





## FOREWORD

OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST 12 MONTHS, much work has been undertaken in the pursuit of our objective of making both government and private sectors more efficient, with a greater degree of transparency and accountability.

One key focus during the year has been the launching of a new National Strategy by the federal UAE Government, backed by, and integrated with, local strategies in the two largest emirates, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Together, these provide a firm set of guidelines for the work that lies ahead, while the launching of new initiatives in support of our central goal of underpinning a just and caring society has yielded a rich harvest of results.

The process of government itself, as well as public participation, has been enhanced by the success of the indirect elections introduced for the Federal National Council, while further progress has been made on the development of public-private partnerships in a number of key sectors of the economy.

At the same time, work to improve the country's infrastructure has pressed ahead, with the Dolphin gas pipeline coming on-stream, the first two lines of the new Dubai Metro rail system nearing completion and other major projects well under way, such as work of the new Khalifa Port, north-east of Abu Dhabi, the expansion of Abu Dhabi International Airport and the construction of the world's largest airport, Al Maktoum International, near Jebel Ali, which is due to open for business during 2008.

We in the Emirates are justly proud of what has been achieved in a wide range of areas, from health, education and social welfare to economic and industrial growth, together with continued refinements to our infrastructure.

At the same time, we have also derived much enjoyment from our increased success in sport, both at home and abroad. Our victory in the 2007 Gulf Football Cup was a moment of sheer ecstasy that will be remembered for many years to come, while our young sportmen and sportwomen have succeeded in winning a



good harvest of medals in a wide variety of sports at a regional and Asian level.

Whilst the UAE *Yearbook* focuses on events and projects that have been achieved rather than those in the pipeline, it would be impossible not to mention the hugely significant developments that are being planned or in early stages of execution throughout the UAE. Such projects, from real estate developments to leisure facilities and key infrastructural schemes are on a scale that cannot fail to impress. The world renowned Palm Jumeirah for example, which received its first permanent residents in 2007, is being joined by two even larger 'Palms', whilst the towering Burj Dubai, still under construction, is already the tallest building in the world.

Abu Dhabi has also embarked on a huge infrastructural, real estate and socio-economic programme that is going to transform the UAE's capital city and, indeed, the whole emirate. Given the detailed and highly professional planning that has gone into these future developments it would be remiss not to cover them in these pages.

But however we plan for the future, and however grand our development projects may be, we have not forgotten who we are or where we came from. We in the Emirates are a people who retain strong cultural links with our past and who have huge respect for the leaders who have guided our nation's growth. I am especially pleased to see that this legacy has led to some unique projects that will greatly enhance the cultural landscape of the UAE. Saadiyat Cultural District, part of which features on the cover of this book, is an excellent example of what creative 'outside the box' thinking can achieve.

It has been an exciting year and there are clearly even more exciting times to come. I believe this book gives a good sense of where we have come from and where we are going.

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