

UAE

At a Glance



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FACTS AND FIGURES

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Official Name	United Arab Emirates
Political Structure	Federation of seven emirates established in 1971
National Day	2 December
President	Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Capital	Abu Dhabi City
Population (2004)	4.320 million
Abu Dhabi	1.702 million
Dubai	1.288 million
Sharjah	679,000
Ajman	251,000
Umm al-Qaiwain	66,000
Ra's al-Khaimah	208,000
Fujairah	126,000
Religion	Islam
Language	Arabic
Dirham Exchange Rate (per US Dollar).....	3.6725



ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Public Finance *

Current Account Balance 2004 (Dh billion).....	47.51
Capital Account Balance 2004 (Dh billion).....	-21.21
Balance of Payments Overall 2004 (Dh billion).....	+12.83
Nominal Rate of Growth of Final Consumption 2004 (%).....	14.1
Nominal Rate of Growth of Fixed Capital Formation 2004 (%)....	11.1
Changes in Consumer Price Index 2004 (%).....	4.7

* Central Bank figures Annual Report 2004

Gross Domestic Product*

GDP per Capita 2004.....	Dh 74,917
GDP in Current Prices 2004 (Dh billion).....	378.76
GDP 2004 at Constant 2000 Prices (Dh billion).....	323.63
Real GDP Growth Rate 2003 (%).....	11.8
Real GDP Growth Rate 2004 (%).....	7.4
GDP Non-oil Sectors (Dh billion) 2004 (current prices).....	255.50
GDP Non-oil Sectors (Dh billion) 2004 (constant 2000 prices)..	230.00

* Central Bank figures Annual Report 2004

Trade Figures

Total Exports & Re-Exports 2004 (Dh billion).....	303.9
Crude Oil Exports 2004 (Dh billion).....	108.79
Total Re-Exports 2004 (Dh billion).....	101.78
Total Imports 2004 (Dh billion).....	199.04
Trade Balance 2004 (Dh billion)	104.86

Oil & Gas

UAE Oil Reserves (billion barrels).....	97.8
Abu Dhabi's Oil Reserves (billion barrels).....	92.2
UAE Natural Gas Reserves (trillion cubic feet).....	213.5
Abu Dhabi's Natural Gas Reserves (trillion cubic feet) ..	198.5
UAE OPEC Production Quota av. 2004 (mb/d).....	2.19

Fisheries & Agriculture

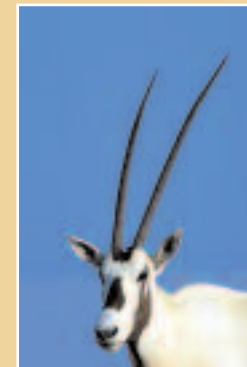
Cultivated Areas (acres).....	891,098
Number of Date Palms (million).....	40
Fishing Fleet	5191
Fishermen	17,264
Estimated Catch (tons).....	97,574

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Employees (000s) 2004.....	2,649
Literacy (%).....	90
Life Expectancy at Birth	78
Infant Mortality Rate 2004 (per 1000 live births).....	7.7
Primary & Secondary Students 2003/2004.....	612,098
Public & Private Schools 2003.....	1,207
Higher Education Registrations 2004/2005.....	10,459
Social Welfare Beneficiaries 2003.....	77,000
Government Hospitals.....	34
Primary Health Care Centres.(2004).....	115
Hospital Beds (both Government and Private).....over	7000

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Total Installed Electricity Generating Capacity (MW).....	12,800
Total Water Production 2004 (bn gallons).....	195
Fixed Line subscribers 2003 (million).....	1.209
Mobile Phone Subscribers (million).....	4.068
Estimated Internet Users (million).....	1.25
International Airports.....	6
Commercial Ports.....	15
Paved Highways (km).....(2004).....	4030
Vehicles (000s).(2004).....	792



GEOGRAPHY

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) occupies an area roughly the size of Portugal along the south-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, close to the entrance of the Arabian Gulf. Four-fifths of the UAE is desert, yet it is a country of contrasting landscapes, from the towering red dunes of the Liwa to the rich palm-filled oases of Al Ain, from the precipitous Hajar Mountains to the more fertile stretches of its coastal plains.

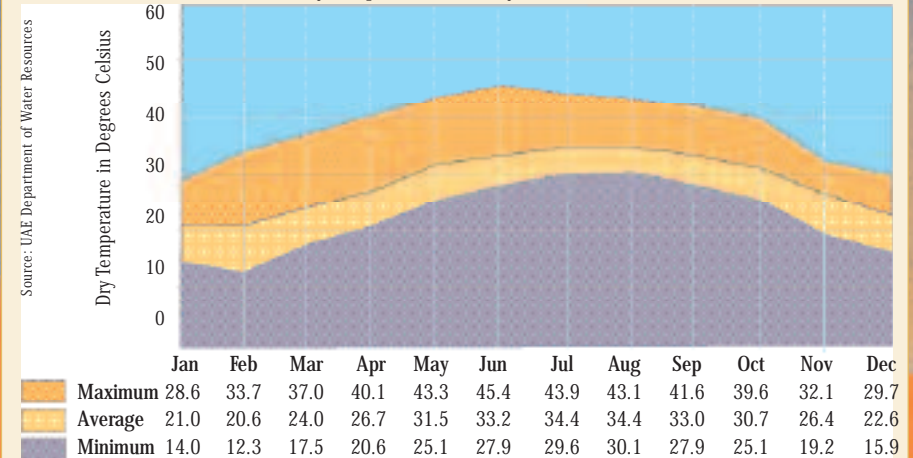
Offshore islands, low-lying islets, mangrove stands, *khors* (tidal inlets) and white sandy beaches characterise the shallow Arabian Gulf coast that borders the deserts of Abu Dhabi, stretching northwards past Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and into the mountainous reaches of Ra's al-Khaimah. On the East Coast, the mountains fall to gravel plains, beyond which the deep oceanic waters of the Gulf of Oman wash against the dramatic shoreline and spectacular beaches of Fujairah.

Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, the UAE is warm and sunny in winter and hot and humid during the summer months. Winter daytime temperatures average a very pleasant 26°C, although nights can be relatively cool, between 12°C to 15°C on the coast, and less than 5°C in the depths of the desert or high in the mountains. Summer temperatures are in the mid-40s, but can be higher inland. Humidity in coastal areas averages between 50 and 60 per cent, touching over 90 per cent in summer and autumn. Inland it is far less humid. Rainfall is sparse and intermittent.



CLIMATE

Abu Dhabi – Dry Temperature Monthly Chart



HISTORY AND HERITAGE

IN THE SHORT PERIOD SINCE its inception as a federal state in 1971, the United Arab Emirates has taken its place as a prosperous, stable nation with a thriving economy and a worldwide reputation for hospitality. It is a remarkable success story, but the elements that forged these achievements are not entirely new; a similar pattern of events, albeit to a much lesser degree, has been repeated in the region throughout its history. The strategic location of the UAE, poised between East and West, coupled with exploitable resources, such as pearls, copper, sulphur and, later, hydrocarbons, has meant that the country has been a meeting-point and trading centre for millennia.

Archaeological studies in recent decades have unveiled much of the rich fabric of pre- and early history that lay under the desert sands. Much more remains to be discovered, but it is clear that from the Late

Stone Age (5500 BC) onwards there is evidence of human occupation which is both extensive and of local and regional importance.

CONVERSION TO ISLAM

The arrival of envoys from the Prophet Muhammad in 630 AD led to the conversion of the region to Islam. By 637 AD, Moslem armies were using Julfar (Ra's al-Khaimah) as a staging post for the conquest of Iran. In 892 AD Julfar was used again, this time as an entry point for the Abbasid invasion of Oman. Julfar continued to be a port and pearling centre of considerable importance, mentioned by leading Arab geographers like al-Maqdisi, in the tenth, al-Idrisi, in the twelfth and Yaqut, in the thirteenth centuries. From here, continuing a 5000-year-old tradition, great wooden dhows ranged throughout the Indian Ocean, trading as far away as Kenya, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and China.

The growth of Sohar, an important trade emporium on the Batinah coast of Oman, was facilitated by domestic trade routes leading to Julfar in the north and Tu'am (Al Ain/Buraimi) in the west. By the thirteenth century, what is now the UAE was closely linked with the Kingdom of Hormuz based on Jarun Island in the Straits of Hormuz.

ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE

This relationship was upset in 1498 following the Portuguese circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama. The Portuguese arrival in the Gulf had bloody consequences for the Arab populations of Julfar and ports like Dibba, Bidiya, Khor Fakkan and Kalba. A string of forts established in these towns, often described as 'Portuguese', are in fact better considered strongholds of local Arab sheikhs, allies of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese author Duarte Barbosa, writing in 1517, noted that the people of Julfar were 'persons of worth, great navigators and wholesale dealers. Here is a very great fishery as well, of seed pearls as well as large pearls'. The growing interest of the Europeans in 'Gulf pearls' led to the tour of the Venetian state jeweller, Gasparo Balbi, in around 1580. His description of the UAE coast from Qatar to Ra's al-Khaimah includes the first European record of the presence of the Bani Yas tribe in Abu Dhabi.



IMPORTANT DATES

c.5500 BC	Earliest evidence of Man in UAE, on Marawah Island.
5500–3000 BC	Occupation by skilled groups of herders using finely made stone tools (so-called 'Arabian bifacial tradition').
3000–2500 BC	Hafit period – era of earliest collective burials first noted on the lower slopes of Jebel Hafit in the interior of Abu Dhabi.
2500–2000 BC	Umm al-Nar period – era of first oasis towns (e.g. at Hili, Tell Abraq, Bidiya, Kalba) dominated by large, circular fortresses; burial of the dead in round communal tombs; wide-ranging trade contact with Mesopotamia, Iran, Indus Valley, Baluchistan, Bactria (Afghanistan); first intensive use of copper resources of Hajar Mountains; area referred to as <i>Magan</i> in Mesopotamian sources.
2000–1300 BC	Wadi Suq period and Late Bronze Age – an era which is characterised by fewer towns; change in burial customs to long, generally narrow collective tombs; close ties to Dilmun (Bahrain).
1300–300 BC	Iron Age – introduction of new irrigation technology in the form of <i>falaj</i> (pl. <i>afaj</i>), subterranean galleries which led water from mountain aquifers to lower-lying oases and gardens; explosion of settlement; first use of iron; first writing, using South Arabian alphabet; contacts with Assyrian and Persian empires.
300 BC–0	Mleiha period (or Late Pre-Islamic A–B) – flourishing town at Mleiha; beginnings of local coinage; far-flung imports from Greece (black-glazed pottery), South Arabia (alabaster unguent jars); first use of the horse.
0–250 AD	Ed-Dur period (or late Pre-Islamic C–D) – flourishing towns at ed-Dur and Mleiha; extensive trade network along the Gulf linking up the Mediterranean, Syria and Mesopotamia with India; imports include Roman glass, coinage, brass; massive production of coinage by a ruler called Abi'el; first use of Aramaic in inscriptions from ed-Dur and Mleiha.
240 AD	Rise of the Sasanian dynasty in south-western Iran, conquest of most of eastern Arabia.
6 th /7 th cent. AD	Introduction of Christianity via contacts with south-western Iran and southern Mesopotamia; establishment of monastery on Sir Bani Yas by Nestorian Christian community; Sasanian garrisons in inner Oman and evidence for contact in the UAE shown by coins and ceramics from Kush (Ra's al-Khaimah), Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.
630 AD	Arrival of envoys from the Prophet Muhammad; conversion of the people to Islam.
632 AD	Death of the Prophet Muhammad; outbreak of the <i>rida</i> movement, a widespread rebellion against the teachings of Islam; dispatch of Hudhayfah b. Mihsan by the Caliph Abu Bakr to quell rebellion of Laqit b. Malik Dhu at-Tag at Dibba; major battle at Dibba, collapse of the rebels.



637 AD	Julfar used as staging post for Islamic invasion of Iran.
892 AD	Julfar used as staging post for Abbasid invasion of Oman.
963 AD	Buyids (Buwayhids) conquer south-eastern Arabia.
c. 1220	Geographer Yaqut mentions Julfar as a fertile town.
14 th –15 th cent.	Close commercial contact between Northern Emirates and kingdom of Hormuz, based on Jarun island in the Straits of Hormuz.
1498	Portuguese circumnavigation of Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama using Arab navigational information.
16 th cent.	Portuguese–Ottoman rivalry in the Gulf.
1580	Venetian traveller Gasparo Balbi's description of coast of UAE from Qatar to Ra's al-Khaimah; mention of Portuguese fortress at Kalba; first mention of Bani Yas in Abu Dhabi.
1666	Description of the East Coast of the UAE by a Dutch mariner sailing in the <i>Meerkat</i> .
1720s	Growth of English trade in the Gulf; increasing Anglo–Dutch rivalry.
1764	Sharjah and most of Musandam and the UAE East Coast, all the way to Khor Fakkan, under control of Qawasim according to Carsten Niebuhr, German surveyor working with the King of Denmark's scientific expedition.
1800–1819	Repeated English East India Company attacks on Qawasim navy.
1820	General Treaty of Peace between British Government and sheikhs of Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
1820–1864	Survey of the Gulf resulting in the publication of the first accurate charts and maps of the area.
1930s	Collapse of the natural pearl market; first agreements signed by rulers of Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi for oil exploration.
1945–1951	Agreements for oil exploration finalised in Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman.
1962	First export of oil from Abu Dhabi.
1968	British Government announced its intention to withdraw from the Gulf region; discussions begin on formation of a federation of the emirates.
1969	First export of oil from Dubai.
10 July 1971	Agreement reached amongst rulers of the emirates to form a union.
2 Dec 1971	Formation of the State of the United Arab Emirates.
2 Nov 2004	Sheikh Zayed, 1 st President of the UAE died.
3 Nov 2004	Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan elected as new President of the UAE.



BANI YAS AND THE QAWASIM

The arc of villages at Liwa in the southern deserts of Abu Dhabi had been the focus of the Bani Yas, at least since the sixteenth century. By the early 1790s, however, the coastal town of Abu Dhabi, founded in around 1763, had become so important a centre of activity that the leader of all the Bani Yas groups, the Sheikh of the Al Bu Falah (the Al Nahyan family) transferred his residence there from the Liwa. Early in the nineteenth century, members of the Al Bu Falasah, a branch of the Bani Yas, settled by the Creek in Dubai and established Maktoum rule in that emirate.

While European powers like Portugal, Holland and eventually Britain competed for regional supremacy, a local power, the Qawasim, were gathering strength and at the beginning of the nineteenth century had built up a fleet of over 60 large vessels and could put nearly 20,000 sailors to sea. Their strength posed a serious challenge to the British, then emerging as the dominant power in the Indian Ocean, and in the first two decades of the nineteenth century a series of clashes between the two sides ended in the virtual destruction of the Qasimi fleet and the consolidation of British influence in the Gulf. Based on British claims that the Qasimi vessels had engaged in piracy, the area gained the name 'The Pirate Coast'. However, HH Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, has convincingly argued in his book *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf* that the British offensive was based on a desire to control the valuable maritime trade routes between the Gulf and India.

TRUCIAL STATES

Following the defeat of the Qawasim, the British signed a series of agreements with the sheikhs of the individual emirates that, later augmented with treaties on preserving a maritime truce, resulted in the area becoming known as 'The Trucial States'. The treaties meant that Britain controlled foreign relations, although the sheikhs preserved their own autonomy on land. Indeed, the emirates always retained their sovereignty, and were never colonies of Britain. The peace at sea, however, facilitated uninterrupted exploitation of the ancient pearl fisheries in the lower Gulf, and once again fine pearls from the

THE CAMEL

Uniquely adapted to the desert, the camel was the mainstay of the semi-nomadic lifestyle that was practiced by many of the UAE's inhabitants. The largest tribe, the Bani Yas, roamed the vast sandy areas that cover almost all of the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The camel was both the reason for these lengthy excursions and the means by which they were carried out. Long periods were spent wandering great distances in search of winter grazing. Once the arid summer approached, almost all the Bani Yas families, with the exception of some fishing groups, returned to a home in one of the oasis settlements, many to harvest their date gardens.

The camel was not just a useful mount and means of transporting possessions and goods on long treks across inhospitable terrain; it also provided food, clothing, household items and recreation, and at the end of the day was a primary source of wealth. In many cases camel milk and the products derived from it were the only protein available to *bedu* families for months on end. The camels were capable of surviving for long periods without water, but it was camels' milk that quenched the herders' thirst. Young male camels were slaughtered on special occasions to provide meat for feasts and informal camel races were held during the festivities. Camel hide was used to make bags and other useful utensils, while tents, rugs and items such as fine cloaks (*bisht*) were woven from camel hair.



emirates were exported to India and to the growing market in Europe. The industry thrived during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, providing both income and employment to the people of the Arabian Gulf coast.

On land, freed from the damaging effects of warfare at sea, but lacking sufficient economic resources, the emirates developed slowly. One of the greatest figures of the period was Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa of Abu Dhabi, who ruled that emirate for over 50 years from 1855 to 1909, earning the title 'Zayed the Great'.

HARD TIMES

The First World War dealt a heavy blow to the pearl fishery, but it was the world economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, coupled with the Japanese invention of the cultured pearl, that damaged it irreparably. The industry eventually faded away just after the Second World War, when the newly-independent Government of India imposed heavy taxation on pearls imported from the Gulf.



PEARLING

Pearling has been an important economic activity in the region since ancient times but the trade fluctuated throughout the centuries. At the end of the nineteenth century pearling was flourishing yet again. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were, according to one calculation, over 1200 pearling boats operating out of the area now known as the UAE, each carrying an average crew of 18 men. The pearling fleet leaving harbour must have been a wonderful sight, but this level of participation meant that during the summer more than 22,000 men were absent on the pearl banks. Long periods away from home placed enormous responsibility on the women of the family, both economically and socially.

For the men, conditions on board the pearling boats were tough and the work was arduous. The profits from a good season's harvest made it all worthwhile, but bad seasons were followed by spiralling debt. Many of the Bani Yas men formed cooperatives, all the crew jointly owning a boat and sharing the proceeds of the sale of the pearls according to an established arrangement: the biggest share to the captain (*nakhuda*), a larger share to the divers than the haulers, and some money left aside to finance preparations for the following year. Over several generations, some tribes involved in pearling became tied to particular locations, and coastal towns such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Ra's al-Khaimah thrived.



The population was resourceful and hardy, but there is no denying the difficulties that they faced. Opportunities for education were generally confined to lessons in reading and writing, along with instruction in Islam from the local preacher, while modern facilities such as roads, communications and health care were unavailable. Transport was by camel or boat, and the harshness of the arid climate meant that survival itself was often a major concern.

Zayed the Great's son, Sheikh Sultan, was in power in Abu Dhabi from 1922 to 1926, and then, after a brief reign by a brother, one of Sheikh Sultan's sons, Sheikh Shakhbut, came to the throne at the beginning of 1928.

THE DISCOVERY OF OIL

In the early 1930s the first oil company teams arrived to carry out preliminary surface geological surveys. Commercially-viable deposits were, however, not discovered until the late 1950s, and it was not until 1962 that the first cargo of crude oil was exported from Abu Dhabi. With revenues growing year by year as oil production increased, Sheikh Zayed, the younger brother of Sheikh Shakhbut, who was chosen as Ruler of Abu Dhabi on 6 August 1966, undertook a massive programme of construction of schools, housing, hospitals and roads. One of Sheikh Zayed's early steps was to increase contributions to the Trucial States Development Fund, established a few years earlier by the British. Abu Dhabi soon became its largest donor.

In the meantime, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, de facto ruler of Dubai since 1939, had developed facilities for shipping along the Creek in a determined effort to replace pearling revenues. When Dubai's oil exports commenced in 1969, Sheikh Rashid was also able to use oil revenues to improve the quality of life of his people.

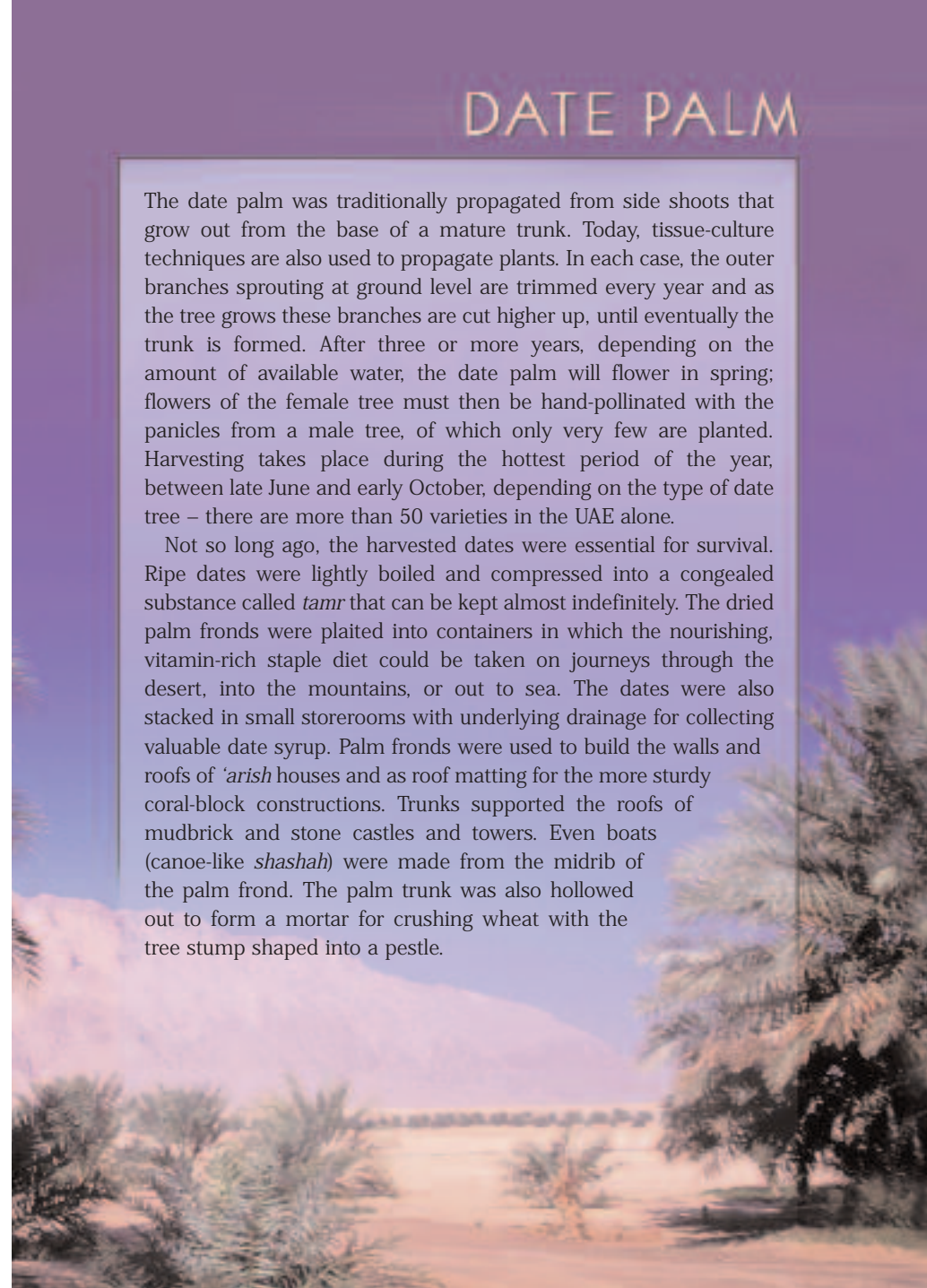
FEDERATION

In early 1968, when the British announced their intention of withdrawing from the Arabian Gulf by the end of 1971, Sheikh Zayed acted rapidly to establish closer ties with the other emirates. Along with Sheikh Rashid, who was to become Vice-President and Prime Minister of the newly-formed state, Sheikh Zayed took the lead in

DATE PALM

The date palm was traditionally propagated from side shoots that grow out from the base of a mature trunk. Today, tissue-culture techniques are also used to propagate plants. In each case, the outer branches sprouting at ground level are trimmed every year and as the tree grows these branches are cut higher up, until eventually the trunk is formed. After three or more years, depending on the amount of available water, the date palm will flower in spring; flowers of the female tree must then be hand-pollinated with the panicles from a male tree, of which only very few are planted. Harvesting takes place during the hottest period of the year, between late June and early October, depending on the type of date tree – there are more than 50 varieties in the UAE alone.

Not so long ago, the harvested dates were essential for survival. Ripe dates were lightly boiled and compressed into a congealed substance called *tamr* that can be kept almost indefinitely. The dried palm fronds were plaited into containers in which the nourishing, vitamin-rich staple diet could be taken on journeys through the desert, into the mountains, or out to sea. The dates were also stacked in small storerooms with underlying drainage for collecting valuable date syrup. Palm fronds were used to build the walls and roofs of 'arish houses and as roof matting for the more sturdy coral-block constructions. Trunks supported the roofs of mudbrick and stone castles and towers. Even boats (canoe-like *shashah*) were made from the midrib of the palm frond. The palm trunk was also hollowed out to form a mortar for crushing wheat with the tree stump shaped into a pestle.



calling for a federation that would include not only the seven emirates that together made up the Trucial States, but also Qatar and Bahrain. Following a period of negotiation however, agreement was reached between the rulers of six of the emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujairah and Ajman) and the Federation to be known as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was formally established on 2 December 1971. The seventh emirate, Ra's al-Khaimah, formally acceded to the new Federation on 10 February 1972. Sheikh Zayed was elected by his fellow rulers as the first President of the UAE, a post to which he was successively re-elected at five-year intervals.

SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

The prosperity, harmony and modern development that characterises the UAE, led today by President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also the Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and his fellow members of the Supreme Council of Rulers of the seven emirates, is due to a very great extent to the role played by Sheikh Zayed, both prior to the formation of the Federation and in the nearly 33 years that followed until his death in November 2004.

The new state came into being at a time of political turmoil in the region. A couple of days before its establishment, on the night of 30 November and the early morning of 1 December 1971, Iran had seized the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb, part of Ra's al-Khaimah, and had landed troops on Abu Musa, part of Sharjah.

Foreign observers, who knew little of the importance of the UAE's common history and heritage, predicted that the new state would survive only with difficulty. Better informed about the character of the country, Sheikh Zayed was naturally more optimistic and the predictions of those early pessimists were shown to be unfounded.

One foundation of his philosophy as a leader and statesman was that the resources of the country should be fully used for the benefit of the people. He saw them as a tool to facilitate the development of what he believed to be the real wealth of the country – its people, and, in particular, the younger generation.

Sheikh Zayed believed that all of the country's citizens, both men and women, have a role to play in its development. Recognising that



in the past a lack of education and development had prevented women from playing a full role in much of the activity of society, he ensured that this situation was addressed rapidly and, under his leadership, the country's women came increasingly to participate in political and economic life.

Another key feature of Sheikh Zayed's strategy of government was the encouragement of initiatives designed to conserve the traditional culture of the people, in order to familiarise the younger generation with the ways of their ancestors. In his view, it was of crucial importance that the lessons and heritage of the past were remembered.

If the heritage of the people of the UAE was important to Sheikh Zayed, so too was the conservation of its natural environment and wildlife. This belief in conservation was derived from his upbringing, where a sustainable use of resources required man to live in harmony with nature, and he ensured that conservation was a key part of government policy. As in other areas of national life, Sheikh Zayed

made it clear that conservation is not simply the task of government. He believed firmly that there was also a role for the individual and for non-governmental organisations, applying this belief not just to concerns such as environmental conservation, but to other areas of national life as well.

Sheikh Zayed imbibed the principles of Islam in his childhood and they remained the foundation of his beliefs and principles throughout his life. He was a firm and dedicated opponent of those who sought to pervert the message of Islam to justify harsh dogmas, intolerance and terrorism. In Sheikh Zayed's view such an approach was not merely a perversion of the message but is in direct contradiction of it. Extremism, he believed, has no place in Islam.

He recognised, however, the necessity not only of eradicating terrorism, but of tackling its fundamental causes. Besides the international campaign against terrorism, there should, he believed, be a strong international alliance that worked, in parallel, to exert real and sincere efforts to bring about a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. Sheikh Zayed was also an eager advocate of tolerance, discussion and a better understanding between those of different faiths, and in particular, was an ardent advocate of dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

In the realm of foreign policy, he led the UAE to adopt an approach of seeking to find compromises, and to avoid, wherever possible, a resort to the use of force, whether in the Arab arena or more widely. Under his leadership, the country became an important provider of overseas aid, both for the development of infrastructure and for humanitarian relief, whether provided through civilian channels, as with the reconstruction of Iraq following the defeat of the Saddam Hussein government in 2003 or, occasionally, by sending units of the UAE Armed Forces as international peacekeepers, such as to Kosovo in the late 1990s. At the same time, the UAE, under his leadership, showed its preparedness to fight to defend justice, as was seen by its active participation in the war to liberate Kuwait in 1990–1991.



CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Culture and heritage are crucially important aspects of the UAE Government's development priorities. Since it is a relatively young country with a growing youthful population, the older generation is deeply concerned that the strengths of character and identity that were nurtured by the lifestyle, customs and traditions of the past could be lost. There is good cause for this concern, especially with the pervading influence of satellite television and the Internet, but there is also considerable cause for optimism: the context may have altered but core values have been preserved. As a visit to a local school or activity group is likely to confirm, cultural ethnicity is alive and well in terms of Emirati music, dance, poetry, story-telling, art and sports such as falconry, camel-racing, and sailing.

Part of the process has involved making sure that physical evidence of the UAE's rich heritage is not lost. Preservation of many of its unique archaeological and architectural sites and its manuscripts has been given top priority. Literature and customs are widely studied in schools, while museum displays, heritage villages and the rebuilding of vanished monuments have helped to create a context and feel for this cultural legacy.

Contemporary activities, such as theatre, film and art, also play important roles in nurturing the cultural side of Emirati society and enhancing the widespread spirit of well-being that both Emiratis and expatriates enjoy in the UAE.

In addition to the large number of renovated old forts and heritage buildings that interpret the past, the UAE also has a rich selection of purpose-built museums and interpretive

centres dedicated to specific subjects, such as the discovery of petroleum, archaeology, natural history, science, popular medicine, astronomy, numismatics, philately, Islam, traditional jewellery, policing and aviation.

Playing a central role in guarding the nation's heritage and helping to stimulate cultural awareness are many cultural organisations. Prominent among these are the recently-established Emirates Foundation and Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage Authority, the Emirates Heritage Club in Abu Dhabi, the Zayed Centre for Heritage and History (a subsidiary of the Emirates Heritage Club) in Al Ain, the Dubai Cultural Council, the Cultural and Scientific Forum in Dubai, the Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah, the Fujairah Cultural Organisation, the Studies and Archives Centre in Ra's al-Khaimah and the Juma Al Majid Centre for Culture and Heritage, also in Dubai. Other institutions of importance to the cultural well-being of the country include the National Heritage Revival Organisation and the Marriage Fund, while there are numerous non-governmental organisations devoted to promoting cultural activities among the various expatriate communities.



GOVERNMENT

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES is a federation of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ra's al-Khaimah and Fujairah. The order in which they are listed is based on a clockwise progression around the country, starting from Abu Dhabi, which occupies the southern sector. Abu Dhabi is also the federal capital.

The Federal Government deals with matters of national importance such as foreign affairs, security and defence, nationality and immigration issues, education, currency, postal, telephone and communication services, air traffic control and aircraft licensing, together with certain special topics delegated to it such as labour relations, banking, delimitation of territorial waters and extradition of criminals. Each of the seven emirates also has its own system of local government.



The Federal Government comprises the Federal Supreme Council, which is vested with legislative and executive powers; a 21-member Cabinet or Council of Ministers, 'the executive authority' for the state; a 40-member parliamentary body known as the Federal National Council, and an independent judiciary, at the head of which is the Federal Supreme Court.

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who was the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, was elected as the first President of the Federal Government in 1971, a post to which he was re-elected at successive five-yearly intervals until his death in November 2004, while the Ruler of Dubai at that time, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, was elected as first Vice-President, a post he continued to hold until his death in 1990. Both were succeeded by their Crown Princes, who became rulers of their emirates and were elected by the members of the Federal Supreme Council to become respectively President, for the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Vice-President, for the Ruler of Dubai.



SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS

HH President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi
 HH Vice-President and Prime Minister Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai

HH Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah
 HH Sheikh Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah
 HH Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Ruler of Fujairah
 HH Sheikh Rashid bin Ahmed Al Mu'alla, Ruler of Umm al-Qaiwain
 HH Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi, Ruler of Ajman

CROWN PRINCES

General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

General Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Minister of Defence

Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, Chairman of the Sharjah Executive Council

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah

Sheikh Saud bin Rashid Al Mu'alla, Crown Prince of Umm al-Qaiwain

Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Crown Prince of Ajman

DEPUTIES OF THE RULERS

Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Minister of Finance and Industry

Sheikh Ahmed bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah

Sheikh Khalid bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah

Sheikh Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah

Sheikh Hamad bin Saif Al Sharqi, Deputy Ruler of Fujairah

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Prime Minister: Vice-President HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Deputy Prime Minister: Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Finance and Industry: Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Minister of Defence: Gen. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs: Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Interior: Lt.- Gen. Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Presidential Affairs: Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Information and Culture: Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Minister of Education: Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan

Minister of Public Works: Sheikh Hamdan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan

Minister of Supreme Council and GCC Affairs: Sheikh Fahim bin Sultan Al Qasimi

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Rashid Abdullah Al Nuaimi

Minister of Health: Hamad Abdul Rahman Al Midfa

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs: Saeed Khalfan Al Ghaith

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Saeed Mohammed Al Raqbani

Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Awqaf: Mohammed Nukhaira Al Dhahiri

Minister of State for Financial and Industrial Affairs: Dr Mohammed Khalfan bin Kharbash

Minister of Economy and Planning: Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi

Minister of Energy: Mohammed bin Dha'en Al Hamili

Minister of Communications: Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs: Dr Ali bin Abdullah Al Ka'abi

PRESIDENT OF THE UAE

HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan was elected by the Supreme Council of Rulers as President of the United Arab Emirates on 3 November 2004, to succeed his father, the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who had been UAE President from the foundation of the Federation in 1971. Sheikh Khalifa is also Ruler of Abu Dhabi, having succeeded to that position on his father's death on 2 November 2004.

The new UAE President had previously been Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi since 1969. He has committed himself to continue in the footsteps of his late father, from whom, he has said, he learned something new every day, absorbing his values, 'and the need for patience and prudence in all things'.

Sheikh Khalifa has been involved in government for nearly 40 years. Born in the inland oasis-city of Al Ain in 1948, Sheikh Khalifa was appointed as Ruler's Representative in the Eastern Region of Abu Dhabi, based in Al Ain, and as Head of the local Courts Department on 18 September 1966, following his father's accession as Ruler of Abu Dhabi the previous month.

On 1 February 1969, Sheikh Khalifa was designated the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, this being followed on 2 February 1969 by his appointment as the Head of the Abu Dhabi Department of Defence, in which post he oversaw the building-up of the Abu Dhabi Defence Force (ADDF), which later became the nucleus of the UAE Armed Forces.

On 1 July 1971, Sheikh Khalifa was appointed as Prime Minister of Abu Dhabi and Minister of Defence and Finance. After the formation of the Federation, he continued to hold his local Abu Dhabi posts, while on 23 December 1973, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister in the second UAE Federal Cabinet.

Shortly afterwards, on 20 January 1974, he was appointed as the first Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council. Under his direction, and in accordance with the instructions of HH Sheikh Zayed, the Executive Council oversaw the implementation of a wide-ranging development programme in Abu Dhabi.



Of particular importance in ensuring that citizens were able to benefit from the country's increasing wealth was the establishment by Sheikh Khalifa in 1981 of the Abu Dhabi Department of Social Services and Commercial Buildings, charged with the provision of loans to citizens for construction. Over Dh35 billion have so far been lent by this department, with over 6000 multi-storey buildings being constructed throughout the emirate.

The establishment of the department, popularly known as the 'Khalifa Committee', followed another decision taken by Sheikh Khalifa in 1979 to alleviate the burden on citizens of the repayment of loans from the commercial banks. The formation in 1991 of the Private Loans Authority, to provide loans for residential and commercial property, was a further important initiative to use government revenues to assist citizens to participate in the process of development.

President HH Sheikh Khalifa has also been involved extensively in other areas of the country's progress. Head of the Abu Dhabi Defence Force since 1969, he became in May 1976 the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, following the unification of

the armed forces of the emirates. In this capacity, he devoted much attention to the building-up of the country's defensive capability, both in terms of highly trained personnel and through procurement of the latest military equipment. As was seen during the 1990-1991 Gulf War and in peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Kosovo, the UAE today has effective, well-led and professional armed forces.

Sheikh Khalifa has held a number of other top posts in the Abu Dhabi government. Since the late 1980s, he has been Chairman of the Supreme Petroleum Council, in which capacity he has also sought to ensure that the country diversifies its economy away from reliance on oil and gas production. In particular, he has worked to develop the UAE's downstream petrochemicals and industrial complex at Ruwais. He is also Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) (which oversees the country's international aid programme); the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) (which manages the financial reserves and investment); and Honorary Chairman of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD).

Externally, Sheikh Khalifa is a strong supporter of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, believing that the achievements of this body reflects the depth of understanding reached amongst its leaders. A keen supporter of the regional policy of HH Sheikh Zayed, in particular in terms of promoting solidarity between Arab states, Sheikh Khalifa is firmly committed to support of the Palestinian people, displaying this through, for example, his decision in mid-2005 to finance the construction of a new city for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on the sites of settlements abandoned following the Israeli withdrawal.

He is also committed to the promotion of stability in Iraq, through the provision of diplomatic and other support designed to help the new sovereign Government of Iraq to rebuild the country's political system and economic infrastructure.

He has stated that his key objectives as President of the United Arab Emirates will be to continue on the path laid down by his father. In particular, he says, he will continue with the 'open door' policy and with the practice of holding regular consultations with the country's citizens, so that he may become aware of, and follow up on, their needs and concerns.



Since being elected President, he has toured widely throughout the country, to visit his fellow Rulers in their emirates and to review with them the needs of the people for new schools, hospitals, roads and other infrastructural development.

In terms of his broad strategy for the future development of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa has stated that this 'will be based upon diversifying the sources of national income. Thus relying on oil as a source of income will be gradually reduced. Oil should be considered as a transitional industry, for reinvigorating economic life . . . We are working within [the framework of] a plan laid down to train nationals so that they obtain a high level of proficiency and competence.'

FOREIGN POLICY

The foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates is based upon a set of guiding principles laid down by the country's first President, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. He derived these from his deep belief in the need for justice in international dealings between states, including the necessity of adhering to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others and the pursuit, wherever possible, of peaceful resolutions of disputes, together with a support for international institutions, such as the United Nations. Only thus, he believed, could the rights of the weak and powerless be defended. In

developing this approach, he brought into play his own experiences on the need for collaboration and consultation, gained during his involvement in the governance of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and in the bringing together of the seven emirates into the Federation.

Within the Arabian Gulf region, and in the broader Arab world, the UAE has sought to enhance cooperation and to resolve disagreement through a calm pursuit of dialogue. Thus one of the central features of the country's foreign policy has been the development of closer ties with its neighbours in the Arabian Peninsula. The Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (AGCC), grouping the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, was founded at a summit conference held in Abu Dhabi in May 1981, and has since become, with strong UAE support, an effective and widely respected grouping.

At the broader level of the Arab world as a whole, Sheikh Zayed was committed to the re-building of a sense of common purpose amongst both its people and its governments. He supported, therefore, the strengthening of common institutions, like the League of Arab States, while recognising that the achievement of progress required not a fruitless search for unanimity but, rather, working to achieve a consensus on key issues.

A key feature of UAE policy within the Arab world has been a consistent support for the rights of the Palestinian people to recover their land and to establish their own state, with Jerusalem as its capital, within the context of a just and lasting peace agreement with Israel. That support has been unstinting, while, at the same time, the UAE has always emphasised that it is for the Palestinians themselves to choose how best to pursue their objectives.

While seeking to promote consensus and reconciliation between Arab states on key issues, the UAE has also made it plain, throughout its existence, that there are certain basic principles which must be maintained. One is the need for states to maintain relations based upon mutual respect and a lack of interference in the affairs of others, while another has been the inadmissibility of territorial gain based upon force. Thus not only has the UAE rejected Israeli claims to occupied Palestinian territories, but it also supported its Gulf sister state Kuwait when the latter was occupied by Iraq in 1990–1991.



The UAE itself has foreign policy issues related to its territorial integrity. Since 1971, the three Gulf islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb have been occupied by Iran. While holding fast to its demand that the islands should be returned, the UAE, in accordance with the policy laid down by Sheikh Zayed, has always adopted a policy of seeking to resolve the dispute by peaceful means, whether through meaningful bilateral negotiations, or through reference to the International Court of Justice, or through international arbitration.

Beyond the Arab world, the UAE has pursued a policy of seeking, wherever possible, to build friendly relations with other nations, both in the developing and in the industrialised world. While this policy is implemented at a bilateral level, another important feature of UAE policy has been its support for international bodies, like the United

Nations and its various agencies. Through such bodies, it seeks to reinforce the rule of international law, and to support the implementation of internationally-agreed conventions, so as to protect the interests of the weak and the powerless.

The UAE has shown its support for legitimate multilateral action not only through its extensive support for the UN and its agencies, but also by assisting peacekeeping operations, such as UNISOM II in Somalia and the international force sent to protect the Muslims of Kosovo in the late 1990s, the UAE being the only Arab and Muslim country to take part in the latter.

Characterised by prudence, a belief in conciliation and consensus, as well as in international institutions, yet also by a readiness, if necessary, to support the use of force to defend the rights of the weak, UAE foreign policy in the years since the state was established has also been noteworthy for its consistency, thanks to the fact that the architect of the policy, Sheikh Zayed, continued throughout to guide its implementation until late 2004.

That policy has remained unchanged under the leadership of President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Many of the key issues have remained the same as in previous years and, in particular the UAE has focused attention on continuing problems in the region, such as those affecting Iraq, the people of Palestine and Afghanistan. The UAE has also continued to work with other countries, both within the region and from outside, to fight the continuing scourge of terrorism, while emphasising the necessity both of a clear definition of terrorism and of ensuring that terrorism perpetrated by states should not be overlooked.

In the immediate area of the Arabian Gulf, the development of relations between the six member states of the AGCC has been a focus of activity. This is seen by President HH Sheikh Khalifa as being a fundamental element in the UAE's foreign policy.

'I strongly believe that the Gulf region is one entity and one area,' he has said. 'Unity is strength. It is my hope that we would be able to forge a greater union or federation, across the Gulf, not just in the UAE, and the success of our federation in the UAE is a cause for hope. Unity is a conviction and a belief.'

FOREIGN AID

Since the establishment of the UAE, the country has played an active role in the provision of financial aid to developing countries and has been a major contributor of emergency relief to areas affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Almost all sectors of UAE society contribute to the provision of relief assistance. Prominent amongst aid-givers are the Red Crescent Authority and organisations like the Mohammed bin Rashid Charity and Humanitarian Foundation, the Zayed Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation and the Umm al-Qaiwain Charity Organisation, often working in close co-ordination with the Red Crescent.

The provision of aid, however, is not confined simply to responding to natural disasters. There is also a long-term focus on tackling poverty and deprivation, both through a programme of government-to-government loans and grants, and through other channels.

Overall, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) has given nearly Dh20 billion in the form of development loans, assistance and grants, with a total of 56 countries benefiting from its activities through nearly 250 individual projects, these often being financed in association with other international and national aid-giving agencies. Financial assistance provided directly by the Abu Dhabi government is also managed by the fund. The bulk of the assistance has been given to support the development of infrastructure. Assistance has also been given to improve health and educational services and generate employment opportunities.

Financial assistance is made available in the form of concessionary loans, grants and direct investments offered with a low rate of interest, lengthy period of repayment and a long grace period. In addition, the ADFD makes direct investments in private-sector projects.

The UAE Government is also an active participant in a number of multilateral aid-giving institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Development Agency, and regional bodies like the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Arab Gulf Fund for the UN, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund and the Islamic Development Bank.

THE ECONOMY

THE UAE'S PRESIDENT, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is committed to building on the economic model that was so successfully established under the leadership of the UAE's first President, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who established a programme of economic reform and liberalisation that has received high approval ratings from key international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation. Real GDP growth continues to accelerate, assisted by development of the oil sector, strong energy prices and continued expansion in the non-oil sector. Fiscal policy remains prudent while expenditure is growing, funded by surpluses in trade.

The Ministry of Economy and Planning is also actively pursuing the Government's progressive economic agenda, focusing on economic liberalisation, diversification and promoting the role of the private

sector. The economic policies of individual emirates are related to their specific strengths and assets. Abu Dhabi continues to develop its large upstream hydrocarbon resources and downstream industrial projects, notably in the petrochemicals sector, whilst also focusing on growth of the non-oil sector. It is involved in a proactive privatisation programme for industrial projects, especially those in the power and water sectors. Dubai continues to play a leading role in the diversification process, building on its emergent position as the region's service hub. Tourism, media, shipping, financial and commercial services, and manufacturing and industry all contribute to the economic expansion of the seven emirates that comprise the UAE.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The UAE's non-oil exports were 52.3 per cent of total exports in the five years from 2000 to 2004 compared to 31.9 per cent in the 1970s and 29.5 per cent in the 1980s. With recent oil price trends up rather than down, the economy has received a double boost, not just from extraordinary growth in the non-oil sector but also from higher than budgeted oil revenues.

The UAE's diversification programme has focused on a number of key areas, including aviation, port facilities, tourism, finance and telecommunications. The Government has also vigorously pursued various trade and investment agreements, both within the Gulf region and with the rest of the world. In particular, free trade agreements are expected to yield benefits across a broad front, leading to freer access to key markets while promoting technology transfers to the UAE's private sector, boosting domestic industrial growth and helping further economic diversification.

Free trade zones, where foreign companies are allowed 100 per cent ownership, have also encouraged inward investment. The country's strong transportation and communications infrastructure has provided a basis for creating one of the world's key trade and trans-shipment hubs.

Buoyancy in industries such as tourism, construction, aviation and services continues to fuel the UAE's economy and several analysts have predicted growth rates above 6 per cent for 2005. Along with



rapid growth comes inflation, a subject of concern to the UAE Government, which is particularly aware of its impact on lower and middle income groups. It is seen as a problem that needs to be quickly solved in order to maintain market stability and to avoid a lending crisis.

Economic expansion is being driven by industrial growth, both in the oil sector, where rises in production rates and prices of oil should play significant roles and, more especially, in the non-oil industrial sector where investment in manufacturing and heavier industrial projects (focused mainly on energy-intensive sectors such as petrochemicals and metals) is likely to bring new capacity on-stream.

At the same time, the competitiveness of UAE exports has been enhanced by the weakness of the US dollar, further adding to growth-rate expectations. Domestic and foreign investment in new projects is expected to remain strong, and capital spending on real estate and infrastructure schemes (including new roads and high-profile programmes such as the proposed Dubai Light Railway) will be a key factor. The service sector is expected to attract significant investment, strongly influenced by growth in tourism, which has already shown impressive potential despite regional uncertainties. Population increase should continue to underpin strong domestic demand, as will the public and private sector salary increases.

FINANCIAL SECTOR

The World Bank's 'financial governance effectiveness table' places the UAE at the top of Middle Eastern countries with a score of 86.1 per cent. The World Bank defines governance as 'the set of traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised'. The higher a jurisdiction scores, the better its governance ranking.

Confidence in financial regulation in the UAE has helped to maintain the unprecedented growth rate of the local investment market that has been the pattern since the establishment of Abu Dhabi Securities Market, together with the Dubai Financial and International Financial Markets.

The most recent addition to the UAE's financial markets is the groundbreaking Dubai International Financial Exchange (DIFX)

Gross Domestic Product at Base Price by Economic Sectors at Current Prices

(In millions of Dh at current prices)		
Sectors	2003	2004*
(1) Non-Financial Enterprises Sector	274,873	328,702
- Agriculture, Livestock, Fishery	9,152	10,100
- Mining	92,901	124,089
A. Crude Oil & Natural Gas	2,136	123,261
B. Other	765	828
- Manufacturing	42,215	49,546
- Electricity, Gas and Water	6,009	6,720
- Construction	26,072	28,468
- Wholesale / Retail Trade and Maintenance	5,460	38,682
- Restaurants and Hotels	6,525	7,343
- Transportation, Storage and Communication	24,692	27,263
- Real Estate and Business Services	25,355	29,540
- Social and Private Services	6,492	6,951
(2) Financial Enterprises Sector	19,992	22,318
(3) Government Services Sector	30,737	32,201
- Household Services	2,065	2,126
(Less): Imputed Bank Services Charges	5,825	6,586
TOTAL	321,752	378,761
Total Non-Oil Sectors	229,616	255,500

Source : Ministry of Economy & Planning and Central Bank Annual Report

* Preliminary Data

Gross Domestic Product by Sectors (Percentages of Total GDP) at Current Prices

Sectors	Gross Domestic Product		Non-Mining GDP*	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
A. Goods Production Sectors	54.8	57.9	36.83	37.0
Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries	2.8	2.7	4.0	3.9
Mining	28.9	32.8	-	-
Manufacturing	13.1	13.1	18.4	19.4
Construction	8.1	7.5	11.3	11.1
Electricity, Gas and Water	1.9	1.8	2.6	2.6
B. Services Sectors	45.2	42.1	63.7	63.0

* Percentage of GDP at factor cost after excluding mining sector.

Source: Central Bank Annual Report 2004



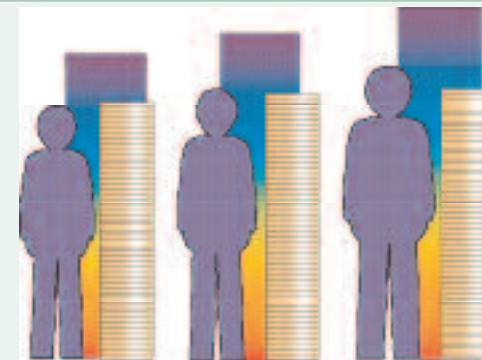
which opened its doors in September 2005 and is accessible to investors worldwide.

The Central Bank, the country's regulatory authority, formulates and implements the UAE's banking and monetary policy. In addition to acting as banker to other banking institutions operating in the country, the Central Bank is also the banker and financial adviser to the government. Central Bank assets grew by Dh13.14 billion in 2004, to reach Dh67.64 billion, a 24.1 per cent increase on the assets held at the end of 2003. Its profit rose to Dh801.9 million in 2004, compared to Dh559.2 million in 2003, a 43.4 per cent rise in profit.

There were 21 locally-incorporated banks registered in the UAE in 2004, while foreign banks operating in the country had 25 head offices and 87 branches. In all, there were 50 representative offices of foreign banks at the end of 2004.

Per Capita Gross Domestic Product

*at constant 2000 prices



Source: Central Bank and Ministry of Planning

	2002	2003	2004
GDP* (Dh Millions)	269,304	301,311	323,630
Population (Thousands)	3,754	4,041	4,320
GDP Per Capita (Dh)	71,738	74,563	74,914

Population by Gender & Age Groups, Mid-Year Estimates

	0	500,000	1,000,000	1,500,000	2,000,000	2,500,000	
60 and above							
40 to less than 60							
15 to less than 40							
Less than 15							
Female	456,679	594,729	135,181	24,411	1,211,000		2002
Male	499,132	1,454,816	552,802	36,250	2,543,000		
TOTAL	955,811	2,049,545	687,983	60,661	3,754,000		
60 and above							
40 to less than 60							
15 to less than 40							
Less than 15							
Female	487,560	637,758	144,798	25,884	1,296,000		2003
Male	535,414	1,572,762	598,155	38,669	2,745,000		
TOTAL	1,022,974	2,210,520	742,953	64,553	4,041,000		
60 and above							
40 to less than 60							
15 to less than 40							
Less than 15							
Female	522,163	685,696	155,573	27,568	1,391,000		2004
Male	571,862	1,678,448	637,440	41,250	2,929,000		
TOTAL	1,094,025	2,364,144	793,013	68,818	4,320,000		

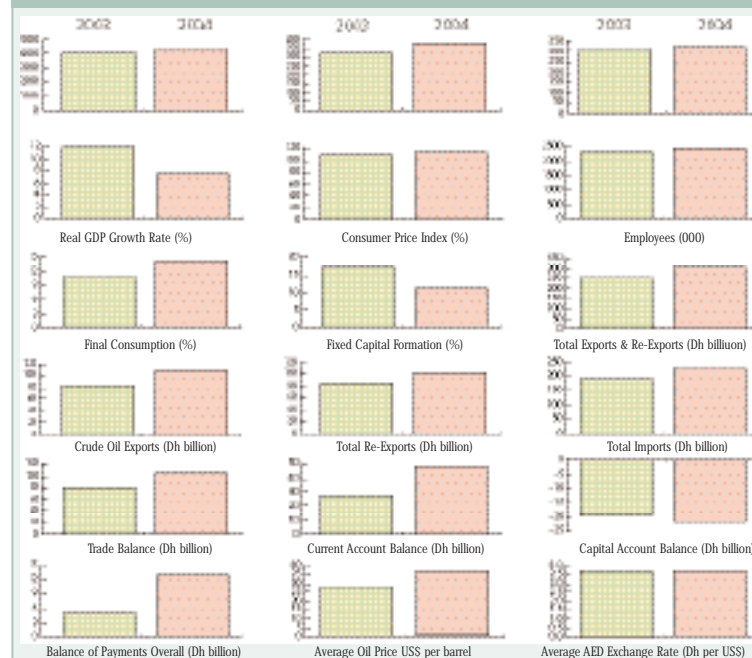
Source: Ministry of Planning



THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Following years of success in promoting diversification of the UAE's economy and creating of opportunities for private investment in UAE-based businesses, leading government officials are the first to admit that there is still considerable scope for investment growth, both through encouragement of private national investment in the UAE and through further attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI). The latter climbed five-fold in the three years from 2000 to 2004, reversing the trend of the 1990s. In 2004, about US\$9 billion (Dh33 billion) of FDI flowed into the country, and the IMF projected inflows of US\$10.3 billion for 2005. It is also clear, however, that business opportunities and incentives by themselves are not enough to promote investment. Attention has, therefore, been focused on creating an even more positive business environment that adopts best practice methods and appropriate legal frameworks and is transparent.

Selected Economic Indicators



	2003	2004
Population (000)	4,041	4,320
GDP, in Current Prices, (Dh billion)	321.8	378.8
GDP, at constant 1995 prices, (Dh billion)	301.3	323.6
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	11.9	7.4
Changes in Consumer Price Index (%)	109.1	114.2
Employees (000)	2,334	2,459
Nominal Rate of Growth of Final Consumption (%)	10.5	14.1
Nominal Rate of Growth of Fixed Capital Formation (%)	17.1	11.1
Total Exports & Re-Exports (Dh billion) ¹	246.56	303.90
Crude Oil Exports (Dh billion)	81.22	108.79
Total Re-Exports (Dh billion) ²	86.06	101.78
Total Imports (CIF) (Dh billion) ³	191.24	226.18
Trade Balance (FOB) (Dh billion)	78.26	104.86
Current Account Balance (Dh billion)	27.73	47.51
Capital and Financial Account Balance (Dh billion)	-19.58	-21.21
Balance of Payments Overall (Dh billion)	+4.73	+12.83
Average Oil Price (US\$ Per Barrel)	28.11	36.10
Dh Exchange Rate for each US Dollar ⁴	3.6725	3.6725

Source: Central Bank of the UAE, Ministry of Planning, Customs, Departments of Local Governments

¹ Preliminary estimates quoted in Central Bank Statistical Bulletin 23/4 ² Including Exports from Free Zones and Re-Export of Non-Monetary Gold.

³ Including Re-Export of Non-Monetary Gold. ⁴ Including Free Zones Imports and Non-Monetary Gold Imports.

⁵ Effective Nov. 1997, the Dh Exchange Rate Has Been Adjusted to Dh3.6725 for Each US Dollar.

Foreign investment has, to some extent, been affected by legislation that prohibited non-nationals owning more than 49 per cent of registered enterprises. However, 100 per cent ownership by non-nationals is permitted in the many free zones located throughout the Emirates and expatriate ownership of real estate, pioneered in Dubai, is now possible, under certain circumstances, in other emirates, including Abu Dhabi.

Creation of the Higher Corporation for Specialised Economic Zones (HCSEZ) in Abu Dhabi was a major step for the emirate in a series of measures to promote diversification and attract local and international investment. The corporation will also seek to develop and encourage small, medium and specialised industries and will encourage the private sector to become involved in the management of the zones.

Investment in the UAE's industrial sector increased by 44.3 per cent in 2004 to nearly Dh6.3 billion, compared to Dh4.3 billion in 2003, and industrial zones and industrial cities are transforming the face of the UAE's manufacturing and industrial base. Projects such as Abu Dhabi's new Industrial City are fuelling expansion plans that are often implemented almost as soon as the initial projects are completed. The Abu Dhabi government is also privatising a number of state-owned companies to encourage investment. This is being handled through the General Holding Company (GHC), which has taken over the industrial holdings of the General Industries Corporation. The new body is selling stakes in public utilities to the private sector as part of the emirate's strategy to forge a public-private partnership and stimulate local financial markets. The companies to be privatised include fodder, cement, steel and pipe plants and flour mills. The privatisation programme has already had a positive impact on the local stock markets as the newly-privatised firms obtain listings.

Industrial development is continuing throughout the UAE. The master plan for Dubai Industrial City was completed in mid-2005, with the objective of promoting growth of the sector through clustering of industrial activities, establishment of a dedicated industrial growth fund, an international engineering academy, a



dedicated logistics zone and a commercial area that will extend along the Emirates Road.

One particular focus of interest, not surprisingly, is the oilfield supply sector where a major dedicated complex is planned. Nearly 530 companies in Abu Dhabi are already active in this sector in various ways, with annual turnover of over US\$1 billion. In order to attract the necessary foreign investment, the Abu Dhabi government is revising local commercial and investment legislation to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the World Trade Organisation.

MANUFACTURING

The UAE's main industrial manufacturing activities, apart from the oil and gas sector, are in construction, aluminium, chemicals and plastics, metals and heavy equipment, ceramics, clothing and textiles, and food. Each emirate has taken steps to nurture the development of non-oil

industries, both in terms of providing attractive structures and support mechanisms and through development of improved facilities such as industrial zones and vital energy and transport networks.

The UAE's manufacturing sector contributes roughly 14 per cent to GDP and is the largest non-oil economic sector in the country. Growth in manufacturing has been impressive, showing a 15 per cent increase in 2004, reaching Dh45 billion. The impetus for growth has come both from a rise in population and demand for consumer goods and from expansion of the free zones and foreign direct investment in the country. In 2004 there were 3036 manufacturing establishments registered with the Ministry of Finance and Industry, compared to 2795 in 2003. Indeed, the manufacturing sector now accounts for roughly one-fifth of the entire non-oil economy. Not only is local manufacturing catering to increasing demand from the domestic non-oil economy, but it is also establishing a foothold in international export markets.

The current trend in UAE manufacturing, particularly in the many free zones, is to focus on less labour-intensive and high value-added activities in the manufacturing process – even if it means that the core manufacturing process may be outside the country.

OIL AND GAS

The UAE is the tenth largest oil producer, the sixth largest oil exporter and has the fifth largest oil reserves in the world. While each emirate takes responsibility for exploitation of its hydrocarbon reserves, if any, with Abu Dhabi playing by far the largest role in this regard, the role of the Federal Government has been re-organised, with a new Ministry of Energy combining the former roles of the Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals and the Ministry of Electricity and Water.

The recent sharp rise in oil prices has brought to an end a decade of relative stability when prices mostly remained in the US\$20 to US\$28 per barrel range (with the exception of 1998 when a sharp downturn took place). The sudden jump in price is the result of an increase in demand rather than any disruption or restriction in supplies. Average 2004 prices were more than US\$10 above the 2003 average (US\$28.39 in 2003 compared to US\$38.87 in 2004). Oil



prices continued to rise in 2005. Global oil prices touched US\$70 per barrel in September 2005.

With both price and production rates rising, revenues have also increased. A surge in world demand and requests to OPEC from the international community to raise production levels resulted in the UAE's production quota, allocated by OPEC, being adjusted five times during 2004. The average quota over the whole of 2004 was 2,189,000 barrels per day (b/d).

Whilst reserves in Dubai and Sharjah have declined significantly, Abu Dhabi, with 94.3 per cent of the UAE's total oil and gas reserves, has significant additional sustainable production capacity, which amounted to 500,000 b/d in 2004. This figure is being increased as a result of the huge investment that has been made in the industry over the past five years. In particular, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has invested around US\$10 billion on an expansion programme that plans to raise production capacity to 3 million b/d in 2006 and 3.7 million b/d by 2010.



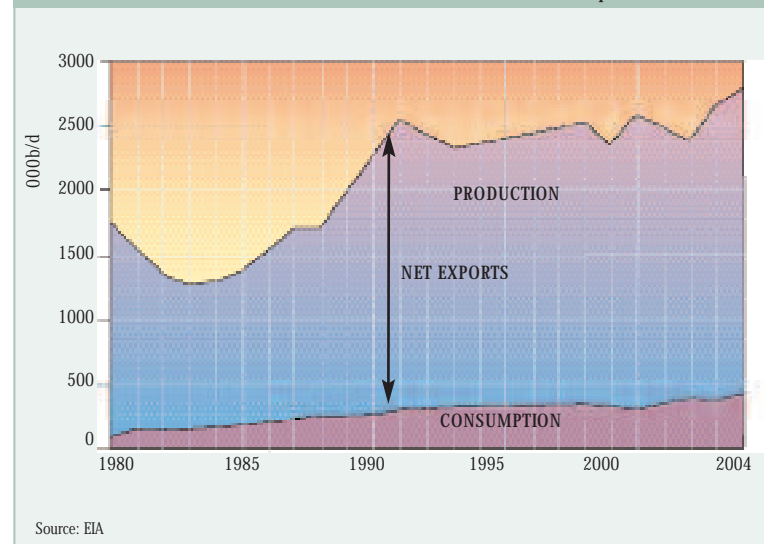
Notwithstanding major progress in its long-standing programme of diversification, the UAE's oil and gas sector continues to occupy prime status in the country's economic profile – a fact bolstered by confirmed hydrocarbon reserves standing at 97.8 billion barrels of oil and 213.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas. Based on current knowledge, the UAE's oil reserves account for 9.6 per cent of the world's total oil reserves, estimated at 1016.8 billion barrels (US Dept. of Energy, based on oil industry figures). These figures rank the UAE in fifth place in terms of the size of its oil reserves (excluding Canadian oil-sands) and fourth with respect to its natural gas reserves. It has been suggested by oil experts that there could be approximately double the discovered reserves in deeper layers, where drilling has not yet taken place. By far the greatest portion of the UAE's oil reserves are located in Abu Dhabi Emirate with 92.2 billion barrels, followed by Dubai with 4 billion barrels, Sharjah with 1.5 billion and Ra's al-Khaimah with 100 million.

Crude Oil Exports by Destination

(in thousands of barrels per day)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*
North America.....	1.3	19.6	10.0	7.0	5.0
United States.....	1.3	19.6	10.0	7.0	4.7
Latin America.....	–	–	–	–	–
Eastern Europe.....	–	–	–	–	–
Western Europe.....	1.3	6.1	3.0	–	–
France.....	0.1	5.1	–	–	–
Germany.....	–	–	–	–	–
Italy.....	–	–	–	–	–
Netherlands.....	1.2	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom.....	–	–	–	–	–
Middle East.....	–	–	–	–	–
Africa.....	34.3	37.0	26.0	28.0	30.0
Asia and Pacific*.....	1,778.0	1,724.0	1,575.0	2,013.0	2,137.0
*of which Japan:.....	1,065.8	1,066.8	1,182.8	1,224.0	1,047.7
Unspecified.....	–	–	–	–	–
Total World	1,814.9	1,786.7	1,614.0	2,048.0	2,172.0

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2004

UAE Oil Production and Consumption 1980–2004



Most of the UAE's natural gas reserves are concentrated in Abu Dhabi, which has 198.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) or 93 per cent, followed by Sharjah with 10.7 tcf, Dubai with 4.1 tcf and Ra's al-Khaimah with 1.2 tcf. Current gas reserves are projected to last for about 150 to 170 years at present rates of production. Gross production by Abu Dhabi rose to approximately 65 billion cubic metres (6.3 billion cubic feet/day) in 2004. Onshore gas fields accounted for about 4.8 billion cubic feet/day (cf/d), whilst offshore fields contributed around 1.4 billion cf/d. The non-associated Khuff gas reservoirs beneath the Umm Shaif and Abu al-Bukhoosh oil fields in Abu Dhabi rank among the world's largest. A project to increase gas production from these fields was completed in 2004. Development of gas production also increases exports of condensates, which are not subject to OPEC quotas.

In addition to the growing volume of gas that is re-injected into oil fields (over 1 billion cf/d in 2004), the country's power stations, desalination plants and other industrial projects depend on burning gas, rather than oil, driving gas consumption to 4.5 billion cf/d in 2004, a figure that is expected to rise to 5 billion cf/d by 2007. At present consumption rates, 71.4 per cent of gross gas production is consumed within the country. This does not include the figure of around 1.5 billion cf/d that is re-injected into oilfields to maintain pressure.

The UAE has been an exporter of natural gas since 1977. Rapid growth in production follows a development programme involving three separate projects to enhance recovery of associated and non-associated Khuff gas from onshore reservoirs. Gross (marketed) natural gas production in 2004 was around 49.2 billion cubic metres. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports amounted to 7.6 billion cubic metres while exports of natural gas liquids (NGLs) reached 13.6 billion cubic metres.

Abu Dhabi is also the location of several major petrochemical and fertiliser industrial complexes. The emirate is planning to grow this sector, both as a result of existing facilities expansion and through establishment of new projects that will produce derivatives such as melamine, polyethylene (PE), polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), linear alpha olefins and aromatics.





TOURISM

Plans, laid in the late 1980s and early 1990s to create an entirely new tourism industry have exceeded expectations. Tourism is now worth more to Dubai than its income from oil. Abu Dhabi has also invested in developing a tourism industry and has announced a number of ambitious projects in this field. All the other emirates consider tourism to be an important factor in their future growth and prosperity. With the wisdom of hindsight, all of this makes sense. The UAE has warm shallow seas, rich in marine life, long fine sandy beaches perfect for sun-bathing and water sports, a climate that delights for much of the year and the resources to mitigate against the discomfort of excessive heat through innovative construction and

cooling projects. It is the 'right flying distance' from some of the world's most populous markets, from the Middle East and Western Asia to Europe, and it has excellent airports and seaports. Its natural and cultural heritage is rich and varied and its people are educated, friendly and hospitable. It is a long-standing melting pot of cultures where foreigners feel at ease. Emiratis have always welcomed visitors: it is not the nature but the scale of things that has changed.

Nevertheless, tourism growth in the Emirates has surprised many analysts and commentators. The country is leading the whole region in developing top-class tourism facilities and attracting visitors. Approximately 11,922 new hotel rooms will become available between 2005 and 2008 (with 9628 in Dubai alone).



Good planning has been the key to growth of tourism in the UAE. It is not just about building hotel rooms but about creating a wide range of spectacular multi-faceted attractions, providing world-class infrastructure and ensuring that the very elements that draw visitors are respected and protected. All this requires coordination and management. Each emirate has its own dedicated tourism development authority or department. In recent years these have grown in size and capability, encouraging development at home and promoting the country worldwide.

EXHIBITIONS

The UAE is also the destination of choice for international business meetings, incentive travel, conventions, events, trade fairs and exhibitions. So much so that this area of activity is now a major component of the country's business and tourism expansion plans. With its purpose-built exhibition halls and luxury hotels boasting state-of-the-art conference facilities, the UAE provides a unique gateway to the Middle East and Asia. The UAE's solid infrastructure and safe environment also helps to explain why the country attracts major global events such as the annual meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2003 (the world's largest yet) and the fortieth International Advertising Association's World Congress in 2006, beating Miami, Bucharest and Sydney for the much-coveted role.

This is only the beginning. The UAE authorities recently consolidated the Dh12 billion (US\$3.27 billion) exhibitions and conference industry under one umbrella corporation entitled the UAE Exhibitions & Conferences Authority (UECA), overseen by the UAE Ministry of Economy and Planning in tandem with the Chamber of Commerce from each emirate.

Some of the Gulf's largest and most significant international exhibitions are held in the UAE, such as the International Defence Exhibition and the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition & Conference, the Environmental Conference and Exhibition, the Arabian Travel Market, Gulf Information Technology Exhibition, Middle East International Motor Show, Dubai Air Show and Dubai International Boat Show.



AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Despite being a country known for its deserts, exceptionally low and unpredictable rainfall and, at times, searing heat, the UAE is also able to sustain a vibrant agricultural sector. The growth in food production since the early 1970s has been correctly attributed to the leadership, much of it by personal example, of the late Sheikh Zayed. Today, UAE exports dates to Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia, while flowers are sent to other GCC countries, Lebanon, Australia, Britain and Japanese markets. Thousands of hectares of palm trees, woodlands and green belts have been planted in the country. Date-palm cultivation plays a key role in turning large portions of the desert into green oases. Over 40 million date palms, of which 16 million line the roads, have been planted in the UAE.

New methods of agriculture are constantly under review. The UAE is especially interested in new agricultural techniques that can boost yields without adversely affecting the environment and human health. The focus is now on organic farming and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has encouraged the use of organic fertilisers, distributing over 32,000 tonnes to local farmers in the last three years. Also, the use of more than 80 varieties of pesticides has been banned and bio-control of pests such as the palm weevil is being developed.

In addition, increasing attention is being paid to the impact of water extraction for irrigation on subterranean aquifers, as well as to the economic sustainability of the whole afforestation and agriculture programme. Several hundred water wells in Abu Dhabi were capped during 2005, with water supplies being replaced from desalinated water, while the viability of large scale fodder production is also being re-assessed. The objective is to ensure that while the planting programme continues, it is done only where it can be justified on economic and environmental grounds.

In 2004, the agriculture, fisheries and livestock sector contributed 2.6 per cent to GDP with a value of Dh10.1 billion. Marine fisheries, in particular, have always occupied an important place in the UAE and continue to do so today. Apart from supporting a traditional way of life, these resources still provide an important source of income, food and recreational opportunity for many residents. In response to



a growing demand for marine products, the traditional commercial fishing sector has substantially invested in modern fishing fleets in the last three decades, while there has also been a significant increase in recreational use of marine resources.

All this has inevitably led to concern regarding the sustainability of fisheries resources. In particular, questions pertaining to depletion of fish stocks, habitat degradation and over-fishing have been raised. A recently-completed report undertaken by the environmental agency, EAD (formerly ERWDA), in Abu Dhabi, in association with the UAE Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Australian/New Zealand consultants has highlighted some of these issues, including a catastrophic decline in some stocks of commercial fish species. Measures are now being taken to remedy the situation, including regulation of catching methods, net mesh size and close seasons.

ENVIRONMENT

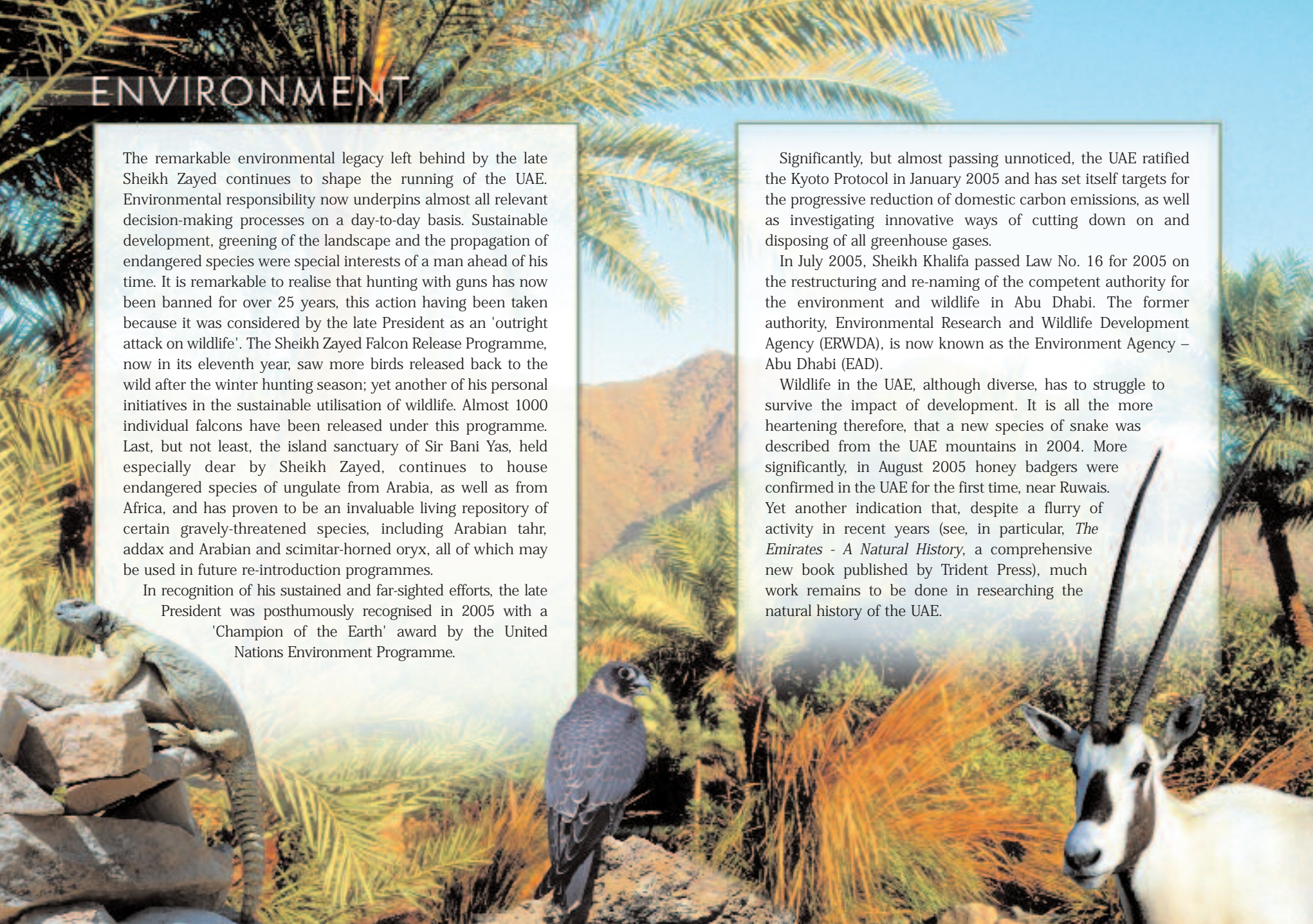
The remarkable environmental legacy left behind by the late Sheikh Zayed continues to shape the running of the UAE. Environmental responsibility now underpins almost all relevant decision-making processes on a day-to-day basis. Sustainable development, greening of the landscape and the propagation of endangered species were special interests of a man ahead of his time. It is remarkable to realise that hunting with guns has now been banned for over 25 years, this action having been taken because it was considered by the late President as an 'outright attack on wildlife'. The Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme, now in its eleventh year, saw more birds released back to the wild after the winter hunting season; yet another of his personal initiatives in the sustainable utilisation of wildlife. Almost 1000 individual falcons have been released under this programme. Last, but not least, the island sanctuary of Sir Bani Yas, held especially dear by Sheikh Zayed, continues to house endangered species of ungulate from Arabia, as well as from Africa, and has proven to be an invaluable living repository of certain gravely-threatened species, including Arabian tahr, addax and Arabian and scimitar-horned oryx, all of which may be used in future re-introduction programmes.

In recognition of his sustained and far-sighted efforts, the late President was posthumously recognised in 2005 with a 'Champion of the Earth' award by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Significantly, but almost passing unnoticed, the UAE ratified the Kyoto Protocol in January 2005 and has set itself targets for the progressive reduction of domestic carbon emissions, as well as investigating innovative ways of cutting down on and disposing of all greenhouse gases.

In July 2005, Sheikh Khalifa passed Law No. 16 for 2005 on the restructuring and re-naming of the competent authority for the environment and wildlife in Abu Dhabi. The former authority, Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), is now known as the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD).

Wildlife in the UAE, although diverse, has to struggle to survive the impact of development. It is all the more heartening therefore, that a new species of snake was described from the UAE mountains in 2004. More significantly, in August 2005 honey badgers were confirmed in the UAE for the first time, near Ruwais. Yet another indication that, despite a flurry of activity in recent years (see, in particular, *The Emirates - A Natural History*, a comprehensive new book published by Trident Press), much work remains to be done in researching the natural history of the UAE.



INFRASTRUCTURE

THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS seen by the UAE would not have been possible without massive investment in a sophisticated physical infrastructure comprising efficient road networks, good telecommunications facilities and freely available, affordable electricity and water. In addition, links with the outside world through the UAE's first-class airports and seaports, a vital component of trade and tourism, are constantly being upgraded. At the same time the provision of modern housing required to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population (from around 250,000 in 1971 to an estimated 5 million in 2005) is a constant challenge. Today, over 75 per cent of the population live in a handful of cities, all of which are experiencing a new wave of infrastructure expansion, much of it on a massive scale.



URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The road and public transport improvements required to meet the needs of the burgeoning population and the extensive building projects taking place throughout the Emirates are continuing. In Abu Dhabi, this takes the form of improved road and bridge networks in Greater Abu Dhabi, adjacent islands and the onshore satellite towns, as well as major redevelopment of the road network on Abu Dhabi Island, including city-centre roads, the extensive Corniche revamp, and the much-needed 'Third Crossing' project, a new bridge linking the island to the mainland.

A number of large mixed-use, commercial and residential properties, together with large shopping malls, are under construction along Abu Dhabi's Corniche and in the city centre, the most significant of which is Aldar's redevelopment of the Central Market area. Aldar is also involved in the construction of a major new suburb at the 12-million-

square-metre Al Raha Beach development that will form a gateway to Abu Dhabi north-east of the main island on the Abu Dhabi–Dubai Highway. Al Raha and a major development on Reem Island were designated as investment areas under a new Abu Dhabi property law that permits expatriates to purchase property in designated areas.

Dubai has over 20 major new road projects under construction or recently completed, including a 1.5-kilometre tunnel under the airport and a new 12-lane bridge across Dubai Creek. It is increasingly difficult for the road network to keep abreast of developments, especially considering the scale of projects such as the massive man-made island complexes that form the Jumeirah, Jebel Ali and Deira ‘Palms’ and ‘The World’, as well as huge leisure-focused projects like Dubailand. Major mixed-use developments such as Dubai Festival City on the shores of Dubai Creek; ‘Downtown Dubai’, with the world’s tallest tower, Burj Dubai, as its centerpiece; and Dubai Waterfront, a major new suburb that will eventually house 750,000 people, as well as extensive developments at Jebel Ali also necessitate a reworking of traffic plans. Public transport projects include a fully-automated, light rail transit (LRT) that comes on-line in 2010.

Although they are not experiencing the same population pressures as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the Northern Emirates of Sharjah, and, to a lesser extent Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ra’s al-Khaimah and Fujairah, are all in the throes of developing and expanding their infrastructure to facilitate commercial, residential and tourist development. In addition, the Federal Government continues to invest money on infrastructure projects in these emirates, especially on roads, housing, electricity and telecommunications.

Major projects announced in the Northern Emirates in recent years include the ‘Nujoom Islands’ project, a residential, commercial and tourist venture near Hamriyah village on the north-eastern coast of Sharjah, the Marina project and a new township in Umm al-Qaiwain. In Ra’s al-Khaimah, work on the Al Hamra project commenced in 2004. ‘The Cove’, involving the development of 50 acres on Ra’s al-Khaimah’s coastline, and ‘Noor’, on a 850-hectare newly-reclaimed area, have also been launched.





WATER AND ELECTRICITY

Total installed electricity generating capacity in the UAE was 12,800 megawatts (MW) at the end of 2004. This will increase to 19,400 MW by 2010 to meet the 6 to 7 per cent annual growth in demand dictated by the escalating needs of industry and private consumers. Approximately 97 per cent of production is fuelled by natural gas. Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah are responsible for 90 per cent of capacity, with 14 federal plants in the smaller Northern Emirates accounting for the remaining 10 per cent.

Abu Dhabi, which has the largest capacity and the highest growth in the industry, dominates electricity production in the UAE. Dubai, too, has raised its share of capacity. It has been importing gas from

Sharjah since 1986, and from Abu Dhabi since 2001. Dubai is due to start importing natural gas from Qatar in late 2006. This will be transported via Dolphin's 370-kilometre export pipeline to a terminal at Taweelah in Abu Dhabi, from where it will be piped to the centres of use, such as the Jebel Ali complex, the location of most of Dubai's electricity and water capacity, and Fujairah's new power and water complex at Qidfa (presently receiving gas from Oman).

Historically, all the UAE's water requirements were met from groundwater obtained from shallow, hand-dug wells and the traditional *falaj* system of aquifers, as well as by the careful trapping of seasonal rainfall. Over the past two decades, however, increasing pressure on the UAE's precious natural water resources has presented a real challenge for a country with no rivers and little rainfall. The UAE is now the world's third largest per capita water consumer after the US and Canada. Annual water consumption in Abu Dhabi Emirate alone is estimated to be 2.486 billion cubic metres and Abu Dhabi's water consumption is expected to increase to 5.858 billion cubic metres by 2020.

Although groundwater still plays a significant role in meeting agricultural demand throughout the Emirates, and more than half of the water distributed by the federal authority (FEWA) in the Northern Emirates is sweet groundwater, a high proportion of the UAE's total requirements is being met by an extensive gas-fired desalination programme, with Abu Dhabi accounting for around half of the total desalinated water production in the UAE. Water production, as distinct from capturing groundwater, reached more than 195 billion gallons in 2004 (up from 130.5 billion gallons in 1996).

In recent years water management initiatives have also included the restoration of traditional *falaj* irrigation systems, well-drilling and aquifer-testing and exploration. Supplementing new wells, over 130 recharge and storage dams have also been constructed to utilise an estimated 150 million cubic metres per year of wadi (seasonal river) flow from 15 main catchment areas.

In addition, water conservation measures are being implemented throughout the Emirates, especially in the agricultural and amenity planting sector where plant suitability, crop replacement and drip



irrigation techniques are being promoted to save water. Emirates such as Abu Dhabi are also educating the general public about the importance of water conservation.

Privatisation of the water and electricity sector has been a key component of Abu Dhabi's efforts to meet its requirements. Since its establishment in March 1998, Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA) has developed projects with a total installed electricity and water production capacity of 7100 MW and 500 million gallons per day (mg/d) through a successful IWPP (independent water and power projects) programme. This is designed to attract foreign investors to build, own, and operate new or enhanced generation facilities. The state has retained a 60 per cent stake in the six IWPPs launched to date. However, the recently-listed Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), a subsidiary of ADWEA, is taking over the state's interest in the IWPPs. It is envisaged that 30 per cent of the government-owned shareholding will be offered to national investors, while 40 per cent will remain with the foreign shareholder. All the electricity and potable water produced by IWPPs are purchased by Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Company (ADWEC) under long-term contracts.

Work is also under way on the construction of substations and the installation of power transmission lines associated with the establishment of a single integrated power network, the Emirates National Grid (ENG). Set up by the Abu Dhabi government in 2001, the project is being jointly undertaken by the five power utilities in the UAE, UWEC, ADWEA, DEWA, FEWA and SEWA, and is designed to enable the emirates to share their reserves of electric power. The ENG project will also facilitate the UAE's plans to link up with the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Grid, further improving performance and reliability throughout the country.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The UAE has a very well-developed, technologically-advanced telecommunications infrastructure and has high mobile telephone (over 95 per cent) and Internet penetration (40 per cent). Since 1976 majority government-owned telecoms corporation Etisalat, a World



Top 500 company in terms of market capitalisation, has operated, maintained and developed the national and international fixed-line network, mobile telephony, Internet access and cable TV services. However, recent government decisions provide for the deregulation of the market.

The first step in the liberalisation of the sector was taken in May 2005 when the Telecommunications Authority (TRA) granted a licence to a new telecom provider in which the Pensions and Social Security Authority and other private sector shareholders hold a 40 per cent stake.

Etisalat is meeting the deregulation challenge on a number of fronts, including making the transition to an international corporation through strategic investment abroad. The corporation is

rapidly establishing itself in international markets and is looking at further initiatives through Etisalat International, its newly-formed international investment arm that has been actively identifying and pursuing international investment opportunities.

Etisalat reported revenues of Dh10.4 billion (US\$2.83 billion) and a net profit of Dh3.4 billion (US\$927 million) during 2004, an increase of 13 and 19 per cent respectively over 2003. Net profit is expected to exceed Dh4 billion in 2005. Major growth is currently in the mobile telecom sector: by mid-2005 subscribers had reached 4,068,847 and revenue from mobile phones accounted for 55.2 per cent of total revenues, while fixed phones made up 25.9 per cent.

In addition to its mainstream operations, Etisalat also provides specialised services through subsidiaries such as the cable TV company E-Vision, eCompany, which provides broadband access services, and E-marine, its submarine cable-laying company.

Etisalat is also a majority shareholder in the Thuraya Satellite Telecommunication Company and is Thuraya's service provider in the UAE. Thuraya provides satellite-based communication solutions in urban centres and remote areas beyond terrestrial telecom networks, offering mobile and fixed telephony, rural telephony (through public call offices or PCOs), maritime communications, GPS tracking, and satellite Internet services across more than 120 countries spanning Europe, the CIS, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

AIRPORTS AND AVIATION

The increase in economic, business and tourist activity in the country has led to a corresponding increase in the local aviation industry. Bucking international trends, airlines based in the UAE have a combined purchase order book of over Dh95 billion (US\$25.8 billion), the Dubai-based Emirates airline and Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways accounting for the bulk of new purchases. In addition, the UAE's total investment on airport development over the coming 20 years will exceed Dh71 billion (US\$19.35 billion). This figure includes redevelopment of Abu Dhabi International Airport at a cost of Dh25 billion, the Dh15 billion being spent on the ongoing

expansion of Dubai International Airport, and Dh30 billion estimated for the new Jebel Ali International Airport (JAIA) development, the UAE's seventh international airport.

In addition, Sharjah International Airport intends to spend Dh227 million on redevelopment and Fujairah has pledged Dh183 million investment for the expansion of its terminal and associated structures. Al Ain International Airport is undergoing a Dh75 million development, while the Ra's al-Khaimah government is also expanding its airport. Currently, the UAE is the largest investor in airport development in the Middle East.

In 2004 more than 3.25 million passengers passed through Abu Dhabi International Airport (ADIA), the gateway to the UAE's capital city, an increase of 22 per cent on 2003 and the busiest year on record. Current capacity is approximately five million, but the major expansion of ADIA, which got under way in mid-2005, will significantly increase throughput. The new facilities will have an initial handling capacity of 20 million passengers a year when they open, and an ultimate capacity of 50 million passengers a year. Another key part of the development project at ADIA is the substantial increase in cargo facilities, with an ultimate handling capacity of around 2 million tonnes of freight a year. A major user will be UAE national carrier Etihad Airways, which is based at the airport. It has identified airfreight, in particular transit cargo, as one of the key growth areas, although the other 20 or so airlines currently using ADIA will also benefit.

In 2004, 21.7 million passengers passed through Dubai International Airport (DIA). This figure increased by 13.7 per cent in the first half of 2005 compared to the same period in 2004. By the end of 2005, it is estimated that 25 million will have passed through DIA and forecasts for 2010 are for a throughput of 60 million passengers. To facilitate the growth, the second phase of DIA's development plan is well under way. Dubai Cargo Village's (DCV) business is expected to remain steady, even when new facilities at Jebel Ali Airport are operational and the second and third phases of expansion are proceeding as planned, aimed at raising DCV's total handling capacity to 4.5 million tonnes by 2020.



Sharjah International Airport (SIA) handled 1.6 million passengers in 2004 and posted a growth of 40 per cent in the volume of cargo handled, 18 per cent in airplane traffic and 22 per cent in passenger volume during the first half of 2005. The increase in passenger figures is attributed to Air Arabia's operations and its success since its launch in 2003. SIA will have the capacity to handle 8 million passengers by early 2007 on completion of its expansion plans.

Other airports in Al Ain, Ra's al-Khaimah and Fujairah are also expanding their facilities and recording impressive growth.

PORTS

Given its strategic location, it is not surprising that the UAE has a wide range of well-equipped ports, most of them being expanded to meet the growing needs of trade. Mina (Port) Zayed in Abu Dhabi City is the emirate's main general cargo port, whilst the terminals at Jebel Dhanna/Ruwais, Umm al-Nar, Das Island, Zirku and Mubarras islands handle the bulk of the UAE's crude oil and gas exports.

Mina Zayed occupies a total area of 510 hectares, including 41 hectares dedicated to container terminals that can handle around 15,000 TEUs (20-foot-equivalent-units). Abu Dhabi Seaport Authority (ADSA) and Dubai Ports International (DPI) entered into agreement in 2005 whereby DPI will develop and manage Mina Zayed.

Dubai's Ports at Port Rashid (35 berths) in Dubai City and Jebel Ali (71 berths), south of the city, play a pivotal role in trade in the UAE. Jebel Ali, which primarily handles bulk cargo and industrial material for Jebel Ali Free Zone, is the largest port in the country and the largest man-made port in the world. Dubai Ports Authority (DPA) processed 6.25 million tonnes of general cargo in 2004, a 20 per cent growth rate and an increase of 1.035 million tonnes over 2003. The port handled about 5.15 million containers in 2004, in comparison with just 1.6 million in 1993. The Dh4.6 billion expansion project under way at Jebel Ali will enable the port to handle 21.8 million containers a year by 2020.

Sharjah's Port Khalid handles a wide variety of tonnage, ranging from tankers, container vessels, ro-ro ships, to a multitude of smaller vessels. Sharjah is building its third container terminal at Hamriyah

Port, which also handles non-containerised break bulk cargo, liquid petroleum gas and petrochemical vessels.

Sharjah's East Coast dedicated container terminal, Khor Fakkan Container Terminal (KCT), is the only natural deep-water port in the region, close to the main east-west shipping lanes and outside the Straits of Hormuz. Already one of the top container trans-shipment hub ports in the country, KCT handled 1.6 million TEUs in 2004. This is expected to grow by 30 per cent by 2007. Total storage capacity after expansion will rise to 30,000 TEUs, and handling capability to 2 million TEUs a year.

Ajman Port, which has eight berths designed to handle both container and general cargo, has been dredged to 8 metres. However, plans are in place to deepen the port to 10.5 metres, enabling visits by 40,000–50,000 dwt (dead weight tonnage) ships up to 175 metres long.

Umm al-Qaiwain is well served by Ahmed bin Rashid Port and Ra's al-Khaimah by Mina Saqr, Ra's al-Khaimah Harbour and Al Jazeeraah Harbour. In 2004, Ra's al-Khaimah awarded Kuwaiti firm KGL a Dh165.15 million (US\$45 million), 21-year contract to build, operate and manage the Port Saqr container terminal. Ra's al-Khaimah Customs and Ports Department is also building a new 307-metre quay and is increasing the port's draught to 10 metres, enabling the port to handle vessels of up to 30,000 tonnes.

Fujairah Port commissioned an additional 150,000 cubic metres of onshore bunker storage facilities early in 2005, ensuring that it now ranks as the second largest bunkering centre in the world, supplying 12 million tonnes of fuel oil a year, worth US\$2.5 billion (Dh9.17 billion). DPI took charge of Fujairah's container terminal in May 2005 under a 30-year concession involving an investment of over Dh568 million (US\$155 million) to develop and operate the terminal, which has been renamed DPA (Dubai Ports Authority)-Fujairah Terminal.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A HIGH STANDARD OF EDUCATION, investment in a sophisticated health service, the development of human resources, the empowerment of women and the provision of social welfare to the less well-off have ensured that the UAE continues to be rated as having a high level of human development, being ranked forty-first in the 2005 UN Human Development Index (HDI), having risen from forty-ninth place in 2004. HDI focuses on three measurable dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life, being educated and having a decent standard of living. Thus it combines measures of life expectancy, school enrolment, literacy and income, providing a broad view of the country's development.



POPULATION

The UAE population was estimated to be 4.32 million at the end of 2004, compared to 4.041 million in 2003. This figure is expected to touch the 5 million mark in 2005, 20 times more than what it was in 1971. (More accurate figures have been gathered by 'Tedad 2005', the fifth census in the UAE's history). This rapid growth rate, which, at an estimated 6.9 per cent is among the highest in the world, can be attributed to improved healthcare, enhanced environment and education systems and increased per capita income, but also, more importantly, to a large and ever-increasing immigrant workforce.

The population is concentrated in urban areas where most economic activity takes place. Thus the two leading emirates, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, account for almost 60 per cent. There is also a concentration of population in the age groups 25 to 40 years, and males outnumber females by two to one because they constitute the majority of the expatriate workforce.

The majority of UAE citizens work in a public sector that has reached saturation point and is, therefore, incapable of absorbing all of the 16,187 citizens expected to enter the job market in 2006. One strategy adopted by the Federal Government to remedy this situation was the establishment of the National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority (Tanmia), an independent authority whose main objectives are to create job opportunities for UAE citizens, reduce the unemployment ratio, enhance the skills and productivity of the national workforce and recommend relevant policies to the Government.

HOUSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Despite the UAE's economic success, there are, inevitably, individuals who are not in a position to benefit directly from the country's good fortune. An extensive social welfare network exists to assist these vulnerable members of society. This takes the form of social security benefits administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in addition to the practical help offered by the network of Ministry-supported social centres run by the General Women's Union (see



section on Women), and the government-supported social welfare and rehabilitation centres providing assistance to the disabled.

The total amount disbursed increased significantly in 2005 following President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan's instructions for a 75 per cent increase in the value of social assistance given to UAE citizens, to take effect from 1 October 2005.

UAE citizens also have access to free or subsidised housing and land, with around 33,000 applications for housing being received in 2005. The Zayed Housing Programme (ZHP) approved 50 per cent of the applications submitted to it for housing and loan assistance by

the various housing committees from all over the country, distributing a total of Dh655 million to 1280 UAE citizens, including non-refundable housing grants and loans.

A new Abu Dhabi Property law, promulgated in August 2005, which grants nationals and, in some investment areas, expatriates the right to own and transfer property in Abu Dhabi, will have a big impact on the local housing sector. Every property granted by the government to UAE citizens, before or after the issuance of the law, is deemed to be the beneficiary's property.

The UAE Red Crescent Authority (RCA) is prominent among the many non-governmental charitable organisations helping those in need, covering such areas as medical aid, student sponsorship, special care, prisoner care and lump-sum aid programmes. Financial support is given for the provision of services to families and the establishment of orphanages, clinics, special schools and homes for the elderly. Thirty humanitarian programmes were implemented throughout the country in 2004, including construction and maintenance of several mosques, the maintenance of a number of schools, and the building of Qur'an memorisation centres and houses in the Northern Emirates.

The Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation finances projects to benefit large communities both within the UAE and overseas. It does not distribute cash to individuals or groups. Within the UAE, the charity has spent more than Dh120 million on major projects and about Dh57 million in contributions.

Eighty per cent of the Dubai-based Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation's budget is normally allocated to projects within the UAE. The Foundation's domestic programmes concentrate on education, medical treatment, monthly or one-time assistance, food coupons, training courses and housing.

Other organisations involved in social assistance include charity associations in Sharjah and Fujairah and Dubai, Ajman Care Society, Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, the Handicapped Guardians Association and Taryam Omran Establishment for Cultural and Humanitarian Services.



EDUCATION

The UAE offers free education to all male and female citizens from kindergarten to university. There is also an extensive private education sector, while several thousand students, of both sexes, pursue courses of higher education abroad at Government expense.

Education at primary and secondary level is universal and compulsory up to ninth grade. This takes place in a four-tier process over 14 years, from 4 to 18. Emiratisation of teaching staff in government schools is scheduled to reach 90 per cent by 2020. However, over 40 per cent of pupils attend private schools, some of which offer foreign language education geared towards expatriate communities, usually preserving the culture and following the curriculum of the students' countries of origin.

The UAE has established an excellent and diversified system of higher education. Citizens can attend government institutions free of charge and a wide range of private institutions, many with international accreditation, supplement the public sector. The country now has one of the highest application participation rates in the world. Ninety-five per cent of all females and 80 per cent of all males who are enrolled in the final year of secondary school apply for admission to a higher education institution or to study abroad.

Prominent among the UAE's universities are the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) at Al Ain, and Zayed University (ZU) for women, which has campuses in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, governed by a single administration.

The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) is a system of 12 single-sex campuses offering over 75 programmes. New colleges include the Fujairah HCT, Dubai Men's College at Academic City in Al Ruwayyah, Abu Dhabi Women's College (ADWC) in Khalifa A City and the new Dubai Women's College campus.

Many excellent private institutions also offer a wide range of tertiary-level opportunities and Dubai has announced that it is setting-up a multi-university complex, Dubai Knowledge Universities (DKU), in pursuit of its aim to be the regional destination for international education providers.

In addition to its higher level institutions, the UAE has several vocational and technical educational centres for those seeking practical training in their chosen careers. These include the Emirates Institute for Banking and Finance, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Career Development Centre, the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Institute, the Dubai School of Government, and The Emirates Aviation College for Aerospace and Academic Studies.

The newly-established Emirates Foundation is a public and private-sector, nation-wide initiative to support creativity and innovation in science, education, technology, art, sports, environment and health. The Foundation will manage a variety of endowment funds to foster and maintain educational institutions and a diverse range of innovative centres of excellence in the UAE. The Technology and Research Endowment Fund is the first to be launched. Ultimately, it is hoped that the Foundation will stimulate increased social consciousness and act as a forum for active interchange between the private and public sectors for the benefit of the community.

The Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education was set up to cater for children with special educational needs. One of the most successful ventures has been a self-financing farm run by physically and mentally challenged people, the Zayed Agricultural Centre for the Disabled. Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services has also been prominent in the care, training, education, rehabilitation and integration of the disabled in society.

As well as providing for the educational needs of young people, the Government has undertaken an adult literacy programme in cooperation with the UAE General Women's Union. The UAE is on its way towards achieving its target of full literacy within five years. The UAE also provides free primary and secondary education for those of its citizens who missed out on education during their childhood.

WOMEN

Economic prosperity has brought greatly improved health care, extended life expectancy and significant educational opportunities. But there was a danger that, as men moved to take advantage of newly-provided opportunities, the UAE's women might be left



behind. Fortunately, Government initiatives and their own anxiety to play their part in the development of the country has ensured that this has not happened. In particular, women have eagerly embraced education and outnumber, and are outperforming, males at every educational level. This enthusiasm for education ensures that women can exercise their right to participate in the labour market and in the decision-making process.

The belief that women are entitled to take their place in society is grounded in the UAE Constitution, which guarantees the principles of social justice for all, in accordance with the precepts of Islam. Under



the Constitution, women enjoy the same legal status, claim to titles, access to education, and the same right to practice professions as men. The guarantees enshrined in the Constitution have been carried through into implementing legislation. Under the terms of the Labour Law, for example, it is prescribed that there shall be no discrimination between men and women in terms of equal pay for equal work. The Government has also ratified international agreements relating to women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The General Women's Union (GWU) (originally the UAE Women's Federation) was established in 1975 under the leadership of Sheikha Fatima, with the aim of bringing together under one umbrella all the women's societies in the country. A Government-funded organisation, the GWU has brought to the fore many inter-related issues of concern for women, children and the family, and it has been instrumental in introducing handicraft, health education and literacy programmes throughout the UAE. It has also provided vocational training, job placement services, family mediation services and religious education.

As the needs of women have developed, so the range and focus of the GWU's concerns and expertise have evolved. The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, for example, is a joint initiative between the GWU, UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), local government agencies and NGOs. The strategy's purpose is 'to activate the role of women and their positive participation in eight major and significant fields, including education, economy, information, social work, health, legislature and environment, in addition to political and executive fields'. The effect of the strategy has been to raise the debate on female participation to a new level with a rhetoric that unapologetically assumes gender equality and focuses on the removal of obstacles to that participation.

The GWU also plays a significant role in women's affairs at regional and international levels. In particular, it maintains strong Arab and international links with women's organisations and is affiliated to the Arab Women's Federation, the International Women's Federation and the International Family Organisation.

The GWU is actively seeking a greater decision-making role for women in national politics. The door is certainly open for female representation under the terms of the UAE Constitution. Sheikha Fatima, wife of the former President, has stated that: '... Engagement of women in national action is part and parcel of their basic rights guaranteed by Islamic faith and valuable Arab traditions'. She went on to say that strengthening the ability of the GCC women's organisations to serve local communities is an important way of improving the participation of women in all aspects of national life, including politics.

The contribution of UAE national women to economic activity has increased significantly from a mere 5.4 per cent in 1995 to 16 per cent in 2004. This positive development was due to substantial enrolment by women in education, particularly higher education, a relaxation of social obstacles on female employment and the fact that work was increasingly being seen not merely as a source of income but as a way of establishing personal identity.

Although the participation rate of economically-active female UAE citizens rose by 11 per cent between 1995 and 2004, their share of the total labour force is less than 27 per cent. This underscores the importance of current efforts to target women for jobs. The unemployment rate among national women is at a high of 19.7 per cent or 14,000 job seekers compared to 8.2 per cent for males, despite the fact that women graduates greatly outnumber male graduates.

As the Government forges ahead with its policy of emiratisation, women are seen as being more and more crucial to its success. The process is assisted by the fact that role models for women in all walks of life are multiplying rapidly in the UAE, encouraging women to break away from traditional areas of employment. Whether her skills lie in finance, IT, the arts, medicine, engineering, the army, police work or the social sciences, the contemporary UAE woman is assured of finding herself following in the footsteps of pioneering predecessors. The formerly unprecedented is gradually becoming the norm. This was highlighted by the appointment in November 2004 of the first female federal government minister as Minister of Economy and Planning. Nevertheless, gender inequality remains an issue requiring renewed focus to ensure that individual success stories are no longer exceptional. In particular, there is a need to conduct increasingly targeted and direct interventions to influence policy-makers and legislators and to encourage skilled groups of capable individuals to lend support to and act as advocates for the strategy.

Despite the preponderance of males in the UAE, it was recognised in the early 1990s that growing numbers of UAE women were remaining unmarried. One of the main causes of this problem, which had escalating social consequences, was the high cost of marriage. The Marriage Fund was set up in 1992 to address the problems

experienced by citizens wishing to marry. Marriage halls where mass marriages can take place were built to facilitate more economical ceremonies and the Government launched a campaign calling for a reduction in dowry size. Since then, an upper limit of Dh50,000 has been placed on dowry size.

Young UAE citizens with limited incomes (up to Dh16,000 per month) wishing to marry can apply to the Marriage Fund for a marriage grant of up to Dh60,000, usually paid in two instalments, and the Fund receives between 4500 and 5000 grant applications every year, up substantially from the initial figure of 2036 in 1993.

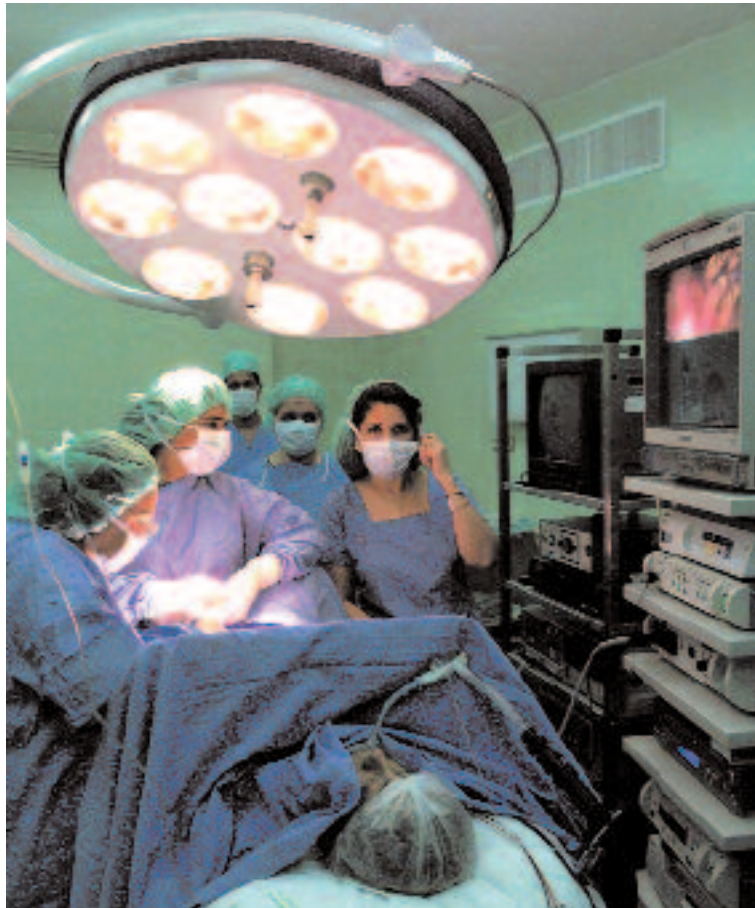
HEALTH

The UAE's high ranking on the UN Human Development Index reflects the success of its efforts to provide a world-class health service for its population. A sophisticated physical infrastructure of well-equipped hospitals and clinics has increased capacity from 700 beds in 1971 to over 7000 beds spread across 60 public and private hospitals. Most of the infectious diseases like malaria, measles and poliomyelitis that were once prevalent in the UAE have been eradicated while pre-natal and post-natal care is now on a par with the world's most developed countries.

In fact, infant mortality and maternal mortality rates have dropped remarkably and, according to the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), the UAE is one of two countries from the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (AGCC) that have successfully maintained maternal mortality rate at levels considered low by international standards. The new-born (neonate) mortality rate has been reduced to 5.54 per 1000 and infant mortality to 7.7 per 1000. Maternal mortality rates have dropped to 0.01 for every 100,000 in 2004, mainly because 99 per cent of deliveries in the country take place in hospitals under direct medical supervision.

As a consequence of this high standard of care at all stages of the healthcare system, life expectancy at birth in the UAE, at 78 years, has reached levels similar to those in Europe and North America.

The UAE provides a high level of specialised health care at its medical facilities, including open-heart surgery and organ



transplantation. Many of the new hospitals, public and private, offer advanced techniques such as 'keyhole', or minimally invasive, surgery, and interventional radiology. Up until recently, these procedures were only available abroad.

Despite these major strides and the fact that the Ministry of Health's budget has increased each year at an average of 4.5 per cent, there is ever-increasing pressure on the country's healthcare services. This is primarily due to the unprecedented growth in population, but other factors come into play, such as the burgeoning

cost of technology. Another is that the role of the private sector has been limited to date: of the 7000 or so hospital beds available in the country, as few as 1000 beds are in private hospitals. The reason for this is that free high-quality care and medicines have been readily available at government hospitals and pharmacies. Expatriates were also entitled to use MOH facilities for minimal fees on production of a health card which cost as little as Dh300 (US\$82) per year. This put a heavy burden on public health care and prevented the development of private facilities. The introduction of compulsory health insurance is considered to be the best way forward, ultimately leading to more cost-effective and efficient services.

Abu Dhabi's new health insurance law (No. 23 for 2005), issued in September 2005, states that, except in circumstances outlined in Articles 2 and 3, all foreign residents and their family members must participate in the emirate's compulsory health insurance system, which applies to both public and private hospitals. The system is, however, optional for UAE citizens. The law obliges employers to enrol all employees, spouses and three children under the age of 18 in the health insurance scheme and employees are compelled to secure health insurance for persons sponsored by them, who are not covered by the employer.

Emphasising the need to ensure that quality and efficient health services are delivered to UAE nationals and expatriates, the Ministry of Health is also being restructured and streamlined, both at administrative and technical levels, to keep abreast with international developments and reinforce the private health sector so as to enable it to play a more significant role in providing health services. Hospital boards are being revitalised, regular hospital visits are being initiated and a UAE council for medical specialists is being put in place to upgrade the training of UAE medical personnel.

MEDIA

The state of the media in the Arab world was recently reviewed by the UAE's Minister of Information and Culture, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in a speech made at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) in Abu Dhabi. The Minister

stated that the era of change in which we live requires a re-assessment of Arab information as a whole, both internally and externally. The first step involves a comprehensive re-evaluation of the laws governing press and publications in the Arab world. This should not be a question of mere amendments or of cosmetic changes, but of new measures that take into account developments in information technology and changes in the speed and ease of flow of information. The UAE's aim is to enhance transparency by guaranteeing free access to information, unless such information is protected under the law.

With regard to internal reform of the media, progress is largely dependent upon media personnel themselves and their ability to strike a balance between professional needs and responsibilities in terms of the way they deliver their message. This issue is being addressed through a better understanding of the role of the media in



communicating information in a credible manner, based on truth and accuracy. Innovative thinking and dialogue are being encouraged and the media is free to question government and criticise its policies – if there is something to be criticised. In this way the media is better able to serve as the conscience, eyes, and voice of public opinion. In so doing it is earning the confidence of the public and ensuring a more buoyant future for its own services.

Media organisations such as Emirates Media Incorporated (EMI) are playing important roles in development of the media in the UAE. As the largest and most diversified media corporation, not only in the UAE but throughout the Arab world, EMI has interests in all branches of media – television, radio, print, publishing and distribution, and the Internet. While the government has relinquished formal control over EMI, ownership is still officially vested in the government and the corporation remains partially dependent on government funding. Nevertheless, EMI enjoys administrative and editorial independence and functions very much as a private company.

Revenues from EMI's extensive audio-visual interests, including satellite channels such as Abu Dhabi Television, Abu Dhabi Sports Channel, and Emirates Channel, available through satellite and terrestrial transmission, represent 35 to 40 per cent of Emirates Media's income. The remainder is generated by print media, including publications such as *Al Ittihad* newspaper and the magazines *Zahrat Al Khaleej* and *Majid*. EMI's Internet service provides another instant medium of contact with the public and includes streaming audio. Finally, in addition to its commercial operations, EMI has a training and development role to play in media in the UAE, particularly in relation to the fostering of local talent.

The Emirates News Agency (WAM) provides news in Arabic and English, together with pictures and news video clips. It has kept pace with rapid changes in communications technology and now makes extensive use of the Internet. Its easily navigated, revamped dual-language website (www.wam.org.ae) presents news text and pictures online. The Ministry of Information and Culture's comprehensive website (www.uaeinteract.com) also provides up-to-date news features on the UAE.

Thirteen national newspapers are published in the UAE, seven Arabic, *Al Ittihad*, *Akhbar al-Arab*, *Al Fajr* and *Al Wahda*, published in Abu Dhabi, *Al Bayan* and *Emirat al-Yom*, published in Dubai, and *Al Khaleej*, published in Sharjah, and six English, *Gulf News*, *Khaleej Times*, *Seven Days*, *Evening Post* and *Emirates Today* published in Dubai and *Gulf Today*, published in Sharjah. Many overseas newspapers also circulate freely in the country. At the latest count, there were 158 magazines and journals (65 in Arabic and 93 in English) published by local and national organisations, while many international magazines are also available. Many of the publications produced in the UAE have active websites.

The UAE has numerous indigenous television channels. Some focus on Arab culture and identity, others on business and sport. Broadcasting in Arabic and English, these include Abu Dhabi TV, Emirates Channel, Abu Dhabi Sports Channel, Dubai 33, Sharjah Channel 22 and Ajman Channel 4. Despite their national epithets, many of the UAE's television broadcasts are available internationally, via satellite. Emirates Cable TV and Multimedia (E-Vision), the only digital cable TV service provider in the UAE, provides over 70 channels, including a variety that offer programming in over 14 languages and premium packages from ART, Showtime and B4U.

Radio stations include popular English language stations such as Abu Dhabi Capital Radio, Dubai FM 92, Channel 4 FM, and Emirates 1 and 2 FM, along with UAE Radio Ra's al-Khaimah. The quality of programming is high and covers a wide range of interests. Some radio programmes are also available on the Internet.

Dubai Media City (DMC) has become an international centre for media-based operations. It is now a thriving media community with a sophisticated infrastructure that hosts broadcasting companies, TV channels and numerous associated media production companies and individual freelancers. Key global companies in DMC include Reuters, CNN, CNBC, MBC, Sony, Bertelsmann, BMG, the Associated Press and McGraw Hill. CNN runs its Arabic news website and regional news bureau from DMC.

A core issue in the UAE's focus on the media is ensuring proper protection of intellectual property rights. The government strictly



enforces its piracy and patent laws, seeing the protection of creativity as a necessity in itself and essential to attracting foreign investment. A member of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the UAE acceded to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property in 1996, following the implementation of three intellectual property laws in 1993. Whilst the task of obliterating copyright piracy is far from over, considerable progress has been made and the country is widely regarded as a regional model for effectively reducing software piracy through stringent legislation, efficient enforcement and public awareness campaigns.

SPORTS

The UAE has already established itself well and truly on the international sporting stage, holding many of the world's major events in a wide range of sports, from horse racing to motor racing, golf, tennis, football, rugby, cricket, sailing, powerboat racing, marksmanship and almost every other competitive sport. In 2004 the UAE gained its first Olympic gold medal, for shooting. These events not only attract large numbers of competing and sports enthusiasts from around the globe, they also see some of the country's top sportsmen and women in action.

Sports play an increasingly important role in the UAE's efforts to develop tourism and facilities throughout the country are being upgraded or newly constructed. As part of the Dubailand project, developers are constructing a 4.65 million square metres Sports City, the first integrated purpose-built venue in the world. These and other developments will ensure that the country will be a serious contender in its bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games.

Aside from the international circuit events, the UAE has its own healthy sporting environment with the local community participating in a wide variety of clubs and associations. The seven emirates regularly compete in national leagues and cups in a multiplicity of sports controlled by specialised governing bodies. Top sporting venues, both indoor and outdoor, ensure that the activities continue throughout the winter season.

The UAE is particularly attractive for watersport fans: the emirates on the Gulf coast are blessed with long stretches of sandy beach where residents take part in sports such as jet-skiing, surfing, swimming and the newly-popular kite-surfing. Residents and visitors are able to take full advantage of the country's parks and recreational grounds where football, basketball and cricket matches are a favourite pastime, while the desert areas outside the main cities provide rough, rugged terrain for more adventurous pursuits. It would be extremely difficult to pinpoint a sport that is not enjoyed in the

UAE as there are always new centres, clubs and associations being established around the region.



CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

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6&7	Camel	(H&J Eriksen/Trident Press)
8	Falcon	(H&J Eriksen/Trident Press)
13	Camels and bedouin encampment	(Trident Press)
14	Traditional Arabian dhow being launched	(BP archive)
15	A cache of pearls from the Gulf	(Trident Press)
17	Date-palm grove	(Trident Press)
19	HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan	(WAM)
20	HH Sheikh Zayed greets young Emiratis	(WAM)
22 & 23	A montage of an old map of the region and photograph	(BP archive)
24	UAE Federal Cabinet meeting	(WAM)
25	HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan with HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan	(WAM)
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28	President of the UAE, HH Sheikh Khalifa	(WAM)
31	GCC Heads of State and representatives	(WAM)
33	Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed lays the cornerstone for Sheikh Khalifa City in Gaza	(Getty Images)
36	Abu Dhabi Securities Market	(Trident Press)
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48	Petrol station, UAE	(H&J Eriksen/Trident Press)
51	Abu Dhabi	(H&J Eriksen/Trident Press)
52	Madinat Jumeirah	(Jon Arnold)
53	Kitesurfing in the UAE	(Trident Press)
55	Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi	(H&J Eriksen/Trident Press))
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