

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES YEARBOOK

2002

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## FOREWORD

The past year has been an eventful one, both for the United Arab Emirates and for the international community as a whole. This Yearbook provides an authoritative summary of the key developments in the UAE itself, both those that are concerned with internal affairs and those that are related to events abroad.

At the local level, the United Arab Emirates celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment back in 1971, an occasion which provided all of the country's residents with an opportunity to reflect upon the achievements of the preceding three decades and to look ahead to the years, and the challenges, to come.

As will be apparent from the information contained in the various chapters of the Yearbook, the country has continued over the last year to make progress in a wide variety of fields, including not only the provision of health, education and other social services to its people, but also in the expansion of its economy, both in the traditional hydrocarbons sector and in the other key fields of industry, commerce and tourism. Whereas once the UAE economy was largely dependent upon the oil sector, it has undergone considerable diversification, enabling the country to weather the vicissitudes of the international oil market.

At the same time, we have continued to focus on two other aspects which we believe of be of very considerable significance — conservation and protection of the national heritage of the people on the one hand, and of the country's environment and wildlife on the other. These remain high priorities with development programmes taking into account the need to respect knowledge of our history and our roots as well as the need to protect the natural beauty of the UAE.

Another key focus of Government attention has been the effort to ensure that all of our people are equipped to play a full role in the country's growth. This is pursued not only through the provision of the best educational opportunities possible, but also through enabling the country's women to contribute comprehensively in each and every sector of national life. Only thus, we believe, can they, and the country at large, achieve their full potentials.

At the international level, the UAE, like the rest of the global community, has been affected by the turmoil that resulted from the September attacks on the United States. In those sections of this Yearbook dealing with foreign policy, the UAE's position and response is clearly stated — to these events and to other major issues like the Middle East peace process — while in the sections on the economy, details are provided of the way in which the country has moved to strengthen the alignment of the regulation of its financial sector with international norms.

In a Yearbook of this type, it is impossible, of course, to give details of each and every event of significance that has taken place over the last year. It is our hope, however, that it will provide valuable background for all those, both within the UAE and elsewhere, who wish to gain insight into the way in which the United Arab Emirates has continued to make steady and sure progress.

*Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan*

Minister of Information and Culture