

## **Joint Statement on the Voluntary National Review of the United Arab Emirates, 2022 delivered by a representative of the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders**

UAE's report reflects integrated visions, plans and implementation focused on the SDGs, with a well-ordered division of custodianship across the Goals, an improvement over its 2018 VNR,

This VNR again stresses a cross-cutting role of Goal-specific youth bodies to ensure policy coherence for youth welfare and engagement in SDG implementation.

Regarding SDG 5, the VNR reports women's growing role in political and decision-making positions. But, like so many VNRs, it overlooks the crucial Targets 5.a and 5.c.

Reporting on SDG 8, this VNR acknowledges UAE's majority foreign and migrant worker population, if only indirectly. We would like to know whom the government considers to be farthest behind, but note the VNR reports exemplary measures to serve and integrate persons with disability.

While diversifying its energy sector with renewables and seeking net-zero emissions domestically by 2030, UAE remains a major fossil-fuel exporter. These internal and external dimensions seem divergent. While noting UAE's generous contributions to humanitarian efforts globally, we also look forward to the state's extraterritorial behavior to align with the 2030 Agenda's para. 35, shared principles and peremptory norms.

Questions for the distinguished delegation include:

1. Does UAE have a plan to repeal the *kafala* system, restricting foreign workers rights, and to ratify the remaining four fundamental and three governance ILO Conventions, as well as the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights?
2. Could we hear examples of how the SDG-specific youth mechanisms have influenced national priorities, SDG implementation, or the VNR processes?
3. For UAE to reach its stated goal of having the world's best government by its centennial year 2071, does this involve lifting the bans on labor unions, in accordance with Target 8.2, and on political parties, and introducing democratic electoral systems?

Thank you very much