



A decade of reform and stability

PROFILE OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND RULER OF ABU DHABI

His Highness has played an active role in strengthening the UAE's external relations

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan is the second President of the United Arab Emirates and the 16th Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. His Highness became President of the State and Ruler of Abu Dhabi on 3 November 2004, succeeding his father, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Born in 1948 in the Eastern province of Abu Dhabi, the Sheikh has spent his life in the service of his country, getting to know it by working in a range of posts, starting when he was eighteen as Representative of the Ruler in the Eastern Region and Head of the Courts Department in 1966 in Al Ain, where he implemented major development projects started by his father. Noted for his common touch, His Highness has always taken every opportunity to meet with his people to understand their hopes and aspirations.

In 1969, His Highness was appointed Crown Prince for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, taking over as head of the Abu Dhabi Department of Defence, overseeing its development and transformation from a small force of guards into a modern, well-equipped task force.

Two years later, shortly before the creation of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa became Prime Minister, taking over the Defence and Finance portfolios.

Following the creation of the UAE in 1971, the Sheikh assumed the post of Deputy Prime Minister in the Federal Cabinet formed in December 1973, and a year later became the first Chairman of the Executive Council that replaced the Cabinet of the Emirate.

During his Chairmanship of the Executive Council, His Highness supervised and followed up a number of key projects aimed at further modernising the Emirate.

He also undertook the management and supervision of what was to become known as the Oil Partnership Negotiations, reformulating oil policy. Continuing in this role, His Highness later took over the Presidency of the Supreme Council for Oil, the body that sets and implements oil industry policy.

In 2005 Sheikh Khalifa announced that half of the members of the Federal National Council, the closest body the country has to a parliament, would be indirectly elected. In September 2011, the UAE held the second election to pick half the members of its advisory national assembly.

Sheikh Khalifa's policy agenda sets out a vision for the overall development of the country. Its stated

objective is to ensure the welfare of its citizens. This is being fulfilled by the promotion of an open economy, based on sustainable knowledge, that can compete internationally, by providing the best services in education and health and developing infrastructure within a legislative environment distinguished by efficiency and transparency. The emirate's strategy documents give special importance to developing a transparent and efficient government apparatus to ensure the implementation of plans and to make use of the country's potential and resources. The country's security, its international relations, safeguarding its environment, and promoting its heritage and culture remain cornerstones of the UAE's vision.

Motivated by his keen interest in promoting the welfare of his citizens, he set up the Khalifa Housing Fund in 1979 to finance the construction of residential and commercial buildings for nationals at low administrative fees, allocating millions of dollars to the fund, which became the main driver for the construction boom in Abu Dhabi. He also launched a number of prizes to support the development programmes inside the emirate, including the Khalifa Education Prize, Khalifa Excellence Prize, and the Khalifa Fund to support small and medium enterprises.

His Highness has personally, as well as through Abu Dhabi's Development Fund, launched an extensive programme of foreign aid and social development in developing countries. He established and continues to fund overseas schools, charity establishments, hospitals and orphanages. As well as his social work, His Highness has played an active role in strengthening the UAE's external relations with its Gulf, Arab, Islamic and international partners, through the exchange of official visits and through meetings with Arab and foreign officials and leaders and participating in international conferences.

A full partner in the leadership of his country in its foundation stages, Sheikh Khalifa actively shared in the implementation of his late father's plans and in the fulfilment of his vision under his direct supervision. He was instrumental during this process in developing the machinery of administration and government so as to transform the state from its early tribal origins to grow to be the fully modern and institutionalised country it has become today, so as to ensure its safe transition and survival in the twenty-first century.