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Dubai ruler pushes bid to host World Expo 2020



Dubai's ruler on Tuesday pressed for the Gulf emirate to be given the right to host the 2020 Universal Exposition, as the Paris-based organizing committee meets to discuss the bids of five competing cities.

"We want to host Expo 2020 –a global event in which the cultures, innovations and creations of the world will meet in Dubai," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum wrote in an article published in several UAE newspapers.

Dubai is competing with Sao Paulo in Brazil, the Turkish city of Izmir, Ayutthaya in Thailand and Ekaterinburg in Russia to host the six-month extravaganza.

"We want to welcome more than 25 million people during the six months," wrote Sheikh Mohammed.

The Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) begins on Tuesday a two-day meeting of its general assembly, it said on its website.

Delegations from the five cities will on Wednesday reportedly make presentations to promote their bids ahead of a November vote.

Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, left on Tuesday for Paris, but his trip is reportedly unrelated to the World Expo bid.

Dubai has transformed itself over the past few years into an international tourism and commercial hub.

It boasts the world's tallest tower, largest man-made island, and one of the busiest airports for international travel.

The first Universal Exposition was staged in London in 1851 and since then they have served to showcase technology, architecture and culture, while attracting visitors to host cities and generating business.

The last World Expo was hosted by the Chinese city of Shanghai in 2010. Milan will stage the next Expo in 2015.