

**The address of His Excellency Ambassador Ahmed Rashid
,Khattabi**

**Assistant Secretary-General and head of the Media and
,Communication Sector**

,The League of Arab States

**At the inaugural session of the Third International
,Scientific Forum for Language and Media**

**At the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and
Maritime Transport**

(Faculty of Languages and Mass Communication)

Smart Village: 14 October 2024

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

Prof. Dr. Yasser Al-Sunbati - Vice President of the Academy for Education and Student Affairs

Dr. Hanan Youssef, Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Mass Communication, Conference Chair, Esteemed Deans and Professors, Distinguished Researchers, Media Professionals, and Students,

It is my distinct honour to once again be present at this prestigious institution, representing the League of Arab States in the third session of this forum, dedicated to the topic of new media and youth empowerment. I extend my best wishes for the success of your efforts in enhancing capabilities and promoting a digital culture that enables youth to effectively participate in public affairs and to advance the pathways of comprehensive development across the Arab world.

Allow me to remind you that over 5 billion people worldwide now engage with social media platforms, accounting for 64.6% of the global population. No fewer than 100 billion messages are exchanged daily on WhatsApp, and 5.4 billion people use Google Drive. This phenomenon is reflected in our Arab region, where 53% of social media users are young people.

Youth, as the predominant demographic in our Arab societies, are the most engaged with the profound transformations in communication, driven by the information and communication

technology revolution, which has impacted various sectors—economic, financial, commercial, consumer, public, social, and media services alike. In this era of artificial intelligence and the emergence of digital citizenship, it is imperative that our youth engage seriously with these rapid advancements, particularly by acquiring the necessary digital training and qualifications to navigate new media applications responsibly and safely.

From this perspective, the significance of integrating media literacy into the Arab educational curricula becomes evident, as it plays a crucial role in raising awareness among young people and equipping them with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate and respond constructively to the negative impacts of media and digital content. This includes safeguarding personal data, upholding cultural and societal values, and combating the spread of misinformation, rumours, and fake news.

In parallel, there is an urgent need to accelerate the digital transformation and foster an enabling environment for the use of artificial intelligence technologies, capitalising on the vast opportunities they offer across various sectors. This must be achieved within the framework of strategies that harness the creative potential of youth, free from hesitation or apprehension, to address the legal, professional, and ethical challenges posed by these technologies. Importantly, this effort must actively encourage the meaningful participation of young people in shaping local and national development programmes, as well as in the decision-making process.

There can be no true progress or development in the Arab world without investing in the energy and potential of its youth, and likewise, no real advancement without securing technological and

digital sovereignty, especially in light of the growing risks in cyberspace.

Finally, I would be remiss not to commend the outstanding efforts of this Academy, under the distinguished leadership of its President, Dr. Ismail Abdel-Ghaffar, in its various branches, in supporting youth, promoting innovation, and enhancing the quality of scientific research. Particularly notable is the work of the Faculty of Artificial Intelligence, which aims to keep pace with global developments and establish the foundations of a safe and constructive digital citizenship that engages with the social environment, responds to labour market needs, and remains open to international experiences.

Thank you, and may the peace and mercy of God be upon you.