

Statement by

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Before
The High- Level Meeting of
the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
**Item 3(a): Follow-up to the fourth World Conference on Women and
to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
"Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century**

New York, 28 February - 11 March 2005

Madam chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to thank you and the members of your bureau for your valuable efforts in directing the work of this important session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Given your skills and experience, we are confident that you will lead the deliberations of this commission competently and successfully. We confirm our full support and co-operation with you as an expression of the UAE and H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the Late Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the chairperson of the General Women's Union, support to the advancement and empowerment of women at the national, regional and international levels.

I also would like to associate my self with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

On this occasion, I would like to thank H.E. Kofi Annan, Secretary-general for his valuable support to this commission, and for his reports on this item. We also express our appreciation for the efforts of the UN in the promotion of gender equality and advancement of women around the world.

Madam chairperson,

Since its establishment in 1971, the government of the United Arab Emirates adopted a development policy that considers the human being as the center of its plans and programs, and aims at promoting the gender equality in rights, duties, and human values. Believing in the importance of women as major and active partners in the process of development, the government had enacted laws and legislations for the protection of the constitutional and human rights of the UAE women. Similar laws were enacted to protect the rights of resident and immigrant worker women in the UAE.

In implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the BPFA, and the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly, the UAE government established six national machineries, headed by the General Women's Union, chaired by H. . Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, as well as several civil organizations, which all work for creating an enabling economic and social environment for the advancement of women, children, and the family in general. The government has taken further measures which included the following:

- 1- Raising the budget for education to 24.6% of the federal government expenditure in order to meet to growing numbers of students, especially females. Statistics indicate that illiteracy levels among the females are at its lowest levels, which promises total elimination of illiteracy in the near future.

- 2- It designated 7% of its federal expenses to the Health Sector in 2003, with special attention to maternity and childhood. As a result, the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 was decreased by 67%, thus reducing the mortality rate to 0.009% in 2002 compared to 0.014% in 1990. the UAE has also succeeded in eliminating polio and Malaria.
- 3- The Supreme Council for Maternity and Childhood was established in 2003 under the direct patronage of the President of the UAE and the chairmanship of H. . Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, the chairperson of General Women's Union. The Council's main purpose is to advance the mother's role and to enhance the attention given to maternity and childhood at all national levels.
- 4- In line with its commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of Beijing conference, the UAE has acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in October 2004. In November of the same year, the government appointed the first female minister in the UAE, and in January 2005, a female officer was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General for the first time in the UAE.
- 5- In 2003, the General Women's Union started the implementation of the national strategy for the advancement of women in the UAE. The strategy was prepared by the General Women's Union in collaboration with national teams from governmental and non-governmental organizations in the UAE, as well as experts from the UNIFEM and the UNDP. The strategy is based on the UAE constitution, which provides numerous rights to the UAE women in the economic, social and cultural fields. The strategy which, is consistent with the spirit of the Bejing Summit, focuses on 8 critical areas; education, economy, social work, information, legislations, decision making, environment and health, and aims at empowering and preparing women to the new developments in the national and international arena.

These measures enabled the UAE woman to actively participate in the advancement of national economy and the sustainable development. Females constitute 66% of the total working force in the government, of which 30% are in decision-making positions. In the Private sector, the number of businesswomen amounts to 10,500 women managing around 4 billion dollar worth of investments in major business fields.

Madam Chairperson,

The government and the civil organizations of the UAE, led by the UAE Red Crescent Society, offer financial contributions to the developing countries, to assist them in the implementation of social development programs, and extend direct financial assistance to the needy families, orphans, widows, refugees and displaced persons.

In this occasion, we would like to remind the international community of the deteriorating conditions of the Palestinian women who suffer economically and socially due to the continued occupation and unstable conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories. We therefore urge the international community to help the Palestinian women and to continue the efforts to reach a just and peaceful settlement in the region in order to ensure a secure and stable life that enables the Palestinian woman to live in dignity and prosperity like the rest of the women in the world.

In conclusion, we emphasize the importance of further efforts towards strengthening the international political and financial support for millions of women in the developing countries who still suffer from poverty, fatal diseases, armed conflicts, wars and foreign occupation, to improve their living conditions in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, the instrument of human rights and the recommendation of the Millennium Declaration and the BPFA.

Thank you