

MEADFA webinar examines role of DF & TR in tourism



MEADFA President Sherif Toulan

The Middle East and Africa Duty Free Association ([MEADFA](#)) hosted its latest webinar this week with more than 170 participants. The discussion focussed on the role and contribution of the travel retail sector to tourism in the African and Middle Eastern regions.

Speakers from across the travel retail value chain gave their perspectives on the critical role of the duty-free and travel retail industry to the travel and tourism sector in the region. Participants were presented with the unique views and perspectives of several leading industry figures within the tourism sector.

MEADFA President, Sherif Toulan said, "I am delighted with the turnout we had for this webinar. We heard some truly insightful perspectives across the entire tourism value chain. Our industry has suffered greatly during the COVID-19 crisis, in addition to dealing with the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which has had an adverse effect on international tourism. The easing of travel restrictions is contributing to the normalization of travel, but the conflict continues to pose a serious threat to recovery. As we continue into this first summer season after the COVID-19 pandemic, this discussion on the value that duty-free and travel retail brings to the tourism space is extremely beneficial to both our members and participants. Our industry provides employment to the region, and critical financial contributions that help airlines, airports, and other tourism infrastructure to function. [The] webinar served to reinforce the importance of our contribution to the Travel and Tourism infrastructure."

Basmah Al Mayman, Regional Director of the Middle East, United Nations World Tourism Organization ([UNWTO](#)), presented the UNWTO vision of duty-free and travel retail in tourism, saying, "The Duty-free industry has several marketing opportunities offering the travellers the option of purchasing duty-free goods, a trend becoming a fundamental source of income for airports generating necessary revenues for the travel, tourism, aviation and maritime industries."

Ramesh Cidambi, Chief Operating Officer, Dubai Duty Free ([DDF](#)), presented an overview on DDF

sales growth, and shared his expectations for the summer.

"The recovery that Dubai has seen in tourism has been fantastic in the first half of this year, and the travel retail industry in the region has benefited from this recovery. I think tourism will continue to be very strong in the summer, and for the rest of the year," said Cidambi.

Antoine Clement from Hume Brophy moderated the event.