


# THE INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION FORUM

A JOURNEY OF GREAT MILESTONES  
2012 - 2016

# A JOURNEY OF GREAT MILESTONES 2012-2016

 SharjahMedia / SGCI.ae

**H.H. Sheikh  
Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi**

Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah

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“Comprehensive and fair development that has the people’s interests at its core is the only way to eliminate the disassociation and extremism that plague many of our communities and the world. Therefore, we regard developmental integrity as the best way to tackle disassociation and extremism at its roots, as it cures the causes and not only the symptoms.”



**H.H. Sheikh  
Sultan bin Mohammed bin Sultan Al Qasimi**

Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah

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“Work in Sharjah has been aimed at building humans and developing their knowledge, as well as the implementation of distinct developmental policies and stimulation of creativity and leadership, in light of the partnership between the Emirate’s public and private sectors and collaboration between its various institutions. This has resulted in important achievements matching those accomplished by the UAE in development and construction.”





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## 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS

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The past five editions of the IGCF brought together powerful political leaders, change makers and media experts from across the world. Each themed edition of the forum discussed the symbiotic relationship between governments and their people. The speakers explored how government communication touches different aspects of people's lives; put the spotlight on how general concerns such as education, health care, unemployment and poverty eradication affect the relationship between governments and the public; and emphasised that public interest must be the ultimate priority for governments everywhere.

## INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION FORUM: CONNECTING LEADERS AND PEOPLE, SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

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**“Communication is central to the work that governments do and is a driving force in getting that work done. Communication is integral to exploring and foreseeing trends, needs and expectations of public opinion. It helps governments anticipate and act upon the questions raised by the public with regard to their services and programmes. Through proactive communication, governments now need to target generations that are able and willing to express themselves and are uniquely open to all cultures. We need to listen to them to utilise their innovative ideas and abilities and further develop our countries and societies,”** said H.E. Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Sharjah Government Media Bureau at the 2016 International Government Communication Forum (IGCF).

This remark aptly sums up the purpose of the IGCF which was established in 2012 under the aegis of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah. IGCF is organised by the Sharjah Government Media Bureau, the media arm of the government of Sharjah. The launch of IGCF came at a time when governments across the world were witnessing sweeping political and social changes. The political upheavals brought forth the urgent need for effective and timely government communication practices and strategies.

## DEFINING A COMMUNICATION ROADMAP

A number of recent studies reveal that listening, responsiveness, and prompt ethically correct reaction are the first criteria for people in choosing a government to represent them. This clearly indicates that it is essential for governments now to formulate clear communication roadmaps and strategies.

In a highly fragile and unpredictable global political environment, it is imperative that the rules and methods of government communication keep up with the pace of change and address people's concerns as quickly and effectively as possible. Government communication has to demonstrate flexibility and superior understanding of public sentiment and needs. By attracting an elite group of senior government officials and media professionals from all over the world, International Government Communication Forum (IGCF) showcases the latest professional standards in government communication and provides a valuable platform for developing a collaborative and participatory dialogue between governments and the governed.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EDITIONS

The past five editions of the event have been an overwhelming success with the Forum being headlined by a collection of global decision-makers; thought leaders; local, regional and global media experts all converging in the Emirate of Sharjah to create a platform for better communication between governments and their stakeholders. Speakers at

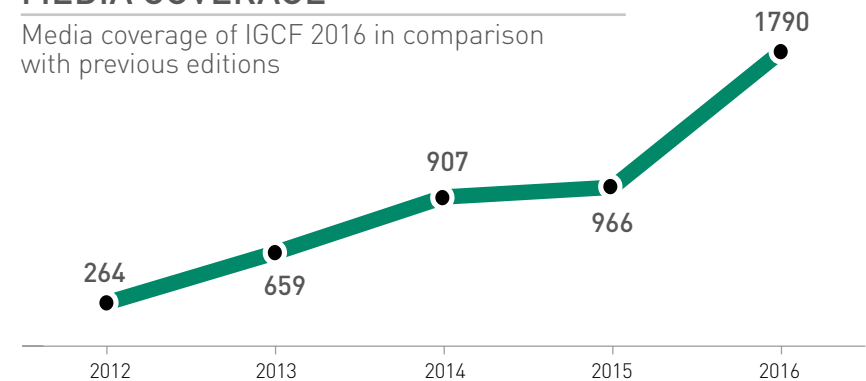
IGCF aims to set improved benchmarks in government communication not just in the UAE, but internationally too. As an annual event, IGCF serves as a transparent, honest and credible platform for industry thought leaders to influence change. It makes significant contributions towards enhancing the standards of the regional media landscape through the exchange of experiences and best media practices.

A first-of-its-kind event, IGCF aims to support the creation of effective government communication mechanisms and engage participatory dialogue between the people and their respective leadership. The forum also benchmarks Sharjah's media and communications mandate against global best practices, aims to bring the latest professional standards of various governments' communication methods to the Emirate and seeks to address and embed macro topics to develop a collaborative and participatory dialogue with opinion leaders, heads of government institutions, and other officials.

IGCF's past editions have included Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations; Jim Messina, campaign manager for Former US President Barack Obama; Mikhail Gorbachev, last President of the Soviet Union (USSR); Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister of Australia; Amal Alamuddin Clooney, lawyer, international human rights activist and author, and Her

## MEDIA COVERAGE

Media coverage of IGCF 2016 in comparison with previous editions



Excellency Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to name a few.

While the inaugural edition of the IGCF saw the participation of 600 media and communication experts, the fifth edition in 2016 was attended by 4,200 prominent global leaders, university professors, students, media representatives and visitors from the GCC countries, as well as from Asia, Europe and Africa.

In the midst of strategic changes taking place in the world today, effective communication between governments and their people has been proven to be crucial. Believing that it is important to communicate with the people is the first step in successful government communication. In addition to proactively identifying the needs and problems that bother people, understanding their concerns, and listening to them, it is essential to engage with them to communicate the government's points of view and reach a win-win situation for both sides.

In each of its past editions, IGCF issued a list of recommendations that can aid and implement an effective and winning government strategy. At its inaugural edition in **2012**, IGCF identified the best communication strategies adopted by governments worldwide, and discussed the viability of applying these models in the Arab world. It put forward a compelling case for governments to maintain transparency in communication to enhance mutual trust between all parties. IGCF emphasised that governments must establish a partnership with their audience, to listen to, understand, analyse and interact with them and understand the challenges they face.

IGCF **2013** highlighted the necessity to change the rules and methods of government communication. The event underscored the need to demonstrate flexibility when communicating with people, given the turmoil being witnessed at that time by the world in general, and the Arab world in particular. IGCF 2013 highlighted the necessity to elevate the concept of government communication from 'talking



to the public' to 'communicating with the public'. The edition's panelists and speakers examined the basic structure of typical government communication units, as well as best practices across the world including approaches that are centred around: observation, listening, engagement, communication and connection.

IGCF **2014** explored the role that government communications could play in improving a country's image and influencing its economic, social, and political status and future. The forum highlighted the need for governments to establish open and honest communication channels with the public, especially the youth to understand the challenges they face. Within the forum,

new modules were introduced to create direct communication channels between the participants and IGCF panelists and speakers, allowing greater thought sharing and transfer of best practices

IGCF **2015** recommended that governments engage in direct dialogue with the people through live TV and radio programmes. Officials were encouraged to use media networks to highlight the achievements of government institutions and to create awareness about the services provided to citizens, as well as the decisions taken in the form of decrees and laws. Governments were urged to hire suitable communication professionals to ensure that timely and tailor-made

messages were issued to the public. It is necessary for government communication officials to be trained to create effective messages, be publicly accessible across various communication platforms, particularly social media, and be quick to interact with their core stakeholders – the public.

Another focus of IGCF 2015 was crisis communication. The forum emphasised the need for governments to devise plans and strategies on how to deal with all contingencies, instead of waiting for the crisis to happen and dealing with it in an impromptu and unplanned manner. IGCF 2015 called for the creation of crises coordinating bodies that would involve all stakeholders and members of the international community. Government spokespersons were encouraged to be proficient in using all the communication tools available within the 21st century communication landscape.

In **2016**, IGCF made several key recommendations in crucial areas. The forum called

for more emphasis on the Arabic language and the use of its rich and valuable vocabulary. Further, it recommended that technology must be integrated into the educational system, in cooperation with private-sector companies with governments assuming direct responsibility for leading the management and redesign of the educational system. The forum highlighted that combating terrorism and violence requires steps and strategies that go beyond military and security measures. More forums such as IGCF were needed to help build platforms that advance positive and peaceful dialogue and reject hate speech. Government communication should expand to cover all vital and high-impact areas, especially religious beliefs and the ideas of the youth.

One of the most important recommendations of IGCF 2016 was the empowerment of women. It encouraged governments to empower the women of their countries to serve society as equal partners capable of directly contributing to the fight against extremism.

## A LOOK AHEAD

This year the International Government Communication Forum will run from March 22-23 2017, under the theme 'Societal Participation... Comprehensive Development'. The theme is inspired by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which outline a sweeping vision for improving the lives of people across the world over the next 15 years. Launched at the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs are global goals that all nations are mandated to follow and include ending poverty and

hunger, revitalising global partnerships for sustainable development and promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

The upcoming edition in Sharjah showcases the UAE's commitment and successful track record in aligning its initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals. IGCF 2017 focuses on stimulating discussions that can add immense value to the implementation of the SDGs and engage with key stakeholders in meeting the challenges of this worldwide effort.



2012

THEME / EVERY  
VOICE MAKES  
A DIFFERENCE

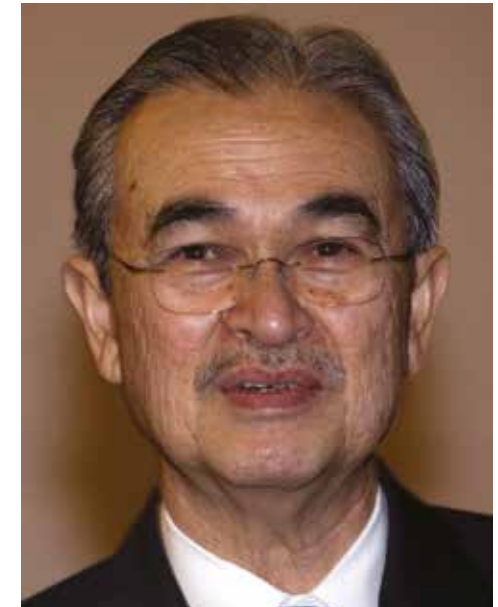
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**H.E. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN  
AHMED AL QASIMI**

Chairman of  
Sharjah Media Council

“The media industry today requires us to possess more wisdom, knowledge, reason and integrity through the different parties of media. We are partners in the rebirth of Arab media. Each and every one of us has an important and effective role that their position decides. Hopefully, we will be working together during the International Government Communication Forum on clear speech and turn the aspirations of the forum into practical and applicable programmes.”



**DATO SERI ABDULLAH  
AHMAD BADAWI**

Former Malaysian Prime Minister

“Civilised Islam aims at promoting a progressive and developmental image as well as building a strong moral society with firm religious and spiritual values. It also calls Muslims to progressivism, modernity, and vivid thinking and behaviour. These comprehensive qualities are sufficient to eventually reshape the image of Islam, not only as a rightful religion but also a glorious civilisation.”



**DR. NABEEL AL KHATEEB**  
Chief Executive Editor of Al Arabiya News Channel



**BRAD STAPLES**  
Chief Executive Officer of APCO Worldwide



**DR. NABIL EL-SHARIF**  
Former Jordanian Minister of Information



**DR. RAFIC CHLALA**  
Former Lebanese Presidential Press Advisor



**ABDUL KADIR BIN HJ SHEIKH FADZIR**  
Former Malaysian Minister of Communication, Information and Culture



**RASHA MAHDI**  
Cartoonist



**EMAD HAJJAJ**  
Cartoonist



**OMAYYA JOHA**  
Cartoonist



**DR. AHMAD AL DOBAIBAN**  
Plenipotentiary Minister at the General Secretariat of the GCC



**FIRAS AL KHATEEB**  
Media Information and Public Relations Official at the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut



**GERARD CORBETT**  
CEO of the Public Relations Society of America



**SAMIR ELBAHAIE**  
Regional Director of Google Middle East



**AHMAD SALEM BOSAMNOH**  
Former Director General of Abu Dhabi TV



**MOHAMED GHIATH**  
Director of Technology and Development in the TRA



**SHEIKH SULTAN SAUD AL QASIMI**  
Emirati writer



**DR. HAMAD AL HAMMADI**  
Director of Communications in the Executive Office of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum



**TURKI AL DAKHIL**  
General Manager of Al Arabiya News Channel



**ZAVEN KOUYOMDJIAN**  
TV presenter at Future TV



**ILKER AYCI**  
Chairman of the Turkish Prime Minister's Advisers for Foreign Investment



**SUE WOLSTENHOLME**  
Elected President of 2013 for CIPR, UK



**ORWELL OWEN**  
Global Trainer



**NICOLAS GEORGES**  
Trade Executive Partner of Reputation Institute

2013

THEME / EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION...  
UNIFIED MESSAGE

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**H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN  
BIN MOHAMED AL QASIMI**

Supreme Council Member and  
Ruler of Sharjah

When I intensified the communication, I found out that Western countries greatly impacted those African countries, as the Western colonialism was well established in them, and I was therefore compelled to look into communication with the West to be able to communicate with African countries.



**H.E. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN  
AHMED AL QASIMI**

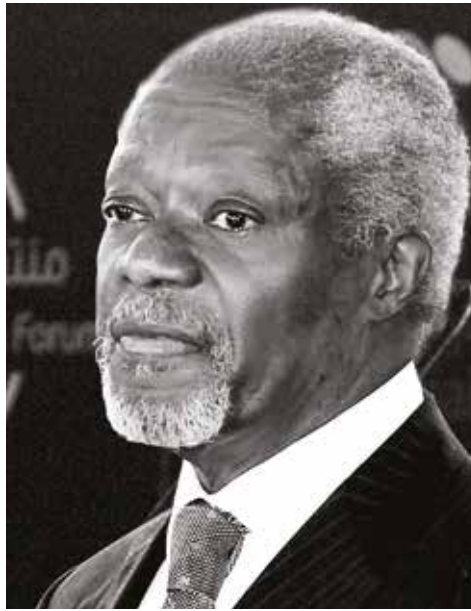
Chairman of  
Sharjah Media Council

“Let’s share, communicate, discuss, learn and cooperate. The world today is in need of openness, discussion, communication and, more importantly, optimism. Public satisfaction is not an easy task that can be achieved all of a sudden or with a click of a button, as we have no magic wand that can assure easing difficult tasks and change perceptions and concepts associated with the methods of dialogue and communication. In contrast, we have a strong will to disseminate the best practices in the sector of government communication, which has now become a necessity that can be perceived in light of the changes that are taking place in all parts of the world.”



**RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN,**  
Prime Minister of Turkey (2003-2014)  
and current President

“The success of our government lies in its inclusion of the heart and sincerity in all means of communication. In our conversations with people and nations we have always spoken with the language of heart, mind and sincerity. Whichever means of communication we use, we have adopted telling the truth as a guiding and unravelling principle.”



**KOFI ANNAN**  
Former Secretary-General  
of the United Nations

“Effective communication, cooperation and trust are the key factors in tackling the changes the world is facing. Rarely have we seen times when the level of trust between the governments and citizens has been so low. And this is ironical, living as we are in a world that is so wired through myriad forms of devices and technology, where the desire for information is insatiable, yet we are still not communicating effectively.”



**H.E. SHEIKHA LUBNA BINT KHALID AL QASIMI**  
Cabinet Member and Minister  
of State for Tolerance

“With the number of channels for communication available today, governments cannot afford to be complacent. Officials have to be straightforward and sincere in delivery. These tools help serve their communication targets effectively. It is for the government to ensure that the community is able to convey its problems. And, it is the role of the government to remain aware of these social changes and new tools, adopt a proactive approach and seek to resolve the people’s concerns.”



**H.E. MAHA AL KHATIB**  
Former Jordanian Minister of Tourism  
and Antiquities and former member  
of the House of the Senate

“When it comes to communicating with the public, if officials do not have a crystal clear message that reflects the vision of the government and the role of the citizen, communication becomes futile. The truth is that we live in a society where the public is not actively involved in decision-making. As a result, there is a lack of awareness and confidence in the government. Citizens do not trust the message because they do not understand what is being done in their favour. There is an urgent need to stimulate the role of the citizen and build a relationship with them.”



**RAWAN AL DAMEN**  
Producer and Director,  
Programmes Department,  
Al Jazeera



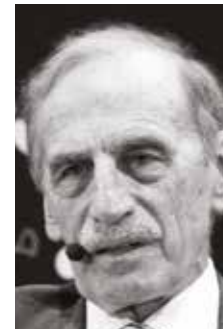
**RAED BARQAWI**  
Editor-in-Chief, Al Khaleej  
Newspaper



**GILBERT DOUMIT**  
Adviser and Director  
of Beyond Reform and  
Development



**GHASSAN HAJJAR**  
Managing Editor of  
Lebanese daily Al-Nahar



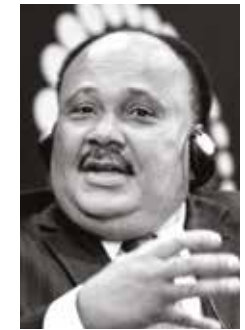
**JIHAD AL KHAZEN**  
Writer and journalist at Al  
Hayat Newspaper



**ALI JABER**  
Dean of the Mohammed  
bin Rashid School of  
Communications at  
the AUD and group TV  
director at MBC



**OCTAVIA NASR**  
Former Executive  
Producer of CNN World  
Report and Former Anchor  
of CNN International's  
World News



**MARTIN LUTHER  
KING III**  
Human rights advocate  
and community activist



**AMR MOUSSA**  
Former Secretary-  
General of the Arab  
League



**ANDREW YOUNG**  
Former US Ambassador  
to the United Nations and  
Human Rights Activist



**GORDON JOHNDROE**  
Former Spokesman for  
the United States National  
Security Council and  
former White House  
Deputy Press Secretary



**NOORA AL KAABI**  
CEO of Twofour54



**DR. ABDULLAH  
JAWDAT RIZKALLAH**  
Founding Member and  
CEO of Al Risalah Satellite  
Channel



**MARYAM BIN FAHAD**  
Executive Director of  
Dubai Press Club (DPC)



**DR. HESSA LOOTAH**  
Associate Professor at  
UAE University



**ZAVEN  
KOUYOUMDJIAN**  
Media Person at  
Future TV



**JIM MESSINA**  
Campaign Manager for  
Obama's 2012 Re-election  
Campaign



**COLLEEN HARRIS**  
Former Press Secretary  
to Prince of Wales, Prince  
William and Prince Harry



**MAMOUN SBEIH**  
Managing Director of  
APCO Worldwide MENA



**ZIYAD BAROUD**  
Lawyer and Lebanon's  
former Minister of  
Interior and Municipalities



**H.E. MARWAN JASSIM  
AL SERKAL**  
CEO of Sharjah  
Investment and  
Development Authority  
(Shurooq)



**SAMI AL REYAMI**  
Editor-In-Chief of the  
daily Emarat Al Youm



**AHMAD SALEM  
BOSAMNEH**  
Board Member of Sharjah  
Media Corporation

**2014**  
**THEME / DIFFERENT**  
**ROLES...**  
**MUTUAL INTEREST**

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**H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN  
BIN MOHAMED AL QASIMI**  
Supreme Council Member and  
Ruler of Sharjah

“It is more necessary than ever today to restore the spirit of humanity in people, and inculcate in them moral and cultural values. Media organisations must remain vigilant and approachable, uphold work and moral values, and help create a world that safeguards public harmony.”



**H.E. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN  
AHMED AL QASIMI**  
Chairman of Sharjah  
Media Council

“Recent studies conducted reveal that listening, responsiveness, and prompt ethically correct reaction are the first criteria for people in choosing a government to represent them. This clearly indicates that things have changed; we too must change. It is essential now for us to understand the requirements of the people and their challenges – not just deliver job, healthcare, and education opportunities.”



**MIKHAIL GORBACHEV**

Last President of the Soviet Union (USSR)

“Weak crisis management indicates lack of political initiative and courage. Leaders have been content with small steps and have failed to act in the spirit of collective leadership, which is the only workable format in today’s world. The transition to a more sustainable world is imperative. If the current elite is not able to provide leadership to pioneer this change, it is time for the new race of leaders to take their place. Today, we need to look for solutions that lead and contribute to world peace. We need global governance – it is a multi-level initiative that covers the local, national, and regional levels. We have only years and not decades to resolve this problem.”



**FELIPE CALDERÓN**

President of Mexico (2006-2012)

“It is important to note that improving perception through transparent communication enhances a country’s attractiveness to foreign investors and leads to registering sustainable profit and revenue. There is currently an obvious lack of trust in governments, and the only way to change this and build credibility amongst the people and the media is through transparency and consistency. Governments need to build a two-way dialogue structure. Such direct interchange with people could be established during events and forums or through social media channels.”



**JAMES WOLFENSOHN**

9th President of the World Bank Group

“It is very clear to me that individual investors in the past couple of years have been highly active. They regard themselves as international citizens investing in shares rather than tangible assets. Through communication and open dialogue, you provide the investors with a sense of inclusion in the process. Such an engagement leads to continuity.”



**H.E. DR. ANWAR MOHAMMED GARGASH**

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Federal National Council Affairs

“There is an inaccurate portrayal of the UAE, and for that we mainly need to change the narrative. Government communications are a necessity because governments have multiple layers of messaging and the narrative has to be built according to the specific message you are trying to portray in a transparent and credible manner.”



**FADI SALEM**  
 Director of the Governance and Innovation Programme, Mohammed bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG)



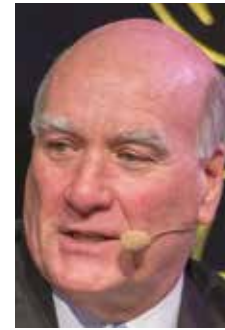
**PARWEEN HABIB**  
 Media Personality, Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI)



**JON DUSCHINSKY**  
 Founder and CEO, The Conversation Farm



**DR. SULAIMAN AL HATTLAN**  
 Founder and CEO of Hattlan Media



**BILL DALEY**  
 American lawyer, Former banker and Former White House Chief of Staff and Commerce Secretary under Bill Clinton



**BRYAN DUMONT**  
 President, APCO Insight



**ALASTAIR CAMPBELL**  
 Director of Communications and Strategy for Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997 and 2003)



**DAWOOD AL-SHIRIAN**  
 Host, MBC Group



**MARWAN ZAWAYDEH**  
 Chief Corporate Governance Officer, Etisalat



**NART BOURAN**  
 Head of Sky News Arabia



**KATHLEEN CARROLL**  
 Executive Editor and Senior Vice-President of Associated Press (AP)



**MONA EL-SHAZLY**  
 Egyptian Talk Show Host



**NIK GOWING**  
 Senior News Anchor, BBC World News



**JOHN KAO**  
 Chairman and Founder of the Institute for Large Scale Innovation (ILSI)



**AMANY EL KHAYAT**  
 Presenter at ON TV



**SIMON ANHOLT**  
 Independent policy advisor



**AHMED MUSTAFA**  
 Chief Editor of Digital Sky News Arabia



# 2015

## THEME / SPECIFIC ACTIONS... BETTER RESULTS

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**H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN  
BIN MOHAMED AL QASIMI**

Supreme Council Member  
and Ruler of Sharjah

“Public communication, particularly that represented by live radio and television programmes where people call in with their concerns on important social issues, is crucial for the exchange of information and messages between the government and the people. Such initiatives help the public to better understand the aspirations of the government.”



**H.E. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN  
AHMED AL QASIMI**

Chairman of Sharjah  
Media Council

“The speed of delivering information and influencing the public is creating a challenge for some governments due to the nature of their administrations. However, the Emirate of Sharjah looks at this challenge as an opportunity to develop this aspect of government work, as effective government communication that is based on transparency and objectivity has become one of the main factors that characterise effective governance.”



**H.E. PRESIDENT GENERAL MICHEL SLEIMAN**

President of the Republic of Lebanon (2008-2014)

“We must spread the culture of communication between officials and the public and create the right environment for its dissemination in a way that is independent of any influences from legislative, executive and judicial authorities. We need to enact laws that protect communication from any political arrogance. We must fight strict media censorship, and not restrain the media with dictatorship. Last but not the least, officials need to leave their ivory towers and get closer to the public.”



**JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO**

President of the European Commission (2004-2014) and Prime Minister of Portugal (2002-2004)

“Governments need to be proactive, adapt and shape their communication messages to be as close to the truth as possible. Today, we need to understand that the old ways of diplomacy and hiding the truth do not work any more. Governments should take the initiative and reach out to the public to explain or inform them about developments, while encouraging them not to be passive but rather interact and express their points of view. Governments need to engage with the youth on social media platforms to ensure maximum impact.”



**GENERAL SIR RICHARD SHIRREFF**

Deputy Supreme Allied Commander NATO Europe (2011-2014)

“Media consultants play an important role in mediating between authorities and the public, and shaping the right communication messages. At the same time, it is essential to get public support to achieve our missions, and this can only be done through building trusted communication with people.”



**PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF**

President of Liberia

“The story about Liberia on the international media landscape has changed significantly over time - from one of fear to hope, and currently to an unqualified assurance of collective and determined progress. The local media also played a remarkable role in the systemic reporting of the crisis based on released and certified information by an Incident Management System. The participation of the community was a valuable lesson we learnt – which found huge resonance with the people. We also learnt that forging valuable partnerships through sustained good relations can result in effective support in times of crisis.”



**H.E. FAISAL AL FAYEZ**

First Deputy Speaker of the Jordanian Senate Council

“Prior to the media and IT revolution, governments used to monopolise the media and control the news. Today things have changed dramatically and we are witnessing a lack of confidence in the official story. We need to rethink how to convey the message accurately to the public to build greater credibility. We need to be transparent and honest. Interfering with the media will cause us to lose every opportunity to gain and retain the trust of the public.”



**LAKHDAR BRAHIMI**

Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (2004-2005)



**ALEX AIKEN**

Executive Director for Government Communications - UK Government



**ROBIN GORDON-FARLEIGH**

News Planner - UK Prime Ministry



**KHALED HAZEM**

Industry Solution Manager, Government Middle East & Africa Public Sector - Microsoft



**SHANTO IYENGAR**

Professor of Political Science, Stanford University



**JULIA GILLARD**

Prime Minister of Australia (2010-2013)



**YOMNA KAMEL**

Government Communication Consultant - UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs



**KAREN SANDERS**

Professor, IESE Business School/CEU San Pablo University



**HUGH PINNEY**

Vice President News EMEA - Getty Images



**JAMES RUBIN**

Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs under President Clinton (1997-2000)



**MUSTAFA AL KHALFI**

Minister of Communication and Spokesperson of the Moroccan Government



**JARED COHEN**

Founder and Director of Google Ideas



**BEN HAMMERSLEY**

Journalist and researcher on social networking tools



**MUNA ABU SULAYMAN**

Presenter - MBC

# 2016

## THEME / CITIZENS FOR PROSPERITY

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**H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN  
BIN MOHAMED AL QASIMI**

Supreme Council Member and  
Ruler of Sharjah

“We should not pursue the advancement of today at the cost of tomorrow. This means being aware of the consequences [of development], such as environmental pollution. Pursuing development should not be at the expense of losing our principles and values. Leaders today should understand and own the concept of responsibility and follow principles of sustainable development.”



**H.E. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN  
AHMED AL QASIMI**

Chairman of Sharjah  
Media Council

“We realise that communication is central to the work that governments do and is a driving force in getting that work done. Communication is integral to exploring and foreseeing trends, needs and expectations of public opinion. It helps governments anticipate and act upon the questions raised by the public with regard to their services and programmes.”



**H.E. DR. SULTAN AHMED AL JABER**

UAE Minister of State and Chairman of the Board of National Media Council

“We must focus on the continuous development of the media in line with our national principles. Within a framework of responsible freedom, media organisations need to take steps to ensure accuracy and professionalism, and align their operations with rapid technological advancements to strengthen the nation.”



**AMAL ALAMUDDIN CLOONEY**

Lawyer, international human rights activist and author

“Human rights have become the language that nations use to communicate with one another and the common yardstick by which all countries are judged. Trade deals, aid packages and appointments to international bodies can be made wholly dependent on a country’s human rights regime. Ultimately, a country’s global reputation stands or falls based on its human rights record, as reported by the media, NGOs, the UN and other states. This means that governments must be vocal and communicate about human rights with the international community.”



**H.H. SHEIKHA JAWAHER BINT MOHAMED AL QASIMI**

Wife of H.H. the Ruler of Sharjah, Chairperson of Nama Women Advancement Establishment

“Women’s rights in the UAE have from early days been based on a true partnership between women and men to achieve social and economic stability for the family and the wider community. Given the UAE’s considerable development since establishment and the contribution made by the country’s women in its growth, the confidence of the UAE leadership with regard to the abilities of Emirati women has gone up significantly.”



**H.E. SHEIKHA BODOUR BINT SULTAN AL QASIMI**

Chairperson of Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq)

“The role of government communications is very important in promoting culture and identity among future generations. However, efforts are required at both the government and community levels and there needs to be a greater interaction between the two to find the best solutions for protecting the identity of youth.”



**H.E. SHAMMA BINT SOHAIL AL MAZROUEI**  
UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs

“There must be more than one pathway of communication and government communication must be to the youth, from the youth. We must change the way we communicate with the youth. We need to use the language they are using and the platforms and tools they use.”



**FREDRIK REINFELDT**  
Former Prime Minister of Sweden (2006-2014)

“The education sector is where changes occur most frequently due to technology advancements and the internet. Therefore, schools will need constant upgrading to better prepare students to be critical thinkers in the real world. New technology is the world of knowledge and technology is our way into knowledge.”



**ZIAUDDIN YOUSAFZAI**  
UN Special Advisor on Global Education



**H.E. MARY ROBINSON**  
President of Ireland (1990-1997) and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002)



**JORDAN CASEY**  
Young entrepreneur, owner of Casey Games and self-taught programmer



**RAJAI EL KHADEM**  
Head of MENA - Public Sector LTS LinkedIn



**H.E. NASSIR ABDULAZIZ AL-NASSER**  
UNAOC High Representative



**DOMINIQUE DE VILLEPIN**  
Prime Minister of France (2005-2007)



**HUSAIN HAQQANI**  
Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States (2008-2011)



**HELEN CLARK**  
Administrator of the UN Development Programme and Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2008)



**TINA BROWN**  
Journalist, Founder of "Women in the World" and CEO of "Tina Brown Live Media"



**DR. SAKENA YACOBI**  
President and Executive Director of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL)



**LAWRENCE CHICKERING**  
Founder and President of "Educate Girls Globally"



**MOUZA AL SHAMSI**  
Student at the American University of Sharjah



**RASHID AL FALAHI**  
Director of Government Affairs at the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation



**KHALED AL AMRI**  
Columnist at Al Khaleej Newspaper and motivational speaker



**BADRIYAH AL MAZMI**  
Topographic Engineer at Dubai Municipality and young Emirati innovator



**DR. RUSUL AL NUAIMI**  
Dentist and international self-development coach



**CHRISTOPHER GARDNER**  
Author and entrepreneur



**DAVID MILIBAND**  
President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom (2007-2010)



**BERNARD KOUCHNER**  
Co-founder and President of Doctors Without Borders (1971-1979) and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of France (2007-2011)



**FAHAD ABDULRAHMAN BIN SULTAN**  
Deputy Secretary General of Marketing and Fundraising at the Emirates Red Crescent (ERC)



**SULTAN AL HOUSANI**  
Student at Zayed University



**AMER AL-SAYEGH**  
Project Manager, Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre



**FATIMA AL KAABI**  
Youngest Emirati inventor



**DR. AISHA BUSMAIT**  
University professor, Director of Communication and Marketing at Dubai Sports Council, writer and journalist



**JOHN SIMPSON**  
World Affairs Editor at BBC



**HABIB AL-SAYEGH**  
Chief Editor Dar Al Khaleej, Chairman of the Emirates Writers' Union, & Secretary-General of the General Union of Arab Writers



**NDABA MANDELA**  
Grandson of Nelson Mandela and Founder and Chairman of "Africa Rising Foundation"



**KHADIJA HUSSAIN**  
Director of Communications and Development at the UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs

# SHARJAH GOVERNMENT MEDIA BUREAU – TAKING THE EMIRATE’S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

**Sharjah is recognised as a pioneer in media initiatives in the region. Home to the Arab cultural renaissance, the Emirate is emerging as a key regional and global media hub helmed by the Sharjah Government Media Bureau**

At the beginning of this year, the Emirate of Sharjah made some bold and farsighted changes in its media sector. H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, announced the establishment of the Sharjah Media Council (SMC) to bolster and streamline the Emirate’s vibrant media sector. The Sharjah Government Media Bureau (SGMB) was named as an important arm of the SMC.

Over the past few years, Sharjah has witnessed a phenomenal revolution and boom on the media front, with the SGMB, previously known as the Sharjah Media Centre, proactively fine-tuning and boosting government communication, putting the Emirate on the global communication map. The SGMB was established to oversee the government and media communication needs of the Emirate and put in place strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the Emirate’s different media bodies

with special emphasis on responsibility, professionalism, creativity and maintaining a competitive edge. The Bureau is also tasked with portraying the true identity of Sharjah and conveying the Emirate’s message of civilisation, culture, intellect and peace to the entire world.

Established under the direction, guidance, and patronage of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, it is the official conduit responsible for all media and communication activities related to Sharjah’s governing bodies and the Emirate as a whole. Envisioned as an integrated media hub, the SGMB ensures that its narrative is based on transparency, integrity and accuracy. It considers members of the media a priority, valuing their efforts in disseminating the Emirate’s message and relentlessly looking for ways to facilitate their work and strengthen cooperation with them.

Over the past few years, the SGMB has succeeded in enriching the Emirate’s media work environment and attracting talent and expertise to improve the quality of media performance. The Bureau provides a valuable meeting point for media professionals to network with senior decision-makers in Sharjah and exchange views on relevant issues.

## Trailblazing Initiatives

Sharjah’s strong presence on the global media map can be attributed to the variety of initiatives undertaken by the SGMB. In 2012, SGMB established the Government Communication Department (GCD). The GCD functions as a central communication unit providing strategic support and communication channels across all Sharjah Government entities. The GCD also aims to enhance Sharjah’s image across the UAE, the Arab region as well as internationally.

Soon after the launch of the GCD, SGMB announced the establishment of the International Government Communication Forum (IGCF). IGCF aims to showcase best global practices in government communication, and enhance the performance of governments through improving their communication with citizens. In less than a decade, IGCF has become one of the most prestigious government forums globally. Each year a host of high-profile political leaders, diplomats and thought leaders gather in the Emirate to discuss and develop strategies of effective government communication.

## Bringing the World Together

Gracing the stage at the 6th International Government Communication Forum taking place in Sharjah from March 22 – 23, 2017 are stalwarts such as H.E. Horst Köhler, President of Germany (2004-2010) and Managing Director of the IMF (2000-2004); Dr. Abdullatif Al Zayani, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf; John Bruton, Prime Minister of Ireland (1994-1997), EU Ambassador to the US (2004-2009) and Chairman of IFSC Ireland; Alexander Stubb, Prime Minister of Finland (2014-2015), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2008-2011) and current Member of the Finnish Parliament; Albert Gore, Vice President of the United States (1993-2001) and Founder and Chairman, The Climate Reality Project; and Nobel Peace Prize winners Mohamed Yunus and Kailash Satyarthi.

This meeting of mega minds is the result of the untiring efforts of the SGMB to bolster government communication while taking the fruits of development to the people and involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process. In the words of H.E. Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Council, “hosting high-profile diplomatic personalities will greatly enrich this year’s edition of IGCF. Furthermore, it will help the forum achieve its objective of boosting the leading status of Sharjah and the UAE in the government communication sector in line with the directives of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah”.



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“The Sharjah forum will examine a wide variety of topics of interest to world governments. To achieve the SAGs, governments must join forces to overcome current and future challenges. In this context, government communication plays a vital role in supporting government efforts towards realising these goals, and contributing to economic and social development,”

**H.E. SHEIKH FAHIM BIN SULTAN AL QASIMI,**  
Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations in Sharjah

IGCF 2017 will bring together members of the UAE’s diplomatic corps under one roof. This meeting aims to improve the coordination of the government communication system in Sharjah and the wider UAE with governments of other countries. During the gathering, ambassadors, consuls and attachés to the UAE will discuss the role of government communication in achieving

sustainable development. “The meeting will highlight the commitment of Sharjah and the UAE to the principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, it will provide a unique opportunity for the diplomatic corps to share the experiences of their countries in working towards these noble goals that have become a top priority for international governments and institutions,” added H.E. Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi.

“The Sharjah forum will examine a wide variety of topics of interest to world governments. To achieve the SDGs, governments must join forces to overcome current and future challenges. In this context, government communication plays a vital role in supporting government efforts towards realising these goals, and contributing to economic and social development,” said H.E. Sheikh Fahim bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations in Sharjah.

Around the world, print media, broadcast audio and social and electronic channels of government communication are playing an exceedingly important role in conveying the messages and visions of government institutions. The SGMB is well aware of this and is sparing no effort in enhancing Sharjah’s media presence; bringing the government and people together and putting the Emirate at the forefront in all fields.



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## THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

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**We are living in an era where communication changes the world radically. As communication reshapes human relations, social life, economy and trade, it is now shaping political and governmental practices as well**

A 2007 Gamos Consortium report observes that a two-way flow of information between policy-making and public debate is necessary for good governance, and that the media holds the role of facilitating that flow. The report concludes that effective governance requires an inclusive public space based on informed dialogue and debate and suggests that communication can facilitate a broader voice and accountability and show a positive impact on good governance.

The role of communication in supporting democratic development and stimulating economic growth is being increasingly recognised in international policy statements.

It is now widely seen as vital for connecting states with society, facilitating inclusive political systems, giving ‘voice’ to poor and marginalised groups, and enabling citizen participation and social accountability. Communication advocates argue that the strategic use of political communication tools and methodologies can influence the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of key stakeholders and secure the political will necessary for reforms to be successful on the ground. Strategic government communication policies can contribute to state-building by improving Government citizen relationships and helping to rebuild social contracts in conflict-affected states.

Witnessing the sweeping political and social changes that were taking place around the world, Sharjah launched the International Government Communication Forum (IGCF).

## Is Communication Necessary for Good Governance?

The answer is a resounding yes. IGCF 2016 highlighted many areas where effective government communication can make a positive impact on a country.

## Building Knowledge Societies

Government communication practitioners play a crucial role in shaping need-based education policies and reforms to develop education systems that are relevant and effective in coping with today's challenges, experts reiterated at IGCF 2016. Government communication plays an important part in shaping public opinion to ensure advancements in the existing education system. If a country's educational system is aligned with the country's overall development goals, it can shape a knowledge-based economy and create an enlightened and empowered workforce.

## Confronting Extremism and the Creation of a Humanist Culture

Speakers at last year's IGCF stressed the important role government communication can play in confronting extremism. Mohannad Al Khatib, media personality from Sky News Arabia, called for continued empowerment of national communication strategies to align government and media communications

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## Social Media & the Government

Social media has greatly changed the way the public communicates and expectations of the responsibility of government have also shifted. Social media is enabling citizens to engage with government from their home, workplace – anywhere they're carrying their mobile device – and these interactions are only set to increase with time. Social technologies can make networking and engagement with the public simple and powerful; make research faster; provide mechanisms for combating negative publicity and measure public sentiment to help inform public policy.

"It's important for governments to not speak at people but to speak to the people. Interaction with the youth through social media or face-to-face allows for direct dialogue", said Ndaba Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela and founder and Chairman of Africa Rising Foundation at IGCF 2016.

Emphasising the role of government communication with the younger generation, H.E. Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Council, said: "The youth of the 21st century are vocal about expressing their opinions on any and every issue via social media. Governments now need to target generations that are able and willing to express themselves and are uniquely open to all cultures. We need to listen to them to utilise their innovative ideas and abilities to further develop our countries and societies."

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for the purpose of addressing and targeting hate speech. The forum advised governments to stop being reactive and be more proactive in using all means of communication to put forth the message of peace.

Underlining the importance of dialogue in creating the right environment for political action, former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin stressed, "Communication should not be a one-way street from the government to the people. It has to go back from the people to the government. If it is not a two-way street, then it is propaganda, and propaganda creates more frustration and resentment because people want to be part of the solution."

Government communication plays a crucial role in upholding the ideal of equality among various segments of the population without discrimination, and in establishing the rule of law as the only reference in resolving disputes. Governments should employ strategic communication tactics to engage youths from different religions in order to strengthen human relations, refine human conduct and strengthen the sense of belonging to society.

## Crisis Management

According to David Miliband, President and CEO of International Rescue Committee and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom (2007-2010), timely and factual government communication can build and reinforce a sense of confidence in the public during



David Miliband

times of crises. Disasters test the ability of government communicators to take action and establish credibility, efficacy and public confidence. The preparedness and ease with which governments handle emergencies influence public opinion and as such, must be handled with complete transparency.

## Protection of the Social Structure

IGCF 2016 also highlighted the pivotal role government communication plays in protecting the strong and cohesive structure of the family unit in the face of external cultural influences. Through an effective communication policy, governments can motivate the youth to stand against disintegration and divisive powers. Communicating with the new generation and interacting with them directly is one way governments can prepare future leaders and create a better world.



## ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

**Launched at the 2016 edition of the IGCF, the Community Innovation Platform brings thought leaders and innovators closer to their audience**

Promoting interactive and direct communication, the Community Innovation Platform (CIP) is an annual meeting of students, innovators and achievers who come together to discuss a variety of issues, such as education, health, unemployment, culture, youth, technology and family. The platform facilitates an exchange of ideas, expertise, and information about the innovators' achievements and students' creativity with the audience.

Last year eight Emirati innovators showcased their projects and initiatives at four specialised sessions spread over two days under the theme 'Luminous Reflections'. The audience was also

given a chance to talk about their own unique achievements that have made a difference in their life, as well as their own experiences with government communication.

The Innovation Platform at IGCF 2016 featured Khaled Al Amri, columnist at Al Khaleej Newspaper and motivational speaker, who highlighted the importance of innovation in the way we live and work, and focused on the importance of innovation in the field of education to prepare future generations for the knowledge society. Al Amri was joined by Aisha Busmait, University Professor, Director of Communication and Marketing at Dubai Sports Council, writer and

journalist, and Emirati innovator Badriyah Al Mazmi, known for her "Heart of the Suburb" project.

Amer Al-Sayegh, Project Manager at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre, took to the stage to talk about the Khalifa SAT project, the first satellite to be built entirely in the UAE while the youngest Emirati inventor Fatima Al Kaabi delighted the audience with the stories and inspiration behind each of her inventions. According to Jawaher Al Naqbi, Manager of the International Government Communication Forum (IGCF), the introduction of the Community Innovation Platform articulates the forum's desire to motivate Emirati nationals to share breakthrough projects that could positively impact the community and create an environment that facilitates innovation in the UAE. The platform stresses the

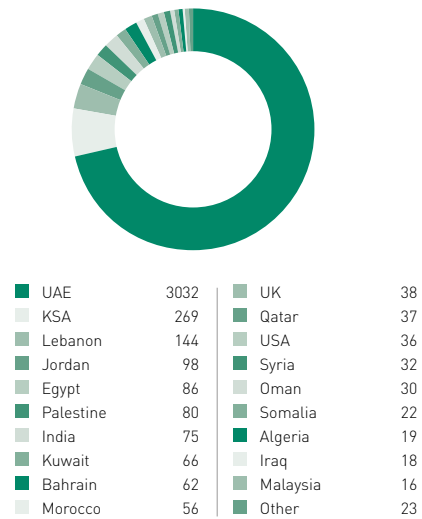
country's keenness to encourage innovators through supporting and celebrating their achievements. It highlights the crucial role of innovation in driving a scientific and knowledge renaissance and ensuring the progress of nations.

"Through this new initiative we aim to sustain innovation and highlight the creative calibre of our young people in diverse fields. We are confident that the ideas to be showcased within the Community Innovation Platform will provide an interesting dimension to the current and upcoming editions of IGCF, combining social, technical, scientific, and humanitarian concepts. Through promoting innovation, the platform will inspire the audience and generate new ideas and projects to position the UAE as a centre of excellence and innovation in the years to come," she added.

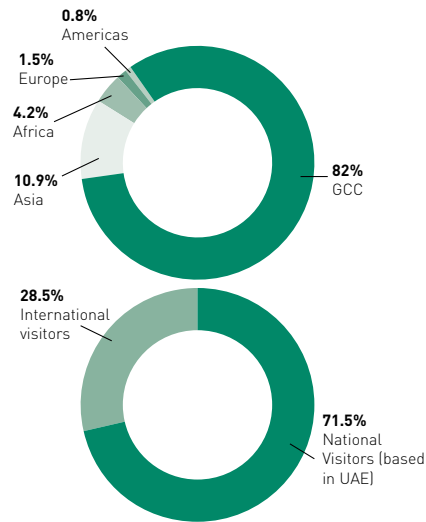


# PARTICIPATION

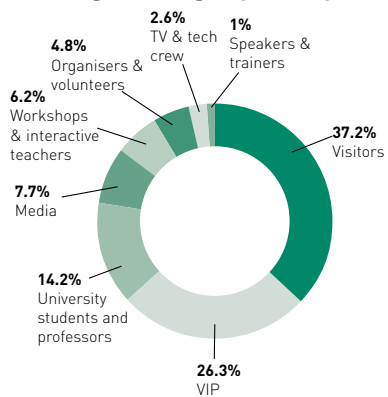
## Country-wise analysis



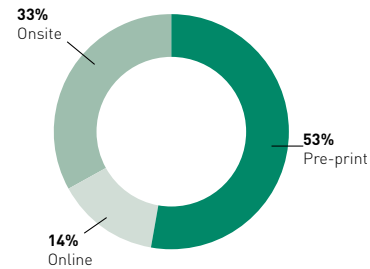
## Region-wise analysis



## Badge category analysis

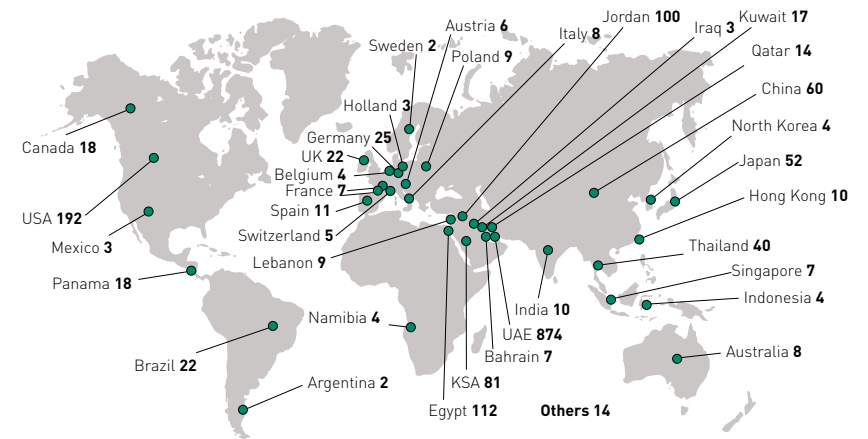


## Registration mode analysis

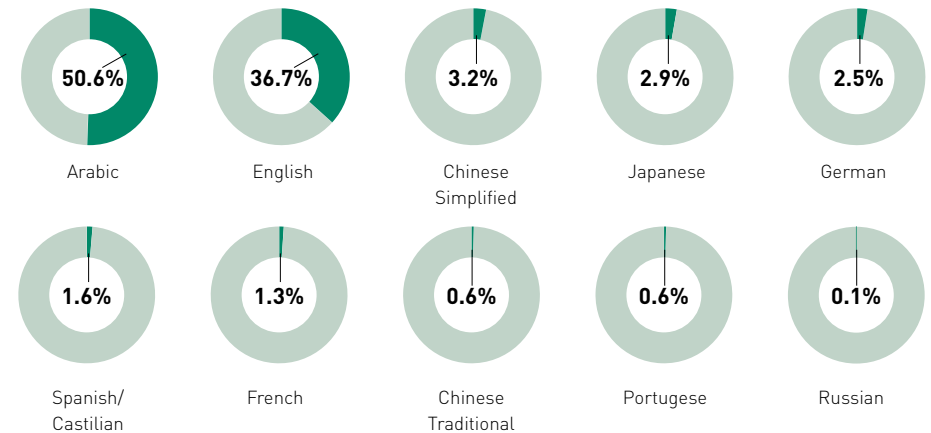


# MEDIA COVERAGE

## Media coverage by country



## Media coverage by language



# TEAM SPIRIT



The International Government Communication Forum is one of the major projects held at the Sharjah Government Media Bureau (SGMB); the forum aims to build a vital platform for governmental communication development, and create a source of information and training where all experts and professionals meet from all over the world. Therefore,

the SGMB team worked hand-in-hand to put together the strategic plans that met the objectives of the forum, establishing an integrated system for governmental entities in Sharjah, UAE and Arab region.

**The Sharjah Government Media Bureau**

# THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



المجلس الوطني للإعلام  
NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

