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Arizona State University and UNHCR Offer Online Training to 400 Refugees and Chadian Youth at the Iridimi Digital Learning Center

Arizona State University (ASU), through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is offering an innovative online training program for thousands of refugees and members of host communities at the Iridimi Digital Learning Center (DLC), located in the Wadi Fira province in eastern Chad.

The training provided by the university through its online learning platform includes four levels of general English and four levels of academic English. An initial placement test was held on Tuesday, October 7, to organize the different learning cohorts. Participation was particularly encouraging: over 200 people registered within just three days.

Depending on learners' pace and commitment, between six and eight cohorts will benefit from this training in the coming months, representing a total of 300 to 400 learners. New testing sessions are organized whenever a group of 50 candidates is formed, ensuring progressive and equitable access for all interested individuals.

This program aims to strengthen participants' language and digital skills, paving the way for opportunities in higher education and employment.

Established by UNHCR and the Government of Chad with financial support from Italy as part of the route-based approach, the Iridimi DLC is the first of its kind in eastern Chad. Its mission is to bridge the digital divide and facilitate access to tertiary education, as well as vocational and certified training through accessible and accredited online resources. Equipped with modern computers, stable internet

connectivity, and versatile learning spaces, the center can accommodate up to 70 students at a time.

Dossou Patrice Ahouansou, UNHCR's Senior Coordinator for the Sudan situation in eastern Chad, praised this collaboration:

"*This initiative embodies the promise of a better future for thousands of young refugees and Chadians. By providing access to internationally recognized training without leaving their community, we are giving them the tools to learn and (re)build a better future*."

Professor Daouda Ahmat, Rector of the Eastern Chad Academy, also highlighted the importance of this initiative for the regional education system:

"*The establishment of a Digital Learning Center in Iridimi, near Iriba, is a major step forward in modernizing the educational system of the East. The Center is the result of a fruitful collaboration between UNHCR and the authorities of the Eastern Academy. By improving learners' employability, the center brings clarity and opportunity to young Chadians and refugees in the region who are seeking educational prospects*."

For **Arizona State University**, this partnership is part of its mission to expand access to education worldwide:

"*We firmly believe that education is a universal right. This partnership with UNHCR in Chad proves that, with technology, neither distance nor refugee status should be a barrier to learning. We are proud to support these youth on their journey toward success and resilience*."

Beyond English courses, the Iridimi DLC will also offer other certified trainings in community health, education in emergencies, office tools and digital literacy, and network computing in partnership with international institutions such as Cisco Academy, the University of Geneva, and national technical organizations.

Through this collaboration, UNHCR and Arizona State University reaffirm their shared commitment to promoting empowerment through education and supporting the development of talent and opportunities for young refugees and their Chadian peers.

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