

Under the patronage of HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, World Islamic Banking Conference (WIBC) announces landmark 26th edition in strategic partnership with the Central Bank of Bahrain

Over 1000 global industry powerhouses, policy makers, innovators and stakeholders will converge for the three-day long forum.

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 4 November 2019: Held under the patronage of **HRH Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain** and the strategic partnership of the **Central Bank of Bahrain**, the 26th Annual World Islamic Banking Conference (WIBC) – the flagship offering of Middle East Global Advisors (MEGA) and the largest and most prestigious gathering of Islamic banking and finance leaders in the world - will take place on **December 02nd, 03rd & 04th 2019** at the **Gulf Hotel in the Kingdom of Bahrain**.

Over 1000 global industry powerhouses, policy makers, innovators and stakeholders will converge for the three-day long forum that will focus on the theme of “**Mega trends in banking & finance**” in line with its steady vision to serve as a compass for the global Islamic finance and banking industry.

Speaking ahead of the 26th WIBC, **Mr. Ehsan Abbas**, Chairman, **Middle East Global Advisors**, said, “For over a quarter of a century, WIBC has been the definitive platform for C-level executives to discuss strategies to navigate the myriad complexities and subtle nuances of the global economy – and given the uncertain economic environment that we find ourselves in, these discussions will prove even more critical to better understand the shifting economic, demographical, technological and regulatory landscape. 2019 marks the 26th edition of the World Islamic Banking Conference – a testament to its continued significance as an indisputable compass for the industry to gather and share critical insights going forward. The conference this year will promote standardization and harmonization the Islamic Finance standards, value-creation via M&A and consolidation, sizing up the Sukuk market and 360-degree solutions to industry challenges.”

Speaking on behalf of WIBC’s Strategic Partner, **Mr. Khalid Hamad Abdul-Rahman Hamad, Executive Director Banking Supervision at the Central Bank of Bahrain**, said, “The Central Bank of Bahrain is pleased to be a strategic partner for the 26th edition of the World Islamic Banking Conference. Every year at the WIBC we have addressed the most pressing issues facing the Islamic banking industry. This year’s edition will focus on harmonization of Islamic finance standards, the digital transformation, sustainable finance and M&A and consolidation in the GCC region. There will be a special session on where the industry is headed with respect to the objectives of Shari’ah. International experts will present their assessment of the global economic outlook and highlight the opportunities for Islamic finance presented by the Belt & Road Initiative of China. As in earlier years, WIBC will also host a CEOs’ power table to discuss what keeps the CEOs awake at night. The format adopted for most sessions is panel discussion with allocated time for answering questions from the audience. The conference will also provide an excellent networking opportunity to individuals and a platform for companies to exhibit their services and solutions. We look forward to welcoming people from the region and outside to the conference in Bahrain.”

WIBC has annually reaffirmed its reputation in generating breakthrough thought leadership. **H.E. Godwin Emeziele**, Governor, **Central Bank of Nigeria** will deliver the keynote address at the 26th WIBC that will be followed by an on-stage interview with **H.E. Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj**, Governor, **Central Bank of Bahrain**. **Other confirmed speakers at WIBC include: Yasmeen Al Sharaf**, Head, Fintech Unit, **Central Bank of Bahrain**; **Hassan Jarrar**, Chief Executive Officer, **Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB)**; **Nitish Bhojnarwal**, Vice President - Senior Credit Officer, Financial Institutions Group, **Moody’s Investors Services Middle East Limited**; **Bashar Al Nator**, Global Head Islamic Finance, **Fitch Ratings**; **Mustafa Adil**, Head of Islamic Finance, **Refinitiv & Omar Mustafa Ansari**, Secretary General, **Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)**, among others.

Industry leaders will also be recognized for their excellence through the **WIBC Performance Awards 2019**, the nominees of which will be announced weeks before the December event, and the winners at the Gala Dinner on December 03. This year's performance awards will see a special award conferred on "Islamic Banker of the Year". **Confirmed partners at WIBC 2019 so far include:** Ithmaar Bank, Khaleeji Commercial Bank (KHCB), Bank ABC Islamic, Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), Al Baraka Banking Group, Moody's Investors Service, The Perth Mint, Eiger Trading, DDCAP Group, Fitch Ratings & Keypoint.

Over the last few years, a key focus area for WIBC has always been to connect the industry with leading pioneers and innovators in the FinTech space and forge a fresh, innovative and technology-enabled phase of the industry's development. In the age of rapid financial advancements, Bahrain, the host nation of WIBC for the past 26 years has emerged as a global leader in Islamic finance, with the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) continuing to provide strong support to the financial industry by actively shaping the fintech of the region. A number of initiatives that have been launched include the Bahrain FinTech Bay, the Regulatory Sandbox, Crowdfunding Regulations, a cloud-first policy & crypto-asset regulations, among others.

The 25th WIBC proved to be the ideal launch pad for a number of initiatives, notably the launch of 3 financial intelligence reports namely The Global Report on Islamic Finance – 2018: The Role of Islamic Finance in financing Long-term Investments by *Islamic Development Bank Group*; The Global Islamic Finance Development Outlook 2018: Building Momentum by *Thomson Reuters & Islamic Finance in Africa: The upcoming Frontier* by *Casablanca Finance City (CFC) Authority & Thomson Reuters*, arming industry leaders with critical insights going forward. The conference also witnessed the launch of Emerico's R35 Self-Service Robot, with dual functionality of a Virtual Teller Machine (VTM) and a customer service agent.

An event that has truly broken borders, WIBC has emerged into a global spectacle that has brought some of the sharpest minds under one roof, attracting a wide array of speakers from across the globe. WIBC 2018 registered participation from an impressive 1000 delegates, 70+ partners, 75+ high profile speakers from across 50 countries, further boosting the powerful WIBC brand and its legacy. The distinguished line-up of speakers over the years include: **Sir Howard Davies**, Chairman, **Royal Bank of Scotland & Former Chairman, European Central Bank**; **Nicholas Naseem Taleb**, Distinguished Professor of Risk Engineering, **NYU-Tandon School of Engineering & Author of The Black Swan**; **Dr. Mark Mobius**, Partner, **Mobius Capital Partners & (Former) Emerging Markets Guru and Executive Chairman of Templeton Emerging Markets**; **H.E. Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj**, Governor, **Central Bank of Bahrain**; **H.E. Dr. Ahmed Abdulkarim Alkholife**, Governor, **Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA)**; **Kishore Mahbubani**, Senior Advisor (University & Global Relations) and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy, **National University of Singapore**; **H.E. Hamood Sangour Al-Zadjali**, Executive President, **Central Bank of Oman**; **Dr. Zeti Akhtar Aziz**, Former Governor, **Bank Negara Malaysia**; **H.E. Riaz Riazuddin**, Former Deputy Governor, **State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)**; **H.E. Dr. Mohammad Y. Al-Hashel**, Governor & Chairman of the Board of Directors, **Central Bank of Kuwait & H.E. Kairat Kelimbetov**, Governor, **Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC)**; among others.

To find out more about the 26th World Islamic Banking Conference, visit: www.wibc2019.com

Join the global conversation on Twitter at: **@WIBC2019 #WIBC2019**

-END-

ABOUT MIDDLE EAST GLOBAL ADVISORS (MEGA)

Connecting markets with intelligent insights & strategic execution since 1993

Middle East Global Advisors (MEGA) is the leading gateway connectivity and intelligence platform to Islamic finance opportunities in the rapidly developing economic region that stretches all the way

from Morocco in the West to Indonesia in the East- The Middle East North Africa Southeast Asia (MENASEA) connection. For 26 years, our exclusive focus on achieving business results for the Islamic finance industry has enabled us to create significant value for the leading players in the Islamic banking, finance and investment markets.

Visit us at www.meglobaladvisors.com

ABOUT WORLD ISLAMIC BANKING CONFERENCE (WIBC)

The World Islamic Banking Conference (WIBC) has established its reputation as the world's largest and most influential gathering of international Islamic banking and finance leaders for over two decades. With the strategic support of the Central Bank of Bahrain, the next generation WIBC will focus on transforming Islamic finance into a global proposition by facilitating strategic opportunities, addressing systematic challenges and connecting international market players and institutional investors to the industry's catalysts, thought leaders, partners and institutions.

To find out more, visit www.wibc2019.com

Ritika Bhateja

Marketing Manager

Middle East Global Advisors

Tel: +971 4 441 4946

Email: ritika@meglobaladvisors.com

© Press Release 2019