

AL'AMMAL

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF LABOUR



Grace period to settle
labour card fines starts

UAE committed to curb human trafficking



Khloud Al Shehhi: From data entry operator to centre director, Emirati woman shows the way to success

**MoL resolves
dispute, two
Emiratis back
on their jobs**

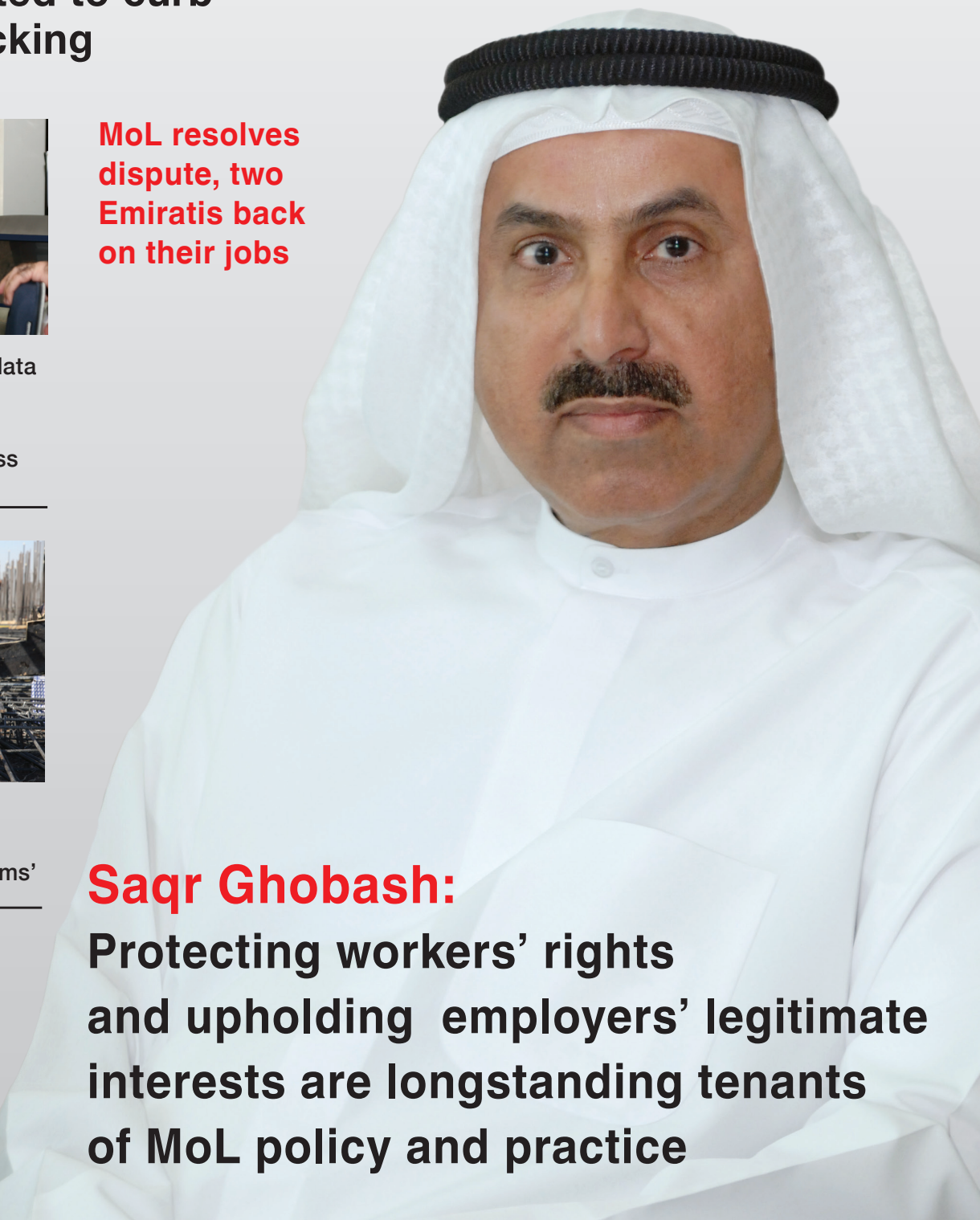


Lalu Bukaia:
'My job in UAE has
fulfilled my family's dreams'

**MoL to suspend
work permits of
firms for non-
compliance of
court orders**

Sagr Ghobash:

**Protecting workers' rights
and upholding employers' legitimate
interests are longstanding tenants
of MoL policy and practice**



United Arab Emirates
Ministry of Labour



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Foreword

We mark the New Year 2015 with the launch of the Ministry of Labour's new publication, Al-A'mal, addressed to our partners, customers and the community at large.

We intend this publication to be a trusted reference and source of information on labour related issues that may be of interest or concern to our readers.

It is to contribute to raising public awareness about these vital issues and offer a channel for communicating the latest updates relating to the UAE labour market. As a specialized magazine, it will contribute to the promotion of the value of work and a higher level participation of our national human resources. It will emphasize the partnership of government and social partners in achieving the UAE development goals.

As we seek to broaden public awareness of labour rights and obligations under the law, we shall strive to position Al-A'mal as a credible authority on labour market developments and challenges, offering reliable and objective accounts of the current state of affairs as well as future trends and objectives.

Our editorial board is committed to the highest editorial standards, and to inviting the contribution of relevant external stakeholders,

The UAE is a diverse and tolerant society where nationals of over 200 nationalities work and live.

We aim to leverage our wide talent pool in developing a stable and safe labour market that fully utilizes a highly qualified workforce to achieve the UAE's vision of a competitive, knowledge-based economy that promotes the wellbeing of our people.

We intend this new publication to add transparency to what we do in pursuing our goals and become a medium for public engagement and participation in achieving them.

Saqr Ghobash
Minister of Labour

Quarterly magazine issued by
Ministry of Labour

Chief Editor

Hussain Al Alili

Editorial Consultant

Ayman Rumaneh

Editorial Board

Fatima Alhammadi

Alaa Elbadry

Ahmed Al Majayda

Photographer: Fathy Farag

Call Center 800665



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Blackberry apps: MOL



Design & Production

Nadd Al Shiba PR and Event Management

Mohammed Al Jarouf

Phone: + 9714 2566707

Fax: + 9714 2566704

Website www.naddalshiba.com

Email info@naddalshiba.com



NADD ALSHIBA
PR & EVENT MANAGEMENT

Ministry offices

Abu Dhabi Office - Al Ain Office - Labour Relations Office in Mazid Mall - bida zayed Labour office - Dalma Labour office - Service Center Abu Dhabi Chamber - Service Center Abu Dhabi Municipality General Directorate of Residency & Foreign Affairs - Ajman Labour office - Labour Relations Office in Dubai Court Dubai Labour office - Al Twar Center - Service Center Department of Economic Development - Service center Muhaisnah - Cancellation Center Alwasl (Dubai) - Service Center Al Manara Center fujairah Labour office - Labour Relations Office Fujairah Courts Ras Al Khaima Labour Office - Al Dhaid Labour office Khorfakkan Labour office - Sharjah Office kalba Labour office - Labour Relations Office Sharjah Court Umm AlQuwain Labour Office

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Al Ain: Infinity Service Documents - Al Ain Branch - AlReaya Services center Al Shamil Businessmen Services

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Al Dhaid: Tasareeh Businessmen Services LLC - Al Shamil Businessmen Services

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Kalba: Al Ettihad Businessmen services

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Ajman E Business Services Company LLC - Mustanadat Trading Information Services

Umm Al Quwain: Muamalat Clearing Documents Center

Ras Al Khaimah: Al Taleb Services - Muamalat for Documents Clearing - Bayanat Al Emarat

Fujairah: Al Mustanad Businessmen Services VIP (Tasheel) - AL Mustaqbal Services

Dibba Fujairah: Tasheel Businessmen Services

Vision

Create a stable labour market and a productive workforce to promote a competitive knowledge-based economy that revolves around UAE citizens.

Mission

Regulate the labour market to boost UAE citizens' participation, to achieve general protection, flexibility, and to attract talented cadres through an integrated system of standards, policies and regulatory tools, institutional partnership and outstanding services.

Values

- Professionalism (Completion of business according to the best standards)
- Respect Human Dignity (Honouring and dignifying mankind)
- Integrity and Honesty (Application of systems honestly and with integrity)
- Trust and Respect (Mutual trust and respect in dealing with users)
- Initiative and Creativity (Creation of creative ideas)

Strategic Objectives

1. Promote the participation of UAE citizens in the private sector, achieve flexibility, attract suitable talents and boost productivity
2. Maintain labour market stability through balancing interests of both production parties in conformity with UAE national legislation
3. Contribute to enhance the UAE's reputation and image in international forums
4. Support institutional competency to deliver high-quality governmental services
5. Ensure that all the administrative services comply with the highest standards of quality, efficiency and transparency

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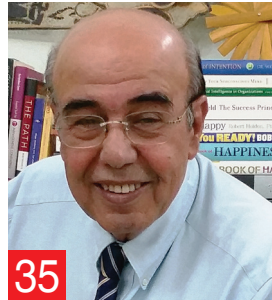
Khlood Al Shehhi
From data entry operator to centre director, Emirati woman shows the way to success



Emiratisation:
A win-win solution for government and private sector



Leadership and governance in the private sector



Legal Advisor





Conference highlights UAE's initiatives to combat human trafficking

Tough law and enforcement in place

A two-day conference on human trafficking highlighted the UAE's numerous initiatives toward combating human trafficking.

The conference, titled 'The Combating Human Trafficking through Mediation Agencies and Employing Proper Capabilities' was organized by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), in cooperation with the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and Dubai Police, recently. Representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM),

International Labour Organization (ILO), officials and other representatives of the judicial and legislative authorities, police and delegations from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and representatives from the mediation agencies and temporary employment agencies in the UAE, participated in the conference.

Mubarak Saeed Al Dhaheri, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour, in his inaugural speech, said that the ministry established a section to fight human trafficking in 2010.

"The section stems from the ministry's systematic approach, through the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking issued under the federal law passed in 2006, to curb the practices which might affect the stability of the labour market," he said.

The MoL is implementing numerous initiatives to ensure protection of employees and a positive work environment that contributes to curbing human trafficking, he added.



| Mubarak Al Dhaheri

“On top of these is the wage protection system (WPS), which is regarded as one of the crucial tools for monitoring the labour market. The WPS has contributed, to a great extent, to the stability of labour relations and creating a safe environment for work,” he said.

Among the measures being taken by the Ministry are rules to regulate private recruitment agencies and ensuring negative practices are controlled right from the stage of hiring a worker, he said.

“Workers must be made aware about terms and conditions of their contracts before flying to the work destination, that contributes to establishing a healthy employer-employee relationship.”

The conference had four sessions which were chaired by Mubarak

Saeed Al Dhaheri, Undersecretary at the Minister of Labour, Dr Ibrahim Al Abed, Director General of the National Media Council and Dr. Jamal Hussein Sumaiti, Director General of Dubai Judicial Institute, Brigadier Dr. Mohamed Abdullah Al Murr, Director of the Dubai Police Human Rights Department, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Committee for the management of labour crisis in the UAE.

Humaid Bin Deemas, Assistant Undersecretary for Labour Affairs at the ministry, said: “In the UAE, we are carrying out concerted efforts on preventing the labour market from becoming a gateway of deception. There are contact centres and hotlines which are dedicated to receiving complaints from harassed and exploited workers. We receive around 75,000 complaints every month.”

MoL monitors four million employees working with 300,000 firms in UAE

Bin Deemas said a specialised committee reviews the complaints and takes the necessary action.

“The committee frequently dispatches teams to inspect labour accommodations and conditions. There are punishments for sponsors who do not comply with the regulations set by the federal government. In fact, the UAE was the first in the Arab region to issue a federal law for combating human trafficking, and also the first Arab country to create a specialised centre to combat human trafficking.”

He explained that any victim can contact the Ministry’s hotline 800665 if he did not receive his agreed salary, vacation or even the nature of the work did not match his expectations, pointing out that in the event of discovering that the work environment is very harsh or housing is unfit for living, workers will be granted the permission to transfer their sponsorship or change the company to another one without even completing two years from joining their current job.

Maher Hamad Al Obed, Assistant Undersecretary of Inspections at



Humaid Bin Deemas

the Ministry of Labour and member of the Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, said the Ministry of Labour has taken numerous initiatives and put multiple mechanisms in place to ensure that rights of workers are protected.

“The Ministry has signed nine international agreements with the International Labour Organisation that aim to preserve the rights and dignity of workers,” he said.

The ministry monitors over four million registered employees working with 300,000 firms in the country and has also created a special department to combat human trafficking.

Another initiative to curb human trafficking is a soon-to-be-launched recruitment portal that will allow only companies having a good track record with the ministry.

Al Obed said: “We have also launched a trial phase of a portal that will be launched soon where recruitment agencies can put information on job vacancies. This portal can be accessed by job seekers and companies and will include only those companies that have a good track record with the ministry. We are hoping this will reduce the possibility of human trafficking crimes,” he said.

He said the Ministry has been actively taking numerous measures to fight human trafficking such as generating awareness among workers and employers.

In the third quarter of 2014, the MoL organised 656 lectures and workshops to raise awareness about the legal rights and duties of workers. Over 171,000 employers and workers have benefited from these campaigns.

The ministry has also launched a call centre and a web portal for complaints and created care centres in all labour accommodations to help workers who face problems.

This is in addition to the ministry’s Wages Protection System (WPS), where people can complain if their wages are not paid on time.

Dr. Saeed Mohammad Al Ghaffi, Assistant Undersecretary for Federal National Council Affairs and Secretary of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, said the number of human trafficking cases was down to 19 in 2013 from 74 in 2012.

“The UAE has five shelters to help victims of human trafficking,” he said, adding that the committee had this year established a fund to help



| Maher Hamad Al Obed

victims make a fresh start and reintegrate with the community.

“We are developing a special website to help spread the awareness about human trafficking and we urge those who notice any such cases or those in trouble to reach out on 800SAVE (8007283) hotline which operates in many languages,” Al Ghaffi said.

Sultan bin Juwaied, Chief of Appeals Court and Member of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, highlighted different means and techniques for mediation offices to check human trafficking crimes, pointing out that UAE has adapted to five international concepts applied with regards to such offices, such as prevention, prosecution, punishment, protection of victims and international cooperation.

**Multi-language
hotline 800SAVE
(8007283)
to report
complaints**

Recruitment companies should not charge workers' placement fee and the ones that do, are usually involved in forced labour and human trafficking crimes, said Ali Hameed Bin Khatam, Chief Prosecutor of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs in Dubai (GDRFA-Dubai) and Head of the Judicial Audit Unit at the Technical Office of the Public Prosecutor in Dubai.

He also pointed out a few cases where migrant workers arrived in the country and found out later that they were required to take up jobs they had never agreed to.

“We drafted a law in 2013 prohibiting any employment companies from hiring out their employees to other companies.

It is important that we educate the public on various laws so they do not become a part of such crime,” he said.

Major General Obaid Muhair Bin Surour, Deputy Director of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA-Dubai), said: “We should integrate a mandatory system for work visa applicants to build awareness, just like we have a compulsory medical exam in our visa applications.”



Professional diploma in combating human trafficking

The diploma will benefit people who work directly or indirectly in the field of dealing with human trafficking, said Lt Col Dr Sultan Abdul Hamid Al Jamal, Director of the Dubai Police Human Trafficking Crime Control Centre.

Human trafficking is not a problem in the UAE, however, the UAE has been a leading force in the fight against it in the region, as it is taking early steps to prevent human trafficking from ever becoming an issue. There has been a constant drop in the number of human trafficking cases thanks to the efforts and steps taken by the UAE,” Al Mazeina said.

Major General Khamis Mattar Al Mazeina, Dubai Police Commander-in-Chief, announced a new Professional Diploma in Combating Human Trafficking Crimes, in coordination with the Dubai Judicial Institute, which will be the first of its kind.

He announced this at the conference ‘Combating Human Trafficking through Mediation Agencies and Employing Proper Capabilities’ held in Dubai. The two-day conference was organised by the Ministry of Labour, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and Dubai Police.

“Training is key to prevent cases of human trafficking, and with this diploma programme we aim to create well-rounded employees, who are aware of all laws and regulations regarding human trafficking and are trained to handle victims of this crime, as well as are equipped with the latest methods of fighting this crime, which will enable them to catch the culprits,” Major General Al Mazeina said.

He added that in April 2007, Resolution No 15 of 2007 was issued, for the establishment of a National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in the UAE, which will act as a coordinating body for anti-human trafficking efforts at all levels in the seven emirates of the UAE, in order to support the implementation of Federal Law No 51 of 2006.

Federal Law No 51 is the law for Combating Human Trafficking Crimes, and consists of 16 articles that define and criminalise human trafficking in all its forms.

Al Mazeina and Mubarak Saeed Al Dhaheiri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour, signed the “Say No to Human Trafficking” document, as a show of commitment to the fight against human trafficking following their opening speeches at the conference. Both Dubai Police and the Ministry of Labour have launched a number of initiatives and departments established specifically to deal with human trafficking cases.



“The system can cover the country’s legislations. That way workers can understand their own obligations and duties as well as their employer’s. It will also tell them how to contact

authorities if they are being exploited or maltreated.”

Bin Surour also said the system should seek cooperation of companies in the private sector

to maximise results Brigadier Ahmed Mohammed Nakhira, Director of Human Rights of the Secretariat of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, talked about the MoI’s role in monitoring the brokering and employment agencies through specific standards, controls and frameworks, as well as duties and responsibilities of mediation agencies and employment offices.

A petition, bearing the slogan “Say No to Human Trafficking”, was launched during the conference, and was signed by many senior attendees and the public to show UAE’s commitment to the fight against human trafficking.

‘Training and transparency will help combat human trafficking’

The conference on ‘Combating Human Trafficking Through Mediation Agencies and Employing Proper Capabilities’ has come out with a set of recommendations to further UAE’s efforts in dealing with human trafficking.

Members at the conference, which concluded in Dubai, called upon the nation to continue with efforts at various levels in order to effectively recognize and handle human trafficking. Emphasising on the need for transparency in employer-employee relations, the members said this would prevent forced

labour and also save foreign workers from being exploited. They also called for mutual cooperation between countries which send labour and those that receive the workforce and ensuring implementation of international, regional and local mechanisms- most notably the ‘Abu Dhabi Dialogue’ in this regard.

The members also recommended partnership between public and private sector and joint programmes against human trafficking. They emphasised that exchanging international experiences in managing mediation

agencies across the country and recruit specialised workforce in the fields of information technology and legislation.

The importance of training government human resources departments in order to ensure highest level of professionalism in dealing with employee-related cases was also recommended. In addition, the members recommended mandatory training and awareness for all categories of employees in recruitment agencies. Those working in recruitment agencies need to be well versed with workers’ rights and labour laws, the members said.

300 officials and experts participate in MOL-hosted forum on best practices



Support Services, said: “The forum is part of the Ministry’s efforts in collaborating with different strategic partners to meet the UAE 2021 vision, which encourages all government entities to work toward reaching new horizons as per the plan.

The forum is the first of its kind as it brings together the best experiences and practices applied in support services sector, most notably human resources, technical support, financial resources and services and equipment sectors.

Osman Sultan, CEO of Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (du), said: “The private sector represents the largest segment of the country’s economy and plays an important role in shifting toward a knowledge-based economy.”

“Our participation in such an event is of great importance as it leads us toward taking government services into a new era and emerging as the most advanced e-government worldwide,” he said.

The Ministry of Labour also honored strategic partners in services and support sectors within the participating government entities and the sponsors, Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company ‘du’ (Diamond Sponsor), Handcrafted IT Solutions TACME (Platinum sponsor) and AAFAQ Islamic Finance UAE as the (Gold sponsor).

Under the Patronage of His Excellency Saqr Ghobash, Minister of Labour, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), along with the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources, hosted a special forum on best practices in services sector. The forum was attended by more than 300 officials and experts, representing 30 government entities from across the UAE.

Government entities, including the Ministries of Labour and Interior, the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), Emirates Transport, and the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs in Dubai (GDRFA), submitted working papers sharing their successful initiatives in support and services sectors.

H.E. Mubarak Al Dhaheri, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour, emphasized on the importance of expertise and knowledge sharing among the government entities to enhance performance and achieve and maintain the highest international

standards in services, which is part of the Ministry’s 2014-15 strategy.

In his opening remarks at the forum, which was held under the slogan ‘New Services Era’, he said the UAE has been witnessing a phenomenal growth in all areas and sectors under the guidance and exemplary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. This requires all government institutions to intensify their efforts and continue building an inspiring and creative work environment for the employees to be able to provide their clients with world-class services.

He said the forum aims to reinforce a culture of excellence and quality in providing services and meeting the smart government initiative requirements, in addition to developing strong professional relationship with the employees engaged in this area at various levels. It would hence enable sharing of experiences which can be replicated for further success.

H.E. Saif Al-Suwaidi, Assistant Undersecretary for Institutional and

MoL achieves outstanding results in 2014

Flexible timings increased staff productivity and reduced work-time delays



The Ministry of Labour (MoL) has achieved outstanding results in 2014, especially in implementing its Strategy 2014-16 in line with the UAE Vision 2021. His Excellency Saif Ahmed Al Suwaidi, Assistant Undersecretary for Institutional and Support Services at MoL, said the ministry's initiatives were aimed at providing excellent services and making UAE the world's best place to work and do business.

"The ministry's keenness to implement the latest regulations and follow all the policies is aimed at strengthening the human resources by enhancing their efficiencies, productivity and creating an attractive and supportive work environment for all talents," he said.

The major operational initiatives in line with the Strategic Plan include flexible timings for the staff, applied across the MOL headquarters in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, as well as labour services offices in the northern emirates.

The Ministry has been on the forefront in successfully implementing this strategy compatibly with the Federal Authority for Human Resources and by applying the Cabinet's regulations in this regard as well as adapting to the organisational structure of the ministry and its resolutions.

Al Suwaidi said the flexible timing system has contributed in increasing productivity by reducing work-time delays.

The system has helped the staff avoid penalties for being late in the morning. It gives them extra time of two hours upon arrival which can be added to the end-time schedule and that is done after coordination with their departments' heads and managers.

Apart from the labour office staff, the MoL employees could also choose to come between 7:00 am and 9:00 am and they can leave for the day after completing seven hours from the time of arrival.

Regarding the service offices employees and the inspections department, the working hours are split into three periods, from 7 am until 2 pm; 10 am to 5 pm and from 12 noon to 7 pm.

The MoL has 1,200 employees across the UAE with a localization percentage of 97.10.

Shama Al Muhairi, Head of the Human Resources Department at MoL, said the ministry has achieved top results in 2014 in applying the 'Bayanati' system, implementing over 10,974 staff operational procedures.

The system includes application of best practices in human resource departments across ministries and federal entities. It provides a common system for managing human resources information as part of the development process of the activities applied by the federal entities within Federal Authority of Government Human Resources and the Ministry of Finance.

MoL to suspend work permits of firms for non-compliance of court orders

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) will suspend work permits of firms that fail to comply with court orders related to labour issues.

Such firms will be issued a 30-day warning notice to comply and avoid a further action by the ministry.

His Excellency Saqr Ghobash, Minister of Labour, said the decision to suspend work permits to such firms is in line with UAE's policies that are aimed at strengthening the judiciary system. The decision supports and enhances the legislation supervisory sys-

tems and is in line with the ministry's strategic plan to protect labour rights while ensuring that employers' interests are kept, he said.

The role of the Ministry does not stop at resolving complaints between employers and employees or referring them to the Courts in case they are not amicably resolved. Suspending work permits will ensure proper compliance of rules and regulations, he added.

The Ministry, in coordination with the Courts, has already compiled

database of such firms to ensure implementation of the decision.

The MoL is keen that work permits are granted only to those firms that are committed to following labour laws. He further said that the ministry will lift suspension orders only if the firms obtained a request from the executional judge stating that they have complied with the orders.

The suspension decision includes various types of work permits including labour transfers, family visa, temporary work permits and minors' work permit.

Sports forum



The Abu Dhabi Wages Protection office organized a Sports Forum in celebration of the 'Spirit of Union' marking UAE's 43rd National Day, in cooperation with the Al Wasl Sports Club. Mohssen Al-Nassi, Head of inspection department,

labor Ministry court in Abu Dhabi, said organizing such activities helped cement social relations among employees and motivated them to build a culture of active participation spirit for all occasions especially those of national significance.

MoL gears up to obtain ISO-certification in six areas by this year



The Ministry of Labour (MoL) is working toward obtaining six international certifications recognized by the World Organization for Specifications and Standards (ISO), as a part of its endeavors to achieve sustainable excellence and provide services of the highest international standards.

His Excellency Dr. Omar Al Nuaimi, Assistant Undersecretary for Policies and Strategies Affairs at the Ministry of Labour, said: “The ministry launched a project last July to enhance the quality of all its organizational units and obtain the ISO-certification in six different domains. This is a part of our efforts to raise the level of institutional performance, achieve leadership in governmental work, which is in line with the Ministry’s 2014-2016 Strategy, and provide the best services to our customers.”

The six areas, for which the ministry is working to obtain the ISO-certification are: Quality Management Systems (ISO 9001-2008), Quality Management - Customer Satisfaction - Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Organizations (ISO 10001: 2007); Quality management-Customer satisfaction -Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations

(ISO 10002: 2004); Quality management-Customer satisfaction-Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations (ISO 10003: 2007); Quality management- Customer satisfaction- Guidelines for monitoring and measuring (ISO 10004: 2007); OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety.

He said these quality management systems (QMS) offer a wide range of tools and mechanisms, which are used to manage the ministry’s activities and operations by documenting work procedures, and methods highlighting responsibilities in measuring performance and audit it at the institutional level.

Quality management systems also focus on customer satisfaction levels, a tool used to review service quality while documenting observations and suggestions in order to participate in the improvement and development of the services that are provided.

Correct application of a series of ISO standards brings in a range of benefits that would be reflected positively in the performance of the staff and also in the quality of the services, thereby enhancing the ministry’s image, added Dr Al Nuaimi.

“This would instill high confidence and satisfaction in our customers while at the same time, enables us to manage, control and focus more on the development of our staff responsibilities and provide them with an optimal opportunity to understand the quality and mechanisms implemented within the targeted goals.

The benefits also include a better understanding of the Occupational Health and Safety management system to minimize potential work-related damages and provide a healthy environment for both the employees and the customers,” he said.

Grace period to settle labour card fines starts

The Ministry of Labour has started implementing the UAE Cabinet decision of granting fine settlement grace period to employers on fines accumulated till December 31, 2014.

During the grace period, which ends in June this year, employers can settle outstanding fines by paying only AED 1,000 per card.

The ministry will also start imposing new administrative fines, including AED 500 fine for not signing an electronic agreement with employees within 60-days of their arrival in the country or the amendment of their residency status. A fine of AED

500 will be imposed on firms which do not apply for or renew electronic labour cards within 60 days of signing contracts; both fines will take effect from March 5.

His Excellency Humaid bin Deemas, Assistant Undersecretary for Labour Affairs, called upon all employers to take advantage of the time limit and speed up the payments of those fines in the month of January and February, in order to avoid the Dh500 fine per month delay, stipulated by the decision following the deadline of the first two months' notice period, which will be applied following March 5 and increase by Dh500 monthly.

He advised company owners to properly and regularly check the electronic labour permit conditions through 'e-Netwasal' services by visiting the ministry's webpage (www.mol.gov.ae) or using the MoL's latest Mobile app which is available in Apple store and Google Play, in addition to the BlackBerry World, in both Arabic and English.

Through this service, employers can detect labourers employment details, pay fines if necessary or cancel work permits in case of those reported outside the country or report absent employees. All these services can be availed of by visiting any of Tas'heel centres across the country.



MoL's smartphone app services attracts over 80k users

fee payment and complaint registration. Ahmed Al Nasser, Director of Information Technology Department at the MoL, said users can access 30 informative services, 34 enquiry services and 10 procedural services through the smartphone app. The ministry is planning to add more services in future to ease labour-related procedures for the customers.

Available in Arabic and English, the app can be accessed on Google Play devices that use Android system, iOS devices as well as Blackberry

app world. It includes a special location features plus the ability to navigate between screens easily. From information related to the ministry like contact details of labour offices across the country, list of Tasheel service centers and news, the users can also share their views through the app. The services that can be accessed include work permit fee payment or cancelation, registering complaint against absent labourers, recovering bank guarantees, modifying employer data and request to cancel private recruitment agency.

The Ministry of Labour's (MoL) smartphone application has attracted more than 80,000 users since its launch at the GITEX 2013. The Ministry is providing 74 services through this application including access to labour card data, work permit

MoL resolves dispute, two Emiratis back on their jobs

The office of Labour Relations in Abu Dhabi has successfully resettled two Emiratis back to work in a private firm after resolving a dispute between them and their manager.

The office received a complaint from the two Emiratis about being verbally insulted by their boss, following which they apprised the management of the incident and urged the company to investigate. They sought an action against the manager as well as an apology.

They said the company management refused to conduct an internal investigation into the matter and, instead, chose to drop the case and suspend them. This pushed them to taking legal recourse. They explained that the company's administration office asked them to return their health



insurance and other belongings in order to be given their end of service benefits.

On receiving the complaint, the Labour Disputes Department held a meeting with the private company's representatives.

The company agreed to withdraw its decision of suspending the two employees and conduct an internal investigation. Both sides reached an amicable settlement and the Emiratis also agreed to drop the court complaint against the manager.



In a comprehensive interview during which he answered a wide range of questions on current conditions in the labour market, prospects for the future and improving the institutional performance of MoL

Saqr Ghobash: Protecting workers' rights and upholding employers' legitimate interests are longstanding tenants of MoL policy and practice

about Minister Saqr Ghobash said that the protection of workers' rights and upholding the legitimate interests of business owners in accordance with the law are longstanding principles that are enshrined in Ministry of Labour (MoL) literature and tenants of its policy and practices. Asserted Ghobash affirmed that MOL administers the labour market with utmost transparency and deals firmly and effectively with rights violations when they occur.



In a wide-ranging exclusive interview with 'Al'Amal', Ghobash said that MoL has proposed amendments to the Labour Law that are currently the subject of consultation with the competent authorities. These amendments promote greater participation by UAE nationals in broader

labour market by narrowing the gap in the conditions of work between the public and private sectors. The use of a new standard employment contract that ensures a greater measure of transparency in the contracting process is soon to be mandated. And in a first assessment of the impact of new

rules on workers' mobility that went into effect in early 2011, a study has concluded that the wage of transferred workers increased by an average of 10%.

Ghobash went on to describe the TASHEEL service centers as a model of public-private sector

partnership that has yielded quality customer service and contributed to Emiratization.

“Certain international reports on labour conditions in the UAE are based on deficient information and do not reflect reality” he said. “Often, anecdotal evidence and particular cases in which labour standards are not up to our federal standards are used to make unsubstantiated generalizations”.

Below is the text of the interview with H.E. the Minister.

Your Excellency, the Ministry is seen as giving increased attention lately to improving organizational performance and developing a culture of excellence. How does impact the ability of MoL to better administer the labour market?

There is, of course, a close correlation between our institutional efficiency and our ability to perform our tasks and discharge our responsibilities. The better our performance is as an organization, the larger the impact of our work in pursuing our visions mission and strategic goals.

Hence, we need to pay more attention to our institutional development and promote a culture of quality and excellence by adopting performance standards, ensuring accountability and continuously developing human resources. We must, at the same time, create and sustain a work environment that promotes creativity and healthy competition.

This is why we launched four years ago an institutional excellence

award program that was inspired by the HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Government Excellence Award, an initiative that had a discernable impact on the performance of government institutions as a whole.



The fourth cycle of the MoL’s Excellence Award program was recently re-named “The Minister of Labour’s Excellence Award”. What impact did that have?

Changing the title of the award had been suggested by the ministry’s senior leadership and reflected my own desire to project personal commitment to organizational excellence and promote creativity within the context of team work across the ministry’s organizational units. It illustrates my

commitment to empowering the staff of MoL to excel.

I wish to emphasize that our drive to excel as ministry of labour would not have been possible without the strong commitment and support by the country’s leadership as it pursues an ambitious vision of excellence in government and all sectors of our society.

How do you assess the relation of the ministry and the level and nature of its coordination and partnership with other relevant government agencies?

There is, of course, close coordination and strategic partnership between the Ministry of Labour and many other government entities. This empowers us to implement our own strategic plans and administer the labour market in a manner that leverages the complementarity

Proposed amendments to the Labour Law incentivize UAE nationals to join the private sector



of roles and jurisdictions. At the ministry of labour, we value these partnerships and work constantly to upgrade them. For example, we work closely with the Interior Ministry to provide a number of services as well as to conduct inspection activities and labour awareness campaigns. Similarly, the Ministry of Presidential Affairs is our strategic partner in the implementation of the “Discounts and Special Offers Program for Nationals Working in the Private Sector Program,” which is incorporated into His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE’s initiative “Absher”. The program is led by the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and implemented by the Ministry of Labour as the competent authority in administering the labour market.

I should also note our partnership with the judicial system that streamlines labour disputes which could not be resolved amicably through arbitration by the labour office and with the Public Prosecutor’s Office to which MoL referred more than 390 firms that were alleged to be in violation of the law in the first 9 months of

Our relations with international organizations conforms with the UAE’s tradition of constructive engagement with the international community

2014. Cases included non-payment of wages for more than two months, employment violations, labourers found working for other firms, unlawful employment, relinquishing workers without reporting to MoL and other types of violations.

Additionally, we partner with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordinating international activities and actions that safeguard the reputation of the UAE and enhance its standing in international forums, and many other federal and local government agencies.

What about partnership with the private sector?

The private sector is clearly a key engine of economic development and, hence, a strategic partner of the Ministry. We give utmost importance to empowering the private sector and upholding its rights and interests in the same way we act to protect workers’ rights. The ‘Tasheel’ service centers serve as a model of a successful public-private partnership that helped create investment opportunities and employment opportunities for UAE business owners and UAE job seekers, respectively. The number of MoL-licensed centers now stands at 40, employing more than 900 UAE nationals and thus contributing to the Government’s efforts to promote Emiratisation in the private sector.

Furthermore, these centers offered the opportunity to make the ministry’s services available to the public in accordance with the highest standards of customer service set by the UAE government, in view of the high level of competence that was exhibited by UAE nationals

employed by these centers. We look forward to expand this successful model of partnership as we implement the recently issued rules on the licensing of new centers and incentivize compliance by old and new centers with directives set forth in the recent ministerial decree.

A standard employment contract soon to be announced adds transparency to the contracting process

This experiment, has allowed us at the Ministry to focus on our core business of formulating policy and monitoring the labour market, given that we administer a market of over 4 million workers and 300,000 registered business establishments with a staff of roughly 1,200 employees.

What are the objectives of these new regulations that you mentioned?

The new regulations will further raise the mandated standards of services offered by Tasheel centers as these increasingly become a principle channel for providing MoL customer service. They aim to carefully expand the number and locations of service providers, subject to compliance with a set of operating standards and rules that will, in addition to upgrading the portfolio of offered services, create a decent and stable work environment that is attractive to UAE nationals.

You alluded to formulation of labour market policies and to better administration of the market. How do you assess the development of the UAE labour market to date and how do you see it developing in the future?

We must recognize first that labour market policies during the past decades focused on securing the manpower that was required for, primarily, infrastructural development, that is securing the supply of labour to the construction, service and associated sectors.

9.2% of permits issued in 2014 were for skilled workers, up from 7.8 in 2012

Job creation was skewed to sectors of our economy that were characterized by deflated wages and working conditions that did not appeal to our increasingly educated and qualified national human resources, who opted instead for public sector employment. Over time, we witnessed the development of two parallel and distinct labour markets with large gaps in their respective wage structures and conditions of work, with UAE nationals overwhelmingly employed in government.

More recently, our Government articulated and adopted a vision for the future of our country that became the frame of reference for the overall strategic planning of the federal government during the two strategic planning cycles of 2011 – 2013 and 2014 - 2016. In pursuit of this vision, our policy making became focused on supporting the transformation of our national economy to one that is “competitive, knowledge-based and led by qualified and skilled Emiratis”.

In other words, the UAE Vision 2021, which was articulated by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and launched in 2010 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of



Dubai necessitated that we focus on creating conditions for a stable labour market in which a qualified and productive workforce contributes to a competitive knowledge-based economy and our nationals are empowered to access suitable private sector job opportunities in positions of leadership, supported by talent from abroad to complement our qualified labour pool.

In the last four years, you introduced several new regulations, notably new rules on labour mobility (job transfers). How do you assess the impact of these new rules?

The updated regulation of mobility introduced in early 2011 paved the way for increased flexibility in our labour market. It allowed workers to transfer from one employer to another subject to certain rules and conditions.

These rules were designed with the interests of both workers and employers in mind, as they addressed the respective rights and obligations of both parties as set in the employment contract, the benefits of defining clear paths for workers to alternative employment without prejudice to the legitimate interests of employers and ways to afford employers the ability to access a pool of previously employed, better qualified workers in the local market.

By facilitating a more efficient matching between workers and job offers, workers improve their earning potentials while employers are able to leverage higher labour productivity and encouraged to seek only better qualified and higher-skilled workers



from overseas. This also creates the conditions for balanced and stable labour relations by incentivizing both sides to live up to their contractual obligations and act to prolong a successful employment relation.

A study of the impact of the new mobility rules, conducted by a group of academics from prominent international universities concluded that the average wages of transferred workers increased by 10%. It is likely that their employers

also enjoyed an increase in labour productivity that more than justified the increase in wages.

Moreover, statistics relevant to work permits issued since the new mobility rules were implemented show that we are on the right track, as the number of permits for specialized (high-skill) professions issued by the Ministry of Labour during 2014 increased to 9.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent in 2012 and 6.9 per cent in 2010.

At the same time, the total number of temporary work permits issued during the past year was 22,249 permits, which represents an increase of 10.3 per cent compared to the previous year and 41.3 per cent more compared to 2011, while the number of part-time work permits issued in 2014 year reached 8504 permits, an increase of 25.3 per cent over 2013 and an increase of 213.9 per cent from 2012.

“Tasheel”, a successful model of partnership with the private sector that provides quality customer service and contributing to Emiratization

Excellency, you asserted that the new mobility rules afford workers

Disseminating a culture of excellence and improving quality of service and organizational performance

the basic right to change jobs; what about other labour rights?

The UAE has a long standing commitment to protecting workers' rights as well as upholding the interests and rights of employers, consistent with the rule of law.

One example of how we uphold the law is the application of the Wage protection System (WPS). WPS has greatly contributed to stability in the labour market and to balanced and improved relations between workers and employers. As it guarantees the workers their right to obtain their salary in full and on time, the system also allows business owners to pay their dues in easier and more innovative ways. Presently, more than

3.5 million workers benefit from WPS and more than 273,500 enterprises have formally subscribed to it.

Federal standards for labour accommodation facilities offer another example of protection, as they provide for decent living conditions and basic amenities for workers in the UAE. So do several initiatives by MoL to offer employers alternative means of utilizing qualified workers such as allowing temporary and/or part time work subject to a set of conditions that are designed to protect the rights of both parties. Rigorous standards of safety and health, alternative channels for dispute resolution including facilitated access to the courts, enhanced inspection capacity and activities to monitor compliance with the law and regulations, all contribute to the protection of workers and better labour relations.

During religious and national holidays, criticism is voiced against MoL by private sector employees, asking that they be allowed to enjoy the same number of days off as do their counterparts in government.

How do you answer such criticism?

Official holidays in the private sector are governed and regulated by the Labour Law. Hence, what is contained in ministerial decrees strictly complies with what is set by the law, namely one day for each the Hijri and Miladi New Years, the Birth of the Prophet (PBUH), Al-Isra' Wal Me'raj and the UAE National Day, three days for Eid Al-Adha and two for Eid Al Fitr.

This leads us to a question about amendments to the Labour Law. Where do these amendments stand?

A total of 390 establishments referred to the Prosecutor's office for employing undocumented workers and failure to pay wages



We have completed a comprehensive draft revision of the Labour law and it is currently subject to discussions with our government partners and the competent authorities in preparation for submitting it to the Cabinet for further action.

What is the nature of these proposed amendments?

Without getting into details, as the draft document is still under discussion within the government, I can say that a key objective of the

Recent mobility rules contributed to a 10% increase in the average wage of transferring workers

proposed amendments is to ensure and encourage a larger participation by UAE nationals in the labour market by way of provisions in the law that narrow the gaps in working conditions between the public and private sectors.

Aside from amendments to the Labour Law, is MoL planning to launch new initiatives or announce new policies in the near future?

We are well on our way to implement our strategic plan through 2016 by way of a number of initiatives that help achieve our stated strategic goals. The latter revolve around empowering UAE nationals to join the private sector, achieve higher flexibility in the labour market, attracting talent from overseas, improving labour productivity, enhance stability in

labour relations by upholding the rights of social partners under the law, contributing to the protection of the UAE's reputation and standing in international forums and improve our organizational performance in the delivery of our services in accordance with high standards of quality, efficiency and transparency.

Notably, we are in the process of finalizing a new standard employment contract that will guarantee the transparency of contracting by spelling out the respective rights and obligations of both parties and ensuring that the worker gives his or her verifiable consent to the terms of the contract prior to departing from his home country to work in the UAE.

We're making strides towards stability in the labour market and improved productivity, in line with Vision 2021

Let us take a few moments to address the services of MoL. Where did MoL concentrate its efforts recently to improve its services?

Providing high quality customer service is a key strategic objective of MoL. One of the ways we planned to improve our services and their delivery was by delegating the delivery of certain of them to private sector operators such as Tasheel centers subject to assuring the quality of their delivery in accordance with MoL supervised standards, allowing MoL to spend more time discharging its mandate to develop and monitor the labour market.

Another was by solidifying our partnerships with other government stakeholders in order to improve the quality of government services as a whole.

MoL paid particular attention to the constant improvement of its customer service in the articulation of its vision and mission statements and strategic plan in the 2014 – 2016 planning cycle, by targeting the provision of services in line with the vision of a digital UAE society and the increasing expectations of our customers. This is consistent with the transition to “Smart Government” as directed by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rahid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the UAE, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. Hence, we introduced MoL services through smart mobile phone applications as part of a larger vision to transition to a comprehensive portfolio of digital services in the future.

How do you assess MoL's relations with international organizations



and forums that deal with labour issues and how do these relations impact the reputation of the UAE abroad?

MoL takes its relation with international relations and other international stakeholders very seriously, as it represents the federal government in dealing with many organizations, national governments and international and regional consultative processes. This is in line with the government's longstanding policy of constructive and proactive engagement with the international community. This approach has paid dividends in terms of positioning the UAE as leader in regional and international forums. We currently preside over the Governing Body of the Arab Labour Organization, are a titular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization, Vice-President of the ILO-affiliated Turin training center.

We leverage the unique position of the UAE in the group of Arab states, which was the fruit of the moderate line adopted by our leadership since the founding of our Union, as well as the confidence in the UAE's leadership abilities that is typically shared by a large number of foreign governments.

As you know, the UAE was instrumental in launching the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in 2008, a regional consultative process that groups Asian countries of origin and destination that first recognized temporary contract labour as a distinct labour mobility model that contributes to development. The success of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, with its permanent office in the UAE, paved the way for



the UAE to participate in the Global Forum on Migration and Development and assume a leadership role in the conduct of the forum's proceedings over the past seven years.

How do you evaluate international reports that are critical of labour conditions in the UAE?

The UAE has over the years enacted a number of progressive and forward looking laws and regulations that deter and sanction violations of workers' rights. MoL is committed to full transparency in dealing with workers' rights and to preventing and sanctioning any violation in accordance with our laws.

As in any other labour market, violations or non-compliance with the terms of labor contracts do occur; what is important is that we

We administer our labour market with full transparency and deal firmly with rights violation

constantly upgrade our regulation to make sure that such violations are anticipated and prevented and when they do occur we take immediate measures to sanction them. We, as part of the UAE government, are intent to do our part in upholding the rule of law and building a country of institutions that protect the rights of all who live in it. Unfortunately, many of the reports you refer to are based on deficient information and do not adequately reflect labour conditions in the UAE as they tend to make unsubstantiated generalizations. Nevertheless, we consider that any plausible allegation of violation or abuse warrants consideration and we will investigate any that are brought to our attention aggressively and transparently.

We seek a better skill mix in our labour market in support of Emiratization

Khlood Al Shehhi

From data entry operator to centre director, Emirati woman shows the way to success



Seven-years-ago when Khlood Al Shehhi joined Tas’heel as a Data Entry Operator, all she thought of was creating a fine work-life balance. Little had the Emirati lady imagined it was her first step to a promising career, which would take her to heights only few can imagine to attain.

Today, Khlood is the Director for Tas’heel’s Ajman Customer Service Centre, which is owned by Ajman Electronic Services Company.

Established by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), Tas’heel facilitates simplification of entire spectrum of MoL’s application procedures by providing comprehensive online services including documentation and payments to companies and typing centres across the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Being an Emirati, Khlood says her decision to join private sector was relatively bold as it implied longer hours at work and during the initial phase, she did wonder whether she would be able to strike a work-life balance.

Women in the region who join private sector have to face numerous

My workplace made me feel empowered and any challenge seemed small

challenges including peer pressure, family commitments alongwith work related issues.

Khlood attributes her success to a supportive work environment at Tas’heel and her family’s cooperation.

“I am particularly glad that I was able to dispel the common

misconception that Emiratis are not good enough for working in the private sector. During my journey with Tas’heel, I learnt a lot, overcome numerous challenges, that anyone would face at the start of their career,” Khlood said in an interview to Al’Amal magazine.

The initial work challenges, Khlood says, “were many, especially when it came to adapting to a new work environment and meeting with the functional requirements”. “I was determined to overcome those challenges. I wanted a work-life balance and must say, that it was the encouragement and support I received by my organization and the cooperation from my family that helped me rise,” she says.

Regular professional trainings to enhance her skill set and motivation to add to her skills, let Khlood

become professionally stronger. “I was motivated to not just work but also to add to my skills and was provided with the facilities to do so. My workplace made me feel empowered and any challenge seemed small,” she says.

“And it is not only me, Tas’heel has provided a supportive work environment and great career opportunities to many Emirati women. They encourage us to not just work, but emerge effective leaders, which makes all the difference. There are no restriction on age or the time one would need to progress, it entirely depends on your performance.”

As a result, Khloud’s career progressed rapidly and she attained many successes from the time she started as a data entry operator.

Women in the region who join private sector have to face numerous challenges including peer pressure

Bring an Emirati, Khloud says, family life is prioritized. “It is important that we are able to maintain a balance. My family, my husband have been very supportive and I would not have been able to rise high without them.

The private sector has relatively longer working hours compared to government, but my family only encouraged me.”

Talking about Emiratis in private sector, she said : “There are many Emiratis who have achieved major success in various fields be it tele-communication, banking, commerce, trade or other sectors, which is a proof that if young talent is encouraged and guided well, there is no limit to their success.”

“I would say Emiratis who want to attain great heights in their career should equally consider working in the private sector. If you have a dream to succeed, a clear vision, private sector can provide you with the right platform and nothing can stop you from being successful.”



For more information, visit the website of the Ministry of Labour www.mol.gov.ae

Here you can get details of the services provided by the Ministry of Labour for its clients, including the procedures, required documentation and conditions to be fulfilled.

Obtaining an Establishment Card:

This is the first step in registering an establishment with the Ministry of Labour. It involves getting a registration number, entering the names of the owners and authorized signatories, registering their official signatures, providing other relevant details and economic activity. The service is completed within two working days and the fee applicable is AED,000.

Insurance service requirements

1. Establishment card request papers
2. Copies of the valid commercial license, including postal address, phone / fax numbers. The contact details, including the PO Box number, must match the ones sealed on the establishment's official stamp. You are required to bring the original license.
3. Valid copies of passport and of passports of the partners.
4. Establishment Card copy for the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA).
5. Provide names of the owners in a list issued by the Economic Department in case the names of the license holders in the commercial license were not available.
6. A copy of the establishment's issuance contract in case of having partners, along with names of those partners.
7. Request to add a file for a local citizen or a foreigner (in the absence of the owner's personal number or any of the owners or one of the partners or service agents or authorized signatories).
8. Provide a Power of Attorney by the local owner which should be certified by a Notary or an approved services agent by the Ministry, plus an endorsement and pledge by the authorized signatory certified by the Notary according to standards adopted by the Ministry.
9. A copy of the boat license issued by the Ministry of Environment and Water (in the case of issuing a fishing boat).
10. An approval from the Ministry of Social Affairs (if the entity is established for public benefit purposes).

11. Certified contract by the Ministry of Economy in the event of having an establishment with limited or joint responsibilities.
12. Certificate from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (if the establishment was a trade representation office).
13. Sketch that clearly shows the location of the facility.

Conditions

1. Valid license should be provided.
2. Holder of the license- whether the owner or the partner or the agent- must be a UAE national (in accordance with the establishment's activity).
3. The owner, partners, service agents and authorized signatories must register their personal numbers with the ministry.
4. All the facilities registered under the owner or registered under the services agent must be unified under one number registered with the ministry.
5. It is mandatory to have a clean record with ministry, and the owner of the facilities must not have any expired cards for more than two months; expired work permits for more than 6 months or expired licenses for more than 70 days with employees nor any other failures to comply with the rules.
6. The minimum permissible age to own a license or to become a services agent is 21 years, the guardian may sign in place of the minor until he reaches the legal age. Minors may sign if they obtain permission from the court.
7. Citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council are treated equally as UAE nationals.

This column allows the readers to submit their questions related to employment issues and they will be answered by legal specialists at the ministry.

You can communicate with us
:through e-mail
magazine@mol.gov.ae

This Issue's Question :

I've worked in an administrative position in a private institution for the past six months.

I submitted my resignation letter right before the completion of my probationary period as the job didn't meet my expectations and the employer didn't compensate me for the extra working hours. My inquiry is about the benefits I am entitled to as my

responsibilities with that company end, especially since the employer is refusing to pay my last month's salary under the pretext that I caused him losses. He says he is looking for an alternative and that this salary will recover his losses. My question is do I have the right to receive any benefits at the end of the service, as well as my last month's salary, and a ticket to travel back home?

Legal Answer

End of service benefits are rewarded to each employee who has completed at least one year with his current company. In your case it is clear that the duration of service was less than six months, which is defined as the probation period and the employee will not receive any end of service gratuity.

But with regards to that last month's salary, it is the employee's right to obtain it, the employer can not cut the employee's salary as compensation for the termination of the contract in such cases, because the termination of the contract had a cause. Regarding the ticket, it is granted to the employee only if he didn't join another company.

The Ministry of Labour stresses that no party within an employment relationship should deceive the other through the exploitation of the employment contract, and if any of the parties proved that the other party has done so, they'll be penalized by law.

In the case before us, if the employee is asked to work during the notice period till the employer finds a replacement, the employee is then entitled to receive

that month's salary and the employer's entitlement to such compensation is conditional only if damages and incurred losses evidences were present due to the termination of the contract, as stated in Article No.116 of the Labour Law , the employer can't decide the damages according to their own benefits and can't just cut the salaries of their employees.





Lalu Bukaia: 'My job in UAE has fulfilled my family's dreams'

Seven years ago, when Lalu Bukaia, Indian, learnt he could get a job in one of the largest construction companies in Dubai, he knew it was his time to harvest the reward.

"I own a house now, my family lives a far better life and I am able to give good education to my daughters," says the construction worker, who never thought he could come out of the struggle of trying to make ends meet.

“I have built my own house in India which is a very big achievement for me. I am also educating both my daughters and can now help them build a bright future.”



Sharing his journey with ‘Al’amal’ magazine, Lalu says the seven years in the UAE have helped him improve his professional skills and realize many dreams, which he never imagined would see the light of the day.

“I own a house now, it is a very big achievement for me. I am also educating both my daughters and can now help them build a bright future,” he said.

Bukaia said back in his home town, he had heard many stories from relatives about how they went to the UAE and made it big. This always had him dreaming of getting some opportunity to work on the foreign land.

When a friend told him about a job opportunity he grabbed the opportunity and wasted no time and flew to Dubai, while his wife and children stayed back. “I clearly remember that summer of 2007,” he said, as he recalled how he was equally concerned about coping up in an altogether new country. Leaving his family behind was not easy. But as time went by, he made new friends

and adapted well to his new lifestyle. The fact that there were many people from his homeland, who also had left their families behind, made it easier for him to connect with them.

The work environment and accommodation were comfortable and Lalu continued working hard, constantly focused on his goal to realize the dreams of his loved ones.

After his first job contract of three years came to an end, he was able to get another job with better benefits as his previous experience of working in the UAE was counted by the new employer.

“In my new job I got a great opportunity in terms of benefits and I was also able to enhance my skills. I got to learn a lot in the field of construction, I also increased my saving, was sending money for my family’s expenses and their affordability increased.”

“This has made our lives easier and with my savings, I was able

to build a new house back home. This was something I could never have thought of achieving had I not got an opportunity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).”

Bukaia describes his journey to the UAE as a success story and says high quality of life and working conditions helped him give his best and achieve his dreams.

He learned a lot from colleagues under the supervision of technical staff who were highly trained and even learned to communicate with people from other nationalities.

“During my stay in the UAE, I made many good friends from Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, China and even Arab nationalities,” he added.

Bukaia says he wants to continue working in the UAE for as long as possible as it will help him carve a bright future for his children. “I want to provide them with proper education so they can get good jobs and live a good life,” he said.

Special Study: Center for Global Development, United States

Indian labourers in the UAE have dramatically improved living conditions of their families back home



A recent study by the US-based Center for Global Development has confirmed that Indian labourers hired on temporary contracts in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have dramatically improved the living conditions of their families back home.

The study, conducted by Dr. Michael Clemens, a Senior Fellow and Director of Research at the Center for Global Development, focused on Indian labourers working within the UAE. His case study was strongly supported by the Ministry of Labour to reach those labourers and measure the positive impact on their families in India.

The study was a comparison between 3,000 Indian families, including 1,500 Indian families which have sent one family member to work in the UAE

in construction sector, were studied during the first phase. The other 1,500 families had similar specifications except that these families could not succeed in sending their family member to work in the UAE during the global economic crisis back in 2008 and 2009.

Eighty-six research teams

The research was conducted during the months of July and September 2011 and was carried out by 86 researchers who used six local dialects

to communicate with the targeted families living in 10 different states in India. Researchers acquired basic information from the Ministry of Labour to analyse records regarding wages earned by those labourers who traveled to work in the UAE.

The study analysed situation of jobs in the construction sector and it was observed that Indian workers who came to work in the UAE prior to the global financial crisis had greater opportunities when compared to

Average monthly income of a worker increased by 250 to 300 per cent

workers who applied for jobs after the crisis. The characteristics between the two groups of workers were similar, which allowed easier comparison of the living conditions of their families notably three years after the global financial crisis as the research was able to precisely measure the short-run effects on one member of those Indian families who works in the UAE.

The study, which interviewed the Indians construction workers who managed to get jobs in the UAE, discovered that their wages were two and a half times more than what they got in their own country and, this too has increased over time to three times higher.

Less debt

Evidence suggests that Indian families with one member working in the UAE during the global financial crisis have been negatively affected by the crisis but results have shown that such Indian families relied less on debts.

The study pointed out that the presence of a family member in the UAE has provided ample accurate information regarding the terms and conditions of employment in the country, which improved the access of Indians to UAE's labour market, and contrib-

uted, at the same time, to rationalizing the level of profit and income expectations to an approximate of 25 per cent.

The fact that Indians moving to work in the UAE have contributed to the reduction of poverty, obtain hundreds of thousands of jobs, and provided Indian families with billions of dollars which were transferred by workers as their incomes continued to rise by 250 per cent up to 300 per cent.

According to the study, the list of benefits families of the workers in UAE get also include 30 per cent increased likelihood of the worker's family to own a commercial project compared with the families with no members working abroad.

The study counter-argues the idea that families (with a member working abroad) rest and completely rely on that member to provide income. Instead, the family works as hard as possible and tries to earn even more than the usual income, the study found.

Criticism rejected

Responding to the many criticisms and stereotypical allegations, the study rejects many academic studies and international organizations' researches in terms of generally disputing that labourers coming from their countries to work abroad are considered useless in particular and are subjected to exploitation due to illiteracy towards their contract terms and conditions putting them in situations that makes it beyond their ability to repay their debts.

Protection of rights

The study confirmed that the UAE has sought, since early stages of its development, to provide protection

measures for the rights of labourers in accordance with the highest international standards based on its desire to comply with legislation, national laws and international agreements, and focus efforts on three aspects; firstly setting strict standards for housing conditions and requirements alongside required facilities such as hygiene baths, kitchens and medical clinics.

The UAE's efforts are also focused on ensuring occupational health and safety measures by ensuring that companies provide protection hel-

86 teams carried out the study on 3,000 families in 10 Indian states

pets, ambulances, and treatments, include safety instructions in various languages and provide gas protection masks in industries that produce harmful smokes. The UAE's decision to prevent work at noon-timings during the summer seasons was taken to protect workers from excessive heat.

The UAE imposes tough penalties on companies that do not abide to pay labour wages on time. There is also a special system to ensure wage protection known as the WPS, and they've develop other sophisticated systems to settle labour disputes.

Emiratisation: A win-win solution for government and private sector

Is Emiratisation a dilemma? It's a question with diverse responses, yet it's a deep-rooted issue with unresolved solutions till this day.

The list of Emirati jobseekers continues to rise amid the numerous initiatives taken by the government.

Among the various measures the government has taken include the 'Abasher' initiative, announcing 2014 as the Year of Emiratisation, holding special training programs by Tanmia (National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority) so as to help national cadres who can cater to the requirements of the private sector, and even encourage private sector to get involved in initiatives to employ the UAE nationals.

The government's approach to Emiratisation is very balanced. In spite of the UAE labour law highlighting the need of Emiratisation, the government's approach toward private sector hiring the UAE natives is neither of force nor pressure. This is due to the fact that they believe that the private sector is a strategic partner in the national development process and is viewed as an important contributor towards Emiratisation which will align the labour market more effectively and efficiently.

Through my work in the private sector, I have observed that it has the capability and the potential to be an active and cooperative part of the national economy. It has also been noted that Emiratis working in the private sector have shown great efficiency and productivity.

The private sector can contribute a lot. It is capable of playing a major role in increasing Emiratisation and it can significantly contribute to the national economy and employ more Emiratis especially when it has complete support from the government.



Ibrahim Al Hashemi
Associate Director of Employee Services
Majid Al Futtaim Properties

This is not to say that the private sector should compromise on quality of its human resources. Instead, it should opt for those who are well-qualified and cater to its needs. Opting for well-qualified Emiratis also gives the private sector a financial advantage since the long-term costs of employing citizens is lesser in comparison to other nationalities. In addition, it will support the national economy and is well in line with the vision of the UAE government.

The private sector is a key partner in the development process and can play a major role in fulfilling the aspirations of the national agenda of the Federal Government. As much as it has the capacity to have a significant contribution to the national economy, it can play an equally important role in developing the local human resource.

By opening its doors to Emiratis, the private sector not only acknowledges their capability and excellence, it also benefits from their competence and participation.

There is a need for joint responsibility and coordination between the government and private sectors, to better serve the nation and to ensure a more effective and positive labour market, especially when it comes to Emiratisation.

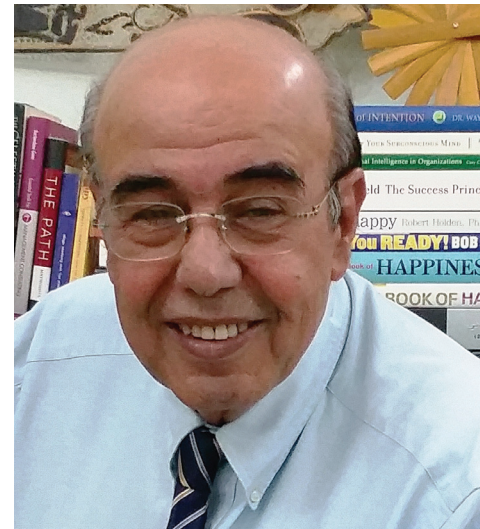
Leadership and governance in the private sector

During the last decade, policy makers, regulators, and market participants around the world have increasingly emphasized the need to develop good corporate leadership and governance policies and practices. An increasing amount of empirical evidence shows that good corporate governance results in competitiveness, facilitates corporate access to capital markets, and, thus, helps develop financial markets and spur economic growth.

Intellectual honesty of directors and senior management is the foundation of effective leadership and governance. This intellectual honesty is expressed by acting in the best interests of the ‘incapacitated’ company. The company, on formation, is a person, but it is absolutely incapacitated until its directors are appointed and the board, in turn, delegates the implementation of its collective decisions to the management.

It’s the quality of governance that is important and not the quantity. Mindless compliance to a set of rules is not good governance. Good governance connotes acting with responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. Transparency has a withering effect on misconduct and is absolutely critical in communicating to the stakeholders any decisions of the board. In this context, transparency demands that the communication consists of substance over form and contains positive and negative aspects, if any.

Today, both domestic and foreign investors place an ever greater emphasis on the way that corporations are operated and how they respond to their needs and demands. Investors are more than ever willing to pay a premium for well-governed companies that adhere to good board practices, provide for information disclosure and financial transparency and respect shareholder rights. Well-governed companies are also better positioned to fulfill their economic, environmental and social



Dr. Kasim Kanakri

responsibilities and contribute to sustainable growth. Improvement in corporate governance practices can improve the decision-making process within and between a company’s governing bodies, and should thus, enhance the efficiency of the financial and business operations. Strong corporate governance also leads to an improvement in the accountability system, minimizes the risk of fraud or self-dealing by company officers. An effective system of governance should help ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and further, allow companies to avoid costly litigation. Also, companies should stand to benefit from a strong credibility, both at home and in the international community.

Now that sustainability has become the moral and economic imperative of the 21st century, governance, strategy and sustainability have become inseparable. For the long-term strategy, the board must consider five capital aspects—financial, human, social, environmental and manufactured/technology. Reports to the stakeholders must integrate the impacts of the company’s business on a community economically, socially and environmentally. While it is the duty of directors to take risk for reward, directors must ensure that they apply the principles of good governance when doing so. Good governance attracts capital, while poor governance will repel capital. Capital has become a scarce resource in a flat, borderless world, where, with the click of a mouse, capital can leave a market and destroy it.