

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 11-7-2018

## **AUB's Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences hosts the launch of the 2018 Global Food Policy Report: Food Security from Global to MENA**

Under its seminar series, the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), along with its Food Security Program, and in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), hosted the launch of IFPRI's 2018 Global Food Policy Report labeled "Food Security from Global to MENA." This event was part of a series of launches held in major cities around the globe including Washington, Rome, Beijing, and New Delhi.

IFPRI's 2018 Global Food Policy Report (GFPR) reviews the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2017. It also highlights challenges and opportunities for 2018 at the global and regional levels. This year's report focuses on the issue of antiglobalism, which was on the rise in 2017.

An audience of over 80 people participated in the Beirut launch event, including FAFS Dean Dr. Rabi Mohtar and Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Dr. Iman Nuwayhid, in addition to other faculty members, students, and alumni. Guests from the private sector as well as NGOs and civil society also attended the event, including representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas.

Dean Mohtar welcomed the attendees and panelists in his opening remarks, highlighting the importance and timeliness of this report. He also discussed some of the research, relevant to the report, which has been conducted at FAFS.

One of the key speakers at the event was Clemens Breisinger, senior research fellow and IFPRI's country program leader in Egypt, who commented on the global themes of this year's GFPR. He explained that while globalization has brought significant benefits in terms of poverty reduction and improvements in food security, globalization has also had negative impacts including

worsening inequality. He stated that if globalization is to advance, it must be managed to the benefit of more people or else risk further reaction and rejection.

Nadim Khouri, an independent researcher focused on food security and an advisor to IFPRI, also spoke at the event, presenting relevant findings for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. He said that conflict-affected countries of the region have experienced reversals of progress in achieving food and nutrition security. Meanwhile, non-conflict countries of the same region have continued to make progress and adopt food policy reforms, even though these countries could do more to support advances across the area. Looking to the future, Khouri cautioned that the MENA region will not be the focus of the global debate around food insecurity and hunger, and therefore it will have to address its own needs to ensure its forward movement.

The speakers were then joined for a panel discussion by Majida Mcheik, head of the Program Department at the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture and an advisor to the minister; Nassib Ghobril, chief economist and head of the Economic Research and Analysis Department at Byblos Bank; Marwan Mikhael, head of Research and Investment Banking at BLOMINVEST Bank; and Lamis Jomaa, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at FAFS. The discussion that followed raised vigorous debate on the current structure and priorities of Lebanese agri-food policies. This included production subsidies; the appropriate roles for the government and private sector in fostering growth and investment in the agri-food sector; and divergent views of agriculture as a productive economic sector versus as a source of livelihoods for producers, small farmers, and rural households.

This event illustrated the need for a continued, robust, and evidence-based dialogue across all relevant stakeholders—including government, the private sector, academia and researchers, and NGOs and civil society—to inform and improve food policy in Lebanon and the region.

**ENDS**

**For more information please contact:**

**Simon Kachar**  
**Director of News and Media Relations**  
**Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024**  
**Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676**  
**Email: [sk158@aub.edu.lb](mailto:sk158@aub.edu.lb)**

## Note to Editors

### About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

### Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:

Website: [www.aub.edu.lb](http://www.aub.edu.lb)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>

Twitter: [http://twitter.com/AUB\\_Lebanon](http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon)