

EPILOGUE

Achieving success requires taking the right decision at the right moment. Such decisions were at the very foundation of Dubai's success during the latter half of the last century and we are confident that the decisions we are taking now will make Dubai even more successful in the future. Each one of us has the right to dream and to have our own visions, goals and time frames to achieve them. All leaders dream, but only a true leader can turn a dream into a vision and a reality.

Vision is the way to true development and is also a matter of courage and conquering the impossible. It is believing in our ability to achieve our goals; a matter of having clear objectives and realizing them with determination, efficiency and speed, never pausing until our children see their country competing with the world's most successful economic centres.

I believe that I have provided sufficient evidence in this book to say that achieving excellence is a realistic goal, not only for Dubai, but for the whole of the Arab world. I also believe that upgrading the role of the United Arab Emirates from a regional to an international economic power is a natural development. In order to keep the momentum of the economic prosperity our country is currently enjoying, and move forward, we need to reduce our reliance on natural resources and to maximize excellence in quality services and tourism. We must focus on developing a knowledge economy and human resources to reach the high economic growth rate we aspire to.

We do not want to find ourselves, anytime in the future, pawns to a single source of income, and will always observe the need to diversify and avail ourselves of all suitable opportunities. Until recently, we were content to catch up with others, but we were so successful in this that we have moved beyond that scenario and are now aspiring to a pioneering role.

We want that pioneering status in full and will not settle for anything less. We want it not only for our own sake, but for the sake of all Arabs. Catching up with others comes at a price, but attaining a pioneering role has an even greater price. Our forefathers taught us that pearls do not

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float on the sea, waiting to be scooped, and that we have to dive to great depths to harvest them. We must therefore be prepared for anything and everything, no matter how hard this might be.

The UAE has proven that it can turn ideas into realities, as shown by the Jebel Ali Free Zone, Emirates Airline, Dubai International Financial Centre and scores of other successful projects. The future will see an exciting world – one in which only those who have the right tools and attitude will attain a pioneering status. These tools are flexibility, innovative ideas and an ability to respond quickly.

Every country wants to be a pioneer and each one is prepared for the great race – one that is likely to become the greatest race the world has ever known. I have often been asked where the development going on in Dubai today will lead us and my only answer is, “To victory.”

This, however, is not the only answer. There are others related to the education we have enjoyed, our motives in life and what we want to achieve. If my motive is the progress of my people and my country to the status they deserve, at what point should I stop? What progress would we have achieved if we had all stopped?

Some people have asked me, “You have a vision for the development of Dubai, but have you ever asked yourself what will happen to that vision if you are no longer here?” A big question maybe, but perhaps one with a small misunderstanding behind it. Although it is true that I am managing, planning and contributing to the implementation of my visions, I want everybody to know that I could not have achieved anything without the trust of my brothers and their constant support. I also could not have achieved anything without my dedicated teams and the support of the private sector.

I never achieved all this success on my own; every single person working in the government, every single person working in the private sector and every single person, wherever they may be, who has helped us achieve our goals, did. I must, however, give the private sector credit and say that the government would not have been able to achieve so much without

its support. So our success is that of the private sector first and then of the government.

If anyone bragged about the goals they have achieved, chances are that they will not be able to achieve any more. When we are at the beginning of the road there is no time for bragging. What lies ahead of us is much, much more than we have done to date.

What will happen to the vision if the visionary goes away? I have asked myself this question and found the right answer: “Nothing will happen, because my vision of Dubai has become Dubai’s vision of itself.” The vision will go on regardless – Dubai will continue to exist and continue to develop itself.

Other people with mixed feelings of scepticism and confidence would ask me whether I was convinced that Dubai would compete with international centres of excellence in places such as the United States, Europe and Japan. My answer to those people is always the same: “I have no doubt that Dubai will be able to compete.” I am convinced about this, even though it is not our final goal.

We are not only racing others, we are racing against ourselves and time. Life presents a limited number of opportunities that must be taken and not lost, and development is an ongoing process that cannot afford delay or hesitation. Dubai is part of the UAE, the UAE is part of the Arab world and the Arab world is part of the rest of the world.

Because the horizon has no limits, a vision cannot have any boundaries. The closer you come to the horizon, the more the boundaries extend. A visionary must match these new boundaries with new aspirations in order for his country to provide magnificent opportunities for mankind.

We will keep pushing our vision forward. Those who succeed us, their successors and all those thereafter until the end of time, will forge ahead along the same road. Will that be the end of the vision itself? Of course not, because my vision today is not the same as the one I developed twenty years ago. A vision cannot remain intact after being exposed to new technology such as e-commerce, the Internet and globalization. If it does it

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will become frozen in time, without any flexibility or horizon, and will not be able to cope with modernization or people's changing needs.

When vision changes, the work plans and methods of implementation also change. All the teams I am managing use modern development methods, and have quickly absorbed expertise and accumulated knowledge. They have put all this at the service of our goals, resulting in higher productivity and achievements.

I want our team leaders and senior managers to acquire all the knowledge and skills they possibly can, in the largest number of fields possible. When I transfer one of these people to a new sector, he will take with him his accumulated expertise and skills, and add new ones. This is an ongoing process – the acquisition of skills never stops, just as providing constant guidance, increasing efficiency and reducing time, effort and cost are continuous processes.

What is the end result of all this?

If time went in a full circle, we would have accomplished what we have achieved during the past twenty years in just five years. But since acquiring skills never stops, we will double what we have achieved during the past twenty years in the coming five years.

If this does not give you an idea about what we have in store for the future, then let me summarize it one final time.

Life consists of a number of opportunities and great opportunities do not come knocking on people's doors. Whoever wants such opportunities must grab them when they arise, for his people and for himself. We have to be powerful, strong-willed, determined and willing to grasp such opportunities, so that we do not have to scavenge the leftovers of lions.

I will never abandon one opportunity and wait for another. We have not reached the goal we are striving for. What you see now is nothing compared to our vision... just tiny parts of what lies ahead.

We will build a great monument on these foundations and it is my wish that other Arab countries will follow suit so that we can develop the Arab world into a world of excellence. The hand of the UAE is reaching

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out to join the hands of its Arab brothers, so take it and let us start building together.

I know the road to development and modernization is difficult; I know that it is long and I also know that the next stages will be even tougher and longer. But I have faith in God, I believe in my people, in the wisdom of our leadership and the future of our nation. I am confident we will realize our goals. Our vision is clear, our road is paved and the clock is ticking. There is no more time for hesitation or half-baked goals or solutions. Development is an ongoing process and the race for excellence has no finish line.

رؤيتي

التحديات في سباق التميّز

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