

## **United Arab Emirates is the first Middle East economy to join the global league of FTTH leaders**

*This was announced at the FTTH Middle East Conference 2010 in Beirut, attended by close to 300 delegates.*

**DUBAI, 1 December 2010** – The United Arab Emirates is the first country in the Middle East to enter the FTTH Global Rankings according to statistics revealed today in a press conference at the FTTH Middle East Conference in Beirut, Lebanon.

To join the FTTH Global Ranking, more than 1% of households in the country must subscribe to broadband over a fibre connection directly to their home or building. The Emirates rocketed past this threshold, recording a FTTH/B penetration rate of 30.8% at the end of September 2010. Globally, only Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong have higher FTTH/B penetration rates. The full FTTH Global ranking at end-2010, including United Arab Emirates will be unveiled at the FTTH Conference in Milan in February 2011.

The massive and rapid growth in FTTH deployments in the United Arab Emirates is to some extent the result of large construction projects in the region – FTTH is considered to add value to new housing developments. Incumbent operator Etisalat wants to make Abu Dhabi the first city in the world to be wholly covered by FTTH before the end of 2010. Alternative operator Du has been connecting major new residential areas in Dubai.

“The United Arab Emirates is clearly a country apart, thanks to the involvement of both the incumbent Etisalat and its main challenger Du,” said Chris Holden, President of the FTTH Council Europe. “Incumbent operators in the Middle East consider FTTH/B as a real differentiator that can help confirm their dynamism on the international scene – and the Emirates will certainly make headlines with such a dynamic leap into the Global Ranking.”

According to the FTTH Market Panorama, carried out for the FTTH Council Europe Middle East Working Group by research firm IDATE, other countries in the region have less well developed FTTH markets; indeed the Emirates represent 96% of FTTH/B subscribers and 76% of all homes passed in the Middle East.

“Although FTTH/B in the Middle East is still in its infancy, telecoms operators can see the potential,” commented Faris Awartani, Chair of the FTTH Council Europe Middle East Working Group. “We have seen encouraging announcements in 2010, and expect more Middle East countries to enter the Ranking over the next few years.”

The FTTH Middle East Conference opened yesterday under the patronage of His Excellency Eng. Charbel Nahas, Minister of Post and Telecommunications for Lebanon, who gave the welcome speech. Taking place with the theme “Taking your life to new horizons”, the FTTH Middle East Conference is the place to discuss all aspects of FTTH deployment in the Middle East.

Latest news and information from the FTTH Middle East Conference can be found at:

[www.conference.ftthcouncilme.org](http://www.conference.ftthcouncilme.org).

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### **About The FTTH Council Europe**

The FTTH Council Europe is an industry organisation with a mission to accelerate the availability of fibre-based, ultra-high-speed access networks to consumers and businesses. The Council promotes this technology because it will deliver a flow of new services that enhance the quality of life, contribute to a better environment and increase economic competitiveness. The Council consists of more than 150 member companies. [www.ftthcouncil.eu](http://www.ftthcouncil.eu)

The FTTH Council Europe Middle East Group is an ad-hoc working group of the FTTH Council Europe. The Group is a working party of new Middle East-based and European Council members. An independent FTTH Middle East Council will be set up in January 2011. [www.ftthcouncilme.org](http://www.ftthcouncilme.org)

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