

## Press Release

### **The Middle East Investor Relations Association celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the largest investor relations conference in the Middle East**

**MEIRA's Annual Conference addressed topics ranging from the development of the Middle Eastern capital markets and investment trends to female leadership in investor relations**

**Dubai, UAE, 26 September 2018.** The Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA), an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting investor relations in the region, has successfully concluded the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of its Annual Conference.

High-profile speakers and panellists as well as more than 200 participants came together at Dubai's Bvlgari Resort on 26<sup>th</sup> September to network and discuss the latest industry developments.

The opening panel titled 'Ten years of change – what's next?' brought together CFOs from Mobily, Aldar Properties and Almarai. The participants of the session highlighted the importance of a solid investor relations programme to support the overall company's strategy.

The much-awaited 'MEIRA Talk' series comprised a total of five sessions over the course of the day. The first talk provided a macro review on the operating landscape for listed companies in the region. Speaker Daniel Marc Richards, MENA Economist at Emirates NBD, outlined how the macroeconomic conditions seem more promising for Middle East economies after a relatively slow start to 2018. The second talk, presented by Chris Wilson, Head of Investor Relations at Aldar Properties, addressed challenges facing Investor Relations Officers in this part of the world from a practitioners' perspective.

Thirdly, Mohamad Al Hajj, Vice President and Head of MENA Strategy at EFG Hermes, elaborated on the rise of passive investing, a trend which is significantly impacting stock markets in the Middle East. Noor Sweid, General Partner at Global Investor, unveiled practical tips on how to effectively pitch your company's equity story to the buy side during her session. The last MEIRA Talk was conducted by Redwan Ahmed, Head of Investor Relations at DP World, who explained the impact of GCC credit from the potential inclusion in the JP Morgan sovereign index.

This was followed by an investor panel discussion on the opening of Saudi Arabia's capital market and the effects on the wider region, gathering participants from FAB Asset Management, Franklin Templeton Investments and Jupiter Asset Management.

The Conference ended with an on-stage discussion on female leadership in investor relations, moderated by Saleha Osmani from Société Générale and Chair Middle East at 100 Women in Finance. While there is much discussion about a glass ceiling globally, the respective Heads of IR

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of Gulf Bank, Almarai, FAB and SODIC concluded that the investor relations profession in the region has been developing rapidly and is in the progress of overcoming the gender gap.

MEIRA Chairman Andrew Tarbuck commented: “It has been a privilege to host the anniversary edition of our Conference. In its tenth year, I am proud that we have brought together some of the industry’s leading minds to explore current trends as well as the challenges and opportunities ahead. This is a particularly interesting time for the regional capital markets, which are on the cusp of significant developments and disruptions. The conversations and discussions that have taken place today demonstrate that having the right talent, infrastructure, and supportive ecosystem in place is crucial to shape the future of the investor relations industry in the Middle East.”

Established in 2008, the association’s Annual Conference has evolved as the region’s largest and leading platform for investor relations professionals to gather, network and debate crucial topics that drive the development of the regional capital markets over the course of the last decade. MEIRA has successfully expanded its footprint across the region, now with presence in ten markets and congregating a strong corporate membership base, among them some of the most reputable listed companies in the Middle East.

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## **Notes to Editor**

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All information is also published on [www.meira.com](http://www.meira.com)

## **About the Middle East Investor Relations Association**

The Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA or ‘the Association’) is an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting the Investor Relations (IR) profession and international standards in corporate governance. The mission of MEIRA is to enhance the reputation, efficiency and attractiveness of the Middle East capital markets.

This is delivered by fostering increased dialogue among members and encouraging the IR community to share the global benchmark in best practice within the field of IR. In partnership with stock exchanges,

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regulators and other market participants, MEIRA supports companies through its professional development and certification programmes as well as its membership community and network of country Chapters.