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Good afternoon everyone, I'm to give you a personal opinion of my Dubai and UK experiences from a firm's perspective.

Given what I have heard thus far from some of the questions and answers which was very informative, having these sessions are very useful and it shows that you cannot get it right from the beginning. Even with a success story like Dubai's, there continues to be challenges and issues that they face. So don't expect that when you open for business as an International Financial Centre (IFC) that everything will be fixed but go with it. There are great opportunities here in Trinidad. Equally from listening to you, from the reading material and from listening to the presentations, I think you have something very special. You have a great people and a great niche, so I would encourage you to go forward with that in mind.

I was seconded to Dubai back in the late 90's and in the early years of the millennium, the IFC there was a dream. But it was more than just a dream. Indeed, it was a vision of Sheikh Akhtar Mohammed - the leader and prince of Dubai. That, in my view, led to the success that Dubai is today. He knew that oil and gas were sustainable for a few more years in the Middle East, but admittedly he wanted to make Dubai sustainable for future generations and as such, bequeathed 110 acres of desert of just sand. When I arrived back in the late 90's I was placed in an office that overlooked this 110 acres of sand. It wasn't dunes; it was just flat and around this sand was a fence which had DIFC (Dubai International Financial Centre) printed all the way around this fence. I had the benefit of coming from the UK where there was Canary

Wolfe, which isn't a separate financial zone as in Dubai, but Canary Wolfe is a fantastic place for financial institutions. The first thing I asked myself as I looked at the sand was, "*how are they going to get water here because it's all sand*". In the first years, I looked down from my office and saw thousands of workers there digging a foundation and slowly but surely, there was something called the Gate building, which was literally growing out of the sand. That Gate Building was the home of the Regulatory Services Authority, the Dubai Financial Service Authority and the Dubai International Financial Services. Today that Gate Building stands proud as the entrance way for the DIFC. My goodness, from the day when I walked in and said to myself "*how are they going to make this happen?*" to today, it is quite an impressive sight.

Just to go to back to the Crown Prince and the leader of Dubai; it was down to him, because he had this vision of a Financial Centre in Dubai and he drove that vision forward, he shared that vision with those that was going to support him, and he delivered the Financial Centre. He also had leadership on his side by virtue of his position as the ruler and prince from my perspective. If I may comment thus far, I would like to commend the Minister of Finance Karen Nunez-Tesheira and her fellow Minister on the vision that they are sharing with you today. I think it's fantastic that they are sharing with you, the local community, and giving you the opportunity to share in it and be part of this initial phase. I would ask you to hold on to this vision and think about the opportunity to build something for future generations. Good luck and you will succeed.

I want to tell you a little about Dubai. My introduction to Dubai is when a senior Partner came into my office in London, and said, "*We haven't actually seconded you*

internationally as yet, but I've got a very exciting opportunity for you Alex. There is a country in the Middle East I would like you to go to and help them establish an IFC". The Middle East? I hadn't been there before but all I heard was the problems and was naturally very cautious. Even speaking to my wife she was even more cautious, but what I can say is, that, a few years later she told me that Dubai and its environment was one of the safest place in the world. Effectively, my issue is the same issue for what I had to do next. I was the person who was appointed and was going to build the infrastructure for the regulatory body's international global firms entering into Dubai. So I had to recruit a team of individuals who were going to support me in this quite significant role. Imagine the difficulty. I didn't have, initially, any potential candidates but had to persuade them that Dubai and the Middle East was the place to go from a personal and career perspective. Those were the challenges.

I am pleased to say that I was able to create a team that came to work for me in Dubai. 90% have remained there in Dubai or in other Middle Eastern regulatory bodies. They also moved on to Qatar, Bahrain or elsewhere and most of them have actually forged a fantastic career for themselves as regulators. They are very popular with the regulatory firms and they are regularly approached. That is an issue for regulatory bodies - how do you actually retain your staff? - because it is the regulated that sees the opportunity to bag a regulator that knows the inside track.

So having recruited a team, it was down to us to develop a process for those institutions that expressed an interest in Dubai and the Financial Zones. That process needed to be the following:

- transparent,

- clear, and
- understood by all.

Interestingly enough, firms also required that the process be robust. A firm like Deutsche Bank is unlikely to commit to any IFC unless it knows that the other regulated firms would have gone through:

1. the same degree of scrutiny, and
2. the same robustness in terms of applications processes.

There is indeed a balance that needs to be established between an easy process and a transparent one. This was a challenge we had at the onset and it is an ongoing challenge. The challenges for the IFC are in terms of vision at the moment or an IFC that is established as much as the regulatory framework.

The profile of the Financial Centre needs to constantly evolve and grow for the financial market's needs. The financial community needs to grow and develop its own products and move into new markets. So let's not 'kid' ourselves here. Once the job is done, in terms of yes we have an IFC let's snip the ribbon and away we go, the challenge continues and it's the vision, the leadership and the involvement of you in the community, that will ensure that those challenges are met, overcome and you can move forward.

So, there was I in the regulatory authority. I developed an application process and a system whereby, on a regular basis, I was actually receiving approaches from international firms who were interested in what Dubai had to offer. Now this had come up quite regularly in conversations during the day - the need to market your IFC. With the DIFC the

regulators developed and produced a marketing facility. A marketing delivery which, in my view, is first class superb and I encourage you to go to the DIFC website and take a look at their website, because that, in my own view, is an example of how an IFC should be advertised to the world. Just like the DIFC and its marketing efforts initially. Yes, it had a value proposition and I would encourage Ms. Tesheira along with her advisors and to you all, to actually think very carefully about what is your value proposition for the IFC, and to actually have some key messages and some key hangars so that when it comes to financial institutions coming to Trinidad, you can say that this is what we are here for and this is what we can offer you. Be very clear and have transparency in a way in which you can sell that and promote it.

The DIFC, without question, went through the same 'teething problems' in terms of establishing what their proposition was all about. Dubai decided that they were to focus on the wholesale market and I should make it clear, it wasn't to completely exclude retail business. There was a small carve out wherein institutions, coming to Dubai's financial zone, were actually permitted to conduct business with high net worth individuals. The definition for high net worth individuals, as I understand in Dubai, has changed. Initially, US\$2 million of liquid assets. So it stuck to its 'guns' in terms of wholesale. Remember, this was a fantastic market effort in terms of DIFC. It also looked at what else would encourage firms to come to us. It looked very carefully at the labour laws and indeed, to what extent they would prevent or prohibit the business. This was a question very much this morning regarding labour laws in Trinidad and I know this is an issue Government would be looking into.

It looked too at taxation. There were considerable tax benefits being offered when joining the DIFC. Furthermore, the DIFC provided a facility where a unit of individuals was granted work permits, residency visas, driving licences and so forth. So those individuals who were coming from overseas to work for institutions and signed up for the DIFC were taken care of.

The issues of administration and bureaucracy were taken away. *Fantastic* for new institutions arriving in Dubai to actually have all these issues dealt with by a central body that clearly, was communicating with the central government in Dubai and just pushed all those issues to one side. Remember my story about the flatness of the desert and how they needed buildings in terms of an ongoing challenge?

Dubai has been a successful project. The Financial Centre that currently occupies the DIFC has a big issue of not being able to provide sufficient office space to accommodate the firms that want to come to Dubai and establish businesses there. The difficulty there is that they will have to wait a little longer. Why? Because there just isn't enough space there. Maybe some stress testing as to what if TTIFC becomes the most successful Financial Centre in the region. Have we got the infrastructure to support it beyond our wildest dreams? And if we haven't, what are going to do about it?

I think it's fair to say that Dubai has not only been overwhelmed by the success of the Financial Centre but also of its tourism. The Sheikh focused on the Financial Centre and the tourism industry. They now have Dubai Land - an indoor ski centre. It's amazing the growth that has been achieved in Dubai, in terms of tourism and finance. However, what they are now doing in Dubai is playing 'catch-up' in

terms of infrastructure - their roads. Try getting out of the office at 5.30 p.m. If you dare you will probably still be stuck in traffic at 7.30 p.m. There weren't enough schools when I was there. So think about the schools literally from nursery up to tertiary to accommodate the overwhelming success in Trinidad.

Let's move on to the DIFC and indeed, the participants within in it. When you look down from the 42nd floor of the Emirates Tower Hotel, now at the DIFC zone, there are 110 acres. I don't know how much of it is currently fully constructed, but a substantial part of it is not just a building that is accommodating financial institutions, there are accountancy firms in abundance. Frankly, PwC, Ernst and Young and other firms cannot keep up with the demands that are made of them from the financial institutions that have arrived. Law firms have done particularly well there too. There were many financial institutions that were thinking of moving to Dubai and two of their main questions were:

1. Are there going to be law firms and accountancy firms?
and
2. Were they capable of meeting the demands that were required of them being situated within an IFC?

Not only law and accountancy firms but also recruitment firms. There are at least six recruiting firms based in the DIFC, the need for IT support, both hardware and software, hotel and bars. There are plans for theatres, nurseries, schools and crèches. This is a fantastic example of the success of the Financial Centre and there is absolutely no reason why it should not happen in Trinidad. But think about the value proposition and think about the support services that you are going to need and put it in place before you launch and open for business.

Just to touch on another matter that was discussed earlier, there was much discussion on the front and back office. My personal advice is not necessarily to be prescriptive at this stage about your focus on the front, middle or back but to listen to prospective firms on what it is they will want to do in Trinidad and why. Discuss with them what their business rationale would be and actually propose to them how Trinidad could accommodate them.

I would like to give you an example of one particular bank that had approached me before the DIFC was launched. The CEO from Hong Kong's Standard Chartered Bank approached me and thought it would be a good idea to come to Dubai and open a small office and how could we help him. *"Yes of course, oh yes please join. Here's the regulatory process and this is what the DIFC had to offer"*. Discussions were initiated on how we can accommodate him in terms of office space and so forth. Today, Standard Chartered Bank now has their Middle Eastern and Far Eastern hub based in Dubai. They have taken over a whole building and they have hundreds of staff based in Dubai. So please, don't be too prescriptive about whether you want to focus on one particular area. Think big because the banks are thinking big also.

I would just like to go back to that marketing effort by the DIFC and how they went about doing it. They produced fantastic materials. They produced brochures, Power Point Slides, CDs, DVDs and they have recruited industry specialists in banking, asset management, insurance and Islamic finance. Those industry specialists were recruited by the IFC as being directors who would be promoting those particular areas or sectors of financial services in Dubai and their efforts have led to the success that they have today. They actually initiated a global tour where they presented to

financial institutions on why Dubai was a good place to do business and they continue even today. They go and meet financial institutions on their home territory and they listen to what these financial institutions are looking for, and why or why not Dubai? They are indeed a great example to follow.

So, some facts on Dubai. It has a separate Zone, it's called the DIFC. It stands separate to the Dubai Local Market. The local market conducts retail and some commercial business. The challenge is whether Trinidad will have a separate zone and what impact it will have on your local market. Something you should think about before going forward.

The DIFC has its own regulator, the Dubai Financial Services Authority. *Is that something you want in Trinidad or will your existing regulatory bodies be responsible for both your local market and the separate zone?* These are the questions and the issues you need to answer as this will reduce the amount of time from possible legislation delays.

Challenges in the first two years that I was in Dubai - In welcoming international firms, the board of the DIFC, the regulator, decided that it was only going to accept applications from the top tier firms. That didn't play too well with the marketing arm of the DIFC because it was of interest to the financial centre to receive as much applications from as many different jurisdictions as possible. But the regulator insisted to start with top tier because the regulator, and indeed the whole reputation of the Financial Centre, needed to be secure from the onset and gain the plaudits and the acceptance of international regulators around the world. So again, something Trinidad will have to consider - *who actually is it we want to attract? Is it the top tier financial institutions or is it all comers?*

Think about your value proposition. Think about Trinidad actually having a 'niche' and being able to advertise itself as being the home or the centre for having something in particular. But don't be too narrow-minded because you can actually grow, evolve and change the way you actually receive and grow your financial centre and what it stands for.

I am just about finished now. I hope that there were one or two things that resonated with or were useful to you. I would like to thank Minister Tesheira for the opportunity because it brought back great memories of what was a fantastic experience in Dubai. Lastly, I wish you all, as participants within the Market, the Government and its advisors the very best of fortunes and I look forward to coming back to Trinidad sooner than later, to see a fantastic Financial Centre.

Thank you very much.