

**Delegation from the United Arab Emirates
Position Paper for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)**

The Topics before the United Nations (UN) Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) are: Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030; and Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making. The United Arab Emirates are deeply committed to the assurance of gender equality as one of the greatest challenges of the UN and therefore hopes to strengthen partnerships in order to address these current challenges because their nature requires collective responsibility.

I. Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030

As stated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), one in every five girls is married off before her eighteenth birthday. As a destination country for human trafficking, our country experiences the connection between this tragedy and child marriage up close. Just as we strive for a world in which human rights and human dignity are the pillars of our society we must recognize from these alarming numbers that despite some gradual progress there are many gaps left on our way to an equal society. In order to achieve equality between men and women and to protect the most vulnerable, the United Arab Emirates believes that it is of major importance to find solutions that effectively eliminate Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (CEFM).

The United Arab Emirates has committed to eliminate CEFM and therefore stands in full support with the efforts made by the UN to the empowerment of women and girls. The United Arab Emirates embraces the UN General Assembly (GA) agenda entitled 2030 Agenda for sustainable development that places gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls at its heart. Fully recognizing the importance of gender equality the United Arab Emirates has acceded the Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2004 ever since the practice of child marriage has continued to decline in our country. Furthermore the United Arab Emirates has agreed on the CEDAW convention to ensure equality in marriage, insofar as they are not in conflict with the principles of Shariah law. As Gender equality is driven by gender inequality and is of paramount importance in the United Arab Emirates the government's holistic approach to women's issues has resulted in new measures to assist women who are victims of domestic violence, family neglect or human trafficking. For that reason the Dubai Shelter for Women and Children has been established in 2007 and is providing support and psychological care to victims from all nationalities and backgrounds. As gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress and growth in our society, the Ewaa Shelters for victims of human trafficking were developed to become the global leader in rehabilitating victims of human trafficking.

Regarding the prediction of Girls Not Brides that by 2050 the number of women married off as children will be about 1.2 billion, the United Arab Emirates would like to emphasize the need of intensified international dedication of this issue of major importance. Despite existing programs and campaigns on this topic of CEFM, such as the Campaign to End Child, Early, and Forced Marriage, there is a serious lack of awareness to that matter. Taking into consideration that young girls who marry as children are more likely to drop out of school, the United Arab Emirates promotes educational programs to raise the awareness on CEFM by giving the victims a voice. Furthermore the United Arab Emirates stresses the importance on the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2014 of a resolution regarding girls' right to education. The United Arab Emirates calls upon the Member States for financial and technical assistance by rich countries to the poor countries to fund educational programmes to close the widening gender gap. The United Arab Emirates is looking forward to enriching debates and new proposition to address the issue remaining at hand.

II. Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making

Within the last years progress has been made toward achieving equality between men and women through an even-handed participation between men and women in governance and decision-making. Nevertheless a UN-Women's report from 2016 shows that only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians worldwide were women. These numbers show a wide gap in the equal treatment of men and women. It is of the utmost importance that the world community recognizes that women's rights are human rights. And while one half of humanity is denied its full human rights and opportunities it will not be possible to achieve full human potential and sustainable development. Therefore, it is not only of major importance to the United Arab Emirates but to the world community to support the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making.

The United Arab Emirates stands in full support with the endeavors made by the UN for Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making and welcomes the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 that was worked out by the United Nations Development Programme in 2017. While this problem cannot be overcome by one nation on its own, the United Arab Emirates is collaborating, along with others, with members of the Arab League and Non-Governmental Organizations. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap report the United Arab Emirates is ranked as a leading country in gender equality in the region. This achievement originates in the fundamental belief that women and men are equal partners in every society. Viewing the empowerment of women as crucial to improving their level of political participation in the country the United Arab Emirates addressed women's involvement in politics through the adoption of a regional plan of action by the Arab League in 2012. As it is imperative to give women equal opportunities in the public sector the United Arab Emirates established the Gender Balance Council to enhance work environment. This federal entity is responsible for developing and implementing the gender balance agenda in the United Arab Emirates. As an equal part of society women are entitled to fulfill active roles in society and become effective partners in the development process while being at the forefront of directing change in the region. The United Arab Emirates serious commitment to ensure that women participate in decision-making at the highest levels was reinforced by increasing the number of female ministers and therefore empowering women politically.

Concerning the fact as stated by UN-Women that no Member State has fully achieved gender equality and that it will take around 82 years until the gender gap in political participation is closed, the United Arab Emirates would like to emphasize the distinctive call for action. While there are strong linkages between education, women's empowerment, and economic growth, the United Arab Emirates expresses its belief that education is a cornerstone of any successful society. In order to give men and women equal opportunities, resources and responsibilities it is essential that we grant them equal access to education. It is therefore of great importance that we abolish the obstacles that exist in many countries for women who wish to start or continue their education. By giving women an opportunity to complete their studies we can educate strong, independent and skilled workforce and at the same time combat inequality in their roots. The United Arab Emirates promotes that governments should offer more support and facilities to remove any barriers that will stop women's progressing. Being a model for women's empowerment in the region the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council has held a meeting with the European-UAE Human Rights Working Group in order to exchange ideas to explore cooperation in the enhancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. This approach is forward-looking and we encourage other Member States to engage with it.