

Economy of Knowledge, focus of an international conference in Tunis

Under the high patronage of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, works of an international conference will open on Tuesday in Tunis on the theme: “Building Knowledge Economies: Towards Creating Job-Opportunities, Promoting Competitiveness and Achieving a Balanced Development.”

Participants in this three-day conference, which is held by the Islamic Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO) jointly with the World Bank and the Tunisian Ministry of Education and Training, will address ways to build successful knowledge economies, develop innovation and competitiveness and stimulate international co-operation.

The purpose is to generate maximum of jobs and boost economic growth.

Emphasis will be placed on the issue of integration into the global economy, given the opportunities it offers in matters of job creation and achievement of sustainable development goals.

Other objectives of the Conference include taking stock of the experience of a number of developed countries and fast-growing economies. Such experiences may help developing countries, especially in Middle East and North Africa (MEAN) region, apply effective policies with regard to education, labour market, science, technology and innovation, and thus boost their competitiveness in the world economy.

ISESCO Director General Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, who held a news conference on Monday in Tunis, said ISESCO will seek to make the most of recommendations to come out of this event to benefit member countries and set up follow-up mechanisms to this effect.

He pointed out that the MEAN region remains a region “consumer” and “non-productive” of knowledge, pointing out that the shift to knowledge production would depend essentially on the setting up of mechanisms that would prompt the emergence of a new generation of innovating activities.

He underlined that thanks to the wealth of its natural resources and qualification of its human resources, the Islamic world is in a position to enhance its positioning in the world economy.

Minister of Education and Training Hatem Ben Salem said the future of Islamic world hinges on training of new generations able to command science and technologies. He highlighted the responsibility assumed by ISESCO to this effect in improving performance of the educational system of member countries and using its international networking appropriately.

He added that Tunisia is keen on investing in developing human resources and utilisation of their knowledge to sustainable development ends.

For her part, Mrs. Shamshad Akhtar, Deputy Chairwoman of the MEAN region at the World Bank, underlined the interest for countries of the region to diversify their economies to achieve the hoped-for development goals.

She said that the major obstacle impeding the integration of countries of the region in the knowledge economy is the result of the poor contribution of the private sector in investment in the area of knowledge, compared to public investments in this field. The agenda of this event includes a roundtable on knowledge economies, two sessions on building knowledge economies, cultural dimension of this kind of economy and the launch of a information campaign on this topic.