

SMEs put in spotlight at international Guangzhou fair

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A major international fair for small and medium-sized enterprises opens today in Guangzhou, capital of South China's Guangdong province.

The 15th China International SME Fair is being held at the Poly World Trade Expo Center from Oct 10 to 13, with nearly 3,020 companies from both home and abroad exhibiting in 6,628 stands.

As many as 668 overseas exhibitors are participating this year from 39 countries, regions and international organizations, including Brazil, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, to name just a few.

"The fair serves as a platform for all SMEs around the world to strengthen exchanges and cooperation, while rendering them an opportunity to take advantage of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area," said Zhong Xuanhui, deputy secretary-general of the Guangdong Provincial Government, at a news conference on Monday.

He highlighted this year's "matchmaking" activities, which are scheduled to bring together some 164 overseas SMEs from countries and regions such as Thailand, Sri Lanka and Nigeria with 322 of their Chinese counterparts to tap future cooperation potential.

UNIDO, which co-hosted last year's event, has agreed to continue doing so until 2022.



The organizing committee briefs journalists about the latest China International SME Fair being held in Guangzhou, Guangdong province from Oct 10 to 13. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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"As an international organization, we put our focus on assisting the development of SMEs," said Ma Jian, deputy representative

of UNIDO's regional office, at the news conference.

"After one year of cooperation, our investigations and studies show the fair is very positive."

Ma said UNIDO is looking to introduce global "best practices, best philosophies and best technologies" to China, while sharing the experience of Chinese SMEs, which has been accumulated over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up, with other countries and regions.

"Our ties with the fair will surely get stronger because our relations have only just entered their second year," he added.

This year also marks the first time an Arab state has co-hosted the fair in the form of the UAE, which is represented by 75 SMEs

from a broad range of sectors including agriculture, trade and retail, innovation, technology, hospitality, industry and manufacturing.

"Both the UAE and China have plans that focus on the growth of SMEs, so we need to explore ways to forge stronger partnerships in this vital area," said Majid Khalid al-Mazrouei, a senior official from the UAE Economy Ministry's trade promotion and investment department.

"The China International SME Fair is a major step in this direction, and I am confident that this will be the start of major joint initiatives in the future."

Xiao Yun, an official with the State Administration for Market Regulation, said SMEs are becoming

stronger and more active in China.

She cited official figures showing about 103 million registered companies and small private businesses at the end of June — nearly 10 million of which were newly registered, a 12.5 percent year-on-year increase.

In the first half of this year, an average of 18,100 companies registered per day, more than 90 percent of which were SMEs, said Xiao.

SMEs in China have employed about 80 percent of the workforce at some point, she noted, adding that at least 70 percent of them are involved in the service industry, information technologies, culture, scientific research and technological services — providing a key pillar of the nation's economy.

UAE becomes first Arab co-host of expo

By CHEN HONG

The United Arab Emirates will forge a closer partnership with China as both look to develop small and medium-sized enterprises, according to a trade promotion official from the Gulf country.

"Both China and the UAE are seeking to promote their SME sector and we are keen to harness our combined synergies and draw on each other's strengths and expertise to attain greater milestones in the growth and progress of this sector," said Majid Khalid al-Mazrouei, a senior official with the UAE Economy Ministry's trade promotion and investment department.

He made the remarks at a news conference on Monday, two days before the opening of the 15th China International SME Fair, which the UAE is co-hosting the event for the first time in Guangzhou, a booming city in South China.

The UAE's pavilion at the fair has a dedicated cultural section, al-Mazrouei said, introducing visitors to major landmarks from each of the seven emirates that make up the country, and giving them an insight into the region's culture and heritage.

SMEs are poised to have a huge impact on the economies of both the UAE and China over the next few decades, according to al-Mazrouei.

"The UAE and China have always shared strong ties and we are keen to strengthen and consolidate them further ... to support the growth and development of both nations and help achieve mutual development goals," he said.

In the UAE, the government has taken steps to enhance the abilities of entrepreneurs and SMEs, widen their access to external markets, develop productive trade partner-

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Majid Khalid al-Mazrouei, a senior official with the UAE

ships, explore best practice and exchange experiences with their global counterparts, according to al-Mazrouei.

He said SMEs are important in the UAE because they complement the country's diversification strategy, which has transformed it into one of the Middle East's most diversified economies.

A national innovation strategy has been drawn up in the UAE that focuses on SMEs as a pillar of the country's non-oil trade, alongside sectors such as renewable energy, transport, health, education, technology, water, and space.

"Given their importance, the UAE has been hard at work providing favorable regulatory and developmental frameworks and mechanisms for SMEs," said al-Mazrouei.

"The UAE Ministry of Economy is optimistic that this event will witness an enthusiastic turnout and prove to be fruitful and productive for everyone involved."

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