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April 24th, 2024

To all the Members of the AIPPI - UAE National Group

Subject: 4th Circular/ 2024

Unlocking Potential in the UAE: A Boon for Franchisers in the Intellectual Property Arena

Dubai's iconic skyline and Abu Dhabi's innovative architecture serve as testaments to the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) unwavering commitment to establishing itself as a global business hub. When evaluating the nation's appeal to global franchisers, it is imperative to highlight its progressive Intellectual Property (IP) landscape.

UAE: More than a Strategic Geographical Nexus

The UAE's strategic location, nestled between Europe, Africa, and Asia, offers far more than just its geographical advantage. Its world-class infrastructure, business-oriented policies, and competitive tax system, as exemplified to create a myriad of opportunities for global brands. However, what truly sets the UAE apart is its pioneering approach to Intellectual Property.

Intellectual Property: The Cornerstone of Business Assurance

For any global brand, safeguarding its identity, whether it's through logos, designs, or innovative strategies, is paramount. The UAE has established efficient enforcement mechanisms, such as administrative measures through various Departments of Economic Development, which expedite IP-related enforcement actions. In response to these needs, the UAE has enacted several foundational IP laws:

- **Federal Law No. 36 of 2021 on Trademarks:** This law fortifies the protection of brand uniqueness, ensuring that brands are shielded from imitation.
- **Federal Decree-Law No. 38 of 2021 on Copyrights and Neighboring Rights:** This legislation safeguards creativity, protecting designs and innovative strategies.
- **Federal Law No. 11 of 2021 on the Regulation and Protection of Industrial Property Rights:** Along with its related regulations, it provides a sturdy framework for safeguarding industrial designs, integrated circuit layouts, patents, and undisclosed business information.

The UAE has a dedicated IP sector under the Ministry of Economy and has recently appointed an Assistant Undersecretary specifically for IP matters.

E-Commerce: The UAE's Digital Prowess

In response to the exponential growth of e-commerce, the UAE has positioned itself as a benchmark by enacting laws that regulate digital marketing and ensure transparency in e-commerce, as outlined in:

- **Federal Decree-Law No. 14/2023 on Trading by Modern Technological Means** which came into force in September 2023.
- **Federal Decree Law No. 46 of 2021 on Electronic Transactions and Trust Services** which repealed **Federal Law No. 1 of 2006**
- **Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 on Combatting Rumours and Cybercrimes**

This framework provides franchisers with a robust foundation when entering the digital realm.

Reasons for Franchisers to Favor the UAE

The UAE stands out as a prime destination for franchisers, and the reasons behind this distinction are abundantly clear. Its stable and burgeoning economy, characterized by a high GDP per capita, creates a favorable economic environment for business expansion. The unique blend of over 200 nationalities within its borders signifies a diverse and vast consumer base, catering to the needs and tastes of a global clientele. This multicultural tapestry is complemented by the UAE's globally recognized ease of doing business, thanks to progressive laws and regulations. Furthermore, unwavering governmental support and the country's rich cultural vibrancy offer brands an unparalleled platform, allowing them not only to operate but to thrive and gain recognition on the world stage. Additionally, it's noteworthy that there is no requirement to register the franchising agreement with the local Trademark Office, further simplifying the process for franchisers.

Diving Deeper into IP in the UAE

The UAE's unique approach to Intellectual Property balances domestic priorities with global standards. From understanding religious sensitivities to adhering to public morals, the trademark

protection criteria, as detailed in Federal Law No. 36 of 2021, ensure that brands remain both locally and globally relevant. Furthermore, the UAE's commitment to enforcing brand rights is unrivalled.

Conclusion

For global franchisers, the UAE represents not merely a market but a realm of boundless potential. With laws that promote innovation, encourage creativity, and champion business excellence, brands not only prosper but also leave a lasting impression. The UAE, with its forward-looking approach, is indeed the future for global franchisers.

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