

## Pope Francis I meets with UFI delegation in Rome

- His Holiness had invited the participants of the UFI Global CEO Summit to a private meeting
- Pope Francis: “Exhibitions offer significant opportunities for showcasing to the wider world the rich diversity and beauty of local cultures and ecosystems”

**Paris, 7 February 2020:** In a meeting with exhibition industry leaders from around the world in the Vatican, Pope Francis I declared that “it has been shown...that fairs and exhibitions not only have positive effects on regional economies and labour markets, but also offer significant opportunities for showcasing to the wider world the rich diversity and beauty of local cultures and ecosystems.”

On the occasion of the UFI Global CEO Summit, His Holiness had invited the one hundred participants of the event to a private audience, held in the Sala Clementina in the heart of the Vatican. They had travelled from 37 countries from around the world to attend the Summit. Fiera Rome with CEO Pietro Piccinetti were the host partner for the event.

As the global association of the exhibition industry, UFI is representing and serving exhibition organisers and venues as well as partners of the industry. UFI President Mary Larkin (President of Diversified Communications, USA), led the delegation into the meeting with Pope Francis I. “It is a great honour and privilege for us that Pope Francis invited us to this exchange. Often, in our everyday work life, we focus very much on delivering the next event. Today carried a powerful message that the social and cultural dimension of our work deserves just as much attention.”

“The message Pope Francis shared with us is a very strong motivation to continue to work to improve our events, to make them as inclusive as possible, as diverse as possible, and ever more sustainable. For me – as for everyone in the room – this meeting is already unforgettable”, she said.

On the occasion of the meeting, UFI presented His Holiness with a sapling of an olive tree – a symbol of the passion for peaceful dialogue and sustainable development created through exhibitions and events. Also, as the exhibition industry is driven by the human factor and dialogue, the delegation brought tea and chocolate from Buenos Aires, the home of the pope.

The meeting ended with a scene rarely witnessed at occasions like these: The pope invited each and every member of the delegation to a personal handshake and brief dialogue, therefore strongly enforcing the unique power of face to face connections.

The papal address to the exhibition industry is available on the UFI blog: <http://blog.ufi.org/2020/02/07/address-of-his-holiness-pope-francis-to-the-participants-of-ufi-global-ceo-summit/>

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*About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the global trade association of the world’s tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI’s main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 800 member organisations in 89 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Around 1,000 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.*

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**Below visual – Pope Francis I at the private meeting with the participants of the UFI Global CEO Summit**

