

Singapore, Costa Rica win 2015 UNESCO-King Hamad Award

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09 : 15 PM - 13/01/2016

Paris, Jan.13- (BNA): The 7th Award Ceremony of 2015 UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICTs in Education was held today in the French capital Paris. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa assigned Deputy Premier Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa to attend the event, which was held at the UNESCO headquarters, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The ceremony was attended by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, UNESCO Deputy Director General Getachew Engida, Assistant DG for Education for Education Qian Tanq, Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, Jury Chairperson Ms. Dorothy, jury members, senior UNESCO officials, Bahrain's delegation, media figures, and Bahraini studies enrolled at French Universities.

Addressing the ceremony, Bokova commended the initiative of HM the King to launch the international award which serves the UNESCO goals. She stressed the positive impact of the award, since its inception, in encouraging international creative initiatives in using telecommunications and information technologies in promoting education. She said that the renewal of the award for a new six-year term represents an acknowledgment of the pivotal role of the award, commending Bahrain for its cooperation with the UN agency in all fields. "The UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize contributes to promoting education and benefiting students and teachers", she said. She congratulated the winners of the 2015 award and stressed the UNESCO 2030 Strategy which focuses on promoting quality education, adding that the award serves the objectives of the organisation. The Deputy Premier conveyed greetings from HM the King, thanking the UNESCO Director-General and assistants for renewing the award for a six-year term, in recognition of the value-added prize which supports the UNESCO-led efforts to promote education for all in all parts of the world.

"The launch of the award in 2006 reflects the keenness of HM the King on encouraging education, being the premium source of knowledge, creativity and innovation and the cornerstone of development and civilizations", he said. He highlighted Bahrain's outstanding strides which enabled the Kingdom to secure advanced ranks on the indices of human developments and achieve most of the goals of education for all. The Deputy Premier highlighted the educational opportunities for both sexes, pointing out that Bahrain has achieved a 100% rate of school in primary education, thus meeting one of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All Objectives. He outlined Bahrain's projects which underway to incorporate the telecommunications and information technologies in education, citing in this regard His Majesty the King's Future Schools Project and the digital library and the digital empowerment scheme. He cited also the Regional Center for Telecommunications and Information Technologies, which was established in 2012 in Bahrain in cooperation with the UNESCO. The centre has so far trained more than 8000 ICT specialists from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries as part of efforts to build and develop national and regional competences. He underlined the mounting challenges facing education due to the booming information age, stressing the crucial importance of acquiring the necessary skills to optimise tangible dividends. He stressed the need of develop the quality of education which serves the needs of the labour market, underlining the importance of profiting from theoretical and analytical knowledge to better deal with the modern science. The 2015 UNESCO King Hamad Prize has been awarded to the Singaporean Ministry of Education in recognition of its "Open Source Physics" project as well as the "National Program of Educational Informatics Foundation" project, which was submitted by Costa Rican Omar Dengo Foundation. The number of entries more than doubled compared with past years as a total of 112 projects from 58 countries and a number of NGOs were nominated for the 2015 award. The Deputy Premier congratulated the 2015 laureates, stressing the importance of the award in encouraging creativity and innovation in education. He thanked Bokova and the jury, stressing Bahrain's firm belief in the UNESCO values and principles to disseminate knowledge, cooperation, amity and peace.

The two laureates commended HM the King's initiative, stressing the importance of the prize in serving the UNESCO goals in developing electronic education and promoting e-learning for all worldwide. A short film produced by the Ministry of Education was shown, highlighting Bahrain's educational achievements, particularly digital empowerment and the integration of students with special needs in formal education. The Deputy Premier and UNESCO Deputy Director-General opened a photo-expo held by the Ministry of Education, showcasing Bahrain's educational development projects, particularly e-learning and digital empowerment. A fine art exhibition was also held showcasing 34 prize-winning artworks which were awarded at the 2015 Child Art Show, including artworks by students with special needs, in addition to a book fair highlighting Bahrain's educational strides.

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BNA 1842 GMT 2016/01/13

Number of readings : 1533

Last updated : 09 : 37 AM - 14/01/2016

