

## Working Group starts to create action plan for Good Governance in Arab countries

The second global Working Group on 'Good Governance for Development in Arab Countries' convened in Dubai today to work out the standard approach to 'E-Government and Administrative Simplification' across the Arab World.

The Dubai School of Government is hosting the two-day forum in co-operation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and supported by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP).

In his opening remarks, Mr. Nabil Ali Al Yousuf, Arab Chairperson of the Forum and Executive President of Dubai School of Government, welcomed senior government officials and decision-makers from over ten different Arab countries in addition to OECD delegates and E-government knowledge experts from Europe and the United States.

Mr. Al Yousuf stressed the importance of the initiative that reflects the strong commitment from many Arab governments towards implementing good governance and e-Government projects to support development efforts in the region.

He also stressed the importance of the group's next meeting scheduled for May 2006 in the Egyptian resort city of Sharm Al Sheikh and urged the participants to encourage the ministers responsible for government development in their countries to participate in this meeting which will review the initiative's achievements over the last year since its launch. Mr. Youssuf also expressed his satisfaction at the progress made so far.

Mr. Al Yousuf added, 'The aim of the forum is not only to focus on reviewing e-Government projects in the region, but also to encourage dialogue and an exchange of ideas and suggestions on new action plans to develop the principles of Good Governance and to further contribute to the simplification of administrative operations.'

Mr. Al Yousuf was joined at the Forum Panel by Mr. Vincenzo Schioppa, Minister Plenipotentiary of Italy; Mr. Lee Chang-Kil, Director General, Head of the OECD Asia Centre, South Korea; Dr. Yasar Jarrar, Executive Dean of Dubai School of Government; Mr. Christian Vergez, Head of Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD; and Mr. Ragaa Makharita, Team Leader, UNDP.

The panel set out the agenda for the meeting and reviewed the current status of e-Government and Good Governance for Development in Arab Countries.

### **Moving Forward**

The first session on 'Update on the progress and status of the Working Group 2 Workplan', was chaired by Mr. Vincenzo Schioppa. He pointed out that the aim of this session was to inform participants of the progress of the activities identified in the WG 2 work plan presented at the first meeting of WG 2 in Dubai on September 2005 and give participants the opportunity to provide their input on how to move forward with the completion of the plan.

Mr. Schioppa and Mr Federico Basilica, Head of the Department of Public Administration, Prime Minister's Office, Italy, briefed the participants about the High-Level Seminar of E-procurement that was held in Naples, Italy on 30th - 31st January 2006. This was followed by a detailed briefing by Ms. Hala Makarem-Saab, Project Manager, OMSAR, Lebanon on the 'Overview and Results of the High-Level Seminar on E-procurement'. . . .



Dubai School of Government hosts Forum that is focusing on 'E-Government and Administrative Simplification' across the Arab World

The first session also included the presentation of the answers to the 'Stocktaking Questionnaire' by the Jordanian, Palestinian Authority and Tunisian authorities. The discussions also included ways to move forward with the completion of WG action plan and how to report back on WG 2 activities at the next Steering Group Meeting that is scheduled to be held from 20th - to 22nd May 2006.

This morning also saw discussions on 'Administrative Simplification' during the second session. Mr. Sameh Bedair, E-government Programme Director of Egypt, chaired the workshop.

He said that the aim of this workshop was to allow countries to first, present their experiences and challenges in reducing administrative burdens and simplifying the way government operates, in particular using Information & Communication Technology (ICT) tools.

'The workshop aims to brainstorm on possible key topics of common interest around which a High Level Seminar on Administrative Simplification and E-government can be organised,' Mr. Bedair said.

The second session included short presentations by selected Arab and OECD countries. The Second Working Group on 'Good Governance for Development in Arab Countries' met again to discuss country challenges on e-Government and to identify key efforts that need to be included in any Action Plans.

Egypt, Bahrain and Lebanon participating in the pilot exercise, presented an overview of key elements of their future Action Plans for e-Government based on the challenges they are currently facing.

### **Detailed Discussions**

The presentations were followed by discussions on the assessment and a draft action plan in view of its finalisation. Invited OECD countries' experts were given the opportunity to comment on the presentations and provide feedback in view of the preparation of a final draft of the Action Plan to be presented at the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Group Meeting in May.

The Dubai School of Government was chosen by the Dubai Government to be the knowledge partner for this initiative. The objective of this forum is to provide executive decision makers with the necessary strategic tools and perspectives to identify suitable objectives understand potential hurdles and anticipate and overcome obstacles in both the development and design of realistic e-government strategies and their implementation.

The 'Good Governance for Development in Arab Countries', initiative was launched at a meeting of Arab Ministers hosted by Jordan on 6th - 7th February 2005, in the presence of King Abdullah II, Donald Johnston, Secretary General, OECD, and Mrs. Rima Khalaf Heinadi, Assistant Secretary General, UNDP.

The Dubai School of Government is the first research and teaching institution established in the region that focuses on public policy governance. It was established in 2004 under the direction of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The Dubai School of Government collaborates and coordinates with other international schools of Government such as Harvard University's John F Kennedy School to launch research programmes and to encourage the global exchange of views and experiences relating to public and government policies, seeking to reinforce and develop the skills of the leaders and decision makers in the Arab region.