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Mr. Naji during a conference at UQAM in 2015

The 300 members of the International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communications (ORBICOM) elected, during a general assembly on December 8th, Mr. Jamal Eddine Naji as a president of this international non-governmental organization which was created in 1997 on the initiative of UNESCO and the *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM), the network's headquarters. This network counts 40 chairs, in addition to more than 270 associated members from all over the world. Mr. Naji, being the newly elected president for a renewable two-year mandate, is also the founder of one of the

Chairs titled “Public and institutional communication” created on 1999 (1999-2005), besides another one titled “public and community communication” in 2006 (2006-2011), both at the presence of the Director General of UNESCO, the minister of communication being the Moroccan government spokesperson, the former first minister Mr. Youssoufi and His Majesty’s King Mohammed 6 counselor the late Meziane Belfquih. Two Chairs are based at the Higher Institute of Information and Communication in Rabat where Mr. Naji was a professor and a scholar from 1948 to 2008.

In his capacity as President of the ORBICOM, Mr. Naji will lead an administrative counsel gathering:

- Pr. Jean Louis Roy (Canada), former secretary-general of the nowadays International Organization of La Francophonie, former Québec Delegate-General, former President of “Rights and Democracy”, former director of the daily newspaper in Montréal “Le Devoir”, and former professor at the McGill University of Montréal, current Chairman of the “*Partenariat International*”;
- Pr. Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martinez, associated in the UNESCO Chair “Communication and Society” at the Ibero-American University of Mexico, elected as vice president of the network;
- Pr. Ghislaine Azemard holder of the UNESCO chair “Innovation Transmission and digital publishing” at the Foundation House of Human Sciences, professor of Information and Communication Sciences at University Paris 8, France, elected as treasurer of the network;
- Pr. Ulla Carlson UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy, University of Gothenburg (Sweden);
- Pr. Walter Neira Bronttis, Dean of the Faculty of Communication, Lima University, Peru;
- Pr. Eric Olmedo, scholar in social anthropology at the ethnic studies institute, Kebangsaan University of Malaysia (UKM);
- Pr. Umaru Pate, Head of the Mass Communication Department, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria;
- Pr. May Abdallah, Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the Faculty of Information, Lebanese University, Beirut.

The executive committee, as part of the administrative council, beholds the president, the vice-president, and the treasurer, in addition to the legal participation capacity of the ex officio: Director General of the UNESCO (Mrs. Audrey Azoulay), Rector of the UQAM, (Mrs. Magda Fusaro), and Secretary General of the ORBICOM (Mr. Yves Théorêt, Media Professor at the UQAM).

Let us not forget that Morocco hosted, within the framework of the network activities, a number of events like: the African Conference on the Public Service in Africa (Rabat, 2000); the Arab-African Inter-regional conference for the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, 2003 in Geneva (Marrakech, 2004); The Arab-African community media conference (Rabat, 2007) and the conference on world diversities (Skhirate, 2013). The network, rich by its experts from various nationalities and cultures, gathering researchers, media decision makers, professionals and industrials is considered, from UNESCO’s point of view, a “Think Thank”, and a “laboratory for ideas” in this domain. A statement which Mr. Frank Larue (Guatemala), Deputy Director-General (DDG) of the organization, and his predecessor Mr. Yanis Karklins (Latvia) have highlighted, respectively during this general assembly and at the conference on diversity held in Skhirate in 2013.

Finally, it is to be noted that Mr. Naji is the fourth president of the network, celebrating today its twentieth anniversary, after Mr. Alain Modoux (Switzerland), DDG of the UNESCO, Pr. Calmon Alves Rosental (Brazil- Austin University Texas USA), and Pr. Bertrand Cabedoche (France- Grenoble- Alpes University). It is worth mentioning that ORBICOM publishes every year studies and surveys on topics and challenges of an international impact in this field, requiring perspectives and approaches to be

converged and anticipated, and that is what the patchwork of its members enables. In fact, its last document, published this week in three large volumes, concerns “Digital humanism: values and models for tomorrow”.

Links

[1] <https://www.haca.ma/en/javascript%3A%3B>