

**Address of Dr. Farid Ayar
At the 17th General Assembly
Of AMAN held in
Lisbon on 23-24/6/2008**

In order not to take much time of the Assembly's, I shall abbreviate my address to cover only specified points and activities performed by the General Secretariat Board of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA).

Before doing this, I wish to point out that FANA was established at the outset of 1975 as a professional organization aiming to exchange experiences and to actively participate in finding the groundwork for establishing a professional democratic information exchange platform.

We were pleased to have succeeded during the past years to build good relations with similar organizations and to have held in the past many conferences, symposia and meetings with news agencies in Europe, Latin America, Africa as well as with International News Agencies Federations.

FANA's main objective at the present period is to enhance the capabilities of journalists working with Arab News Agencies because we believe that through these activities the same news agencies can develop themselves and increase their productive and qualitative capacities.

In view that the main office of FANA is in Beirut, the volume of work performed during the past year and a half decreased because of political security conditions prevailing in Lebanon and the sad events which occurred in Beirut and some other regions in Lebanon. However, following the "Doha Accord" reached between the Lebanese political factions, work inside FANA returned to normal. We held a meeting which joined the public relations officers working in the Arab News Agencies on 20-21/6/2008, in Beirut. This meeting had its particular importance in coordinating work between agencies members of FANA and in enhancing the spirit of joint work between all parties.

During the second half of August this year, we will hold, in cooperation with international organizations involved in training, two training workshops about editing economic news and about issues relating to the money-laundering. Preparations for holding these workshops are ready and a number of agencies will participate in them. Moreover, two training workshops about the Internet Journalism and the Environment are under preparation. A symposium concerning the role of news agencies in confronting terrorism is scheduled to be held during October this year either in Beirut or in Amman which will be attended by top officials of news agencies. We are planning also to hold a meeting of technical sections managers at News Agencies to study the latest developments realized in the

telecommunications field and to give their professional appreciation of FANA's new site at the Internet.

As regards relations with other agencies, FANA assiduously worked to develop them FANA's 35th Annual General Assembly held in Amman, Jordan on 28-29 October, 2007, adopted a decision to invite officials of European News Agencies for a meeting with officials of FANA's General Secretariat Board in Beirut to study cooperation possibilities and to re-open mutual communication venues which have been closed since over two decades.

FANA's General Secretariat Board is now exploring European news agencies wishing to attend the meeting. It will dispatch during the coming two weeks invitations to attend the meeting in Beirut to be held during October next and before the meeting of FANA's 36th Annual General Assembly.

On another level, FANA operated at present a website on the Internet (www.FANANEWS.com). The site was located and work began on the new site starting from 1/1/2008. 14 Arab News Agencies out of a total 18 Agencies participate in the site. The number of agencies which transmit their news daily in the Arabic language are 11 (eleven) at the average rate of 900 news items. The number of agencies which transmit their news daily in the English language are 6 (six) at the average rate of 300 news items. The site is equipped to accommodate news photos and there is the possibility at the site to accommodate photos with the news items in view that there exists a space for publishing five main news items with their pertinent photos.

FANA site on the Internet occupies according to ALEXA number 211144.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Farid Ayar
Secretary General