

**COUNTRY**  : United Arab Emirates

**COMMITTEE** : Commission on Population and Development

**AGENDA**  : Improving accessibility and the inclusion of Persons with disabilities in urban Areas

**DELEGATE** : M.S.Bhagyashree, Adarsh Vidya Kendra.

The **United Arab Emirates** (**UAE**) is situated in the Southeast of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Oman and Saudi Arabia. In December 1971, the **UAE** became a federation of six emirates - **Abu Dhabi**, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, and Fujairah, while the seventh emirate, Ras Al Khaimah, joined the federation in 1972. Before oil was discovered in the 1950s the UAE's economy was dependent on fishing and a declining pearl industry. But since oil exports began in 1962, the country's society and economy have been transformed.

The UAE has become a regional trading and tourism hub. Abu Dhabi is one of the richest cities in the world. In 2020 it became the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. The country is particularly vulnerable to COVID’s fast rising economic costs. Declining demand for oil has already had a huge impact on the Gulf countries.

**PREVIOUS SITUATION:**

Before the enactment of federal Law No. 29 of 2006, Public transport was not equipped for disabled. Previously accessibility was limited only to the construction of the ramps in front of public buildings wheelchair, special entrance for disabled. Federal Law No. 29 of 2006 "Regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" has significantly helped to raise public awareness of the concept and issue of accessibility in the UAE. In particular, Articles 22 and 23 of Chapter v are dedicated to mandate accessibility for persons with disabilities

The UAE Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) plays an integral role in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects education, employment, public services etc. One of the main objectives in recent years is developing accessibility in public places and transport. The Department of Welfare and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (DWRPD) under (MSA) has cooperated with many parties such as the Roads and Transport Authority in Dubai, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing and Dubai Airport Authority to facilitate access for persons with disabilities. Shopping malls, hotels and some public parks can also be accessed by persons with disabilities.

**CURRENT SITUATION:**

The Ministry of Community Development, MoCD, announced the beginning of the implementation of "Kheta" platform in cooperation with "Ynmo" in Saudi Arabia under the supervision of "Ibtikar" Edu Tech Solutions starting from the new academic year 2020-2021 as part of the programmes and plans provided by the ministry to support people of determination and their families during the novel coronavirus pandemic-COVID 19 and the changes in the patterns of education.

The "Kheta" platform is expected to facilitate and overcome all the obstacles of the educational and rehabilitation services of the people of determination, and at the same time will support their families through the development of educational and rehabilitation programmes that are easy to share with the family to be implemented at home.

**SOLUTION:**

Building accessibility for persons with disabilities and elderly in public buildings and transport requires cooperation of many parties. From MSA own experience more emphasis should be placed on involvement of persons with disabilities themselves in assessing the level of accessibility and determining the features they need.