**CARAT PREDICTS ROBUST MOMENTUM INTO 2017 WITH +4.5% INCREASE IN GLOBAL ADVERTISING SPEND**

* *Digital Leads Growth to Attain 29% Market Share & $161 Billion Advertising Spend in 2017 -*

Carat, the leading global media network, today publishes its first forecast for worldwide advertising expenditure in 2017, combined with its latest forecasts for 2016 and actual figures for 2015, showing positive global outlook led by the continued investment in Digital media spending.

Based on data received from 59 markets across the Americas, Asia Pacific and EMEA, Carat’s latest global forecasts highlights that advertising spend will reach US$538 billion in 2016, accounting for a +4.5% year-on-year increase. Fuelled by high-interest media events taking place during the year – including the US presidential elections, Rio 2016 Olympics and Paralympics and the UEFA EURO 2016 championship – the positive outlook for 2016 is predicted to continue into 2017, with Carat’s forecast highlighting a consistently strong year-on-year global advertising growth of +4.5%.

Carat’s latest forecasts reconfirm the rise of Digital as the established driver of global advertising spend growth. Powered by the upsurge of Mobile (+37.9%), Online Video (+34.7%) and Social Media (+29.8%) in 2016, the strength of Digital is expected to continue to grow at double digit prediction levels of +15.0% this year, and a further +13.6% in 2017. Overall, Carat predicts the upsurge of Digital to account for 27.0% of advertising spend in 2016 and extend significantly to 29.3% in 2017, reaching US$161 billion globally.

In 2015 all regions reported positive growth, from Western Europe at +2.8%, +4.3% in North America, +3.6% in Asia Pacific and Latin America at +11.0%. Regional confidence is predicted to continue in most regions in 2016, despite volatility in some individual markets. In 2016, the North American advertising market remains strong with a solid growth of +4.6%, with the upcoming presidential elections solely expected to generate US$6 billion advertising spend in the US. Western Europe’s sustained positive recovery driven by solid growth in the UK and Spain in 2015 is expected to continue in 2016 and 2017 at +3.1%. Despite a decline in global growth forecasts due to China and Brazil’s economic volatility, Asia Pacific and Latin America advertising markets remain strong in 2016, achieving +4.4% and +10.5% year-on-year growth respectively. Carat also reports an encouraging outlook for 2017 across all regions including Central & Eastern Europe, as Russia’s economy is expected to stabilise from 2016.

By media, Digital continues to be the star performer for growth level globally with Hong Kong & Estonia now joining the list of 12 markets where Digital is now the principle media used based on spend. The US, Germany, Taiwan and Austria are predicted to join this list in 2018. Whilst Digital is constantly closing the gap, TV continues to command the majority of market share with a steady 42.0% in 2015 and is predicted to grow by +3.1% this year as the Olympic Games and US elections are predicted to generate significant TV viewership across various markets. In addition, Carat’s forecasts reconfirm the steady decline in Print\* in 2016 and into 2017 with Newspapers declining by -5.4% and Magazines by -1.7% in 2016 whilst highlighting positive year-on-year growth in 2016 for all other media, including Outdoor (+3.4%), Radio (+2.2%) and Cinema (+2.8%), with the latter expected to grow further at +5.0% in 2017.