

المجلس الوطني الاتحادي
الإمارات العربية المتحدة



FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



 @fnc_uae  /fnc.uae  @fnc_uae  /uaefnc

Content

<i>The Federal National Council (FNC)</i>	١٠
<i>The Formation of the Federal National Council</i>	١٢
<i>The Bodies of the Federal National Council</i>	١٤
<i>Permanent Committees</i>	١٦
<i>Council's Responsibilities</i>	١٨
<i>Empowerment Stage</i>	٢٠
<i>The Council's Achievements Through its Journey and Exercise of the Constitutional Competencies Thereof</i>	٢٢
<i>Communication with Society</i>	٢٤



The Federal National Council (FNC)



Headquarters of the Federal National Council in Abu Dhabi, Capital of the UAE Federation

Shura (Consultation) was practiced for long decades by the UAE community, before the birth of the UAE federation, and was considered a way of life and an approach to define relations between the ruler and his people. The ruler's majlis (council) was one of the places where views and consultations on different affairs were exchanged, citizen complaints and grievances were heard, and their demands and needs were met.

The provisional constitution of the UAE was signed on 8th of July 1971, by the founding fathers, led by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan "may God bless his soul". On 2nd December of the same year, the dream came true, and the flag of the union flew high up in the sky of the region. On the 2nd of December 1971, the provisional constitution came into force to define the objectives of the federation, its political system and ratify the federal executive, legislative and judicial authority

Article (45) of the constitution, stipulates that the Federal National Council (FNC) is the fourth authority of the five federal authorities, namely, the Supreme Council of the Federation, the Federation President and Vice-President, the Federal Cabinet, the Federal National Council, and the Federal Judiciary.

The FNC operates on the basis of the Shura system, and as a forum for political participation; and a medium for expression, and to provide help for the government to build a modern state.

On the 12 of February 1972, the Federal National Council convened its first session. The next day, the UAE President, the Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, inaugurated the first annual regular session of the FNC's first legislative chapter.

Establishing the Federal National Council

The Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan “May God bless his soul”, the Founding Father of the United Arab Emirates, attending one of the sessions of the Federal National Council.



Articles 68-93 of Chapter 4 of the UAE’s Constitution, provide for the formation of the FNC, its mandate and its by-laws. The council’s by-laws were stipulated by federal decree number 97 passed in 1977 which were amended by Resolution No. (1) passed in 2016, issued by the UAE’s President.

The FNC consists of (40) members from all over the Emirates. They are distributed as follows:

(8) seats for each of the Abu Dhabi and Dubai Emirates.

(6) seats for each of the Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaimah Emirates.

(4) seats for each of the Ajman, Fujairah and Umm Al-Quwain Emirates.

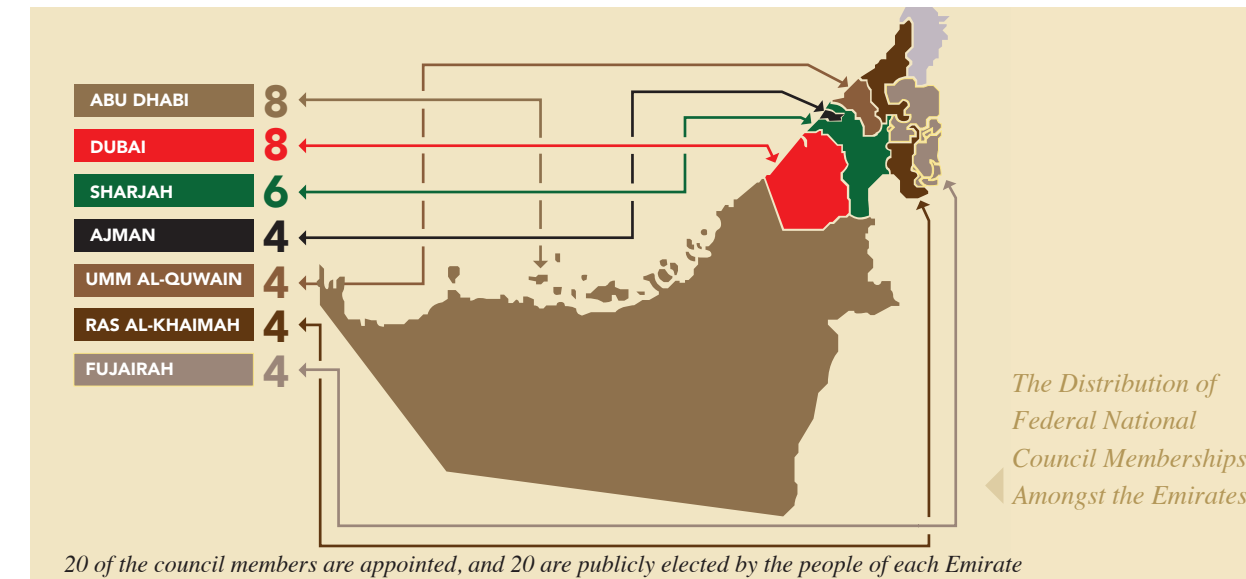
Article 77, of the UAE constitution stipulates that “A

member of the FNC represents the entire people of the UAE and not merely the Emirate which that member represents in the FNC”

Article 71 of the Constitution stipulates that “A person may not be a member of the FNC and at the same time hold public office in the UAE including ministerial portfolios”

Membership

Article 69 of the Constitution states that, “An Emirate is free to determine the method of selection of its representatives in the FNC.” Since 2006, half of the Council members have been elected, and the other half appointed. This period also witnessed the election and appointment of women as council members for the first time.



FNC’s Rules of Procedure

The FNC is called into session and is dismissed by a decree issued by the President of the UAE subject to the approval of the Federal Council of Ministers. The FNC meets in an annual regular session for a minimum of seven months, commencing on the third week of October every year.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan “may God protect him” inaugurates the fifteenth legislative chapter of the FNC in the presence of Their Highnesses members of the Supreme Council, and Rulers of the Emirates.

The FNC may be called into an extraordinary session, if necessary. In such a session it may not hear any matters other than those for which the session has been convened.

The FNC convenes its sessions in Abu Dhabi, the UAE’s capital. The sessions are open to the public and are not confidential, unless a government representative, the speaker of the FNC, or one third of its members request otherwise.

Deliberations of the FNC shall not be effective, unless at least are attended by the majority of the FNC members. Resolutions shall be passed by the absolute majority of the attending members. In case of a tie vote the speaker shall break the tie in the cases that requires a special majority.

A meeting of the FNC is valid only if attended by a majority of its members at least. The FNC’s resolutions are decided by the absolute majority of the votes of the members present, except in cases where a special majority is required. In case of equal vote, the speaker of the session has a casting vote.

A council member’s membership lasts four (Gregorian) years, beginning from the first council sessions he/she attends

FNC is composed of five key bodies. These are:

(1) The Speaker:

The FNC speaker shall be elected in the first session of the legislative chapter and by the absolute majority of the attending members. His mandate extends throughout the legislative chapter.

The speaker shall lead, open, and close public sessions, steer discussion in them, announce resolutions issued by the council, maintain order during the sessions, set the Council's agenda, and direct the general secretariat of the council.

He/she shall chair, by virtue of his/her position, the board of FNC Office, the parliamentary division and its affiliated executive committee. He/she shall represent the council in its communications with other bodies. He/she shall speak on behalf of the council and supervise all its tasks, and ensure provisions of the constitution, law, and the FNC by-laws are implemented.

(2) FNC Office Board

Article 84 of the constitution stipulates that FNC shall have a Bureau, formed of the speaker and his two deputies, as well as two observers, to be elected from among the FNC members. The mandate of the speaker and his two deputies shall expire with the end of the FNC legislative chapter, or its dissolution.

The two observers shall be elected at the beginning of each annual regular session, and their term shall expire by the end of the annual regular session. The observers with the speaker and his deputies shall constitute the Office Board, responsible for

performing all administrative duties of the council, upon the request of the speaker, in the period between two annual regular sessions. The Office Board shall also perform several other duties, including following up the implementation of the recommendations issued by the FNC.

The Office Board shall settle objections to the sessions' minutes contents, and review the FNC annual budget and its final account, follow up implementation of the FNC recommendations, and propose proper systems for the FNC members' affairs.

(3) FNC Committees:

FNC committees shall be set up in the first week of its annual regular session. Each committee shall comprise seven members. The Council shall elect members of committees by a relative majority of votes. Each FNC member shall have membership of at least one committee, but shall not be a member of more than two permanent committees. The committees may perform their duties during the vacation of the council, in order to present their works to the council when it convenes.

The meetings of committees shall be confidential, and shall convene by the attendance of the absolute majority of its members. Each committee shall elect a chairman and a rapporteur from its members, and shall have a secretary from the FNC staff.

Ministers of the cabinet shall have the right to attend the committee's meetings, that discuss their respective ministries affairs. They may be accompanied by one or more of their professional staff or experts.

The position of FNC Speaker was assumed by the following figures:



*H.E. Dr. Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi
(2015 - present)*



*H.E. Mohammed Ahmad Al Murr
(2011 - 2015)*



*H.E. Abdulaziz Abdulla Al Ghurair
(2007 - 2011)*



*H.E. Said Mohammed Said Al Kendi
(2003 - 2005)*



*H.E. Mohammed Khalifa Bin Habtur
(1997 - 2002)*



*H.E. Al-Haj Bin Abdalla Al-Muhairbi
(1993 - 1996)*



*H.E. Hilal bin Ahmed bin Lutah
(1981 - 1991)*



*H.E. Taryam Omran Taryam
(1977 - 1981)*



*H.E. Thani Bin Abdullah
(1972 - 1976)*

FNC Permanent Committees

The FNC has permanent committees who, according to their specialisations, study draft laws, public issues and complaints referred to them by the Council. Article 47 of the FNC by-laws states that the FNC shall have ten permanent committees. These are as follows:

1. Constitutional, Legislative and Contestation Committee
2. Defence, Internal and External Security Committee
3. Financial, Economic and Industrial Affairs Committee
4. Technological, Energy and Mineral Resources Committee
5. Education, Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Committee
6. Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
7. Social, Labour, Population and Human Resources Committee
8. Islamic Affairs, Endowments, and Public Facilities Committee
9. Complaints Committee
10. Heads of Committees' Committee

Article 49 of the by-laws stipulates that the council may form other permanent or temporary committees as required, and may set specific provisions for each. Accordingly, the FNC has established two additional permanent committees in its fifteenth legislative chapter, they are:

- Heads of Committees' Committee: which has been stated amongst the permanent committees in the Council by-laws issued by the presidential decree No (1) for 2016
- And the Human Rights Committee as a permanent committee, in addition to the ten permanent committees stated in the Council by-laws.

The Council may set up temporary committees, to study certain topics or issues. The mandate of the temporary committee expires when it has concluded its study, and prepared relevant reports. Of these is the committee responsible for responding to the opening addresses of His Highness the UAE President, to the different FNC annual regular sessions.

(4) The Parliamentary Division:

The Parliamentary Division is the body concerned with the domains of parliamentary diplomacy. This division was created on 9th of December 1975. It is composed of all council members, who form the general assembly.

The Parliamentary Division represents the FNC at Arab, Islamic and International councils, parliamentary union conferences, and parliamentary bodies, as well as other international parliamentary organisations.

The first executive committee of the parliamentary division was formed on the 22nd of March, 1977.

The FNC is a member of:

- Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union since 1975.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union, since 1977.
- Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States, since 1999.
- The Arab Provisional Parliament since 2005 which became permanent as the Arab Parliament in 2012.



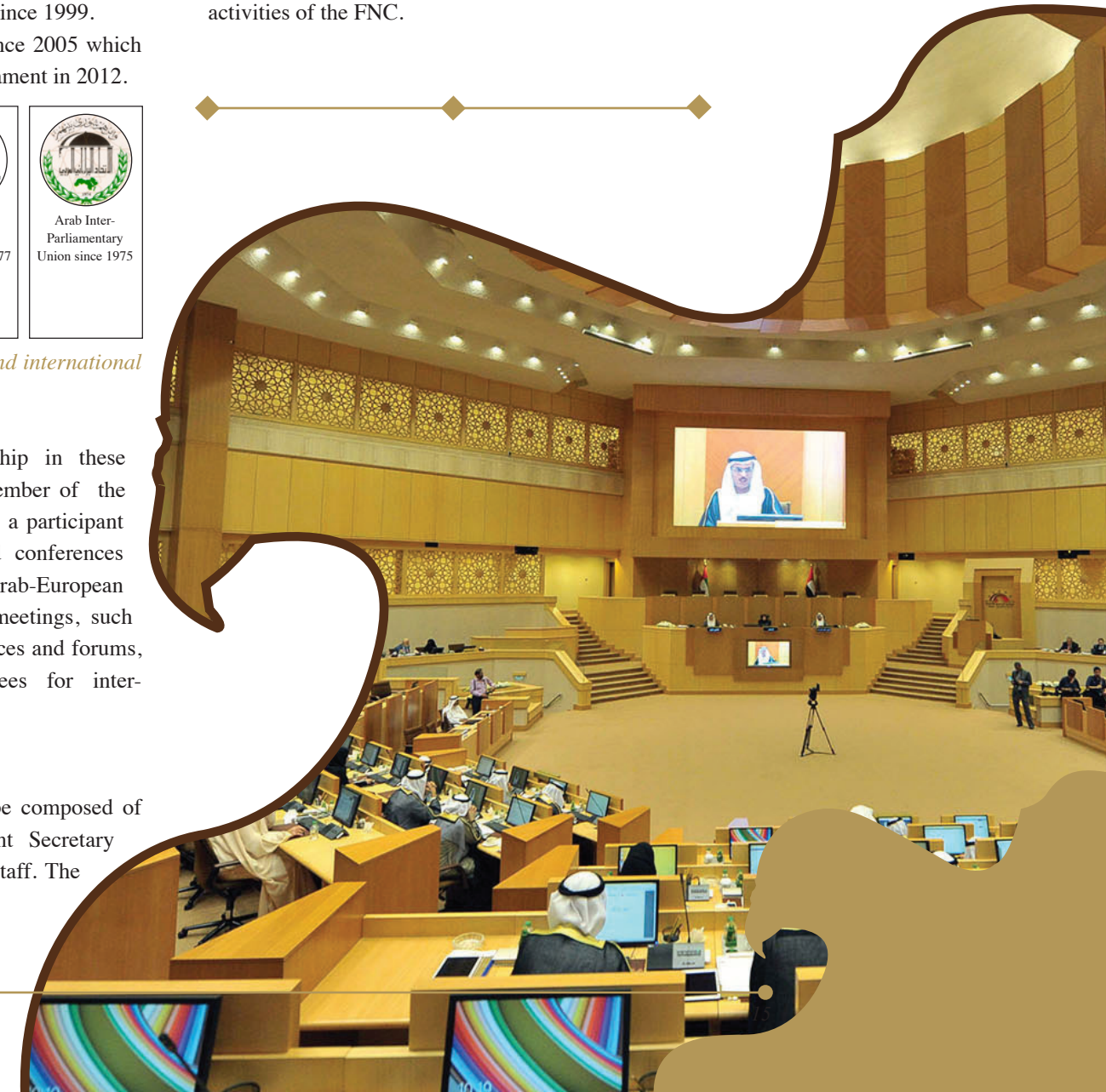
FNC membership in Arab, regional and international parliamentary unions.

In addition to the FNC membership in these parliamentary unions, it is also a member of the Asian Parliamentary Association, and a participant in the periodic Gulf meetings, and conferences of Arab-African Dialogue, and Arab-European Dialogue, and other parliamentary meetings, such as specialised parliamentary conferences and forums, parliamentary visits, and committees for inter-parliamentary friendship.

(5) General Secretariat

The FNC General Secretariat shall be composed of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, heads of departments, and staff. The

General Secretariat is the technical and administrative body. It plays a vital role in supporting the council in performing its legislative and monitoring duties, and its parliamentary diplomacy role. The General Secretariat also empowers the FNC members to carry out their parliamentary/representative duties effectively and with high efficiency, in terms of internal and external activities of the FNC.



FNC Mandate



A session of FNC held at Zayed Grand Hall in Abu Dhabi

The FNC mandate, according to the UAE constitution, is divided into two categories: legislative mandate and monitoring mandate.

• Legislative Mandate:

The FNC legislative mandate is limited to receiving proposals for constitutional amendments, and draft laws from the Council of Ministers, which is the body responsible for proposing draft laws. The FNC has the right to discuss, reject or approve such draft laws both without amendments, or with amendments by way of deletion or addition, before submitting them to the Council of Ministers, to be presented in turn to the UAE's President and the Federal Supreme Council to ratify them.

The FNC may discuss proposals for constitutional amendments, state budget and its final account and state their observations on them. In addition, Article 91 of the constitution requires the government to inform the FNC of the international treaties, and agreements concluded with other nations and various

international organisations, together with the proper data and information. A resolution issued by the UAE's President usually defines the international treaties and agreements to be discussed by the FNC before they are ratified by the President.

• Monitoring Mandate:

The FNC performs its monitoring mandate through specific instruments. They are as follows:

1. Presenting General Issues for Discussion:

The FNC may embrace, propose and discuss general issues relating to the federation affairs, upon the consent of the government. The FNC may present recommendations regarding those issues. The FNC usually discusses a general issue by submitting a request signed by at least five members, to question the government policy regarding that issue.

2. Directing Questions to the Prime Minister and Ministers:

Every FNC member has the right to inquire to the Prime Minister and other Ministers about issues

within their domain, including an inquiry about an issue the FNC member wants to know, or inquiring about a certain event. The question shall be forwarded by only one member. The question should be asked to the Prime Minister or any one Minister. The member who asks the question has the sole right to comment twice on the answer. The comments shall be brief.

3. Issuing Recommendations:

The FNC shall have the general right to make recommendations, and express its desires and wishes about any issue related to public activities in the country, whether political, economic or social. The FNC makes its recommendations in the domain of its mandate, such as responding to the inaugural address, reviewing a draft law, or discussing a public issue or inquiry.

4. Examining Complaints Against Federal Government Agencies

The FNC, as part of its monitoring mandate, shall have the right to look into complaints submitted by individuals against federal government agencies, and settle them. There are certain conditions in this regard:

- The complaint should have already been submitted

to the federal governmental agency in question, without it being settled.

- The complaint should not be being considered at present by any court, nor should a final court ruling have been issued about it.
- The complaint submitted to the FNC should be signed by the complainant, with his name, place of residence, and place of work clearly stated.

The FNC speaker may ask the Prime Minister and the relevant Ministers to provide information and explanations about the complaint. The official who was requested to provide information should provide the required explanations within a maximum period of three weeks from the date of request.

The FNC speaker shall refer complaints to the Complaints Committee, accompanied with feedback from the relevant ministries. The committee shall examine the documents received. The committee informs the one who complained, through the FNC speaker, about the outcomes of his complaint.

5 The FNC may issue statements to express its views on various national, local, Arab, and international issues, and different occasions.

Stage of Empowerment



In addition to the support received by the FNC since its initiation by the founding fathers, it has witnessed a landmark transformation since His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan “may God protect him” assumed power in 2004. This transformation is ongoing and gradual, and is the result of a national program which embodies the vision and ideas of His Highness which is based on enhancing the principle of ‘Shura’ (consultation) and popular participation in the decision making process.

In His Highness’s 34th National Day address on 2nd December 2005, the President of the UAE launched a program to empower the FNC. H.H. expressed this

point by saying: “The coming stage in our march, taking into consideration the transformations and reforms this region is witnessing, requires greater activation of the FNC’s role and the empowerment of the Council to become an assisting and guiding authority to support the executive authority. We will work to ensure that the FNC becomes more capable and effective, and closer to the issues of the nation and the concerns of citizens - through this the values of participation and of the ‘Shura’ (consultation) become deeply-rooted, by means of a gradually fulfilled process.”

Development from the perspective of empowerment is a human and social process, the aim of which is to

create the knowledgeable and prudent management of human and natural resources, in a way that preserves for the country its existence; and for the society its stability; and for human being his pride, dignity and security, and for the coming generations their bright future and prosperity.

The Federation’s Supreme Council has considered, in its Resolution No. 3 for 2005, H.H. the UAE President’s address as a national work-plan to follow in the coming stage.

The Supreme Council also issued its resolution No. 4 in 2006, regarding the way of selecting the representatives of the United Arab Emirates in the FNC. The resolution stipulates that half of the FNC members shall be chosen by an electoral college, formed to include at least a hundred times the number of representatives of each Emirate. The other half of the representatives of each Emirate are to be selected by the rulers of the respective Emirates.

Outcome of Empowerment Stage

As an outcome of the empowerment stage, the first parliamentary elections were held in 2006 to elect half the Council members and appoint the other half, where twenty members were chosen through elections in various Emirates, and another twenty were appointed by the rulers of their respective emirates. This stage also witnessed Emirati women as voters and candidates for the first time in the history of the FNC. Her Excellency Dr. Amal Abdullah Al-Qubaisi assumed the position of FNC Speaker, as the first lady to head a parliament across the Arab world.

In 2009, the constitutional amendment No. 1 was

issued to be another stage in terms of implementing the political agenda of H.H. the President. According to that the following was amended:

- The term of the FNC membership shall be extended to become four Gregorian years instead of two, as the two year period was not enough to discuss all issues presented in the parliamentary legislative chapter.
- Extend the annual regular session to no less than seven months.
- The FNC shall draft its own by-laws, ordered by an issue from the UAE’s President, based on the recommendations of the Federal Supreme Council. This amendment enhances the independency of the FNC.
- A decision by the UAE’s President shall define the international treaties and agreements the FNC shall discuss before they are ratified.

In September 2011, the UAE conducted its second round of elections. This time a resolution by the Federal Supreme Council expanded political participation, where the number of Electoral College members was increased to a minimum of 300 times the number of representatives of each Emirate in the FNC, without a ceiling for the number of these Electoral College members.

In March 2015, the UAE conducted its third round of elections, where the number of Electoral Colleges was expanded to reach 224,000 voters. Women represented 48% of the voters. Every voter shall have one vote with which they will not be allowed to elect more than one candidate for the Emirate in whose electoral college they are registered.

FNC Achievements



The UAE Federal National Council has been a witness to the historical progress of the UAE along the last four and a half decades plus. It will continue to contribute for the benefit of the UAE's people, under the leadership of H.H. the President – may God protect him – who emphasised on more than one occasion, that his vision for the future goes beyond the present time by following a gradual approach appropriate to the unique Emirati situation, in order for the political participation and parliamentary experience to fulfill their objectives.

Since its inception, the FNC spared no efforts to push ahead with the development and construction process in the country. In the legislative domain, the council contributed to the modernisation and updating of the UAE's legislation, in different social, economic, environmental, and infrastructure fields, as well as transport, communications and other fields. The most prominent of which was the amendment of social security law, and the linking of social welfare provision to economic changes and social developments. The amendment also expanded the categories benefitting

from the social welfare to include handicapped people. Another amendment was made to the Children of Unknown Parentage law, to provide shelters and safe haven for them, and to protect them from negligence, exploitation and ill-treatment. The FNC also passed anti-money laundering, and counter terrorism laws, and other important and vital legislations for the security of citizens and the country.

On the Monitoring Domain: the FNC discussed many public issues related to government policies in various fields. The council issued its recommendations on many issues pertinent to education, health care, environment, security, housing, labor, human resources and salaries among other things.

However, the most prominent outcomes of the recommendations of the FNC to the federal government were: the launching of Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme, the Marriage Fund, and UAE University.

The FNC members presented questions to Ministers,

each in his relevant specialty, about various the citizens' various matters and concerns. The council spared no effort to settle many complaints presented to them by citizens. The FNC was proactive and interactive where national issues were concerned.

On the FNC Foreign Activity: the Parliamentary division achieved many accomplishments through its foreign participations, and its parliamentary diplomacy. It played an active role in various parliamentary arenas. The activity and effectiveness of the parliamentary division was revealed in the quantity and quality of initiatives and technical projects, in which the Council participated across various parliamentary events. It also played a significant role in supporting national, Arab and Islamic causes. It also voiced the attitudes of the UAE towards those issues and causes. Moreover, it responded and reacted positively to international issues.

The issue of the three UAE islands (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa) occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, was on top of the issues adopted by the FNC. It mobilised international support for the UAE's stance, which seeks a peaceful solution to the dispute, through direct negotiations, based on a fixed time-table, or to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The FNC succeeded to make this a firm issue number on the agenda of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union. Also it presented the issue to the visiting delegations of ministers, diplomats and parliamentarians, and at the periodic meetings of regional and international parliamentary organisations, unions and institutions.

The FNC has always emphasised the necessity for solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and the need to

establish a permanent committee to take care of the Jerusalem issue, and confront the Israeli plans for the Judaization and occupation of Jerusalem.

Among the initiatives presented by the FNC on the level of various regional and international institutions are: the amendment of the Charter of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union; the amendment of the by-laws of the Arab Group of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Executive Provisions for the Arab Media Medal Award; and the Charter for the Islamic Parliamentary Work for Countering Terrorism and Extremism.

In addition to inserting urgent provisions on the agendas of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the FNC presented the initiative for the Immediate Stop of Blood-Shed and Human Rights Violations in Syria; and securing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all needy population. The FNC also inserted an emergency item titled: "Global Financial Crisis and its Consequences".

The FNC also signed the first executive agreement for cooperation between the FNC and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The FNC has proposed the following: a comprehensive proposal document about women prepared by Arab Parliament, a proposal for a parliamentary award to be named "Arab Parliamentary Distinction Award", a proposal for the Amendment of the statute of the International Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a proposal for the creation of the Gulf Parliamentary Information Network, Creation of a Common Gulf Parliament.

Community Outreach



The FNC is keen to adopt an approach of transparency and communication with various sectors to carry out its tasks and duties, as a manifestation of the principle of political participation in decision making, and an enhancement of parliamentary life and culture across all available communication channels, whether direct communication or through the channels provided by technological advancement.

The FNC sends invitations to citizens, institutions, government and private agencies and departments, civic organisations and experts to attend its sessions, and participate in Committees' meetings and discussion forums in order to learn about their opinions. It also seeks the assistance of scientific and technical studies to help committees studying draft laws and general issues.

Moreover, the FNC conducts field trips to the different

Emirates and various government agencies to get a close look at issues, examine problems, and listen carefully to all opinions, proposals and ideas of the citizens, besides participation in societal activities and events.

The FNC always seeks to enhance partnership with the media, in compliance with the principle of transparency. It also works carefully to empower citizens and all sectors and institutions of the society, to encourage them to communicate and interact closely with what is happening in the parliamentary arena.

The FNC website is considered one of the most important venues for communication. It allows the public to be informed about the publications of the council, access the agendas of its sessions and their minutes, and browse a photo and video library via the FNC Media Centre.

The FNC and Future Foreseeing

At the onset of the sixteenth legislative chapter in 2016, the FNC organised an event under the title “Future Foreseeing”, in an initiative unprecedented since its creation. The event was the “First Consultative Parliamentary Meeting” to discuss the first comprehensive strategy for the council. The strategy’s aim is to achieve the best accomplishments, and to keep pace with the emerging events and the new trends of the country, as per the national guidelines and principles contained in the political empowerment program. The renaissance the FNC wishes to achieve is to translate the development vision – with all its meanings, principles and concepts – to a workable strategy and a collection of behavioural values to be practiced by citizens in their daily lives, and whose benefits they are to preserve. This is the purpose of empowerment, and the peak of responsibility and loyalty.