

For Immediate Release



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Students hold diplomatic discussions in International Model United Nations conference at AUB

The Beirut Model United Nations (BEYMUN) student-run annual international conference, at the American University of Beirut (AUB), took place in its third edition. Like other Model United Nations (MUN) events, BEYMUN aims to introduce students to the inner workings of the United Nations (UN) through simulating committee sessions held by UN entities to discuss pressing modern-day global issues and learn about diplomacy and international relations. The theme of the BEYMUN 2018 conference was “Paving Unity, Pioneering Acceptance.”

During the opening ceremony that was held at the Issam Fares Lecture Hall, student Fadi Kaaan, secretary general of BEYMUN, addressed the audience saying, “I tried to harness an organizational culture that BEYMUN prides itself on. A transparent and open organization that establishes a consistent alignment of efforts and focus across all teams. We wanted to create a conference that would put Beirut on the map as the leading international platform for MUN and debate in the MENA region.”

A video message from AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri to the students participating in the conference was played during the opening ceremony. In his message, Khuri said, “AUB is founded on the belief in the necessity of empowering and investing in future generations of leaders. You are here, because you are those leaders of tomorrow. The skills you learn and practice here are the same ones you need in your future careers to make our world a better place: there are the potency of the spoken word, the authority of the well-structured argument, the supremacy of objectivity and open mindedness, the requisite of understanding the other and striving to hear their point of view.” He added, “This event is a simulation, but you are not just ambassadors in a simulation, you are in fact ambassadors in a very real sense, representing your values, your communities, your families, and perhaps most significantly, your generation.”

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Lebanon Representative Mireille Girard spoke at the opening ceremony saying, “The key word in all this, ladies and gentlemen, is the resolve. The very words of the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations. The resolve to find solutions, the resolve to not give up and to stay focused and determined to achieve results, for any family, for any individual that we help.” Girard added, “We hope that you will be able to demonstrate the resolve to uphold the values that created us as the United Nations; and the values that we should be transmitting to each other, from one generation of diplomats to another... until we achieve these goals of development, human rights, peace and security, for the people of the United Nations.”

The event also included an exhibition outside the opening ceremony venue, which reflected AUB’s contribution to the UN Charter, through displaying a collection of writings and pictures compiled with the help of the AUB Archives and Special Collections department.

Over the following two days, BEYMUN held its committee sessions, at the Diana Tamari Sabbagh Building on the AUB campus, bringing together AUB students as well as other students attending from different local and international universities. Elite MUNers from a number of Lebanese high schools were also invited to take part in the event.

These sessions provided the participants with a platform to engage in diplomatic discussions and negotiations through simulating four committees, each addressing two topics. The Disarmament and International Security Committee discussed the reduction of illicit small arms and light weapons trade, and the regulation of foreign military aid. As for the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, it tackled the topics of rebuilding failing states and the preservation of ethnic identities and ethno-cultural differences. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Committee addressed the issues of combating pharmaceutical crimes and counterfeit medicine, and addressing tax fraud and tax evasion. Last but not least, the Historical Security Council Committee discussed the topics of the Persian Gulf war (1990), and South African apartheid (1948).

The event was organized by a body of 85 AUB student volunteers, with support from the Office of the President, the Office of the Vice President for Advancement, the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, the University Student Faculty Committee, in addition to the alumni community, AUB faculty and staff, as well as different student societies and clubs.

Karl Daniel, Anthony Daye, Hassan Ismail, and Nadine Naboulsi are some of the students who participated in organizing the event. They shared with us their experience making this conference happen, describing it as a full-time job in which they worked in offices, had general assemblies, met with suppliers, visited other university campuses, and contacted international institutions, and held team as well as secretariat meetings. They also shared their impressions of the impact

BEYMUN had on them, such as enhancing responsibility, autonomy, team effort, leadership, and time management skills, as well as helping them to step out of their comfort zones, and realize the fact that there is a lot more to university life than academics.

BEYMUN 2018 concluded with a closing ceremony at the Phoenicia Hotel, in which awards and honorable mentions were presented to outstanding delegates.

For more information about BEYMUN: <https://www.beymun.com/>

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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 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.

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