

## **A.S. Watson Group Announces Franchise Agreement with Al-Futtaim**

*The world's largest international health and beauty retailer brings  
Asia's No. 1 Brand Watsons to the Middle East Consumers*



**[Dubai / Hong Kong, 8 September 2020]** Al-Futtaim, one of the most diversified and progressive, privately held regional businesses and A.S. Watson Group, the world's largest international health and beauty retailer, jointly announced today that they have reached an exclusive franchise agreement to launch the flagship health and beauty brand **Watsons** in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

This is the first franchise agreement of A.S. Watson Group in its almost 180 years of history, and its first venture in the Middle East, adding to its established leadership in Asia and Europe.

With plans to open 100 stores in the region by the end of 2025, the first **Watsons** flagship will officially open in Dubai Mall, on 1 October; along with an eCommerce portal (Watsons.ae), and a mobile app called **Watsons UAE**, and a **Watsons** loyalty programme.

Omar Al Futtaim, Vice Chairman at Al-Futtaim Group said, "As a local business operating across the globe, it is our duty to support and contribute to the economic growth of the region we belong to, while bringing quality and customer-oriented brands to our retail network. Our partnership with A.S. Watson Group is another milestone in our journey to further enhance both the UAE and the Middle East's position in the world's top retail destinations map, and we look forward to making this brand available across further locations in the region."

Expansion plan of **Watsons** in the Middle East will see the opening of two outlets in Dubai Festival City Center and The Mall of the Emirates in the fourth quarter of 2020, followed by entry into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2021.

Dominic Lai, A.S. Watson Group Managing Director is delighted with the new venture, “We are delighted to bring **Watsons** to the beauty-savvy customers in the Middle East which is one of the world’s fastest-growing markets for beauty products. Al-Futtaim has impressed us with their proven experience and track record in quality management of retail brands. We are excited to partner with them to bring new offline and online beauty experience as well as numerous trendy brands to customers in the region.”

Being named Asia’s number one brand\* for 12 consecutive years, **Watsons** is famous for its customer engagement through its 100 million member base loyalty programme and 30 million social media community; its expertise in beauty, as well as its fully integrated offline and online experience. Its promise is to make customers LOOK GOOD, FEEL GREAT every day.

*\*Campaign Asia-Pacific/Nielsen’s “Asia’s Top 1,000 Brands” Online Study 2020 is based on interviews with over 8,000 people across 14 markets in the Asia-Pacific region*

### **Photo Captions**



Omar Al Futtaim (right), Al Futtaim Group’s Vice-Chairman and Dominic Lai (left), A.S. Watson Group Managing Director signed the agreement in January to launch Watsons in GCC, with the first store being opened in October

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## **Notes to the Editor**

### **About Al-Futtaim Group**

Established in the 1930s as a trading business, Al-Futtaim today is one of the most diversified and progressive, privately held regional businesses headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Structured into four operating divisions; automotive, financial services, real estate and retail; employing more than 42,000 employees across 25 countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, we partner with over 200 of the world's most admired and innovative brands.

Al-Futtaim's entrepreneurship and relentless customer focus enables the organisation to continue to grow and expand; responding to the changing needs of our customers within the societies in which we operate.

By upholding our values of respect, excellence, collaboration, integrity; Al-Futtaim continues to enrich the lives and aspirations of our customers each and every day. For more information visit: [www.alfuttaim.com](http://www.alfuttaim.com)

### **About A.S. Watson Group**

Established in Hong Kong in 1841, A.S. Watson Group is the world's largest international health and beauty retailer operating over 15,800 stores under 12 retail brands in 26 markets, with over 140,000 employees worldwide. For the fiscal year 2019, A.S. Watson Group recorded a revenue of US\$21.8 billion. Every year, we have over 5 billion shoppers in stores and online.

A.S. Watson Group is also a member of the world-renowned multinational conglomerate CK Hutchison Holdings Limited, which has five core businesses - ports and related services, retail, infrastructure, energy and telecommunications in over 50 countries.

Please visit [www.aswatson.com](http://www.aswatson.com) for more information.

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