

Dubai Tourism and Dubai Economy hold meeting with leading retailers

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Officials reaffirm Dubai's position as a leading retail destination

Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism), in cooperation with the Department of Economic Development (Dubai Economy), held a meeting with leading retailers in the emirate to discuss market issues and recent developments.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of public-private partnerships across sectors and its key role in accelerating the emirate's economic development.

Various developments in the sector, including recent challenges arising from the global outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and worldwide efforts to contain its spread, were discussed. The international trade repercussions of the coronavirus crisis were a key focus of the deliberations.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism; Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE); Mohammed Shael Al Saadi, CEO of Strategic Affairs, Dubai Economy, as well as senior representatives from leading retail establishments and shopping malls attended the meeting.

Welcoming the attendees, His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism, highlighted Dubai Tourism's keenness to strengthen cooperation with its partners in the government and private sector in order to achieve the best results. He said such meetings foster a broader understanding of recent market developments and a productive exchange of ideas and knowledge, while also generating new perspectives on the opportunities and challenges faced by the retail sector, he noted.

Commenting on the occasion, Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE), said: "As part of the longstanding collaboration between DFRE and its stakeholders, we are always keen to discuss the latest developments in the retail sector with our partners. This meeting was held to review the current global health situation and reinforce the importance of each of us playing a responsible role in ensuring the health and safety of shoppers, residents and visitors. The

quick and preventive actions taken so far by our partners must be appreciated. It is critical that everyone adheres to the instructions and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Prevention and Dubai Health Authority on this matter."

Mohammed Shael Al Saadi, CEO of Strategic Affairs at Dubai Economy, said: "The retail sector is a key engine of economic growth in Dubai and a major contributor to the emirate's GDP. We are committed to working closely with the private sector to achieve common goals, in addition to taking steps to protect the retail sector as well as the community and customers it serves. In light of the current challenges, we will continue to extend our fullest cooperation to our partners in the private sector and provide all support necessary for the health authorities to ensure the effectiveness of their measures."

During the meeting, officials explored ways to overcome challenges in the local market within the framework of the UAE's and Dubai's efforts to implement globally-benchmarked preventive measures.

Attendees praised the measures taken by UAE authorities including the Ministry of Health and Prevention, the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), Dubai's Crisis and Disaster Management Team and other authorities working around the clock to ensure the health, well-being and safety of residents and visitors. They also lauded the steps taken by the Dubai Government to educate the public on the Covid-19 virus and preventive steps and practices aligned with World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations.

Officials at the meeting stressed the high priority UAE health authorities have placed on the health and safety of its citizens, residents and visitors. They underscored the importance of coordinated efforts to raise the effectiveness of precautionary measures including steps taken in retail locations to avoid the spread of the virus. In this context, the meeting highlighted the vital role of private sector players, particularly in Dubai's retail sector, whose world-class attractions continue to draw large numbers of people.

Officials reaffirmed the importance of comprehensive and stringent preventive measures in retail locations with high footfall. These include making hand sanitiser dispensers widely available and thorough cleaning of common facilities and amenities. They noted such measures will help people go about their daily life in a normal way and defuse fears caused by misinformation.

Dubai's Tourism's meeting with DED and retail groups forms part of a series of engagements with key government and private sector partners to discuss the latest market developments, exchange opinions and ideas, and review opportunities and challenges in the sector in order to ensure its continuous growth.

Fuad Mansoor Sharaf, Managing Director for Majid Al Futtaim Properties, Shopping Malls (UAE, Bahrain and Oman), said: "The health and wellbeing of employees and customers in all of our markets remains our number one priority. We have put in place stringent measures to ensure that our assets are safe. We are also conducting enhanced cleaning and sterilization across our properties. As a lifestyle provider, we are committed to the growth of the UAE retail sector and look forward to coordinating our efforts with Dubai Tourism to ensure that our malls continue to provide a welcoming and safe retail experience to all our visitors."

Omar Khoory, Managing Director, Nakheel Malls, said: "As a leading retail group, Nakheel Malls has adopted various measures to meet the current public health challenge in line with the directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Prevention and Dubai Health Authority and are following their advice to ensure the welfare of our shoppers and visitors. We are also pleased to work closely with Dubai Tourism and Dubai Economy in maintaining a conducive environment for business, as we continue to welcome residents and visitors to our family destinations in Dubai."

Mohammed Baqer, Vice Chairman and CEO of Gulf Marketing Group, said: "We must express our appreciation to both Dubai Tourism and Dubai Economy for this critical engagement with the retail ecosystem to ensure that the sector continues to serve the needs of residents and visitors and give them the necessary confidence to follow their daily routine. It is also imperative that all of us in the retail and business community should reciprocate the trust reposed in us by the government and abide by the preventive steps announced by the Ministry of Health and Prevention and Dubai Health Authority in the interest of public health and safety."