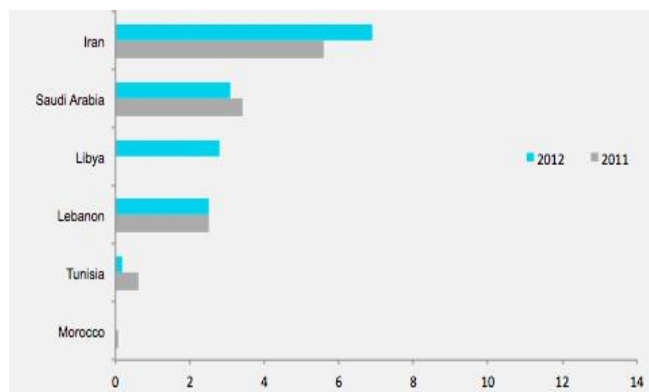


donation and Transplantation (IRODaT) website declares with regular update the current status of living and deceased (BD) organ transplantation all over the world including MESOT countries as shown in **figure (1)** <sup>(15)</sup>.



**Fig. 1. Africa – Middle East Deceased Organ Donors per million population (PMP) 2012**

In USA, the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) which is a private, non-profit organization manages the nation's organ transplant system under contract with the federal government. UNOS developed an online database system, to collect, store, analyzes and publish all data related to the waiting list, organ matching, and transplants. Launched on October 25, 1999, this system contains data regarding every organ donation and transplant event occurring in the United States since 1986 <sup>(10)</sup>.

## Discussion

Iraq is one of the leading Middle East countries to start kidney transplantation (KT) program. The first living donor KT operation was carried out in 1973 by Professor Waleed Al Khial. The Medical City - Baghdad KT program started in 1985 by Professor Usama N. Rifat and colleagues. Since then KT was carried out in several governmental and private hospitals based on living related KT <sup>(16)</sup>. Although the legal and religious legislations for organ transplantation from BD donors are declared in our country in the 1980s, there is no yet a national BD organ donation program. This is related to several factors mainly the lack of awareness of BD organ donation merits from both health authorities and people in Iraq, lack

of governmental economic funding for standardized ICU equipments and training the ICU staff to establish and maintain such program system, the series of social instability periods that Iraq passed through in the last decades due to wars and sanctions. In addition there is a lack of a standardized network system to collect and record all the relevant clinical data of kidney donation, transplantation and patients' follow up throughout the country.

Discussion of the national strategy to improve organ donation and transplantation in Iraq requires recruiting all the relevant authorities and professional staff who had experience of difficulties and limitations of organ transplantation to fix, re - write or modify the clinical and legal legislations concerning organ transplantation according to the current situation.

Regarding BD organ donation, it may be possible to think on the short term of cooperation of Iraqi Ministry of Health with certain regional / international authorities to bring cadaveric (BD) donor organs (Kidneys) to be used for transplantation and this requires legal and logistic infrastructure facilities to transport organs to the transplantation centre. This may go together with a national strategy on the long term to overcome lack of adequate public knowledge regarding organ transplantation from BD donors in Iraq by adequate and continuous public communication, education and organ donation campaigns for adults as well as educating high school and (medical and non medical) university students to promote a positive attitude towards organ donation among such young age group section of society. The latter can be implemented by teachers' education and highlighting the issue of organ failure and merits of life saving organ donation in the relevant teaching curriculum of students. The attitude of teachers <sup>(17)</sup> and high school students <sup>(18)</sup> toward organ donation was assessed in some countries as part of the above mentioned strategy. The same efforts should apply for upgrading our hospitals' ICUs and training medical and nursing staff working there