Mohammed Foundation, UNDP tie up

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DUBAI — The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) yesterday launched a new partnership to promote creative knowledge generation and investment in education.

The partnership marks the first of a series of strategic initiatives announced by His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, at the Knowledge Conference in Dubai last month.

The agreement was signed by His Excellency Mohammed Al Gergawi, Chairman of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, and Ms Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States.

The partnership will mark the compilation of the 'Arab Knowledge Report', on the status of knowledge in the Arab world. The report will be released by December 2008.

Al Gergawi said: "Research on the region's development indicates tangible progress can be achieved only with a competent knowledge base. There is an urgent need for an adequate resource pool of qualified human capital to realise the region's ambitious development goals.

"The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation has been launched to address this situation and invest in knowledge and human capital development. It seeks to lead by example in bridging the knowledge gap of the region to drive its growth and ensure the welfare of its people."

He added: "Our partnership with UNDP will help us impact a positive environment, offering equal opportunities that nurture the region's youth and create a promising generation of future leaders."

"The Arab world is in dire need to revisit the understanding of the 'knowledge' concept, and embracing the knowledge economy as the only path to succeed in facing the third millennium challenges, and achieving a befitting place among the world nations?, said Ms. Amat Al Alim Alsoswa.

The Report will have a two-fold objective:

1.How knowledge is produced in the region through research institutions, the publishing industry, patent systems, and higher education and literary and artistic production

2.How knowledge is acquired and disseminated by socialisation, education, mass media and translation.

In analysing these critical factors, the report will identify challenges and best practices, and propose policy solutions for the effective generation and application of knowledge in the region.

The Report will build on the foundation set by UNDP's Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society, part of the award-winning AHDR series that has in four editions since 2002 outlined the most important development challenges facing the Arab world. Written by a group of distinguished Arab scholars and opinion leaders, the 2003 report emphasised the need for Arab countries to close a growing knowledge gap by investing heavily in education and promoting open intellectual inquiry.

The 'Arab Knowledge Report' will expand on that analysis, presenting new data and agenda-setting studies on recent and long-standing trends, deepening the inquiry into the state of education and the development of a 'knowledge society' in the Arab world.

The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation's partnership with UNDP is part of its broader effort to open doors for future generations of Arab leaders to shape their own futures through the acquisition of world-class knowledge and education. The Report will strengthen the Foundation's range of initiatives by advocating for more supportive policies and institutions throughout the region.

Launched in 2007 with a $10 billion endowment, the Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to boost the knowledge capital of the region, from funding research institutions and youth leadership programmes to providing scholarships and research grants.