

Sharan Burrow  
General Secretary  
ITUC

Sarah Leah Whitson  
Executive Director, Middle East and North Africa Division  
Human Rights Watch

From the Director  
**Hartwig Fischer**

20 May 2016

Dear Ms Burrow and Ms Whitson,

I wish to express my thanks for your letter of 17 March 2016 and my apologies for not replying sooner but I have only been at the museum for a short time.

The welfare of the migrant workers who will support the construction of Zayed National Museum has been, and remains, a matter which the British Museum takes seriously. It is for this reason that our Chairman, Trustees and senior staff have taken regular visits to the Saadiyat Accommodation Village to view facilities.

Like Human Rights Watch, we recognise that the government of the UAE has recently enacted positive reforms to labour law and policy and we likewise appreciate the challenges of enforcement. We also commend TDIC's creation of the Employment Practices Policy and its annual revisions, in which we take a keen interest. The appointment of PWC to monitor and report on migrant workers' welfare is also welcome. Construction has not yet begun on Zayed National Museum but we will of course continue to monitor the situation.

Museums are civic spaces which foster understanding and tolerance and allow for dialogue on different cultural perspectives. Currently there is nowhere in the Middle East where the history of the UAE can be studied in the context of the region and wider world. It is of critical importance that the material for an understanding of the region's history can be made available.

We are delighted to be supporting the creation of the Zayed National Museum, which aims to generate a deeper understanding of its culture and history.

*Yours sincerely,  
Hartwig Fischer*

Hartwig Fischer  
Director, The British Museum