CONFERECE SYNOPIS
Kuwait, 28-30 January 2014

I. PROJECT BRIEF: This conference is the fifth edition of the annual meeting of the GIFT-MENA network. It intends to provide a basis for continued in-depth discussion by public authorities, Development Banks, and social partners including academia and the private sector, on issues of institutional development and human capital formation. It aims at achieving a broad-based consensus among those actors of what is currently needed to build future leadership in Government, and inspiring future actions that contribute to the agenda of skills and learning for better service.

For a period of two days, participants will be provided with an overview of the policy context and the current challenges of bringing public service training and education in line with best international practices and current global trends in human resource development. They will discuss structural and political constraints for building an innovative leadership in the public service and the importance of continuous training, development and learning in ensuring that public servants of the 21st century are knowledgeable, effective and creative in fulfilling their mission to serve their country and their citizens. They will address ways to promote networks of learning and south-south cooperation in pursuit of better performance. The conference will also bring forth challenges of designing capacity building plans and the relationship with private sector providers.

II. PROJECT ORGANIZERS:

1. THE ARAB PLANNING INSTITUTE: (API) is a non-profit regional organization whose primary mission is to advance the cause of economic and social development in Arab countries through training, research, consultancy, expert-group meetings, and publications.

2. THE INSTITUTE OF FINANCE BASIL FULEIHAN: Established in 1996, the Institute is a training center specialized in Public Finance and Customs. It is a public autonomous agency working under the tutelage of the Minister of Finance of Lebanon. Since 2006, the Institute is the regional training center of the World Customs Organization and the Secretariat of the GIFT-MENA Network.

THE GIFT-MENA - NETWORK OF LEARNING

Launched in Beirut on March 2006, the network brings together 45 schools and institutes from across the MENA region, in addition to more than 15 partners representing leading regional and international organizations. It serves as a global hub for networking among public sector training operators.

The network is an instrument of development cooperation. It was created to foster the development of South-South cooperation through the facilitation of peer-to-peer learning and exchange of experiences in the area of capacity development for public finance and governance reform; and to reinforce the impact of bilateral and multilateral exchange programs.

The GIFT-MENA Annual Conference offers a space for dialogue, experience-sharing and peer-to-peer learning. It draws upon lessons learned of various countries in capacity development and state building from the Arab world and beyond.
III. **CONFERENCE TITLE:**

**CHALLENGES OF BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE ARAB WORLD**
The 5th Annual Conference Of The Gift-Mena Network

IV. **VENUE, AND DURATION**

- The conference will be held from 14 to 16 January 2014. It will take place in a Hotel (__________) in Kuwait city.
- The opening will take place on the evening of January 14 under the auspices of HE _________________.
- The conference will be followed by a closed meeting of the GIFT-MENA Steering Committee Meeting to which regional and international organizations will be invited.

V. **AUDIENCE**
The event is open to a broad range of stakeholders including:

- Secretary Generals, Directors Generals and senior staff in Government
- Presidents, Directors, Senior executives and public officials in charge of civil service training schools and institutes, and human resources management at concerned ministries and institutions (Ministries of Finance and Planning and International Cooperation, Central Banks, Civil Service Boards, Prime Ministry Offices, etc.)
- Senior officials at Development Funds and Banks and multilateral Cooperation Agencies.
- Directors and senior representatives of private sector training institutions
- International and regional experts and specialists in capacity development and human resources management in academia and civil society organizations

VI. **PROPOSED THEMES**
The conference will focus on the following three themes:

1. **Building Capacities in Times of Crises:** Are civil servants partners of Growth? What are we doing to attract, retain and empower talents in Government? What approaches to privilege in budget surplus countries vs fragile states? Has the crisis modified our vision of capacity development and service delivery? What are the missing linkages between Training and Capacity development?

2. **Regulating the Training Market:** Is capacity building a policy or a market place? Who leads the process and with what vision and tools? What are the limits of private sector interventions? What are lessons learned in setting standards and regulating the training market?

3. **Development Cooperation and the key role of the Arab funds and development banks:** Are countries of the Arab region able to collaborate and create synergies in areas of capacity development and human capital formation? Are regional development organizations and banks addressing the question of skills and capacity building in Government? Can synergies between technical assistance and training be reinforced? And how? What is the scope and prospects of South-South cooperation in the area of capacity development and knowledge transfer?
VII. **CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

- **Objective 1:** To engage in a dialogue on policies and best practices of human capital formation in the public sector and exchange expertise among the various countries in the above areas;
- **Objective 2:** To reinforce regional networks and build partnerships in pursuit of improved performance;
- **Objective 3:** To foster technical and financial support by international partners and engage them in the policy debate about Capacity in Government and its impact on Growth and Stability.

The two-day conference will include keynote presentations by world-leading experts and practitioners highlighting international best practices and specific country experiences, in addition to workshops and roundtable discussions.

As such, participants will share and learn about the experiences of each others’ while they focus on identifying local problems and plausible solutions.

The discussion of key challenges will culminate in the presentation of sets of recommendations that are expected to serve as baselines for better capacity development policies, institutional and regional partnerships, as well as for a more efficient, coherent and coordinated cooperation with the donor community.

VIII. **PREVIOUS GIFT-MENA CONFERENCES**

Previous annual conferences were organized by the Secretariat of the network – the Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan of Lebanon, with the contribution and support of renowned partner institutions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>GIFT-MENA First General Assembly</td>
<td>World Bank Institute ADETEF ENA France</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Leadership in MENA Civil Service: Challenges of Competence and Confidence Building</td>
<td>ADETEF Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France ESCWA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Public Financial Management in MENA: Reforming for Results at a Time of Crisis</td>
<td>API ADETEF World Bank</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Rethinking Training in the Public Sector</td>
<td>ADETEF EU-SIGMA Fransabank</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Training and Cooperation for Change in the MENA region</td>
<td>ADETEF National School of Finance of Tunisia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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