

UAE issues paternity leave and equal pay amendments to Labour Law

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His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, has issued Federal Decree Law No. 6 of 2020 (the Decree) which amends Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 on the Regulation of Labour Relations (as amended), otherwise known as the UAE Labour Law.

Paternity leave

In welcome news to new fathers in the UAE, the Decree provides male private sector employees in the UAE with paid paternity leave of five working days. This paternity leave entitlement applies for six months from the child's birth and means the UAE joins the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the only GCC countries to provide paid paternity leave to private sector employees, with the UAE having the most generously paid paternity leave policy.

The changes brought about by the Decree are applicable to employees employed by all onshore and free zone private companies, other than employers based in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) or the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) financial free zones, which each have their own employment regulations and which each provide specific rules on a paid paternity leave entitlement of five working days. The entitlement to five paid days of paternity leave is, therefore, generally aligned for private sector employees across the UAE.

Equal pay

The Decree also makes a small adjustment to article 32 of the UAE Labour Law by clarifying that female employees are to be paid the same as male employees for the same work or for other work of equivalent value. The Decree provides that the UAE Cabinet will issue a resolution, based on the proposals of The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, which will set out the procedures, limitations and standards required to evaluate work of equivalent value.

This is all positive news for working parents and female employees, and reflects the UAE's position as a modern and forward-looking jurisdiction with a keen focus on workplace equality.

The Decree was published in the UAE Official Gazette on 25 August 2020 and will come into force one month after the publication date.

How Dentons can help your UAE business

As the first international law firm to establish a presence in the Emirates, our UAE-based employment and labour team has an in-depth understanding of local issues and is regularly instructed by local and international clients doing

business in the UAE. Our wider Middle East employment team, with nine offices across seven jurisdictions, is a diverse practice giving focused, experienced advice and assistance on contentious, non-contentious and advisory employment work.

We would like to thank Associate Kislay Kumar of our UAE Labour and Employment Team who contributed to this article.

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