

Boursa Kuwait organizes seminar to highlight strategic role of Investor Relations in listed companies

-Held in collaboration with the Middle East Investor Relations Association

Kuwait, 23 April 2019: Boursa Kuwait held the fifth Investor Relations (IR) seminar at the company's premises, in collaboration with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and its Kuwait Chapter. The one-day event, which attracted many participants, mainly IR practitioners from companies listed on Boursa Kuwait, highlighted the growing importance of the IR function in Kuwait's highly dynamic market.

Delivering the welcome address at the seminar, titled *'Importance of IR from local fund managers' perspective,'* Ahmad AlKiswani, Executive Director, Risk Management, Compliance and Corporate Governance, Boursa Kuwait, explored the strategic role of IR in markets that are disrupted by local and international economic, and regulatory trends.

Ms. Noura Al Abdulkareem, Acting Executive Director, Markets, Boursa Kuwait, said: "As an organization that strives to promote a sustainable capital markets ecosystem in Kuwait and contribute to the economic growth and development of the nation, Boursa Kuwait has remained at the forefront of initiatives that will enable listed companies, investors, and other market participants to excel in their areas of business and operations. Our fifth IR seminar represents another major step towards achieving our established goals and we look forward to continue building on our long-standing relationship with MEIRA to launch new initiatives in the future."

The seminar featured a thought-provoking panel discussion moderated by Mohammad Abdal, Chief Communications Officer at Zain Group, MEIRA Kuwait Chapter Head and MEIRA Board Member, with the participation of renowned industry experts, including Mohammed K. Al-Abdulkader, Assistant Vice President, MENA Equities, Kuwait Financial Center "Markaz", Mubarak Al-Hamdan, CFA, Assistant Vice President, Investment Banking – Research and Analysis at Tharwa Investment Company, and Eisa Ali Alhasawi, Vice President-MENA Asset Management at Kamco. The panel, shed light on the latest trends pertaining to IR function in today's economy, especially as companies are increasingly expected to maintain strong and transparent relationships with investors. The panelists also commented on the evolving demands of fund managers and how Investor Relations Officers (IROs) can address them.

Addressing the panel Mr. Mohammad K. Al-Abdulkader, said, "Investor relations play an important role in establishing a healthy two-way communication between a company and the financial community. The objective of investor relation contributes significantly to helping a company security achieve its fair valuation in the stock market. Investors require accurate, relevant and timely information to be able to make informed investment decisions thus leading to the great importance of active investor relation function within a company. A company can gain a lot of benefits through higher transparency by increasing trading liquidity, reducing stock volatility and building healthy shareholder base of long term investor which contribute positively

to the company share price and the overall market. Furthermore, importance of transparency increases at this very stage of the Kuwaiti market as it is on the verge of a massive transformation and is anticipating a much more diverse and sophisticated investor base where transparency an expectation.”

Commenting on this matter, Mubarak Al-Hamdan, said: “While relatively in its early development stage, the IR function in Kuwaiti companies has played a key part in raising the level of transparency and information flow in the market. The reclassification to emerging market status and increased interest from international investors in Bursa Kuwait should set the tone for higher standards in transparency and corporate communications requirements going forward”.

Eisa Ali Alhasawi added: “No one can ignore the importance of the strategic role that IR plays. IR professionals are essential in keeping the lines of communication open between the listed company and the investment community. By being transparent, IR adds credibility on behalf of management and through this, trust plays a big part in the decision-making process of investors. The best way to enable a company to achieve a fair share price that reflects the fundamental value of the company is to have a proactive IR department”.

To conclude the session, Samantha Bartel, Managing Partner, Instinctif Partners, shared a short presentation with useful tips to deploy and enhance an IR program.

The participants at the seminar also had the opportunity to hear the latest initiatives of the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and the MEIRA Kuwait Chapter. Commenting on this, John Gollifer, MEIRA General Manager, said: “It is an honor to support Bursa Kuwait's lead in promoting the role of investor relations (IR) in its listed companies. IR matters and is increasingly considered by company management and investors alike as an integral part of strategic corporate communications. This approach to IR can only help companies to differentiate their investment stories. We applaud the Bursa and its continued work in partnership with the Kuwait Chapter of MEIRA and we look forward to supporting the professional development of IROs in the market”.

The ‘Importance of IR from local fund managers’ perspective’ seminar is part of a series of workshops held by Bursa Kuwait in collaboration with MEIRA and its Kuwait Chapter, with the aim to raise awareness of the importance of effective investor relations and the value it adds to listed companies.