

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 17-4-2019

## **AUB: Student delegates debate pressing world issues in BEYMUN 2019**

Students of the American University of Beirut (AUB) held the fourth edition of the university's Beirut Model United Nations (BEYMUN) annual international conference on April 5, 2019. The event was themed "Take Action, Initiate Change." Around 250 students coming from 15 countries attended the conference to act as delegates and participate in simulated committee sessions held by UN entities.

"Every year, students from AUB and other universities commit to organizing a three-day international Model United Nations (MUN) conference like no other, and every year we get to reach higher and higher echelons," said AUB student Yarah-Maria Khalifeh, BEYMUN 2019 secretary general. "This conference provides a platform for delegates from all corners of the world to meet and debate pressing world issues. The discussions held in the committee sessions foster the art of diplomacy to mold the leaders of tomorrow."

### **The opening session**

BEYMUN 2019 kicked off with an opening ceremony that was held at the Issam Fares Lecture Hall. An exhibition outside venue was also held, showcasing photos and information about the creation of the UN Charter and the contributions of Dr. Charles Malik (1906-1987). Malik was an AUB alumnus and professor of philosophy who had a distinguished role as chief motivator and coauthor of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, signed in 1948. He was also and the thirteenth president of the UN General Assembly.

The UN's Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator Philippe Lazzarini addressed the delegates during the event's opening ceremony. "Former secretary-general Ban Ki-moon stated once that with this Model United Nations experience you are becoming representatives of the United Nations. Student ambassadors charged with building

a better understanding of what the United Nations is all about, what it does, and what it can do,” Lazzarini noted. “This conference will provide you with the opportunity to learn about the United Nations and its unique role in promoting peace and sustainable development, and explore also ideas that can help to change the lives of millions, if not billions, of people across the world.” Lazzarini also encouraged the BEYMUN 2019 delegates to “not only to focus on effects of conflicts but on its root causes.”

A video message from AUB President Fadlo Khuri was also played during the opening ceremony. In his message, Khuri said that this event reflects the university’s mission to train and empower future leaders. “Like all of you, AUB students are awakened to the challenges in the world around them, and are determined that their actions will have a positive impact. It is fitting therefore that the theme of this year’s conference is ‘Take action, initiate change.’”

Khuri added, “The university experience teaches you about the world around you, but it is also the greatest opportunity I know of to learn about yourselves. At BEYMUN, you will meet new people from unfamiliar backgrounds, and you will form lasting bonds with respect and friendship. You will test your abilities in diplomacy, rhetoric, collaboration, discussion, and debate. You will hone skills which will be essential to your future lives and careers.”

### **Debates and more**

Over the next two days, four committee sessions were held. The sessions included the General Assembly First Committee which deals with disarmament and international security; General Assembly Third Committee which tackles cultural and humanitarian matters; UNESCO that promotes international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reform; and Security Council which debates issues related to maintaining international peace and security.

In these committee sessions, delegates debated transnational organized crime and stabilizing post-war countries; child marriage and inequalities in sports; cultural heritage in conflict zones and threats to journalism and freedom of speech; as well as the war in Yemen and the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar.

The conference concluded with a closing ceremony on the evening of April 5 at the Issam Fares Lecture Hall, in which by Dr. Talal Nizameddin, Dean of Student Affairs at AUB addressed the delegates.

Besides participating in the committee sessions, delegates at BEYMUN 2019 enjoyed a number of activities and social events organized throughout the days of the conference. These events included a live music performance by Father Riberts Institute students with hearing impairment

and special needs at the conference's opening session, and another live music performance by the AUB Music Club during the closing ceremony.

### **BEYMUN Community Outreach Program**

In line with this year's conference theme, Take Action, Initiate Change, BEYMUN is implementing the BEYMUN Community Outreach Program. The program includes diverse volunteering events that address the needs of different communities across Lebanon. In addition, BEYMUN is aiming to raise awareness about multiple issues by providing exposure and supporting various organizations throughout the year, and offering students the opportunity to participate in events related to educational, cultural, social, environmental, and humanitarian issues.

For more information and updates visit <https://www.beymun.com/>

**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 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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