

THE NETHERLANDS

The Covid-19 crisis has opened doors for innovation

The relationship between the UAE and the Netherlands has historically been strong. With a trade volume of around \$8 billion per year, the UAE is a key trading partner of the Netherlands in the MENA region. The UAE is also home to over 300 Dutch companies and almost 8,000 Dutch citizens.

Measures taken during the Covid-19 lockdown in the UAE demonstrated the Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General in Dubai's *raison d'être*. Whilst the Consular Department was working around the clock to support and repatriate stranded Dutch tourists, the Economic Departments actively reached out — online and offline — to the Dutch business community in the UAE.

The crisis allowed the Embassy and Consulate General to work more closely with companies, the Netherlands Business Council in Dubai and the BeNeLux Business Council in Abu Dhabi as well as the Dutch community groups: ClubNL, the



Lody Embrechts
Ambassador
The Netherlands



The Netherlands has boasted a pragmatic approach to the pandemic and applied an intelligent lockdown — making extra room for innovation in order to get the Dutch economy back on track. We hope our companies here and at home will come back stronger from this crisis. The Embassy and Consulate General stand ready to support them as we look forward to partnering with the UAE.

iam Al Mheiri, UAE Minister for Food Security, as well as Dutch and local experts, has led us to start a series on the topic and has made our Expo participation on 'Uniting Water, Energy, Food' increasingly relevant as preparations continue.

These online experiences, of course, cannot replace face-to-face interactions but do provide a manner to inform, stay in touch and support business development during these difficult times.

During the lockdown, the Embassy arranged for overdue crew changes and vessel maintenance in Ras Al Khaimah. Meanwhile, branding and design agency Skyne celebrated the opening of its Abu Dhabi office, cementing yet another Dutch company's strong presence in the UAE.

Dutch in Abu Dhabi and LanguageOne.

Following the lockdown measures in the UAE, the Economic teams in Dubai and Abu Dhabi quickly sent out a survey to the Dutch business community to find out how we could best support Dutch businesses during and in post-Covid-19 times.

An overview of both the UAE and Dutch stimulus packages designed to help businesses was also shared. As a result, the Economic Departments, along with the business councils, collaborated on a variety of online meetings and webinars, from roundtables for corporates, entrepreneurs and individuals.

The interest in the webinar on Food Security featuring HE Mar-



Nonetheless, we look forward to a corporate comeback and resumption of activities where possible. The crisis has shown our companies' resilience, ability to adapt to the new Covid-19 reality and reinvent themselves.

Hans Sandee
Consul-General in Dubai



USA

Business-to-government discussion platform



The new joint task force will leverage feedback from the industries in the UAE

In response to the global impact of Covid-19 and its pressures on the international business landscape, including here in the UAE, a multi-nation group of business councils and chambers based in Abu Dhabi and Dubai have joined forces to engage with the UAE government and work collectively to ensure business continuity in the UAE.

Initiated by AmCham Dubai and AmCham Abu Dhabi, the Multi-Nation Business Continuity Task Force aims to gauge sentiment, assess business continuity challenges and support the wider business community on specifics that require UAE government assistance. The task force will provide a channel of communication for its members and is committed to supporting members on an individual basis where possible, in addition to presenting common strategic themes at the government level.

Comprising 25 diverse business councils and representing over 6,500 companies, the joint task force is a business-to-government initiative established with the intent of serving as an advocate and resource that may be leveraged by the UAE government to secure clear, concise feedback from business and industry.

"Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, authorities in the UAE have rushed to contain the outbreak through closely monitoring and proactively testing and enforcing self-quarantine. These



Now, as businesses return to more normal operations, we anticipate that business confidence will improve and recognise the demonstrated commitment of the UAE leadership to support the continued robust business environment the country is known for.

efforts helped ensure that our families and communities were safe. Now, as businesses return to more normal operations, we believe that the proven commitment of the UAE government to continue supporting a robust business environment for those operating throughout the country, will see a significant surge in business confidence," said Sammy Bousaba, President, AmCham Dubai.

The mission of the Multi-Nation Business Continuity Task Force is to expand and improve awareness of business goals and support the development of policies that shape a robust trade environment. It will serve as the integrated window of communication between its representative multi-nation business community members and the UAE government.

APCO Worldwide is the advisor and consultant to the Secretariat and will continue to support the important mission of the task force.

The joint task force is working with the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry as well as various UAE

government entities.

During a recent meeting held by the task force, Hamad Buamim, President and CEO of Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, shared his insights on the current business landscape reshaped by the impact of Covid-19, and stressed the importance of close cooperation between the public and private sectors in addressing new challenges and developing the right solutions to address them.

"The establishment of this task force is a significant development that will advance ongoing efforts to meet the changing needs of the UAE's business community and serve its interests. We look forward to working closely with various business councils and chambers of commerce throughout the country to ensure a favourable business environment and pave the way for economic growth."

Mohamed Helal Al Mheiri, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, added that the chamber will continue to support the efforts of the government in Abu Dhabi and the UAE in general in supporting businesses and limiting the negative effects of the Covid-19 on the economic scene.

He pointed out that the Abu Dhabi Chamber, which represents the voice of the private sector in the emirate, has launched a number of initiatives since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Director General also praised the interest of the American Business Council in Abu Dhabi and Dubai in opening new communication channels between the public sector and the private one in order to work together in drawing solution and suggestions on how to better serve the business community and implement the precautionary measures that ensure business continuity and efficiency.

Bridging the gap between the investors and the UAE



The business consulting firm is a pioneer in assisting clients set up offices across the nation

With the UAE businesses reopening post Covid-19 lockdown and as the interest in setting up new businesses pick up, Aurion has resumed work with all precautionary measures in place such as disinfecting its office space and maintaining social distance among its staff.

Led by Managing Director Syam Panayickal Prabhu, who holds a post graduate degree in Law from the University of Kerala, Aurion is one of the pioneers in the field of company incorporation in the UAE.

"We expect a surge in the new company registrations post-Cov-



Syam Panayickal Prabhu
Managing Director
Aurion Business Consultants

id-19 era as the businesses are slowly getting back to normal. With countries gradually opening up international borders and flights resuming, we foresee a constant inflow of investors to UAE as earlier," a confident Prabhu points out.

According to him, the distinct advantage to the UAE post-Covid-19 era is the people's confidence in the country. "They feel safe and reassured due to a large number of testing and healthcare

centres. Precisely due to this we get an unprecedented number of inquiries from other countries seeking the ways to settle with their families in the UAE."

With over 12 years of experience and incorporating more than 4,500 companies in the UAE, Aurion has earned the reputation of being the top brand consultant in the country.

Based on the investor's business activity, experience, the facility required, and budget, Aurion designs the ideal company formation package in the freezone or the mainland. Its expert business consultants choose the right option from over 40 plus freezones and 3,000+ business activities for any business setup.

The portfolio of services includes company incorporation, residence visa processing, bank account opening assistance, VAT assistance, Chamber of Commerce registration, tax residence certificate, import/export code, trademark registration, ISO standard consulting, and a host of PRO Services required for the investors.

The free-to-download Aurion mobile app also provides up-to-date notifications to clients on all assignments undertaken by Team Aurion.

Sterilising area equivalent to 462 soccer fields



Jafza is carrying out a massive disinfection drive across all its facilities in Dubai

As the staff prepares to return to work in full force, Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza), the leading trade and logistics hub, has announced its readiness to facilitate the full operations of over 8,000 companies by conducting a massive disinfection programme across all its facilities.

The area covered for internal fumigation and disinfection of buildings is around 3,300,000 square metres, equivalent to 462 soccer fields. The road disinfection campaign carried out a couple of months ago to limit the spread of Covid-19 covered more than 35km.

The disinfection programme at Jafza started in March 2020, and has not stopped since then. It has covered all office and accommodation buildings, security gates and commercial centres, as well as the main roads in Jafza.

Jafza has implemented comprehensive policy and guidelines such as executing complete disinfection and sanitisation programme for all equipment, vehicles, offices and other physical assets. Isolation rooms have been identified, and all processes and procedures are in line with Dubai Health Authority (DHA) guide-



Mohammed Al Muallem
CEO and Managing Director
DP World, UAE Region
and CEO of Jafza



The safety of our community is our top priority because people are our most valuable asset. Over the months, we have implemented a resolute action plan.

lines for dealing with such cases. All Covid-related essentials such as identification of symptoms, emergency numbers, awareness and instructions will be conveyed through desktop displays, emails, text messages, notices and flyers. Such resolute measures will sustain business continuity and facilitate resumption of essential operations.

Mohammed Al Muallem, CEO and Managing Director, DP World, UAE Region and CEO of Jafza, said: "As the world is

working to cope with Covid-19, Dubai will play a pivotal role in the post-pandemic economy recovery thanks to its state-of-the-art infrastructure, effective resilience strategies and its ability to efficiently deal with all circumstances.

"In line with Dubai Government's directives for private sector businesses to operate at 100 per cent capacity while Dubai government employees would fully resume working at their offices from June 14, we are ready for the immediate return of Jafza companies to pursue normal operations.

"We will continue to implement the highest precautionary measures and full inspections aiming to protect the health and safety of all our employees and partners. We're also working closely with all companies in Jafza to continuously raise awareness about the required measures, which will keep their staff and customers safe in compliance with the directives of the competent authorities in Dubai and the UAE."

Al Muallem added: "The safety of our community is our top priority because people are our most valuable asset. Over the months, we have implemented a resolute action plan. The measures we implemented have enabled our companies to continue their services and facilitated essential trade flowing in the midst of the global pandemic, while adhering to the requirements of the UAE Government, DHA and the World Health Organisation."

Jafza is home to the world's well-reputed companies, including over 100 of the Global Fortune 500 enterprises, and has attracted 23.9 per cent of Dubai's foreign direct investment sustaining more than 135,000 jobs.



Syam Panayickal Prabhu receives award for Best Consultant in Middle East from Bollywood actor Karisma Kapoor at Taj Lands End, Mumbai, organised by Asia One Limited

