

The International

January 2012 - Vol: 01 Issue: 02

# Diplomat

First Diplomatic Magazine in the UAE and the Region



Interview with Ambassador of Qatar & Dean of UAE Diplomatic Corps



Lebanese Consul General & Dean of the Consular Corps Dubai Hosts Lebanese National Day

## Abu Dhabi

GLITTERING METROPOLIS THAT  
ROSE FROM THE DESERT

National Feature

Dubai Airshow 2011  
Sky High Deals

### Launch Photos

Ambassadors Launch the First Diplomatic Magazine in UAE



GCC Summit : Saudi King Calls for Arab Union

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creativei

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# Khaleej Times

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# Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

December is always busy in the UAE with so much happening across the Emirates. We were literally spoiled for choice with Formula One, the Dubai Air Show, the Dubai Film Festival, Abu Dhabi Art, and a whole series of events to mark the UAE's 40<sup>th</sup> National Day. The diplomatic calendar was overflowing too both in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and heading the list was the Launch Ceremony of the first diplomatic magazine in the UAE – *The International Diplomat*. We launched the magazine in the nation's capital,

Abu Dhabi, and were joined by Ambassadors and Diplomats from various countries at a leading 5-star hotel.

In Abu Dhabi, the Ambassadors of Qatar, Bahrain, Brazil, Russia, Turkmenistan and Kenya hosted fabulous events that we were delighted to cover, along with the Diplomatic Group for Spouses of Ambassadors (DGSA) who held their fundraiser to raise money for victims of the recent floods in Thailand. The Ambassador of Russia, H.E. Andrew V. Andreev hosted a delightful reception to mark 40 years of their diplomatic relations in the UAE, attended by the crème de la crème of the diplomatic community and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr Anwar Al Gargash. Similarly, the National Day of the State of Qatar was also a glittering occasion, attended by members of the Royal family and a host of government Ministers.

Dubai's December was also very busy. H.E. Donna Turk, the Consul General of Lebanon and the Dean of the Consular Corps hosted her country's National Day event that was thematically organized to raise awareness about the environment. We also covered the British Business Group's Annual Dinner and the Australian Business Council's Christmas function – two excellent business diplomacy events.

As one year comes to a successful end, we look forward another year with hope, and ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that await us. Now that the diplomatic community in the UAE has its own magazine, we hope to cover more of your events, and to be there with you throughout the coming year. We would also like to welcome your suggestions and ideas.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Javed Malik.**  
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief.

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### GERMANY

#### His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Receives the German President



Abu Dhabi: The President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan received the German President Christian Wulff at Al Diyafa Palace, where an official reception was also held. National Anthems of the two countries were played, followed by a guard of honour. The President also met with the members of the delegation accompanying the German President, which included Jochen Homann of the German Federal Ministry of Economics and

Technology, Dr Clemens von Goetze, Director-General for Foreign Affairs at the Office of the Federal President, Dagmar Freitag, Chair of the Parliament's Sports Committee, Herbert Frankenhauser, Deputy Chairman of the Budget Committee, Michael Glos and Gunter Gloser, members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Michael Hennrich, member of the Health Committee and Ambassador of Germany to the UAE, Nikolai von Schoepff. - WAM

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### H.M. Queen Elizabeth II Greets the President on UAE National Day



Abu Dhabi: The President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan received a letter of greetings from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the UAE National Day. The letter was presented to General His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces during a meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, the Duke of York. During the meeting the Undersecretary of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court and the British Ambassador to UAE, Dominic Jermy was also present. - WAM

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

#### Sheikh Mohammed Opens 8<sup>th</sup> Dubai International Film Festival



Dubai: The 8th Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) was opened by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. DIFF has established itself as a premier film festival aimed at celebrating films and cinema from around the world. This year's event attracted a host of celebrities from different countries who were all warmly received with the traditional Emirati hospitality. The Prime Minister was also accompanied by the Deputy Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Chairman of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority Sheikh Majid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Sheikh Mansour bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and other senior officials. The highlight of the evening was when Sheikh Mohammed, graced the red carpet surrounded by leading international celebrities including Tom Cruise, whose film "Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol," was premiered in the Arena Hall.

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

#### Sheikh Abdullah Meets Dominican Republic's Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Eng. Carlos Morales Troncoso paid a visit to his counterpart H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, to discuss bilateral relations between the Dominican Republic and the United Arab Emirates as well as regional and international affairs. In addition, they exchanged ideas on mutual cooperation in the field of agriculture. He was accompanied by H.E. Mrs Clara Martinez Thedy de Safa, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic in the United Arab Emirates.

## RUSSIA

## Celebrating 40 Years of Russian Diplomatic Relations in the UAE



Abu Dhabi: The Ambassador of Russia to the UAE, His Excellency Andrew V. Andreev hosted a reception in Abu Dhabi to mark 40 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UAE and Russia. The gala reception was attended by a large number of diplomats as well as senior officials from the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr Anwar Mohammed Al Gargash was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister hailed bilateral strategic relations between UAE and Russia and their steady growth over the last four decades. He expressed UAE's keenness to further expand the scope of relations between both countries particularly in the fields of economy, investment and trade. He appreciated the major role Russia plays on the regional and international arenas as well as its efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

In his welcome address, the Russian Ambassador congratulated the leadership and people of UAE on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the National Day, a time, which also marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between UAE and Russia. He paid tribute to the long-standing relations between UAE and Russia and highlighted the cooperation between both countries in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, education, science and culture.

## CHINA

## Arab- China Forum in Abu Dhabi



Abu Dhabi: The Fourth Arab-China Symposium entitled 'Dialogue between Arab and Chinese Civilizations' was held in Abu Dhabi aimed at further bolstering the cultural and business ties between China and the Arab world. The UAE Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahayan while inaugurating the Forum expressed his confidence in the growing relations which are encouraged by the people and the leadership of both regions based on friendship, mutual respect and common interests. He expressed the hope that China-Arab Cooperation Forum would play a significant role in this regard, and said "I am looking forward to the meetings and the discussions that would take constructive steps towards cooperation". The UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E Dr Anwar Mohammad Gargash also spoke on the occasion along with the former deputy foreign minister of China, H.E Jang Fu Chang.

## KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

## Saudi King Calls for Arab Union

Riyadh: – His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia has called for the creation of a Gulf Union at the opening session of the annual Gulf Cooperation Council Summit being held at Riyadh. The Summit was attended by rulers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, while the United Arab Emirates delegation was led by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister. Addressing the participants of the Summit, King Abdullah said, "I ask today that we move from a phase of cooperation to a phase of union within a single entity to achieve joint welfare and stave off threats. History and experience have taught us not to be complacent with our reality and whoever does this will be left behind and face weakness. This call for Union has been welcomed by leaders and people across the Muslim World - Courtesy WAM



# THE FIRST Diplomatic Magazine

## Launched in UAE by Ambassadors & Diplomats



Ambassadors of different countries launching UAE's First Diplomatic Magazine in Abu Dhabi

The UAE's first diplomatic magazine, *the International Diplomat* was launched in style at an impressive Ceremony in the country's capital, Abu Dhabi. The ceremony, at the Beach Rotana hotel, coincided with the Nation's 40<sup>th</sup> National Day celebrations, started with the National anthem of the UAE and was attended by a large number of Ambassadors, consular representatives and business leaders from over 50 countries. Welcoming the guests, the magazine's publisher and editor in chief, Javed Malik - himself a former Ambassador - spoke of the need for a dedicated publication to cover events and activities emanating from Embassies, Consulates and Business Councils representing over 90 countries in the UAE. "The magazine aims to promote goodwill and friendship through positive dialogue between people and we could not have asked for a better place to launch this magazine than the UAE where people from different nationalities, cultures and faiths are all living, working and doing business together for collective success and progress". He termed the UAE "a glowing example of positive co-existence" and paid a rich tribute to the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the President of UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister of UAE and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi whose welcoming policies have made this possible.





H.E. Clara Martinez Thedy Ambassador of the Embassy of Dominican Republic to the UAE, Ms Rosario and Mr Eduardo Cintron Morales (Counsellor of the Embassy of Dominican Republic to the UAE)



Mr Erik Christian Furu, First Secretary of the Royal Norwegian Embassy



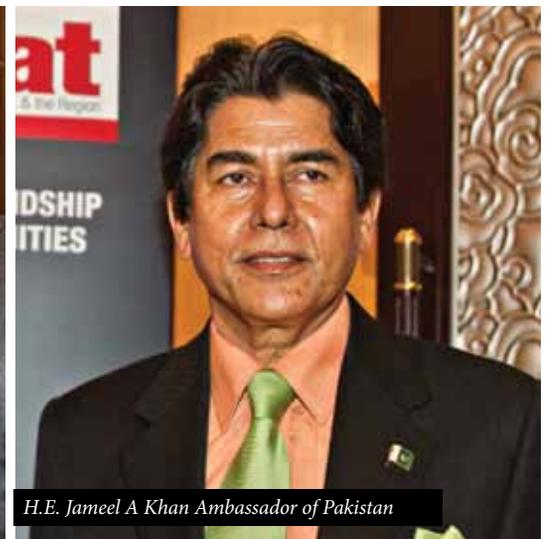
H.E. Ambassador Somchai Charanasomboon and Mrs Viyada Charanasomboon (Thailand)



H.E. Ambassador Yuriy Volodymyrovich Polurez and Mrs Lena Polurez (Ukraine)



Ms Daniella Melikian, H.E. Amb. Vahagn Melikian, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the UAE and Mrs Armine Melikian



H.E. Jameel A Khan Ambassador of Pakistan



Mr Abdullah Naeemat, Mr Abu Ahmed and Dr Mohammed Naeemat



H.E. Fatima Mohammed Ishaq Al Awadhi



H. E. Ambassador of Egypt with his wife Dr Maha Radwan



Diplomat Team, with Chairman & Editor in Chief



H.E. Dr Aleksandr Semeshko Ambassador and his Spouse of Embassy of Belarus



H.E. Janos Gyuris Ambassador of Hungary and a guest



Mr Fareed Abdullah (Press Attache) and Ms Stephanie Sandoval (Cultural Affairs Officer) of Embassy of USA



Mr Asad Burney, Mr Hassan Haroon and a guest



Stephanie Belair



H.E. Ephrain M Hlophe Amb of The Kingdom of Swaziland



Guest

# Abu Dhabi:

## Glittering Metropolis that Rose from the Desert

'I had many dreams I dreamt of our land keeping pace with the growth of the modern world'

H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan (1914-2004)



By: Joanne Al-Samarrae

As the United Arab Emirates celebrated its 40th birthday the capital Abu Dhabi was the focus of everyone's attention. The story of this city is one of humble beginnings and it is a journey of incredible leadership, vision and determination. Over the last 40 years UAE in general and Abu Dhabi in particular has emerged as a leading world player. From pearls to petroleum and from water wells to pleasure domes, Abu Dhabi is a monument to Arab enterprise and multicultural advancement.

Over the years, the UAE has been nurtured by a vision of His Highness, the Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan who was the founding president. Under his wise leadership, and that of his successor, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, the current President of UAE, Abu Dhabi has evolved into a magnificent Emirate and placed the UAE as one of the richest and most prosperous countries in the world.

### History

Historically, Abu Dhabi was a desert ruled by the Bani Yas tribe, from the Liwa Oasis near the Empty Quarter, who later migrated to the coast of the Arabian Gulf where they became the most influential family in the region. The UAE was a desert populated by a few small villages where people sought their livelihood from fishing and diving for pearls off the crystal like coast. Ultimately it was the pearl industry that began the country's first transformation from a fishing harbour to a trading centre and a busy port. Slowly it began to attract a more cosmopolitan population from the nearby Asian subcontinent, Persia and neighboring Arab countries, all hoping to make their fortune in this land of opportunities. Then, in 1952, the first oil site was explored and black gold was discovered, a monumental turning point in Abu Dhabi's history. The discovery of oil paved the way for a promising future for the capital and its growth is rooted in the fact that it sits on nine per cent of the world's oil reserves and 15 per cent of natural gas supplies.

Another milestone in Abu Dhabi's journey occurred on the 2nd December 1971, when two great men – Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan of Abu Dhabi and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum of Dubai, along with the noble rulers of the neighboring "Trucial States," laid the foundations of the federation which became known as the United Arab Emirates. Sheikh Zayed's dream of forming one constitution made up of the seven Emirates became a reality as he was crowned leader, the founder and the first President of the country. It was his strength of character and vision that over the next decade would haul the small country into the 21st century, and start its transformation into one of the most advanced countries in the world as scaffolding rose up and gleaming skyscrapers were built alongside multi-lane motorways.



State-of-the-art infrastructure, schools, hospitals, wide boulevards, shiny offices and sprawling malls now inhabit the former desert. With the Emirate's success, came a rapid jump in its population, as people from all over the world flocked to reap the benefits of the oil boom.

As the new city took hold a focused importance was placed on education. New and improved schools and universities were being built all around the country and existing ones received dramatic renovations, not just architecturally but to the education system, which Sheikh Zayed was determined to overhaul. He once said, 'The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education.' One major change was the education of women; he wanted women to play an important role in the new, fair and equal society he hoped to create. In 2009, Sheikh Khalifa continued his father's work to improve education, launching an ambitious 10-year plan to raise an entrepreneurial and sophisticated workforce.

### Abu Dhabi Today

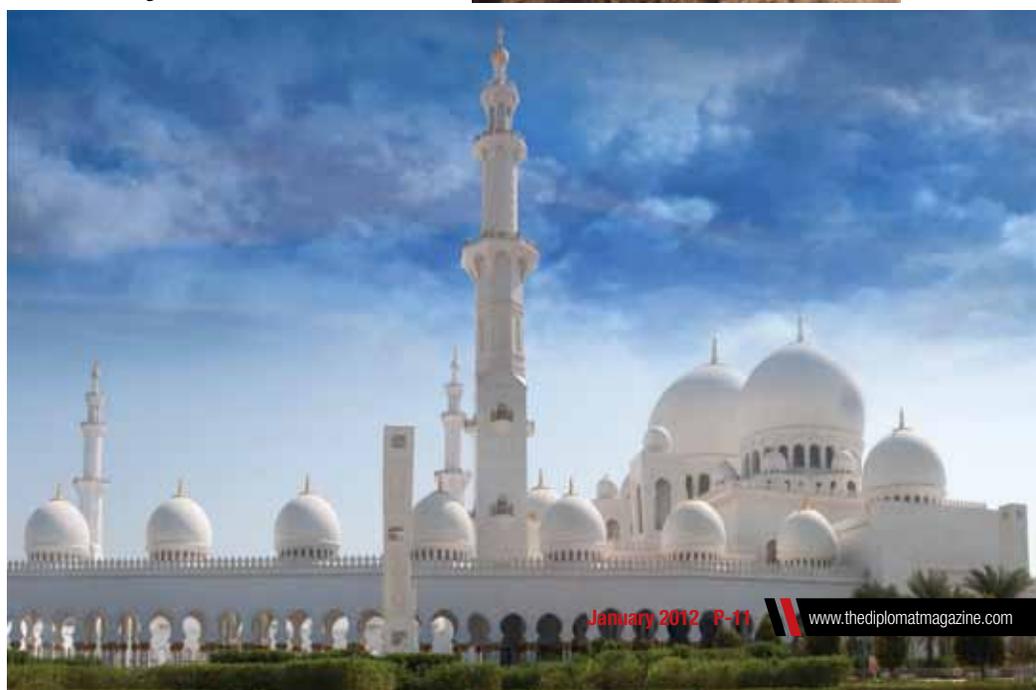
Rapid development over the past four decades has been one of the capital's most

defining characteristics. A new city of lights emerged and the speed of growth was remarkable, but with these new feats the country remained true to its roots, holding dear the values of the Bedouin tribes that had once roamed the land. In the words of the late Sheikh Zayed, 'He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and future, for it is from the past that we learn.' Today it is clear how far Abu Dhabi has actually come as a result of his vision and ingenuity. All the modern day developments that were once plans on paper are now bricks and mortar.

Abu Dhabi hosts world-class sporting, art and music events and boasts one of the most beautiful buildings in the world – the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. The majestic Emirates Palace Hotel dominates the skyline; the pristine beaches give way to the impossibly green ocean islands that now house grand projects that are pushing the boundaries of technology and architecture. Yas Island is one of Abu Dhabi's most recent success stories, housing Ferrari World, the Formula

One race course and numerous five-star hotels. It is a luxury resort for thrill-seekers looking for adventure and entertainment.

Etihad Airlines is another of Abu Dhabi's most important successes and shows no signs of slowing down. Eight years ago Etihad Airways did not exist. Today it is a leading airline, flying four million passengers annually to fifty destinations worldwide, making it the fastest growing commercial airline in history. By 2020 Etihad Airways plans to double the number





of cities they reach and fly twenty-five million passengers yearly. Judging by their determination it seems Etihad Airways will continue to keep flying high.

### Diplomacy and the Economy

Over the years the social landscape of Abu Dhabi has also developed vastly and it has been a shining example of people positively co-existing in the mutual pursuit of their progress, in turn building a nation rich in culture and social values. Under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan and the UAE leaders, the country is growing in stature on the world stage, working to bring international diplomacy and peace to the Arab World, holding out their own country as an example of what can be achieved with mutual collaboration. International conferences, like the World Future Energy Summit are now commonplace and attract Presidents, Kings, and Secretary Generals of United Nations alike. Abu Dhabi hosts world leaders who discuss the challenges facing the globe, particularly on issues including future energy efficiency and ecologically friendly technologies. By engaging political and business leaders they hope to drive innovation and investment into these sectors.

Economically, Abu Dhabi is going from strength to strength and has bucked the trend by not falling into recession during the global economic downturn of recent years.

Indicators show improvements in economic growth, foreign trade, consumer prices and industrial activity. Overall, imports have been multiplying year on year.

### Arts and Culture

The Leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the President and the Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahayan attach particular importance to arts, culture and education which has resulted in huge investment made into these sectors. One major player is the Abu Dhabi Art and Culture Authority, which, since its conception, has served as a platform for promoting art and culture in the Emirate.

### Looking to the Future

Just 500 metres off the coast of Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Island is under transformation. The 27-square kilometre location will be a world-class leisure and cultural hub and aims to house the all of the most important cultural establishments in one place. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is due to open on Saadiyat Island by 2013. The joint venture between Abu Dhabi and France aims to create a prestigious universal museum of epic proportions that will place Abu Dhabi on the cultural map, the classical art museum will house work jointly acquired by France and Abu Dhabi, a unique

bond that will strengthen future ties between the two nations. Another landmark structure to grace the shores of the island is the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi that will open in 2014 with 13,000 square metres of gallery space to display some of the world's most renowned pieces of art. Zayed National Museum will also open the same year to honour the late founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan and will be a testament to the life and times of the beloved national figure, a monument to his inspired vision and his legacy.

Abu Dhabi has re-constructed itself into a flawless city, where extraordinary skyscrapers sit next to grand mosques. Although it has grown, its past remains a prominent factor of its path to success. It is a nation that continues to amaze and astonish as it forges ahead setting new boundaries. Nothing was deemed impossible in the minds of its visionary leaders who transformed the once barren coastal desert region into a world-class city. Congratulations Abu Dhabi on an incredible 40-years and good luck for the next 40!

# Abu Dhabi Art

## Emirati Expressions Reflect Photographic Patriotism

In its second year, Emirati Expressions made its photographic mark on Abu Dhabi in a purely patriotic way. Running until late January 2012, and as part of the third Abu Dhabi Art season, Emirati Expressions has been commended as a beautifully crafted collection of local photographic work and a memorable photo-opportunity to commemorate the UAE's recent National Day celebrations.

Organised by the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), Emirati Expressions is displayed in Manarat Al Saadiyat, in the artistic heart of Abu Dhabi and has been hailed as a truly Emirati inspired project, featuring 10 Emirati artists.

At its opening, H.E. Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahayan, Chairman of TDIC explained, 'Through the Emirati Expressions series, we bring Emirati artists to the core of the Saadiyat Cultural District institutions to nurture and support their talent. We feel this is an important moment for such an initiative, as it allows both artists and the wider UAE community to express their artistic identity, particularly as we [recently, sic] celebrated the 40th anniversary of our country.'

As a nod to the UAE's 40th National Day,

the exhibition worked as a worthy extension to the nation-wide celebrations, as a huge photo-booth was installed at Manarat Al Saadiyat to encourage people to contribute to the exhibition with personal photographs. Visitors were invited to take photographic portraits, which they then pasted onto display boards at Manarat Al Saadiyat. On the event's busiest night, the giant photo-booth took more than 600 images or one image per minute!

### Abu Dhabi Art 2011 Showcases New Pavilion

Abu Dhabi Art 2011 was a monumental success. In its third year, the event not only showcased an impressive collection of acclaimed artwork,

but also introduced its stunning addition and Abu Dhabi's newest arts venue, the UAE Pavilion, to the art world. The Pavilion

is nestled nicely in the heart of Saadiyat Island, in close proximity to the museums in Saadiyat's Cultural District.

Organised by the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC) and the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage (ADACH), Abu Dhabi Art 2011 was an outstanding arts event for the region, welcoming a record 17,000 visitors from all over the world to view the exhibitions and the state-of-the-art Pavilion. Speaking at the event's finale, on the success of this event and of the new Pavilion, His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahayan, Chairman of TDIC and ADACH stated, 'The quality of the works presented at Abu Dhabi Art confirms our position as a leading event for contemporary and modern art. Opening the UAE Pavilion with such a prestigious event as Abu Dhabi Art was a fitting welcome to our visitors, exhibitors, artists, curators and collectors from all over the world.'

The Pavilion designed by Lord Norman Foster was erected in Saadiyat Island, billed as the home of Abu Dhabi Art. The main galleries section is the only fair in the world to be hosted in such an iconic building inspired by the sand dunes of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.



# H.E. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Othman

Ambassador of State of Qatar, Dean of The Diplomatic Corps of UAE

*The International Diplomat* spoke exclusively to the Ambassador of the State of Qatar, and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps of the UAE, His Excellency Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Othman.



## Relationship Between UAE and Qatar

*Magazine (The Diplomat): United Arab Emirates and Qatar have a wide-ranging relationship that has evolved steadily over the years. What would you say are the main aspects of this special relationship?*

H.E. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Othman (The Ambassador): The foundations of the special relationship between Qatar and UAE was laid by the wise leadership of the Emir of Qatar, H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa

Al Thani and his brother President of UAE, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan. They were keen for both countries to achieve cooperation between Qatar and UAE and their vision has materialised over the years through several projects serving the progress of development and brotherhood between the two countries in all fields. The geographical proximity of the two countries has been an added advantage to the businessmen and professionals from both countries to work together.

*The Diplomat: How do you see the level of this cooperation growing in the future?*

Qatar and UAE have the same traditions, conventions, and heritage due to the Arabian geography of the Gulf region. As for businessmen, there are several economic projects between the two countries, especially as Qatar has given priority to Gulf businessmen to work in Qatari markets. Qatar has opened its markets specifically to the Gulf countries, especially after winning the honor of hosting the FIFA World Cup Tournament 2022. Take into consideration that Qatar will have many economic and cultural projects in the coming period, as well as many infrastructure

projects that will be developed in the capital of Qatar, Doha.

*The Diplomat: Qatar and UAE share the global outlook on the major regional issues, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). How do you see the GCC playing a vital role in bringing the countries and the people of the region closer together?*

The Ambassador: I believe that the level of cooperation between GCC is quite good; the GCC Summits usually discuss the major issues that are directed in the interests of the Gulf community. Moreover, the Gulf country leaders are looking out for the interests of their people; they have inspired the spirit, information and modern requirements to achieve the concept of modernization, sustainable development and a cultural renaissance in all human, economic, social, cultural and security aspects of their countries.

*The Diplomat: As the Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the UAE, you play a significant role in expanding the scope of relations between the two countries. What are the initiatives you have taken in this regard?*

The Ambassador: My role as the Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the UAE is to coordinate the development of the relations between the two countries by transferring the views to the officials in both countries for the common interests of the two countries and their people. I have taken several steps to expand the scope of relations between the UAE and Qatar. One such initiative was to establish long-term strategic cooperation between Qatar and the UAE in the shape of Project Dolphin with an initial investment of approximately \$4 billion. There are several other projects on which I am working in order to further strengthen the links between the State of Qatar and the UAE in various fields of politics, economics, culture and sport.



Ambassador with The President of UAE,  
H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan



The Ambassador with H.H. Sheikh Zayed  
bin Sultan Al Nahayan



Ambassador with The UAE Prime Minister  
H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al  
Maktoum

I also coordinate between the two countries in many important meetings between the leaders of both countries, both bilaterally, as well as within the ambit of the Gulf Summits. I organize various meetings and dialogues at a ministerial level, between the State of Qatar and UAE, which are aimed at enhancing the level of cooperation in a variety of fields. Another important aspect of my work is the ongoing efforts pertaining to the meetings that are held in the UAE aimed at joint projects between Qatar, the UAE and other countries in the GCC. These meetings are continuously followed up on a daily basis in order to achieve the desired results.

### The State of Qatar

*The Diplomat: The wise and able leadership of Their Highnesses the Rulers of Qatar, has steered the country into a new level of excellence, especially in attracting the world's leading companies to establish their presence in the State. What are the incentives offered by your country for investors and potential businesses?*

The Ambassador : On the directives of the Emir of Qatar the State of Qatar opened its markets to investors and businessmen from the GCC and the world, opening branches of their companies (especially in real estate and investment) in Doha in order to facilitate their activities. These incentives are to support businessmen and entrepreneurs, particularly from the GCC, to enter the Qatari market. We are confident that Qatar will have a new and giant real estate boom synchronized with their successful bid to host the World Cup 2022. This great event will promote the development of infrastructure in Qatar, as well as the construction of stadiums and an interior railway "metro" to avoid traffic jams and many other projects.

### Qatar National Vision 2030

*The Diplomat: By launching the Qatar National Vision 2030, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, has offered a road map with a strategic plan aimed at development and progress in the State of*

### *Qatar. Would you tell us more about the Qatar National Vision 2030 and its objectives?*

The Ambassador: The Qatar National Vision 2030, which was approved under the Emiri Decree of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, aims to transform Qatar by the year 2030 into a developed country that can achieve sustainable development and ensure the continuation of high standards of living for its people, generation after generation. The Qatar National Vision 2030 provides a general framework for the development of comprehensive, national strategies and implementation plans that will take the State of Qatar to new heights of progress and development across all fields.

The most important general features of the Qatar National Vision 2030 are achieving modernization while simultaneously maintaining the traditions of the State of Qatar and the needs of the present and future generations. It requires the wise vision of His Highness, the Emir, who is conscious of the growth and expansion of the country. He is focused on the path of development, the size and quality of the targeted expatriate labor force. Finally, the vision takes into account the economic and social development, the impact of this development and the protection of the environment.

### The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC)

*The Diplomat: The establishment of the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) was a major step that provides many opportunities to foreign investors. Tell us more about the QFC and how it has opened new horizons of opportunities?*

The Ambassador: The Authority of QFC provides a sustainable unique platform for regional growth in financial services, with a particular focus on the sectors of reinsurance, self-insurance, asset management and access to the return of emerging markets. The QFC leads the expansion process in the financial services sector in Qatar, dependent on the current large assets owned by the State of Qatar and plays a pivotal role in the strategy of

the State of Qatar for its long term plan of diversification.

Regarding your question about how to open new horizons of opportunities, I would like to mention that the Authority of QFC welcomes national and international companies and intends to be part of the story of growth and success of the financial services sector in the State of Qatar.

### Tourism

*The Diplomat: Qatar is also a popular destination for tourism – your airlines and Qatar Tourism Authority are working hard to promote tourism to become a popular tourism destination. What steps are being taken in this area?*

The Ambassador: Qatar offers a perfect blend of traditional cultural heritage and modern state-of-the-art facilities. This provides visitors to the State of Qatar, whatever their reason for visiting, a unique double-faceted experience. They can soak up the Qatari historical legacy of traditions, culture and heritage and enjoy the finest aspects of development and progress, which in Qatar are thriving.

The General Authority for Tourism is entrusted to represent and promote the development of Qatar as a distinct tourist destination for businessmen, scholars and athletes as well as tourists who are seeking comfort, entertainment and recreation. The increase in the number of travellers coming to Qatar forms the nucleus of the new strategy of the General Authority for Tourism and millions of travellers use Doha International Airport and Qatar Airways as a transit point for global destinations. Today, Qatar Airlines operates a modern fleet of 72 Airbus and Boeing aircraft to 84 destinations around the world. We plan to increase this number significantly over the next few years and the fleet size will double to more than 120 aircraft by 2013.

The New Doha International Airport is expected to receive 50 million passengers a year when it opens in 2012 and will be able to accommodate 320,000 flights. The State of Qatar intends to increase



The Ambassador with H.H. UAE Foreign Minister H.H. Sheikh Abdullah and H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan



The Ambassador with H.H. The Emir of Qatar



The Ambassador Presenting a Gift to the President and Rulers of Emirates

investment in tourism infrastructure in a \$17 billion deal intended to secure Qatar's ability to attract visitors.

**Qatar's Role in the GCC and on the World Stage**

*The Diplomat : Qatar has made its presence felt as a leading country within the GCC and the Arab world. How do you see the increased role being played by the State of Qatar at an international level?*

The Ambassador : The adoption of a comprehensive 2030 vision for national development, announced by His Highness the Emir, provides a vision for shaping a successful future for the State of Qatar across various areas. This vision is to create and ensure Qatar remains a developed nation capable of keeping pace with other countries. The vision of His Highness the Emir is to enable the State of Qatar to match all the major countries in the world, not only

on a political level, but also economically, culturally and in the sporting arena.

**The International Diplomat Magazine**

*The Diplomat : The International Diplomat is the first magazine for the diplomatic community in the UAE. How do you see this important initiative as the Dean of the Diplomatic Community in the UAE?*

The Ambassador : I welcome this new and innovative idea, which is a unique concept that will greatly benefit all diplomats working in the UAE. There was a need to have such a publication that provides information and covers the diplomatic activities and events in the UAE. It will also benefit the diplomatic community in their work, by sharing their ideas and thoughts. I congratulate the publishers of the magazine on this important step and I wish the *International Diplomat* magazine all the success, particularly because it comes at a very important time.

**As the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps of the UAE**

*The Diplomat : In addition to your role as the Ambassador of the State of Qatar, you are also the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps of the UAE. Tell us more about this role?*

As for my role as the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in the UAE, we work together and hold meetings with all diplomats in the UAE, from Arab, European, American, Asian or African countries to discuss how we can facilitate their diplomatic missions in the country. We act as a bridge that coordinates with the UAE Foreign Ministry. As the Dean, I also organize welcome and farewell ceremonies for all the Ambassadors arriving and leaving the UAE. During their tenure, I help and assist them with their missions in the UAE, to serve our countries, to strengthen cooperative relations between our countries and the UAE and to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation at a bilateral and collective level.

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## National Day of State of Qatar

His Excellency Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Othman, the Ambassador of the State of Qatar hosted their country's National Day. The event was attended by a number of country Ambassadors, diplomats and government officials and businessmen from the local and expatriate community. Also present were cadets, officers from the Abu Dhabi police force and the Army Club of State of Qatar.



Army Club



Ambassador of Qatar, with cadets and officers of Abu Dhabi Police



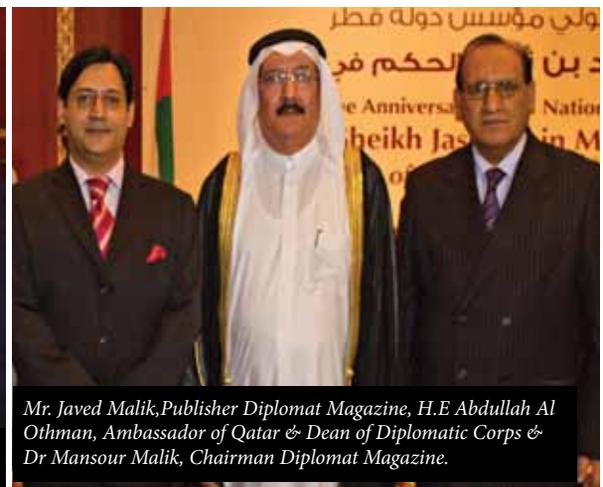
Mr Nasser Hassan Al Bataynah, Dr Mohammed Abu Al-Faraj Sadiq, Mr Yousif Al Mahmoud, Deputy Ambassador, Qatar Embassy and Air Commodore Ilyas Sultan



Dr Abdelwahab Mustafa with Amb of Qatar



Mr Fared Abdullah - Press Attache, U.S. Embassy, Ms Isabel Mainville, Mr Patrick Caron and Mr Erik Christian Furu - First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy



Mr. Javed Malik, Publisher Diplomat Magazine, H.E Abdullah Al Othman, Ambassador of Qatar & Dean of Diplomatic Corps & Mr Mansour Malik, Chairman Diplomat Magazine.



Amb of Qatar with Amb of Oman H.E. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Qatabi



Mr Mohanad Abu Shahin with Mr Tarek Nabil



Mr and Mrs Kabu And Pauline Okai-Davies

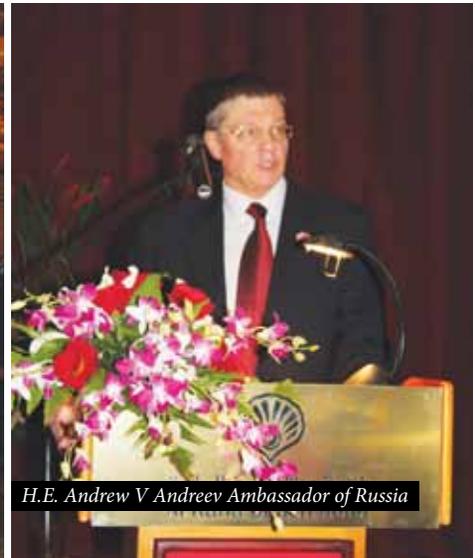


Mr Fahed Al Harbi, Mr Khamis Dharmaki, Mr Mohammed Al Kaabi, M. Al-Qaisi – Embassy of Kingdom of Bahrain Mr Yousif Khalil Al Yasi





H.E. Andrew V Andreev Ambassador of Russia, with other eminent guests, dignitaries and VIP's



H.E. Andrew V Andreev Ambassador of Russia

## Russia Celebrates 40 Years of Diplomatic Relations with the UAE

The Ambassador of Russia in the UAE, His Excellency Andrew V. Andreev hosted a reception in Abu Dhabi to mark 40 years of excellent diplomatic relations between the UAE and Russia. The Guest of Honour was the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr Anwar Mohammed Al Gargash.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister described the bilateral strategic relations between UAE and Russia and their steady growth over the last four decades. The Russian Ambassador's welcome address commemorated the leadership and people of the UAE on reaching their 40<sup>th</sup> National Day.

The lavish event was held at the Raha Beach Hotel in Abu Dhabi and was attended by numerous diplomats as well as senior officials from the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*More images of this event are on our website:  
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H.E. Dr Anwar Al Gargash Minister of State - Foreign Affairs



Olga Adigamova & Mohammed Khatir



Radomir Kasic (Ambassador of Bosnia & Herzegovina) L. Costas A. Papademas (Ambassador of Cyprus) & Marc Scheer (Grand Duchy)



Alexander Yurin, Janos Gyuris (Ambassador of Hungary) & Wife



The Ambassador with distinguished guests



Damir Valeev and Diana Bayzakova



Alexander V. Homich & Alexander Yurin



H.H. Niculae Goia (Ambassador of Romania) Vural Altay (Ambassador of Turkey), and Jean Paul Tarud (Ambassador of Chile)



Saleh Al Saadi and Farooq

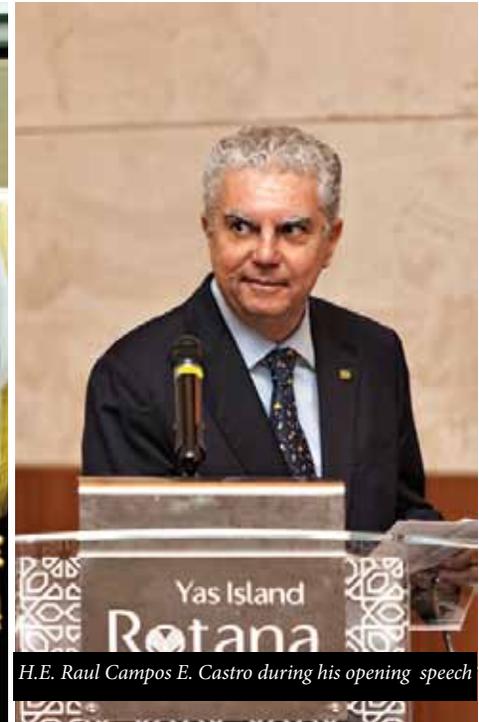


Dr Igor Denisov & Jumal Alotiba





H.E. Raul Campos E. Castro (Brazilian Ambassador), Sheikha Lubna bint Al Qasimi (Ministry of Foreign Trade) Cake Cutting



H.E. Raul Campos E. Castro during his opening speech

## National Day of Brazil

The Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Raul Campos E. Castro, hosted Brazil's National Day Reception in Abu Dhabi. The Guest of Honour was Her Excellency, Sheikha Lubna bint Al Qasimi, Minister of Foreign Trade. H.E. Ahmed Abdullah Al Musala, the Director of the Asian and African Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry, and a large number of diplomats, business leaders and distinguished members of the community also attended the glamorous event.

*More images of this event are on our website: [www.thediplomatmagazine.com](http://www.thediplomatmagazine.com)*

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Guests at the event



H.E. Prof. Semakula Kiwanuka (Ambassador of Uganda) and Veronica



Mike And Elvis Bacon



*Dr Mohammed Al-Naeemat ( Chairman) of Adbox and H.E. Raul Campos E Castro*



*H.E. Raul Campos E Castro, Mr Geraldo Aguiar, and Mrs Sylvia Holzmeister Castro*



*Ms Jennifer Bondoc and Ms Zanete Oliveira (Embassy of Brazil)*



*Ms Silmara Ruiz, Ms Petra Uendu, Ms Beth Aguiar and Mr Geraldo Aguiar (CFO) of Dubai Aluminium Company Ltd*



*Capt. Leonardo Jaeger (Pilot) of Emirates Airlines and Mrs Thamyris Jaeger of Apex Brazil*



*H.E. Somchai Charanasomboon (Thai Ambassador) and Wife*



*Dr Maha Radwan (Wife of the Egyptian Ambassador) and Mrs Sylvia Holzmeister Castro (Wife of the Brazilian Ambassador)*



Dignitaries and special guests celebrate Bahrain's National Day



Distinguished guests at the event



Distinguished guests at the event

## National Day of Bahrain

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, H.E. Mohammed bin Hamad Saqr Al Moawda hosted their country's National Day Reception in Abu Dhabi. The Guest of Honour was Dr Rashid Ahmed bin Fahad, Minister of the Environment and Water. A number of diplomats, members of Abu Dhabi's police force and cadet academy, and distinguished business people also attended the reception to mark the occasion.



Ms Farah Hariri of Lebanon Embassy and H.E. Grace Relucio Princesa (Philippines)



Eng'r Hanna and Mrs Majda Al-Dawani of Bahrain Embassy



Cadets from Dubai Police Academy



Distinguished guests at the event



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H.E. Nokerguly Atagulyev with his family celebrated Turkmenistan's National Day

## National Day of Turkmenistan

His Excellency Nokerguly Atagulyev, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan, hosted his country's National Day reception in Abu Dhabi. H.E. Oraz Charyyev, Turkmenistan's Consul General, attended the event alongside a number of diplomats and distinguished businessmen

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Distinguished guests and members of Turkmenistan's Business community attended the event



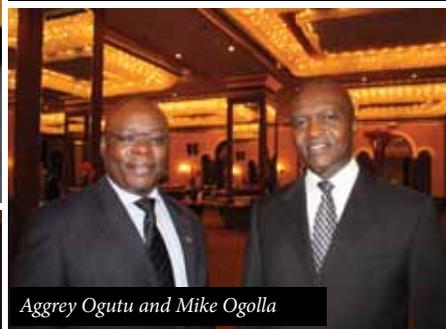
*The Ambassador of Kenya, H.E Mohammed Abdi Jillo with Guest of Honour, H.E. Dr Maitha Salem Al Shamsi, UAE Minister of State, Abdul Salam Hareb Al Rumaithi, Director of Protocols and guests*

## National Day of Kenya

The Ambassador of Kenya, H.E Mohammed Abdi Jillo, hosted Kenya's National Day Reception in the Hilton Hotel, Abu Dhabi. Guest of Honour, Her Excellency Dr Maitha Salem Al Shamsi, UAE Minister of State was present alongside Abdul Salam Hareb Al Rumaithi, Director of Protocols at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Diplomats representing various countries were present along with members of the Kenyan community.



*Tamer Mansour (Ambassador of Egypt) Abdourahmane DIOP (Ambassador of Senegal) and Ahmed Al Siddiq (Ambassador of Sudan)*



*Aggrey Ogutu and Mike Ogolla*



*Inna and Jertnide*



*Samson Kembi (Kenya Embassy) L Benjamin Muka, John Kyovi (Kenya Consulate) and Margaret Njogu*



*Toya, Dee Azlan, Kora*



## H.E. Mr Walter Deplazes Consul General of Switzerland

H.E. Mr Walter Deplazes, the Swiss Consul General in Dubai, spoke to *the International Diplomat* about the great relationship between Switzerland and the UAE, the similarities between the two nations and how the late Ruler, H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan enjoyed holidaying in Switzerland.

Mr Deplazes was posted to Dubai in January 2011, his first Middle Eastern appointment, following a period spent in Vancouver, Canada. He describes his immediate fondness for the region, 'I am new to Dubai and I am enjoying the UAE very much. I have travelled a little bit and I would like to travel and discover a bit more of the country.'

The Swiss consulate has been present in Dubai since 1985 and the ties between the two countries extend back further, 'The Swiss have had diplomatic relations with the UAE since 1972, one year after the Union of the Federation.'

Housed in the Dubai World Trade Centre, built in 1978, Mr Deplazes reflects on the home

of the Swiss Consulate offices in relation to the rapid progress the UAE has witnessed over the last four decades. 'If you see photos of the region in the 1950s and a photo in 1978 of the Dubai World Trade Centre, this is the only tower standing and look what is standing around it today.' He ponders too, that the Dubai World Trade Centre represents the start of a modern Dubai.

### Bilateral Relations

The Swiss Consulate has close ties with the Swiss Business Hub, located on the 14th floor of the Dubai World Trade Centre. They collaborate to promote Swiss products, investment possibilities and financial services in

the UAE. The Consulate interacts too with the Swiss Business Council (SBC), a non-profit organisation, licensed by the UAE Chambers of Commerce & Industry, which was established in 1996 and has branches in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

There are currently around 2,000 Swiss expats in the UAE, with the largest proportion of around 1,700 living in Dubai. Swiss expats work in a variety of industries. The attraction for the Swiss to move to the UAE and establish business here is clear, according to Mr Deplazes, 'the business environment in the UAE is very good. Many of the Swiss companies have their headquarters here, because this is a hub geographically with a well connected airport to the whole world.'

Famed for their watch-making (Switzerland is responsible for half of the world's production of watches), banking and chocolate production are also synonymous with the Swiss. With a tempting selection of Lindt chocolates on his desk, Mr Deplazes mentions how popular the "Kit Kat" is, made by Nestle and manufactured here. The Swiss-founded Nestle is the world's largest nutrition, health and wellness company. Other large companies with a presence in the UAE include the Swiss ABB Group, a leader in power and automation technologies and many other Swiss companies too, with growth too in the small to medium sized companies, 'There is a growth in the small to medium sized companies. After the crisis, a few people



‘We are both federations and we are very proud of our identities. Switzerland is also a multi-cultural nation, as we have the German, the French, Italian and Romansh cultures’

left and now they are back in Dubai and they are coping very well.'

The Swiss Consulate continuously monitors the economic and other projects in Dubai and the Northern Emirates. For example, on a recent trip to Fujairah, Mr Deplazes was interested to learn that Fujairah plans to become a world leader in oil banking, as well as a National Green Reserve.

The business field between the two nations is evolving as Mr Deplazes points out. 'The relations between both countries are very good and are evolving by the year. The free trade agreement will be ratified very soon, which is a double taxation and an investment agreement.



'We integrate the Swiss business council very well with our activities.' Mr Deplazes's visit to the Dubai Air Show was a recent example, as he explains, 'I had the pleasure of visiting the Dubai Airshow with my colleague the military attaché from Abu Dhabi and we had a visit from the Brigadier General from Switzerland, who was on an official mission here in the UAE.'

**Similarities between the UAE and Switzerland**

The two nations not only share business interests, they are both small nations, with Switzerland's population of only 8 million. Mr Deplazes notes other commonalities, 'we



**Consular Initiatives**

The Swiss Consulate facilitates bilateral relations between Switzerland and the UAE but also promotes Swiss culture and events in Dubai and the Northern Emirates. Consular services to the Swiss community, include issuing passports, certifying the civil and labour status of Swiss nationals and according to Mr Deplazes, 'the most important consular service, without exception, is issuing visas. We issue some 13,000 visas per year from Switzerland, which is an impressive number for such a small country.'

A lot of Swiss Ministers visit Abu Dhabi and Dubai, who are introduced to the Swiss business group's members when possible,



are both federations and we are very proud of our identities. Switzerland is also a multi-cultural nation, as we have the German, the French, Italian and Romansh cultures.'

The countries also share educational ties. In 2009, the Swiss opened the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne Campus in Ras Al Khaimah. The Institute provides research opportunities for developing alternative energy sources and optimising consumption. Recent projects have included cost-saving energy solutions for cooling houses and wider green issues. Solar energy is another important topic. The Institute is shared with the emirate's investment arm, the RAK Investment Authority.



By: Lisa Crowther

**Tourism**

A further similarity is that the two countries are both popular tourist destinations. Visitors to Switzerland from the UAE number over 30,000, 'there are many places in Switzerland where the Emiratis like to visit but there is one city which is favoured, which is Geneva'. One measure of Switzerland's popularity is the frequency of Emirates flights there from Dubai. 'There are three Emirates flights daily to Geneva and Zurich', Mr Deplazes explains.

**Swiss Art Gate UAE**

On a cultural level, Swiss Art Gate UAE initiates, fosters and organises cultural and educational projects in the UAE, by international artists, with a focus on the works and performances by Swiss and Arab artists in music, visual arts, dance, literature, drama, film and news media.

Swiss Art Gate UAE is a private entity, and, as Kurt Blum, General Manager describes, one which is dedicated to 'fostering projects in arts and culture. It is a unique Arts Council in the world because normally arts councils are government institutions.'

**Recapturing Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan's Swiss Moments**

Perhaps the most famous tourist to

Switzerland was His Highness, the Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan who spent a lot of time with his family holidaying in Lausanne. In June 2011, Swiss Art Gate UAE coordinated the Emirati-Swiss Friendship Forum, which was held in Lausanne in collaboration with Emirati artists based in Switzerland. This was the first time Swiss Art Gate UAE had organized a focal Emirati cultural event abroad. One of the main events was a photographic exhibition, featuring 18 photos, which recaptured the Late Sheikh Zayed's time in Switzerland between 1971 and 2004.

The title of the exhibition 'Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, Founder of the UAE, in Switzerland - Through the lens of Noor Ali Rashid' presented images by the Late Royal photographer, Noor Ali Rashid, who portrayed his visits in Switzerland, in a park in Lausanne, meetings with dignities from all over the world, and the Late Sheikh Zayed on tour around Lake Geneva. Remarking on the exhibitions, H.E. Abdelredha Abdullah Khoori, Ambassador of the UAE to Switzerland, said 'I had the honour to accompany His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, during his private visits to Switzerland in the summer period. His Highness was a lover of nature

in general, and of the Swiss countryside in particular. He used to attend to state matters from his resort in Geneva.'

Mr Deplazes mentions that in November 2011, under the Patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, the same photographic display, renamed the 'Late Sheikh Zayed's Journey in Switzerland', was exhibited at the Swiss Residence in Abu Dhabi.

Swiss Art Gate UAE's other art exhibition in Lausanne included, 'Colors of the Emirates', which showcased four young emerging artists from the UAE, supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development of the UAE, in co-operation with the Emirates Fine Arts Society. While the fashion event, also in Lausanne, '40 Years of Elegance Emirati Style' by Mona Al Mansouri, presented the renowned Emirati designer, Mona Al Mansouri, who unveiled a stunning collection of 25 dresses that reflected the last 40 years of fashion in the UAE.

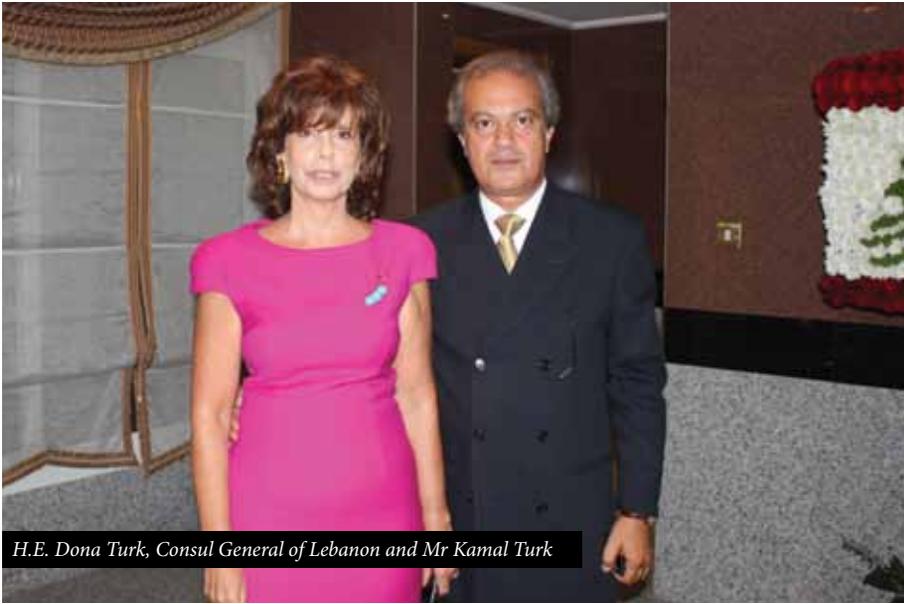
Looking ahead, the future of the joint relationship between Switzerland and the UAE is promising, as Mr Deplazes remarks, 'such a successful country which has known a very rapid progress in the last 40 years has got great visions for the future.'



Images by  
 Switzerland Tourism & Swiss Art Gate  
<http://www.myswitzerland.com>  
 Scan the code to visit site

“Such a successful country which has known a very rapid progress in the last 40 years has got great visions for the future.”





H.E. Dona Turk, Consul General of Lebanon and Mr Kamal Turk



## National Day of Lebanon

Her Excellency, the Consul General of Lebanon Dona Turk hosted Lebanon's National Day reception. The theme of the reception was "Think Green" and the Consul General, who is also the dean of the consular corps made an eloquent welcome address in which she also touched on the importance of environmental issues. Consul Generals, business leaders and distinguished members of the Lebanese, Emirati and expatriate communities in the UAE, attended the event.

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H.E. Emad Al Madani and H.E. Tariq Hamad



Kamal Turk with guest



Wissam Khalifeh and Omer Hassan Elamin



George Aziz and Salim Shair



Hala and Zein



Majed Malak and Tamara



The Consul General with UAE Minister, H.E. Dr. Rashed Bin Fahad



Alfed Mady and Kamal Turk



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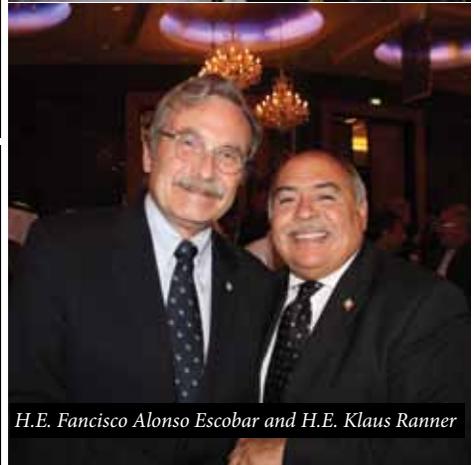
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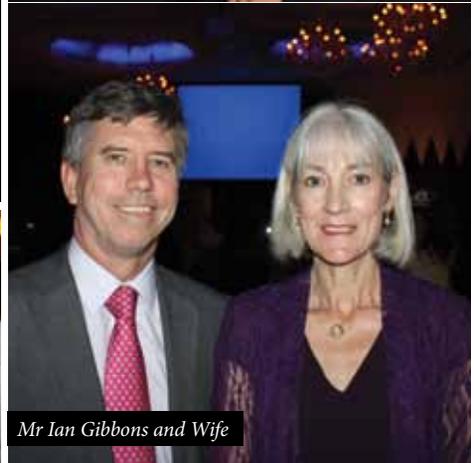
*Cake cutting ceremony during the event*



*Atiq Juma Faraj & Tariq Al Hamad (Kuwait, CG)*



*H.E. Fancisco Alonso Escobar and H.E. Klaus Ranner*



*Mr Ian Gibbons and Wife*

## National Day of State of Qatar

H.E. Faris Al Naumi, the Consul General of Qatar hosted their country's National Day at the magnificent Raffles Hotel in Dubai. The event was attended by a number of diplomats, government officials and businessmen from the local and expatriate community.

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*Ahmed and Fardeen, Bouchra*



*Ahmed Saleh, Ahmed Elyasi and Saeed Al Najjar*





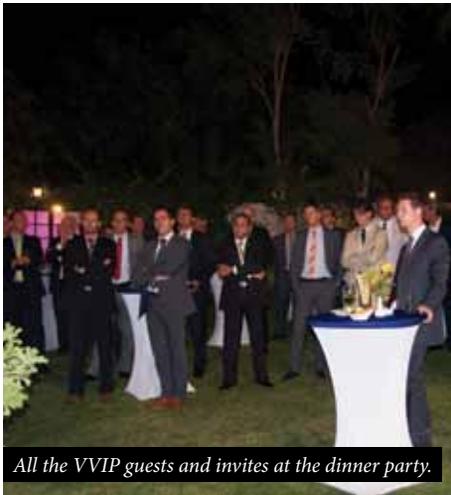
*Kees V. A. Van Spronsen CG of Netherlands the host of the Dinner Event*



*Frank Jansen MD of Netherlands Aerospace Group, Chief guest of this event*

## Dutch Consul General Hosts Dignitaries

His Excellency Kees V. A. Van Spronsen, the Consul General of The Netherlands, hosted a dinner at his residence to welcome the country's delegation to the Dubai Airshow. Mr Frank Jansen, Managing Director of The Netherlands Aerospace spoke on the occasion which was attended by diplomats, Emirati and expatriate businessmen and members of the Dutch in the UAE



*All the VVIP guests and invites at the dinner party.*



*Jacques Geijsen GM of Avio Diepen with Lion Zeldenrust, Attache Immigration Affairs*



*Professor Nara Srinivasan with Dr Abdulla Al Hashimi SVP Emirates*



*Joseph Mouawad Ibrahim with Macro Smit and Paul Van Den Brink*



*Loveraj Talwar with Eng Mohamed Al Noori and Macro Smit*



*Fanus Schoeman, South African Consulate General Dubai with Judith*



*Rob Broere Vice President IT PSS Emirates Airlines with Jan A Demmink*



*Mangaret Van Spronsen (hostess) with Brigadier General I.S. Van Duurling*

# Sky High Deals and Record Crowds at Dubai Airshow 2011

Perfect weather, exciting aircraft and major business deals formed the backbone of the Dubai Air Show, now considered a main event on the radar of major aerospace companies. It was the 12th iteration of the successful biennial show to be held in the UAE.

Hosting major manufacturers, airlines, research companies, training institutions and other key players in the aviation industry, the show was held at Dubai Airport from the 13th - 17th of November. The show boasted around 960 exhibitors from 50 countries, a significant increase since 2009. Alison Weller, Managing Director of the Air Show's organiser



H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum,  
Chairman Emirates Airlines & Aviation City

F&E Aerospace, said: "We promised a Dubai Air Show that would be bigger and better than ever and we did not disappoint. The past week has been notable for its buoyant crowds,

spectacular aerial displays and astonishing order announcements."

## Emirates Record Breaking Deal with Boeing

Whilst major business is always done at the Dubai Air Show, this event will be remembered for the record breaking deal between Emirates Airlines and manufacturing giant Boeing, as the UAE airline put pen to paper on a deal that will potentially be worth \$26billion. The order, for more than 50 Boeing 777 aircraft (worth over \$18billion), the option to purchase on 12 more and other agreements, may mean the final agreement will be worth even more.

The Boeing 777 is a well-known and highly valued member of the Emirates fleet that is used in many medium and long haul sectors.

At the time, this deal represented Boeing's biggest ever order in terms of dollars spent. Emirates is keen to expand its global network further with the introduction of Dubai World Central airport, currently open to cargo traffic and expected to open to commercial traffic in the coming years. Emirates expect to fully move their passenger operations to the new airport by 2025. His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum,

Chairman of Emirates, confirmed this by saying "We have an ambitious and strategic plan to continue growing our international network and especially increasing our long-haul, non-stop routes."

The direct rival to the 777, the Airbus A350-1000, would have been a competitor on this order, but the deal went to Boeing. The new aircraft ordered by Emirates should enter service in 2015. The Boeing 777-300ER is expected to have a rather extended shelf life, as confirmed by Jim Albaugh, Head of the commercial jets section of Boeing, who stated, "The 777-300ER is a plane that's in demand. I can tell you that we're talking to a half dozen other customers right now."

Not to be outdone, Qatar Airways also made a large order at the show; however, their money was given to Airbus rather than Boeing. The Doha based airline, represented by CEO Akbar al-Baker, ordered 50 Airbus A320neo's (the new generation version of the successful Airbus A320 designed to rival the Boeing 737 new generation, as used by FlyDubai). They also doubled their existing order of the 'super jumbo' A380 to 10.

Boeing certainly considered the show to be a huge success for them and Charlie Miller, Vice President of international



*JF-17 Thunder fighter jets, by Pakistan & China at the Air show.*



communications for the US plane maker said “Dubai 2011 has been a very positive air show for Boeing. We have sealed key agreements that mark a significant step forward in our partnerships in the United Arab Emirates and across the Middle East region. And our Middle East customers have heavily endorsed Boeing’s innovative family of commercial airplanes with outstanding orders.”

Boeing had previously released a statement mentioning that they expect the Middle East to need an additional 2,520 aircraft over the next 20 years.

Engine manufacturers also did good

business at the air show with US-based CFM International the big winner, netting a \$6.7billion order. Pratt & Whitney announced an undisclosed deal to provide the engines for the Qatar Airways A320neo order and Boeing walked away with over \$1billion in orders and service contracts.

By the time the show had closed, it was estimated that there were \$63.3billion worth of orders placed; a massive increase on the \$14 billion placed in the 2009 event. The aviation industry has faced some tricky times as of late and this was encouraging news to businesses everywhere whose interests lie within this sector.

### Growth in Gulf Aviation

The Gulf continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in world aviation and this was reflected in the huge order book at Dubai Air Show during a time when many European and US airlines are struggling to make ends meet. The Gulf region certainly enjoys good cash flow, especially compared to the Eurozone, which has suffered somewhat of a crisis as of late.

Inaugurated by His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum, Dubai Air Show played host to the first GATE (Gulf Aviation Training Event) conference that





focused on how the region must expand its training capabilities to make sure the airlines will be correctly staffed in the future. It is estimated that the region will need 36,000 new pilots and over 50,000 additional engineering personnel over the next 20 years and, as a result, the need for new staff is both urgent and obvious. This conference provided a great foundation for the region to build upon anticipated training demands.

The conference also attracted high profile keynote speakers, including Captain Randolph Babbitt, Administrator of the US FAA (Federal Aviation Authority) and William Voss, CEO of the US-based Flight Safety Foundation. The GATE conference closed with a signing of the GATE Memorandum that identified four main areas of concern regarding local training institutions, such as outsourcing, training standards, training methods and industry reviews.

### Formidable Flying Displays

Whilst many came to the air show to focus on new business opportunities, there was also plenty to see for the aviation enthusiast. Multiple flying displays on each day of the show ensured that plane spotters everywhere got the chance to see aircraft that do not usually feature in Dubai.

The crowds were dazzled by the intricate

flying of the UAE's very own aerobatic flight team known as 'Al Fursan', who performed their first time at the Dubai Air Show. These pilots, flying their Alenia Aermacchi MB-339 aircraft, are considered the very best that the UAE air force has produced and, as such, are chosen to represent their country in a way few could even dream about. The team flew wonderful displays with a large emphasis on the UAE's 40th anniversary celebrations and proudly displayed the country's national colours through smoke entrails on the backs of their aircraft.

Additional aerobatic teams, such as the Patrouille de France (from the French air force) and the Frecce Tricolori (from the Italian air force) flew dazzling displays, wowing crowds not only over the airport but also over Dubai Marina. Other aircraft that were featured over the duration of the show included the Eurofighter Typhoon, the Dassault Rafale and the McDonnell Douglas F-15E. The UAE air force was also well represented with static displays including the Boeing AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, the Boeing C-17 Globemaster III (a heavy transport aircraft) and the Lockheed C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft. The air show also showcased a regional debut for the new Boeing 787 'Dreamliner', an aircraft that only started its commercial flights in late October 2011.

The 2011 Air Show was a massive success,

measured not just by the size of the order book, but also in how well attended the show was. Visitor numbers were up 6.7 per cent, by up to about 56,500 attendees, compared to the last Dubai Air Show in November 2009. The amount of visitors did not include the huge amount of people who stood outside the exhibition with their eyes to the skies watching the stunning displays of fast aircraft and superb airmanship. This Show also represented the last event that will be held at Dubai Airport with future events expected to move to the world-class facilities at Dubai World Central from 2013 onwards.

The event finally closed with the Dubai Air Show Gala Dinner held at the Meydan Stadium. An audience of almost 5,000 was treated to dinner and the songs of Welsh music superstar, Tom Jones.

Guests included Tim Clark, President of Emirates Airlines, Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice-Chairman of Dubai Duty Free, and His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of The Emirates Group.

The Dubai Air Show was organized under the kind patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai in co-operation with the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Dubai Airports Authority and the UAE armed forces.



By: Daniel Evans

## BBG Christmas Ball and Fund Raiser

The British Business Group (BBG) hosted their annual members' Christmas Ball on December 9th, at the beautiful British Embassy Gardens in Dubai.

The British Consul General, Mr Guy Warrington was the Special Guest along with the Deputy Consul General, Mr Ian Gibbons who were welcomed by the Chairman of the BBG, Mr Jonathan Davidson and his wife Victoria. Also present were Mr Nigel Page from the Emirates Group and his wife Claire. The BBG's Ball also raised funds for the British Community Assistance Fund (BCAF), Gulf for Good, the Flying Angel Appeal and the Royal British Legion's (RBL) Poppy Appeal.



British Consul General, Mr Guy Warrington



Chairman of the BBG, Mr Jonathan Davidson



Mr Davidson at the Fund Raising event



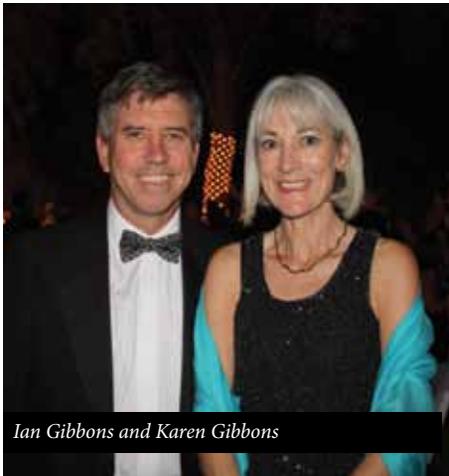
Mark Ford, Emiley Woodsend, Marie Moore and Peter Moore



Mark Gibson, Karen Potts and Chris Woodey



Julie, Marc, Elliem and Viv



Ian Gibbons and Karen Gibbons



Molesheads Family



Tan, Sibylla, James and Suzzie

## The Chinese Business Council

Interview with  
CBC Chairman, **Mr Wan Jun**

**Mr Wan Jun was selected as the Chairman of the Chinese Business Council (CBC) in May 2011. As their figurehead, Mr Wan chairs the CBC Committee to promote Chinese business in the UAE and boosts the relationship between the UAE and China commercially, as he explains to *The International Diplomat*, ‘No other place can compete with the UAE in the area and every year we receive a lot of visitors from China who are interested in setting up business here.’**

**F**ounded in 2004, the CBC currently has 138 members, and represents over 2,000 Chinese enterprises across the UAE. There are also approximately 200,000 Chinese expats working here as the UAE is a popular place for the Chinese business community, as Mr Wan recognises, ‘The UAE remains a hot spot in the middle of the world for economic growth. In the UAE, we feel strongly that the government is very active in attracting foreigners, their policies are clear and correct and they give foreigners a lot of help with businesses.’

Although each year sees an inevitable number of Chinese businesses leaving Dubai, the trend for Chinese businesses and companies to move here is increasing, as Mr Wan notes, ‘there is good growth in Chinese businesses in the UAE every year. Our membership numbers increase by about 20 to 40 members annually.’

### **The Role of the CBC**

The CBC has a Committee that is comprised of six sector professionals, who represent a range of industries, including law, construction, recreation, leisure, tourism and shipping. Reflecting this diversity, Mr Wan is confident the CBC Committee meets its members’ business requirements, ‘with these groups represented by the Committee we can cover most of our members business scopes.’

The CBC Committee meets quarterly, focusing on a number of issues, as Mr Wan describes, ‘we have regular meetings to discuss any new business regulations in case they need to be upgraded and to review the new membership applications and accept them.’

The CBC’s primary duty is to offer assistance to the business community here, although Mr Wan is quick to acknowledge that the UAE is an especially business-friendly location, ‘in the UAE, and especially in Dubai, the environment for doing business is friendly and very flexible for a new company to be set up. It’s the most convenient place and the government’s tax free policy is very attractive to foreigners.’

The CBC has close links with the Chinese Embassy and follows up on many of the business or company enquiries that are fed through from the Embassy, or the Consulate in Dubai. The Chinese Embassy might be a company’s first point of contact, before they

realise that the Chinese Business Council is active here.

### **CBC’s Diverse Membership**

Like every country in the UAE, China has a range of small, medium and larger-sized businesses established here, as well as start-up companies and individuals. The CBC’s membership boasts the top 10 Chinese companies in the UAE, major companies from China in the construction and banking sectors as well as their major airline. However, as Mr Wan points out, ‘the smaller, private and individuals are also here. If you look at Dragon Mart traders, for example, they are doing quite well and growing. They will come to the CBC group for advice and we have helped them a lot.’

Despite its size, the UAE’s strong economy facilitates a gateway for Chinese products seeking entry into the Middle Eastern market place. Interestingly, recent reports suggest that ‘Dragon Mart’, has signed a contract to expand and open up new branches in the GCC and the Middle East.

### **Negotiating Power**

Traders here have experienced setbacks from the Dubai Customs inspection agency that might discover and subsequently impose fines on Chinese manufacturing firms for faulty import cargo. Whatever failures these products may have, Dubai Customs’ hefty penalties may destroy smaller businesses, or deter further prospective Chinese investment. This explains Mr Wan has had a negative impact on Chinese businesses in previous years and could be discouraging for trade here, something the CBC is keen to avoid. The CBC’s role is to step in, as Mr Wan explains ‘we work on behalf of our member as negotiators, to alleviate the fines and to help resolve problems

The CBC will contact Dubai Customs, have a meeting and negotiate on behalf of Chinese businesses. The authorities may also introduce regulations for our members to follow. We negotiate between the authority and our members and now the situation is getting better. They are very friendly, adaptable and accept our comments.’

Mr Wan, who has lived in Dubai for three years, is also Captain Wan Jun, the President of China Shipping (West Asia) Holding, one of two leading shipping companies based here. As the Head of CBC, the business group and their members benefit from Mr Wan’s expertise in the shipping field.

### **High Level Visitors**

The CBC is accustomed to receiving high-level visitors to Dubai’s shores. In 2010, China’s Minister of Transport, Mr Li Shenglin was here. Many of these high-level visits take place between China and the UAE due to the CBC’s relationship with the Chinese Embassy, as Mr Wan explains, ‘we receive a



lot of support from the Chinese Embassy and the Consul General in Dubai – they give us a lot of guidance and help.’

Mr Wan also talks about how active the CBC is, with a General Secretary from the trade promotion association, organising a number of member events throughout the year. ‘We have twice-monthly member meetings and host various forums. We receive many high-level visitors and we let our members know about these events and highlight them.’ For example, the Chinese Commodities Fair Sharjah (CCFS) reached its milestone 10th year in 2011, showcasing Chinese products and technology. The CBC, in association with their trade promotion association, also looks forward to the 4th China-Arab States Cooperative Forum in Sharjah, in mid-January, and expects some high-level Chinese visitors to attend.

On a tourism level, the sector remains positive, and the number of Chinese tourists who visit the UAE annually has risen to 120,000. Mr Wan supports this figure agreeing that, ‘Chinese people are interested in visiting here.’ In recent years, there has also been a noticeable increase in the number of Emirati tourists visiting China and one of the

CBC’s key Committee members is from the Tourist Enterprise Association, which reflects China’s increasing focus on tourism.

**China-UAE Trade Partnership**

As a supreme maritime link between the Far East and the West, the Jebel Ali Port is one of the most modern and efficient ports in the region, as Mr Wan has come to observe during his career in shipping and logistics, ‘I have visited many countries and many ports and the Jebel Ali Port is the number one in the area. Our Chinese vessels coming out of Jebel Ali always operate smoothly.’ Mr Wan also admires the expansion plans marked out for Jebel Ali’s Terminals 2 and 3 and sees the growth potential in Sharjah’s smaller port.

The import market of products from China to the UAE is significant and China is the UAE’s second most important trade partner, with a volume of trade between the two countries that is expected to increase as the UAE’s demand for overseas products increases. There continues to be a greater need for Chinese food products and a range of commodities to be imported to the UAE. At the helm of the West Asia China Shipping group, these facts are well known to Mr Wan’s as he observes, ‘In this area, there

are a lot of containers transported to and from China to the UAE, and imports from China to the Middle East remain strong, with services provided by China Shipping, including to the Gulf and the Red Sea. The UAE needs to import a lot of commodities, while its exports are much less.’

The UAE and China are committed to enhancing their trade, tourist and investment ties and many of the business events shared by the UAE, the CBC and the Chinese government highlight these relations. The economic ties between the two countries were evident at the Canton Fair 2011 last November. Held in Guangzhou, China, the Fair entitled the ‘Rising Chinese Factor in the Middle East’ was attended by HE Abdullah Ahmed Al Saleh, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and HE Luo Jiang, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade Affairs. During the event it was announced, according to a report by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), that China is expected to become GCC’s most important economic partner by 2020. UAE’s interest in strengthening relations between the exporters and importers of both countries also topped the agenda.

# JEBEL ALI Port and Free Zone Factfile



Jebel Ali is the world’s largest man-made harbour and the biggest port in the Middle East (built between 1976 and 1979). The Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ), established in 1985, is home to almost 5,500 companies from more than 120 countries. These companies are drawn to the free zone for many reasons. They take advantage of an easy influx of labour, an exemption from corporate tax for fifteen years, the absence of import or export duties and a lack of restrictions on currency.



*By: Lisa Crowther*

## ABCD Christmas Inter-Business Council Function

The Australian Business Council in Dubai (ABCD) hosted their annual Christmas inter-business event on December 13th, at the attractive Arabian Terrace in the Westin Hotel, Dubai.

A variety of members from the Australian business community attended the festive, networking event, which was held jointly with SABCO, the Swiss Business Council and the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce (AHK).



*Claudine Mischele, Marion Englert, Carhen Hiller and Tina Fritzsche*



*Venessa, Lourens and Valeirie*



*Carissa Crowley and Arlene Lumley*



*Maria Giagos, Katya Galabova and Bassel*



*Craig Holding ABCD member addressing the guest*



*Melissa Forbes, Dominik Engel*



*Robert Paul and Ron Van Arkel*



*Carol singers at the event*



*Alex, Kate, Paula and German CG*

# Interview with H.E. Fatima Al Awadi

*'UAE is the market leader the Arab countries and premiums have grown 51%'*

- H.E. Fatima Al Awadi,



**The International Diplomat spoke exclusively to Her Excellency Mrs Fatimah Ishaq Al Awadi, Deputy Director General, UAE Insurance Authority about the robust UAE Economy.**

**The Diplomat: The economy of the UAE has been growing steadily over the years, how has the insurance industry contributed to this growth?**

H.E Fatima Al Awadi: The UAE insurance industry made a distinct quantum leap particularly in the last four years. The industry immensely contributed to expand the platform of the economic diversification in UAE and increase the pace of the national economy development. The insurance industry in UAE is presently in its golden era as compared to the preceding periods particularly following rearrangement of the sector and organization of the local market situation in a proper form as to performance, supervision, competitiveness. The insurance Authority earnestly worked to accomplish the legislative frameworks and adopted many procedures that have been channelized into the right direction towards organization and supervision of the market according to those standards aimed to develop performance and implement the best legal and organizational practices and rules. UAE is presently leading the markets of the Arab

countries in written premiums as they are grown in size by 51% during the period 2007 - 2010 and 10% in the year 2010 and thus surged from around US\$ 4 Billion in 2007 to about US\$ 6 Billion in 2010. The funds invested in the insurance market developed by 20% i.e. from US\$ 6.3 Billion in 2007 to US\$ 7.5 Billion in 2010. All these would ascertain the importance of the local insurance market and the role it plays in the national economy. The role of the insurance sector in enhancing the economic growth in UAE during the coming years is expected to grow particularly, as the Insurance Authority is currently working in many initiatives to reorganize the local insurance market and establish it according to the best technical, financial and legal rules and practices; a matter that would have positive reflection in the development and growth of the sector's indicators in all fields.

**The Diplomat: We understand that the UAE Insurance Authority was established in 2006 -how has this paved the way for the streamlined the insurance industry in**

**the UAE - and paved the way for further growth in the insurance business?**

H.E Fatima Al Awadi: The establishment of the Insurance Authority by virtue of the Federal Law No.6 of 2007 enhanced UAE insurance sector towards a more clear and transparent legal basis and developed competitive supervisory and regulatory standards. It also introduced best legal and organizational practices and rules in the local market that has led to enhance performance of the insurance sector and surge its contribution in the economic growth witnessed by the UAE.

The Insurance Authority issued the Executive Regulation of the Federal Law on establishment of the Insurance Authority and Directives No.1 of 2009 on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing Terrorism in insurance activities, Directives No.3 of 2010 on Profession Practice and Code of Conduct to be adopted by the insurance companies. Ultimate aim of all of these is to protect the holders and beneficiaries of the insurance policies. The Insurance Authority issued Takaful Regulations No.4 of 2010 which is deemed the first of its kind in the Arab world and the most comprehensive in the Islamic world, Directives No.8 of 2011 on organizing insurance agents' works and Directives on licensing and organizing third party administrators. Further, it implemented the esteemed Cabinet of Ministers' resolution to increase the minimum capital of the insurance and reinsurance companies in UAE market. Further, the Insurance Authority prepared drafts of financial regulations in addition to the accountancy regulations and prepared draft of bancassurance, and prepared draft of regulations on licensing foreign insurance companies to operate in the State.

**The Diplomat: Various international and European companies have entered the UAE Insurance market and introduced innovative products, as well as contributed with their expertise and experience. Would you agree that this has further expanded the UAE Insurance market and therefore contributed positively towards the economy?**

H.E Fatima Al Awadi: I agree. International companies in general and European companies

in particular have acquired expertise and experiences that render them active entities in any insurance market they may enter.

**The Diplomat:** How many general and life insurance companies are being regulated by the Insurance Authority and how many of them are foreign companies?

**H.E Fatima Al Awadi** The number of the registered insurance companies surged in 2007 from 51 (24 national and 27 foreign companies) to 61 (34 national and 27 foreign companies) in 2011. It has to be noted that the Insurance Authority's Board of Directors issued in December 2009 a resolution to stop issuing new licenses to carry out insurance business in UAE save to those companies established by the emirates' local governments.

**The Diplomat:** *What are the reasons why the Insurance Authority has stopped issuing new licenses – and when is this ban going to be lifted?*

**H.E Fatima Al Awadi :** On December 15, 2008 the Insurance Authority's Board of Directors decided to stop issuing new licenses for insurance companies. The main reason behind taking such decision was because we took into consideration the size of the insurance market where already 61 insurance companies are operating, and this is large number. The UAE market written premiums are around Billion 6 US\$ (Billion 5 US\$ general insurance and Billion 1 US\$ life assurance) i.e production rate amounts to Million US\$ 100 per company. This means disintegration has occurred in the insurance market and that many of the national insurance companies are small ones and unable to compete in one side and unable to attract the required efficient technical individuals in the other side. So, the Insurance Authority's has urged the small companies to merge but no progress was made in this area. It's worth mentioning here, that the non-issuing decision applies to both the national and foreign companies. That is to say there is no discrimination in treatment.





Counsellor Chatsinee Wutimananon / Ms Orathai / Mrs Kultida Mrs Viyada of Thailand / Mrs Wendy Lewis President of DGSA



Mrs Wendy Lewis DGSA President

## Diplomatic Ladies Raise Funds for Thailand's Flood Victims

The Diplomatic Group for Spouses of Ambassadors (DGSA) hosted a charity coffee morning on December 5th that raised funds for the flood victims of the Thailand. Speaking about the event the President of the DGSA Mrs Wendy Lewis, the wife of the Canadian Ambassador said that they were delighted with the success of the Charity Coffee Morning and the silent auction as it raised funds for a worthy cause. She thanked the members who worked very hard to prepare items for the bake table, the silent auction, a white elephant table and a jewelry table. The Flower and Garden Group also assisted with the sale of flowers and donated all proceeds to our event. The DGSA organizes various social cultural and charitable events that add value to the diplomatic calendar of the UAE.



Mrs Chi-Soon of Korea and Mrs Anki Bjuhr of Sweden



Mrs Latiefa of South Africa and Ms Alia of Irena



Mrs Wendy Lewis President of DGSA with guest



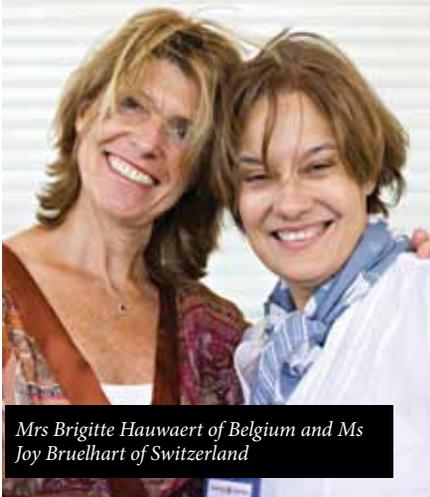
Ms Jathal and Ms Sana of Palestine



Ms Orathai with their painting exhibit



Ms Shweta, Ms Shereen and Mr Gregg Fray



Mrs Brigitte Hauwaert of Belgium and Ms Joy Bruelhart of Switzerland



The ladies in action and goods they are selling



Mrs Chi-Soon of Korea, Ms Alia of Irena, Mrs Maria of Portugal and Mrs Sahar Al Rifaii of Kuwait



Shereen Mitwalli of City 7 TV



The ladies in action and goods they are selling



Ms Matelda Benedette of Italy and Mrs Maria of Portugal

More images of this event are on our website:  
[www.thediplotmagazine.com](http://www.thediplotmagazine.com)

If you would like us to cover your events, please contact us

# Dr Maha Radwan,

## the Wife of the Egyptian Ambassador



was completely different to Africa. It was 10 years after the revolution in Romania and it was an experience to see the change from one era to another, a little like we are experiencing in Egypt now.'

Their next assignment was to Colombia in Latin America, which was surprisingly lovely, despite the trepidations from her friends, 'Colombia was an amazing posting as we didn't have a good idea about this country. In reality, I learnt Spanish, I found the people very nice, happy, welcoming and hospitable.' Having had two sons, this was also where Dr Maha completed her family, giving birth to her daughter. After Colombia, they went to Zambia in Africa, which was a memorable posting because this was where Dr

Maha's husband became an Ambassador.

Today, Dr Maha is as impressed with the UAE as she was when they arrived two years earlier. She recalls her first impressions of, 'a very modern country with huge buildings, high technology and a stable economy, now after two years, I think in a deeper way about the personality of the Emirati, the human resource, which is the most important resource a country has.'

### Diplomatic Group for the Spouses of Ambassadors

Between 2010 – 2011, Dr Maha was appointed President of the Diplomatic Group for the Spouses of Ambassadors (DGSA) in Abu Dhabi, which she loved, 'The DGSA build bridges between all the different nationalities and the host country. It was a really good experience for me to be President of the Group. I enjoyed it and I learnt a lot.'

Every country's spouse is a member of DGSA, which meets monthly and is run by an executive committee, with other members busy coordinating numerous projects and charity work throughout the year. They support charities across all the Emirates

and also reach out to natural disaster relief funds abroad. While Dr Maha was President she suggested that the group publish a compilation of children's fairy tales, aimed at youngsters aged between 6 and 12, as she explains, 'We collected traditional stories from our members that represent the cultural diversity of all our countries.' The illustrated book will be available in English and Arabic, and will be launched at the March 2012 Book Fair. The proceeds of the book will be donated to the Al Ain Care and Rehabilitation Centre for children with special needs, a cause that is clearly important to Dr Maha.

### A Doctor and a Diplomat's Wife

Dr Maha is a qualified GP, (she later specialized in dermatology and venereology). When she is in Egypt she returns to her medical practice, and whatever country she has lived in, she has immersed herself in social work, which is her priority. 'It fascinates me to be involved in social, charity and voluntary work. A charity, for me is my first interest. I believe, regardless of religion, education, or nationality, charitable work should be for everybody. I am a doctor, a dermatologist and a hard-working woman.' 'My personality suits my role as a diplomatic spouse and a doctor. You have to be disciplined, well organized and the careers are similar – as you need to prioritize the important things in life and be a decision-maker.'

### Women's Empowerment

Another role close to her heart is the role of women, which she discusses passionately, reflecting on her country's history, 'Egypt, has a very long history of women's empowerment starting from the Pharaohs in the 4th century.'

She regards the role of women in the UAE as particularly inspiring and praises Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the late H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan for her belief in women's empowerment. 'The number of women seeking education here is great and the personality of Emirati women here is lovely and open. Women here want to prove that they are capable.'

Her admiration for Sheikha Fatima, as a positive role model for women in the UAE, is obvious, as Dr Maha adds, 'Sheikha Fatima encouraged women in the beginning and it was very important to find such an open minded and visionary leader for women here.'

**D**r Maha arrived in Abu Dhabi in 2009 with her husband, the Egyptian Ambassador to the UAE, H.E. Tamer Mansour. Having met at school, the path to a diplomatic career was both interesting and varied, with postings to many far-flung corners of the globe. From the start, Dr Maha knew the path required commitment, as she describes, 'I believe that the spouse of a diplomat has a valuable role, especially when you reach the position of Ambassador's spouse. It takes a long time and it is a very important role. Becoming an Ambassador's spouse is a life decision as you have responsibility for the community, the family and for the Embassy.'

### Varied Postings

For an Egyptian Ambassador, any posting is fixed for four years, with a return to Egypt in between. Dr Maha has relished her opportunity to travel, as she confirms, 'I am lucky to see and travel between different places from East to West.' Their first posting, in 1984, was to Madagascar, 'An amazing island in the Indian Ocean.' Romania followed, which was interesting because it had entered a post-revolution phase, as Dr Maha explains, 'it



## AN EXPERIENCE OF EXQUISITE ARABIAN HOSPITALITY

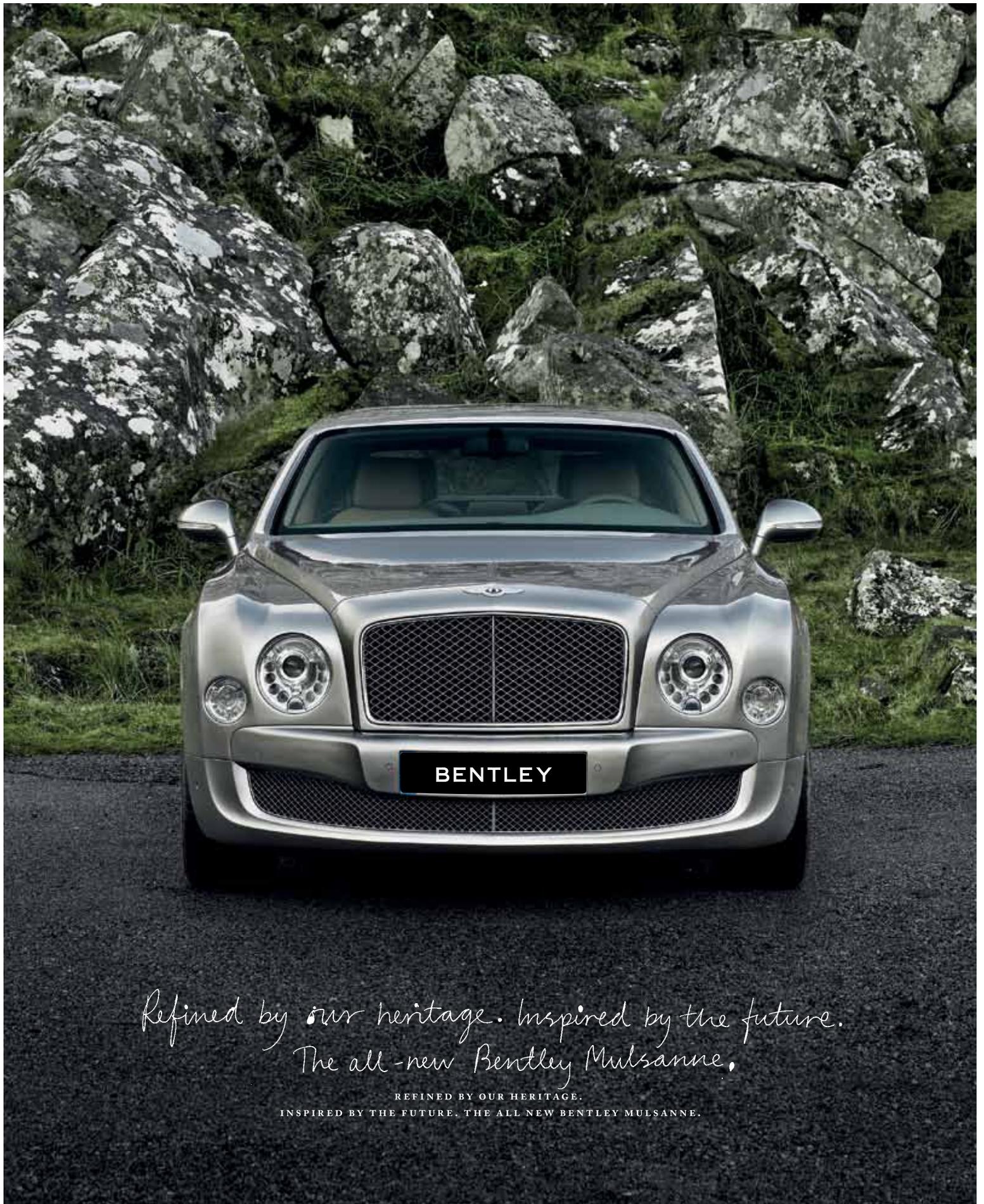
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