

HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of ASREN, Jordan

HE Talal Abu- Ghazaleh extended a special tribute and deep appreciation to HH Sayyid Taimur Bin As'ad Al Said, Assistant Secretary General for Communication at The Research Council of Oman for the patronage of the conference on integrating Arab e-Infrastructure in a global environment. This patronage is considered as a support to host research and education activities and e-infrastructure networking for all the Arab region and Sultanate of Oman. He also thanked His Excellency Adam Kulach, Head of Delegation of the EU to Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia for taking the time to join the conference. This is seen as a signal of great continuous support and generous funding to the efforts in developing research networking for the whole Arab region. He also expressed his appreciation to the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, ICT and Planning in Palestine, Somalia, Yemen and Oman as well as Mrs. Magda Zaki, Director of Education and Scientific Research at the League of Arab States, our partners in developing the Arab network for research and education.

HE Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh expressed his appreciation to the Oman Research Council, the event's host, with the great support of His Excellency Dr. Hilal Al Hinai, Secretary General of TRC and Eng. Juma Baloushi, the director of the Oman Research and Education Network – OMREN project. Tribute and appreciation to the sponsors and he also welcomed the delegation of the European Commission and European partners from EUMEDCONNECT3, CHAIN-REDS, with great appreciation for their technical and financial support since 2004 and beyond, as well as the delegations of the Arab countries – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Somalia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Sudan, as our partners in developing the Arab research and education network, and finally 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, ASREN will continue to work to develop coordination and interoperations towards a global network for research and education.

His Excellency asserted the growing interests of Arab NRENs for joining ASREN as shareholders in addition to the NRENs in Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia, he announced the United Arab Emirates, Somalia, and Iraq research and education networks as new shareholders, now in the legalization process in Germany. He continued, 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. He also announced the launch of ASREN's operational point of exchange in London with the support of ISOC, Cisco, and DANTE. This point of exchange is now connected to the European GEANT network and to the rest of the world's research and education network. He invited the Arab NRENs to link to this PoP for direct peering for research and education. Also, he announced the development of AGE-OX in Fujairah as a regional point of exchange with the support of Ankabut. In addition to that, he declared the kickoff of the 155 Megabits per second STM1 link funded by Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) for the connection between ASREN and the European Research and Education Network "GEANT" through ASREN PoP in London.

Dr. Abu Ghazaleh asserted the support of developing quality of education through the Arab Organization for Quality Assurance in Education – AROQA. This year's AROQA's 6th Annual Conference, held in parallel with e-AGE platform, focused on quality standards and accreditation on digital education. In this regards, he announced the establishment of the "Association of Arab e-Universities" (AAEU), with the e-Universities of the UAE, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan, Bahrain, Yemen, and Tunisia as funding partners, as well as the announcement of the quality standards and accreditation of schools, now being implemented in Jordan's Omarieh Schools and the first Arab Journal of Quality in Education, a peer reviewed and indexed Journal.

In closing, Dr. Abu- Ghazaleh concluded his speech by saying "This event is an opportunity to consolidate our efforts together towards developing a better network infrastructure and a better quality education for a prosperous future of our young people."