

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I would like to thank the organizing committee for inviting me to attend this important event and to participate in this round table.

I will speak shortly about my experience with EUMEDCONNECT and EUMEDGRID projects and about my viewpoint concerning the building of sustainable infrastructure for education and research.

I joined the EUMEDCONNECT and EUMEDGRID projects from the beginning. I was the representative of HIAST (the Higher Institute for Applied Sciences and Technology) who is the Syrian partner in these two projects. Recently I left HIAST, but I still feel that I am concerned by the future of the infrastructures built by these projects. And sure, I will continue supporting them from my new position.

These projects were really two successful cooperation stories between Mediterranean countries. EUMEDCONNECT has succeeded in creating a network infrastructure for research and education around the Mediterranean. EUMEDGRID also has succeeded in building a grid infrastructure above EUMEDCONNECT network.

The question now is how to make these infrastructures sustainable.

EUMEDCONNECT partners have agreed in September 2006 that the best way to make the network sustainable is to create a consortium for this purpose, but, as the European countries had already their consortium. So the idea was to create a consortium only for the Mediterranean Arab countries. A declaration was signed in Rome at that time by the representatives of six Arab countries to express their intention to work together on the creation of a research and education network connecting the Arab Mediterranean countries. The consortium was called CAMREN.

The signatories of this declaration (I was personally one of them) have done their best to create CAMREN. But after more than three years, CAMREN did not see the light. I think, it is important to ask ourselves, why this did not happen although that all the partners of EUMEDCONNECT and every person involved

in this project were convinced of the importance of the creation of such consortium.

Anyway, the work on CAMREN has been stopped because a new initiative called ASREN is launched aiming at the creation of a scientific research and education network covering all the Arab countries.

If we want this new initiative to succeed, we should learn from CAMREN lessons and we should find solutions to the issues that had delayed CAMREN creation. At the first sight, it seems that ASREN will be able to avoid CAMREN obstacles and personally, I think that AZREN has more chance to succeed. Anyway, we should do our best to make it really happen this time.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Creating a regional research and education networks is a necessity, whatever the name was, CAMREN, ASREN, or any other.

In creating such regional network we facilitate the scientific collaboration that already exists between neighboring countries and it will also lead to set up more and more collaboration between scientific communities in these countries where many of them work on resolving common problems.

Building Grid platforms above the regional network is also a necessity. This powerful computing tool encourages the joint researches to tackle complicated scientific problems that concern usually the whole region such as environmental, biological and agricultural problems.

To conclude, I think that the necessity to have a research and education network that connects the countries of our region is a fact. We do not need to justify it! All what we need, is to work and work and to use all our means to make it exist.

Thank you for your attention