

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE ARABIAN HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE (AHIC) 2010 ADVISORY BOARD LINE UP
ANNOUNCED

Top hospitality industry stakeholders meet to discuss the future of the Middle East's hotel industry

Dubai, October 2009: Key members of the region's hospitality industry gathered today to discuss the state of the Middle East's hotel sector in advance of the upcoming Arabian Hotel Investment Conference (AHIC).

The exclusive AHIC Advisory Board, made up of over 40 hotel stakeholders, key investors and governmental representatives from across the Middle East and Africa.

Including industry-leaders such as Sami Al Ansari, CEO of Ishraq Gulf Estate Holding, , Paul Bell, Managing Director; Aldar Hotels; Susan Harmsworth, CEO, ESPA; Omar Benanni, CEO, Morocco Tourist National Development; Gerald Lawless, Executive Chairman, Jumeirah Group; Marc Dardenne, CEO, Emaar Hotels and Resorts and Michael Scully, Managing Director, Seven Tides Hospitality, to name but a few, will all play a key role in establishing the theme and programme of the 6th Annual Arabian Hotel Investment Conference held on 1 – 3 May 2010, Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai.

This year's face-to-face meeting which takes place at the Emirates Academy allows the board to drive the growing success of AHIC and to discuss potential key elements of the expert program, including hotel ownership and investment opportunities, current industry developments, global economic outlook and future markets.

The meeting comes at a critical time for the MENA region's hospitality sector which has seen a decline in occupancy rates, but has since revealed a promising development pipeline of 468 hotels with 126,464 rooms according to the August 2009 STR Global Construction Pipeline Report.

The UAE is currently leading the way in the region with projects in the 'in-construction' phase with over four times the number of rooms under construction compared with its closest competitor, Saudi Arabia, according to the report.

Sami Al Ansari CEO of Ishraq Gulf Estate Holding, commented, "2009 has been extremely challenging for the hospitality industry in Dubai, the drop in demand for hotel rooms as a result of the recession coupled with a huge increase of 17% in rooms inventory drove occupancy down by 15% and revenue per available room by 35% so far this year as compared to 2008"

Al Ansari further commented, "Signs of improved demand for the remainder of 2009 are evident, nevertheless pressure continues on room rates as a result of fierce competition.

The outlook for 2010 is cautious, as a lot will depend on how soon the world economy can recover thus the return of leisure and business demand for hotel rooms in Dubai."

In addition, the board meeting encompasses key panel sessions for Emirates Academy students, the industry leaders of the future. These key panel sessions will examine closely the elements necessary for succeeding within the hotel industry and will also include the leading regional commentators Sean Brierley, Content Director, MEED; Philippe Doizelet, Managing Partner, Horwath HTL, Dr Costas Verginis, Director Consulting, Deloitte and Jalil Mekouar, Executive Vice-President - Head of Middle East & Africa, Jones Lang Lasalle Hotels. This morning they presented for students their top three industry predictions for 2010.

Al Ansari concluded, "The challenge continues to be the entry of new rooms supply estimated at 15% in 2010 which will increase the available rooms in Dubai to 54,000. This is a staggering 40% additional supply when compared to 2008"

The 6th annual AHIC conference, which is jointly organized by MEED and Bench Events, takes place at the Madinat Jumeirah from 1st-3rd May 2010. We are delighted to announce that in 2010 The Rezidor Hotels Group, Morocco Tourist National Development Company, The Address Hotels + Resorts, Hamilton Hotel Partners, Hilton Worldwide, Jumeirah Group, IHG, Corinthia Hotels and WATG have demonstrated their commitment to growth in the region by sponsoring AHIC 2010. Additionally the AHIC opening reception on 1 May will be hosted by Jumeirah and the networking reception on 2 May will be hosted by Emaar at the yet to opened, highly anticipated, Armani Hotel.

For further information please visit www.arabianconference.com

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Notes to Editors

They should be getting a full list anyway

Bench Events

Bench Events has a long track record of hosting the premier hotel investment events in the world. Bench Events' Chairman, Jonathan Worsley, is one of the organisers and founders of the highly successful International Hotel Investment Forum now in its thirteenth year (www.berlinconference.com). In 2005, he was responsible for launching the Arabian Hotel Investment Conference in Dubai and in 2008 launched the Russia & CIS Hotel Investment Conference which was a sell out success (www.russia-cisconference.com).

Bench Event's sister company, JW Bench, is a benchmarking company that has successfully launched the Conference Bench and the Productivity Bench. An industry first, the Conference Bench, measures performance data for conference and banqueting space in hotels in Stockholm, Oslo, London, Brussels with other capital cities contributing shortly. www.benchevents.com

MEED

For 50 years business leaders have been relying on MEED (Middle East Economic Digest) to give them a wealth of factual, unbiased business information that they need to be successful. The MEED brand represents an unrivalled portfolio of high calibre business information products, online services and premier networking events.

MEED Conferences is part of the leading information brand in the Middle East working to provide delegates with the very latest business sensitive information. Over the past 12 years, MEED Conferences has organised events attended by senior government officials and thousands of international business people. The conference series is aimed at companies actively seeking business in the markets of the Middle East. MEED is well established as the source of strategic and accurate regional information placing it in a unique position to bring together high-calibre speakers.

For additional information please contact:

Claire Stapley

Managing Partner

Siren Consulting

Tel: +971 4 321 5351

claire@sirenconsulting.com