

PRESS RELEASE – WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

DUBAI — GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce has successfully hosted another in its series of highly successful Chamber International Breakfast Workshops. This time the area under the spotlight was Dubai; which serves as a gateway to the Middle East and even countries such as Sri Lanka in the Far East.

Long recognised as the leading regional trading hub of the Middle East, the city of Dubai has transformed itself in recent years into an international business centre of global significance. With a city of approximately 1.4 million inhabitants, Dubai provides access to a market of outstanding potential for overseas companies in a wide range of sectors, including transport and distribution, manufacturing and processing, regional offices, conferences, exhibitions and trade. This in turn necessitates a wide range of import requirements, which provides opportunities for suppliers of most products.

Dubai's open market, with no exchange controls, quotas or trade barriers is served by 170 shipping lines and 86 airlines and among its key characteristics are its large, growing, prosperous market, with more than \$17 billion in domestic imports annually and its strategic location at the heart of one of the world's richest regions. It provides almost unlimited scope, with a great deal of potential, especially for quality service companies.

With gaps in every sector of the building industry professional skills are in demand as are those that can provide services such as finance, marketing and maintenance. There is also a shortage of management skills and training in retail, transport and hotel sectors, as well as water sport and golfing instruction. In summary, there are gaps in the supply of everything from basic raw materials, such as steel pipes to software and instrumentation. Companies that supply new designs in equipment or IT that is designed to improve production are especially sought after.

Jan Ward, Board Director of the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce who acts as the Chamber's agent in Dubai said that,

“Dubai, the countries it services and the whole of the Middle East are important to our companies in this area. We should be using them to our full advantage and with the support of the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce, via Chamber International, it is a market we should be seriously exploring if we wish to expand our business”.

Patrick Walters, Managing Director, Southampton Container Terminals Ltd (SCT) whose major shareholder is DP World added:

“SCT is a local company which already has strong links with Dubai through its majority shareholder, DP World which is a Dubai based company. I am please to see the Chamber of Commerce encouraging local businesses to develop trading links with a growing and dynamic market such as Dubai.”

Support to get started in this area is available through the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce's Chamber International, through trade missions and exhibitions. For further information please contact: Jacqueline Russell on 023 8022 3541 or by e-mail jackie@chamberinternational.co.uk