

For Immediate Release



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NGO Fair Held at AUB

Abou Faour: the need for AUB is greatest as darkness envelops our country

The American University of Beirut (AUB) opened its NGO Fair under the auspices of the Minister of Public Health Wael Abou Faour, and with the participation of representatives from international bodies and civil society organizations.

The fair was inaugurated with a ceremony in the Issam Fares Institute Auditorium on the Green Oval. Besides Minister Abou Faour, the ceremony was attended by Coordinator of United Nations Activities in Lebanon Philippe Lazzarini, Mrs. Nora Jumblatt, and Acting Director of the United Nations Information Centre - Beirut Margot Helou.

From AUB, attendees included Acting AUB Interim Provost Dr. Mohammed Harajli, Director of the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) Dr. Rabeeh Shibli and the Director of News and Media Relations Simon Kachar. AUB students and interested individuals also came.

The ceremony began with words of welcome by Lina Abu Farraj from the CCECS, and she detailed the objectives of the fair and the serious commitment of the center.

Dr. Harajli spoke next, calling the fair an epitome of AUB's commitment to meeting the challenges faced by the Lebanese society. He added that the fair provides the opportunity for everyone to communicate and create links that will serve the public good. Dr. Harajli also gave an overview of the CCECS and its interaction through the university with students and organizations. He also spoke about AUB's responsibility and engagement in public issues, especially the issue of Syrian refugees.

Next to speak was Philippe Lazzarini, who dwelt on the vision of the international community in supporting and empowering civil society. And he explained to the audience the real or practical meaning of civil commitment, which is based on respect for the laws in the interaction of organizations and individuals with each other. He urged Lebanese civil society to continue its activity, highlighting the importance of wise governance and its affiliation with the work of civil society. To close, he thanked AUB and all the fair participants and lauded the clear spirit of initiative that moves all participants, adding that now is the time to act in order to achieve their goals.

The last remarks were by the patron and keynote speaker of the event Minister Wael Abou Faour, who thanked AUB and expressed his joy at being in this inveterate and prestigious institution, where he graduated years ago.

Abu Faour recalled his university days and the turbulent movements by students, not for the unruly or narrow partisan purposes, but for humane idealistic aims and to champion oppressed peoples.

He continued: "AUB always sided with reason, and today the need for AUB and similar universities is greatest, as darkness envelops our country and the minds and hearts. Here comes to my mind the tragedy of the Syrian people and the role of civil society in helping it and caring for it as it faces many hazards, including forced ignorance".

He added: “I learned from Kamal Jumblatt that institutions are valued by how much they serve humanity and not only one religion”.

Minister Abou Faour concluded: “I thank AUB for this call and this foray in the domain of social work in Lebanon and I hope that the roles of the state and the roles of civil society will be complementary, in the hope that we will be able to formulate a Lebanese future based on this partnership”.

It is recalled that more than a hundred non-governmental organizations took part in this annual fair, which is organized by AUB’s CCECS in collaboration with the United Nations Information Center – Beirut (UNIC).

ENDS

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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 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 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.

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