



"Where Leaders of Higher Education Meet"
Since 2013

Global Challenges, Local Impact:

Higher Education's Role in Shaping a Resilient Future

**28-30
SEPT, 2026**

Kempinski Central
Avenue, Dubai - UAE



CLICKS

Center for Learning Innovations &
Customized Knowledge Solutions

FORUM ORGANIZER



Overview

The **7th Edition of the MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum (MENA-HELFF)** will be held in the vibrant city of **Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from September 28–30, 2026**. Taking place under the timely theme **“Global Challenges, Local Impact: Higher Education's Role in Shaping a Resilient Future,”** this edition comes at a defining moment for the global higher education sector.

Launched in 2013 as a biennial gathering, MENA-HELFF has grown into one of the most prominent international platforms dedicated to higher education leadership. With participation from over 60 countries in previous editions, the Forum provides a truly global and cross-regional space for dialogue, critical reflection, strategic collaboration, and the exchange of best practices. It is not just an event you attend—it is a platform you help shape.

The 2026 edition holds particular significance, as universities and higher education systems across the world confront a rapidly evolving landscape marked by technological disruption, changing learner expectations, sustainability imperatives, workforce realignment, and growing demands for relevance, inclusion, and resilience. Against this backdrop, MENA-HELFF 2026 will serve as a strategic convening space where leaders come together to collectively reimagine the role of higher education and co-develop solutions with lasting impact both locally and globally.

This global gathering is expected to welcome **250–300 higher education leaders, senior policymakers, industry partners, and international experts representing more than 50 countries**.

Over the course of three dynamic days, the Forum will feature keynote addresses by global thought leaders, engaging panel discussions, strategic debates, and fireside chats, as well as pre-forum workshops, targeted focus groups, and institutional case studies aligned with the Forum's central theme and sub-themes. In addition, participants will have access to a dedicated exhibition space showcasing cutting-edge services, tools, and technologies from selected partners that support and enhance the higher education sector. The program also offers ample networking opportunities, designed to foster meaningful dialogue, peer exchange, and long-term collaboration.

A major highlight of the Forum will be the announcement of the **winners of the 5th Cycle of the Zairi International Awards for Excellence in Higher Education**. Open to institutions worldwide, the Awards recognize outstanding institutional innovation, leadership, and impact, reinforcing the Forum's commitment to celebrating and amplifying excellence across diverse higher education systems.



40+

INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDIES ACROSS 6 PARALLEL TRACKS

04

WORKSHOPS



FOCUS GROUPS



PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES



THE ZAIRI INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION



KEYNOTE ADDRESSES



FIRESIDE CHATS



+300
Participants



+200
HEIs &
Organizations



+60
Speakers/
Panelists



+50
Countries



Forum Objectives



Building on the insights from previous editions and in response to the rapid transformations shaping higher education, the 7th MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum aims to

1

Navigate Global Disruptions and Strengthen Institutional Agility and Resilience

Reflect on the disruptive forces impacting higher education—including climate change, digital transformation, economic volatility, shifting workforce demands, and geopolitical instability—and identify strategies to enhance institutional agility, sustainability, and resilience. Particular attention will be given to how institutions can strengthen their capacity to anticipate, adapt, and thrive amid uncertainty and disruption.

2

Redefine the Role of the Engaged University

Explore how universities can revisit their purpose to serve the common good, contribute to sustainability efforts, and foster meaningful community engagement through lifelong learning, social responsibility, and civic partnerships. The Forum will also examine how institutions can reinforce trust, social cohesion, and societal well-being in times of increasing complexity and change.

3

Align Higher Education with Future Workforce Needs

Examine the skills and competencies required in the evolving job market and discuss how HEIs can redesign curricula, enhance the student experience, and integrate skilling, reskilling, and upskilling models to support knowledge-based economies. Special emphasis will be placed on preparing graduates with the adaptability and lifelong learning capabilities required to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

4

Leverage Digital Transformation and Innovation

Investigate how HEIs can harness AI, automation, and digital tools to enhance teaching, learning, research, and institutional effectiveness, while promoting creativity, innovation, and problem-solving to address pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges. The Forum will further explore how institutions can responsibly integrate emerging technologies while preserving their human and social mission.

5

Showcase Global Practices and Institutional Transformation

Provide a platform for sharing successful case studies and innovative strategies from universities worldwide, highlighting how institutions are adapting to change and driving positive transformation across governance, pedagogy, research, and engagement. Particular attention will be given to examples demonstrating strategic agility, innovation, and sustainable institutional renewal.

6

Strengthen University-Industry-Government Collaboration

Examine how higher education institutions, industry leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders can work together to foster strategic partnerships, drive research and innovation, and contribute to national and regional socio-economic development. The Forum will also explore new models of collaboration needed to address increasingly complex and interconnected challenges.



Why Join the 7th MENA-HELF(2026)?



A Premier Leadership Platform for Higher Education: The MENA-HELF has established itself as a leading global platform for higher education leadership in the region, bringing together university presidents, policymakers, and sector influencers from over 50 countries.



Confront Global Challenges with Locally Grounded Solutions: The 2026 Forum centers on the theme “*Global Challenges, Local Impact: Higher Education’s Role in Shaping a Resilient Future*,” offering a platform for higher education leaders to explore how institutions can translate global disruptions into contextually relevant strategies that drive resilience, equity, and long-term societal impact.



Showcase and Learn from Global Best Practices: Through institutional case studies, high-level panels, and strategic roundtables, the Forum offers a rich platform to share success stories, policy insights, and transformative models from around the world.



Build Strategic Partnerships and Expand Your Network: Connect with fellow higher education leaders, quality assurance bodies, EdTech innovators, and regional and international organizations through the multiple networking opportunities the Forum provides.



Exhibit, Promote, and Position Your Institution or Services: Benefit from dedicated exhibition space to showcase your university’s achievements, projects, or services to a global audience. The Forum also includes branding opportunities for partners, sponsors, and exhibitors looking to increase visibility in the MENA and global higher education landscape.

Target Audience

We invite leaders and decision makers within Higher Education from across the globe to join us, including

- Senior Administrators including Chancellors, Presidents, Rectors, Provosts, Vice Chancellors and Deans of Colleges.
- Members of governing bodies of Universities & Colleges.
- Higher Education Policy Makers.
- Representatives from Ministries of Higher Education, Accreditation Agencies, National Research Foundations, etc.
- Representatives from NGOs and IGOs concerned with Higher Education.
- Researchers.



ORGANIZER, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS



Some of the Confirmed 7th MENA HELF Speakers



**H.E. Prof. Amr
Ezzat Salama**

Secretary General of the
Association of Arab
Universities, Jordan



**H.E. Prof. Ebrahim
Al Hajri**

President, Khalifa
University of Science and
Technology, Abu Dhabi,
UAE



**Prof. Francisco
Marmolejo**

Higher Education
President, Qatar
Foundation, Qatar



Dr. Mazen Hasna

Chairman, National
Committee for Qualifications
and Academic Accreditation,
Qatar



**Mr. Nodirbek
Ergashev**

First Deputy Director,
National Quality Assurance
Agency for Education,
Uzbekistan



**Prof. Mohammed
Hussein Ahmed**

Director General-Head
Apparatus of Supervision
and Quality Assurance,
Ministry of Higher Education
and Scientific Research,
Kurdistan, Iraq



**Dr. Roberta Malee
Bassett**

Global Lead for Tertiary
Education, The World Bank



Dr. Nitesh Sughnani

Expert of Policies, Research
& Programs, Knowledge &
Human Development
Authority, UAE



**Dr. Narimane Hadj-
Hamou**

Chair, 7th MENA Higher
Education Leadership
Forum, Founder & CEO,
CLICKS, UAE



**Prof. Dr. Agron
Bajraktari**

Rector, University of
Applied Sciences in Ferizaj
(USHAF), Kosovo



**Prof. Rachid Hadj-
Hamou,**

CEO, The Elite Academy,
UAE



Dr. Tod Laursen

Chancellor, American
University of Sharjah
(AUS), UAE



Dr. Karim Seghir

Chancellor, Ajman
university, UAE



**Prof. Ghassan
Aouad**

Chancellor, Abu Dhabi
University, UAE



**Dr. Alaa K.
Ashmawy,**

President, National Authority
for Quality Assurance and
Accreditation of Education,
Egypt

Some of the Confirmed 7th MENA HELF Speakers



Prof. Ahmed Alraeesi
Vice Chancellor, UAE University, UAE



Dr. Javier Cevallos
President, American Academic Leadership Institute, USA



Prof. Bassam Alameddine
President, American University of Ras Al Khaimah (AURAK), UAE



Prof. Dr. Mohamed Sami Abdel Sadek
President, Cairo University, Egypt



Dr. Md. Sabur Khan
Founder and Chairman, Daffodil International University (DIU), Bangladesh



Mr. Rob Stroud
Executive Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, QAA, UK



Dr. Rana Sawaya
President, University College of Bahrain, Bahrain



Dr. Boushra Rahal Alameh
President, Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education (KAAE), Iraq



Dr. Çiğdem Canbay Türkyılmaz
Rector, Samarkand State Architecture and Construction University, Uzbekistan



Dr. Karim Moustaghfir
Associate Vice President for 21st Century Learning Innovation & Faculty Development, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco



Prof. Khaled Assaleh
Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Ajman University, UAE



Prof. Ahmed Elseragy
Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employability), and Dean of the Faculty of Art & Design, The British University in Egypt, Egypt



Dr. Saurav Dixit
Pro Vice Chancellor, CRIO, Chitkara University, India



Prof. Nader Elbokle
President, October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA), Cairo, Egypt.



Dr. Nabil EL KADHI
Vice President, Academic Affairs and Development, Applied Science University, Bahrain

Some of the Confirmed 7th MENA HELF Speakers



**Prof. Yusra
Mouzughi**

Provost, University of
Birmingham, UAE



Dr. Ryan Hartnett

Vice President for
Membership, Middle States
Commission on Higher
Education, USA



**Dr. Wafa
Almansoori**

Interim President and
Provost, American
University of Bahrain
(AUBH), Bahrain



**Prof. Hassan
Abdalla**

Provost, University of East
London, UK



Dr. Rima Mattar

Provost, Holy Spirit
University of Kaslik
(USEK), Lebanon



**Prof. Sherine
Farouk**

Assistant Chancellor, Global
Partnerships and Impact,
Abu Dhabi University, UAE



**Dr. Vidya
Yeravdekar**

Principal Director,
Symbiosis, Pro Chancellor,
Symbiosis International
University, Pune, India



**Prof. Salim bin
Hamood Al-Harthi**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Academic Affairs and
Community Service, Sultan
Qaboos University, Oman



**Prof. Momna
Hejmadi**

Pro Vice Chancellor
(Education), University of
Bath, UK



**Dr. Ashwin
Fernandes**

Chair, QS India and Vice
President, Strategic and
International Engagement,
QS Quacquarelli Symonds
Ltd, UK



Dr. Kinan Bahnassi

Senior Adviser, Policy
Development, Education,
Human Development, and
Community Council.



Mervin Bakker

Executive Director,
European Association for
International Education
(EAIE), Netherlands



**Prof. Francois
Therin**

Director General, ICN
Business School, France



**Dr. Julie Furst-
Bowe**

Vice President for Academic
Affairs, Arkansas Tech
University, USA



Pedro Moura

Director, Strategic
Partnerships, Coursera

Some of the Confirmed 7th MENA HELF Speakers



Prof. Mubarak H. AlKhatnai

Dean of Quality and Development, King Saud University, KSA



Prof. Abhilasha Singh

Dean, College of Business Administration, American University in the Emirates (AUE), UAE



Dr. Mona Ismail

Dean, Scientific College of Design, Oman



Dr. Said Saleem Al-Kittani

Associate Dean for Community Engagement, Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), Oman



Fiona Lennoxsmith

Head of Leadership, Governance & Management, Advance HE



Ramy Hassanien

Regional Director for Middle East, Africa & Central Asia, Emerald Publishing



Nesma Mostafa

Head of Higher Education Insights and Student Mobility, British Council, Egypt



Catriona McCarthy

Director Education, British Council, UK



Shizuka KATO

Policy Analyst, Skills and Future Readiness Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD



Dr. Georgeta Auktor

Head of Strategy and Development & University Development & Management Lead, TUM International (TUMint), Germany



Amal Dimashki

Regional Director, MENAT, Turnitin, UAE



Rawan Yasmin

Head of Higher Education Portfolio, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, UAE



Morwenna Crago

Sr. Director, Marketing, Product & Sales Enablement, Higher Education – McGraw Hill International



Solveig Andres Nicklos

Managing Director X.O Advisory, UAE



Dr. Habib Fardoun

Executive Committee Member IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence, Belgium and Principle Consultant QS Quacquarelli Symonds



Madelein Meiring

Higher Education Academic Excellence Advisor, McGraw Hill International



Józefa Fawcett

UK

Be Part of the 7th MENA HELF!



Become a Sponsor

Be part of this prestigious global gathering by becoming a sponsor of the 7th MENA-HELF. Showcase your commitment to higher education transformation and position your brand before influential decision-makers from around the world.



Exhibit at the Forum

Limited early bird exhibition slots are now available! Don't miss the chance to showcase your innovative solutions, services, or technologies to a high-level audience of university leaders, policymakers, and partners from 50+ countries.



Present your Institutional Case Study

We invite universities and institutions to contribute to the forum's program by submitting institutional case studies aligned with the Forum's theme or sub-themes. Take advantage of discounted presenter rates and ensure your case is submitted before the deadline



Actively Participate

Secure your spot! Join hundreds of global higher education leaders in shaping the future of the sector. Spaces are limited.



Center for Learning Innovations & Customized Knowledge Solutions

FORUM ORGANIZER

Forum Structure (28th September 2026)

Morning Pre-forum Workshops

09:00-12:30

Workshop 1
Institutionalizing technology transfer at universities.

Facilitator

Dr. Georgeta Auktor, Head of Strategy and Development & University Development & Management Lead, TUM International (TUMint), Germany

Co-organized with:  TUMint
TUM International GmbH
The University Company

Workshop 2

Driving Impact and Excellence: Strategic Approaches to University Rankings and Global Visibility

Facilitator

- **Dr Ashwin Fernandes**, Chair, QS India and Vice President, Strategic and International Engagement, QS Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd, UK
- **Dr Habib Fardoun**, Principal Consultant, QS Quacquarelli Symonds

Co-organized with: 

Afternoon Pre-forum Workshops

14:00-17:30

Workshop 3
Futureproofing Graduates: Skills, Employability, and Industry Collaboration

Facilitator

Madelein Meiring, Higher Education Academic Excellence Advisor, McGraw Hill

Co-organized with:  McGraw Hill

Workshop 4

Leadership Framework for MENA Higher Education: Building adaptive leadership capacity to navigate global challenges while creating meaningful local impact

Facilitator

Fiona Lennoxsmith, Head of Leadership, Governance & Management, Advance HE

Co-organized with:  AdvanceHE

My deepest gratitude to Dr. Narimane Hadj Hamou, CEO of CLICKS, for having organized the 6th MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum, an event that defied an unprecedented storm in Dubai and turned out to be a great success. The forum's theme, Towards a New Generation of Engaged Universities: The Need to Act, Adapt, and Transform, touched upon the transformation that we are witnessing in the higher education sector across constructive roundtables, keynote speeches, and spontaneous dialogues. The discussions about upskilling the workforce, embracing technology, and fostering innovation were thoughtful and inspiring. The emphasis on empowering students engagement resonated deeply with my personal academic ethos.

PROF. DR. BASSAM ALAMEDDINE

President and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait

Day 2 (29th September 2026)

08:00–09:00	Welcoming and Registration					
09:00–09:45	Forum Main Opening and Awards Ceremony					
Morning Plenary Session Chair: Solveig Andres Nicklos, Managing Director X.O Advisory, UAE						
09:45–10:25	Keynote Address 1 Beyond Degrees: Universities as Drivers of a Resilient Future Prof. Francisco Marmolejo, Higher Education President, Qatar Foundation, Qatar					
10:30–11:30	Panel Discussion 1 Bridging Boundaries: Building a Collaborative Ecosystem for Workforce Readiness and Social Impact Moderator Prof. Yusra Mouzughi, Provost, University of Birmingham, UAE Panelists - Prof. Bassam Alameddine, President, American University of Ras Al Khaimah (AURAK), UAE - Dr. Karim Seghir, Chancellor, Ajman university, UAE - Prof. Ahmed Elseragy, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employability), and Dean of the Faculty of Art & Design, The British University in Egypt, Egypt - Dr. Kinan Bahnassi, Senior Adviser, Policy Development, Education, Human Development, and Community Council, UAE - Morwenna Crago, Sr. Director, Marketing, Product & Sales Enablement, Higher Education – McGraw Hill International - Dr. Md. Sabur Khan, Founder and Chairman, Daffodil International University (DIU), Bangladesh					
11:30–11:50	Coffee Break and Networking					
11:50–12:30	Keynote Address 2 Embedding Vocational Considerations into the Curriculum: Putting Tertiary Education to Work Dr. Roberta Malee Bassett , Global Lead for Tertiary Education, The World Bank					
12:30–13:30	Panel Discussion 2 Presidential Panel University Leadership in an Era of Uncertainty: Balancing Innovation, Values, and Resilience Moderator Prof. Ghassan Aouad, Chancellor, Abu Dhabi University, UAE Panelists - H.E Prof. Ebrahim Al Hajri, President, Khalifa University of Science and Technology, Abu Dhabi, UAE - Prof. Dr. Agron Bajraktari, Rector, University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF), Kosovo - Dr. Tod Laursen, Chancellor, American University of Sharjah (AUS), UAE - Prof. Ahmed Alraeesi, Vice Chancellor, UAE University, UAE - Prof. Dr. Mohamed Sami Abdel Sadek, President, Cairo University, Egypt - Dr. Çiğdem Canbay Türkyılmaz, Rector, Samarkand State Architecture and Construction University, Uzbekistan					
13:30–14:20	Lunch Break and Networking					
Parallel Institutional Case Study Presentations						
14:30–18:00	Track 1 <i>Embedding Sustainability and Societal Responsibility in Higher Education</i> Chair: Dr. Nabil EL KADHI, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Development, Applied Science University, Bahrain	Track 2 <i>Strengthening University-Industry-Government Partnerships for Workforce Readiness</i> Chair: Solveig Andres Nicklos, Managing Director X.O Advisory, UAE	Track 3 <i>Advancing Digital Transformation and AI- Driven Innovation</i> Chair: Dr. Karim Moustaghfir, Associate Vice President for 21st Century Learning Innovation & Faculty Development, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco	Track 4 <i>Fostering Global Engagement and Social Impact</i> Chair: Józefa Fawcett, UK	Track 5 <i>Bridging Higher Education and Employability</i> Chair: Dr. Mona Ismail, Dean, Scientific College of Design, Oman	Track 6 <i>Strengthening Leadership and Governance for Institutional Resilience</i> Chair: Prof. Rachid Hadj-Hamou, CEO, The Elite Academy, UAE

Day 3 (30th September 2026)

Morning Plenary Session Chair: Dr. Nabil EL KADHI, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Development, Applied Science University, Bahrain	
09:00–09:40	Keynote Address 3 All the World is a Stage: Global Challenges, Regional Disruptions and the Future of Higher Education Dr. Javier Cevallos , President, American Academic Leadership Institute, USA
09:40–10:10	Fireside Chat Shaping Resilient Futures: Rhetoric or Reality? Higher Education's Real-World Impact Moderator Catriona McCarthy, Director Education, British Council, UK Panelists • HE Prof. Amr Ezzat Salamat, Secretary General of the Association of Arab Universities, Jordan
10:10–11:10	Debate Are Traditional Universities Becoming Obsolete in the Face of Digital Education and AI? Moderator Pedro Moura, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Coursera Panelists • Prof. Hassan Abdalla, Provost, University of East London, UK • Prof. Khaled Assaleh, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Ajman University, UAE • Prof. Momna Hejmadi, Pro Vice Chancellor (Education), University of Bath, UK • Dr. Saurav Dixit, Pro Vice Chancellor, CRIO, Chitkara University, India
11:10–11:40	Coffee Break and Networking
11:40–12:20	Keynote Conversation Governing AI in Higher Education Moderator Rawan Yasmin, Head of Higher Education Portfolio, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education Speakers • Amal Dimashki, Regional Director, MENAT, Turnitin, UAE • Dr. Rima Mattar, Provost, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon
12:25–13:30	Panel Discussion 3 Accreditation as a Catalyst for Innovation and Resilience: Safeguarding Trust, Equity, and Relevance Moderator Dr. Narimane Hadj-Hamou, Chair, 7 th MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum, Founder & CEO, CLICKS, UAE Panelists • Dr. Mazen Hasna, Chairman, National Committee for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation, Qatar • Mr. Rob Stroud, Executive Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, QAA, UK • Mr. Nodirbek Ergashev, First Deputy Director, National Quality Assurance Agency for Education, Uzbekistan • Dr. Alaa K. Ashmawy, President, National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education, Egypt • Dr. Ryan Hartnett, Vice President for Membership, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, USA • Dr. Boushra Rahal Alameh, President, Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education (KAAE), Iraq
13:30–14:20	Lunch Break and Networking

The MENA-HELF 2024 Conference connected leading university administrators and faculty to share their perspectives and ideas to cope with the many challenges facing the academy. The presentations, keynotes and discussions allowed for a rich exchange of ideas and sharing of valuable perspectives from around the world.

DR. M. NAUMAN FAROOQI

President and Vice Chancellor, St. Thomas University, Canada

Day 3 (30th September 2026) Contd...

Parallel Strategic Leadership Focus Groups (Requires Registration)

In Conversation with University Presidents and Senior Leaders:

A facilitated leadership dialogue bringing university presidents, senior leaders, and stakeholders together to co-create strategic recommendations and practical roadmaps addressing priority challenges in higher education. Each focus group is designed to generate actionable insights and roadmap elements that inform leadership decision-making and contribute to a collective vision for resilient higher education systems

14:30–16:00	Focus Group (1) Accelerating Research and Innovation: Strategies for Impact Moderator - Prof. Abhilasha Singh, Dean, College of Business Administration, American University in the Emirates (AUE), UAE Panelists - Ramy Hassanien, Regional Director for Middle East, Africa & Central Asia, Emerald Publishing - Prof. Mubarak H. AlKhatnai, Dean of Quality and Development , King Saud University , KSA - Prof. Mohammed Hussein Ahmed, Director General-Head Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Kurdistan, Iraq	Focus Group (2) Industry-Academia Partnerships for Local Development Moderator - Mervin Bakker, Executive Director, European Association for International Education (EAIE), Netherlands Panelists - Dr. Rana Sawaya, President, University College of Bahrain, Bahrain - Dr. Said Saleem Al-Kittani, Associate Dean for Community Engagement, Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), Oman - Dr. Kinan Bahnassi, Sr. Adviser, Labour Market and Education Policy Education & Human Development & Community Council, UAE	Focus Group (3) Strengthening Higher Education Systems through Regional Collaboration Moderator - Nesma Mostafa, Head of Higher Education Insights and Student Mobility, British Council, Egypt Panelists - Prof. Francois Therin, Director General, ICN Business School, France - Prof. Sherine Farouk, Assistant Chancellor, Global Partnerships and Impact, Abu Dhabi University, UAE - Catriona McCarthy, Director Education, British Council, UK
16:00- 16:20	Coffee Break and Networking		
Afternoon Plenary Session Chair: Dr. Nabil EL KADHI, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Development, Applied Science University, Bahrain			
16:25-16:45	Keynote Address 4 Higher education in a skills-first era: Adapting to changing labour market demands Shizuka KATO, Policy Analyst, Skills and Future Readiness Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD		
16:45- 17:45	Panel Discussion 4 Reinventing Governance: Agility, Innovation, and Institutional Resilience Moderator Dr. Ashwin Fernandes,Chair, QS India and Vice President, Strategic and International Engagement, QS Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd, UK Panelists • Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Principal Director. Symbiosis, Pro Chancellor, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India • Prof. Nader Elbokle, President, October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA),Cairo, Egypt • Dr. Julie Furst-Bowe, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Arkansas Tech University, USA • Dr. Wafa Almansoori, Interim President and Provost, American University of Bahrain (AUBH), Bahrain • Prof. Salim bin Hamood Al-Harathi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Community Service, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman • Dr. Nitesh Sughnani, Expert of Policies, Research & Programs, Knowledge & Human Development Authority, UAE		
17:45-18:00	Closing Remarks, Key Insights and Future Directions Dr. Narimane Hadj-Hamou, Chair, 7th MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum, Founder & CEO, CLICKS, UAE		

Institutional case studies presented from leading Higher Education Institutions

 LAU اللبنانية الأمريكية Lebanese American University 	 جامعة أبوظبي Abu Dhabi University 	 THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KURDISTAN 	 University of Reading 
 جامعة عجمان AJMAN UNIVERSITY 	 AUBH الجامعة الأمريكية بالبحرين AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN 	 كلية الشرق الأوسط Middle East College 	 الجامعة الخليجية GULF UNIVERSITY 
 City University Qatar 	 جامعة زايد ZAYED UNIVERSITY 	 جامعة اليمامة Al Yamamah University 	 جامعة الأمير محمد بن فهد PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN FAHD UNIVERSITY 
 The British University in Dubai 	 IUL Lebanese University Of Lebanon Université Libanaise Du Liban الجامعة اللبنانية في لبنان 	 CEU Universidad San Pablo 	 جامعة الحسين التقنية Al Hussein Technical University 
 NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY 	 جامعة الامير سلطان PRINCE SULTAN UNIVERSITY 	 الجامعة الأهلية AHLIA UNIVERSITY BAHRAIN 	 NIVERSIAPOLIS Université Internationale d'Agadir الجامعة الدولية لآغادير ECOLE POLYTECHNIQUE D'AGADIR 
 AURAK الجامعة الأمريكية في رأس الخيمة AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF RAS AL KHAIMAH 	 UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK 	 جامعة صحر Sohar University 	 أكاديمية قطر للتمويل والأعمال Qatar Finance and Business Academy 
 QFBA 	 جامعة خليفة Khalifa University 	 ISSAI NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence 	 الكلية الذكية الجامعية للتعليم الحديث Smart University College for Modern Education 
 جامعة سمىة Princess Sumaya University للتكنولوجيا for Technology 	 LIU 		

Registration Fees

Registration Fees for the Forum (excludes workshops)

	Individual Registration		Group Registration	
	Early Bird Registration (Prior to 30/11/2025)	Regular Registration	Early Bird Registration-3 & above Participants (Prior to 30/11/2025)	Regular Group Registration-3 & above Participants
AMOUNT IN AED	AED 2,500*	AED 2,900*	AED 2300*/Participant	AED 2500*/Participant
AMOUNT IN US\$	USD 681*	USD 790*	USD 626* / Participant	USD 681* / Participant

*All fees are subject to 5% VAT

Registration Fees for the Pre-Forum Workshops (28th September, 2026)

AMOUNT IN AED	Fee for Forum Participants	Fee for Non-Forum Participants
	AED 500*/Participant	AED 600*/Participant
	AMOUNT IN US\$	USD 136*/Participant

*All fees are subject to 5% VAT

It was my great pleasure to join the 6th MENA Higher Education Forum that has already become an efficient platform to discuss current trends and challenges of higher education. We got a chance to hear diverse perspectives of distinguished university leaders and esteemed higher education experts from different corners of the World. We discussed very important global, regional and national challenges of higher education, and we learned about the best practices to address those challenges. We did our best to contribute to the success of the Forum by presenting the perspectives of the International Association of Universities (IAU) and Mingachevir State University (Azerbaijan). Our big thanks and sincere congratulations go to all organisers, partners and sponsors of the Forum. We will be looking forward to join the next Forum in Dubai, UAE.

DR. SHAHIN V. BAYRAMOV

Rector, Mingachevir State University, Azerbaijan Board Member, International Association of Universities (IAU)

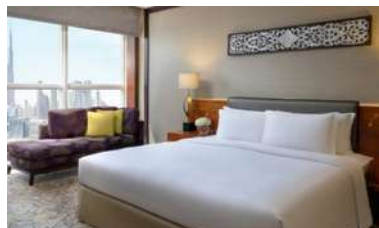
Venue

Kempinski Central Avenue, Dubai, UAE (Formerly the Address Dubai Mall)

Located at the heart of trendy Downtown Dubai, overlooking the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, and attached to The Dubai Mall, one of the largest shopping and entertainment destinations in the world, Kempinski Central Avenue (Formerly the Address Dubai Mall) will be home to the upcoming MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum. Elegant and chic, this glamorous hotel offers guests a unique blend of traditional Arab hospitality in the most contemporary and cosmopolitan environment. Participants may enjoy dining in of the numerous restaurants available or just walk to the mall, Burj Khalifa, Dubai Boulevard or enjoy the beautiful musical fountains.



Special Hotel Rates at the Dusit Thani, Dubai



**Rate in AED Single Occupancy
(Bed & Breakfast)**

AED 320 NETT

**Rate in AED Double Occupancy
(Bed & breakfast)**

AED 420 NETT

Contact for Hotel Booking

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