

*“ASREN is a non-profit company with limited liability (GmbH) and is officially registered in Germany, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The main goal is to connect Arab institutions among themselves and to the globe through high-speed data-communications networks. Such networks will enable sharing and access to a variety of R&E services and applications in addition to utilization of highly sophisticated and technologically advanced computing resources available only at very few institutions in the world.”*

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## Connecting the National Agricultural Research Center of Jordan to the Arab States Research and Education Network in London



*Amman* - Upon the instructions of His Excellency Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, the National Agricultural Research Center of Jordan is now connected to the global research and education networks through the main point of presence of the Arab States Research and Education Network in London.

This point of presence is operated and managed by the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) in cooperation with the European Research and Education Network (GÉANT) with funding

from the European Commission under the EUMEDCONNECT3 Project and Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Global.

His Excellency Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of the Arab States Research and Education Network said: “We are happy to support the research and developments at the Jordanian National Agricultural Research Center by connecting them to the worldwide R&E networks. This service will enable them to access research and education data and resources from around the world.”

HE Dr. Nizar Jamal Hadad, General Director of the National Center for Agricultural research said:” We are working on developing and enhancing our research and interacting with similar centers and research institutions in the same domain. This connection will help us achieve that.”

The Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) was established under the auspices of the League of Arab States and chaired by HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh. ASREN works on establishing the pan Arab research and education network to provide network and application services to the Arab research and education communities and to connect them with their peers around the world. ASREN activities are funded and supported by the European Commission and Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Group.

Established in 1958, National Agricultural Research Center aims at utilizing the outcomes of the agricultural research that is developed locally or devised from other sources for the purposes of increasing agricultural production, both plant and animal production, and improving it and its efficiency; (ii) conserving the agricultural natural resources and optimizing their use; (iii) serving the purposes of agricultural development; and (iv) preserving the environmental balance.

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## **Abu-Ghazaleh: We are committed to cooperate with WACREN and other African NRENs**

Accra, Ghana - HE Dr. Talal abu Ghazaleh, Chairman of the Arab States research and Education Network (ASREN) said:”We are proud with our cooperation with WACREN and remain committed to collaborate with them and other NRENs in Africa.”

The week of 11-15 March 2019 provided room for a variety of activities, from librarians and NRENs collaborating on repositories during the LIBSENSE workshop, to AfricaConnect2 coordination meetings, to knowledge exchange during the annual WACREN conference. This year, GARNET, the Ghanaian NREN hosted the conference in the capital city of Accra. Representatives of several NRENs, institutions, universities and other relevant organizations from West and Central Africa gathered during the two-day conference and presented ideas, challenges and opportunities.



The first day of the conference kicked-off with an opening ceremony, including inspiring words from WACREN's CEO Boubakar Barry as well as GARNET's chairman of the board Clifford Nii Boi Tagoe who highlighted that all bodies should cooperate to create the Africa we want. This was followed by African Internet Pioneer Nii Narku Quaynor saying "AfREN is connected!". After welcome remarks and goodwill messages, the two Internet Hall of Fame inductees Erik Huizer (GÉANT CEO) and Nii Narku Quaynor (WACREN Chairman of the Board) opened up the knowledge sharing floor with a discussion on the importance of global collaboration to support national research and education development.

Representing the Arab States research and Education Network (ASREN), Yousef Torman sent a goodwill message at the high level opening session and chaired one of the main sessions discussing NREN issues including strategies for optimizing REN impact.

Five sessions were distributed over the two-day conference each containing 4-5 paper presentations. A variety of topics were discussed, ranging from repositories and open science, end-user engagement, data security, World Bank collaboration, several tools for specific fields of research, digital services, and the role of NRENs amongst others.





## UbuntuNet Alliance Appoints Engineer Dr. Matthews Mtumbuka as CEO

*Lilongwe, Malawi* - The Chairperson of UbuntuNet Alliance, Prof. Stephen Simukanga is pleased to announce the appointment of Malawian Engineer Dr. Matthews Mtumbuka as the new CEO of the Eastern and Southern Africa Research and Education Network effective 1st May 2019.

Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka has been appointed to the new position after satisfying a rigorous recruitment process. He takes over from Eng. Dr. F. F. “Tusu” Tsubira – the founding CEO- who was invited back to caretake the Alliance until the successor to the previous CEO, Dr Pascal Hoba, was identified.

An accomplished academic and engineer, Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka brings to UbuntuNet Alliance over ten years of senior management experience in telecommunications, academia, oil and banking technology industries. Before accepting his new role at the UbuntuNet Alliance, Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka has been working for Airtel Africa in a regional role covering IT Operations and Governance and as a Special Assistant to the Chief Information Officer for Airtel Africa, a role in which he has been managing IT systems, infrastructure, billing, Airtel Money and other projects across 14 countries. Prior to that, he worked as IT Operations and Governance Lead for Airtel Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda. He also worked as IT Director for Airtel Rwanda and Airtel Malawi; Head of Technical Services at the Malawi Switch Center (MALSWITCH) Ltd; and IT Service Delivery Coordinator at Shell Exploration and Production – Europe based in Aberdeen, UK. He has taught as an adjunct Lecturer in Management of Technology at the Business School, University of Cape Town, South Africa.



Professionally, Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka has served as the President of the Malawi Institution of Engineers (MIE) for two years and as Chairperson for the ConnectIT Network, an association of IT Professionals in Shell in Europe. He was Executive Director of the Malawian Initiative for National Development and President of the Oxford University Africa Society. He currently sits on boards of several companies and organisations in Malawi including NBS Bank, Nico Technologies and Responsible Safari. Previously, he served as Vice Chairperson for the Council for Mzuzu University among other university governance roles.

A registered engineer with the Malawi Board of Engineers and Rhodes Scholar, Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka received a PhD in Engineering Science at the University of Oxford in England in 2005 after graduating from the University of Malawi with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (with DISTINCTION). His PhD Thesis, titled: “MIMO Techniques for Future High-Speed Wireless Communications Systems” – investigated techniques that would improve the rate of data transmission on the mobile phone for 4G / LTE technology and produced more than ten publications in refereed journals.

Welcoming the new CEO, UbuntuNet Alliance Board Chairperson, Prof. Stephen Simukanga said: “I personally welcome Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka to the UbuntuNet Alliance family of service providers to our education systems in member countries. On behalf of the member NRENs, the Board and staff of UbuntuNet Alliance, I congratulate Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka for this appointment and look forward to working with him.”

In accepting the post, Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka stated “I am excited about this great opportunity to contribute towards the development of technology for education and research institutions in our region. We will leverage the great work of my two predecessors to increase our product offering, grow service utilization and expand geographical reach in order to safeguard sustainability of the Alliance.”

Eng. Dr. Mtumbuka becomes the first Malawian to be appointed CEO of UbuntuNet Alliance which is headquartered in Lilongwe, Malawi.

#### **About UbuntuNet Alliance:**

UbuntuNet Alliance is the regional Research and

Education Networking organisation for Eastern and Southern Africa. It plans, builds and operates UbuntuNet, the regional high-speed internet network dedicated to research and education in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Alliance also promotes and supports the integration of advanced ICT services and tools in research, teaching and learning, taking advantage of the opportunities that come with the Internet.

The Alliance was established in the latter half of 2005 by five established and emerging National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), namely MAREN (Malawi), MoRENet, (Mozambique), KENET (Kenya), RwEdNet (Rwanda) and TENET (South Africa). The Membership region of the Alliance spans across Eastern and Southern Africa, covering 26 countries. Currently, 16 countries have joined the Alliance and are at different stages of development. The Alliance is incorporated as a Trust in Malawi and has its secretariat in Lilongwe, Malawi.

*Source:* <https://ubuntunet.net/2019/04/ubuntunet-alliance-appoints-engineer-dr-matthews-mtumbuka-as-ceo/>

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### **Arab States Research and Education Network**

TAG-Org GA Building  
46 Abdel Rahim Al-Waked Street, Shmeisani, Amman, Jordan  
P.O. Box: 921100 Amman 11192, Jordan

**Email: [info@asrenorg.net](mailto:info@asrenorg.net) |  **ASREN****

**[asrenorg.net](http://asrenorg.net)**



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