

First Business Roundtable with the Government of the United Arab Emirates

Behind the myths: the realities of doing business in the UAE

March 10th 2008, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi

Preliminary programme

Chairman: David Butter, Regional Director, Middle East & North Africa, and Viewswire Editor, Middle East, Economist Intelligence Unit

8.00am Registration and continental breakfast

**9.00am Chairman's welcome and Economist Intelligence Unit briefing:
business outlook for the UAE**

- Corporate strategies in the Middle East—where does the UAE fit in?
- Is high growth sustainable in the UAE?
- Removing obstacles to business development: progress and prospects
- Ensuring a growing skills base for the private sector
- Questions and discussion

**9.30am The UAE as an investment destination: a view from the top
CEO keynote address**

**9.45am The role of business in driving economic diversification
Off-the-record discussion panel**

- Understanding the UAE's burgeoning business community
- Is there a level playing field for the private sector in the UAE?
- Managing business across the Emirates: coping with diversity
- The Emirati legal framework: challenges for business
- UAE business as global investors: progress and prospects
- Facing hidden taxes and inflation
- Environmental challenges: areas to be addressed by business
- Prospects for gas as cleaner energy for industry
- Questions and discussion

Confirmed speakers:

*Nabil Habayeb, President and Chief Executive Officer, Middle East & Africa,
GE International*

*Craig McLaren, Area Director, MD&D EMEA, Johnson & Johnson
Waleed al-Mokarrab al-Muhairi, Chief Operating Officer, Mubadala
Development*

*Jean Louis Chaumeil, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé Middle
East*

- 11.15am** **Break**
- 11.30am** **Creating a world-class business environment**
Discussion with HE Sheikha Lubna al-Qasimi, Minister of Economy and Planning
- Improving the business environment: new laws and foreign investment
 - Prospects for broader economic integration in the GCC markets
 - Is the UAE private sector competitive?
 - Can infrastructure keep up with business growth?
 - Is UAE growth sustainable?
 - Diversification strategies in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and the other emirates
 - Free-zone and special economic zone concepts: a long term solution?
 - Business impact of bilateral free trade agreements
 - Questions and discussion
- Confirmed panellists:*
Hun Sung Rhee, Senior Executive Vice-president, Hyundai Heavy Industries
Hussain al-Nowais, Vice-chairman, Abraaj Capital
- 1.00pm** **Lunch**
- 2.15pm** **Reforming the labour market: beneficial to business?**
Off-the-record discussion with HE Ali bin Abdullah al-Ka'abi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs
- What role will UAE nationals play in the economy over the next decade?
 - Education reform and focus
 - Combating Emirati unemployment: new laws
 - Improving conditions for expat labour—the legislative outlook
 - Skills supply—the outlook for the next decade
 - Social spending: ensuring it hits the mark
 - Questions and discussion
- Confirmed panellist:*
Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Chairman, Bin Zayed Group
- 3.15pm** **Break**
- 3.30pm** **United Arab Emirates convergence: a reality check**
Off-the-record discussion with HE Dr Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs
- Strategic linkages: mutual dependencies between the seven Emirates
 - Creating synergies between federal government and the emirates
 - Bringing federal law in line with reality: streamlining regulation, taxation and legislation
 - Competition and complementarity: understanding the UAE
 - Infrastructure: potential road towards the UAE's unified development
 - Sustainability of real-estate development and growth across the emirates
 - Performance targets for the Emirates: a way forward to create confidence
 - Questions and discussion
- Confirmed panellist:*
Khater Massaad, Chief Executive Officer, RAK Investment Authority

4.45pm **Break**

5.00pm **Growth of sovereign wealth funds: outlook and impact**

- How much of the global economy will sovereign funds own in 10 years time?
- How big is the threat of political backlash against sovereign funds?
- Sovereign fund vs private equity investors
- Improving transparency: what is needed?
- Should and can sovereign funds be more active investors?
- Questions and discussion

Suggested speakers:

Economist expert, EIU expert on sovereign wealth

KPMG

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority

Istithmar

Emirates Investment Authority

6.00pm **Closing networking cocktail**