



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
9 May 2012

Original: English

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## Sixty-seventh session

Item 111 (d) of the preliminary list\*

### **Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council**

#### **Letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

I have the honour to inform you of the decision of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to present its candidature for membership on the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015, on the basis of its firm belief in the importance of promoting and protecting all human rights through global partnership and constructive dialogue with all actors.

I would like to transmit herewith an aide-memoire covering the pledges and commitments of the United Arab Emirates to promoting human rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, entitled "Human Rights Council" (see annex).

*(Signed)* **Ahmed Al-Jarman**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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\* A/67/50.



**Annex to the letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

**Candidature of the United Arab Emirates for membership on the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015**

**Voluntary pledges and commitments**

The United Arab Emirates adopts and applies the principle of dialogue and understanding in its relations with brotherly and friendly countries. It is committed to the Charter of the United Nations, respect for international conventions, the observance of the rules of good neighbourliness, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means. The United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of openness to the world and in building strategic partnerships in various fields, including political, economic, commercial, cultural, scientific, educational and health fields.

The United Arab Emirates has adopted a balanced and moderate policy towards regional and international issues and is an outstanding model of religious freedom. Hundreds of thousands of people of different religious beliefs and ideologies all work and live in the United Arab Emirates in an environment that ensures religious freedom and tolerance, in line with the United Arab Emirates' belief in the importance of promoting a culture of moderation, and tolerance.

The desire of the United Arab Emirates to become a member of the Human Rights Council reflects its firm conviction in respect of the importance of human rights and its keenness to participate in international efforts aimed at promoting and protecting these rights in the world, and its belief in the importance of the role of the Human Rights Council in this area.

Therefore, the United Arab Emirates decided to present its candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015 for the first time since the founding of the Council in 2006.

**I. Commitment to the Advancement of Human Rights, Fundamental Freedoms and Human Dignity and Welfare at the International Level**

- Strengthening technical and substantive cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in various related areas.
- Continuing the work within the General Assembly and the Third Committee on promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Promoting and protecting human rights through our membership in regional organizations and in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

- Continuing financial and moral support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to enable it to perform its duties and activities at the regional and international levels.
- The United Arab Emirates has acceded to several international conventions on human rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Government of the United Arab Emirates cooperates with the committees of these Conventions in a transparent and sustained manner.
- Strengthening cooperation with the Human Rights Council and enhancing coordination and dialogue with its various bodies and mechanisms, in order to achieve further progress in all areas of human rights.
- Contributing to humanitarian programmes and seminars organized by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and continuing to provide assistance to developing countries as a way of improving the enjoyment of human rights in other parts of the world.
- Sharing with other countries the experiences and practices of the United Arab Emirates in the area of developing the necessary legislation and appropriate mechanisms required to end human trafficking at the international level.
- Undertaking a study to amend some provisions of Federal Law No. 51 of 2006 on combating human trafficking, in order to be in line with the Palermo Convention, which the United Arab Emirates has acceded to, in order to provide greater safeguards for victims of human trafficking.
- Continuing the United Arab Emirates' leading role at the regional level in respect of promoting cooperation and active dialogue with countries exporting labour.

## **II. Commitment to the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the United Arab Emirates**

- Pursuing legal and legislative reforms at the national level, with a view to promoting and protecting human rights in accordance with international standards and in line with the cultural values of United Arab Emirates society.
- Continuing efforts aimed at creating a system that provides better protection to children, and ensuring further promotion and protection of women's rights.
- Continuing efforts to strengthen labour systems and taking further steps towards improving the conditions of contract labour, including in the support category. In addition, stronger monitoring of working and living conditions of expatriate workers is being provided by appointing more inspectors to oversee the effective implementation of labour laws.
- Continuing the attention devoted to guaranteeing economic development, including the development of infrastructure in rural areas, in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and health rights by the inhabitants of these areas.

- Studying the possibility of establishing an independent national human rights body, to be in charge of providing advice to the Government and enhancing the awareness of human rights in United Arab Emirates society.
- Organizing training courses in the area of human rights for the law enforcement agencies in the United Arab Emirates at all levels.
- Promoting dialogue with civil society regarding the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of the universal periodic review and on the establishment of a permanent forum to facilitate such dialogue and allow greater mutual understanding.
- Working on developing a concrete national strategy for the promotion of human rights culture in the long term and at all levels.

### **III. Priorities of the United Arab Emirates in the area of human rights**

#### **A. Women's rights**

Women occupy a prominent place in United Arab Emirates society; since its foundation in 1971, the United Arab Emirates has focused on advancing women and improving their situation so that they can become effective and productive members of society through positive participation in the various aspects of life. The United Arab Emirates has also introduced legislative and legal measures against discrimination on the grounds of gender and adopted many policies to advance United Arab Emirates women and ensure their enjoyment of all constitutional and legal rights, participation in the decision-making process and representation at the international level. Statistics show the high number of women occupying leading positions in the United Arab Emirates, where the number of women represented in the Cabinet in the year 2011 increased from two to four ministers (the Minister for Foreign Trade, the Minister for Social Affairs and two Ministers of State). United Arab Emirates women also occupy 7 out of 40 seats in the Federal National Council (17%), and have entered the judiciary, prosecution and diplomatic and consular corps.

The United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of supporting international efforts aimed at empowering women. In this context, the United Arab Emirates commends the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and has affirmed its strong support for the Entity through its donation of \$5 million.

#### **B. Rights of expatriate workforce**

The United Arab Emirates believes in the right of all human beings to enjoy decent living conditions, including temporary contract workers. From this standpoint, the Government of the United Arab Emirates has approved a strategy and an action plan aimed at ensuring the rights of expatriate workers in the United Arab Emirates and improving their living and work conditions. The plan is based on the following elements:

- Protecting the right of workers to receive fair wages at the time specified in their employment contracts
- Developing mechanisms to regulate the labour market, in order to ensure more flexibility in the movement of labour within the labour market
- Protecting the right of workers to housing and a decent life in a safe and appropriate environment
- Strengthening international cooperation in the area of employment
- Protecting the rights of workers in the event of disputes with their employers.

The Government of the United Arab Emirates has also signed several memorandums of understanding with labour-exporting countries in Asia, with a view to promoting the welfare of expatriate workers, raising their awareness and protecting them from exploitation in labour-exporting countries.

### **C. Combating human trafficking**

The United Arab Emirates' official campaign to combat human trafficking has entered its seventh year. The campaign was commissioned by Federal Law No. 51 of 2006 concerning Combating Human Trafficking and the establishment of a National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, which was created in 2007. Results and accomplishments of the previous phase of this campaign indicate that the Government has come a long way in translating its goals into reality in record time. Despite these admirable results, the Government is well aware of the numerous challenges and multifaceted dimensions associated with such criminal behaviour, which requires constant vigilance. The Government of the United Arab Emirates will therefore remain committed to preventing all access to human trafficking and improving tools of detection and prosecution of human trafficking crimes in the future.

### **D. Dissemination of the culture of human rights**

The United Arab Emirates recognizes that education and the dissemination of human rights concepts is a fundamental human right. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has developed a unified system for providing education on various human rights concepts and integrating the culture of human rights in the curriculum for grades 1 to 12.

Moreover, the academic curriculums in law schools and police academies include two credit hours for human rights education, in order to make the students aware of the culture of human rights, the regional and international human rights regime, the rights of groups, the rights of prisoners, human rights in the United Arab Emirates, the role of police institutions in the area of human rights, and the performance of police officers while respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law. The Government of the United Arab Emirates has also paid attention to the preparation and training of judges at both the federal and local levels and has established an Institute for Training and Judicial Studies. Similar local institutes have been established in Abu Dhabi and Dubai; their

curriculums include conventions and treaties on human rights, international human rights organizations and international resolutions issued in this regard.

This is in addition to organizing numerous campaigns and seminars and issuing newsletters and legal periodicals through State institutions and non-governmental organizations, with a view to promoting the culture of human rights.

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