An innovative Employability Programme aimed at supporting youth employment in Egypt held its kick-off meeting yesterday (18th June) at St. Regis Hotel Cairo, with the aim to agree on targets with a focus on employment for women and access to disadvantaged groups.

The project is run by the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and aims to develop a model for Egypt’s hospitality sector, especially hotel and F&B businesses, to get more young people working in the industry. The programme is underway in Cairo and Hurghada, with scope to scale it at country level. The event was hosted by St. Regis Cairo, a Marriott international property, which is also participating in the project.

Besides 11 Marriott hotels in Egypt who is also involved in the project, representatives from other hotel brands who attended the meeting included IHG Hotels & Resorts, Four Seasons, Kerten Hospitality, Radisson Hotel Group and Jaz Hotels. TICO (Touristic Investment Company – Crave/ Qahwa/ Crave Catering & Good Food), a Food and Beverage company also joined along with Etijah, a not-for-profit organisation who will be providing training.

Established in 2006 Etijah work to promote youth and adolescent empowerment and will be overseeing the implementation of the program, with the objective of bridging the skills gap in the hospitality labour market in Egypt.

The kick-off meeting focused on project ambitions and objectives, agreeing on future plans, key milestones and impacts. The council was also formally launched, recognising the first movers in the industry.

The project is supported by the Special Initiative "Decent Work for a Just Transition" of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which is
implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH among others and also operates under the Invest for Jobs brand.

The Employability Programme has been developed with a focus on achieving equity for women. In this project the Alliance team is working closely with hotels, F&B businesses and local training partners at each stage to ensure activities are designed to address needs and remove impediments where possible so that young women can participate fully.

The objectives for this programme are to:

- Develop collaborative linkages across hotel and F&B businesses and local training organisations.
- Establish a local partnership structure to manage and deliver sector endorsed core soft skills and practical skills for entry level hospitality jobs.
- Establish a local leadership group to own the programme, including metrics, learnings, and adaptation of the programme for high quality outcomes

Sustainable Hospitality Alliance CEO, Glenn Mandziuk, said: "We are delighted this kick-off meeting was a success with ambitious targets set. I’m proud to welcome the first movers to this project which is putting the Alliance’s strategy into action. We look forward to seeing the impact it has on the local communities and also in moving the industry towards Net Positive Hospitality”.

Magdy Anis, the General Manager of St. Regis Cairo and Chairman of the Marriott Egypt Business Council, reaffirmed Marriott International's dedication to fostering the development of women and providing access to the hospitality industry for disadvantaged groups. This commitment is an integral part of Marriott International's global initiative, 'Serve 360,' which focuses on creating sustainable impact in communities worldwide.

Magdy Anis expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled to participate in this initiative, as it perfectly aligns with Marriott Egypt's mission to drive social progress and create meaningful opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups in our country. By investing in their development, we aim to build a more inclusive and prosperous future for Egypt's hospitality industry."

Jaz Hotel Group CEO Alaa Akel said, “At Jaz Hotel Group, we are delighted to be part of the Youth Employability Programme. Well-trained young people are essential to our society and our industry. At Jaz Hotel Group, we are committed to helping young people shape their future by creating equal and sustainable opportunities for them.”

This project sees the Alliance’s newly unveiled 5-year strategy in-action and is part of the Alliance’s Net Positive Accelerators. The strategy, launched earlier this month, promotes Net Positive Hospitality for People, Planet, Place and Prosperity. The accelerator programme aims to inspire the Alliance’s members and leverage their footprints and operations to launch collaborative pilot initiatives targeting systemic issues in specific destinations. The aim is to capture critical learnings and potential for scaling and replication, which will be disseminated to the broader industry.

A roundtable event will be held later in the year.

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About the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

The Sustainable Hospitality Alliance brings together engaged hospitality companies and the wider hospitality value chain, along with strategic partners, to address key challenges affecting the planet, people and places around the world.

Through their strategic initiatives and global networks, they develop practical programmes and resources to create a prosperous and responsible hospitality sector that gives back to the destination more than it takes.

Their members represent over 50,000 hotels spanning 270 brands – totalling over 7 million rooms – and include world-leading companies including Accor, Choice Hotels International, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Four Seasons, Marriott International, and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, as well as regional brands. Their network also includes other parts of the hospitality value chain, including owners, investors, suppliers, and other partners to further drive joined up action on sustainability, and accelerate the industry on the path to Net Positive Hospitality.

About the Special Initiative "Decent Work for a Just Transition":

Under the Invest for Jobs brand, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has put together a package of measures to support German, European and African companies in investment activities that have a high impact on employment in Africa. The Special Initiative "Decent Work for a Just Transition" – the official title – offers comprehensive advice, contacts and financial support to overcome investment barriers. The development objective is to team up with companies to create good jobs and improve working conditions in the eight African partner countries. The Special Initiative is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH among others. Further information is available at www.invest-for-jobs.com.