



U.A.E. Government Reinvents Itself to Be More Agile and Forward Looking

Latest Government Reshuffle Sets Up U.A.E. for Economic Recovery and Transformation

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum, U.A.E. Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, announced a new structure of the U.A.E. Government on 5 July 2020. This announcement, which followed consultations with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, included the merger of ministries, new appointments, and the reported goal to convert 50 percent of government services to digital platforms as well as merge around 50 percent of federal authorities within two years. Nine of thirty-three ministers in the new U.A.E. cabinet are now women. Close observers say that these latest reforms to the U.A.E. Government, coming amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and lower energy prices, will not just make the government more agile and efficient but better positioned to achieve its ambitious goals to diversify the economy, build a knowledge economy, and become a global leader in the digital age.



Changes

Perhaps the most notable change of the government reshuffle is the introduction of a new ministry, the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology. His Excellency Sultan Al Jaber, who was previously CEO of ADNOC and Minister of State, will lead the new ministry. It is tasked with developing the industrial sector within the U.A.E. Previously, this task fell to the Ministry of Energy and Industry. His Excellency Minister Al Jaber will also retain his role as CEO of ADNOC.

As for what remains of the Ministry of Energy and Industry, these functions will be merged with the Ministry of Infrastructure to create the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. His Excellency Suhail Al Mazroui, who previously led the Ministry of Energy and Industry, will lead this revamped ministry. His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, who was formerly Minister of Infrastructure, became Minister of Climate Change and the Environment, replacing His Excellency Thani Ahmad Al Zeyoudi, who assumed a new position within the Ministry of Economy.

For its part, the Ministry of Economy is being reorganized so that it now has a total of three ministers.

- His Excellency Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, who was Secretary General of the U.A.E. Cabinet, becomes Minister of Economy, replacing His Excellency Sultan Al Mansouri, who had served in that post since 2008. His Excellency Al Mansouri was the most senior U.A.E. official to leave the cabinet.
- His Excellency Thani Ahmad Al Zeyoudi, who was formerly Minister of Climate Change and the Environment, was appointed to a new position of Minister of State for Foreign Trade.
- His Excellency Ahmad Abdullah Humaid Belhoul Al Falasi, who was formerly Minister of State for Higher Education and Advanced Skills, was appointed to a new position of Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture and Youth was created by merging the Ministry of Culture with the National Media Council and Federal Youth Authority. Her Excellency Noora Al Kaabi, who was formerly the Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, now holds the title of Minister of Culture and Youth, while Her Excellency Shamma bint Suhail Al Mazrouei continues in her role as Minister of State for Youth Affairs but now carrying out her duties within this new ministry.

Other important changes are as follows:

- H.E. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Happiness and Wellbeing, is now the Minister of State for Government Development and The Future. Her previous duties on quality of life and happiness as Minister of State for Happiness will move to the Ministry of Community Development.
- H.E. Omar bin Sultan Al Olama's title changed from Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence to Minister of State for Digital Economy, Artificial Intelligence, and Remote Work Applications, reflecting an expanded purview of responsibilities.

- H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Minister of State for Food Security, took on the title of Minister of State for Food and Water Security, now under the Ministry of Presidential Affairs.
- H.E. Sarah bint Yousif Al Amiri's title changed from Minister of State for Advanced Sciences to Minister of State for Advanced Technology. Additionally, H.E. Al Amiri will now head the U.A.E.'s Space Agency. Her Excellency currently holds the position of Emirates Mars Mission Deputy Project Manager at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre.
- The Federal Electricity and Water Authority, Emirates Post Group, Emirates General Transport Corporation and Emirates Real Estate Corporation will now be part of the Emirates Investment Authority, the U.A.E.'s only federal sovereign wealth fund.
- The General Authority for Pensions and Social Security was brought within the Ministry of Community Development.
- The Security and Commodities Authority (SCA) moved under the chairmanship of the Minister of Economy. Additionally, the Insurance Authority merged with the SCA.
- A new U.A.E. Government Media Office was established, headed by His Excellency Saeed Al-Attar.

While some local commentators and regional analysts have called these changes extraordinarily significant, it is important to note that approximately two-thirds of current cabinet members retained their positions. Moreover, there were no changes to the highest profile portfolios such as foreign affairs, interior, defense, finance, and presidential affairs, which are held by the ruling families of Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Significance

The pandemic has significantly impacted the U.A.E. Its flagship airlines were temporarily grounded as countries closed their borders and global travel came to a virtual standstill. Meanwhile, oil prices fell to record lows due to extremely low global energy demand. These economic shocks prompted U.A.E. leaders to create a more streamlined future-forward government, continuing an ongoing process that began earlier this decade.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum's announcement of a total of three ministers within the Ministry of Economy underscores that the U.A.E.'s top priority post-COVID-19 is economic recovery. The U.A.E. is no stranger to dealing with times of great economic challenge, as evidenced by the 2008 financial crisis. With this announcement, the country's leaders are working to ensure that they are able to come out stronger and more agile after this current crisis.

As the U.A.E. looks to recover, the creation of the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology also demonstrates the emphasis that the U.A.E. is placing on harnessing the power of new technologies to transform its economy. This point is punctuated by the expansion of H.E. Omar Al Olama's overall responsibilities as he is now the Minister of State for Digital Economy, Artificial Intelligence, and Remote Work Applications.

Indeed, digitization is a key component of this government reorganization. Within two years, half of all government service centers will be shuttered and moved online. As H.E. Hamad Al-Mansoori was appointed Head of the Digital Government, he is tasked with creating a centralized digital system for all government services. Digitization and cybersecurity go

hand in hand, and as such Mohammed Hamad al-Kuwaiti was appointed Head of Cyber Security.

All of these changes are the continuation of a process whereby the U.A.E. Government and the leadership of the seven Emirates have made reforms to structure and leadership to reflect national priorities.

- In 2013, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid introduced a cabinet with “young faces with new ideas and energy to keep up with the rapid changes and to deal with our people’s top priorities.” As such, HE Suhail Al Mazrouei, then Deputy CEO of Mubadala Oil and Gas, was appointed Minister of Energy, and Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, then head of renewable energy company Masdar, was appointed Minister of State.
- In 2016, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid introduced a cabinet with eight new ministers, including five women. The new government saw the addition of new Ministers for Tolerance, the Future, Youth, Happiness, and Climate Change. The Minister of Youth, H.E. Shamma Al Mazrouei, was just 22 years old at the time she became Minister.
- In 2017, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid announced another government reshuffle involving the creation of Ministers of State for Food Security and Artificial Intelligence. H.E. Sara Al Amiri was also appointed Minister of State for Advanced Sciences.

As a result of these series of changes over the years, the U.A.E. is said to be better positioned to realize a future in which women are represented, youth are heard, tolerance is promoted, and the U.A.E. harnesses the power of new technologies to transform its economy and become a leader in the digital age.

Current Structure



As a result of the aforementioned changes, the leadership of the U.A.E. government currently looks as follows.

1. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense (Remained in position)
2. H.H. Lt. General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior (Remained in position)
3. H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs (Remained in position)
4. H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Cabinet Member and Minister of Finance (Remained in position)
5. H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Cabinet Member and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Remained in position)
6. H.E. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Cabinet Member and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence (Remained in position)
7. H.E. Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Gergawi, Cabinet Member and Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future (Remained in position)
8. H.E. Ahmed Juma Al Zaabi, Minister of Federal Supreme Council Affairs
9. H.E. Abdul Rahman bin Mohammad bin Nasser Al Owais, Cabinet Member, Minister of Health and Prevention and Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs (Remained in position)
10. H.E. Dr. Anwar bin Mohammad Gargash, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Remained in position)
11. H.E. Obaid Humaid Al Tayer, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for Financial Affairs (Remained in position)
12. H.E. Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashemy, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for International Cooperation (Remained in position)
13. H.E. Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Cabinet Member and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure (Formerly Minister of Energy and Industry)
14. H.E. Dr. Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Cabinet Member and Minister of Climate Change and the Environment (Formerly Minister of Infrastructure Development)
15. H.E. Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Cabinet Member and Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology (Formerly Minister of State)
16. H.E. Sultan bin Saeed Al Badi, Cabinet Member and Minister of Justice (Remained in position)
17. H.E. Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Cabinet Member and Minister of Education (Remained in position)
18. H.E. Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Bowardi, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for Defence Affairs (Remained in position)

19. H.E. Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Cabinet Member and Minister of Culture and Youth (Formerly Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development)
20. H.E. Jameela bint Salem Al Muheiri, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for Public Education (Remained in position)
21. H.E. Nasser bin Thani Al Hamli, Cabinet Member and Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation (Remained in position)
22. H.E. Hessa bint Essa Buhumaid, Cabinet Member and Minister of Community Development (Remained in position)
23. H.E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Cabinet Member and Minister of Economy (Formerly Secretary General of the U.A.E. Cabinet)
24. H.E. Dr. Maitha bint Salem Al Shamsi, Minister of State (Remained in position)
25. H.E. Dr. Ahmad Belhoul Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and SMEs (Formerly Minister of State for Higher Education and Advanced Skills)
26. H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade (Formerly Minister of Climate Change and Environment)
27. H.E. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Government Development and The Future (Formerly Minister of State for Happiness and Wellbeing)
28. H.E. Shamma bint Suhail Al Mazrouei, Minister of State for Youth Affairs (Remained in role but in new ministry)
29. H.E. Zaki Nusseibeh, Minister of State (Remained in position)
30. H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Minister of State for Food and Water Security (Remained in position but in new ministry)
31. H.E. Sarah bint Yousif Al Amiri, Minister of State for Advanced Technology (Formerly Minister of State for Advanced Sciences)
32. H.E. Omar bin Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Teleworking Applications (Formerly Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence)
33. H.E. Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, Minister of State (Remained in position)

CEOs of UAE Government

- H.E. Mohammed Sultan Al Obaidly, Head of Legal Affairs
- Mohammed Hamad Al-Kuwaiti, Head of Cyber Security
- Saeed Al-Attar, Head of Government Media Office
- H.E. Hoda Al Hashemi, Head of Government Strategy and Innovation (Formerly worked in His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid's office)
- H.E. Hamad Al-Mansoori, Head of the Digital Government (Formerly led the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority)
- Mohammed Bin Taleya, Head of Government Services