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Abu-Ghazaleh: Tunisian Academic and Research Network (RNU) joins GÉANT and ASREN networks under the AfricaConnect2 Project



Amman, Jordan, Tunis, Tunisia - H.E. Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) and Prof. Habib Youssef, Director General of Centre de Calcul El Khawarizmi (CCK), the entity responsible for the management of the Tunisian National Research and Education Network (RNU), have signed an agreement under which ASREN will provide a 1 Gbps connection between CCK and the pan-European GÉANT network through ASREN's Point of Presence (PoP) in London.

RNU is the Tunisian National Research and Education Network (NREN) which provides internet connectivity, applications and services to the research and education (R&E) communities in Tunisia. This agreement will allow researchers, academics and students to get access to the global R&E networking infrastructure, enabling them to collaborate with peers in Europe, USA, Latin America, Asia and Africa, in addition to other Arab countries.

The agreement marks Tunisia's re-joining the international R&E networking community in the context of the EU-funded AfricaConnect2 project. The project aims to support the development of high-capacity internet

networks for R&E across Africa. AfricaConnect2 is managed by networking organisation GÉANT in conjunction with ASREN and regional sister organisations in Eastern & Southern Africa (Ubuntunet Alliance) and in West and Central Africa (WACREN).

Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of ASREN said: "We are pleased to see the pan-Arab research and education network growing rapidly, and Tunisia remains an important country with a high research and innovation profile. The connection with Tunisia will support more regional peering of R&E traffic and stronger research collaborations."

Prof. Habib Youssef, General Director of CCK said, "The network infrastructure of the Tunisian National Research and Education Network (RNU) has significantly improved over the last five years. It is now an all-optical network with 20 Gbps capacity in the core and providing fibre optic access to nearly 440 academic institutions and research centres, spread all over Tunisia. This has boosted our international traffic to nearly 5Gbps. We

have been working for over three years on establishing direct connectivity to the pan-European network GÉANT, with the objective of giving access for the Tunisian scientific community to the numerous computational resources and rich service portfolio available on GÉANT. It is our hope that these services will further improve the many ongoing scientific and academic collaborations between Tunisian and EU researchers."

Mr David West, GÉANT's project manager for the AfricaConnect2 North Africa cluster commented: "GÉANT is delighted Tunisia is reconnected to the European R&E community thanks to the AfricaConnect2 project and efforts by ASREN and CCK. A further project phase of AfricaConnect is due to start next year and I look forward to Tunisia making the most of the project funding and support for the benefit of its community and to contribute to many international scientific and socially beneficial collaborations".

Article link:

http://www.tagtenders.com/news.aspx?id=24532&group_key=news&lang=en

Japan Contributes US \$ 23 Million to UNRWA in Support of Palestine Refugees

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GAZA CITY - The Government of Japan has contributed US\$ 23 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The agreement was signed by the Japanese Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to Palestine, Mr. Takeshi Okubo, and UNRWA Commissioner-General, Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl.

Of this very generous and crucial contribution, US\$ 17.7 million will go towards the Agency's core program of education, health care and improved living conditions for 5.4 million Palestine refugees across all five fields of UNRWA operation. This support from Japan will have a direct positive impact on the well-being of some of the most vulnerable refugees in the Middle East. An additional US\$ 4.5 million will be used to improve the quality of UNRWA health services

in the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon and Syria and another US\$ 800,000 will contribute to the education of Palestine refugee children affected by the conflict in Syria.

Ambassador Okubo said: "I'm also pleased to announce to you that the Government of Japan has decided to provide supplementary budget for a new assistance of about US\$ 23 million to UNRWA. We are determined more than ever to send a message to Palestine refugees through the assistance that: A friend in need is a friend indeed. Japan will be there with you. At a time when UNRWA suffers from the financial crisis since last year, and especially Gaza is experiencing humanitarian crisis. With this new assistance, the total value of Japanese assistance to the Palestinian people will exceed US 1.9 billion since 1993."

Commissioner-General Krähenbühl expressed his deep gratitude and recognition of the sustained support that Japan has extended to UNRWA over the years: "We are extremely grateful for the generous support provided by Japan and deeply impressed by the strength of the country's commitment to our work. This substantial contribution - so early in the year - protects our service delivery and provides assurance to Palestine refugees. It also represents a contribution towards stability for Palestine refugees and the Middle East region."

The Government of Japan is a dedicated donor to UNRWA, having supported the Agency since 1953. In 2018, the

Government of Japan was the 10th largest contributor to the Agency, playing a critical role at a time when UNRWA faced an existential crisis. It is thanks to the enduring support of donors like the Government of Japan that the Agency is able to provide vital services to Palestine refugees across the Middle East, even in the face of its continuing financial challenges.

Source:

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/japan-contributes-us-23-million-unrwa-support-palestine-refugees>

Article link:

http://www.tagtenders.com/TenderNews.aspx?id=5505&group_key=tagitenders&lang=en

AGIP Awarded Best IP Advisor in the Middle East for the Second Year

PARIS – Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property (AGIP) was awarded the Best IP Advisor in the Middle East during the second edition of the Innovation & IP Forum and Awards held in Paris, France on January 30, 2019.

More than 70 specialist jury-panels; general counsel and chief IP counsel elected the winners due to their provision of excellent IP services and lasting contribution to the IP community.

On behalf of AGIP, Ms. Rasha Bazian, Proposals Department Manager, received the award saying: “I am honored to receive this prestigious award on behalf of AGIP and to share our success story with the International Intellectual Property community. This award crowns our continuous efforts to provide the best competitive services to our valued clients globally.”

A member of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org), AGIP is the leader in Intellectual Property protection services in the world



providing an extensive range of IP services for the protection, commercialization and enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights, covering patents, trademarks, designs, copyrights and domain names.

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Morocco: New Program of Support Focused on Investing in People and Economic Transformation

WASHINGTON - The World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors endorsed a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the Kingdom of Morocco, which will guide the financial and technical assistance program over the next six years.

The Kingdom is at a turning point in its history and has a unique window of opportunity to create high and inclusive growth, taking advantage of positive trends in Moroccan society, including urbanization and the demographic transition. The 2019-2024 CPF aims to support the Kingdom's ambition of sharpening its competitive edge in the global economy while boosting shared prosperity among its population.

In alignment with the new CPF, the Board of Directors also approved a Euro 611.3 million (US\$700 million equivalent) project to accelerate Morocco's adoption of digital technology as a source of improved services, growth and jobs and as key to leading the economic transformation in the North Africa and Africa region.

"Morocco has made significant economic and social progress, which has raised the aspirations of Moroccans, especially its young people," said Marie Françoise Marie-Nelly, World Bank Maghreb Country Director. "The Government has launched ambitious plans to meet these aspirations, and these efforts will receive the full support of the World Bank



Group. Realizing Morocco's tremendous potential will require investing in its youth to ensure they have the skills needed to drive the economic transformation, while unleashing the job-creating dynamism of the private sector."

The new CPF drew on consultations with the Government, private sector and civil society, as well as lessons learned from the previous Country Strategy. It identified three strategic pillars to guide World Bank Group support: promoting job creation by the private sector; strengthening human capital; and promoting inclusive and resilient territorial development. The CPF has governance and citizen engagement as its foundational pillar, and gender and digital technology as cross-cutting themes.

Under the first strategic pillar, efforts will be made to increase competition and improve the business environment for enterprises, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Morocco has made steady progress over the past few years in the Doing Business Index, but SMEs continue to face obstacles limiting their

growth and opportunities for job creation. The CPF will leverage the strengths of IBRD; IFC, the World Bank's private sector window; and MIGA, the World Bank's agency for investment guarantees. The three WBG institutions will aim to maximize Morocco's development resources by drawing on private financing and sustainable private sector solutions to provide value for money and meet the highest environmental, social and fiscal responsibility standards, while reserving scarce public financing for those areas where private sector engagement is not optimal or available.

"Morocco has been a top Doing Business reformer over the past few years, improving its business climate and its competitiveness to position itself as a business gateway to Europe and Africa. IFC will work with MIGA and IBRD to foster private sector participation in key sectors such as infrastructure, regional development, education, capital market and digital finance combining WBG derisking instruments," said Xavier Reille, IFC Country Manager for Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. "IFC will also scale up its advisory and financial support to harness the full potential of the private sector to create jobs and inclusive growth."

To ensure that Morocco has the right skills to compete in the global economy, the second strategic pillar will focus on human capital. The World Bank Human Capital Index revealed deficiencies that the Kingdom will address by investing more in

early childhood development and quality education throughout the education lifecycle. This will allow education to play a role in transforming the economy and giving every Moroccan a chance to reach his or her full potential. The second pillar will also focus on upgrading social safety nets and improving the performance of the health sector, to ensure the long-term well-being of every Moroccan.

The third pillar is aimed at less developed regions. Support based on this pillar will promote the equitable distribution of infrastructure and services across the entire country. This will include better management of water resources and strengthening the country's resilience to climate change shocks so that people in all regions have the resources and capacities to cope with their impacts.

To allow for effective implementation of the WBG support program, governance will be a fundamental component of all three pillars. All activities under the new CPF will promote efficient financial management, transparency, accountability and citizen participation. They will also be gender-informed, with the objective of empowering women and girls for shared prosperity.

The CPF will have the overarching goal of harnessing the potential of new technologies to promote entrepreneurship, productivity and e-government platforms to boost growth and innovation. The drive to leverage

digital technologies to transform Morocco's economy into a more inclusive and innovative driver of growth will receive support from the new project announced today, the Financial Inclusion and Digital Economy Development Policy Financing (DPF). In line with the Government's strategy, the new DPF will support a set of financial sector and digital economy reforms to facilitate Morocco's shift to the New Economy.

"The aim of this program is to support an inclusive financial sector and a competitive digital economy for all Moroccans. It will address social and economic inclusion challenges, particularly for youth, women, and rural populations," said Djibrilla Issa, Lead Financial Sector Specialist and Task

Team Leader. "It will also support policy reforms to develop digital platforms and infrastructure to broaden the use of mobile payments and enhance competition among digital providers. Digital entrepreneurship is central to the current program: greater effort to facilitate online enterprise creation and improve access to finance will be deployed to unleash the potential of Morocco's digital start-ups."

Source:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/19/02/2019/morocco-new-program-of-support-focused-on-investing-in-people-and-economic-transformation>

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Abu-Ghazaleh Knowledge Forum Hosts Al-Khairallah in “Prospects of the Strategic Relations between Iraq and Jordan” Seminar

AMMAN – Under the patronage of HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Knowledge Forum (TAG-KF) hosted Iraqi Senior Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Mr. Nizar Al-Khairallah in a seminar entitled “Prospects of the Strategic Relations between Iraq and Jordan” in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq.



In his address, Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh welcomed Mr. Al-Khairallah, highlighting the importance of Jordanian-Iraqi relations at all levels, stating the need to introduce tools and means to enforce these relations at an institutional level as well.

Iraq, noting that Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh is an Arab role model who Iraq takes pride in for his outstanding expertise.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh called for cooperation in the transport sector between the two countries in addition to forming sectoral committees to discuss and cooperate in industrial and productive projects in all sectors.

Al-Khairallah affirmed that there is a firm political will in both countries to redevelop and enforce the historical strategic partnership between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh said that Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) established its office in Baghdad 50 years ago, noting that the Baghdad Office is one of TAG-Org’s major offices out of its more than 100 offices worldwide, in addition to its Erbil Office which has been operating since 2006.

He also expressed optimism about achievements in recent years, referring to the formation of the Jordanian-Iraqi Political Consultancy Committee and a number of joint committees as well as the visit of HE the Iraq President to Jordan and the historic visit of HM King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein to Baghdad, in addition to the recent visit of Jordan’s Prime Minister HE Dr. Omar Al Razzaz and Cabinet members to Baghdad.

For his part, Mr. Al-Khairallah, expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Jordanian leadership, the government and people, and highly commended Jordan’s great supporting stand and keenness on the stability and security of

Moreover, Al-Khairallah pointed out that Jordan is the most adequate and deserving country to contribute to the restructuring of Iraq due to its multiple experiences and capacities, matching those of global private sectors, mainly

in the fields of Resource and Ground Water Management, Renewable Energy, Hospital Management, Education among other sectors.

Al-Khairallah asserted the strong and close Jordanian-Iraqi relations, affirming the keenness of Iraq to implement a set of mega projects in collaboration with Jordan, and to increase trade exchange between the two parties, especially after the opening of border crossings.

He also mentioned the recent talks between Jordanian and Iraqi Foreign Ministers in Baghdad who discussed opening cooperation channels and trade relations between Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan to enhance economic and commercial ties that would ensure economic welfare for all.

Additionally, he expressed hopes to establish serious partnerships in the private sector between Jordan and Iraq, especially in the existence of free economic zones in Iraq, as well as potential cooperation in the medical tourism field.

Al-Khairallah accentuated Iraq's need for a comprehensive change in its educational system that can benefit from the educational development in Jordanian schools and private universities, along

with other prospects of cooperation in the water and energy sectors.

It's worthy to mention that Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh visited Iraq in April 2018 during which he met President of the Republic of Iraq, HE Dr. Fouad Masoum.

During his three-day visit, Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh, accompanied by HE Dr. Jawad Al Anani and a number of TAG-Org's directors in the presence of HE Ms. Safia Taleb Al Suhail, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Jordan, discussed cooperation between the Organization and Iraqi institutions in the fields of capacity building, training, information technology and intellectual property.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh and the accompanying delegation met a host of Iraqi state officials.

It is noteworthy that Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh was appointed last week as the Honorary President of the Jordanian-Iraqi Amity Assembly during the Assembly's annual ceremony in Amman held under the patronage of HRH Princess Sanaa Asem in the presence of official figures and businessmen from both countries.

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UNIDO to Pilot Better Cotton Initiative in Egypt towards Sustainable Cotton Production

CAIRO - The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), under the framework of the Egyptian Cotton Project, launched the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) pilot in the country to support the Egyptian Cotton branding as part of a renewed drive to increase product sustainability, improve working conditions along the supply chain, and support cotton growers and relevant institutions in paving the way towards the pilot's national upscaling.

"The project's vision is to pilot the BCI standard system in Egypt to advance the cotton industry in a way that cares for the environment and the farmers growing it, through a multi-stakeholder program jointly coordinated by UNIDO, relevant governmental entities, farmers' cooperatives, cotton and textile associations, and local and international private sector stakeholders," said the Egyptian Cotton Project's spokesperson.

The BCI will strengthen the competitiveness of the Egyptian textile industry in the global market through an holistic approach to sustainable cotton production which covers all three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and



economic. Farmers will receive trainings and those who meet rigorous levels of sustainable production and employee welfare will be granted the BCI standard.

Funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Egyptian Cotton Project is implemented by UNIDO in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation as well as with local and international textile private sector stakeholders. It also leverages the "Cottonforlife" CSR initiative by Filmar Group.

Source:

<https://www.unido.org/news/unido-pilot-better-cotton-initiative-egypt-towards-sustainable-cotton-production>

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