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Human Rights Council

**Fifty-fourth session**

September-October 2023

Agenda item 6

**Universal periodic review**

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

United Arab Emirates

Addendum

Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review

1. The United Arab Emirates reaffirm their determination to continue the promotion and protection of human rights and again express their support for the universal periodic review mechanism, as it affords possibilities for exchanging information, experience and best practice with regard to human rights.
2. The United Arab Emirates attentively examined the 323 recommendations made in the course of the review session of its fourth periodic report on 8th May 2023 at the Human Rights Council, during the consultations and meetings held by the Standing Committee to follow up the universal periodic review on human rights.
3. The United Arab Emirates indicate that 198 recommendations have been approved. Effect has already been given to a good number of these recommendations, whereas others are at a planning stage. The United Arab Emirates will strive to implement the remaining recommendations within the framework of the National Plan for Human Rights.
4. The United Arab Emirates have taken note of 125 recommendations in the knowledge that many of them require closer consideration and the introduction of a national legislative framework consonant with international standards and instruments, or that they are in part incompatible with Sharia and national legislation Some such recommendations could be partially accepted if the procedure in place under the universal periodic review mechanism allows for partial acceptance of recommendations.

**Issues relating to the strengthening and development of national legislative, legal and institutional frameworks and policies relevant to the protection of human rights**

1. The following recommendations are accepted: 70, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 167.
2. During the past period, the United Arab Emirates has adopted a large package of important national legislation that contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as an interconnected and integrated system of national policies and strategies that seek to promote and to guarantee the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The State is currently working on developing the national human rights plan. At the institutional level, the United Arab Emirates established the National Human Rights Institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles. The State will provide through its executive institutions the necessary support for and strengthen its cooperation with the National Human Rights Institution, thus contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level.
3. Note has been taken of the following recommendations: 71, 72, 73.

**Questions concerning the ratification of international treaties and conventions to which the United Arabe Emirates have not yet acceded and concerning the withdrawal of reservations**

1. The following recommendations are accepted: 1, 41, 55, 56.
2. The UAE continuously examine all international treaties and conventions and their compatibility with its national legislation and policies, in a way that contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights. The State is also currently considering withdrawing some of its reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
3. The following recommendations have been noted: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 144, 267.

**Questions relating to strengthening frameworks for cooperation with United Nations bodies, mechanisms, committees and funds**

1. The following recommendations are accepted: 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 67, 68, 69, 123.
2. The UAE is keen to strengthen its cooperation with United Nations bodies, mechanisms and committees in order to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights. The State seeks to benefit from the expertise of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in implementing a number of programmes, activities and specialized workshops, including cooperation with regard to the National Recommendations Tracking Database. The United Arab Emirates is also eager to improve cooperation with special procedures, and it has extended invitations to make field visits to the country to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. It is also considering extending invitations to other special rapporteurs, including those who have previously made visit requests.
3. The following recommendations have been noted: 62, 63, 65, 66, 130.

**Questions concerning continuous action to promote women’s rights and gender equality**

14.The following recommendations are accepted: 195, 196, 215, 216, 220, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259.

15.The following recommendations have been noted: 197, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 242, 252, 268.

16. The 2022–2026 gender-balance strategy has been adopted. Its purpose is to bridge the gender-balance gap in all sectors, mainstream a gender perspective, promote gender balance in decision-making positions and consolidate the country’s leading position and leadership in relevant legislation. During the past three years, more than 20 new laws and legislative amendments aimed at promoting women's rights and empowerment have been adopted, the most important of which is the Federal Decree-Law on Personal Status applicable to non-Muslims residing in the country. Article 4 of the Decree-Law, which concerns the issue of equality of rights and duties between men and women, aims to promote the principle of equality in matters of witness testimony, inheritance, the right to request divorce and joint custody. With regard to the decriminalization of abortion in some circumstances, the Medical Liability Law provides for two following cases in which doctors can perform an abortion subject to controls: if continuing the pregnancy would endanger the life of the pregnant woman and if the foetus is shown to have an abnormality. The Cabinet is currently considering allowing abortion in other specific cases subject to controls and standards.

**Questions relating to further promotion and protection of labour rights**

17.The following recommendations are accepted: 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 245, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 308, 309, 310, 311, 313, 316, 317, 318.

18. The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance to protecting the rights of workers in the country and to providing them all with universal coverage under a number of different programmes that both safeguard their rights and ensure a decent standard of living. The United Arab Emirates has introduced a wide range of reforms over recent years. These include legislative and regulatory reforms as well as proactive services for workers of all categories in the country to ensure the protection of their rights, the most important of which is the adoption of the Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on labour relations. The State has launched within this framework several initiatives that have the primary purpose of protecting workers’ rights and providing comprehensive insurance coverage so as to guarantee a dignified life during and after the period of employment, the most important of which is the unemployment insurance system.

19.The following recommendations have been noted: 180, 181, 304, 305, 306.

**Questions concerning the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of older persons, and the support and protection of the family**

20.The following recommendations are accepted: 193, 194, 207, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 269, 271, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285.

21. The United Arab Emirates will continue to strengthen and develop its efforts related to the protection of the rights of children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, as well as the support and protection of the family. National legislation, policies, initiatives and programmes adopted by the State in this context form solid foundations for promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups.

**Questions relating to access to justice, criminal justice, protection of inmates in penal facilities and taking measures against torture**

**22**.The following recommendations are accepted: 122, 126, 127, 129, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142.

23. The principle of judicial independence in the United Arab Emirates is rooted in the Constitution and the relevant federal laws. The matter is addressed explicitly in article 94 of the Constitution, which states: “Justice is the basis of governance. Judges are to be independent and are subject to no authority in the performance of their duties other than that of the law and their own consciences.” The United Arab Emirates have recently adopted several important pieces of legislation that contribute to strengthening the independence of the judiciary, including Federal Decree-Law No. 32 of 2022 on the Federal Judiciary, as well as other pieces that enhance access to justice through amendments to the Civil and Criminal Procedures Laws. The State also sought to continuously develop its penal and correctional facilities through increasing capacity and establishing a classification system, their suitability for the number of inmates, rehabilitation programmes and the quality of service provided to inmates. Moreover, it has established, through the Ministry of the Interior supportive organizational units to protect the rights of inmates, including the Oversight and Inspection Branch, as well as medical clinics designated for inmates.

24.The following recommendations have been noted: 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 128, 132, 143, 148, 158.

25. The death penalty shall be applied within the narrowest limits and for serious and particularly serious crimes, based on a public and fair trial before the courts. This penalty shall not be applied until all the various stages of litigation have been exhausted and a final judgment has been rendered in accordance with the law. Death sentences are appealed and appealed in cassation by the force of law. The State’s legislature has codified the death penalty with important legislative and judicial safeguards.

**Questions concerning the promotion of freedom of opinion and expression, the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society, and the formation of associations**

26.The following recommendations are accepted: 145, 146, 152, 154, 155, 157, 160, 161, 162, 165.

27.Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed under the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates, article 33 of which stipulates: “Freedom of assembly and freedom of association are guaranteed, as prescribed by law.” Article 30 states: “Freedom to hold opinions and express them orally, in writing or by other means of expression are guaranteed, as prescribed by law.” The UAE is currently working on preparing a new draft law to replace Federal Act No. 15 of 1980 concerning printing and publishing. The new law is intended to keep pace with rapid developments in the media in its various forms, including digital media, in line with relevant international standards.

28.The following recommendations have been noted: 147, 149, 150, 151, 153, 156, 159, 163, 164.

**Questions relating to the promotion of tolerance, the fight against discrimination and a culture of peaceful coexistence and religious freedom**

29.The following recommendations are accepted: 106, 107, 108, 288, 289, 290.

30.The United Arab Emirates is a haven of tolerance, peace, security and multiculturalism, where more than 200 nationalities live lives of dignity and respect under national laws that ensure justice, respect and equality for all while criminalizing hatred and extremism and eliminating sources of strife and division. The State will continue its efforts to promote tolerance through the implementation of the National Programme for Tolerance.

**Questions concerning continuous action taken to combat trafficking in persons**

31.The following recommendation is accepted: 135.

32.Note has been taken of the following recommendations: 133, 134.

**Questions concerning continuous action taken to combat trafficking in persons**

33.The following recommendations are accepted:

168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 270, 307.

34.The United Arab Emirates considers human trafficking a crime against humanity and affirms its commitment to addressing all human trafficking offences in cooperation with the international community. In that context, the UAE Cabinet adopted in July 2023 a number of important amendments to the Anti-Human Trafficking Law, including tightening penalties and introducing services for victims, such as educational assistance, measures for the safe return of the victim to her/his homeland, criminalizing incitement to crime, and stiffening the penalties imposed on perpetrators.

**Questions concerning nationality**

35.The following recommendations are accepted: 260, 321, 323.

36. After the adoption of Federal Decree-Law No. 16 of 2017 amending some provisions of Federal Law No. 17 of 1972 on Nationality and Passports as amended, the file of children of Emirati women is no longer exceptional, but has become part of the provisions contained in the Nationality Law that is dealt with under the requirements provided for in Article 10 by the Federal Authority for Identity, Nationality, Customs and Port Security, like other requests received within the regular work of the Authority. In recent years, thousands of children of Emirati women have obtained Emirati nationality.

**Questions relating to the further promotion and protection of human rights, support, protection and social security, and the promotion of volunteerism**

37.The following recommendations are accepted: 82, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 206, 209, 286.

**Questions concerning continuous action to ensure access to education and to promote the right to education and the right to health**

38.The following recommendations are accepted: 105, 198, 201, 203, 204, 228, 287, 312, 314, 315, 319.

39.The following recommendations have been noted: 273, 320, 322.

**Questions concerning education, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights**

40.The following recommendations are accepted: 131, 199, 200, 202, 205, 208, 291.

**Questions concerning the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

41.The following recommendations are accepted: 102, 212, 213, 214.

**Questions concerning environmental protection, food security and climate change**

42.The following recommendations are accepted: 189, 210, 211.

**Other questions**

43.The following recommendations have been noted: 103, 104, 166, 279, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297.

44.The United Arab Emirates have taken note of the recommendations related to homosexuality, considering them unacceptable and inconsistent with social values and traditions and Islamic Sharia.