



25-29 SEPTEMBER 2016
MADINAT JUMEIRAH DUBAI



THE MIDDLE EAST
CHALLENGES AT THE HISTORICAL
CROSSROAD OF THE F&F TRADE

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Dear Friends & Colleagues,
As-salamu aleikum!

I am delighted to welcome you and your spouses to Dubai for the next IFEAT Conference which will be held at the exceptional Madinat Jumeirah Hotel facing the iconic Burj Al-Arab!

You will be traveling to a land and region where no IFEAT Delegate has ever travelled before! Indeed, since its inception in 1977 the IFEAT has never set foot on peninsular Arabia. Cairo, Tel Aviv, Istanbul, Cochin, and this year Colombo have been the closest.

How peculiar, I told myself when offered to Chair our Organising Committee, that the historical crossroad of the F&F trade was never visited by an IFEAT Conference in nearly 4 decades... I thought there must be something prophetic about this... Isn't it interesting to witness how our sector has undergone great tremors and agitation of all kinds over these 40some years. Perhaps, I thought, it is time to consider how we may be living hinging moments. In other words: challenges. And so came up the title of this conference: **The Middle East – Challenges at the historical crossroad of the F&F trade.**

What better place to consider challenges than the Middle East and Dubai to host such a conference.

The Middle East is an extraordinary F&F market for who knows how to tap it. It is a market in the making. From a consumption point of view, but also from a regulatory one. It combines both age-old traditions and modern re-interpretations of those. It follows its own rules unabated by exterior limitations. Fine fragrance in this part of the world is not genderised. *Oudh* or Jasmine scents are not more or less male than female. And flavours encompass shamelessly all the tastes other cultures have to offer. It is a checker board over which the East and West exchanged for millennia. A place 'on the way' as much as 'in the way' where many devoted much time at looming ties with it, while no fewer were trying to circumnavigate it...

Dubai is undoubtedly the epitome of all these considerations. It is all about the unexpected made factual, the contradictory made evident, the unreasonable made to be. A place that thrives only through challenges.

In not so long foregone days it was a land of lure, and gold, of pearls and trading dhows, known to the British as the "Pirate Coast". Today it is a booming world-class air and maritime hub, financial center, and holiday destination. What achievement if we consider 1833 Dubai's contemporary founding date!



That year tribal feuding in Abu-Dhabi led to an exodus of the Al Bu Falasa tribe whose leaders, Ubaid bin Saeed and Maktum bin Butti, acted as joint heads when they settled in Dubai (arguably referring to *daba* a past tense derivative of *yadub* meaning "to creep" in reference to Dubai's creek). In 1836, Ubaid bin Saeed's passing away left Maktum to establish the dynasty ruling to this day. In 1853 the wise Said I bin Butti (Maktum bin Butti's brother) signed the Perpetual Maritime Truce following the 1820 peace treaty enacted by all the sheikhs of the coast and the United Kingdom to end harassment of British shipping. So was coined the term "Trucial States" or "Trucial Coast" which remained until 1971 when the UK ended its protectorate.

Present day Dubai is the visionary legacy of Sheikh Rashid Al-Maktoum (r. 1958-1990) and since 2006 this vision has been carried by his son Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, affectionately known as "Sheikh Mo".

And this vision will blow your mind!

No one can stand indifferent to Dubai. Literally, this is a city that has risen from the sand in just over 40 years. The first hotel to be built here was in 1959. Ten years later there were only two additional hotels. Today, Dubai's *hôtellerie* industry boasts to be the second most expensive in the world after Geneva and the 7th most visited city in the world. 15 million tourists will be accommodated here in 2015. Considering Dubai's population of 2.2 million, one cannot but acknowledge the achievement...

Whether it be food, architecture, shopping, culture, luxurious *farniente*, horse racing, desert safaris, falconry, fashion, amusement parks, or golf... Dubai has it all or shares it with its 6 other sister UAE Emirates.

For all those reasons – if not only to contemplate the elegantly inflated sail of Burj Al-Arab in the foreground of our venue's view over the Persian Gulf - I look forward to welcoming you all to Dubai and share it with you!

Marhaba fi Dubai!

Hussein A. Fakhry



IFEAT Organising Committee

Conference Chairman: Hussein A. Fakhry (A. Fakhry & Co. | Egypt)

Michael Boudjouk (Medallion International, Inc. | USA)

Jalal Charaf (Les Arômes du Maroc | Morocco)

Antonella Corleone (Agrumaria Corleone | Italy)

Alain Frix (Renessenz LLCI Belgium)

Dominique Roques (Firmenich | France)