

AFED Conference in November Part of AUB 150th Anniversary: Sustainable Development Goals in a Changing Arab Climate

Beirut, 18 July 2016

The Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) and the American University of Beirut (AUB) have announced that AFED's 9th annual conference will convene on November 10-11, 2016 at AUB. The conference, which is part of AUB's 150th Anniversary program of events, will explore challenges and prospects of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a turbulent Arab world.

The AFED 2016 Annual Report on the State of Arab Environment, entitled "Towards 2030: Sustainable Development Goals in a Changing Climate," will be launched and discussed at the conference. While focusing on the water-energy-food nexus, the report also explores viable routes to finance development and enabling conditions required to achieve the goals set for 2030.

AFED Secretary General Najib Saab explained that the conference would attempt to draw a roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs in Arab countries, in view of the Paris Climate Agreement, while taking into account the present security, economic and social challenges in the region. "AFED calls for integrating sustainability principles in development plans in general, as well as in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in countries passing through wars and strife," he said. Saab added that AFED was proud to be part of AUB anniversary events, especially that many members of its Board and Secretariat are AUB graduates.

AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri welcomed the partnership with AFED, as the leading regional organization dedicated to environment, and highlighted the alignment between the Forum and an institution of higher learning such as AUB.

"AUB had always been part of its community, and we intend to play a pivotal role in advancing quality education, which is a key SDG, as well as providing professional support for development towards 2030 in our region and re-building in the wake of the tragic conflicts which we are witnessing today," Dr. Khuri said.

Among contributors to the report and speakers at the conference will be some leading figures, including Adnan Badran, Chairman of the Board of Jordan University and Former Prime Minister of Jordan, Mahmoud Mouhieldin, Senior Vice President of World Bank, Abdulrahman Awadi, Executive Secretary of Regional Organization for the Protection of

Marine Environment (ROPME) and former Kuwaiti Minister of Public Health, Inger Andersen, Director General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Scott Vaughan, President of the International Sustainable Development Institute (IISD), Ismahane Elouafi, Director General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), Abdussalam Ould Ahmad, Regional Director and Representative of FAO, Adnan Shihabeldin, Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), Abdullah Al-Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCWA, Mahmoud Solh, Director General of International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General of the Center for Agronomic Research in the Mediterranean (CIHEAM), and Abdulkarim Sadik, Senior Economist at Kuwait Fund. A host of ministers from the MENA region have confirmed participation.

Cooperation between AUB and AFED dates back several years. AUB is an AFED academic member and its faculty contributed to all previous AFED reports, joining as panelists and speakers in the annual conferences. This year's report includes a background paper on Sustainable Health, whose lead author is Dr. Iman Nuwayhid, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, with many other members of the AUB community contributing as co-authors and editors. AUB students from several faculties are closely involved in AFED's Future Environment Leaders Forum (FELF) program. FELF enables university students to contribute to AFED reports and conferences and express their views on issues related to their future.

AFED annual reports on the state of Arab environment, published since 2008, have gained reputation of integrity and credibility and became leading sources on their topics. They provided solid scientific data and analysis, which assisted in taking informed policy options across the Arab countries. AFED's annual conference has developed into the prime environmental event in the region, gathering over 500 decision makers and academics, alongside business and community leaders and many media outlets from the Arab countries and beyond.

For updates and more information on the conference: www.afedonline.org

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