AICTO: Ensuring equal ICT development across the Arab League

The Arab Information Communications Technology Organization (AICTO) is a regional government agency that falls under the umbrella of the Arab League, with all AICTO members also members of the Arab League. Established in January 2008 and headquartered in Tunis, AICTO is responsible for strategic planning and cooperation, developing talent, and coordinating policies for ICT across the Arab League nations.

By Gary Maidment

Ben Amor

Each year, AICTO runs regional forums, summits, and training programs with key industry organizations like ITU, UNESCO, 3GPP, and Beidou Satellite Office. Mostly recently, AICTO took the lead in hosting the Arab ICT Summit, the Arab African PKI Forum, Digital Strategies & New Challenges Agenda, and the China-BeiDou Satellite Forum. We spoke to AICTO Secretary-General Mohamed Ben Amor about the organization's current strategies and how Huawei is involved.

WinWin: What is the role of AICTO in the Arab region?

Mohamed Ben Amor: The Arab AICTO organization represents the league of Arab states. It's an organization for ensuring ICT development across the Arab region and our mission is to develop the ICT sector for all countries in this region. The region is composed of three levels of development: We have the Arab Gulf countries. And then we have the middle zone, which is Tunisia, Egypt, and Lebanon. And then there's the third region, which is composed mainly of less developed countries, like Palestine and Mauritania. So, our strategy is to achieve balanced development in the ICT sector using the know-how of the mid-developed regions like Tunisia, which has very developed human resources, and the

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funding of the Gulf countries. And we aim to particularly benefit the third region, which is less developed.

It's our mission to balance the level of development between all countries and to help those which are less developed using human resources and the economic potential of the most developed countries.

WinWin: What progress has been made with Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG)?

Ben Amor: The BSG program was set up under the mainframe of our strategy, which is based on four Ds: Digital Inclusion, Digital Trust, Digital Innovation, and Digital Transformation. And this program [BSG] comes under the pillar of Digital Inclusion, which means no one should be left behind. We're working with the International Telecommunication Union to disseminate standardization in the Arab world.

When we have a good appreciation of standardization, we can develop the sector more easily. So this program is well advanced: We held two forums in the Arab nations to disseminate standardization and we're very happy with the results that we've achieved with this program.

WinWin: Is the shortage of ICT talent a pressing issue in the Arab region?

Ben Amor: It's a concern for the whole world, not just the

Arab region, because new technologies are needed, and dissemination isn't as fast as the technology is developing in these domains. In the Arab nations, we're planning to make our human resources more adaptable and ready to use emerging technologies, because of the importance these technologies have for socioeconomic development.

WinWin: What are your expectations of Huawei moving forward?

Ben Amor: Both of us are working towards making the life of people in the world better using technology, with us focusing on the Arab nations. The level of advancement reached by Huawei has put it in pole position to help my organization reach its goal: to make the life of the Arab citizen better and better using technology. And Huawei brings with it a great capacity for technology transformation, respecting the environment by providing green technology, and respecting human rights and the privacy of citizens.

WinWin: What benefits can Huawei bring AICTO?

Ben Amor: I've seen Huawei develop over 20 years, and it's one of the fastest developments I've ever seen in this sector. So Huawei has come a long way in developing the best products and we're very happy with that. Today, one of the key trends is the fourth industrial revolution, and I think that Huawei is one of the pioneers making this revolution a reality with its large variety of equipment and solutions that today is offered to all citizens.