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UFI Report Confirms GCC Boom in Exhibition Sector

January 9, 2007 – Dubai: UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has released the findings of its study on “The Exhibition Industry in the GCC – Facts and Figures.” The study was released today during a press conference hosted by UFI member, the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Participants at the Press Conference were: Jochen Witt, UFI President; H.E. Ahmed Humaid Al Mazrouie, UFI Middle East/Africa Chapter Chairman; and Mr. Helal Saeed Al Marri, Director General, Dubai World Trade Centre. The research for this study on the exhibition industry in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states was conducted by the UFI Middle East/Africa Office in Abu Dhabi.

Report findings indicate that the exhibition industry in the GCC states has entered a significant “boom and adjustment” period. This clearly reflects the overall prosperity and modernization process underway in the region. The number of organized exhibitions continues to increase, while exhibition venues are being enlarged and modernized in order to match rising market needs.

Jochen Witt, UFI President, said: “It is clear that the GCC exhibitions market is in a period of significant expansion, demonstrated by the increasing sophistication and economic value of the regional event sector. We are delighted to see the emergence of such a healthy regional exhibition industry, which will continue to develop international prominence.”

Today 16 exhibition centres are in operation in the GCC states, providing a total net covered exhibition space of 243,300sq.m. By 2009, four new centres will be operational, raising the GCC’s total available exhibition space to 429,800sq.m, - a 76.6% increase over current capacity.

In 2006, 289 trade fairs were held in the GCC states, an increase of 40% since 2002. Sixteen new trade fairs and exhibitions will be launched in 2007. Consumer Goods and Education lead the exhibition themes for which exhibitions are being organized.

“Membership of UFI has delivered a number of strong benefits for Dubai World Trade Centre, including access to this essential report. It is apparent that the region’s exhibitions industry offers major potential for growth and expansion,” said Helal Saeed Al Marri, Director General, Dubai World Trade Centre.

The growth in exhibition surface reflects an adjustment of the venue offer towards the exhibition organizer’s demand. It echoes the current trend towards the development of city and industrial infrastructures in the region. It also mirrors government policy encouraging the development and expansion of the private sector and the attraction of foreign investment.

“The research report demonstrates the dynamism of the GCC market, which continues to expand at an impressive rate. Ongoing investment and the delivery of new, industry-specific congresses and conferences will enable us to maintain this dynamic growth,” concluded H.E. Ahmed Humaid Al Mazrouie, UFI Middle East/Africa Chapter Chairman.

UFI members will receive the complete finding of this Report. Additional regional coverage data is expected to be completed in the coming months. UFI’s commitment to the region has been strong since the opening of its office in Abu Dhabi in 2006. The association will be organizing the first UFI Open Seminar in the Middle East in Muscat Oman from January 10-11. More information on this event and on UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, can be had at www.ufi.org/muscat2007 . The Executive Summary of the UFI Report on “The Exhibition Industry in the GCC” is attached. For more information, please contact:

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UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, promotes, serves and represents the trade fair and exhibition industry worldwide. Via its member organisations, including the world's leading show organisers and fairground operators, professional associations and industry partners, UFI is present in 73 countries on 6 continents. UFI Members are responsible for the management and operation of over 4,500 exhibitions around the world. Additional information on UFI and its programmes is available at www.ufi.org. UFI already has 28 members in the Middle East/Africa region and has recognised the "UFI Approved" quality of 42 exhibitions in this Region.