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## E-disclosure seminar takes place ahead of DIFC Courts' decision to issue new Practice Direction

DIFC Courts, the Dubai International Financial Centre's (DIFC) independent and common law judicial system, joined together with TRILANTIC, a global legal support company focussing on e-Disclosure solutions, late last week to coach some of the leading legal minds in the Middle East in the area



The seminar was held as the DIFC Courts' newly established Rules Subcommittee considers the practice direction and e-disclosure rules for DIFC Courts. The Rules Subcommittee was inaugurated on 11th October 2010, and is tasked with providing recommendations for updates to The Rules of The DIFC Court (RDC).

The panel comprised of Senior Master Whitaker, Senior Master of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, Queen's Bench Division, Sir Anthony Evans (Former Chief Justices of the DIFC Courts), Graham Lovett, Managing Partner of Clifford Chance Dubai and was moderated by Nigel Murray, Managing Director of TRILANTIC.

Senior Master Whitaker is leading the UK judiciary and the courts in their efforts to encourage parties to cost effectively and efficiently use technology to manage electronically stored information. He discussed recent developments in the UK and their relevance for the UAE, including a new Practice Direction and the Electronic Document Questionnaire which came into effect in England and Wales on 1st October 2010.

Nigel Murray is one of the leading experts in the management of electronic documentation for dispute resolution and outlined the benefits of some of the new technologies that will be available to GCC clients through TRILANTIC's newly established Dubai office.

Chief Justice Michael Hwang said: 'Since their inception, the DIFC Courts have made great strides in providing efficient, accessible and transparent justice. This year we launched our new online case management system for users of the Courts to have even more ease of access to information, and our efforts are now focused on adopting e-disclosure best practices.'

Steven Whitaker, Senior Master of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, Queen's Bench Division said: 'Providing rules and guidance for the practice of E-disclosure is an important step forward for judicial systems across the world, as they encounter in litigation ever increasing volumes of electronic documentation. We live in an electronic world and, as such, disclosure practices must remain current and embrace the digital revolution. It is also important that parties to litigation familiarise themselves with the developing technologies which reduce the burden and expense of handling huge volumes of documentation. I am delighted to be here today to discuss e-disclosure in the UAE and indeed the GCC.'

## Notes and Media Contacts

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### About the DIFC Courts

The DIFC Courts is an independent court system set up to uphold the provisions of DIFC laws and regulations. They provide the protection of an English language, common law court system, with an internationally renowned bench of judges versed in commercial disputes, to ensure transparent and efficient justice in civil and commercial matters in or relating to the Centre. The overriding objective of the DIFC Courts is to deal with cases justly and swiftly and to help parties settle cases. Designed to deal specifically with the sophisticated transactions conducted within the DIFC, the DIFC Courts provide comprehensive legal redress in civil and commercial matters. Along with offering the highest standards in legal dispute resolution and a judicial system based on international best practices, DIFC Courts provide a small claims tribunal which is unique in the region. In January 2008, DIFC Courts appointed the first female judge in the UAE and announced that two Emirati judges had become common law International Judges. The DIFC Courts were established under laws enacted by The Late His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai in September 2004. The DIFC Courts are an independent judicial system which has jurisdiction over matters arising from and within the DIFC. The DIFC Courts were established under two new laws enacted by His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai. Dubai Law No. 12 of 2004 established the Judicial Authority at the DIFC and sets out the jurisdiction of the court and allows for the independent administration of justice in the DIFC. The laws establishing the DIFC Courts are designed to ensure the highest international standards of legal procedure thus ensuring that the DIFC Courts provide the certainty, flexibility and efficiency expected by the global institutions operating within the DIFC.

### About the DIFC

The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) is an onshore hub for global finance. It bridges the time gap between the financial centres of Hong Kong and London and services a region with the largest untapped emerging market for financial services. In just three years, over 600 firms have registered at the DIFC. They operate in an open environment complemented with world-class regulations and standards. The DIFC offers its member institutions incentives such as 100% foreign ownership, zero tax on income and profits and no restrictions on foreign exchange. In addition their business benefits from modern infrastructure, operational support and business continuity facilities of uncompromisingly high standards.

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