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**QUDWA 2017**

## SPECIAL ADDRESS

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**H.E. Hussain Ibrahim Al Hammadi**, Cabinet Member and Minister of Education, UAE

### Summary Paragraph/Key Points

Every country is seeking to promote their knowledge economy and the role of education in the coming years. Teachers will be at the heart of this “Fourth Industrial Revolution,” but their roles will change. The Emirati School Model was launched by the Ministry of Education in September and aims to incorporate the best international teaching practices in all UAE private and public schools.

“Education is an integral part of the government’s vision,” H.E. Al Hammadi said. “His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed al Nahyan mentioned the need to introduce change in the UAE and the need for transparency and accountability. His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah said this morning that everybody is part of this effort.”

Qudwa itself is an example of how deep the government’s investment in education is. In addition to this conference, which brings in top-notch educators from across the globe, the Ministry has dedicated 1,100 hours of training for teachers, including more professional development conferences and workshops to inspire educators and give them 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. They have also set up educational development programs and established continuous learning centers so that teachers can study on weekends or in the summer. The government has entrusted the UAE’s teachers with something much more valuable with its Moral Education Program (MEP). Starting in September, schools across the country now teach units on values such as tolerance, resilience as well as civics. To show appreciation for this larger role, the Minister of Happiness, H.E. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi has trained hundreds of teachers to be Ambassadors of Happiness at schools.

“The role of the teacher is difficult,” H.E. Al Hammadi said. “We want to create an environment that promotes learning. Teachers are mentors, role models and inspire passion for learning. We want to see the bliss, this plenty built on love, peace, giving and justice that you see from the elite teachers from around the world [at Qudwa].”





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“You are ambassadors for a generation of people open to the love of acceptance. Entrench these values in students. You are our safest bet for the future.”

Technology has become an intrinsic part of the economy, and education should be no different. H.E. Al Hammadi used the example of the aviation industry as one that has leveraged technology to lower training costs. Flight simulators allow pilots to practice their profession without risk and with greater repetition. In the education sector, technology can be used to lower costs in virtual labs; mobile phones, tablets and laptops can be used at home or at school, allowing children to learn at their own pace and in different environments. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed launched an initiative in 2012 to promote smart learning in schools, and the results are now showing.

“We see now the teachers accept new technology,” H.E. Al Hammadi said. “Teachers believe in this great vision, and we are finding out that they are doing more than expected. Our model was singled out as one of the best in the world.”

The role of the private sector will be crucial to implementing the government’s vision. The technologies that will revolutionize education might not even have been invented yet. Important, too, is the research companies are conducting right now that will drive down the cost of tools such as Virtual Reality (VR) so that they can be implemented across the world in the spirit of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal no. 4 (“to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.”)

“I cannot choose one technology that will be important in the future because every month or year there is something new,” H.E. Al Hammadi said. “We have companies that are excellent at promoting technology in schools, and we need to leverage the achievements of the private sector. Not all schools are capable of using technology, so why not invent technologies that all countries can use in the future?”

