



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

19 January 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of the United Arab Emirates by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 43<sup>rd</sup> session in May 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of the United Arab Emirates was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 54<sup>th</sup> session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/ae-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the Voluntary Funds for UPR, in particular the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Türk'.

Volker Türk

His Highness  
Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
and International Cooperation  
of the United Arab Emirates



### **Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

Due note is taken of the steady progress made by the United Arab Emirates in promoting and protecting human rights since its third UPR review, including advancements in education, health, social protection, combating discrimination, promoting justice and preserving cultural rights, as well as the enactment of important legislation on the rights of the older persons and the establishment of a national human rights institution.

The adoption of legislation on gender equality and non-discrimination in banking transactions and access to credit, on equal pay for equal work, on protection against domestic violence and on the legal obligation for market-listed companies to have women's representation on their boards of directors is most welcome. The prominent role played by women from the United Arab Emirates in space programmes, with a representation of 80 per cent in the Hope Probe's scientific team, is also noteworthy and could serve as an example for other countries around the world.

As mentioned during the review, the United Arab Emirates is encouraged to abolish the practice of male guardianship for women and girls and adopt anti-discrimination measures to ensure their equal rights, as well as equality between men and women in marriage, family relations and divorce, access to employment and education, as well as to ensure that perpetrators of so-called "honour crimes" receive penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime. Concerns remain about the impact that Law No. 7 of 2014 on Combating Terrorism Offences might have on freedom of opinion and expression, and on the freedoms of peaceful assembly and of association.

It is concerning that the death penalty is still applicable in law, that death sentences continue to be handed down, and that those convicted of capital offences might spend years on death row. The United Arab Emirates is encouraged to establish a moratorium on the death penalty and commute all death sentences to other punishments. Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, would be a significant step in this direction.

The United Arab Emirates is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the Federal National Council, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix referred in the letter may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR



implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to further strengthen the Human Rights Committee, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of the United Arab Emirates may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR  
19 January 2024