

PRESS RELEASE

2012 ITEMA Prize – For excellence in the Italy-Morocco partnership for Culture section is awarded to the Rector of the International Telematic University UNINETTUNO, Prof. Maria Amata Garito

Rome, 14 November 2012

Maria Amata Garito, Rector of the International Telematic University UNINETTUNO, was awarded the 2012 ITEMA Prize, that will be given her in the framework of the Italy-Morocco Friendship Day, on Wednesday the 14th November 2012, at the Auditorium Pontificio Regina Apostolorum - in via degli Aldobrandeschi 190, Rome - during the gala dinner that will see the participation of institutional and non institutional representatives of the Italy-Morocco partnership.

The jury decided to award her this Prize, for the Culture section, with the following motivation: “Since her continuous attention paid to the young people made her collaborate with the Moroccan Universities in the support of students; in addition, the literacy diffusion televised course “*I learn Arabic. The Treasure of the Letters*” gave a significant contribution in the fight against illiteracy in Morocco”

The Prize represents a the recognition of a path started several years ago in cooperation with some universities of Morocco and 30 universities of 11 Mediterranean countries; jointly they developed the Med Net'U (Mediterranean Network of Universities) European project, aimed at realising the first Euro-Mediterranean Distance University and thanks to this project they realised the International Telematic University UNINETTUNO where, on the Internet, in the portal www.uninettunouniversity.net, teaching and learning are carried on in six languages, but, above all, in Arabic. In 2006 UNINETTUNO opened a Technological Pole of its own in the premises of the Ministry of Vocational Training of the Kingdom of Morocco, in Rabat, through which were trained, at distance via the Internet, for computer literacy the executives of the Moroccan Public Administration. “While I was engaged in working in Morocco on the Distance University project – the Rector Garito states – I paused to think about the actual needs of the Moroccan society and, undoubtedly, I deemed it important to help them to solve their big problem due to illiteracy. In 2008 44% of the Moroccan population was illiterate. I devoted two years of study and research work to identify a method that, thanks to television, could take the Arabic literacy diffusion courses to everybody’s home and I designed a pedagogic model by means of which, the first time in the world, the Arab language is taught in a lay way, words are contextualised to the objects of the daily life of the Moroccan population. I always thought that television is a technology of the mind; it is the languages that are used to realise its programmes that characterise its functions; this is the reason why, since many years, I have been carrying on research projects aimed at identifying new languages that could be useful to realised a new model of television, a television of thought, of reflection: a Knowledge Television where the star is Understanding indeed. This is the context from which derives the result of the research work that enabled me to realised the project : “I Learn Arabic. The Treasure of the Letters” to teach how to read and write to the Moroccan illiterate adults using the language of television.” The project is part of the wide programme that involved political and institutional top-level representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco and, as consequence, even the King Mohammed V, that is to be able to overcome illiteracy by 2015. This course is broadcast every day by the first national television channel, SNRT “La UNE” and on the 4th educational channel of Morocco, gaining a significant success among the audience. In addition, the course is

broadcast, every day, on the television channel RAI NETTUNO SAT and every morning on RAIDUE, at 5:30 am.

2012 ITEMA, is a prestigious initiative conceived by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco in Italy, H.E. **Hassan About Abouyoub**, with the clear aim of proposing themes of discussion related to culture, economy, gastronomy, music and tourism. 2012 ITEMA was born for the purpose of consolidating the relations between Italy and Morocco along an inclusive path, to better face the ever-changing society in which diversity is a resource and richness for the future.

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