



# THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GARDEN

*Following the recent visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to the UAE and the spectacular Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi, the Year of Tolerance is blooming.*

“We view all human beings as members of one global society.”

So said His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, the UAE’s Minister of Tolerance recently, who described the UAE as “one of the most diverse countries in the world, but at the same time, one of the most peaceful, harmonious and prosperous places on earth”.

HE Al Nahyan added: “Although the UAE is a young country, it has an impressive history of tolerance. Tolerance is part of the soft power of our country.

“We wish to build local and global partnerships based on a tolerance that realizes the potential in diversity. And we undertake continued societal and legislative initiatives that fight hate, promote mutual respect and celebrate our shared human values.

“These are some of the reasons that have made the UAE a global model of success as a peaceful, tolerant and prosperous country.”

The UAE is the first country in the world to set up a Ministry of Happiness, Tolerance and the Future to promote cultural understanding, peace and tolerance







**Above:** The UAE has also reiterated the critical role global parties can play by engaging in promoting values of tolerance

among mankind. Sheikh Nahyan explained that the role of the Ministry of Tolerance was to “promote tolerance by working with all of the country’s residents cooperatively on activities such as volunteer programmes, advocacy, education and awareness raising, public events and celebrations, while all the time undertaking research about the drivers of tolerance and the causes of intolerance, as well as determining strategies and monitoring progress”.

The minister added: “We aim for the ministry to always be known as a ministry of action, outcomes and impact. It will always be known as a ministry for all the country’s residents.”

HE Sheikh Nahyan was speaking at the launch of Tolerance Talks, an initiative launched by the *Khaleej Times*, the UAE’s oldest and longest-running English daily newspaper. Tolerance Talks is a year-long series of talks aimed to promote dialogue and peaceful coexistence as the UAE celebrates the Year of Tolerance.

Speaking to guests and dignitaries at the launch, Sheikh Nahyan said that tolerance has been an essential virtue and a guiding principle for the UAE’s people and its leadership from as far back as he could remember.

“Our region has always been a crossroad for people, ideas and commerce, and it has always welcomed travellers with unconditional hospitality,” he reflected. “We grew up understanding the importance of celebrating the common bonds that unite all members of the human race.

“Tolerance will help us deal with important environmental issues. Tolerance will help solve conflicts and political disagreements. Tolerance will help improve education and encourage innovation so that all citizens can contribute to a knowledge-based economy. Tolerance will make us champions for human rights and human obligations.

“We know that gardens are most beautiful when they have flowers of many varieties,” he concluded.

“So too, our tolerant communities are those that have diverse populations.”

Mohammed Abdul Latif Galadari, Director of Galadari Brothers, also spoke at the launch event. Speaking from a business point of view, he told the audience: “It is very necessary to have the culture of tolerance at the workplace and once you have that in place, you are allowing people from different countries and cultures to come in with their unique skill sets and contribute to your growth. If I limit my workforce to represent a certain faith, culture, gender or demographics, I am limiting the talent pool available to me, which is critical to the growth of my business.

“Tolerance is not an end goal,” added Mr Galadari, “as it’s a stepping stone towards the ultimate goal, which is acceptance.”

Meanwhile, the UAE has also reiterated the critical role global parties can play by engaging in promoting values of tolerance. The UAE Permanent Representative to the UN and Other International Organisations

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**HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH NAHYAN BIN MUBARAK AL NAHYAN,**  
THE UAE’S MINISTER OF TOLERANCE



in Geneva, Obaid Salem Al Zaabi stressed the importance of the role of international bodies and governments in promoting values of tolerance. During a session entitled ‘Celebration of diversity: beyond tolerance, the path towards empathy’, Mr Al Zaabi highlighted the UAE’s commitment to international treaties and charters on equality, freedom, respect and non-discrimination.

The event was held by the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, on the sidelines of the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

The Ambassador expressed his pride in the UAE declaring 2019 as the Year of Tolerance, adding that it further promotes the principles of co-existence and harmony within the country, which hosts over 200 nationalities and varied religious communities in peace and security.

He explained that the UAE’s stance on tolerance stems from the teachings of Islam, which calls for peace and rejects fanaticism, extremism and racism, and that it carries on the legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who entrenched the values of acceptance within UAE society.

Authored by Reverend Andrew Thomson, the recently published book *Celebrating Tolerance: Religious Diversity in the United Arab Emirates* has also been incredibly well received. The book – “the first of its kind delivering an importance message of tolerance – focuses on inter-faith dialogue and freedom of religious expression in the UAE. A diverse group of faiths collaborated on the book, which serves as a compendium of their experiences of coexisting peacefully in the country. A copy of *Celebrating Tolerance* was presented to His Holiness Pope Francis during his recent historic visit to the UAE.

*Celebrating Tolerance* will soon also be available in the UK, following its UK book launch, on 5 April, at the UAE Embassy in London. The UK book launch has been organised by His Excellency Sulaiman Al Mazroui, UAE Ambassador to the UK.

A spokesperson for publishers Motivate Media Group said: “*Celebrating Tolerance* is a testament to the country’s highly tolerant views and acceptance of a very diverse group of people who come from all over the world. We’re delighted that the book has been so well received in the UAE and beyond.” †