

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Middle East and North Africa Regional Conference of Psychology, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Michel Sabourin

*Université de Montréal, Canada
Liaison of the International Union of Psychological Science*

Mike Knowles

*Monash University, Australia
Liaison of the International Union of Applied Psychology*

The first Middle East and North Africa Regional Conference of Psychology (MENA RCP) was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, December 13–18, 2003, under the auspices of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), and the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP). It was organized by a local Conference Committee and by the Yemen Psychological Association (YPA), in collaboration with the Egyptian Association for Psychological Studies (EAPS). High attendance, with participation from 35 countries, including 17 from the neighbouring Middle East and North Africa region, was a major achievement of the conference. Conference participants, many of them leaders of their national psychology associations, who also attended the concomitant National Capacity Building Workshop organized by the IUPsyS, signed an official Declaration to create a Regional Council of Arab Psychological Associations during the coming year and to follow this first MENA Conference with a second conference to be held in Amman, Jordan, in 2005.

Le premier Congrès régional de psychologie du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord (MOAN) s'est tenu à Dubai, Émirats Arabes Unis, du 13 au 18 décembre 2003, sous l'égide de l'Union internationale de psychologie scientifique (UIPsyS), de l'Association internationale de psychologie appliquée (AIPA) et de l'Association internationale de psychologie inter-culturelle (AIPIC). Ce congrès a été organisé par un comité local et par l'Association de psychologie du Yémen (APY), en collaboration avec l'Association égyptienne d'études psychologiques (AEEP). Les participants à ce congrès provenaient d'un total de 35 pays, et jamais auparavant on n'avait retrouvé autant de psychologues de la région (en provenance de 17 des 21 pays du MOAN) assistant à un même congrès. Les délégués choisis pour assister à un atelier offert par l'UIPsyS sur le développement associatif, lesquels, pour la plupart, occupent des fonctions de direction au sein de leur association nationale, ont profité de l'occasion pour endosser une Déclaration officielle, à l'effet de créer au cours de l'année à venir un Conseil régional des associations arabes de psychologie et de voir à organiser un deuxième congrès régional à Amman, en Jordanie, en 2005.

Se realizó en Dubai, Emiratos Árabes Unidos, del 13 al 18 de diciembre de 2003, la primera Conferencia Regional de Psicología del Oriente Medio y África del Norte (CRP-OMAN), bajo los auspicios de la Unión Internacional de Psicología Científica (UIPsiC), la Asociación Internacional de Psicología Aplicada

Correspondence should be sent to Professor Michel Sabourin, Department of Psychology, University of Montreal, PO Box 6128, Downtown Station, Montreal (Quebec), Canada H3C 3J7.

© 2004 International Union of Psychological Science

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/pp/00207594.html>

DOI: 10.1080/00207590444000131

(AIPA), y la Asociación Internacional de Psicología Transcultural (AIPT). Un comité local y la Asociación Psicológica de Yemen (APY) la organizaron en colaboración con la Asociación Egipcia de Estudios Psicológicos (AEEP). Uno de los mayores logros de la conferencia fue la gran participación de delegados de 35 países, incluyendo 17 de los 21 de la región del Oriente Medio y África del Norte. Los delegados, muchos de ellos líderes de su respectiva asociación psicológica nacional, quienes también participaron en el Taller de Construcción de Capacidad Nacional, organizado por la IUPsyS, firmaron una Declaración oficial para crear un Consejo Regional de asociaciones psicológicas árabes en el curso del siguiente año y organizar una segunda versión de esta conferencia regional en Amman, Jordania en 2005.

GENERAL IDEA

The Middle East and North Africa Regional Conference of Psychology (MENA RCP) was held in Dubai from 13–18 December, 2003. This was the fifth regional conference organized under the auspices of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), and the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP). Regional conferences are held every 2 years in between the large international congresses organized by IUPsyS and IAAP. They were especially introduced as a joint venture between IUPsyS, IAAP, and IACCP to review the current state of psychology in a particular region and to foster its development by increasing communication between scientific researchers and professionals, disseminating psychological knowledge and expertise, and supporting the organization of psychology within the region. Previous regional conferences have been held in Guangzhou, China; Mexico City, Mexico; Durban, South Africa; and Mumbai, India.

SPECIFIC IDEA

The present regional conference was hosted by the Yemen Psychological Association and the Conference Organizing Committee in Dubai (Dr Raymond H. Hamden, Chair), in collaboration with the Egyptian Association of Psychological Studies. The Scientific Program Committee was chaired by Professor Hassan Kassim Khan of Yemen. Located in the United Arab Emirates, the conference drew upon a region with a population of well over 100,000,000 people throughout the Middle East and North Africa. For the majority of people, the primary language is Arabic and the principal religion is Islam. There is a growing number of trained psychologists in this region: The 135 attendees at the conference came from 17 out of 21 neighbouring countries, namely, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine

Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Colleagues from Eastern African countries came from Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan (in fact the largest delegation of psychologists attending the conference, 30, was from Sudan, with the second largest, 12, from Yemen). Other attendees were from countries as far-flung as Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, India, Malaysia, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. All in all, psychologists from a total of 35 countries attended the conference. This large country representation far exceeds the usual numbers witnessed in most previous regional conferences.

Historical background of psychology in the region

An interest in psychology has been present in the Muslim and the Arab world since the 9th century, when Muslim scholars began to propose more or less scientific explanations concerning a wide variety of modern-day psychological concepts. But even in more ancient times, the Egyptians had already attempted to explain phenomena like hysteria, epilepsy, delusions, and dreams by using psychological and philosophical concepts, and they had even attempted to treat some mental abnormalities.

Hence, for many of the present-day nations in the Middle East and North Africa whose civilizations are thousands of years old, psychological thought is deeply embedded in the language and reflected in the classical literatures. Along with mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, the study of the mind (*El-mo-nafs*) dates back at least 1000 years. It was considered to be an integral part of philosophical discourse, and included a practical emphasis on healing both mental and psychosomatic disorders.

The scientific study of psychology commenced in the early decades of the 20th century, building on the context of this ancient heritage. Egypt and,

to a lesser extent, Lebanon were the first Arab countries where modern psychology began to emerge. Other Arab countries (e.g., Syria, Iraq, and Sudan) became interested in scientific psychology around the middle of the 20th century, and most remaining Arab countries encountered psychology for the first time in the 1960s. Universities were the cradle of this growth. With departments of psychology primarily located in faculties of Medicine and Education, it was natural to find that the first courses in psychology to be introduced and developed focused on health psychology, clinical psychology, and educational psychology. Not surprisingly, therefore, these constituted three of the primary themes of the conference's scientific program.

CURRENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The countries from which the conference delegates came varied considerably in terms of economic prosperity. By international standards most participants worked in developing economies, resulting in an uneven mix of fields being represented. There was a relative absence of fields such as organizational psychology; private practice was not broadly represented across the region; and there were few presentations from areas such as cognitive psychology or neuropsychology, which require laboratory facilities that are not readily available in most countries of the region.

There were many presentations focused on conflict and conflict resolution, not surprising given that a number of the countries in the region had experienced or were caught up in states of war and terrorism, with devastating effects upon the physical and psychological welfares of populations enmeshed in these traumatic situations. The theme of conflict and conflict resolution was also reflected in the general theme of the conference—Psychology for Peace and Sustainable Development.

THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

The scientific program was structured around several principal themes: clinical and health psychology in the Middle East, educational and school psychology in the Middle East, and peace psychology and conflict resolution. Other smaller but clearly identifiable themes included the psychology of women, Islam and psychology,

cyber-psychology, special issues in the region, and cross-cultural psychology. Two days of workshops concluded the conference. The following is a review of the scientific program and the workshops. Although not exhaustive, the goal of the review is to capture the essence of the presentations included in the major themes.

Keynote address at the opening ceremony

The opening ceremony keynote address, titled "Globalization for the Common Good: Economists and Psychologists Building Cultures of Peace" was delivered by Dr Kaman Mofid, an economist. Mofid discussed the fact that he has spent most of his academic life lecturing on the standard neoclassical model of economics which, in his words, has "squeezed almost all psychological content out of economics." Along with an increasing number of other economists, he has realized that the assumption that people act as rational selfish maximisers is no longer tenable. He described how current models of economic decision making assume that people act in accordance with personal and social preferences, which are, in turn, affected by their cultures and their identities. Mofid's address drew upon the work of Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2002, for his work toward changing the nature of economic thinking through fostering an understanding of behaviour at the individual and group levels as well as at the level of culture, politics, and ethnicity. The themes of understanding globalization in its human and its economic dimensions were echoed by many of the topics comprising the conference's scientific program.

Clinical and health psychology in the Middle East

Keynote addresses and symposia dealt with two aspects of clinical and health psychology. One concerned the psychological challenges experienced by patients, such as mental, emotional, school, sexual, domestic violence, stress, anxiety, burnout, neuroticism, self-harm, and drug abuse problems; problems experienced by patients with special medical conditions such as epilepsy, heart disease, irritable bowel syndrome, hyperthyroidism, and AIDS; and problems of patients with special mental conditions such as schizophrenia, phobia, and depression.

A second set of presentations addressed the

challenge of changing the health care system to give attention to the psychological dimensions of physical illness and recovery, including the role of a healthy lifestyle in the prevention of disease and illness. One example is the medical undergraduate degree at the University of Aden in Yemen. Rather than being grounded in traditional physical and biological science-based curricula, the program has adopted a strong behavioural orientation. It is a community-focused program, based on the premise that health is the presence of well-being, not the mere absence of disease. The program focuses on why people become ill, how they respond to their illness, and how they recover. Similarly, the neuropsychiatric hospital in Aden places psychological and psychiatric emphasis on patients' becoming aware of the issues and complexities associated with their condition as well as their families' appreciating the role played by hereditary and environmental factors (including the patients' childhoods) in their disorders.

Educational and school psychology in the Middle East

This sequence of keynote addresses and symposia primarily addressed issues at school and university. At the school level presentations examined the connection between time management and performance anxiety, a trial program for talented children, and the impact of co-education on the educational achievements, behaviours, and cultural beliefs of teenagers.

Research presentations on the university included topics such as students' attitudes toward marriage to a relative; the effect of military service on students' personality, social adjustment, and political, religious, and national orientations; a comparison of the educational achievement of combatant and noncombatant students; the orientation of students toward violence; and changing attitudes of students with psychological disorders to using the services of a psychological clinic.

A third sequence dealt with special problems in education such as stuttering, learning disability, and parental adjustment of children with such a disability; the issue of inclusion and whether or not children with disabilities should be placed in general education classrooms at pre-kindergarten and primary school levels; and information and parental acceptance of child handicaps.

Peace psychology and conflict resolution

Peace psychology and conflict resolution constituted a distinctive part of the scientific program. These themes assumed particular relevance in a region affected by wars between and within nations. One aim of the conference was to contribute toward preventing fighting and violence. In one sequence of this theme, keynote addresses and symposia examined issues such as the psychological health of victims of war and terrorism, both of which create psychological states of extreme fear, anxiety, and depression. In addition, war and terrorism profoundly alter relationships and frequently lead to increasing violence within the family. Women are especially affected by these traumatic circumstances; a very moving and powerful account was given of women who are expected to rejoice in the martyrdom of victims on behalf of the state, even when they themselves experience devastating physical, psychological and economic consequences of the loss of husbands and sons.

A second stream of presentations addressed therapeutic techniques to foster recovery from trauma as well as ways to develop skills in integrating seemingly opposing cultural values wherever the conflict occurs. For example, Western methods of treatment (e.g., cognitive behaviour therapy, a changing emphasis from post-traumatic stress to post-traumatic growth) were compared with Eastern techniques of healing (e.g., those based upon ancient Hindu *tantri* concepts or the Buddhist concept of compassion), and a novel method of "street therapy" that integrates Western and Eastern approaches to achieve inner and outer peace was described and illustrated. In addition, positive results were reported from women organizing themselves into support groups and mobilizing communities with a view to building a culture of peace.

Psychology of women

In a number of the countries within the region of the Middle East and North Africa, the cultures are conservative by international standards, especially in their support for the traditional role of women, including strong restrictions. A number of studies in this stream examined the changing attitudes of younger women and the kind of programs facilitating their adoption of a more active role within society, changes brought about by increasing globalization and educational

achievement among women. In one study of female students in technical institutions, employment and work were seen as an important route to creating a worthwhile role and attaining a higher level of life satisfaction. In an allied study of young Muslim women, it was reported that the majority considered that they should be able to have access to highly influential jobs such as managers in the private sector and ministers in the public sector. Advancement in this direction could be facilitated by acquiring problem-focused coping skills at the individual level and utilizing support groups at the social level.

Other presentations examined special problems faced by women including low levels of literacy, unwanted pregnancy, and domestic violence. For example, research from Turkey showed that an increase in women's literacy and education raises their level of cognitive competence and sense of self-efficacy and lowers fertility rates and child mortality. Similarly, a clinical cognitive enhancement group therapy program in Saudi Arabia has been used to help women improve their self-awareness, self-confidence, and communication skills.

Other presentations addressed unwanted pregnancy and family planning programs and issues such as concerns about contraception side-effects and health and alternative methods, including psychopharmacology. Studies addressing domestic violence presented research under "abnormal" social conditions on families that lived continuously in the violent circumstances of prolonged war. One study reported that one consequence of this was an increase in family disintegration and in sexual violence within the family. A second study described the role of women in such war-torn countries, where women participate as warriors, combatants, spies, or carriers of messages, as well as in support groups that mobilize communities to spread messages of peace and work toward developing a culture of peace.

Other studies concerned domestic violence in "normal" societal conditions. These reports addressed the paradoxical fact that most abused wives blamed themselves for the abuse and continued to stay within the marriage.

Islam and psychology

Many psychological practices utilized in Western societies are based upon empirical methodologies that, from an Islamic perspective, neglect the Islamic teachings and tenets on psyche, mental health, and spiritual values. Thus, the challenge

facing Muslim psychologists is to identify courses of action that integrate psychological techniques with their religious beliefs as formulated by the Qur'an and the doctrines, statements, and acts of the religion of Islam.

While the development of an Islamic or Taassil psychology is still in the making, specific examples of how this is being achieved in professional practice were illustrated in the areas of guidance and counselling as well as in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. As was pointed out, Islam also advocates the practice of self-reliance in bettering individual and societal welfare, as the following quotation illustrates: "Verily! Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves" (Qur'an, Surah 13:11).

Another study examined the attitudes of young women to Islamic and Western cultures; it was found that an overwhelming majority held the belief that the culture of Islam offers more respect toward women than do Western cultures, with these women also wanting to keep the practice of wearing the veil.

Cyber-psychology

The technological advances that have been made with the advent of the Internet have affected psychology in many positive ways. For example, it was reported that a primary health-care initiative in Yemen has been the establishment of a hotline telephone service in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Aden. This service provides assistance to clients from a wide range of age groups who are unable, for either financial or geographical reasons, to access doctors or psychotherapists, or who are unwilling to do so because of social stigma. It covers diverse problems such as mental disorders (35%), school problems (10%), childhood and adolescent disorders (10%), emotional problems (9%), domestic violence (6%), sexual problems (4%), and a wide range of other problems (26%).

Another development discussed was the creation of Islamonline.net over 3 years ago, which takes advantage of the privacy and interactivity that the Internet affords, and its special suitability for conservative communities. It currently has attracted over 1000 inquiries from all over the world covering a long list of issues as diverse as drug addiction, interfaith marital issues, self-development, homosexuality, and identity crisis.

The Internet has also been used in an educational setting; it was reported that a WebCT interface was established, enabling students from Israel and elsewhere in the Middle East to discuss didactic and personal issues among themselves, with a view to enhancing learning, fostering the development of a diversity of viewpoints, promoting cross-cultural communication and understanding, and contributing toward the prevention and resolution of conflict.

Special issues in the region

In addition to the impact that the Internet is having on the way psychology is practiced in the Middle East and North Africa, there are other issues that arise in this region of the world which, although they are not specific to it, are typical. One concerns the experience of expatriation, which is now common in many countries as a result of the increasing globalization of the world's economy, and is particularly widespread in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Since expatriation involves much more than the physical movement of a person from one place to another, this paper examined its psychological and social-psychological impact on couples who spend large parts (or, indeed, the entire period) of their married lives in separation, while at the same time trying to function as a single family unit. Problems identified addressed three aspects of the lives of the children born into these families. The first concerned the initial part of children's lives, when they were left with their grandparents or other caregivers while their parents worked abroad, when the former became the children's "real" parents. The second was when the children moved to the country of expatriation and were required to adjust to their biological parents. The third concerned the period when the children, either as teenagers or adults, returned to their home country to encounter the strangeness that this experience presented to them.

A second paper dealt with problems in the expatriate workforce due to the fact that the majority of expatriate employees have different national and linguistic backgrounds. Because they all work in the same organizational units, their managers are faced with special difficulties in establishing effective levels of communication and developing effective team spirit within the work groups.

A third paper in the area of environmental psychology described aspects of the rapid

degradation of the global environment and the need to develop programs of sustainable development that bring together psychological, social, economic, and political issues. The psychological aspects identified in the paper include needs, attitudes and values, and social issues involving conflict and aggression.

Cross-cultural psychology

In contrast to a number of the papers referred to above, which dealt with the emic (a perspective that uses the concepts and categories that are relevant and meaningful to the people studied in organizing and interpreting data) aspects of culture in North Africa and the Middle East, one group of keynote addresses and symposia in cross-cultural psychology examined differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. As was noted, much of mainstream psychology has been developed in the individualistic cultures of Europe and North America, making it reductionist (dividing mind and body, separating the individual from the family) and positivist (emphasizing material reality at the expense of imagination). This type of psychology fosters the development of individual or independent identity. This contrasts with the collectivistic cultures of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and South America, which are more holistic (integrating mind and body) and spiritualistic (valuing dreams and visions rather than materialistic reality). Since these cultures foster the development of a collective identity, these countries need to establish a different kind of psychology in which theory and practice reflects the emic nature of these cultures.

A second stream of keynote addresses and symposia approached the question of culture from the opposite direction and examined etic (using an outside observer's pre-established categories for organizing and interpreting data, rather than categories established within the culture being studied) differences between various countries. In perhaps the most comprehensive piece of research conducted in this area to date, a map of over 70 cultures around the world was presented in which 8 cultural regions were identified, each distinctive in terms of 7 cultural value orientations. Each of these regions was characterized by a coherence of culture, and each differed from the others in systematic ways. This has important implications for another piece of research dealing with the policies and practices of multinational companies that are at the heart of the current movement of

globalization. Issues discussed included whether or not these organizations operate in similar or different ways at their widely different locations, and the extent to which work motivation, teamwork, and leadership vary from one location to another.

The question of similarity and difference between cultures also spanned many other issues. For example, it was reported from a comprehensive study involving over 60,000 school children that there were no differences in cognitive ability across the 30 countries included in the sample. This is important information, given the media attention this question attracts, and counters some of the opinions sensationalized in the press that are derived from hearsay and prejudice rather than systematic empirical research.

In other areas of psychological testing, however, the situation is more complex, raising the question of the utility of Western tests (and intervention programs) beyond their cultures of origin. It was also observed that the quality of the research in the area depends upon the soundness of the methodologies that are used.

NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

On the second day of the conference, a special 5-hour workshop was held with invited representatives of the national psychological association or societies (current or in development) of the MENA region. Most participants held leadership or administrative positions. This workshop was organized under the initiative of the International Union of Psychological Science and coordinated by Professors Ype Poortinga (Tilburg University, Netherlands), and Elizabeth Nair (National University of Singapore), two members of the IUPsyS Executive Committee. The goal was to provide information concerning a range of issues (e.g., organizational, advocacy, regulation of psychological practice) that are of importance to the growth of national psychology organizations. Presentations were made by Judy Hall, Executive Director of the US National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and by both coordinators. Participants from 12 countries attended this workshop, including delegates from national psychology organizations in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine Authority, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Partial funding of this workshop was provided

by the American Psychological Foundation, the German Federation of Psychological Associations, and a private donor.

POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Two days of workshops following the scientific program offered delegates the opportunity to work in small groups in close collaboration with the workshop presenters. The workshop program dealt with three specific issues: the identification of talent, balancing life demands and avoiding stress and burnout, and debriefing after critical incidents in order to increase the validity of eyewitness testimony.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

Successful conferences such as this do not happen without much work on the part of a dedicated few. It is fitting to pay tribute to the Conference President, Raymond H. Hamden, the Chair of the Scientific Program Committee, Hassan Kassim Khan, and Eva Bruyninckx-Gerard, the Chair of the Secretariat Committee, as well as all the committee members. In addition, the conference organizers acknowledged the support of the members of the Scientific Advisory Council and those acting as liaison for the three sponsoring international organizations: Michel Sabourin, Treasurer of IUPsyS, Mike Knowles, President Elect of IAAP, and Klaus Boehnke, Secretary General of IACCP. Appreciation is also extended for the financial contributions of the American Psychological Foundation, the German Federation of Psychological Associations, IAAP, IACCP, IUPsyS, and a private donor.

IMPACT OF THE CONFERENCE

As mentioned above, this regional conference, initiated by the International Union of Psychological Science and fully supported by both the International Association of Applied Psychology and the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, was organized to gather together psychologists coming mainly from the Arabic-speaking world and to foster the development of academic and professional psychology in all countries of the Middle East and North Africa region. The quality of the papers presented at the conference, the active involvement of so many participants in the many discussion periods, and the spirit of goodwill that prevailed throughout

the conference, all attest to its outstanding success. Time and again participants commented upon the benefits they obtained from attending such informative sessions and the professional support they derived from meeting, getting to know and networking with colleagues from their own and other countries. There were two indicators of just how effective the conference was. The first was to consider it worthy to dedicate the conference to Professor Fouad Abu Hattab of Egypt, a renowned scholar who was a distinguished member of the Executive Committee of the International Union of Psychological Science from 1992 to 1996. The second was the decision made by the participants of the National Capacity Building Workshop to form a Regional Council of Arab Psychological Associations, which would build upon the foundation of MENA and continue the momentum it generated by planning a second regional conference in 2005 in Jordan (see Appendix for the Dubai Declaration).

APPENDIX

Dubai Declaration, December 2003

The 1st MENA Regional Conference of Psychology was held in Dubai, UAE, from December 13–18, 2003, and was sponsored by three international professional organizations, which were the IUPsyS, the IAAP, and the IACCP, by the local Dubai Organization Committee, and by two Arab professional associations, the Yemen Psychological Association and the Egyptian Association of Psychological Studies.

All through the conference, issues related to the development and improvement of psychology through the Arab world were highlighted and emphasized. This led to the need to coordinate the efforts among the national psychological associations already in existence or in the process of formation in different Arab countries. Therefore it was decided to establish a professional body to strengthen collaborative work across these associations.

The following points were adopted:

- The establishment of a *Regional Council of Arab Psychological Associations*.
- In order to prepare and establish such a Council, a Preparatory Committee was formed from the following representatives of the different national associations: Dr Hassan Kassim Khan (Yemen), Dr Adnan Farah (Jordan), Dr Brigitte Khoury (Lebanon), Dr Ali Hassan Fakih (Saudi Arabia), Dr Marwan Dwairy (Palestine Authority), Dr Omar Haroun Khalifah (Sudan), Dr Reda Abouserie (Egypt), and Dr Abdelkader Khiati (Algeria). Dr Hassan Kassim Khan was chosen to be the coordinator of the Preparatory Committee. This Committee will contact all Arab Associations that were not present at the Conference to call for their participation in his Council.
- Within 6 months, this Committee will prepare a document defining the founding principles of this Council, its by-laws, membership requirements, finances and other issues.
- A year from the Dubai Conference, a preparatory meeting for the Regional Council will be held in Amman, Jordan, to discuss the founding principles, finalize them, and announce the official formation of the Regional Council of Arab Psychological Associations. During this meeting, the 2nd MENA Regional Conference of Psychology will be discussed and planned.
- The Jordanian Psychological Association suggested holding the 2nd MENA RCP in Amman, Jordan, in 2005 and the preparatory committee agreed to that invitation. Dr Adnan Farah was chosen to be the coordinator of the conference.

All the participants of the National Capacity Building Workshop who have signed this Declaration would like to thank the international and local psychological associations for the organization and the hosting of the 1st MENA RCP.