MOROCCO'S BUSINESS AVIATION AIRPORT PROJECT ON TRACK

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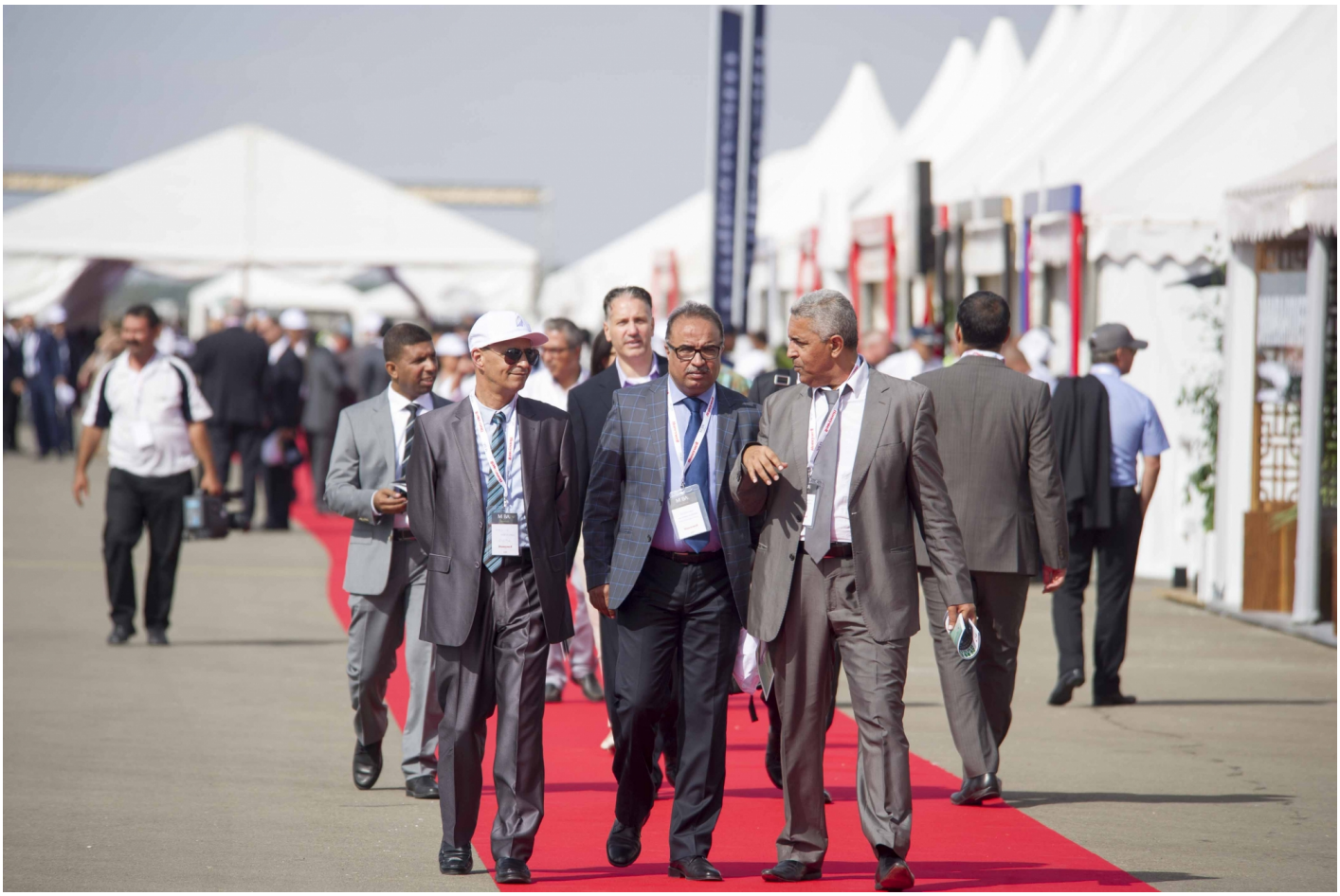

Morocco's business aviation project is on track to meet its goals of creating a new industry hub in North Africa, according to Zouhair El Aoufir, CEO of Office Nationale des Aeroports (ONDA). Speaking at the MEBAA Conference Morocco today, El Aoufir gave around 100 attendees an exclusive look into the project.

"Being an air junction between Europe, Africa, North and South America, Near and Middle East, Morocco enjoys a privileged situation, an undeniable competitive advantage which makes it a serious candidate for the development of business aviation," he said. "ONDA has therefore mandated an international firm to study the development potential of this activity and also recommend the necessary investments as well as the best model for its realization and management."

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With Morocco strategically positioned as an aviation hub for the region and benefitting from government support and investment, the country's business aviation project is an ideal fit to keep pace with the regional growth of the industry. El Aoufir stated that the first phase of the project, when the airport will be operational, is planned for 2025, with a further ten-year growth plan. "The concept of upgradeability is at the heart of planning to provide a progressive layout of parking lots, hangars and commercial activities to enhance our heritage." He added.

Another learning was that Middle East and North Africa (MENA) purchasers of business jets prioritise brand, range and new technology when making a buying decision, according to Raghed Talih, Director, Middle East and Turkey of Honeywell Aerospace. Presenting results from Honeywell's latest survey of executive aircraft purchase expectations, Talih pointed out the differences in the region's buying motivations and discussed the opportunities offered to both OEMs and resellers.

"The MEBAA Conferences are always informative and add true value to attendees business," says Ali Alnaqbi, Founding & Executive Chairman of the Middle East & North Africa Business Aviation Association (MEBAA). "Today's announcements and lively panel discussions have certainly demonstrated the wide range of opportunities presented by the burgeoning growth in the region. I hope that all of the attendees found it as useful as I did and am pleased that MEBAA has been able to enhance their knowledge of these opportunities."

Other topics covered throughout the day included the context of the FBO market in North Africa, during which Josh Stewart, Founder and CEO of XJET, Adel Mardini, CEO and President of Jetex and Christophe de Figueiredo, CEO of Swissport Maroc looked at the development of FBOs in Morocco, how they are evolving and the context of the FBO market in North Africa.

In addition, panels looked at cyber security in business aviation and aviation insurance, during which MEBAA announced the launch of its new offering to members, a suite of insurance products recently developed in partnership with leading global insurance firms.

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