GCC countries maintain leadership in eGovernment readiness among Arab peers while advancing and retreating Globally

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving License program in the Gulf States, has has commented on the 2010 UN eGovernment Readiness Survey, which showed that GCC countries has maintained leadership in eGovernment readiness among Arab peers.

The Foundation has confirmed that the growing efforts by GCC governments to promote digital transformation and Literacy has helped further enhance the region's collective ranking in the 2010 UN eGovernment Readiness Survey, which presented various roles for e-government in addressing the world financial and economic crisis. Bahrain and the

UAE occupied the top two rankings respectively among Arab countries in the survey, followed by Kuwait at third, Saudi Arabia at fifth, Qatar at sixth and Oman at eighth.

Countries world wide race to advance their rankings in the eGovernment Readiness index UN survey, which is clearly shown by Bahrain jumping 29 points to take rank 13 worldwide now after being ranked at 42 in the UN eGovernment Readiness Survey in 2008, Saudi Arabia has also advanced from (70) to (58), and Kuwait from (57) to (50), and Oman from (84) to (82), which is attributed to these countries further investment in IT infrastructure.

The 2010 UN eGovernment Readiness Survey has shown UAE retreating globally from the 32nd to the 49th spot, and Qatar retreating globally from the 53rd to the 62nd in comparison with the UN eGovernment Readiness Survey in 2008, which maybe attributed to delays in further implementation of e governance relevant projects in those two countries.

The survey pointed out that eGovernment has helped underpin regulatory reform, while promoting greater transparency in government. Moreover, eGovernment has enhanced the delivery of public services, enabling governments to respond to a wider range of challenges despite the difficulties in the global economy.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation, said: "The results of The 2010 UN eGovernment Readiness Survey is encouraging to the GCC countries as it confirms that the delivery of eGovernment and commercial e-services are improving and gaining a wider acceptance from the general public. This momentum presents the GCC countries another opportunity to reach out to the wider public, provided that Information and Communication Technology becomes more affordable, so we call on all the stakeholders

such as telecom operators in the region and hardware manufacturers to consider affordable solutions to the larger masses."

The eGovernment Readiness Survey has helped identify benchmarks for improving eGovernment programs and consequently expanding the scope of e-services. Digital literacy initiatives such as the e-Citizen program, a specifically designed basic computer skills program developed by the European Computer Driving License in collaboration with experts from across Europe, have been implemented to further increase computer and internet usage by the general public. Recognising its critical value in facilitating digital transformation, several countries worldwide including UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and the rest of the GCC region have adopted the e-Citizen digital literacy program as an integral component of their respective digital awareness campaign.

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