

Oman hosts memorable UFI Global Congress

- 89th edition on the event welcomes more than 400 delegates from over 50 countries and regions
- Oman's Minister for Heritage and Culture attends the Opening
- Michael Duck takes over as UFI President

Muscat / Paris – 22 November 2022: UFI welcomed more than 400 UFI delegates, from over 50 countries and regions, to its 89th annual Global Congress in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 14 to 17 November.

The Global Congress is always the largest, most international, and final event of the year for UFI members. It aims to build on the programming and conversations that occurred at all its events throughout the year and give a preview into the industry for 2023. The global industry was hosted by the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre and markets like Germany, Italy, the UK, US, India and, of course, the GCC region sent significant numbers of participants.

Oman's Minister for Heritage and Tourism, Salim bin Mohammed bin Said Al Mahroqi, attended the Congress opening and held talks with the UFI leadership, underlining the importance of the sector for the development of Oman.

The Congress is known as a global platform for industry leaders to learn, network, and drive business. Four days of meetings, main stage keynotes and sessions, topical deep dives, and numerous networking events provided a multitude of opportunities to recharge old connections and make new ones.

Summarising the event UFI CEO Kai Hattendorf says: "This year's Congress will be remembered for a long time. We returned to the Middle East for the first time in ten years, and we see significant progression in the industry throughout the region, with more markets growing their infrastructure and offerings for our sector. We re-balanced the mix between networking and content time. The networking areas were buzzing, the stands of our partners were busy. We were delighted to welcome many first time attendees, and we're even more pleased to know they left with new peers and contacts."

Speakers & Content Programme

With around 60 speakers from around the world, the Congress delivered a mix of keynotes and breakout sessions.

Opening speaker (and two times Oscar winner) Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoi showed the audience the power of story in transforming the world. She helped the audience to understand how the invisible can be brought into view and how we all have the power to change the way we think and view culture. She received a standing ovation from the audience.

UFI's 2022 Class of "Next Generation Leaders"- Monika Baro, Jo Kowalsky, Justine Rebel, Daniella Galante, Maria Victoria Piñeres and Jon Yahirun – followed Ms. Obaid-Chinoi's advice and presented precisely such a story – the story of a new career narrative to attract talent globally into the exhibition industry.

Sandy Angus, outgoing Chairman at Montgomery Group, led the first edition of a new format, the "Global Exhibition Industry Board Meeting", where leaders like David Doft (CFO, Emerald Expositions), Anne Lafère (CEO, Easyfairs), Derar al Manaseer (Director Strategy & Investment,

ADNEC), Christian Gerdau (CIO, Messe München) and Kevin O'Donoghue (HR Director, RX Global) discussed today's challenges and mid-term strategies.

Also taking place for the first time, a designated speed networking session made sure first timers as well as Congress veterans got to know a number of new people ahead of the main programme.

Through a mix of session formats, delegates could engage directly in topics of specific relevance to them. The xChange stage provides an additional segment with presentations from destinations and event tech companies.

UFI members can access all the talks and presentation in the members section of the UFI website.

Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative

Sustainability continues to drive a lot of UFI's activities. Alexander Alles, Executive Director of the Joint Meetings Industry Council, and UFI CEO Kai Hattendorf could report on the Roadmap of the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative, which had just been presented by both on them and many industry leaders at the COP27 Global Climate Conference in Sharm El Sheikh on 11 November.

Many UFI members have been among the first industry groups joining the pledge, and the Congress honoured their engagement. UFI is proud to be one of the more than 400 industry actors supporting the pledge.

Special moments and memorable experiences

The 89th Global Congress included many networking opportunities and special moments. The UFI Sports Club offered running, pilates on the beach, and Omani yoga. The Grand Night Out took place outdoors under the stars at magical Turtle Bay, and included many local cultural experiences. The Post Congress Day tours took around 200 participants to the Grand Mosque, the Muscat Souk, and to selected other sites of the Sultanate.

Welcome to the 2022/23 UFI President

At the close of the Congress, Michael Duck, EVP at Informa Markets, formally took over the office of UFI President for the year to come.

Addressing the global UFI community, he says: "This industry of ours is a 'catalyst. It is a wonderful way to bring people and communities and our hopes and aspirations together. I am hugely honoured to be in this position as your president, and I will ensure that I will work hard with the UFI team and the board to bring back our industry from the challenges of covid and other economic and geopolitical matters which have affected both our business and personal lives."

Michael succeeds, Monica Lee-Müller, Managing Director of Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited. In 2023, Michael and Monica will also serve as a part of UFI's Trio, the incoming, present, and immediately past Presidents of the association, along with incoming President Geoff Dickinson, CEO of dmg events.

The UFI Global Congress – Context and Outlook

Open to more than 50,000 industry professionals globally who work for UFI member companies, the UFI Global Congress takes place each November and is known as the exhibition industry's largest global meeting of the year, combining international networking with unique content and experiences.

Recent hosts have been Muscat, Sultanate of Oman (2022); Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2021); Bangkok, Thailand (2019); St. Petersburg, Russia (2018); and Johannesburg, South Africa (2017).

In 2020, due to COVID-19- related global travel restrictions, the Congress went digital, with programming from Hong Kong, Dubai, London, and Bogota.

In 2023, the 90th UFI Global Congress will take place in Las Vegas, USA, hosted by the LVCVA. For 2024, Cologne, Germany, has been selected as the host destination.

Attachments:

- [Congress Visual Oman](#)
- [Congress Pictures](#)
- [UFI President Michael Duck addressing the Congress](#)
- [LVCVA management inviting the global UFI community to Las Vegas for the 2023 UFI Congress](#)

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 780 member organisations in 83 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 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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