



NEWS RELEASE

Zain Group and Cisco Blaze Innovation Trail to Drive Network Transformation for the Digital Era

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KUWAIT, KUWAIT CITY -- (Marketwired) -- 12/19/17 -- Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO)

- *Collaboration supports the next wave of innovation for Zain Group, enabling it to adapt easily to future customer needs and deliver new services faster*
- *Successful IP/MPLS implementation drives next-generation network capabilities for digital transformation, brings benefits of segment routing and fast tracks network automation*

Zain Group and Cisco announced today that they have successfully achieved a key milestone in expanding the telecommunications operator's IP/MPLS network with cutting edge technologies, setting the groundwork for new opportunities and business models to be developed.

As a telecommunications operator serving over 45 million customers across eight countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Zain Group's network infrastructure faces an increase of expectations and workloads driven by the growth of devices and connections. The annual [Cisco Visual Networking Index™ \(Cisco VNI™\)](#) forecast projects a 12-fold increase in Middle East and Africa mobile data traffic from 2016 to 2021, a compound annual growth rate of 65 percent.

This unprecedented growth requires service providers to transform their networks. Zain Group is leveraging Cisco® advanced segment routing platforms and WAN automation to bring the benefits of distributed intelligence and centralized control to its network. Cisco's industry leading innovation around cloud-scale and automation will deliver next-generation network capabilities to Zain Group to enable simplification, scalability and open innovation that drive business results.

"The demands of the digital era means that we must prioritize improving speed and efficiency, defining a growth strategy based on new services, and ensuring security," said **Henri Kassab, Managing Director, International, Wholesale and Roaming, Zain Group**. "These are the building blocks of our innovation that support our transformation in becoming an integrated digital lifestyle operator. With the support of Cisco's leading technology, our future-ready network architecture positions us well to

drive tangible business outcomes and meet the evolving demands of our customers."

The deployment is a bold move toward network automation and represents a significant step towards a more resilient network that delivers high bandwidth, enhanced application intelligence for 5G, and a significantly improved end user experience that defines the network of the future. Cisco's technology will also help Zain Group optimize network operations and offer a richer suite of differentiated services.

"The capabilities of Cisco's segment routing, automation and our best of breed routing engines enable Zain Group to implement a programmable network that allows them to rapidly adapt to future customer needs," **said Ali Amer, Managing Director, Global Service Provider Sales, Cisco Middle East and Africa.** "By fast tracking their network automation, Zain Group are future-proofing their network with an agile, scalable and secure architecture that supports their growth strategy and enhances their competitiveness."

Other benefits Zain Group will gain by modernizing their global IP/MPLS architecture include simplified operations, programmability, scalability and increased network availability.

The [Cisco Visual Networking Index \(Cisco VNI\)](#) forecasts that by 2021, the Middle East and Africa will have 2.4 billion networked devices (up from 1.7 billion in 2016) and 1.4 networked devices per capita, while 75 percent of all networked devices will be mobile-connected in 2021.

Cisco is leading the disruption in the industry with our technology innovations in systems, silicon, optics, services and security, and our unrivalled expertise in mass-scale networking, automation, optical, cable access, video, and mobility. This enables service providers, media and web companies to reduce cost and complexity, help secure their networks, and grow revenue.

About Zain Group

Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and North Africa providing mobile voice and data services to over 45.3 million active customers as of 30 September, 2017. With a commercial presence in 8 countries, Zain operates in the following countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. In Lebanon, the company manages 'touch' on behalf of the government. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5% stake in Wana Telecom, now branded 'INWI', through a joint venture. Zain is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (stock ticker: ZAIN).

About Cisco

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