



جمعية الشرق الأوسط و أفريقيا للأسواق الحرة
MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA
DUTY FREE ASSOCIATION

MEADFA PRESS RELEASE

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07/10/2020 MEADFA Press release:

A first virtual event – Coordinated advocacy by airports & retailers key to the recovery of travel retail

Today the Middle East & Africa Duty Free Association (MEADFA) held its first virtual event outlining how travel retail in the Middle East and Africa is fighting against the impact of COVID-19. Over 150 participants from across the world joined the event.

On Behalf of MEADFA President, Rita Chidiac – MEADFA AWG Secretary General remarked “this is a crisis like no other, and travel retail is very much in the eye of the storm. Our industry requires the full support of our governments and our airport partners and stakeholders. Global industry associations including MEADFA, ICAO, DFWC, ACI WORLD, IATA, ETRC, APTRA, ASUTIL and many more are working together joining efforts to mitigate the effect of COVID-19.”

The event was moderated by John Hume, Hume Brophy Managing Partner, and included high profile speakers:

- Ali Tounsi, Secretary General ACI Africa
- Rita Chidiac, Corporate Affairs & Communications Manager Worldwide Duty Free – JT International
- Ramesh Cidambi, COO Dubai Duty Free

The impact of COVID-19 has been catastrophic, but positive steps towards recovery in the MEADFA region can be seen. Despite very low numbers, passenger behaviour and spending patterns have held up well, and many categories are proving to be very resilient.

One of the major lessons learned is that a strong cooperation between MEADFA and its natural allies such as airports and airlines is paramount.

MEADFA Board Member Rita Chidiac said; “Our airport and airline partners have taken major steps to make travelling by air very safe. Travel retail operators have worked hard to create the new safe operating conditions in our shops to protect both staff and customers. All of us must now work together to convince people that they can fly safely and comfortably.

Most importantly, more needs to be done to ensure the industry maintains a deeper dialogue with governments in Africa and Middle East. The patchwork of quarantine and travelling restrictions currently in place, means that passenger confidence and ability to travel is at an all time low.

We need to move away from quarantining travellers and introduce consistent and coordinated testing procedures to really give our passengers the confidence and the ability to take to the skies again.”

ENDS

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