

Middle East's Index Fair Showcases 36 Brazilian Companies

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Index, the largest accessory and decoration fair of the Middle East, should count on the presence of 36 Brazilian companies in a stand to cover an area of 1,264 square meters. This should be the largest participation of Brazil in the event, to take place from December 3 to 7, in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates.

The Brazilian stand is organized by the Brazilian Furniture Industry Association (Abimóvel) in partnership with the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil). According to a text disclosed by the Apex, expanding business and opening new markets in the Middle East are the main objectives of Brazilian companies at the fair.

From January to October, Brazilian furniture exports to the Arab country totaled US\$ 10.46 million, which represented growth of 23% over the same period last year. Algeria was the main destination, with imports of US\$ 4 million, growth of 140%; followed by the United Arab Emirates, with US\$ 3.8 million, a reduction of 2.9% and the third main destination was Saudi Arabia, with US\$ 786,000, growth of 54.4% over the first ten months of 2007.

The main Brazilian furniture shipped to the Arab nations was wooden, metal and upholstered products, bedroom, kitchen and office furniture and chairs for offices and beauty parlors. The figures were provided by the Foreign Trade Secretariat of the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade.

In 2006, the Arab countries imported a total of US\$ 3.8 billion in furniture. According to the president of the Abimóvel, José Luiz Diaz Fernandez, the presence of Brazilian furniture has been growing each year. "The Index Dubai fair should be a great opportunity for diversification of destinations for our exports and for reduction of dependence on Americans, who should buy less next year," stated Fernandez in an interview to Apex.

With the financial crisis, participation of the United States, the main market for Brazilian furniture, fell from 52% to 30%, but the destination is still the leader. With the depreciation of the dollar against the Brazilian real, the sector has revised from 5% to 2.5% the projected growth of Brazilian foreign sales for 2008, as against last year, when they reached US\$ 1.1 billion.

Last year, in the last edition of the Index, 1.690 companies from 56 countries showed their products, in an area of 35,700 square meters. Over 32,000 visitors participated in the event. Many of the Brazilian companies that participated in the fair closed deals, among them artist Marilza Ramos, of Mz Artes, who sold 38 pictures in the five days of the event. Another company was Formanova, which closed deals with retailers from Egypt and Algeria.

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