



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Mena Insurance CEO Club Looks Ahead to Greater Traction**

10 October 2013 - The greater purpose of insurance, the dynamic use of economic capital models, the need to build and protect reputation, getting CEOs to become strategic, the impact of CEOs on the rating process, and better serving the needs of the MENA insurance market were some of the key issues discussed at the 4th Annual Strategic Seminar of the MENA Insurance CEO Club (MICC) in Istanbul earlier this week.

The Strategic Seminar, normally restricted to MICC members, was this time open to up-and-coming executives as part of the Club's attempts to nurture young talent. The winner of the 2nd MICC Essay Contest, Mr Cyril George of Vision Insurance, Oman also presented his findings on Climate Change and its impact on the MENA markets to the august body of CEOs.

Ms Serap Oguz Gonulal, Senior Financial Sector Specialist with the World Bank, set the tone for the seminar as keynote speaker, looking at how far insurance has come and how much further the journey is in today's sophisticated world with increasing risks. Noting the social and noble aspirations of insurance which were irreplaceable by any industry, she stressed the need for data, without which there cannot be any premiums.

In her view, active public-private sector partnership is the way forward with compulsory insurance and realistic pricing being real solutions in areas affecting large sectors of the economy and people. The secret lies in being efficient and responsive to claims, providing appropriate compensation for the risk assumed.

The MICC was also briefed on the dynamics of the unique Turkish Catastrophe Insurance Pool (TCIP), one of the world's leading CAT Pools launched in 2000 after the 1999 earthquake that ravaged the city. Mr Ismet Gungor, Co-ordinator of the Pool said CAT Management does not start with commercial feasibility but of necessity. Milli Re, which hosted the MICC at their premises, also explained their unique role in serving the Turkish market.

Dr Shaun Wang, Deputy Secretary General of The Geneva Association, the think tank of the world's insurance industry, briefed the MICC on the Association's role in serving the global insurance industry. He also urged the MICC to actively consider co-operating with The Geneva Association on joint research of critical importance to the MENA region.

Dr Kai-Uwe Schanz, Chairman of Dr. Schanz, Alms & Company AG, noting that not a single insurance company is among the world's top 40 brands, said brand management was becoming a strategic management challenge because of the increasing number of different stakeholders involved, from customers and employees to rating agencies and investors.

Mr Safder Jaffer, Managing Director, Middle East & Africa with Milliman, in explaining the growing use of economic capital model (ECM) to optimise return on capital, said the ECM will actively and dynamically help CEOs manage risks intelligently, noting that without risk there is no reward.

Mr Fady Khayatt, Partner, Oliver Wyman challenged CEOs to consider if they were getting in the way of business. Mr Vasilis Katsipis, General Manager, Market Development for South & Central Asia with A.M. Best shared insights into the impact of ratings on common assertions such as “the market is too competitive”, “others offer much lower rates to get market share”, “we grew at 10% while market grew at 5%” and “we will grow faster if we have a higher rating”, and urged CEOs to have a clearly defined risk appetite.

The MICC, now into its fourth year of operations, has in this short span hosted two important conferences for the insurance professionals in the MENA region on Political Risks and Social Media, launched an annual Essay competition to enhance the storehouse of knowledge and research, and sponsored training stints to young professionals. It has also held regular meetings for CEOs to debate and discuss issues of importance to them and released a joint research paper on the Future of MENA Insurance Markets with Oliver Wyman.

### **About MICC**

The MICC was set up by pro-active leaders in the industry, with the vision to become the mouthpiece of the MENA insurance industry. Over time, the MICC aims to serve as the premier think tank for the MENA insurance industry. Launched on 1 October 2010, it has achieved the following milestones:

- (i) As an exclusive, by-invitation-only club, the MICC has grown from 12 to 17 members.
- (ii) Responding to the social unrest and tensions and Arab Spring, the MICC hosted a special Conference on Political Risks and Terrorism in the MENA Region in November 2011. Some 120 delegates attended the conference to look at the key challenges facing insurers in the market in responding to the increasing need and demand for cover.
- (iii) The MICC conducted an extensive survey on the Future of MENA Insurance. The survey results were released in April 2012.
- (iv) It has held three Strategic Seminars for its members – the first at the hallowed grounds of the Chartered Insurance Institute in London in November 2010 (theme: “Lessons from London for MENA”), the second in Beirut in November 2011 (theme: “A Dashboard for CEOs”), and the third in Abu Dhabi in October 2012 (theme: “From CEO Dashboard to Strategic Implementation”).

The Club is led by the Steering Committee consisting of **HE Dr Bassel Hindawi**, immediate past Insurance Commissioner of Jordan; **Mr Yassir Albaharna**, CEO of Arig; and **Mr Sivam Subramaniam**, Editor-in-Chief of *MEIR* and *Asia Insurance Review*. Its members include:

- **Mr Walid A Sidani**, Abu Dhabi National Insurance Company, UAE;
- **Mr Fady Shammis**, Arabia Insurance Company S.A.L., Lebanon;
- **Mr Fateh Bekdache**, Arope Insurance S.A.L., Lebanon;
- **Mr Michael Gertsch**, Gulf Re, UAE;
- **Mr Mahomed Akoob**, Hannover Retakaful, Bahrain;

- **Mr Wasef Jabsheh**, International General Insurance, Jordan;
- **Mr Imad Abdel Khaleq**, Jordan Insurance Company, Jordan;
- **Mr Ayman Adel El Hout**, Medgulf, Bahrain;
- **Mr Nagib M Bahous**, MIG Group, Bahrain;
- **Dr Michael Bitzer**, National Health Insurance Company - Daman, UAE;
- **Mr Patrick Choffel**, Oman Insurance Company, UAE;
- **Mr Fahad Al-Hesni**, Saudi Re, Saudi Arabia;
- **Mr Farid Chedid**, SEIB Insurance & Reinsurance Co, Qatar; and
- **Mr Tarek A Hayel Saeed**, United Insurance Company, Yemen.

The MICC's secretariat services are provided by *MEIR*.

For more information, please contact Ms Cynthia Ang at [Cynthia@meinsurancereview.com](mailto:Cynthia@meinsurancereview.com) or Ms Ann Tay at [Ann@meinsurancereview.com](mailto:Ann@meinsurancereview.com).