

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Dubai brings global insights to the region through first-ever ICCA Middle East International Meetings Forum

*ICCA Middle East International Meetings Forum established to increase knowledge sharing and address future growth potential for the business events industry in the region*

**Dubai, UAE: 31 May 2016** – Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city’s official convention bureau, and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), the global expert in association meetings with more than a 1,000 members worldwide, hosted the first ICCA Middle East International Meetings Forum. The enormous opportunity for hosting global and regional events was identified as key focus for and by DBE with the aim to spearhead regional development and advancement not only for the city, but the region at large.

The forum, held from 18-19 May 2016 at Sofitel Downtown Dubai, attracted more than 180 participants from across the Middle East. As the first-ever regional meeting of-its-kind, the event was organised as a precursor to the prestigious 2018 ICCA Congress, which will see an expected 1,000 global event leaders descend on Dubai. Initiating the annual forum marked an important step to gain insights into the successes and experiences from international experts in establishing Dubai and other cities in the region as hosts for international conferences.

**Ahmad Khalifa Al Falasi, CEO, Corporate Services and Investment, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism), said:** “The first ICCA Middle East International Meetings Forum was a tremendous success and we’re proud to have played a leading role in organising the inaugural event. I personally look forward to seeing the Forum grow in strength over the coming years, as the city gears up to host the ICCA Congress in 2018.

“Dubai continues its pursuit to create a world-leading knowledge-based economy and has demonstrated an exceptional ability to pioneer new ideas of its own as well as foster the exchange of ideas between countries and cities around the world.”

**Martin Sirk, CEO, ICCA,** said: “The Middle East is growing at a rapid pace and establishing this forum gives us the opportunity to connect the region with our global network of practitioners, allowing for knowledge sharing and understanding the needs of the meetings business in a deeper way. Ahead of the ICCA Congress coming to Dubai in 2018, we want to ensure that we build up interest and capacity together with our local members and partners in the region over the next two years.”

The focus of the inaugural ICCA Middle East International Meetings Forum was to establish a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices that will be essential as the region's meetings industries seek to align products and services with the rapidly evolving demands from international associations and corporations.

The forum attracted over 20 internationally renowned speakers and global meetings industry experts, who discussed global trends, the importance of destination teamwork and industry collaboration, and the competitiveness of the Middle East region as a stepping stone to booming markets in the Middle East and Africa. Speakers also shared strategies on bidding for international meetings and conferences, which has become increasingly competitive, as well as the need for training programmes capable of supporting and responding to future trends across the region.

Further insights into the region were shared by executives from four international associations, who shed light on how the Middle East can leverage its competitiveness, maximise its growth potential, and increase its share of the global meetings market.

The Middle East International Meetings Forum will be held annually as a commitment made during the successful bid to host the 2018 ICCA Congress in Dubai.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About Dubai Business Events – the Official Convention Bureau**

Dubai Business Events (DBE) – the Official Convention Bureau, aims to further develop and increase Dubai's share of the international business events market in order to grow economic development, jobs and knowledge creation in the emirate. DBE's main goal, as a division of Dubai Tourism, is to establish the Emirate as a premier business event destination by helping organizers of international meetings, incentives, congresses and exhibitions plan and manage every aspect of their event. DBE's service standards are audited by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance as part of DBE's membership of BestCities Global Alliance that aim to deliver the world's best service experience for the meeting industry.

### **About Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism)**

With the ultimate vision of positioning Dubai as the world's leading tourism destination and commercial hub, Dubai Tourism's mission is to increase the awareness of Dubai among global audiences and to attract tourists and inward investment into the emirate.

Dubai Tourism is the principal authority for the planning, supervision, development and marketing of Dubai's tourism sector. It markets and promotes the Emirate's commerce sector, and is responsible for the licensing and classification of all tourism services, including hotels, tour operators and travel agents. Brands and departments within the Dubai Tourism portfolio include Dubai Convention and Events Bureau, Dubai Calendar, and Dubai Festivals

and Retail Establishment (formerly known as Dubai Events and Promotions Establishment).  
In addition to its headquarters in Dubai, Dubai Tourism operates 20 offices worldwide.

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