

Millennium To Open 35 Hotels In 5 Years Throughout Middle East And North Africa Regions

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Millennium Hotels & Resorts announced the opening of its regional headquarters in Abu Dhabi and its plans to develop 35 hotels in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) over the next 5 years.

The company intends to expand its participation at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) next month to push its ambitious plans. 'Our approach to the market will mainly focus on management contracts which will cover different levels; our Millennium brand as our 5 star brand, our Copthorne brand which will focus on the 4 star development and introducing, for the first time in the region, our 3 star brand which is the Kingsgate as an upper 3 star brand.

We believe that with our vast global experience we can add a lot to the market, having a combination of both, eastern and western philosophy backed with a very strong local management which will make us one of the few international players having such a combination. Our Kingsgate brand, for the 3 star ranges, existing mainly in Australia and New Zealand will be launched within a few months with its first property in Abu Dhabi and will target a different type of clientele focusing on the basic requirements of the guest.

We envisage this brand to grow quickly with a plan to have more than 20 hotels in the area for the next 3 years,' said Ali Hamad Lakhraim - President of Millennium Hotels & Resorts for Middle East & Africa. Millennium Hotels had signed a management contract for a new 218 room hotel in Doha, the group's first hotel in Qatar due to open in September 2006. Existing properties in the region include the Millennium Hotel Abu Dhabi (325 rooms), Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai (496 rooms) and the Millennium Hotel Sharjah (259 rooms) and the Coral Beach Diving Hotel in the resort of Marsa Alam - Port Ghalib in Egypt (206 rooms). The Millennium Tiran Hotel & Resort at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt is due to open early in 2007 with an approximation of 440 rooms. 'We have quatro-tripled our presence at ATM this year in an effort to launch our expansion plans and seek out new opportunities,' said Manfred P. Simons, Vice President Operations and Development of Millennium Hotels MENA.

'Upon completion, Millennium Hotels & Resorts will have about one third of its global room capacity in the MENA region.' Millennium Hotels is a dynamic, global hotel company, which owns asset manages and/or operates over 100 hotels in 15 countries around the world. In 1995 CDL Hotels International acquired the Copthorne group of hotels, with properties in the UK, France and Germany, in a deal valued at £219 million. Millennium & Copthorne Hotels plc was then floated in 1996 on the London Stock Exchange. In Springtime 1999 Millennium & Copthorne Hotels plc purchased the majority hotel interests of its main shareholder, CDL Hotels International Ltd in South East Asia and Australia, for a sum of £556 million. In November 1999 the company acquired the Seoul Hilton in Korea for £140 million and then in December 1999, the company acquired Regal Hotels in the USA for a sum of £395 million.

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