Sustainability agenda to take centre stage at Dubai Diamond Conference 16-17 October

The **Dubai Diamond Exchange** (‘DDE’), a **DMCC** (‘Dubai Multi Commodities Centre’) platform, today announced the keynote speakers and subjects to be discussed at the third edition of its biennial two-day **Dubai Diamond Conference 2017** (‘DDC 2017’) under the theme ‘Destination Next – Shaping the future of an interconnected marketplace’.

(PRWEB) September 18, 2017 -- The **Dubai Diamond Conference**, which has gained a reputation for identifying the main issues impacting the global industry, will again provide a rich agenda of subjects critical to the future of the diamond business worldwide.

DMCC’s Executive Chairman, Ahmed Bin Sulayem is to open the conference and will welcome top-level speakers and panellists from every sector of the diamond pipeline and from across the world who will provide their input on the enormous changes that have taken place in recent years – and speak about where the industry is heading.

With the rough diamond trade continuing to see deep-seated changes and long-time stakeholders taking different roles as new players join the business, what does the future hold for the rough sector? In finance, banks are continually changing their policies and liquidity has become a scarce resource for many, so panellists will discuss what this means for diamantaires. The issue of sustainability has attained growing importance and is seen as vital in creating a viable future for the human race, but how widespread is it and is the diamond industry on track to meet global goals? In the retail sector, the relative strength of diamond jewellery consuming markets is changing – what does that mean for sales in the future?

Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, Chairman, Global Compact Foundation, will also speak on the opening day of the conference about United Nations Global Compact which encourages businesses to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation backed up by his extensive experience in the business world over several decades.

A major panel discussion to be moderated by Iris Van der Veken, Director – Public Affairs & Policy International, **DMCC**, on Day 1 will further drive the importance of the sustainability agenda with Sir Mark Moody-Stuart; World Federation of Diamond Bourses President Ernie Blom; Responsible Jewellery Council Executive Director Andrew Bone; De Beers Group Head of Government and Industry Relations Feriel Zerouki; CIBJO, The World Jewellery Confederation President, President Dr. Gaetano Cavalieri; Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council Chairman Mr. Praveen Shankar Pandya; and Signet Jewelers Ltd. Vice-President, Corporate Affairs, David Bouffard.

“We recognise the importance of bringing the sustainability agenda to our conference and to bring insights from other industries in the field of corporate sustainability. The **Dubai Diamond Conference** is a great opportunity to reconnect all stakeholders to discuss a common sense of purpose so we together can build a better future of trade for all, ultimately a roadmap of continuous improvement," said Iris Van der Veken.

Mr. Blom will give the diamond industry's perspective on responsible mining, manufacturing and sourcing of goods. "As an industry that extracts precious minerals from the Earth, we have a responsibility to leave the Earth as we found it. And, from a consumer point of view, we must show that our actions are not
environmentally damaging, and that care for our planet is paramount. Consumers – especially the younger generation – are demanding this and we must show that it is a vital part of our agenda."

Mr. Bone will give input from the perspective of the Responsible Jewellery Council which has more than 1,000 members from the mining to the retailing sectors. "Our members are committed to a responsible supply chain and business practices. I look forward to speaking on the issue and how the trade can expand its activities in these fields."

Feriel Zerouki, representing De Beers Group, which has long invested in corporate social responsibility programmes, will provide details of the mining giant's work, and the thinking behind it. "De Beers Group is committed to minimising the environmental impact of its operations and to protecting and enhancing biodiversity," said Ms. Zerouki. "It's of the utmost importance to De Beers that we leave a positive legacy in the communities where we mine diamonds and this involves working with our local partners and stakeholders to build strong and resilient communities that thrive long into the future.”

Dr. Cavalieri said that a major element of CIBJO's work in recent years has been the promotion of United Nations sustainable development goals among its members which cover all elements of the jewellery pipeline, from precious stones and metals miners, jewellery manufacturers and retailers. "We, at CIBJO, have been working very hard to achieve these very important goals. The jewellery industry’s challenge in coming years will be to position itself as a model of sustainable development to enable it to appeal to a new generation of consumers, said Dr. Cavalieri.

"CIBJO strongly supports the objective, particularly in terms of showing ourselves to be a generator of sustainable economic and social opportunities in mining and manufacturing nations, as well as leader in responsible environmental practices. We strongly advocate a vigorous carbon reduction drive in the jewellery and gemstone sector, and indeed for four years we have been completely carbon neutral. Furthermore, we are operating a programme to promote carbon neutrality throughout our industry."

Mr. Praveen Shankar Pandya said that the Indian diamond and jewellery industries have been working towards sustainable development targets, and are keen to take this further forward. Meanwhile, Mr. Bouffard pointed to the steps his company has taken in recent years to improve the integrity of the global jewellery supply chain. "Signet is committed to maintaining and improving consumer confidence in jewellery products by addressing the social, ethical and environmental risks facing it and the industry at large. We have a formal social ethical and environmental (SEE) governance framework with SEE principles and policies, along with a long-term engagement with the global community in which it operates. This is represented by the strength and effectiveness of its working relationships with international governments, civil society, and through industry trade bodies," he commented.

Panel discussions on Day 2 will focus on the following topics: ‘Lab-grown diamonds and their disclosure: Is there a problem?’, ‘Bankability, transparency, innovation’, ‘KP Reform: A reality or a never ending story?’, ‘The impact of value added tax (VAT) or GST on wholesale diamond trading’, and ‘Tender or auctions: temporary phenomenon or new business of the future?’.

The conference, which takes place in Dubai's Almas tower, which houses the Dubai Diamond Exchange, on October 16-17, will bring together international leaders of the diamond industry ranging from African Ministers to traders, financiers and world-renowned jewellers. The conference will provide an opportunity to build relationships between companies and governments in producing and consuming countries further highlighting
the pivotal role that Dubai plays in the global diamond trade for diamonds. The programme will enable discussions and debate with a focus on stimulating innovation and growth in the diamond industry.

For more information or to register to attend visit www.diamondconference.ae.
Contact Information
Henriette
DMCC
http://www.dmcc.ae
+971 562163031 Ext: 971

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