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وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي



WORLD BANK GROUP

PRESS RELEASE: TERTIARY EDUCATION: IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY LEADS TO BETTER COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Algiers, Algeria, 31 May 2016 – University leaders, tertiary education policy makers and experts from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region gathered to discuss and identify ways for improving university governance and quality in order to increase their graduates' competitiveness and employability.

The question of governance in tertiary education is particularly relevant in the MENA region where youth unemployment rates are higher than in any other region across the world – 21 percent in the Middle East and 25 percent in North Africa – and tertiary education graduates with at least an undergraduates' degree make up nearly 30 percent of the unemployed. There is a broad consensus on the role of governance in improving education quality in tertiary education.

The regional MENA conference, "Paradigm Shifts in Tertiary Education: Improved Governance and Quality for Competitiveness and Employability" was jointly organized by the World Bank Group, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), in partnership with the British Council, UNESCO Office in Beirut, Regional Bureau of Education for the Arab States, the Association of Arab Universities, the International Association of Universities and UNIMED.

Participants included representatives from the 113 tertiary education institutions network in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, government officials, quality assurance agencies, as well as regional, European and international experts, and discussions focused on:

- Identifying alternative policy options to improve governance and quality assurance in tertiary education as a major path towards competitive economies and societies.
- Developing skills in areas such as institutional planning, performance assessment, development of indicators, financial management and internationalization.
- Addressing the pressing issue of the employability of university graduates.
- Strategizing to attract the participation from institutional representatives from MENA countries not yet participating in the project, and from other regions, especially, Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Exploring potential synergies in-between programs and facilitating connections among initiatives.

The conference was also the occasion for the program's network of 113 tertiary education institutions in the region to share and discuss best practices and success stories they have encountered in introducing measures to develop institutional governance, as well as the implementation of the second version of the University Governance Score Card (UGSC V.2.0), which is an innovative tool that enables institutions of tertiary education in the MENA to benchmark themselves with other institutions in the region as well as with international standards, define their own unique set of goals and establish individualized benchmarks to assess their progress in achieving them.

This conference comes as a fifth in a series of regional conferences organized by the World Bank and the Center for Mediterranean Integration Regional Tertiary Education Program and is part of an overall effort aimed at building capacity in tertiary education institutions across the MENA region; and sharing of best practices on governance, management and quality. Its purpose is to address insufficient access to higher education, inconsistent quality of higher education institutions across the region, and discrepancies between graduates' skills and the skills demanded by the labor market.

- More on the conference (agenda and participants' list) can be found [here](#).
- More on the Center for Mediterranean Integration Higher Education Program available [here](#).

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The Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) is a multi-partner platform where development agencies, Governments, local authorities and civil society from around the Mediterranean convene in order to exchange knowledge, discuss public policies, and identify the solutions needed to address key challenges facing the Mediterranean region. Members of the CMI include Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, City of Marseille, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank Group, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) as an observer. Web: www.cmimarseille.org; Facebook: CMI Marseille; Twitter: @cmimarseille

