

Press Release

Middle East investor relations community calls for shift to digital

- Annual Middle East Investor Relations Association conference highlights the latest developments in regional IR landscape
- Discussions surrounding driving stakeholder value theme led by leading IR experts
- Launch of first-ever regional MEIRA IR Best Practice Guide

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 28 September 2020 – The 12th annual Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) conference concluded on a high note amid optimism and prediction of growing significance of investor relations in the region. Themed *Driving Stakeholder Value*, the virtual conference reiterated the strategically important role that investor relations continues to play in the ongoing development of regional capital markets.

The Middle East's largest gathering of capital markets professionals comprised of topical discussions surrounding the investor relations community. There was broad consensus among participants that capital markets and investor relations are set for a period of sustained growth in the region, driven particularly by the growing importance of digital IR adoption, which is anticipated to act as a catalyst for stakeholder engagement.

Addressing the conference in his welcome note, Andrew Tarbuck, Chair of MEIRA, said: "This year's theme, Driving Stakeholder Value, truly resonates with us at MEIRA as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a monumental shift in the way we engage with stakeholders. As such, we are pleased to unveil our MEIRA IR Best Practice Guide, among the first for the region, which is a culmination of our many years of industry expertise, with insights spanning across the Middle East. We at MEIRA will continue to champion greater excellence across the IR function through the entirety of our activities."

This year's conference also saw the launch of MEIRA's IR Best Practice Guide, a first for the region. As a professional body for Investor Relations (IR), MEIRA stands for best practice and this guide brings together valuable information in a single handy reference book for IR practitioners everywhere.

Among the conference's numerous industry leaders, Dr. Mark Mobius, Partner at Mobius Capital Partners and emerging markets expert, addressed the delegates with a compelling discussion on the potential for a V-shaped recovery for a post-COVID economy, the importance of management in gauging an institution's performance, and the Middle East's promising regional growth. Dr. Mobius also discussed the state of ESG practices over the course of his investment career and highlighted its importance as a key determinant of an institution's profitability.

In accordance with the overarching theme of the event, findings from the Middle East IR Pulse survey, pioneered by MEIRA, Instinctif Partners and Prose Solutions analyse various IR trends that have emerged amid the global pandemic, chief of which is the rising interest in environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. According to the study, an astounding three quarters of IR experts surveyed believe that

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ESG has become more important for their company and shareholders since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

The MEIRA Annual Conference and Awards, established in 2008, has been an industry platform committed to improving the profession of IR by facilitating constructive dialogue among issuers, regulators, stock exchanges, analysts and investors, among others. The annual event has become a catalyst for driving strong stakeholder engagement and communication, as well as improving transparency.

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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, 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.