



مؤسسة الإمارات  
Emirates Foundation

Press Release

## MEANINGFUL CAREERS AND SELF-MOTIVATION ARE FOCUS OF EMIRATES FOUNDATION'S TAWTEEN PROGRAMME

More than 200 participants from Arab governments, private sector, civil society and academia to address vital common issues of skills access and self-development

Launch at Tawteen Symposium in Abu Dhabi, 27-28 February



**Abu Dhabi, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007:** The Tawteen Programme, announced today, is a long term strategic initiative of the UAE's Emirates Foundation – designed to address persisting social and cultural obstacles to meaningful careers and self-development throughout the nation and across the Arab World.

The Programme, which is fully supported by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will be launched at the inaugural Tawteen Symposium, being held in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 27 and 28. Within the UAE, Tawteen will work closely with the Emirates National Development Programme, the Abu Dhabi Emiratization Council, TANMIA, Young Arab Leaders and similar bodies.

The word 'Tawteen' means 'localization' in Arabic. The innovative Tawteen Programme has accordingly been created to help empower individuals to fulfil their potential; to address social and cultural barriers to self-development and to motivate and equip young people with the right workplace skills.

The UAE-based Tawteen Programme is the first of a series of similar regional projects established as part of a wider plan - the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Learning & Leadership Programme.

More than 200 participants have been invited to Abu Dhabi's Tawteen Symposium – from all GCC nations, as well as the Levant, North Africa and East Africa. They represent four key pillars of Arab society: government, business, education, and the civil community. The Symposium will be built on specifically created interactive workshops, which will identify and address key learning and social issues facing the UAE as well as the wider region.

The Emirates Foundation is producing the Symposium in partnership with the Middle East Association (MEA) and Compass Rose International, both based in the UK. The Emirates Foundation's objective is to increase community access to cultural, educational and technological resources across the UAE. It seeks to encourage such increased participation in civic life – especially among the young – through joint government and private sector-funded projects that stimulate social, personal and intellectual growth

Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, Managing Director of the Emirates Foundation, explained: "A significant number of UAE nationals aged between 16 and 24 are currently seeking meaningful work, despite rapid economic growth. Private sector companies are keen to employ a greater proportion of UAE nationals, but they find it difficult to locate and retain sufficiently qualified or motivated candidates".

He added that there was a need to address the social and cultural obstacles to self-development, if young people were to realize their goals. The challenge, therefore, went beyond job creation.

Omar Saif Ghobash, Deputy CEO of the Emirates Foundation, emphasized: “Although many young nationals are looking for careers, UAE companies face a skills shortage caused by a disconnect between private sector needs and the education available. The Tawteen Programme will address these matters in a constructive and pro-active manner.

He continued: “I am really encouraged that we have been able to confirm our first event in Abu Dhabi, with the collaboration of important organizations already at work on many of these challenging issues. The Symposium will provide an open and structured platform to discuss key challenges and potential solutions among senior pillar representatives from many of our friends and neighbours.”

Michael Thomas, Director General of the Middle East Association, said: “According to recent World Bank figures, 80 -100 million jobs need to be created in MENA over the next 20 years just to keep pace with regional population growth. Those job opportunities need to come from the private sector, since the public sector is already saturated.

“It is imperative that international private sector bodies work in partnership with their host governments and local private sector organizations. I am pleased to confirm that Shell, International Power, DLA Piper and BP are our founding partners in this important programme. There is no more pressing issue in the Middle East today.”

The Tawteen Programme will be launched at the Tawteen Symposium, to be held at the Rotana Beach Hotel, with a series of workshops and panel events for participants. The Symposium will be chaired by Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean (former UK Cabinet Minister, and currently Vice President of the Middle East Association) in her capacity as Chair of the MENA Learning & Leadership Advisory Panel. It will be moderated by Lyse Doucet, BBC World news presenter and correspondent.

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***Notes to Editors:***

**The Tawteen Programme aims to:**

- Bring together the four key pillars which must work together to resolve the issue: government, private sector, civil society and academia.
- Create a forum through annual symposia for these pillars to exchange experiences, consolidate effort, and agree initiatives to scale-up best practice in the region, while maintaining relevance to grassroots and local community needs
- Develop pilot projects – two private/public working groups have already been formed to facilitate better links between learning institutions and industry – and promote private sector engagement with local communities and under-represented groups

- Encourage private/public partnership in the UAE, and support the efforts of the Emiratization Council, TANMIA and other UAE bodies to understand and address the skill needs of the private sector

The Tawteen Programme is the first local initiative of the MENA Learning & Leadership Programme. For more details, visit [www.uaetawteen.com](http://www.uaetawteen.com)

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***Background Information:***

**The Emirates Foundation**

The Emirates Foundation, created in 2005, represents a unique, multi-sector effort to create a new range of opportunities for the people of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Through philanthropic projects within our four core areas of interest, we seek to engage all individuals and groups in the UAE to usher in a new era of mutual achievement.

The four core areas for our work are: education; research & development; arts & culture; and social & environmental development.

All our activities are designed to benefit the broader public, both directly and indirectly. In many cases, the success of our projects will be dependent on large-scale public participation. We invite you to explore our website to learn more about the role that we intend to play in our community.

***[www.emiratesfoundation.ae](http://www.emiratesfoundation.ae)***

**The Middle East Association**

The Middle East Association (MEA) is the UK's premier organisation for promoting trade and relations with the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey and Iran.

The MEA is an independent, non-profit making organisation established in 1961. The members of the Association cover all sectors of industry and commerce including banking, finance and consultancy, and are responsible for about 70 percent of all UK investment and trade with the region.

***[www.the-mea.co.uk](http://www.the-mea.co.uk)***

## **Compass Rose International**

Compass Rose International (CRI) is a strategic partner of the MEA. CRI was founded to effective positive development through private sector engagement. CRI focuses on programmes related to sustainable economic development.

Our three main pillars of focus include: learning and leadership, tourism and infrastructure development and development of sustainable financial partnerships.

***[www.compassrose.uk.com](http://www.compassrose.uk.com)***

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