



Press Release

Creating Sustainable & Effective Partnerships between Government, Industry and Academia Under Spotlight at the 3rd MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum in Dubai

Dubai, 14th of November 2017

The 3rd MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum Organized under the theme “*Strengthening the Dialogue between Higher Education, Government and Industry: Working Together towards a Common Vision*” started yesterday at the Address- Dubai, Mall

Higher education, government and industry leaders from more than 45 countries across the region and worldwide have assembled yesterday for the first day of a summit which could have a major impact on improving the dialogue between universities; government and industry in order to address the skill gap, ensure curriculum reforms are made to respond to market needs and improve the research output of our region.

The question of employability and graduate skills become crucial with 54 percent of the working age population in the Middle East and North Africa being unemployed as indicated by the World Bank. An average of 28.7 percent of 15- to 24-year-olds in the Middle East and 30.6 percent of those in North Africa are unemployed, according to the International Labour Organization. One of the biggest challenges the World Bank identifies in our region region is that unemployment rates are the highest among the educated, with university graduates making up 30 percent of the region's unemployed population.

Organized by the Center for Learning Innovations and Customized (CLICKS) in partnership with the Association of Arab Universities and NASPA; the Forum has as an objective to address this issues along others including low research output in the region, universities' capabilities to respond to the dynamic industry needs and skills gap. Through the different interactive session on the program; a number of questions will be addressed during the three days of the forum including looking at how do we measure the economic and societal impact of universities and innovation? How can government and industry work together with universities to drive positive change? What models have proved to be effective? What successful examples of partnerships exist? What factors can facilitate or inhibit stronger university-industry/government partnerships, as well as the potential opportunities for future partnerships.

The third edition of the Higher Education Forum brought together a number of prominent experts and gurus to promote and develop a global mindset in leaders of higher education, industry and government representatives that supports the establishment of effective collaboration and synergies among various sections.

Among Speakers at the Forum are :Dr. Francisco Marmolejo from the World Bank; Prof. Max Lu, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey in the UK; Douglas Blackstock from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK, Dr. Stephanie Gordon, Vice-President NASPA in U.S.A and Prof. Mohamed Zairi.

Other experts include: Dr. Sultan Abu Orabi Al-Adwan, Secretary General of the Association of Arab Universities, Prof. Tod Laursen, President of Khalifa University ; Dr. Abdullatif M. AlShamsi, Vice Chancellor, Higher Colleges of Technology; Prof. Riyadh Hamzah, President of the University of Bahrain; Prof. Amr Adly Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at Cairo University in Egypt among many others.

Commenting on the launch of the Forum Dr Narimane Hadj-Hamou, Founder and CEO of CLICKS and Chair of the 3rd MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum said: “With the emergence of today’s global knowledge economy there is a pressing need for industries, academia and governments to come together to tackle many socio-economic challenges including issues such as un-employability, job readiness of graduates, enhancing research productivity, etc. One of the approaches to address the un-employability and job readiness problem is an active and sustainable partnership between governments, industry and academia where national priorities are identified coped with a clear prediction of future job requirements,

curriculum are aligned with industry requirements, adopted pedagogies emphasizes on skill-based education and students are exposed to workplace environment throughout their course of study via integrating internships, live projects, and corporate interactions. Similarly a closer interaction between government and industry will allow bridging the gap between academic research and the research needs of industry and to a smaller extent the public. Throughout the three day of the Forum, we will explore various strategies and approaches to create better synergy between governments, industry and academia. Success stories and examples from different parts of the world will also be presented “

The MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum is perceived today as one of the region’s premier higher education gatherings involving of leaders of higher education that include representatives from Ministries of Higher Education and regulatory body representatives, IGOs, NGOs, Rectors, Chancellors, Presidents, Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Pro-Vice Chancellors among others.

More details of the event and a full list of keynote speakers and panelists can be found on the Forum’s official website at www.menahelf.com