**PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED FOR MEADFA CONFERENCE 2015**

The Middle East & Africa Duty Free Association is pleased to announce that the 2015 MEADFA Conference will take place on 23rd and 24th November at the world-class King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

The Conference will be preceded by a relaxed Opening Cocktail on the evening of 22nd November, sponsored by Dufry, the first of many opportunities for networking with delegates from all over the Middle East, Africa and beyond.

Organised by TFWA on behalf of MEADFA, the event is the duty free and travel retail industry’s leading conference in this vibrant region, attended last year by a record 600 delegates.

**Sean Staunton, President MEADFA** will open proceedings by welcoming delegates to a region which posted encouraging growth in 2014 but which continues to face a challenging trading environment.

The opening keynote address will be given by **His Excellency Akel Biltaji, Mayor of Amman**, who served previously as Jordan’s Minister of Tourism and Antiquities and also enjoyed a distinguished 28-year career with Royal Jordanian Airlines.

Providing what promises to be a fascinating address on the geopolitical climate in the Middle East will be **Tim Sebastian**, **founder of the BBC’s Doha Debates**, chair of The Arab Debates on Deutsche Welle TV and one of the region’s most respected voices.

Discussing the evolving role of tourism and luxury retail in Africa will be two of Africa’s most successful young entrepreneurs, **Mark Essien, founder of Hotels.ng** and **SoleRebels creator** **Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu**, in a session entitled ‘Young Africa: Driving the continent’s future’.

Senior executives from the region’s leading retailers will be taking part in the event to discuss the issues currently facing the industry in the Middle East, among them fluctuations in exchange rates and changes to travel patterns and customer demographics.

The Conference programme will include interactive workshops on inflight retail and, secondly, on the technology which is revolutionising the way travel retailers communicate with their customers.

**Sean Staunton, President MEADFA**, comments, “The Board of MEADFA is delighted by the welcome that is being extended to us by His Excellency the Mayor of Amman and the authorities in Jordan for our annual conference. The conference facilities at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre are absolutely excellent and, what’s more, the location is like no other on Earth. We are sure that delegates will enjoy their time at the Dead Sea.

“The duty free & travel retail business here and elsewhere in the Middle East & Africa region is demonstrating an extraordinary enthusiasm for development and expansion but it is also a region which is beset by many challenges. Our line-up of speakers will provide delegates with fascinating insight to many aspects of trading and developing the industry in the various parts of this dynamic region.”

The MEADFA Conference will be moderated by Dermot Davitt, President of The Moodie Report and TFWA’s Conference, Research and Corporate Affairs Director John Rimmer.

Several companies have already expressed their commitment to the 2015 MEADFA Conference, including the official carrier Royal Jordanian Airlines; World Duty Free Group, which will host the conference and sponsor the Gala Dinner; platinum sponsors AerRianta and Bahrain Duty Free; gold sponsors JTI and Ferrero; silver sponsors Jordan Tourism Board and Aphrodite Duty Free Shop; smoking lounge sponsor and exhibitor Philip Morris; coffee break sponsor International Duty Free Trading & Agencies; Lagardère Travel Retail will provide the lanyards.

Registration will open in September and further details can be found at [www.tfwa.com](http://www.tfwa.com).

Ends

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