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Middle East hotel development company on track for 2012	<b>Publication</b>	Al Watan Daily
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## Middle East hotel development company on-track for 2012

**KUWAIT:** Eight of the region's gateway destinations will be servicing the mid-scale lodging sector with an international brand choice by 2012, according to Action Hotels, a subsidiary of Kuwait's Action Group Holdings.

The company's chairman, His Excellency, Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah confirms that nine, mid-scale properties flying international flags will join the three already open in Salmiya, Kuwait (2008), Muscat, Oman (2009) and Amman, Jordan (2009). This was stated in a press release on Monday.

"This year, Sharq, Kuwait and Manama, the capital of Bahrain, are set to see two ibis flags join the mid-scale lodging offering with a 160-room hotel and 304-room mixed-accommodation tower, respectively," says Sheikh Mubarak. The Manama property is just opposite the Kingdom's burgeoning Al-Seef commercial and shopping district and includes suites and apartments.

Meanwhile in international markets, Action Hotels has developed the Ibis Glen Waverly in Melbourne, Australia (2007), and has also confirmed the imminent signing of a 250-room Novotel in Brisbane (2011).

According to Sheikh Mubarak, the economy hotel sector led the global hospitality development by six percentage points in the year 2009. He cites the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) research that suggests that the Middle East tourism sector, for both business and leisure travel, grew by nine percent in 2009, as global markets remained on a sharp decline.

"Our regional strategy is to cement a leading position in the economy hotel segment," he said.

"We are ahead of the race. The ibis, Holiday Inn and Novotel flags sit perfectly in this lodging

gap for business travellers and tourists who 'travel differently' and want a comfortable room and personable proactive service at true value rates."

According to World Tourism Organisation (WTO) the economic climate substantially drove demand for economy hotels by as much as 16 percent in 2009.

Sheikh Mubarak indicates that with economy air travel to the Middle East up some 13 percent, demand for good, price-effective, service-efficient lodging is vibrant.

"Business class air travel has experienced at least a six percent down turn, in the past year. Meanwhile, intra-regional travel is also growing, and this accounts for more than 70 percent of the room occupancy in Dubai and Bahrain, for example," notes Sheikh Mubarak.



Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al Sabah, Chairman of Action Hotels.