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A survey of the image of Brazilian shoes in UAE

Brazil's footwear industry association Abicalçados and export promotion agency Apex-Brasil will disclose the results of a study conducted with wholesale buyers, consumers and specialists in the Arab country.

Isaura Daniel*

São Paulo – Brazilian business owners can now gain a better grasp of the footwear industry in the United Arab Emirates and the thoughts of storeowners, opinion-makers and consumers in the Arab country about shoes from Brazil. The international consulting firm Glasgow Consulting Group has conducted a survey commissioned by the Brazilian Footwear industry Association (Abicalçados) and the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil) and is set to present it this month.

The first presentation will take place in Franca, São Paulo, a footwear industry hub, on March 21, and the second one in Novo Hamburgo, Rio Grande do Sul, another production cluster, on March 23. Seats are limited and registration will be available until March 18, according to Abicalçados. Vishal Pandey, of the US-based Glasgow Consulting, will deliver a lecture in English. The **Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce** will also present an analysis of the Arab market.

Abicalçados and Apex are partners in *Brazilian Footwear*, an international promotion project that pinpoints different countries as target markets every two years. In 2015 and 2016, the United Arab Emirates is one of the priorities. The survey was conducted as part of this project, according to Abicalçados project manager Cristian Schlindwein.

The consulting firm questioned UAE importers and shoe buyers about their perceptions of Brazilian shoes, their pricing, the need to adapt products to the local market, the best approaches to promotion, and the best distribution channels. Opinion-makers were also interviewed, including the specialized press, fashion and footwear consultants, and potential buyers.

According to Schlindwein, the study was one of the actions provisioned in the *Brazilian Footwear* project, and its presentation will be followed by a prospecting mission to the UAE, with Abicalçados professionals and the support of Apex's, to gain a better grasp on the market. The trip should take place between May and June, after which a commercial promotion action will be considered alongside industry companies. Such an action might be going to an industry show, engaging in business matchmaking, or other sorts of events.

Abicalçados declined to provide numbers from the study, since they are strategic and will be given only to the companies involved. However, it disclosed data that shows a bit of the UAE's economy profile and its shoe-buying potential. The country has 8.5 million residents and a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) exceeding USD 64,000, one of the world's highest. In 2014, 22.1 million shoe pairs were purchased in the country, and the near-entirety was imported – half the shoes come from China.

Brazilian shoe sales to the UAE are on an upward curve. Brazilian companies shipped 1.9 million shoes to the Arab country last year, an 8.2% increase over 2014, and the average price per shoe pair was USD 11.40, higher than the total average of Brazilian exports in the year, which was USD 7.70.

Presentation – Strategic Footwear Industry Study – United Arab Emirates

Limited seats

Registration is open until March 18; send an email to janaina@abicalcados.com.br or call (+55 51) 3594-7011

Franca – São Paulo

March 21, Monday, 5pm

Sindifranca, Rua Cecim Miguel, 2.760

Novo Hamburgo – Rio Grande do Sul

March 23, Wednesday, 6pm

Abicalçados, Rua Júlio de Castilhos, 561

***Translated by Gabriel Pomeranclum**