Press release

Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Technology Witnesses the Official Launch of "Silicon Waha"

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On the second day of eLearning Africa, the 11th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training in Africa, H.E. Yasser Elkady, the Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Technology, witnesses the announcement of the official launch of "Silicon Waha", the new Egyptian initiative to establish and operate Science and Technology Parks throughout the country. eLearning Africa is taking place in Egypt for the first time, hosted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and its executive IT arm, ITIDA (Information Technology Industry Development Agency), from 24 to 26 May.

"Silicon Waha" is the product of a partnership between ITIDA, MCIT and the New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA) of the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Construction. Through this partnership, Silicon Waha seeks to stimulate the planning, design, implementation and creation of buildings and ICT Tech Parks throughout Egypt. To this end, Silicon Waha will offer logistical support services and initiate technology and infrastructure projects required for the development of these areas.

The company provides the requisite experience and environment to serve the ICT industry in Egypt through integrated services for entrepreneurs, start-ups as well as local

and international companies of all sizes. The business model includes the design and assembly of electronics and promotes commercial, research, regional, international and educational relations with NGOs, universities, research centres and tech industrial companies through Innovation Clusters.

The company will draw on Egypt's competitive advantages in terms of its location, multilingualism, skilled workforce and abundant talent pool in order to attract local, regional and global investment in the areas around these technology parks, help local ICT companies to access foreign markets and encourage them to export their products and services.

Asmaa Hosni, CEO of ITIDA, stated during the announcement that, "the objective of the tech parks is to limit domestic migration by offering direct and indirect jobs to the young Egyptian across different fields. They aim to contribute to the development of disadvantaged and marginalised areas by providing electronic services to Egyptian citizens. Silicon Waha will use the technology parks to develop the skills of the country's university graduates and those who work in the governorates, as well as to motivate them to join call centres, technical support centres and electronic design and manufacture companies." She also confirmed that the new parks will provide competitive operating costs for the investor and a work environment conducive to investment in the governorates.

The company's Board of Directors incorporates representatives from MCIT, ITIDA and NUCA. Under their auspices, six technology parks in the cities of Burj Al Arab, Madinat Al-Sadat, Tenth of Ramadan, New Beni Suef, New Assiut and New Aswan will be constructed in the coming months. The company has already begun work on the initial phases of the project and is working to ensure that 11 buildings in the Burj Al Arab and New Assiut governorates are constructed by the end of the year.

The Economic Ministerial Committee, headed by Egyptian Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, agreed in February to the establishment of "Silicon Waha" within the framework of the national technology parks project of. The project had been launched by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology at the "Cairo ICT" exhibition and conference late last year in the presence of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

At eLearning Africa, Mr. Ahmad Sobki, Vice President of ITIDA, chaired a session under the title "Egypt shares best practices and projects". The session showcased Egypt's experience ofutilising information and communication technology tools to enhance the education system.

The session contained several presentations on a number of subjects highly relevant to ICT-enhanced learning in Egypt, notably on the 'Empowerment of Egypt's human capital'. Dr. Yasser Dakroury, Head of the Egyptian E-Learning University, presented the innovative learning models that his university employs as one of the leaders in this field and the only institution in Egypt that provides academic programs in ICT, business management, elearning and software engineering.

In the same session, the Information Technology Institute presented their experiences in the field of elearning, which began in 2001 with an initiative named VITI, which offered training courses electronically. VITI was followed by another initiative named "VITI for Kids", which claimed more than five international awards. The University of Nantes also presented on the role of governance in inspiring African innovation and productivity.

In another session on investing in education to inspire innovation, Dr. Hossam Osman, Vice President of ITIDA and Chairman of the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (TIEC), discussed the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in providing pan-African technological solutions in the field of education. He also introduced the latest figures which indicate that investment in innovation in education increased worldwide by 700% last year on the 2010 numbers. The total investment in this respect

hasreached2 USD billion a year, a strong indication of the world's appetite for investment in education solutions.

Silicon Waha Web Site: siliconwaha.com.

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About ITIDA:

The Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) is a governmental entity affiliated to Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. It is responsible for growing and developing Egypt's position as a leading global outsourcing location by attracting foreign direct investment to the industry and maximizing the exports of IT services and applications.

Located in the heart of the modern business environment at Smart Village, the six hundred acre business park on the outskirts of Cairo, ITIDA is a self-sustainable entity that drives the IT industry in Egypt and raises awareness among the Egyptian people of the benefits and use of ICT to advance socio-economic welfare of the whole community.