**The Emirates Group Annual Report 2016-17**

**Message from HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

**Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai**

We live in a time of rapid change that has seen extraordinary new achievements, knowledge, and discoveries. Countries, cities, businesses, and individuals have to constantly evolve, adapt and learn at the same pace at which global transformations are occurring.

In the 45 years since the birth of the United Arab Emirates, our country has taken great leaps forward in terms of developing our social, economic and political infrastructure. As we continue this journey with big hopes and ambitions, we have identified, through the UAE Vision 2021 and Dubai Plan 2021, the goals that will contribute to building a world-class modern civilization that will enable us to become the best country and city in the world.

This year, the UAE considerably enhanced its standing in the World Bank’s annual “Doing Business” report, moving up from 34th to 26th in the rankings for ease of doing business, the highest among Arab countries. We were also recognised by the World Bank as one of the top 10 most improved business environments. In the Global Entrepreneurship Index Report 2016, the UAE was ranked 19th in the world, ahead of many countries that have a strong history and reputation such as Norway, South Korea, Turkey and Japan.

The foundations laid by our nation’s founding fathers decades ago, created a solid base to build our civilization and invest in a future full of opportunities. They inspired us to shape a vision that focuses on developing the UAE into one of world’s the most advanced and prosperous nations.

For us, real and sustainable growth has always been multi-dimensional. Building physical infrastructure, using smart technologies, and diversifying the economy are vital for us. Equally essential is putting in place a caring and efficient government that is able to facilitate and enable development; build inclusive and cohesive communities; and ensure that our citizens and residents are safe, happy, empowered, and have access to good education, healthcare, and amenities. These are the elements that combine to create a quality life for everyone.

Our national strategy of diversifying our economy, investing in infrastructure, and nurturing an inclusive society has earned us success on the international stage, and enabled us to weather a myriad of external challenges over the years. We have also invested, based on our capabilities and potential, in shaping a future that meets our aspirations.

Optimism, and the relentless pursuit of excellence and sustainable success, are part of the ethos embedded in our national institutions and companies, both at an individual and collective level. These organisations play a vital role in translating our aspirations for the future into positive outcomes for the various sectors of our country.

The Emirates Group is one of our national companies that exemplify balanced growth, innovation, and resilience. Both Emirates and dnata have a track record of investing in its people, in its business, in new technologies, and working with partners on innovative solutions.

Aviation and travel are today one of the main engines and enablers of the UAE economy, connecting us to global trade, commerce, and tourism opportunities.

The Emirates Group has grown with Dubai and the UAE, taking our nation’s capabilities and reputation for excellence onto the international stage as Emirates and dnata grow their global footprint.

With its commitment to encouraging innovation and investing in the future, we are confident that the Emirates Group will achieve even greater successes and contribute further to Dubai and the UAE’s economic growth.

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