

**Under the patronage of HRH Prince Talal bin AbdulAzez
Al-Saud**

Mentor Arabia launches to protect children and youth from drug misuse

Dubai, April 5, 2006: Mentor Arabia Foundation, the Arab chapter of Mentor Foundation was today launched under the patronage of HRH Prince Talal bin AbdulAzez Al-Saud and in the presence of Prince Turki bin Talal bin AbdulAzez, Chairman of the Follow-up Committee of Mentor Arabia Foundation. The Arab non-government, not-for-profit organization works with a single-minded focus on the prevention of drug misuse and promotion of health and well-being of children and young people.

Also present for the launch at the press conference held at Madinat Jumeirah Hotel were: Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg, former Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Mentor International and present member of Board of Trustees, Lieutenant General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Commander in Chief of Dubai Police, Dr. Hussein A. Gezairy, Director of Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization (WHO), Mr. Mohamed Abdul Aziz, regional representative of the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Middle East and North Africa and Mr. Amro Khaled, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Right Start International Foundation.

The occasion also marked Mentor Arabia Foundation signing two Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and- a multilateral agreement between representatives of different organizations working in the field of drug prevention. The first MoU was signed between Mentor Arabia Foundation and Dubai Police followed by a second MoU between Mentor Arabia Foundation and WHO to collaborate and be mutually supportive towards prevention of drug misuse in the region.

The multilateral agreement for the training project under the title - 'Protectors of the Future' was signed by Prince Turki bin Talal bin AbdulAzez, Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Dr. Hussein A. Gezairy, Mr. Mohamed Abdul Aziz, and Mr. Amro Khaled,

Mentor Arabia Foundation's success can only be achieved through the active participation of youth: By creating opportunities to open channels of dialogue with them by actively engaging them in planning and implementing the Foundation's projects. Mentor Arabia Foundation will strive to help the youth in maintaining better health standards and preventing them from drugs misuse. Mentor Arabia Foundation will work on developing innovative programmes in different sectors such as awareness, education, information which are addressed to children, youth, their families, parents, schools, universities and everybody connected to these sectors.

Mentor Arabia will work towards accomplishing the following initiatives through cooperation with its partners: training on awareness and empowerment in the area of protection; training for children at an early age; establishing a website for Mentor Arabia to be linked with information on, research and coordination centres of the Foundation; training and awareness for parents in the area of communications, relations and trust; teaching and mentoring skills and developing and supporting the government and social policies in the area of protection from drugs.

Mentor is undertaking a range of initiatives with its work at international and national levels. At the international level the focus is to help those working in prevention at the policy and practitioner level. At the national level Mentor continues to support new and promising initiatives in prevention. Mentor Arabia Foundation is a significant addition to the international chapters.

Mentor Arabia Foundation's establishment responds to the findings of international and regional organizations, whose research has presented strong indications to the rapid growth of drug misuse among the young Arab population.

Mentor Arabia Foundation is mandated by the recommendations put forth by an international conference held in Dubai during December 2004. The participants in the conference voiced the necessity to establish Mentor Arabia with a focus on prevention and awareness and to implement its projects in consultation with youth, families, educational institutes, governmental and non-governmental entities and international organizations engaged in the field.

As a priority, Mentor Arabia shall work to increase the abilities of young people by providing them with the necessary knowledge and information on drug-related issues. The establishment shall provide them with the required life skills as to enable them to make the rational decisions on the means to leading a safe and healthy lifestyle.

With the support and assistance of several local and international partners from philanthropic to business foundations including civil society organizations, government and private institutions, specialized organization, United Nations organizations, police, spiritual and political leaders as well as parents, grandparents, youth and children, the Mentor Foundation has established new paths to overcome drug abuse. Mentor Arabia will benefit from the results of the projects already accomplished in different areas of the world and which millions of children and youth benefited from.

About Mentor Foundation

Mentor Foundation was founded in 1991 in Geneva, Switzerland as an initiative of Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, HRH Prince Talal bin AbdulAzez Al-Saud, and a number of Royals, Politicians and business people from various parts of the world. It is a unique, independent, apolitical, international non-government organization with the mission to prevent drug misuse and promote the health and well-being of children and youth. Mentor is supported by its Scientific Advisory Network, a group of international experts in drugs and prevention related work from around the world which also provides practical input, advice, expertise and experience to enhance Mentor's professional credibility in the field.

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