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جنيف

Statement by

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United Arab Emirates

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Mister President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased on behalf of the United Arab Emirates to extend to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Human Rights Council, and I am confident that your wisdom and good chairing will contribute to the success of this session. I would also like to thank your predecessor "Mrs. Laura Dupuy Lasserre" for the active role she played during her mandaté. Let me also express my appreciation for the efforts made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Navi Pillay, and all her colleagues to promote and protect human rights.

It is a great privilege for me to be back in Geneva for the second time within a month, to participate on behalf of the United Arab Emirates in this high level segment of the Human Rights Council.

In January, the UAE experienced its second Universal Periodic Review. I was honored to lay out the UAE's strategic vision for the protection of human rights, and was pleased with the useful and constructive dialogue that followed. The UAE will continue to work with this Council to advance the promotion and protection of human rights at home and abroad.



Mister President,

Allow me to briefly reiterate our achievements of the past and our vision for the future. Three months ago, we celebrated our forty-first anniversary as a nation. Our young country is proud of the progress it has made in a short time. The UAE has a stable political system characterized by a strong relationship between the citizens and government, the application of the rule of law, and good governance. The UAE's legislative and institutional framework has evolved over time in response to the aspirations of its citizens in the light of a modern contemporary state, while staying consistent with its traditions. Our Constitution remains the foundation for the protection of the rights and freedoms in our country.

The political achievements made in the UAE over the past years thanks to the vision of our wise leadership, have gone hand in hand with a giant and unprecedented leap in social, economic and cultural conditions of our people. According to the UN's Human Development Index, the UAE ranked 1st among Arab countries and 30th internationally in the 2011 World Human Development Report. Today, the citizens of the UAE enjoy a high standard of living and are reaping the benefits of huge Government investments made over the past years in infrastructure, housing, education and health services. We invest in our people, at the same time as we work to modernize our institutional and legislative structures to keep pace with the best international standards and practices.



The UAE has placed at the heart of its Emirates Vision 2021 the aim to achieve an even stronger federation, with a competitive economy and the best possible quality of life for our citizens. To this end, we will continue to focus on developing our society and improving education and health care systems. To implement this vision, the UAE has developed specific national strategies, which focus on the empowerment and advancement of women, motherhood and childhood, and the provision of social services, housing programs and care for the elderly.

In a situation where challenges facing all countries are getting harder, and in a difficult and unstable region, the UAE has taken a pro-active approach towards the protection of human rights, in a way that is consistent with our constitution, laws, and traditions. We continue to build on our achievements within the framework of our human rights institutions, for example with the recent creation within the Federal National Council of a parliamentary committee to monitor human rights. The UAE also made great efforts to bring its national legislation in line with the best international standards, as is shown by the great progress made in improving and expanding labor regulations, human trafficking laws, as well as empowerment of women, protection of children's rights and promotion of equality before the law in the light of an effective system that safeguards human rights.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential component of the principles and values of the UAE society. The UAE has achieved in this regard great gains we can be proud of and which made our country an attractive environment for more than 200



nationalities. This was possible thanks to an open and tolerant society ensuring to all its members the enjoyment of all rights and freedoms and religious practice to all nationalities residing on its territory on the basis of the United Arab Emirates principles and values that embrace moderation and rejection of all forms of extremism and religious intolerance.

Mister President,

Our country's desire to be a part of this Human Rights Council reflects our firm convictions on the importance of protecting human rights. We are proud to have been elected a member of this esteemed body, and we will do our utmost to contribute to its work. In this spirit, the UAE underlines its belief that the Council should conduct its work in a manner that is transparent, a-political, and aims to achieve cooperation instead of confrontation. We will work with all our partners towards this goal.

The UAE made the issue of women's empowerment one of its priorities for its term on the Council due to its settled conviction of the prominent role women in society, since they became effective partners in the development gains made by the country. Women hold 66% of government jobs, 30% of which are senior leadership jobs associated with decision-making. Women's participation in higher education amounts to 95% of female students, 80% of high school graduates, and 70% of the total university graduates, which is considered the highest rate in the world, in addition to their enrolment in the judiciary, prosecution,



police, diplomatic and consular corps. In the area of gender equality, the UAE ranks among the most gender equal of Arab countries and 38th internationally according to UNDP.

The UAE believes in the importance of supporting international efforts aimed at empowering women. In this context, the UAE commends the establishment of UN Women, and has affirmed its strong support through a donation of five million dollars. The UAE is proud to be currently serving on the Executive Board of the organization and is looking forward to cooperate with all parties in order to achieve the objectives for which this organization was created.

Within the context of advancing women's empowerment, the UAE will take action to support international initiatives on women's empowerment and consolidating girls' right to education. Hence, the UAE announces its intention to hold a panel discussion on girls' right to education, and will work to support international initiatives in this regard, particularly in with low-income countries.

Mister President,

Allow me to turn to some major international issues that concern the Council. My country is extremely concerned with the ever deteriorating situation in Syria, which has outraged millions of people around the world, with the ongoing crackdown claiming the lives of more than 70,000 people by a regime that lost its legitimacy. We deeply sympathize with the plight of the Syrian people, and call upon the international community to assume its



humanitarian responsibility to stop the terrible tragedy the Syrian people is living. We also commend the efforts of this Council to address the spiral of violence and increasing sectarianism. We hope that the UN Commission of Inquiry set up by the Council can play its part in investigating the daily violations committed against Syrians.

Regarding Palestine, the United Arab Emirates strongly condemns the continued Israeli violations of defenseless Palestinians' rights, and calls for a halt to all Israeli settlement activity. The UAE also urges the international community to work on enabling the Palestinian people to obtain all their rights and establish their own free and independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

In this regard, we concur with the outcome of the recent report from the HRC's International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Based on this outcome, Israel must evacuate all its illegal settlements, and stop its nefarious practices against Palestinian civilians, detainees and prisoners.

The UAE expresses its deep concern about the tragic situation of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, where the Muslim population is faced with serious violence, and calls upon the international community to act and take action in accordance with its humanitarian responsibility, so as to push and encourage the Government of Myanmar to carry out its duties to address the situation of this community according to the principles of human rights and relevant international conventions.



The UAE also continues to be concerned with the situation in Myanmar, where the Muslim population; we are working within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to address this issue.

Mister President,

We believe in the Human Rights Council's significant and primary role in addressing cases involving wide and systematic violations of human rights. Hence, I thank the Council for its sustained efforts and courageous decisions to deal with the situations I just described. We also emphasize the importance of the Council's involvement in providing technical assistance to many countries, including Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia. The UAE supports these Human Rights Council's initiatives, which should be provided on request from the countries concerned, according to their needs. In this context, the UAE, through its donor institutions, provided foreign aid to many developing countries. In 2011, a foreign aid estimated at 2.11 billion dollars has been directed at building capacities of these countries in order to provide healthcare, education, food, housing and others services. The UAE ranked 14 globally among donor countries that contributed most in providing foreign aid according to the 2010 OECD Classification.



Mister President,

The UAE renews its support to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. For the current year, we have contributed 90 thousand dollars to the budget of her Office and related funds. We are also pleased to announce an additional contribution of one-and-a-half million dollars as a support to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner.

On this occasion, we express our appreciation for the tireless efforts made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Navi Pillay, and her office to promote and protect human rights. We will be happy to welcome her on a visit to the UAE later this year. In the same spirit of continued cooperation, the UAE will host the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights in the second quarter of 2013.

The UAE is strongly committed to the goals and objectives for which the Human Rights Council was created. We look forward to working with all of you over the next few years to advance human rights worldwide.

Thank you.