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UAE–UKRAINE: ACCOMPLISHING THE AMBITIOUS AGENDA

Today, UAE–Ukrainian relations are positively evolving and, in all fairness, have reached a strategic level. The great new chapter in the development of direct contacts between our nations was opened at the end of 2017 with the launching of the visa-free regime.

As a logical follow-up to the development of bilateral relations and previously reached agreements, the Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental UAE–Ukraine Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation took place in Kyiv on 16 and 17 August 2018. The UAE part of the Commission was headed by Dr. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

As a result of the efforts of our countries' leaders, bilateral trade in goods and services has seen double-digit growth, standing at \$666 million in 2017 and almost reaching \$1 billion in 2018. In the first six months of 2019, the bilateral trade volume increased by another 11.4 percent and totaled \$500.4 million. The trade growth coincided with the number of flights between the countries increasing to almost 40 performed by four air carriers on a weekly basis.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that since 2014 the Kyiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been vigorously working on the organization of the National Pavilion of Ukraine at such exhibitions as Gulfood and Gulfood Manufacturing. In particular, this year, 33 Ukrainian enterprises were represented at the national stand of Ukraine, and more than 60 visited the exhibition as participants of the business mission. As an Embassy, we fully support such efforts. Participation of Ukrainian companies in exhibitions in the UAE is the most efficient tool for entering our market. It also contributes to the development of economic relations and in the mid-term perspective will thereby help reach the trade volume of \$2 billion.

As for UAE investments in Ukraine, the Embassy is working on promoting Ukraine in UAE business sector to explore investment and partnership opportunities in all fields, particularly, port industry, food security, construction, traditional and renewable energy.

Taking into account the important role of international platforms to promote trade and investment on the regional and international level, we would like to extend one more time our gratitude to the Ukrainian Government for

responding positively to the invitation to participate in Dubai Expo 2020. The event will bring together more than 180 countries and more than 25 million visitors from the world's top business leaders to major investors. We invite all of you to come and enjoy our hospitality.

Thanks to efforts from both sides, today our cultural cooperation is flourishing. In April alone, the delegation of around 60 performers presented Ukrainian culture and tradition in the UAE during the Sharjah Heritage Festival 2019. On April 26–27, 2019 in Dubai, the National Ballet of Ukraine performed *The Sleeping Beauty*. It demonstrates that despite geographical remoteness, our nations are becoming much closer.

As it is known, in the UAE last year was proclaimed as the 'Year of Sheikh Zayed', the founding father of the country, and 2019 was designated as the 'Year of Tolerance'. In order to mark these important events, H.E. Ambassador of the UAE to Ukraine exerted significant efforts during 2018 and 2019 and organized or assisted in the organization of more than 20 events, namely the Final of the International Contest-Festival for orphans 'Happy Palms', a number of charity events to support people with special needs, helping low-income families, etc.

At the same time, the UAE Embassy in Ukraine facilitated the inauguration of the Center for Arab Studies and Study of the Arabic Language at the Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Semen Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics and Hennadii Udovenko Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

As a result, 'in a sign of the considerable contribution to the development of partner, friendly and economic relations with Ukraine' H.E. Ambassador of the UAE to Ukraine became laureate of the 23rd nationwide program 'Person of the Year in Ukraine'.

The UAE and Ukraine share a common ground in many spheres, such as education, health, and human resources, thus allowing us to advance to new levels of cooperation because due to the shared basic values for the development of society. We also maintain proper collaboration within the United Nations and other international organizations of which we are members. We provide mutual support and assistance in these spheres.

We are not inclined to deal with any topic separately, since all of them are equally valuable for us and we strive to develop them all.

Therefore, I propose to work together to achieve the most ambitious goals.