

Press Release

Middle East investor relations leaders highlight importance of ESG amid growing capital markets scene

- Annual Middle East Investor Relations Association conference highlights the latest developments in regional IR landscape with a focus on ESG
- MEIRA Awards recognise IR champions in the region, including Baladna, FAB, HMG, Mobily, STC and many others

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 26 October 2021 – The Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) successfully concluded the 13th edition of its annual conference, held under the theme *An Odyssey, from ESG to IR*. Attended by some of the region’s most recognisable regulators, listed firms, investors, research analysts and advisers, the annual MEIRA conference continues to demonstrate the heightened importance that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors play in attracting investment to and sustaining growth across capital markets.

The Middle East’s largest gathering of IR professionals included topical discussions of relevance to the investor relations community with specific focus on championing sustainability and the ongoing digitalisation of the way we work.

Addressing the conference in his welcome note, **Andrew Tarbuck, Chair of MEIRA**, said: “It is always important for MEIRA to recognise the support of our broader regional market eco-system. Today we are spoiled by the calibre and seniority of our speakers, from the exchanges to the issuers and of course, all of our important supporting intermediaries, including the sell-side, who help us understand and engage with the investment community and other stakeholders.”

In his closing remarks, he continued: “Increasingly, we can see progress: this year, capital markets have been abuzz with activity from new and existing issuers – there is certainly no lack of IPO and other capital raising opportunities; a growing appetite from a larger number of international investors, both institutional and retail; and of course, a recognition that investors have choices, there are other markets outside the region, after all. With opportunity comes responsibility, we operate in regulated capital markets where there is a real premium on governance, the right sort of behaviours expected by investors and increasingly, other stakeholders, the policy-makers, the regulators, the exchanges, to name just a few big ones and ultimately, our public investors.”

Keynote speakers at the event included Guy Opperman, UK Minister of Work, Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Mohammed Al-Rumaih, Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi Exchange (Tawadul) and Hana Al Rostamani, Group CEO at First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), as well as other C-suite speakers, including Haitham bin Salem Al Salmi, CEO of the Muscat Stock Exchange, Iman Abdel Khalek, Co-Head of CEEMEA Debt Capital Markets at Citigroup, and Khatija Haque, Head of Research and Chief Economist at Emirates NBD.

Alongside the expansive conference agenda of keynote addresses, MEIRA Talks and panel discussions were the annual MEIRA Awards, conducted in partnership with Institutional Investor and based on the

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results of the 2021 Emerging EMEA Executive Team survey. This year's Awards recognised several of the region's foremost corporates, exchanges, and IR practitioners, including: FAB; Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank; Al Rajhi Bank; Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Services Group (HMG); Mobily; STC; and newcomer, Baladna, across categories such as the Grand Prix – Leading Corporate for Investor Relations – Middle East, Best Annual Report, and Best Investor Relations Professional.

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 in regional capital markets.

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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.