



## MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA DUTY FREE ASSOCIATION

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### MEADFA Conference 2026 to spotlight resilience, AI and new opportunities across Middle East & Africa travel retail



The MEADFA Conference 2026 will bring together senior leaders from across aviation, travel retail, tourism, technology and consumer industries in Rabat from 15–17 November, as MEADFA marks its 25th anniversary. With more than 300 delegates already registered to date, this milestone edition is building strong momentum ahead of a programme examining the major forces shaping travel retail across the Middle East and Africa. Newly confirmed sessions will address geopolitical and economic change, Africa's expanding aviation and tourism landscape, evolving consumer expectations, sustainability, artificial intelligence and the growing influence of major sporting events on travel and retail.

The programme opens on Monday 16 November with 'MEA at a crossroads: Navigating a new global reality', followed by 'Growth under pressure: Leading travel retail across MEA'. The leadership panel will feature MEADFA President Abdeslam Agzoul of Avolta, alongside Nuno Amaral of Aer Rianta International, Ramesh Cidambi of Dubai Duty Free, Chichi Maponya of Africa Travel Retail, Vincent Romet of Lagardère Travel Retail and Bernard Schlafstein of Gebr. Heinemann.

With the conference taking place in Morocco for the first time, 'Morocco's moment' will explore the country's growing tourism and aviation market. Monday will also feature 'Protecting the channel', focusing on the evolving regulatory environment and industry advocacy, and 'MEA air traffic outlook', led by Marina Giuliano of Amadeus, examining changing passenger flows and connectivity across the region.



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The day will close with 'Game Changers', exploring the growing intersection of sport, tourism and travel retail.

Tuesday's programme will open with Thabet Musleh, Chief Retail and Hospitality Officer at Qatar Airways, before turning to 'Africa in focus', examining aviation growth, infrastructure investment, intra-African travel and evolving consumer markets across the continent.

The programme will also explore changing retail models in 'Do malls do it better?', looking at what travel retail can learn from shopping malls, lifestyle destinations and digital-first brands. Sustainability will take centre stage in 'From commitment to action', with Dr Munif Mohammed providing an update on the MEADFA Sustainability Charter, before the conference closes with 'AI: buzzword to business tool', featuring Professor Hajar Mousannif of Cadi Ayyad University. Abdeslam Agzoul, MEADFA President, said:

"We're especially proud to bring MEADFA to Morocco for the first time in this anniversary year. The programme reflects a region full of change and opportunity, and I'm looking forward to the conversations it will spark across our industry."

Alongside the conference sessions, delegates will have opportunities to connect at the Opening Cocktail on 15 November and the Gala Dinner and MEADFA Awards on 16 November, as well as through networking facilities throughout the event.

The conference is organised in partnership with TFWA, with Avolta as Official Host and support from a strong line-up of industry partners.

Diamond Partners include Swedish Smokeless Solution, Chkoudra, Scent of Africa, Locali Gourmet, Hama Gulf and Badael. Heinemann Middle East Africa will sponsor the Opening Cocktail, International Duty Free Shops (IDFS) Maroc will sponsor Lunch Day 1, while Lagardère Travel Retail and Mazaya will support Lunch Day 2. Masra by Al Waha Duty Free will sponsor the Networking Lounge.

Platinum Partners include Aphrodite Duty Free, Aer Rianta Middle East, Dubai Duty Free, DFP World, Estée Lauder Companies and Imperial Brands. Inter African Marketing and Pernod Ricard are Gold Partners and Mondelēz International and Mars Wrigley will sponsor the Coffee Breaks. Further support comes from Moroccan Oil, Seeberger, Al Jaber and Bloom – Dead Sea Gift Enterprise.

The MEADFA Conference 2026 takes place from 15–17 November at the Four Seasons Hotel Rabat at Kasr Al Bahr. Pre-registration is open until 22 October 2026.

[Pre-register for MEADFA 2026 here.](#)

[Visit the MEADFA website](#) for further information and follow MEADFA and TFWA's official channels for programme and event updates.

## ENDS

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## About MEADFA

Established in 2001, the Middle East & Africa Duty Free Association (MEADFA) represents the interests of duty free and travel retail stakeholders across the Middle East and Africa. Through advocacy, networking, education and industry events, MEADFA works to support the sustainable growth and development of the sector throughout the region.

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## 25 Years of MEADFA

**2001** – MEADFA Founded

**2002** – First MEADFA Conference Held in Dubai

**2006** – Launch of MEADFA Training Programs

**2013** – Expansion into Africa and Transition from MEDFA to MEADFA

**2018** – MEADFA Expands Membership to Include Suppliers

**2019** – Strengthening Industry Representation, Advocacy Committee launched

**2022** – Launch of the MEADFA Awards

**2023** – First MEADFA Conference Hosted in West Africa (Accra)

**2026** – 25 Years of Supporting Duty Free & Travel Retail Across the Middle East & Africa

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