



MEADFA PRESS RELEASE

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

For immediate release
October 01, 2025

Programme announced for MEADFA Conference 2025

This year's MEADFA Conference, which will take place from 9th to 11th November at InterContinental Dubai Festival City, promises three days packed with insights, debate, and unmissable networking. The event will open in style with an Opening Cocktail on Sunday, the perfect opportunity for delegates to get together before the serious business of the week begins, with a programme designed to challenge, inspire, and connect. The conference will start at 9:00 the following day with a warm welcome from moderators Dermot Davitt and Michele Miranda and remarks from MEADFA President, Abdeslam Agzoul.

Delegates will then hear from a powerhouse panel of Abdeslam Agzoul (Avolta), Nuno Amaral (ARI), Chichi Maponya (Africa Travel Retail), Vincent Romet (Lagardère Travel Retail), and Bernard Schlafstein (Gebr. Heinemann) who will debate 'Leading through change', offering perspectives on navigating through complexities and rethinking the value proposition for a new generation of travellers.

After a networking coffee break, delegates will be seated for the 'Safeguarding tomorrow's travel retail' session, where they will hear from MEADFA Advocacy Committee Chair, Nuno Amaral, joining fellow members Roger Jackson and Chichi Maponya, along with DFWC President Sarah Branquinho and COMESA Secretary General Teddy Soobramaniam, to discuss how advocacy efforts are adapting to meet the challenges of today.

The first day will close with two powerful sessions, 'The business of airports: Economic trends & non-aero growth' led by Lia Lioutov, Head of Economics at ACI World, and 'Luxury, local, and lifestyle: the new face of MEA travel retail', led by Stephen Hillam, Managing Director at Pi Insight. These discussions will present the latest economic outlook, highlighting trends impacting retail, F&B, and commercial services as well as unveiling new data on how younger, experience-hungry shoppers are shaping demand for sustainable luxury and lifestyle-driven offers.

On Tuesday, the agenda explores some of the region's most dynamic markets. Trevor MacFarlane, Managing Director at EMIR, will lead a session titled 'Risk & resilience: navigating MEA's business landscape', offering a timely briefing on the macro-trends influencing investment, consumer confidence, and developments across the region, equipping delegates with critical insights to guide strategy. This session will be followed by 'Destination Saudi: growth & opportunity' which will unpack the scale and significance of Saudi Arabia's transformation, and a 'MEADFA sustainability update: call to action' where Dr. Munif Mohammed, head of the MEADFA Sustainability Committee will look at how brands, retailers, and airports can collaborate, stay accountable, and genuinely promote change, turning sustainability commitments into concrete action.

The next wave of Africa travel retail will be the topic of a conversation between Ali Tounsi, Secretary General of ACI Africa, and Harold Sunner, Area Manager for Middle East and Africa at Gebr Heinemann, and Claudio Ferreira, Vice President Global Travel Retail, Japan Tobacco International (JTI), who will share insights from the front lines of travel retail's African expansion. The following session will spotlight one of travel retail's key regions in the session 'The India Effect: How Indian travellers are reshaping MEA's travel retail' with viewpoints from Pooja Padmanabhan Bommidala, CEO of BBM Travel Retail, Renat Rozpravka, CEO of Muscat Duty Free, and Mudit Srivastava, COO at Cococart. IATA's Martina Bednarikova will lead the final session 'Travel takeaway', presenting the latest aviation trends from route expansion and passenger booking patterns to infrastructure investments and the economic levers driving tourism, leaving delegates with a clear view of what's next for the region.

For further info please contact:

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The MEADFA Conference is supported by a distinguished line-up of sponsors. This year's Gala Dinner will be hosted by AVOLTA, with HEINEMANN MIDDLE EAST AFRICA sponsoring the Welcome Cocktail, and lunches presented in partnership with LAGARDERE TRAVEL RETAIL and MAZAYA. Among the Diamond Partners are CHKOUDRA, HAMA GULF, JT INTERNATIONAL, ARMAF, and AL HARAMAIN. Platinum Partners include ARI MIDDLE EAST, GULF BEVERAGES, IMPERIAL BRANDS, DFP WORLD, and MMI.

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LOACKER will support the conference as Coffee Break Sponsor. Other sponsors include STORE MAKERS, SEEBERGER, AHMED AL MAGHRIBI PERFUMES, and ORIENTAL GENERAL TRADING, while Media Partners include DUTY FREE NEWS INTERNATIONAL, GLOBAL TRAVEL RETAIL MAGAZINE, THE MOODIE DAVITT REPORT, and TR BUSINESS.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.meadfa.com/conference/>

<https://www.tfwa.com/the-meadfa-conference-2025>

"As this year's event draws closer, it gives me great pleasure to be able to share details on the packed programme we've crafted for delegates joining us in Dubai. Each session will be of great value, and we have worked hard to ensure that the learnings offered throughout the week will be both comprehensive and relevant to all professionals attending."

Abdeslam Agzoul, MEADFA President

"We are once again very pleased to be working with MEADFA. Looking at the programme that has been put together for this year's event fills me with confidence that this edition will be both enjoyable and productive, leaving delegates with many valuable learnings to take back to their business."

Philippe Margueritte, TFWA President

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