

GCC countries dominate top 5 Arab States recording in ICT development Index

Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, KSA, Oman rank in top 60 globally

UAE, December, 2014 - ICDL Arabia, the governing body and certification authority for the ICDL certification program in Egypt, GCC States and Iraq, has expanded on the recent findings of the 2014 report published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations' specialized agency for ICT, pointing out the outstanding performance of the GCC countries in the report. The ITU's flagship annual report 'Measuring the Information Society Report' has identified Gulf countries among the group of 'most dynamic countries,' having recorded above-average improvements in their ICT Development Index (IDI) rank over the past 12 months.

According to the UN report, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman are the top five among Arab States and within the top 60 globally in the IDI, a composite measure that ranks 166 countries according to their level of ICT access, use and skills. In the Arab States, Bahrain ranked number one with an IDI of 7.40 while the UAE jumped 14 places to earn second rank with an IDI of 7.03. Qatar was third with 7.01, followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in fourth and Oman in fifth position with IDIs of 6.36 and 6.10, respectively.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL Arabia, said: "These are exciting times for the ICT sector as the world is shifting towards a smarter society characterized by the integration of fresher technologies, the adoption of new standards and legislations on digital advancement, and the emergence of products and solutions for mobility, business and the likes. The recent UN study demonstrates the GCC countries leading role in the technology shift, with five GCC states joining the world's top 60 countries in ICT development. The UAE in particular has made a significant improvement, jumping 14 positions to its current global ranking of 32."

The IDI top 30 rankings include Australia, Bahrain (rank 27), Canada, Japan, Macau, New Zealand, Singapore, and the USA. Denmark was ranked first, followed by the Republic of Korea which ranked second. The UAE, Qatar, KSA and Oman are at 32, 34, 47, and 52, respectively. Almost all countries surveyed improved their IDI rankings, with the CIS and Arab States demonstrating the highest improvements in regional IDI averages.

The report further highlighted that Internet usage continued to grow steadily at 6.6 per cent globally in 2014. The number of Internet users in developing countries has doubled in the last five years (2009-2014), with two thirds of all people online now living in the developing countries. By the end of 2014, almost 44 per cent of households globally will have Internet access at home, up from 40 per cent last year and 30 per cent in 2010. In developed countries, , 78 per cent of households now have home Internet access, compared to 31 per cent in developing countries, with just 5 per cent in the 48 UN Least Developed Countries.

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