News Release

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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Arab World Urgently Needs Institutional Reform and Extra Investment in Education

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Arabic

- Arab World Competitiveness Report 2013 highlights job creation as the major economic challenge for leaders in the Middle East
- Among the 13 countries in focus, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are leading in overall competitiveness; Jordan slightly improved its performance.
- Underdeveloped skills, weak institutions and labour market inefficiency are the main factors limiting competitiveness and the ability to create jobs vary across the region
- More information about the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa is available at http://wef.ch/mena13

Dead Sea, Jordan, 25 May 2013 – The Arab world must improve its economic competitiveness if the region is to solve its biggest economic challenge of creating enough jobs for its youthful and growing population, according to the Arab World Competitiveness Report 2013 launched today.

Published by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the report identifies a number of areas where regional leaders could prioritize reform in order to unlock barriers to job creation and private sector expansion. These barriers differ across the region: with weak institutions and labour markets singled out as the most significant areas for improvement in North Africa; weak infrastructure and institutions in the Levant; and a pervasive education and innovation gap in countries in the Gulf.

The report also finds that leaders in the Arab world who embrace the challenge of lifting competitiveness and enabling private sector growth could look forward to a " win-win " scenario, characterized by higher employment and greater social stability.

Børge Brende, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum, said: " Strong leadership based on a shared vision of the future political and economic system will be necessary to navigate the countries of the region through the turbulent times. The findings of this report are crucial for informing the discussions at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa. "

Erik Berglöf, Chief Economist of the EBRD, said: " Arab world leaders must prioritize developing market institutions and structures, which can enhance the regulatory and business environment and ultimately attract more capital into the region. Sustainable growth and job creation can only come through the unleashing of the private sector. "

Notes to Editors

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