

**File name: Interview with DMCC CEO Gautam Sashittal**

<b>Barbara Njau.</b>	Hello my name is Barbara Njau. I am the editor for Africa, Asia and the Middle East at fDi Magazine. I am here with the new C.E.O of the DMCC, Mr Gautam Sashittal to discuss exciting developments in DMCC and the outlook for free economic zones for the coming year. Mr Gautam Sashittal, congratulations of being appointed C.E.O of DMCC.
<b>Mr Gautam Sashittal</b>	Thank you very much.
<b>B.N</b>	My first question is, is there a great deal of pressure involved in leading such a major free zone like DMCC in such a competitive environment even within the UAE? And is this a daunting task for you?
<b>G.S</b>	I wouldn't say at all it's daunting. Competition is always good, it keeps us on our toes, it helps us innovate, it helps us create new products and services. So really competition is what gets us going, wakes us up in the morning and helps us excel. So today where we are, we're at eight thousand, seven hundred companies and growing at two hundred a month, that means that we are always bench-marking ourselves against the best in the world, not just within the UAE but also outside of the UAE.
<b>B.N</b>	What are your most immediate priorities?
<b>G.S</b>	Oh, there are several of them but I'll give you just a few actually Barbara. The first is building capacity. If you are at eight thousand seven hundred companies and growing at two hundred a month that means that you are going to run out of space shortly, so what we are doing is building new capacity. That's one of our biggest challenges so we're building one tower which is a ground plus 14 tower, built for the trade and that will be ready by September of next year. And then we are building a much bigger challenge actually, the Burj 2020 which my Chairman might have talked about and that's going to be the world's tallest commercial tower and that capacity will keep us going for the next five to ten years in terms of being able to keep the same level of growth and in fact accelerate that level of growth. The second thing of course and most important again is to keep improving the customer experience. So for instance, we launched our customer portal which has taken all of our free zone services completely online.
<b>B.N</b>	The growth so far for DMCC when you look at the figures has been really astounding. Can this pace be maintained and how do you plan to maintain this?
<b>G.S</b>	Eight thousand, seven hundred companies, growing at two hundred a month. The two hundred a month we maintained for the last 3+ years. So how? What do we do? We've got to listen to our customers and listen to them again and then produce more products and services, get more efficient, get a more scalable business, build capacity, all of the things I said.
<b>B.N</b>	What regional economic trends do you expect to have the most impact, good or bad, on DMCC but also when you look more widely on the Middle East regions and on free zones operating within the Middle East regions for the coming year?
<b>G.S</b>	You know, if you look at what we do in DMCC for instance, it's 0% taxation, freehold ownership, rules and regulations that are robust, the right amount of regulation, and then if you look at Dubai itself, the supporting environment of Dubai. If you look at Emirates airlines, it's linked to almost every resource country in Africa, every country in Asia, Europe the U.S and of course the ports network, a world class infrastructure. All of these basically combined, and also not to forget free trade policy, all of these mean that Dubai is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this trade shift that is happening currently and to grow it's position in the world economy.
<b>B.N</b>	Mr Gautam Sashittal thank you very much for your time. It was a pleasure talking to you.
<b>G.S</b>	Thank you very much. It was a pleasure to come here.