



**Press Release**

**ICDL GCC Foundation first to call for launch of ‘Gulf Digital Literacy Week’**

*Developing IT literacy among citizens underlines competitiveness of national economies*

April 13, 2010

ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving License program in the Gulf States and Iraq, has urged decision makers, strategists and government bodies to launch a ‘Gulf Digital Literacy Week’ – as a yearly initiative that aims to further develop and promote electronic skills and digital literacy across the Gulf countries. The initiative could be designed on the premise that digital literacy fosters economic creativity, innovation and growth in the region.

ICDL GCC Foundation emphasized the importance of facilitating collaboration between various government agencies, social groups, institutions and other stakeholders concerned with the creation

of a digital society in the Gulf countries to introduce initiatives such as the ‘Gulf Digital Literacy Week’. The initiative recognises that e-skills will be the differentiating factor for the creation of new ideas, products and services, and will be the catalyst for the region’s growth in a global digital economy.

“Tackling unemployment is one of the most important issues that Gulf countries need to focus on in the future, especially in light of the global financial crisis that has negatively impacted the job market. Equipping citizens with the requisite electronic skills is a crucial step to leverage the potential and capabilities of human resources in the Gulf region. In this regard, we believe that organising initiatives such as the ‘Gulf Digital Literacy Week’ annually, which focuses on spreading digital literacy among individuals, will go a long way in overcoming current and future challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Jamil Ezzo, Managing Director, ICDL GCC Foundation.

“We also believe that the “Gulf Digital Literacy Week” will eventually lead to the organising of more conferences, workshops, seminars and other IT awareness raising activities by the private and public sectors, which could result in the faster spread of IT literacy and enhancement of overall national capabilities,” added Ezzo.

The process of effectively spreading IT literacy requires the provision of easy access of affordable ICT elements to individuals. Government bodies and stakeholder corporations that stand to benefit from the creation of an integrated digital society in the Gulf region have a responsibility to provide reasonably priced ICT services to the people. It is imperative that these ICT services are supported by training on the use of various ICT programs through initiatives that are funded by government bodies and the private sector as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts. ICDL GCC Foundation believes that this could be achieved by organising a network of national training centres that would facilitate easier access to basic computer skills training programs which can help individuals take advantage of modern information and communications technologies. This will greatly contribute to enhancing the quality of life of individuals while improving the country’s socio-economic stature.

Meanwhile, ICDL GCC Foundation noted the recent launch of the European e-Skills Association (EeSA) during the ‘European e-Skills Week’. Representing a broad community of stakeholders, EeSA will address the need to foster digital competencies, raise awareness of ICT studies and career opportunities and help equip people with new skills for new jobs, for inclusion, growth and

innovation in Europe. EeSA which was launched to highlight the urgency to further develop and promote e-skills and digital literacy within Europe, is designed on the premise that e-skills and digital literacy will be the foundation for Europe's success as an innovative and inclusive society. To meet the global challenges of increased competitiveness, employment, and social inclusion, EeSA affirms the view that an increased focus on human capacity building is of vital importance.

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