

PRESS RELEASE

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ABU DHABI TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HOSTS A FORUM ON “STRENGTHENING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ENVIRONMENT OF THE UAE”

Abu Dhabi, 3 November 2010. As part of its efforts to develop a vibrant science and technology sector in the Emirate, the Abu Dhabi Technology Development Committee (TDC) hosted a forum yesterday on “Strengthening the Intellectual Property Environment of the United Arab Emirates”. The forum was co-sponsored by Latham & Watkins LLP and Al Tamimi & Company and was held at the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi. In attendance was over 100 representatives from industry, academia and government who came together to review the current status of the UAE’s Intellectual Property (IP) environment and discuss initiatives to strengthen the creation, attraction and protection of innovation in Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

The keynote speech was delivered by H.E. Mohamed Omar Abdulla, Under Secretary of the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (DED), on behalf of the DED chairman, H.E. Nasser Ahmed Alsowaidi. H.E. stressed the need for a strong regulatory regime that protects the rights of IP holders by saying: “Such a regime can encourage the attraction and creation of innovation in Abu Dhabi and help in developing a strong and diversified knowledge economy.” He then added: “Today’s forum is a small step towards building a strong IP environment as any success will require the collective efforts of government, industry and academia.”

Following the keynote speech, H.E. Ahmed Saeed Al Calily, Director General of TDC, stated that: “Given Abu Dhabi’s commitment to developing a vibrant science and technology sector, all stakeholders at the local and Federal level need to work closely together to achieve a step increase in the strength of our IP environment.”

The content of the IP forum revolved around 3 key themes:

- **IP laws that provide a solid foundation for innovation:** Panel members stressed that innovation leading countries have a set of laws and regulations that provide a strong foundation for newly generated ideas. In this regards, the UAE is working on several initiatives to activate a new set of best practice IP laws including plans by the Ministry of Economy to amend the Industrial Property law and efforts by the Abu Dhabi government on drafting a “trade secrets” law that can be presented to the Federal government for further review.
- **IP enforcement system that protects the rights of IP users:** As part of the UAE’s continuing efforts to strengthen the protection of IP rights, specialized IP units have been established in Dubai customs and Sharjah customs while the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department plans on introducing a specialized IP court that can deal with the rising complexity of IP related litigations. However, more needs to be done as the UAE is currently perceived as a transit hub for counterfeit products as it was ranked by the EU as the #2 source of counterfeit items seized at its borders.
- **IP infrastructure that is conducive to creating and generating innovation:** R&D spending in Abu Dhabi currently amounts to less than 0.1% of GDP. To achieve its

economic vision, the Abu Dhabi government aims to push the economy's R&D intensity, both public and private, to reach levels comparable to leading innovative countries.

Going forward, TDC will be working with key stakeholders from government, academia and industry to explore practical ways to implement the forum's recommendations. This will contribute to strengthening the UAE's IP environment and help meet Abu Dhabi's vision of building a sustainable and diversified knowledge economy that is well integrated into the global ecosystem.

Notes and Media Contact

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About the Abu Dhabi Technology Development Committee

The Abu Dhabi Technology Development Committee (TDC) was established by the Executive Council's Decision number (19) for year 2009 to encourage, support and supervise the development of Science and Technology in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

TDC is a multi-stakeholder government coordinating body interfacing between government, business and academia to realize Abu Dhabi's vision of building a sustainable and diversified knowledge economy, well integrated into the global ecosystem. TDC aims to do so through cooperation with various stakeholders to develop and implement policies, strategies, and projects throughout five areas of focus including Human Capital, Research and Development, Law and Regulation, Enterprise Development, and Infrastructure.