

## Workshop on bridging policy, R and amp;D to be held in Dubai

Ways to bridge the gap between researchers and policy makers to improve growth prospects in developing countries will come up for discussion in the course of a two-day workshop here starting Monday.

Organised by the Global Development Network (GDN) and the Dubai School of Government (DSG), the workshop on 'Bridging Policy and Research' will be attended by influential policy makers and researchers from across the Arab world, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America among others.

"The issue of bridging research and policy is very important for everybody, especially for policy makers within governments," Joseph Hoffman, a Canada-based independent consultant on public sector reforms and policy capacity building, told IANS.

Pointing out that big investments made for research work often go waste when this work is not taken into account while implementing government policy, he said: "The issue is how to take the research work to the policy makers. Very often, important (policy making) decisions are taken in isolation of the available information through good research work."

The workshop is aimed at stimulating dialogue between policy makers and researchers.

Toronto-based Hoffman said that there are many reasons for this frequently debated gap between policy and research.

"Some research work takes years to complete while government policy decisions on the issue may have to be made fast."

At the same time, some blame lies with researchers as well.

"Researchers too have to learn how to present the results of all their hard work in an easily understandable manner," Hoffman said.

"Then there are the stereotypes too. Government officials think researchers are too academic and then don't understand practical aspects of an issue. Researchers, on the other hand, think that government officials seldom take into account the complexities of an issue before taking policy decisions."

He said during the course of the workshop, the participants would be divided into two panels - one comprising researchers and research leaders and the other comprising policy makers.

"A very important issue that will come for discussion is the role of intermediaries between policy makers and researchers so that civil society can have more say in policy decisions. The media and non-governmental associations are important agents in this," Hoffman said.

GDN said in a statement it was concerned with "strengthening the link between researchers/research institutes and policy makers, at the country level, and indeed also at the regional and global levels".

"To this end, we have been conducting consultations on the content of a 'Bridging Research and Policy Initiative' to help link research with policy by providing opportunities for policy makers and think tank leaders across the developing world to share experiences inter-regionally and internationally," it said.

GDN is a worldwide network of research and policy institutes working to provide relevant perspectives to the development challenges across the world.

DSG is a research and teaching institution focussing on public policy in the Arab world.

Established in 2004 under the patronage of Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in cooperation with the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, DSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Among leading figures participating in the workshop are chief director of economic policy at the South African President's Office Alan Hirsch, former chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Bank Guillermo Perry, director of the Lebanon-based Carnegie Centre for the Middle East Paul Salem, president of the Philippines Institute of Development Studies Joseph Yap and joint secretary in India's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) P.K. Mohanty.

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