**Khaled Abdelshafi**

**Director**

**Regional Hub for Arab States**

**United Nations Development Programme**

Press Conference

Official Launch of

**The Global Knowledge Index**

* **Date**: Monday, June 19, 2017
* **Time**: 11.00 am
* **Venue**: MBRF Headquarters – Dubai

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Esteemed Guests,

It is our pleasure to host you today in this press conference to announce the expansion of the Knowledge Index from an Arab index to a global one. Efforts are currently in progress to produce the 2017 edition of this notable index in its first global version, building on the success and experience of the earlier Arab Knowledge Index initiative.

The Knowledge Index has been one of the most successful initiatives of the Arab Knowledge project, a joint partnership between UNDP-RBAS and Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation. Since the release of its first version in 2015, the Knowledge Index has been widely received with appreciation, especially in the circles of policy makers, academics, researchers, NGOs, and the different stakeholders in the areas of knowledge and development.

The Knowledge Index is the first and only index that aims at assessing the knowledge situation from the perspective of sustainable human development. It is built on the view that knowledge is an essential element in supporting development efforts, and that establishing the knowledge economy and society is a prelude for achieving the aspired sustainable human development.

The 2017 global version of the knowledge index will embody the main basic structure of the earlier Arab knowledge index, albeit with few refinements in terms of minimizing the number of feeding variables, restructuring the enabling environments indicators, and calculating one general index. The specificities of these refinements are currently being identified by a select group of top experts from the Arab region, in close coordination and consultation with international experts in each of the six thematic areas of the index: Pre-University Education; Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET); Higher Education; Economy; Research, Development and Innovation (RDI); and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The global Knowledge Index will be released in November 2017; and in here I would like to thank the experts’ team who are with us today, for their endurance, persistence and hard work throughout the preparation stages of the index, since its early days in 2015.

Knowledge today is the pillar of development, and a comprehensive view of knowledge -as reflected in the Knowledge index, is the gateway for devising effective solutions to the myriad of development challenges we are facing today, including but not limited to, the challenges of poverty, water and food security, climate change, social justice, peace, security and counter-terrorism.

As we prepare today to complete this remarkable milestone achievement and produce the global knowledge index, and as we realize that such a challenge is not obstacle-free, we do believe firmly in the importance of such a step, and the need to have this index at the global level, especially in light of the lack of an objective and evidence-based statistical indicator on knowledge and its various revelations and sectors, not to mention its importance in relation to development efforts.

We do look forward to the knowledge index, hoping that this statistical tools will enable us to better approach development at the global, regional and national levels, as it will enable the objective comparison of any country’s performance across its regional and international counterparts, and later across time, to better identify the challenges and opportunities towards building the knowledge society and economy, and achieving sustainable human development.

We also hope that the index results will guide policymakers and stakeholders in developing informed strategies and policies that support knowledge in its various sectors as a requirement for building the knowledge society and economy, which in turn leads to achieving sustainable human development in the Arab region, and around the globe.

Thank you for being with us on this remarkable occasion, and we look forward to welcome you again soon to share the results of the index.

Thank you.