



COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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In less than a month's time, the attention of the sporting world will be focused on the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, which will be hosting the final Formula 1 Grand Prix of a fascinating, fluctuating season.

The race will take place on a brand new track, one of the best in the world. And I am told that every ticket for the air-conditioned grandstands has already been sold.

It is an exciting time for motor sport, not just for Abu Dhabi, but in the region as a whole.

Of course, Bahrain has also hosted Grand Prix events, and there is rich heritage of motorsport, from rallying to motorcycling, throughout the Arab world.

I was proud to help my country become the first Arab nation to host a round of the World Rally Championship of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

My late father, His Majesty King Hussain, was a tremendous motorsport enthusiast, introducing it to the Kingdom some 60 years ago. I share his great passion, not just for motor sport, but for what the automotive world contributes to society worldwide.

The mobility delivered by the motor car has changed our lives beyond recognition. It has had a hugely liberating effect, opening up new leisure opportunities and changing the way we live and work.

Nowhere has that been more important than in this region. Our relationship with the world of motoring is symbiotic. The motor vehicle has helped shape society and commerce, while our region contributes much of the fuel which keeps the whole world moving.

I believe that the FIA is absolutely central to the future of motorsport and to promoting the further development of mobility, with a focus on safety, technology and the environment.

And as president of the Jordan Olympic Committee, and founder of Generations for Peace, I absolutely believe in the power of sport to drive social development, to change the way young people live, and create new opportunities for them.

Properly and enthusiastically administered, motorsport has a role to play in this process.

In our region, 50 % of the population is under 16. I believe that the FIA has a key role to play in engaging them and helping them develop a true sporting attitude to life, as well as providing the practical support and education, which will improve driving standards and significantly improve road safety.

But if the FIA is to realise its full potential as a governing body, I believe it must first become "fit for purpose" in a changing world. It is to that end that I am delighted to accept an invitation from FIA presidential candidate, my good friend Ari Vatanen, to join his election campaign as his proposed Vice-President Sport (Middle East).

We share a vision for the FIA.

It is a vision of a body in which the Arab countries enjoy a level of representation, in keeping with their influence in the world today.

It is a vision of a future in which the FIA will become more accountable and more transparent.

It is a vision of an FIA, which ensures a consistent and appropriate bidding process for those countries that wish to stage major motor sports events.

It is a vision of an FIA ready to play its full role in both sport and mobility issues, and to play an agenda-setting role within the context of the world sports community.

In welcoming you to this Conference, I am confident that you will all share our vision for the future.