UAE President: 'We encourage our youth to remain at forefront of scientific, technological progress while staying true to their national identity, values'

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President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has affirmed that empowering citizens to actively contribute to shaping the country's future remains a fundamental priority. This reflects the core principle guiding the UAE's present and future outlook, putting its people first and recognising them as the foundation of development, its driving force, and its ultimate purpose.

In a statement to mark the 54th Eid Al Etihad, His Highness stressed the importance of upholding the UAE's national identity, its values, and preserving the Arabic language. He emphasised that this responsibility is shared by all members of society, as well as key institutions, particularly those responsible for education, cultural development, and social upbringing. He urged these institutions to place moral and ethical development at the heart of educating and preparing younger generations.

His Highness said, "While we want our youth to be fully engaged in the global march of scientific and technological progress, we also want them to remain firmly grounded in their values, ethics, and national identity. A nation without identity has neither a present nor a future. Upholding our identity is a source of strength, self-confidence, and pride in who we are."

His Highness reaffirmed the UAE's unwavering support for all efforts to promote global peace, stability, and cooperation, and to resolve regional and international conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. This, he said, stems from the UAE's belief that such an approach is the key to achieving nations' aspirations for development and prosperity.

The following is the text of His Highness the President's statement on the occasion of the 54th Eid Al Etihad:

"My brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters,

The second of December stands as a defining chapter in our nation's story. It is a day of pride, unity, and inspiration that continues to resonate across generations of Emiratis. What the late Sheikh Zayed and his fellow Rulers achieved on that historic day remains a lasting symbol of resolve – a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished through unity, purpose, and unwavering belief in a shared future.

Eid Al Etihad is more than a celebration of our founding. It is a moment to reflect, to draw lessons, and to renew our determination as we work together to shape the future we all hope for.

As we mark the UAE's 54th Eid Al Etihad, we look back with gratitude and pride at the journey we have taken together. We honour the progress we have made and the

milestones we have reached. And we renew our pledge – before God, to ourselves, and to our people – to continue working with sincerity and dedication to ensure that the UAE remains, just as the late Sheikh Zayed envisioned, a nation defined by excellence, progress, and a far-reaching sense of purpose.

Family and society are central to the UAE's development strategy and vision for the future. This is why we established the Ministry of Family and renamed the Ministry of Community Development as the Ministry of Community Empowerment, while also expanding its role and responsibilities. We declared 2025 the Year of the Community, and, God willing, 2026 will be the Year of the Family.

We believe that strong families and cohesive communities are the basis of a thriving nation, one that is able to face challenges, seize opportunities, and move forward with confidence.

Strengthening families, supporting their growth, empowering them, and increasing fertility rates are national priorities that lie at the core of our broader concept of national security. The future of the nation begins with the family. It is the first and most important school in a person's life, one of the main pillars of social development, and the first line of defence against any ideas or behaviours that conflict with our values, traditions, and culture.

Preserving our national identity, values, ethics, and Arabic language is a key national priority and an essential responsibility that must be upheld by every member of society. It is particularly important for institutions entrusted with education, cultural development, and social upbringing to take the lead in this effort. I call on these institutions to place the moral and ethical development of our youth at the forefront of their mission.

While we want our youth to be fully engaged in the global march of scientific and technological progress, we also want them to remain firmly grounded in their values, ethics, and national identity. A nation without identity has neither a present nor a future. Upholding our identity is a source of strength, self-confidence, and pride in who we are.

Our ambition continues to grow, as does our conviction that the educated, capable, and patriotic Emirati citizen is the main driving force behind all our development plans. Investing in the people of this nation – particularly our youth – will remain our highest priority. That is why we are deeply committed to education and to continuously developing its systems and structures in line with the highest global standards. We believe that quality education is the most valuable investment we can make in our future.

We are working diligently to achieve our strategic objectives in this vital sector, particularly by aligning education with our national development plans. This includes supporting human capital development, advancing scientific research, creating an environment that attracts talent, and embedding the principle of lifelong learning. We are also committed to strengthening quality standards across all levels of education.

Our ambition is to establish an education system that serves our development goals, aligns with our vision for the future, reinforces our values and national identity, and transforms our schools and universities into models of excellence and innovation. We aim for them to be sources of meaningful ideas that strengthen and advance our

nation's development journey.

Encouraging citizens to take an active role in building the nation's future has always been a central pillar of our vision. This stems from the core principle guiding the UAE's outlook today and tomorrow: putting people first. The Emirati citizen is the foundation of development, its driving force, and who it ultimately seeks to serve.

This is why Emiratisation remains a strategic priority – not only in government but also in the private sector, which is a vital partner in our economic vision. Through the Emirati Talent Competitiveness Council – Nafis – we have seen growing numbers of young Emiratis flourish in private sector roles. I commend their efforts and the progress they represent.

But we are not done yet.

Our goal is clear: to see Emiratis, empowered by knowledge, experience, and ambition, succeed and make an impact across all sectors of the economy, including those of vital importance to our national development.

The UAE is moving at pace to be a leader in science, technology, and innovation, with artificial intelligence at the heart of our ambitions. These transformative fields are reshaping our world, and we are determined to harness their potential to drive a new era of sustainable development.

Thanks to our national efforts and active partnerships with leading countries and global technology companies, we have already made tangible progress in this area. I call on our youth to make the most of AI and modern technologies in a thoughtful and responsible manner, and to focus on academic and scientific disciplines that serve our national development priorities.

We will continue to invest in advanced technologies and artificial intelligence, not only to stay ahead of global trends but to help shape them. Our goal is to explore new frontiers in science that support development and bring lasting benefit to humanity.

Sustainability is a fundamental pillar of our development strategy. Environmental protection and the preservation of natural resources are core objectives within the UAE's established approach to sustainability. The UAE will continue working with international partners to confront environmental challenges and invest in renewable energy to help build a better future for humanity.

Efforts to promote sustainability are ongoing and continuous, as the challenges facing our planet's environment and natural resources are constantly evolving and increasing. The UAE's vision is rooted in determined action to advance sustainability through innovative and effective methods, guided by a sense of shared responsibility at both the national and global levels.

Our ambition is for the UAE's experience in sustainability and clean energy to serve as a source of inspiration, and for sustainability to become a mindset and a culture embraced across society. This supports our national goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and advancing economic diversification for the benefit of future generations.

The UAE has made significant strides in building effective economic partnerships with countries around the world. This reflects our belief that economic cooperation creates

a solid foundation for meaningful development, fulfils people's aspirations for progress and prosperity, and supports peace and stability at both the regional and international levels.

The UAE will continue to expand its network of economic partnerships, building on its domestic development achievements, the confidence it enjoys internationally, and the stability it maintains across all fronts. These factors have long provided a solid foundation for the country's development journey, its partnerships, and its international relations.

The UAE continues to uphold its commitment to multilateral international cooperation, supporting collective efforts to address shared global challenges in a way that benefits all nations and their peoples. Its foreign policy remains grounded in moderation and balance, while actively expanding its avenues of engagement on the international stage to serve development at home and promote peace and prosperity both regionally and globally.

The UAE will maintain its steadfast support for all efforts to promote peace, stability, and cooperation around the world, and to resolve regional and international conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. It firmly believes this is the path to realising the aspirations of nations for development and prosperity.

Amid ongoing conflicts worldwide, the UAE has remained actively engaged in humanitarian efforts to ease civilian suffering, provide medical care, and respond to the consequences of war. These efforts will continue, guided by the UAE's humanitarian approach and commitment to supporting communities everywhere.

My brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters,

In conclusion, I reaffirm that the UAE welcomes all who consider it their home and who contribute through their efforts and ideas to its journey of progress. The country opens its heart and mind to everyone who wishes to be part of our story of success and ambition for a better, more advanced, and more prosperous future, within a framework of tolerance and respect for the rule of law. The UAE values the contributions of residents who have played an important role in its development and advancement over the past decades.

On this cherished national occasion, I extend my warmest congratulations to my fellow Rulers, Crown Princes, Deputy Rulers, and to the loyal people of the UAE. I pray that God continues to protect our nation and bless it with lasting dignity, progress, and prosperity. I wish you all continued wellbeing and success. With God's will, the future will be even brighter through our dedication, ambition, and unity.

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you."

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