

HE Dr. Hilal Al Hinai, Secretary General, TRC, Oman

HE Dr. Hilal Al Hinai commenced his speech by welcoming HH Sayyid Taimur Bin As'ad Al Said, the conference sponsor, as well as other prominent figures and esteemed guests. Dr. Al Hinai also expressed his pleasure to attend this important international platform which includes research, education and technical experts from more than thirty countries worldwide. The platform was organized by The Research Council (TRC) in cooperation with the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), with a view to finding mechanisms for technological cooperation between international networks and electronically connecting them to facilitate the requirements of researchers and students from various countries.

His Excellency emphasized that the communication networks became one of the most important factors for success in this era, known as knowledge era. This is highly evident upon comparing the countries' development and advancement in the knowledge economy with the quality and dissemination of other information networks at the regional and international levels.

He also indicated the desire of the Omani Research Council to work with the international and regional research and education networks in order to establish a broad and secure infrastructure connected to research and education sources worldwide. Such infrastructure shall fulfill the present and future needs, comply with the international standards, characterize with proper readiness, promote societal and research cooperation and provide the necessary support for educational and research institutions in Oman and the Arab world. Unfortunately, the Arab region suffers poor quality and high costs of communication networks, which deprived research and education institutions from taking advantage of available knowledge treasures through connecting with this generation of networks and we, as institutions and individuals, became outside the context of scientific and technological cooperation system.

His Excellency added that the Research Council sought, through approving the Oman Research and Education Network (OMREN), to establish a solid infrastructure for developing scientific research and education in the Sultanate, and building local research capacities in various scientific fields. The OMREN shall connect the research and academic institutions in the Sultanate through high-speed and high efficiency electronic network, which includes electronic applications and packages to promote the level and efficiency of education, research and electronic communication. It shall also serve as the Sultanate's gateway to similar international networks.

As part of the Council's endeavors to enable the Omani Network project, a network data center was provided within the National Data Center at the Information Technology Authority. In addition, the design of the project's logo has been completed and announced during the platform. A steering committee and a technical committee were also formed for the project to work in full efficiency. Moreover, the tender of the network basic structure was announced to connect 14 educational institutions in the first phase during the first quarter of 2015 until completing all the phases of project implementation plan in 2019 to connect 57 educational institutions.

HE Dr. Al Hinai emphasized the significance of digital infrastructures in allowing researchers, professors and students to connect, contact and cooperate with each other, and providing them with the knowledge and ability to extract, analyze and use research and educational information and broadband cloud computing. He also hoped that the universities as well as education and research institutions in the Sultanate become an integral part of the Arab and international research and education networks, through embracing research and

technological competences and supporting research, education, sustainable technological infrastructure as well as taking advantage of the digital world capabilities.

Finally, His Excellency expressed gratitude for the participation of attendees in this platform, wishing they enjoy their accommodation in their second country, Oman, and wishing them success in their tireless efforts and endeavors.