

**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 25th
edition in strategic partnership with the Central Bank of Bahrain**

Over 1200 global industry powerhouses, policy makers, innovators and stakeholders will converge for the three-day long forum.

Amwaj Islands, Kingdom of Bahrain, 13 August 2018: 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 World Islamic Banking Conference (WIBC) will take place on November 26th, 27th & 28th in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Middle East Global Advisors (MEGA), a leading financial intelligence platform facilitating the development of knowledge-based economies in the MENASEA markets, announced that it will convene the 25th anniversary edition of their flagship offering – the largest and most prestigious gathering of Islamic banking and finance leaders in the world – at the ART Rotana Hotel in Amwaj Islands.

Over 1200 global industry powerhouses, policy makers, innovators and stakeholders will converge for the three-day long forum that is spearheading a series of discussions gravitating around the theme of “Islamic Finance & Sustainable Economic Growth in the Age of Disruption” in line with its steady vision to serve as a compass for the global Islamic finance and banking industry.

Speaking ahead of the 25th WIBC, Ehsan Abbas, Chairman, Middle East Global Advisors, said: “For over 25 years, WIBC has helped forge a robust ecosystem to widen the scope of Islamic finance to meet new realities, whilst staying true to its ideals. 2018 will mark the 25th anniversary edition of the World Islamic Banking Conference – testament to its continued significance as a trusted benchmark for the industry to gather and share critical insights going forward.”

Adding further, Mr. Abbas said, “To assess recovery of economic growth, WIBC will seek to address the optimal ways that policymakers can support long-term robust growth by preparing to cope with possible bouts of financial market volatility. Countries need to rebuild fiscal buffers, enact structural reforms, and steer monetary policy cautiously in an environment that is already complex and challenging. In the midst of this, the 25th WIBC will focus on how Islamic finance can build on its global value proposition as a means of strengthening the financial sector.”

Speaking on behalf of WIBC’s Strategic Partner, Khalid Hamad Abdul-Rahman Hamad, Executive Director - Banking Supervision, Central Bank of Bahrain, said, “The Central Bank of Bahrain is pleased to be a strategic partner for the 25th edition of the World Islamic Banking Conference to be held on 26-28 November in Bahrain. The conference this year combines the best of Islamic Banking & Bahrain against the backdrop of recent changes. Key areas of focus will be new initiatives in Digital Banking, Economic Growth & Sustainable Finance, and country specific showcases. The Minister for Oil and Gas will also be talking about investment opportunities in Bahrain’s recent mega Oil and Gas discovery. The CBB is committed to remaining at the forefront of these developments by providing regulatory oversight to emerging technologies and ensuring the sustainability of financial resources. With the recent announcement of the Regulatory Sandbox and Bahrain Fintech Bay, Bahrain now also has an ecosystem in place to encourage growth in the Fin-Tech industry, making all the conference discussions & participatory interaction very relevant.”

WIBC has annually reaffirmed its reputation in generating breakthrough thought leadership. A true flagbearer for the conference and its ethos year-on-year, His Excellency Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj, Governor, Central Bank of Bahrain, will showcase his support for the event by delivering the keynote address at the 25th World Islamic Banking Conference, with the vision of furthering the ecosystem for Islamic finance entities to thrive and grow globally.

With the pace of change in Financial Services increasing rapidly, so does the urge for the industry to react. Rapidly embracing the prevalent disruption and forging partnerships in efforts to sharpen operational efficiency have taken precedence in the digital era. 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. While last year's edition witnessed keynote speeches by Alex Tapscott, CEO NextBlock Global, Co-Author of Blockchain Revolution & Founding Member, IMF's High Level Advisory Group on Fintech and Xen Baynham- Herd, Head of Strategy and Lead Economist – Blockchain who spoke about embracing new technologies like blockchain in the changing face of financial services due to the advent of the digitization, this year's edition will also see leading technology experts deliberate as part of an exclusive FinTech Panel.

Key features for WIBC 2018 include: Governors' Addresses; High-profile Regulatory Debate among Central Bankers; a conversation with a distinguished Islamic finance veteran on the future course of the Islamic economy, The Regulations Power Table on fostering synergies among regulators, standard setters and global financial regulatory authorities to further Islamic Finance; Panel discussions focusing on sustainable, equitable & inclusive growth, FinTech, new horizons for Islamic finance, cross-jurisdictional issues on Sharia standards & practices and much more.

Industry leaders will also be recognized for their excellence through the WIBC Performance Awards 2018, the nominees of which will be announced weeks before the November event, and the winners at the Gala Dinner on November 27. Confirmed partners at WIBC 2018 so far include: Casablanca Finance City Authority, Ithmaar Bank, Khaleeji Commercial Bank (KHCB), World Gold Council, First Energy Bank, The Perth Mint, Eiger Trading, Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) & Fitch Ratings.

Bahrain, the host nation of WIBC for the past 25 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. With the aim of strengthening Bahrain's position as a Fintech and financial services hub in the GCC, the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and FinTech Consortium recently announced the launch of Bahrain FinTech Bay, among the largest dedicated financial technology (fintech) hubs in the Middle East and Africa. The 10,000 square foot space in Manama aims to support the development and acceleration of Fintech firms, as well as the interaction between investors, entrepreneurs, government bodies and financial institutions.

Interestingly, the 24th WIBC proved to be the ideal launch pad for a number of initiatives, notably ALGO Bahrain - the world's first Fintech Consortium of Islamic Banks and Wahed Invest's launch of the world's first halal robo advisor – a unique way of revolutionizing halal investing by using technology. The conference also played host to the launch of The ICD-Thomson Reuters Islamic Finance Development Report 2017 and The Islamic Commercial Law Report 2018 by Thomson Reuters, arming industry leaders with critical insights going forward.

WIBC 2017 registered participation from a staggering 1200 delegates, 87 partners, 90 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:

- His Excellency Rasheed Mohammed Al Maraj, Governor, Central Bank of Bahrain
- His Excellency Dr. Kairat Kelimbetov, Governor, Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC)
- His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Abdulkarim Alkholifey, Governor, Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
- Kishore Mahbubani, Dean, Professor in the Practice of Public Policy, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore
- H.E. Hamood Sangour Al-Zadjali, Executive President, Central Bank of Oman
- H.E. Riaz Riazuddin, Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)
- Manjiang Cheng, Chief Economist, Bank of China International (BOCI), CEO, Research Company of BOCI
- H.E. Dr. Mohammad Y. Al-Hashel, Governor, Central Bank of Kuwait

To find out more about the 25th World Islamic Banking Conference, visit: www.wibc2018.com

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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 25 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.wibc2018.com

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