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البعثة الدائمة
لدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
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نيويورك

Statement by

H.E.Dr. Ali Abdullah Al-Kaabi

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Head of Delegation

**at the General Assembly High-Level Dialogue
on International Migration and Development**

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Madam Chairperson,

International Migration is an old phenomenon that is as old as man's need to search for livelihood and security. If regulated and invested in a well thought of manner, it could play an essential role in constructive cooperation among countries of the world in areas of human assistance, exchange of economic profits and the extension of bridges of cultural tolerance between peoples and countries of the world, which helps to advance sustainable development plans in those countries, especially developing ones, as well as reinforce good relations and efforts towards the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since its establishment, the UAE has recognized the importance of economic and cultural cooperation between friendly countries, which carries with it economic and social benefits and gains for all parties. Since the flow of oil in our country, the state opted to import foreign labor to help in building the infra structure necessary for laying the basic foundations of the modern state and advancing its institutions to achieve sustainable development and prosperity for its citizens. In the same time, it established a partnership with labor exporting countries, especially the developing ones, to help vitalize their economies and implement development programs in them. It is estimated that external remittances amounts to 22 billion dollars annually.

Expatriate labor represents about 90% of the total work force in the UAE, with external remittances representing 8-9.5% of the GDP of the UAE. In the light of this and its economic implications, and to protect the special particularity of the Emirate society in the face of cultural and social effect resulting from values and norms brought in by expatriate labor, which could influence, in one way or another, the social fabric of the society and the demographic constitution of the country, besides other sensitive issues, the state of the UAE has put a set of laws and regulations ensuring that guest workers in the country are temporary, not permanent immigrants; they do not leave their countries to immigrate and live permanently in the UAE, but come according to temporary work contracts to perform specific jobs, after which they return home. Such arrangement has been made according to mechanisms and procedures based on terms agreed on by countries exporting and importing labor, and are ratified by the international migration organization. This arrangement proved to have positive outcomes and fruitful results on the economy of both parties.

Madam Chairperson,

Acting from its convictions and a policy based on principles of cooperation and respect for human beings, cultural and religious diversity, the UAE provided

expatriates in the country with a friendly tolerant social environment, one that meets their social and human needs. Believing in the important role expatriate labor plays in stimulating the economy, the State has stated laws and regulations to regulate entry, residence and work of foreign workers in the country, ensuring the protection of their rights in accordance with national laws and international treaties on labor and human rights. The UAE has ratified nine international treaties on working hours, compulsory labor, inspection of work in industry and trading, night work for women, equal wage for males and females, banning compulsory labor and minimum age for labor, Discrimination in employment and occupation, and The worst Form of Child Labor, in addition to regional and bilateral treaties and Memorandum of Understanding with other countries.

Of the most prominent measures taken by the government in this field is the Federal law issued last year by H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed AlNahyan, President of the state, regulating the use of children in camel racing. It prohibited using children from both sexes, under the age of 18 in any form of camel racing and subjected violators for severe penalties.

Another new measure was taken in July 2006, demanding construction companies **to allow 2 ½ hours break at noon for laborers who work under the sun during the months of July and August every year where the temperature rises to very high levels.**

In addition to that, the UAE has put laws to regulate the Hawalla system through coordination with national and international financial institutions in order to prevent abuse of Hawalla while enabling expatriate laborers to benefit from its advantage.

The UAE continues to update and reform its present laws and adding new regulations in order to meet the new developments and changes in its market and in the volume and diversity of the expatriate labor. Such laws aim to define rights and duties of laborers within the requirements of the general economic and social goals while taking in consideration national and international commitments as well as ensuring a stable political environment in which we can achieve desired economic transformations that would ensure the utmost of benefits for all stakeholders.

In conclusion, hope that our dialogue will achieve its goals towards leading our countries to progress, prosperity and sustainable development.

Thank you Madam Chair.