



وزارة الخارجية  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# Candidature

of the **United Arab Emirates**  
to the **Human Rights Council**  
2013 - 2015



Candidature endorsed by the African Union



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## Candidature of the United Arab Emirates For the Human Rights Council 2013-2015

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has always supported international efforts to promote human rights with the firm belief in the right of all the peoples of the world to live in peace, security and prosperity. The UAE further believes in the importance of promoting global economic development in order to enable all people to enjoy their human rights. The role of the UAE in the field of international development and its commitment to poverty eradication lies at the heart of the UAE's policy.

The UAE has long called for a strong international commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has particularly focused on reducing gender based discrimination and ensuring equity in access to health care as well as the elimination of child labour and human trafficking.

Since its establishment, the UAE has integrated in its Constitution and laws the principles of fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UAE has also acceded to several United Nations conventions on human rights such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The UAE actively participates in the work of the Human Rights Council and experienced the Council's mechanism of the Universal Periodic Review for the first time in December 2008. Now it is seeking membership of the Council for the period 2013-2015 in order to further actively contribute and collaborate with the international community on the essential and necessary work of the Council.

Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

## Reasons for the candidacy of the UAE for the Human Rights Council

The UAE believes in the principles of dialogue and mutual understanding between friendly nations and is committed to the United Nations Charter and to respecting international norms as well as to the principles of peaceful coexistence between countries, state sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the settlement of conflicts through peaceful means. It also believes in the need to remain open to the world and forge strategic partnerships through cooperation in various political, economic, commercial, cultural and scientific fields.

Domestically, the UAE adopts a policy of balance and moderation and it is considered to be a model in terms of religious freedoms, as a country where people from over 190 nationalities holding differing beliefs are living in harmony in an atmosphere which guarantees religious freedoms and tolerance.

The desire of the UAE to be a member of the Human Rights Council stems from its firm belief in the importance of human rights and its commitment to participate in international efforts to promote and protect these rights, in addition to its awareness of the increasingly important role and activities of the Human Rights Council. For these reasons the UAE has decided to present its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period from 2013 to 2015 and for the first time since the founding of the Council in 2006.

As part of its effort to apply the basic principles of human rights, the UAE has acceded to the following relevant international conventions:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1974)
- Declaration of the Islamic Conference of Human Rights (1990)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1997)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2004)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009)
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2008)
- The Arab Charter of Human Rights (2008)

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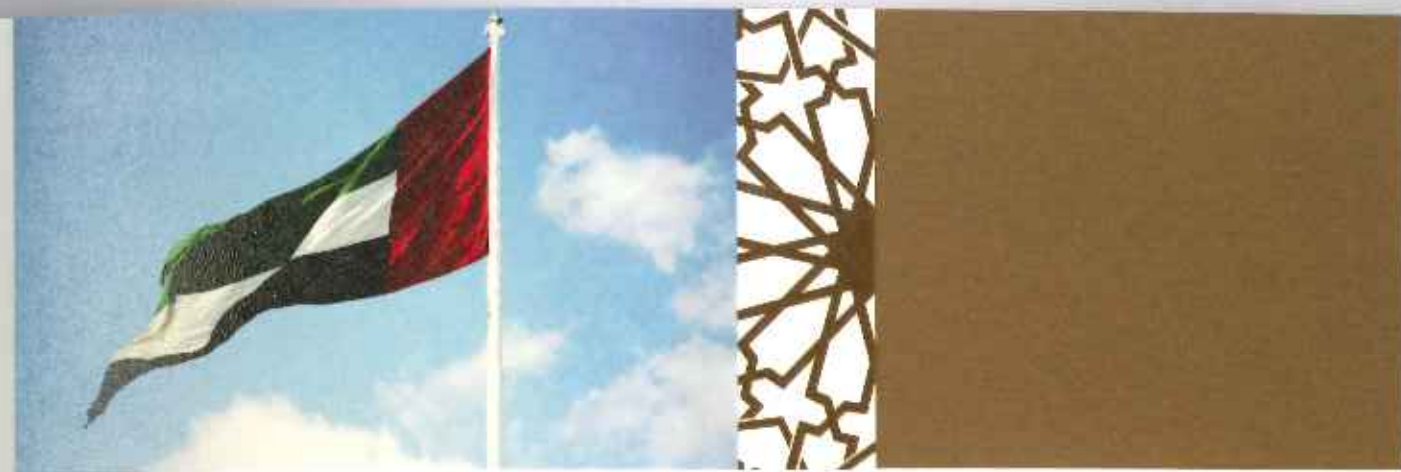
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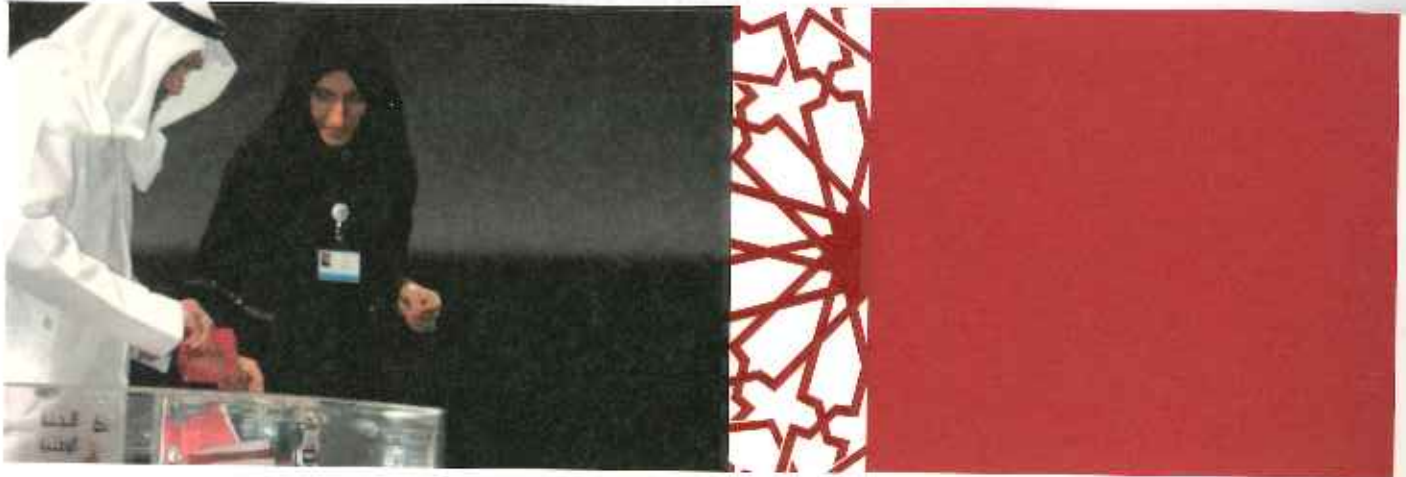
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## Achievements of the UAE in the field of human rights at the national level

The UAE has been ranked thirtieth out of 187 countries, according to the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Human Development Report of 2011, which measures a combination of health, education and income. The UAE continues to hold the highest position among Arab countries for the second year in a row. In addition, the UAE has improved its performance on its own score of 2010 in the gender equality report issued by the World Economic Forum in 2011, and it now occupies the first rank among Arab countries in this as well.

The continued progress witnessed by the UAE since the country was established in 1971, has become a global model in all areas of development. The UAE has been keen to employ the yield of oil revenues and alternative energy resources to enhance human development through the launch of numerous development projects, including a focus on developing the country's infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, ports and airports.



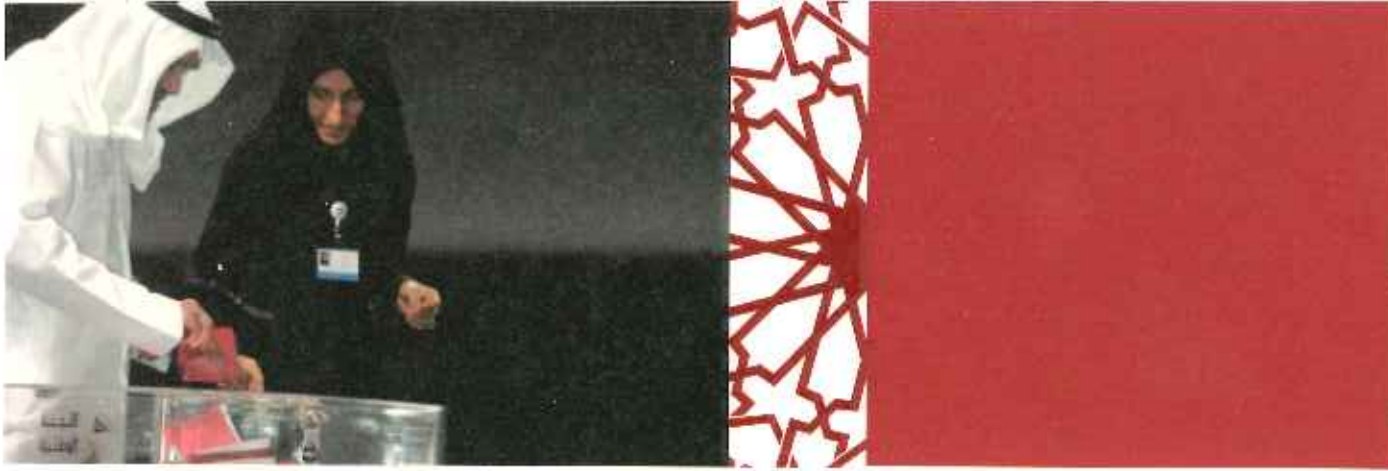
## Women

Women enjoy an unquestioned and prominent place in Emirati society. Since its founding in 1971, the UAE has endeavored to improve the status of women and enabled Emirati women to become more active and productive in the community through participation in various aspects of social, political and economic life. The law in the UAE forbids discrimination on the basis of gender, as illustrated by various policies adopted by the government to ensure the advancement of women, the full enjoyment of their constitutional and legal rights, and their participation in the process of decision-making and representation.

The following statistics illustrate the role that women play in leadership positions in the UAE:

- The number of female ministers in the UAE Federal Cabinet increased in February 2008 from two to four (Minister of Foreign Trade, Minister of Social Affairs and two Ministers of State), meaning it has one of the highest ratios of women to men in government in the Arab world;
- Emirati women have 7 seats out of 40 in the Federal National Council, equating to 17 percent of the Council's membership. This is one of the highest levels of female representation in legislative bodies in the Arab world; in the first elections of 2006, women gained 9 out of the 40 seats.
- There are women in the judiciary in the highest positions
- There are many women in the diplomatic and consular corps, of whom several are ambassadors and consuls;
- Women hold 66 percent of the jobs in the Federal Government, including 30 percent of senior leadership positions;
- Women constitute 15 percent of the teaching corps in UAE universities; and
- Women hold 80 percent of the senior positions in medicine, teaching, pharmacy and nursing and are found in the ranks of the uniformed armed forces, police and customs.

In addition, the Council of Businesswomen in the UAE comprises around 12,000 women who run 11,000 investment projects, with a volume of investment amounting to approximately 12.5 billion Dirhams (USD 3.4 billion). The number of women working in the banking sector, which is one of the most important economic sectors in the country, account for almost 37.5% of the work force.



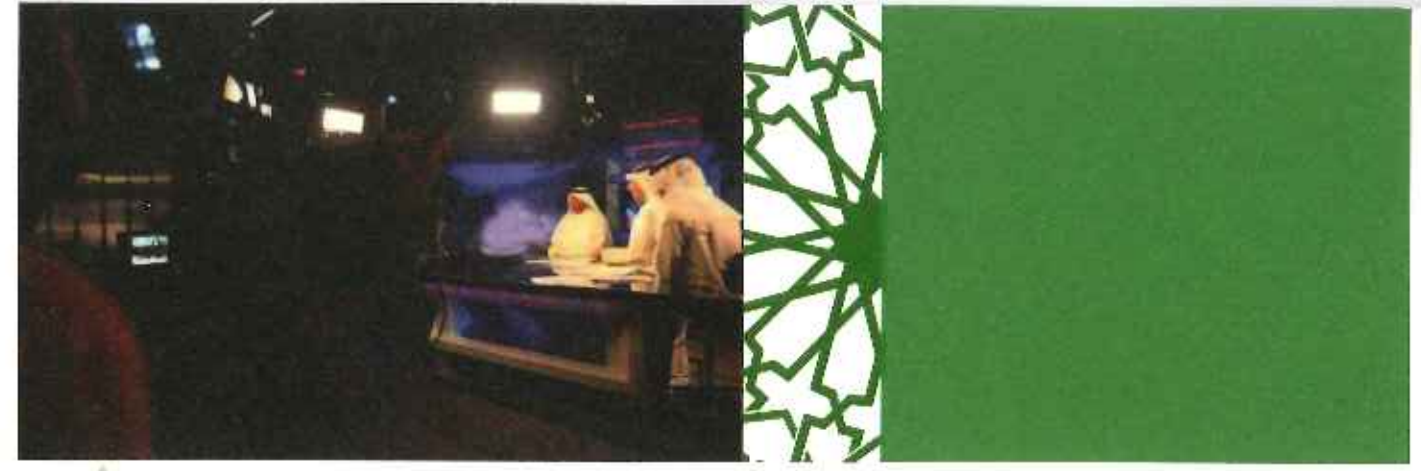
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## Media

A National Media Council was established to regulate media affairs. Media institutions in the UAE have achieved a quantum leap on the professional and technical level with respect to journalistic performance. There are eight newspapers in Arabic and five newspapers in English published in the UAE, in addition to a variety of magazines and specialized periodicals. Television stations have witnessed significant evolution by entering into satellite broadcasting and the number of specialized companies operating in the Free Zone, Dubai Media City, has risen to more than 1213, including 60 television corporations which run and broadcast approximately 150 television channels and more than 120 publishing houses producing approximately 400 publications. The prohibition of imprisoning journalists for any work related offences had a positive effect on further opening the space for media independence and oversight. Media freedom in the UAE is an evolving and positive sphere.



## Foreign Workers

The UAE believes that all human beings have the right to enjoy adequate living conditions. Working in an often difficult demographic context, where society in the UAE is comprised of approximately 80 % expatriate workers, the UAE has nonetheless worked tirelessly to ensure their protection and well being. On the basis of this belief, the Ministry of Labour has adopted a strategy and action plan aimed at providing and ensuring the rights of contractual workers in the UAE with the purpose of improving their working and living conditions.

This strategy and action plan consist of the following elements:

1. Protection of the right of the workers to earn fair wages for the duration of their contracts of employment;
2. Development of mechanisms regulating the labour market in the UAE in order to achieve more flexibility and increased mobility within the labour market;
3. Protection of workers' rights to housing and living in a suitable and safe environment where all components of a decent life are available;
4. International cooperation in the field of employment; and
5. Protection of the rights of workers in the case of labour disputes with the employer.

In an effort to avoid the exploitation of workers during their recruitment in their countries of origin, The UAE signed several memoranda of understanding with Asian labour-sending countries to ensure that malpractice and abuse is stopped at the source.



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## Human Trafficking

Six years ago, the UAE launched its official campaign to combat human trafficking, starting with the adoption of Federal Law No 51 in 2006 on Combating Human Trafficking and the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in 2007. The results of the first phases of the campaign indicate that the UAE has made substantial progress in a relatively short time although there is still some way to go.

In spite of these positive results, the UAE is fully aware of the multiple challenges and the complex nature of such crimes, which require constant vigilance. Accordingly, the UAE has set up more efficient mechanisms to show its determination to combat human trafficking and to prosecute those involved in these crimes.

The number of registered cases related to human trafficking stands as evidence of the commitment of law enforcement institutions in the UAE and of the effectiveness of its tools for fighting this crime. Reports show that there were 58 cases registered in 2011 compared to 43 in 2009. The increase in the number of cases led to an increase of awareness about the crime of human trafficking in society, which also led to the intensification of the measures adopted by the UAE in its campaign against human trafficking. In addition, law enforcement officers have become more effective in thwarting many of the activities of organized crime related to human trafficking.

Most importantly, the UAE has kept the victims of trafficking at the center of its approach, opening shelters for victims to be rehabilitated as well as ensuring that they are protected and prevented from falling victim to perpetrators of trafficking in the future. A hotline number has been created





## Health Care

Another aspect of development that the UAE has focused on is providing health services to its citizens and residents by building many hospitals and clinics, which ensure treatment for all individuals in the country. The number of public hospitals in 2006 reached 33 and the number of clinics and health centers 192, with the number of beds reaching 6490. The UAE also allowed the private sector to open hospitals and clinics in every Emirate in order to promote medical services in cooperation with medical centers worldwide. In this regard, the establishment of Dubai Healthcare City is worth mentioning, as it attracts many international medical institutions.



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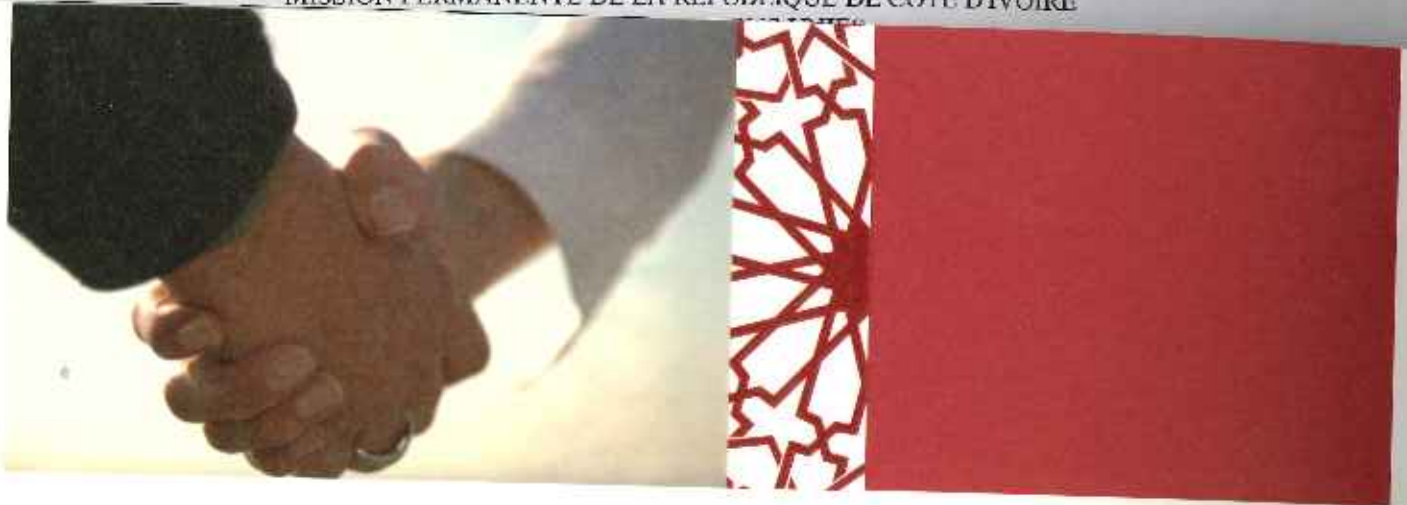
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## Social Services

In order to encourage early education, the UAE has opened a number of nurseries and kindergartens around the country with the aim of achieving the best standards in the world. The UAE cabinet decision No. 19 in 2006 mandated the opening of nurseries at the headquarters of ministries and agencies, as well as public institutions and government departments, in order to provide care for the children (aged between 2 months and 4 years) of the female employees in these institutions and ensure that mothers are able to reintegrate back into the workforce.

The UAE is also engaged actively in assisting disabled children and those with special needs by providing them with educational and training tools in order to integrate them in society. To achieve this goal, the UAE has established many rehabilitation centers as well as recreation clubs in all parts of the country to provide educational and health services in addition to vocational and sport capacity building. In its endeavor to tackle juvenile delinquency, the UAE has established specialized centers equipped with facilities of social welfare, education, rehabilitation, and vocational training to provide care and shelter to children of both sexes, as well as after-care follow-up in order to assure their re-integration into the community.



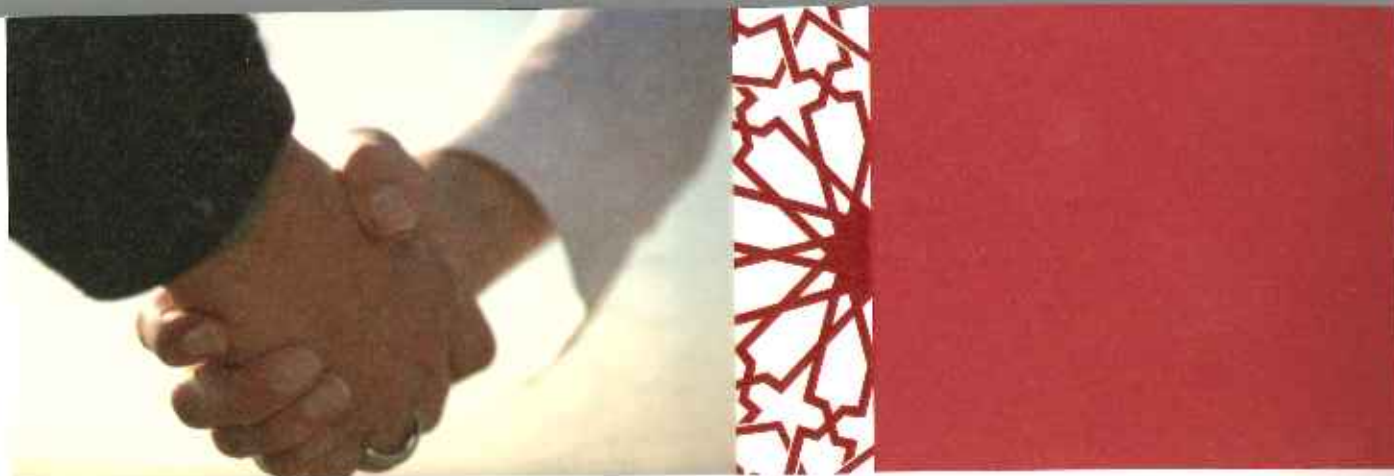
## Cooperation and efforts of the UAE at the international level

Since joining the United Nations on the ninth of December 1971, the UAE has worked continuously to support the activities of international organizations and to promote the UN Charter and international laws and norms, as it is convinced that the United Nations is the right and effective mechanism for strengthening international relations and promoting sustainable development.

The UAE also worked to strengthen its membership of the specialized agencies of the United Nations such as the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund.

The UAE has ratified more than 28 international cooperation agreements with several United Nations organizations that are implementing around 80 technical and advisory missions in the country for the benefit of a number of ministries, institutions and federal and local departments. In addition, the UAE through its membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) consistently supports the work of the Organization to enable it to play an effective role in supporting the development of Islamic countries.

The UAE has, since joining the League of Arab States and its institutions and specialized organizations, worked actively to support all their activities and regional programs. Furthermore, as a founding member of the Organization of



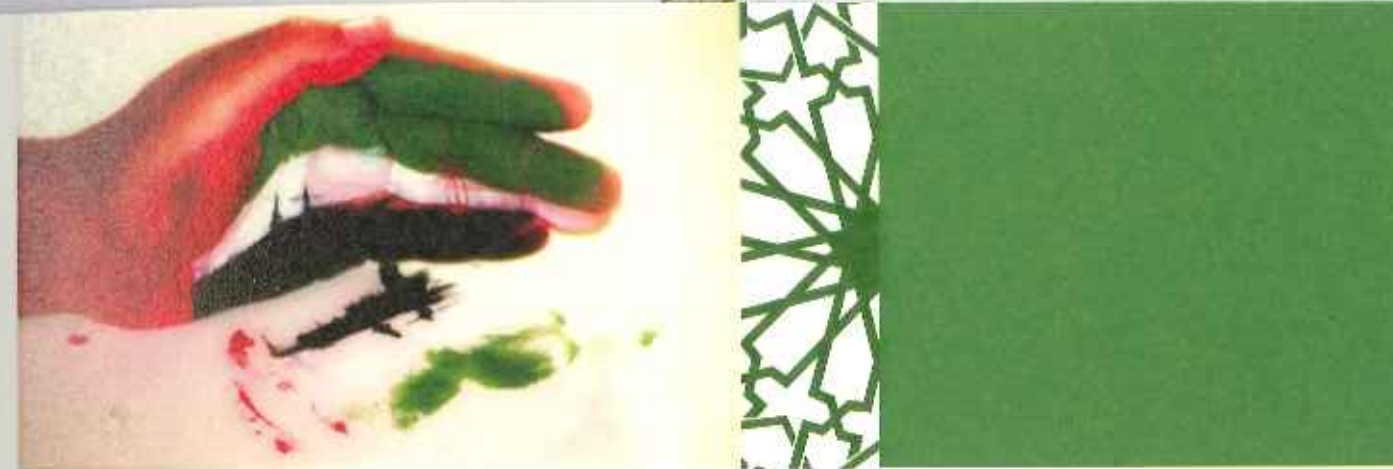
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the Cooperation Council of Arab Gulf countries (the GCC), the UAE has since the founding of the Council in Abu Dhabi on 1981, contributed to deepening the ties of cooperation between the member states of the GCC to achieve better harmony and integration in various fields and to ensure coordination between the positions of the Council's members on foreign policy and economic development issues.

In the framework of the cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UAE provided \$ US 15 million to support the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking and to enhance UNODC's work organizing training courses for technical staff and law enforcement personnel.

The UAE sees the importance of supporting international efforts in the field of women's empowerment and gender equality, in this context the U.A.E praises the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and declares its support by providing \$ US 5 million for this emerging organization.



MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE COTE D'IVOIRE

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## UAE achievements in the field of humanitarian aid, relief and emergency response

The UAE is committed to providing for basic needs in an optimal way so as to ensure victims' survival, the alleviation of suffering, and the protection of human dignity during and after natural disasters and crises worldwide. The UAE's humanitarian assistance, response and relief are totally neutral, without prejudice or discrimination between affected people, nor favor to any party, but on the basis of purely humanitarian motives, independent of any political, economic or military intentions.

During the year 2010 the total value of foreign and humanitarian aid disbursed by the UAE was 2.8 billion AED (762.2 million U.S. dollars) in the form of grants and loans for development programs. It should be noted that UAE donors committed a further 2.81 billion AED (765.3 million U.S. dollars) to development, humanitarian and charitable programs beyond 2010.

The UAE is committed to taking consistent actions to mitigate climate change; its leading role in international efforts in this regard has culminated in it hosting, since 2009, the headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Furthermore the UAE has pledged to provide 350 million U.S. dollars to support renewable energy projects in developing countries and promote the use of sustainable energy in a number of areas most in need around the world.