes the greatest care of them, and follows up their status, providing the necessary medication, health advice and information on the disease, methods of infection and how to avoid transferring the virus to others.

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In cooperation with UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund and various civil society organizations, the Ministry of Health implements programmes to raise awareness of the risks posed by HIV/AIDS and ways of protecting against it. Such programmes are appropriate to the values, customs and norms of the conservative society of the State. It should be noted that the General Women's Union organized an awareness campaign on the HIV/AIDS virus which had the slogan "Together for the sake of the children, together against HIV/AIDS". In cooperation with Dubai Police, a series of informative lectures was held in various parts of the country, including rural areas.

The fertile woman and children

Pregnant women are tested for HIV/AIDS in mother and child health centres and units when the other routine tests are being carried out. If a woman tests positive, she is referred for special counselling on breastfeeding and provided with all the information on feeding options.

Economic and social benefits, article 13

27. Women's access to loans and financial credit. Women's and girls' equal access to participation in sports.

1. Loans and financial credit: Policy on loans and financial credit in the United Arab Emirates does not differentiate between men and women. All the banks that operate in the country grant financial credit to women on condition that they provide the same financial security that is demanded of men.

2. Through the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme, the State grants loans and financial assistance for housing to women in the following circumstances:

- A widow who is rearing children.
- A divorced woman who is rearing children, when the father of the children is unable to provide housing for his children.
- A woman who has lost both parents and has no family members who are legally obliged to support her.
- A woman who has lost both parents and has reached the age of 30 without getting married.
- A woman who is married to a foreign national, provided she has children who are living in the United Arab Emirates and that the father of the children is unable to provide appropriate housing for the family.

3. The State believes that it is important to ensure equality of opportunity between the sexes, including in respect of sport. It therefore endeavours to remove all obstacles to women's active participation in sport. In 2008, the United Arab Emirates Women's Sport Committee was established with the aim of encouraging local women to take up sport and qualify them to take part in Gulf, Arab and international competitions. Today, we are proud of the significant sporting achievements of women from the United Arab Emirates in such competitions, which include, but are not limited to the following:

Karate:

Nura Muhammad Said Mahbub won the bronze medal in the First Arab Women's Championship, which was held in Beirut in 1998. The United Arab Emirates girls team has also had many successes under the leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Maitha Bint Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, President of the United Arab Emirates Karate and Taekwondo Federation. In Asia, the United Arab Emirates girls team achieved first place in the Western Asia Women's Karate Championship that was held in Dubai in 2002: the team won three silver and five bronze medals. The team took part for the first time in the Asian Games that were held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2002, as well as participating in November of the same year in the World Karate Championship in Madrid. They competed in the Asian Karate Championship that was held in China in February 2004, and won their first gold medal in the Pan Arab Games that were held in Algiers from 24 September to 8 October 2004. Sheikha Maitha Bint Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum herself won the silver medal in the XV Asiad that was held in Doha in 2006, competing in the +65 kilogram category.

Riding:

- Her Highness Sheikha Latifa Bint Ahmad Al Maktoum was runner-up in the 2003 Abu Dhabi International Show Jumping Championship and won the bronze medal in the show jumping section of the XV Asiad that was held in Doha in 2006.
- Equestriennes Rasha Harb and Nadia Tarim have taken part in many international show jumping championships.

Archery:

Shama Ahmad Al-Muhairi won the gold medal at the Arab Archery Championship in 1997. Under the supervision of the United Arab Emirates Olympic Committee, a women's archery team competed for the first time in the XIII Asiad in Bangkok in 1998 and in the 9th Arab Games in Jordan in 1999, where they won one silver and one bronze medal. The team also competed in the VIX Asiad in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2002.

Chess:

Since 1980, the United Arab Emirates has had great international success with chess. The country won one gold medal and three bronze medals at the 9th Arab Games in Jordan in 1999, and a gold medal at the 2004 Pan Arab Games in Algiers.

4. The State organizes and hosts several women's sporting events, including the following:

- The first Ramadan sports event for girls and women, "Sports for Women, Health and Department", was held from 8 to 15 October 2006 and included volleyball, basketball and individual and team table tennis. Events took place at the Khaula Bint Al Azwar school, the Jazira Club and the Wuhda School in Abu Dhabi.
- In May 2008, the first sporting and cultural Olympiad for female students was held in the halls and sports fields of Al-Ayn University.
- Sponsored by the President of the General Women's Union, in cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Education Council and the Abu Dhabi Education District, on 24 February 2009, events were held for schools of the Abu Dhabi Education District to mark Women's Sports Open Day. A total of 85 female students from all grades of 20 schools took part at the New Beach on Abu Dhabi corniche.
- In March 2010, the United Arab Emirates will host the second Gulf Cooperation Council Women's Games.

5. There are many women's sports clubs in the United Arab Emirates, including Abu Dhabi Women's Club and Sharjah Women's Club, in addition to private gymnasiums.

Rural women, article 14

28. Programmes developed to meet the needs of rural women; percentage of rural girls and women who are enrolled in education, and how those percentages compare with urban enrolment.

The United Arab Emirates devotes great attention to the development of rural areas and has implemented numerous projects designed for that purpose. Such projects included the building of Government housing, schools, and health and social centres, which brought about qualitative change in the level of services and facilities and provided a life of dignity for the inhabitants of those areas. It is the view of the State that the rural population should have access to all types of care, protection, support and concern, and that rural areas should be transformed into up-to-date regions provided with every modern, sophisticated service and

amenity. They should also be linked to the road network, thereby enjoying the same comprehensive services as cities.

Marriage and family life, articles 15 and 16

29. Equality between women and men in respect of personal status regarding marriage, divorce, child guardianship, custody and inheritance.

The Law of Personal Status in the United Arab Emirates regulates all matters pertaining to personal status, marriage, divorce, maintenance, child care and inheritance.

It should be noted here that the Islamic sharia provides the basis for the Law's provisions, which in several articles include protection for women's rights in those respects, some of which are set forth below:

Article 21 (1): One of the requirements for marriage is that the man must, at the time of the conclusion of the contract, be a fit partner for the woman. The woman and her agent have the right to demand an annulment once that is no longer the case, without any effect on the remaining clauses of the contract.

Article 27 (2): Before a marriage contract is concluded, a report must be obtained from a medical committee established by the Minister of Health stating that the parties are free of the diseases that the present Law provides may be a cause for separation.

Article 35 (1): The wife shall have the right to refuse consummation of the marriage until her dowry has been paid.

(2) If the wife is willing to permit consummation before the dowry has been paid, the money remains owing by the husband.

Article 55: The wife has the right to expect from her husband the following: (1) maintenance; (2) that he will not prevent her from completing her education; (3) that he will not prevent her from visiting and receiving her parents, extended family and siblings as is customary; (4) that he will not expose her to material or moral injury; (6) where the husband has more than one wife, all the wives must be treated equally.

Article 62 (1): A woman of full legal age has complete control over her property and the husband may not dispose thereof without her consent. Each spouse has an independent financial title. If one makes the other a partner in a financial venture, the building of a house, or anything similar, each is entitled to their share of it in case of divorce or death.

Article 63 (1): Maintenance shall include food, clothing, housing, medical care and assistance for the wife if she is caring for her family, and anything considered normal for married life. (2) When maintenance is set, the husband's ability to pay and the financial situation of the wife shall be taken into consideration, as shall the economic situation of the time and place, but the amount shall not be less than sufficient.

Article 74: The husband must provide for the wife in their place of residence a dwelling place that is appropriate to their status.

Article 117 (1): Each spouse may demand divorce on the grounds of any injury that means that normal married life may not be continued. Both

shall continue to have that right unless it is proved that they have become reconciled.

Article 124 (1): If a non-absent husband refuses to support his wife and has no assets that can be immediately realized for that purpose, the wife has the right to demand a separation.

Article 110 (1) : Divorce at the instance of the wife is a contract between the married couple in which both agree that the marriage contract shall be terminated upon payment of a consideration by the wife or a third party. (2) Admissible consideration for such divorce shall be as specified in the dowry contract. It is not permissible to accept non-payment of maintenance for children or for their custody. (3) If the consideration is not paid, the husband is entitled to the dowry. (4) Divorce at the instance of the wife is annulment. (5) An exception to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this article shall apply when a husband's refusal is unreasonable, and there are fears that God's will will not be respected, in which case a judge shall rule for annulment upon payment of the appropriate consideration.

Article 156 (1): Women's custody of children shall terminate when a boy reaches 11 years of age and when a girl reaches 13 years of age, unless the court believes that custody should be extended until the boy comes of age or the girl marries. (2) Women shall continue to have custody if the child is mentally disabled or has a serious illness, provided the interests of the child do not dictate otherwise.

With respect to the distribution of inheritance, the provisions of the Islamic sharia are the principle reference. It should be noted that the different shares allocated to male and female inheritors by the sharia are not dictated by gender, but by the following three criteria:

1. The closeness of the relationship between the inheritors, whether male or female, and the deceased. The closer the relationship, the larger the share of the inheritance. Conversely, the more distant the relationship, the smaller the share of the inheritance, regardless of the gender of the beneficiary.

2. The generational position of the beneficiary. Persons of the generation that follows the life in question and bears its burdens usually have a greater share of the inheritance than those from a generation that preceeded the life and did not have such a burden, the burden normally being borne by others. Again, that bears no relation to the gender of the beneficiaries. For example, the daughter of a deceased man inherits more than his mother, although both are female. The daughter inherits more than the mother even if the daughter is a foster-child and has no idea who her father is, and even when the father is the origin of the wealth owned by the son, the son inherits more than the father, even though both are male.

3. The third criterion is the financial burden which the sharia recognizes as being placed on the inheritor because of his responsibilities towards others. This is the only criterion which differentiates between males and females. However, that differentiation does not lead to any wrong or unfairness towards the female. The opposite may well be the case. For when the inheritors are equal in respect of proximity and generation, as for example, the male and female children of the deceased, their respective financial responsibilities will be the determining factor in the division of the inheritance. In that case, because it is a man's responsibility to support the female, his wife and his children, whereas a female inheritor has in her brother someone who must support her and her children, she

receives less than her brother, who receives twice as much as she does, but is more fortunate in respect of the inheritance because she is not obliged to support anyone else: that money is hers alone and is intended to provide a form of insurance for her.

30. Please clarify the role of the courts with regard to marriage and family practices and customs, and describe the measures, including training, to ensure awareness of the Convention and compliance by the judiciary and the legal profession with State obligations under the Convention.

The State has created departments for family reconciliation and guidance in all courts. Recently, a family prosecutor's court was established in Abu Dhabi in order to consider such issues.

There are three institutes for judicial training: the Institute for Training and Legal Studies in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, which is a federal institution, and two others in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. They provide training for members of the judiciary in the international laws and conventions to which the State is a party. Trainees are also taught the law on personal status, including the provisions relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance and custody.
