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Mid East youth in focus at CSR Summit

The 3rd CSR Summit which takes place next week 17-20 September, at the JW Marriott Hotel in Dubai will place a special emphasis on businesses and their corporate responsibility towards youth throughout the Middle East.

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One of the panel sessions will focus on the role businesses and organisations can play in addressing the challenge of youth development in the Middle East.

The session will also examine in depth, the demographic realities and trends in the MENA region related to youth and how businesses can attract the talent, energy and potential of the region's young people. However, the problem of youth unemployment is far more complex.

Christianna Tsiterou, Summit Director commented,

'Some economists have reported that youth unemployment in the MENA region is running at over 26 per cent, double that of the western economies. With an estimated population of over 250 million, of which nearly 50 per cent of the population is under 16 years old, businesses need to implement sound CSR strategies urgently and where applicable, establish partnerships with the public sector and non-governmental organisations.'



Imelda Dunlop.

To discuss these issues, a panel of regional and international experts has been assembled including UAE-based Imelda Dunlop, Associate Director Middle East, Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) who has launched a new Middle East initiative entitled 'Business and Youth in the Arab World'.

The aim of the project is to support and promote the development of employment, enterprise and development opportunities for younger people in the Middle East and North Africa region and work with companies and organisations to spread and implement good practices.

Specifically they are urging the business community to take leadership, share experiences and 'know-how' and drive progress in areas of youth development across the region through long-term collaborative workshops, programmes and partnerships.

'The creation of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people is one of the most critical challenges facing the Arab world. Business, together with government and civil society, has a vital role to play in delivering innovative solutions to the growing youth

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unemployment problems,' stated Dunlop.

Joining Dunlop on the panel is Graham Hanlon, General Legal Counsel, for the Junior Chamber International (JCI), which is an international organisation based in Florida, providing young people around the globe with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, social responsibility, fellowship, and entrepreneurship.

'CSR has now graduated from a tactic within business to mainstream business strategy, which is clearly evident in forward-thinking organisations like IBLF and JCI,' added Tsiterou.

Other prevalent issues to be presented at the summit include, how to integrate CSR with business strategy and the increased value on investment, the effect CSR has on employee retention, the latest rules and regulations affecting CSR globally, how social and environmental responsibility can be profitable and Identifying the differences between CSR and 'feel-good PR.'

An impressive line-up of international and regional expert speakers has been assembled which include amongst others, Dr Madhav Mehra, President of World Council For Corporate Governance (WCFCG), Paul Clements-Hunt, Head of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Finance Initiative, Dr Ola Ullsten, Chairman World Council For Corporate Governance (WCFCG) & Ex- Prime Minister of Sweden, Michael Hölz, Managing Director of Deutsche Bank AG and Gavin Graham, Vice President Business Relations, Shell Middle East.

Two interactive post-summit workshops have also been included in the four-day programme. These workshops will address the in-depth issues associated with designing and implementing a CSR strategy and adding credibility to sustainability when preparing CSR reports.

The event, organised in association with Shell, has also attracted premium sponsors such as Etisalat and Al Karama Edutainment and is endorsed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Finance Initiative.

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