



Pearl Initiative

Press Release

## **Pearl Initiative hosts roundtable to explore viable options for Gulf's philanthropic sector to institutionalise giving**

*Senior business leaders raise awareness on the various structures and mechanisms available to institutionalise giving across the UAE*

**Dubai:** The Pearl Initiative, a business-led non-profit organisation promoting a culture of corporate transparency and accountability for the Gulf Region's private sector, recently hosted a roundtable with experts from the UAE's business and philanthropic community to raise awareness on the various legal structures and mechanisms available to support the institutionalisation of philanthropy within the UAE.

With family businesses in the Gulf Region becoming major forces in regional philanthropy, supporting a wide range of causes, business heads learnt how to increase the impact of giving in their communities by modernising traditional philanthropic approaches.

The panel discussion revealed that the most successful global family charities use impact philanthropy, which has three aspects: institutionalising philanthropic activities, adopting proactive alternatives to grant making and measuring impact. The discussions helped business leaders and directors managing philanthropic capital navigate the legislative and regulatory framework guiding charitable activities across the UAE. The panel comprised of presentations from David Russell QC, Barrister at Law, Outer Temple Chambers; Khadija Ali, Chief Representative, Business Development Segment, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Authority; and Taufiq Rahim, Executive Director, Globesight.

Yasmine Omari, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative, said: "By institutionalising philanthropic activities, companies can devise clear and coherent strategies to identify focus areas that are consistent with family values and corporate strategy. Family foundations are a great way for family businesses to be philanthropic, and while the funds and activities of private foundations serve the public, these charitable vehicles do offer significant benefits for donors as well, enabling them to leave a personal and family legacy while also engaging family, particularly the next-gen in philanthropy. ."

The DIFC Foundations Law 2018 (DIFC Law No 3 of 2018) came into effect in March 2018. It allows family businesses to set up a Foundation in DIFC as a separate legal entity, so that they may enjoy greater flexibility and control, all within a robust governance structure that facilitates philanthropy.

"The modern Foundation structures now available in the DIFC enable donors to confidently make provisions for charity on a continuing basis. Just as benefactors elsewhere have come to realise that institutionalising and professionalising their charitable works ensures better outcomes for those they seek to support, so Gulf families and companies have come to support charitable activity on a structured basis. The DIFC Foundation provides a welcome addition to the available means of doing so." Quoted David Russell QC, Barrister at Law, Outer Temple Chambers.

Taufiq Rahim, Executive Director of Globesight added, "The philanthropic sector in the UAE is at a pivotal point, and with the right policy and legal environment, there is an opportunity for transformative impact. We need to continue to have more discussions like today, bringing together diverse stakeholders, to show where we can build momentum towards institutionalising giving in the country."

As part of its Governance in Philanthropy programme, the Pearl Initiative conducted research in 2017 on the region's philanthropic ecosystem. Participants learnt that with charity increasing in scale, the need to apply and practise good governance is vital to retain donors' trust in the work being done and the distribution of money to rightful recipients.

Founded in 2010, the Pearl Initiative is a Gulf business-led non-profit organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency as key drivers of competitiveness and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf Region. The organisation develops programmes and publishes regional research reports and case studies to promote the implementation of higher standards of corporate governance amongst business and student communities across the Gulf Region.

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**Photocaption:**

**During the philanthropy roundtable hosted by Pearl Initiative in Dubai**

**About the Pearl Initiative:**

Prominent business leaders from across the Gulf Region formed the Pearl Initiative in 2010 to create a non-profit vehicle for the Private Sector to collectively take the lead in adopting higher standards in corporate governance, accountability and transparency to enhance business innovation, opportunity and value creation.

With over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative brings together business, government and civil society decision-makers to share best business practices and to help maximise the economic opportunities available to companies within the region. The Pearl Initiative also supports Gulf-based university students to identify and embrace strong ethics as they embark on their future careers.

The Pearl Initiative seeks joint collaborative action between regional and global business leaders, international institutions, government bodies and wider initiatives within the Gulf Region, exhibiting positive leadership and sharing knowledge and experience in order to influence regional business and student communities.

For more information, please visit [www.pearlinitiative.org](http://www.pearlinitiative.org) or contact us on +971 6 515 4605 or via email at [enquiries@pearlinitiative.org](mailto:enquiries@pearlinitiative.org)