Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh
Chairman of the Arab States Research and Education Network
Chairman of the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education

Talking Points

6th International Platform on Integrating Arab e-infrastructure in a Global Environment
e-AGE 2016

8th Annual Conference of the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education
AROQA 2016

2nd International Conference on Open Source Computing
OSSCOM 2016

American University of Beirut, Lebanon, 1-2 December 2016

- Under the patronage of His Excellency Mr. Botrus Harb, the Minister of Telecommunications, today's conferences on e-infrastructures, open source, and quality of education are held. We are highly honored for this important and timely patronage. This is considered a great support to the pan-Arab research and education activities, open source communities, and e-infrastructure networking.

- Tribute and appreciation to Dr. Mohamad Harajli, Provost of the American University of Beirut and the coordination team for their excellent host and warm welcome. Thanks for the extra ordinary arrangements AUB has been made during the past months. This is seen as a signal of enthusiasm to our efforts in developing quality of education, research networking, and open source initiatives for the whole Arab region

- Tribute and appreciation to His Excellency Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. Yasser Abdel Moneim, Director of Education and Scientific Research, the League of Arab States – Its secretary general His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit honorary chairs the Arab States and Research and Education Networks and the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance operate. We are proud to cooperate with the League of Arab States in developing the Arab network for research and quality of education.

- Tribute and appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Fouad Qasem, Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq for his participation and his active role in developing Iraq research and education network.

- Tribute and appreciation to our partners at the European Union and European GEANT Research and Education for taking the time to join us today. This is seen as a signal of fascinating support to our efforts in the region. Our great appreciation to the co-funding schemes to support EUMEDCONNECT, AFRICACONNECT, MAGIC, and OSSCOM projects

- Tribute and appreciation to the support of our national research and network shareholders of Egypt, Tunis, Jordan, Algeria, Somalia, Sudan, Palestine, Morocco, and Iraq.

- Tribute and appreciation to our partners and members, university presidents, directors, and VIP delegates from across the region and the world.

- Tribute and appreciation to our hosts for today's events – The American University of Beirut - the great support of Dr. Yousef Asfour, CIO, and his team: Mohammad Abbas and Lara Mneihem. We thank you for your great hospitality and support

- Tribute and appreciation for Dr. Walid Karam for his support in the Ministry of Telecommunications.

- Tribute and appreciation to our sponsors –

  - Naseej: Arabian Advanced Systems as a Platinum sponsor for the 3rd time,

  - CERN: the European Organization for Nuclear Research; ISOC: The Internet Society; and alfa as Bronze sponsors

  - RIPE NCC; Tata Communications; and bmb as sponsors

- Digital meets Culture as a Media partner.

  Your generous support has made this even possible and is highly appreciated.

- Welcoming the delegation of the European Commission and European partners from EUMEDCONNECT3, Africa Connect 2, and MAGIC with great appreciation for their technical and financial support since 2004 and beyond

- Welcoming the delegation of the Arab countries – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Somalia, Algeria, Morocco, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Sudan, as our partners in developing the Arab research and education network

- Welcoming the delegation of the US Internet2, and representatives of regional research and education network from Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and Canada, with them we will continue to work to develop coordination and interoperations towards a global network for research and education

- Today, we meet for several regional events that focus on research and education:

  - ASREN 6th Annual Meeting

  - AROQA's 8th Annual Conference

  - OSSCOM 2nd Annual Conference

  - EUMED Event 8

  - EUMEDCONNECT3, Africa Connect 2, Internet2 SIG, and OSSCOM meetings

  - E-Infrastructure workshops

  - Quality Assurance in education Workshops

  - Open Source Software Workshops

- Thanks to the commitment of the European Commission for their continuous support and generous funding to developing research and education networks in our region and to ASREN as well as to OSSCOM in the framework of Tempus

- Thanks to the commitment of the 80 university and school members of AROQA for their continuous support to developing the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education

- We witness today growing interests of Arab NRENs for joining ASREN as shareholders with Lebanon becoming an active partner in research and education networking.

- ASREN will continue to serve the Arab region in developing best practice NREN model and provide pan-Arab e-Infrastructure connectivity at the regional level. We have been supporting the NREN development in the Arab countries.

- We build on the operational success of ASREN's operational point of exchange in London. This point of exchange is now connected to the European GEANT network and to the rest of the World's research and education network. ASREN's PoP is linking a number of Arab NRENs for direct peering for research and education, now in the pursuit of Africa Connect 2 and EUMEDCONNECT3.

- Africa Connect 2 will create the first Pan-African Research and Education infrastructure coordinated by the African networking organizations: Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN), and UbuntuNet Alliance, in partnership with the European counterpart GÉANT. The objective is to establish a largely EU co-funded project to provide high-speed Internet to African research and education.

- We announce today:

    o the launch of the 1 Giga bits per second Lebanese international research and education link via the American University of Beirut to the European GEANT via ASREN PoP. This build on a long planning and discussion with AUB and other partners in Lebanon including the national council for scientific research - CNRS

    o the launch of the 155 Mega bits per second STM1 Palestine international research and education link to be established via the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to the European GEANT via ASREN PoP

    o the continuation of Jordan's 155 Mega bits per second STM1 link which now links the SESAME project and soon the Jordan University of Science and Technology

- continuing coordination with UbuntuNet Alliance to interconnect the Sudan Research and Education Network to the European Research and Education Network

- last and most important, our continuing coordination with the League of Arab States to establish the "Pan-Arab Connect", a long-term Gigabit Ring interconnection with all the Arab Countries and with Europe and the world

    We are very thankful to the European Commission for their great support, without their continuing co-funding, these interconnections would not have been possible.

- It has become necessary to establish high speed networks with Gigabits bandwidth connecting neighboring countries in the Arab region, and to the world regional networks for research and education

- This will help to introduce tools for developing collaboration and cooperation between scientists, researchers and students and to enhance the quality of education and research

- We announce the development of inter-operational platforms and success deployment of Eduroam in more than 10 countries in the Arab region

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization, the global professional service company which I established in 1972 will continue to support research and education in an effort to assist in the development of a broader and more inclusive information society in the Arab world. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University is a new development towards democratizing world class education based on the provision of science, learning and creativity to the citizens of the world through educational partnership with the top 500 prestigious international universities

- We support developing quality of education through the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education – AROQA. This year's AROQA's 8th Annual conference held today focuses on quality standards and accreditation.

- We support developing open source software and building its communities to strengthen knowledge societies

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Today and tomorrow, there will be intensive discussions from experts on research and education, from which we can derive important ideas for implementation. But I thought to share with you our plans and thoughts, which may be considered as recommendations, hoping to be the subject of study and as important declarations of this conference:

  1. Expand and develop a framework of effective participation of Arab NRENs towards developing an pan-Arab electronic infrastructure that strengthens the role of research and education communities in the Arab world.

  2. We want to move to a new phase in developing a road map for the Pan-Arab eInfrastructure building on EUMEDCONNECT3 and Africa Connect 2

  3. Launch an Arab-African awareness campaign that covers: the Concept of e-Infrastructure and connectivity, What Services and applications as well as benefits it provides, and How does it work in a best practice setup.

  4. Begin to invest in developing cross border links between Arab NRENs, to help support collaboration between the Arab scientists and move towards innovation and creative scientific communities

  5. Support sustainable pan-Arab research and education network connecting European and world leading regional networks

  6. Leverage and build on the previous success of the Euro-Mediterranean projects and forums in the field and the development of cooperation and coordination between the Arab and European researchers, and support joint scientific research projects that use the scientific infrastructures

  7. Work to encourage and attract donors and institutions supporting Arab research institutions to help in the development of the pan-Arab research and education network

8. Promote private sector participation and cooperation towards the development of research communities in variety of domains.

9. The League of Arab States has accepted to host the 7th international platform on integrating Arab e-Infrastructure in a Global Environment – eAGE 2017, the 9th annual conference of the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education - AROQA 2017 in December 2017. We will coordinate our efforts with the Egyptian Universities Network for the continuation of our coordination next year.

<u>In closing,</u>

This event is an opportunity to consolidate our efforts together towards developing a better network infrastructure, a better open source communities, and a better quality education for a prosperous future of our young people

Your Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends, thank you sincerely for all of your support.