



**OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES
FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

13 February 2006

Dear Mr. Annan,

Subject: UN Resident Coordinator Report of 2005 for the United Arab Emirates

I have the pleasure to submit the annual Resident Coordinator Report reflecting the United Nations operational activities for development undertaken in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This report was prepared with the participation and contributions from UN agencies, both resident and non-resident, with operational activities in UAE.

Over the past 4 years, a large number of UN agencies and NGOs have set up warehouses and offices in UAE, especially in Dubai, which has demonstrated the Government's clear support towards humanitarian causes through the establishment of Dubai Humanitarian City and the Dubai Aid City. It is clear with the extension of the UAE ports, the Dubai free zones and the construction of the world's largest cargo and passenger airport as well as the investment in long range air carriers, Dubai is swiftly migrating from a commercial hub for the Middle East, East Africa and Central Asia to become a worldwide distribution and transit hub covering all continents.

Currently, there are 11 UN agencies and specialized organizations resident in UAE out of which FAO, WFP and UNDP have independent Representations through separate country host agreements. The remaining agencies that are operating under UNDP are, UNDSS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-OCHA, UN-IRIN/OCHA, UNOPS, UNU. UNODC has signed an agreement with the government for implementing a drug control project. Activities of non-resident agencies have increased during the reporting period. None resident agencies contributed with activities in UAE included: IAPSO, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMO, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHAS, UNIFEM, UNITAR, UNODC, UNV, WHO, WMO, and WTO.

UAE's Current Situation

On 4 January 2006 UAE lost one of its key leaders, Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashed Al-Maktoum, the previous Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai Emirate. The late Sheikh Maktoum contributed significantly to the fast and remarkable development of the Emirate of Dubai. His brother, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who was the Crown Prince of Dubai, was appointed as the new Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. Another important political development in the country was the announcement made by UAE's President, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, in December 2005 that half of the members of the UAE Federal National Council (considered as parliament) will be appointed through elections. Members of the 40-seat highest legislative body in the country used to be appointed for 2 years by UAE Supreme Council's members, made up of the rulers of the country's seven emirates. The decision is considered to be a key step in the process of promoting democratic practices in the country.

Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations

UAE has been successfully adopting a policy to liberalize bilateral and multilateral trade, factors considered by the authority as pre-requisites for entering the global market. These measures, supported by economic diversification and attraction of FDI efforts, and the increase in oil prices has enabled the country to continue to achieve high economic growth and evolve into one of the most dynamic and vibrant economies in the region and globally. GDP stood at \$ 104 billion in 2004 compared to \$ 88 billion in 2003 and only \$ 1.2 billion in 1974, while GDP per capita was \$ 23.90 in 2004, which may be the highest in the Arab region. UAE was ranked number 1 among the Arab States and number 18 globally in the Global Competitiveness Report 2005-2006 of the World Economic Forum, an annual study used as a valuable tool for shaping economic policy and guiding investment decisions.

The population of UAE is estimated at 4.32 million in 2004. Since December 2005 the government has embarked on an ambitious programme of a general census of population, buildings and establishments. The census will result in the availability of comprehensive demographic, social and economic data that will be instrumental in the formulation of future developmental plans and policies in an accurate and scientific manner. The latest official population census was done in 1995 showing a population size of 2.4 million for UAE.

UAE is also making progress in the human development front as reflected by the country's development indicators in the field of education, health and other social services. The country has made a big leap in the Human Development Index (HDI) of the global Human Development Report (HDR) ranking number 41 among 177 countries and the 2nd among the Arab States as per 2005 HDR compared to number 49 and the 4th among Arab Countries in 2004 HDR.

The country continued to provide generous humanitarian, recovery and development assistance to other developing countries affected by conflicts and disasters. Example of these are pledges of US \$ 100 million made by UAE government for meeting emergency relief and recovery needs of the people affected by the tragic earthquake in Pakistan in August 2005 and funding a US \$ 13 million housing project for Palestinians of Khan Younis in Palestine. This is in addition to a US \$100 million vital humanitarian project expected to provide shelter for 30,000 to 40,000 Palestinians following the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza. There is also a large amount of funds that is being provided directly by individuals and non-governmental bodies. UAE also continues to organize and host annually the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition (DIHAD) which has successfully laid the foundations that addresses the needs of various humanitarian actors and promotes the exchange of best practices and approaches to humanitarian response.

Campaigning for Achieving MDGs and Reducing Human Poverty

Within the context of achieving MDGs globally and reducing human poverty in poorer countries, US \$ 1.5 million were mobilized by UNDP from UAE through the established partnership with the Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation for the implementation of a water supply project in Niger. Through a community based water management system, 37 boreholes will be established and 40 existing wells rehabilitated in some of the most drought stricken areas in Niger. The Office of the Resident Coordinator organized a workshop on MDGs for the local media in UAE. The workshop, which was attended by 25 participants, aimed at increasing awareness about MDGs among the media and promoting their role in advocating for the MDGs and assisting in mobilizing resources for poor and developing countries. MDGs advocacy materials, including posters and leaflets, are also being developed by the Resident Coordinator Office.

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

UNIFEM in partnership with UNDP continued to be active in supporting UAE efforts in achieving gender equality and empowering women, particularly in relation to enhancing the political participation of women. As such, in partnership with UNDP and the UAE's General Women's Union (GWU), UNIFEM organised a symposium on "Enhancing the role of Arab Women Parliamentarians in Public Life" in Abu Dhabi. The symposium provided a forum for the exchange of opinions and sharing of successful experiences in the process of legislative reforms. Also in collaboration with the GWU in UAE, UNIFEM is implementing a three-year regional project to facilitate the empowerment of Arab women parliamentarians. To support the GWU to implement the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in UAE and enable the organisation to more effectively contribute to gender empowerment and sustainable development efforts in UAE, UNDP developed a Capacity Building Project for the General Women's Union. Funding for the project (US\$581,194) has been secured from the British Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

Health Care and Responding to HIV/AIDS

WHO's technical support to UAE's Ministry of Health (MoH) for further strengthening the country's health care system continued during the reporting period. Different activities were implemented in the area of improving maternal health, fighting HIV/AIDS, and combating malaria, tuberculosis, measles, polio and other diseases. According to WHO most of malaria cases in UAE were mainly imported and vary annually between 2000 to 3000 cases. UAE also has a low incidence rate of tuberculosis whereby estimated incidence rate of all tuberculosis is 20 per 100,000 population. The focus of the HIV/AIDS fighting programme is on prevention through health education activities. One of the measures being taken is that all blood, blood products, organs, and tissues are screened before transfusion or transplantation. Other UN agencies engaged in HIV/AIDS activities are UNDP and UNICEF. In partnership with the UAE's MoH and the Red Crescent Society, UNDP under its HIV/AIDS Awareness Raising in UAE project, conducted several HIV/AIDS awareness raising activities, including orientation sessions and training workshops for high schools and university students, and medical professionals. UNDP also facilitated the participation of a number individuals from UAE, both from the government and non-governmental bodies to participate in regional HIV/AIDS workshops. UNICEF launched a country-wide awareness raising campaign on HIV/AIDS as part of the UN's \$ 1 billion five year global awareness raising campaign.

Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development

In the area of energy and environment, the UAE Government has been implementing several initiatives for advocating best practices and applied policies in the field of environmental management both at the national and global levels. Example of these is the Zayed International Prize for the Environment, which was established in 1999 to recognize and encourage environmental achievements and supporting the achievement of MDGs. These efforts are supported by the technical assistance of the UN specialized agencies and entities, with FAO playing a key role in supporting the UAE Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to develop the agricultural as well as fisheries sectors by sharing best practices and provision of sound technical advisory services. FAO also supported the participation of the officials of MoA in the Regional Workshop for the Review of Draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) and the Near East and North Africa Regional Network (NENARNAP) Regional Workshop on Recent Development in the WTO negotiations on Agriculture, both held in Cairo. Furthermore, the Regional FAO Crop Production Officer and a consultant visited the UAE from in August 2005 to finalize drafting of unilateral trust fund project to address institutional strengthening, capacity building, and expertise requirements

for organic agriculture development. In the area of fisheries development, two FAO missions to UAE took place during the reporting period by the Senior Regional Fisheries Officer. FAO also provide technical assistance on preparedness modalities towards the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Two missions were fielded to UAE to provide technical assistance to the Federal Government as well as the National Emergency committee chaired by his highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister. A national workshop in that respect under the auspicious of FAO and OIE was held in Abu Dhabi to discuss the findings and present the recommendations to standardized national priorities with global initiatives. The national action plan was finalized by the Government whereby taking into account the recommendations made by FAO and OIE. FAO Country Representative, who is also currently the acting UN Resident Coordinator for UAE, has been an active member and advisor to the government's established National Disaster Committee on Avian Flu.

In the area of marine and coastline management, UNU-INWEH completed a pilot project to evaluate the marine ecosystems being created by the massive land-reclamation projects under construction in the near-shore waters of the Arabian Gulf at Dubai. Through the project, UNU-INWEH examined the present environmental conditions, identified aspects of concern, and made a series of recommendations to the UAE Government for actions to ensure the sustainability of these ecosystems. In response, the government requested UNU-INWEH to design and implement a four-year project that will develop related governmental agency capacity for effective environmental management of these projects. Capacity building will be a focus, involving trainees and professionals from universities and government agencies in the Middle East region. The project entails the development of a long-term environmental monitoring and management program for the full Dubai coastline.

Human Rights and Protection

To address the issue of child camel jockeys and associated child trafficking and abuse problems, UAE government issued in March 2005 a new legislation banning the use of jockeys under the age of 18 and lighter than 45 kgs. The government also launched a programme for the safe repatriation of children who were involved in camel racing to their place of origin and their reunification with their families. UNICEF through its Gulf Area Office signed an agreement with UAE government to contribute in the implementation of the programme and provide support to the former child camel jockeys. According to the agreement, UNICEF will provide technical support and guidance in the identification and registration of children formerly involved in camel racing; assess and build national capacity of service providers working with children in transitional shelters; assist and facilitate repatriation of the children in coordination with authorities in countries involved; and work with partners in countries of origin for rehabilitation and reintegration of the children into mainstream social services, including basic education. So far, 1071 children repatriated to their home countries and united with their families. UNICEF is also setting up systems to help monitor the reintegration of the children and reducing the risk of the children being exploited again or re-trafficked. UNHCR organized a workshop on Refugee Law for 43 high-ranking officers from the government and representatives from non-governmental organizations in UAE. Through the development and promotion of both meaningful and effective partnership with the government, UNHCR continued also to provide international protection for refugees and asylum seekers in the country. UNODC signed an agreement with UAE government for the implementation a drugs control project. The project will be implemented in partnership with UAE's Ministry of Interior (MoI).

Support to Emergency Relief and Recovery Efforts

WFP and UNOPS in particular have been contributing significantly to emergency relief and recovery efforts in conflict affected and disaster stricken countries in Africa, Asia and globally. Through the past four years, mainly due to the proven strategic location of Dubai and its enabling government, WFP's office in Dubai grew to a worldwide support office covering a number of services, including: non-food supply chain management comprising of non-food procurement, warehousing and transport services; base of FITTEST, WFP's ICT intervention team, including the management of a 2.3 million USD contingency ICT stock; contingency office for WFP operations in the region (in case of evacuation or sudden increase of operations); and training support.

The current warehousing facilities consist of a 40,000 m² compound of which 10,000m² in warehousing allowing outside (shaded/unshaded) storage, open and racked warehousing (airvented and or airconditioned) cold stores and freezers. The warehousing support system is easily expandable through a number of service agreements with local logistics companies (for daily labour and warehousing equipment). In the past years, WFP Dubai yearly shipped to an average of 60-80 countries by land, sea and air, with peaks up to 25 airlifts per month. The current onsite stock of ICT equipment (sufficient to equip IT, telecoms and electricity systems for 20 WFP offices), is being expanded with a fleet of 25 light vehicles (Land cruisers and Hiluxes) and about 0.5 million USD of other emergency stocks (logistics and office equipment). Currently WFP Dubai employs 50 staff (of which 5 internationals), with a yearly turnover of 50 million USD in projects and Non-Food procurement.

Taking the advantage of the strategic location of Dubai, UNOPS Regional Operational Hub in Dubai (the Operation Support Unit–OSU) continued to deliver responsive and cost-effective solutions to disaster relief and post-conflict emergencies. The current Portfolio value of OSU-supported operations is in excess of US\$1 billion. OSU capabilities include: strategic emergency reserve stocks of vehicles, communications, survival kits, etc; call centre - 24 hours global operations hotline; procurement procedures employing economies of scale; research and development of emergency response methodologies; immediate response capacity (6-24 hours) of personnel and equipment; and operational logistics support to regional operations in: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Liberia and Haiti (with possible expansion in 2006 into Iraq and DRC).

UN-OCHA's newly established Regional Disaster Response Advisory Office in Dubai during the latter part of 2005 was rapidly developed into a Regional Office covering the Middle East, North Africa, Iran and Afghanistan. The mission of UN-OCHA regional office is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to: 1) Alleviate human suffering and disasters in emergencies; 2) Advocate for the rights of people in need; and 3) Promote preparedness and prevention, and facilitate sustainable solutions.

In recent months, UN-OCHA's Regional Office has worked hard on getting the office fully established including recruitment of staff. In addition, a start has been made with networking and building partnerships in the UAE and the wider region which involved a number of (support) missions abroad. Furthermore, the office has interacted with counterparts in the UAE on humanitarian training and capacity building and is now firming up proposals in this respect. UN-OCHA lent support to and participated in a recent "In Honour of Africa Benefit Dinner," organized by TECOM with prominent personalities such as Sir Bob Geldof

and Adel Imam to raise awareness for poverty in Africa. Lastly, UN-OCHA has been engaged in advocacy and public information work for the Tsunami and the South-Asia Earthquake.

Similarly, UN-IRIN/OCHA established a regional office for the Middle East in Dubai during the course of 2005. IRIN, which is a web-based news service, aims to raise awareness of humanitarian issues - already covering sub Saharan Africa, parts of Asia and now the Middle East. It also has a film unit. Currently IRIN regional office reports on humanitarian issues in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen and Jordan, and plans are in place for expanding to other countries in the region. Increasingly, local and international media are using IRIN as a resource and are reprinting stories in newspapers and online news services such as BBC, Reuters Alertnet and in local newspapers. A film documentary on humanitarian issues is planned for the Middle East in 2006.

UNDP mobilized US \$ 5 million for the construction of 1033 houses and related infrastructure for the victims of the Tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia to be implemented by HABITAT.

In closing, I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to all colleagues who have contributed to this report and to colleagues in the United Nations Development Group Office for their continuous support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kayan Jaff', written over a horizontal line.

Kayan Jaff
UN Resident Coordinator (ad-interim)
FAO Representative