

For Immediate Release



President of leading Canadian international development agency: Corruption and lack of democracy no obstacles to development

Beirut, Lebanon- 31/03/2011 - Corruption and absence of democracy are not necessarily obstacles to economic growth, said the president of a leading Canadian funding agency for international development, during a thought-provoking lecture held at the American University of Beirut on March 30, 2011.

David Malone, PhD, the president of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), one of the world's leading institutions in the generation and application of new knowledge, told an AUB audience of faculty members and senior administrators that there is no one successful model for development.

"Those who think there is one model for development need to study China and India," said Malone, who has published lucratively on peace and security issues and has an extensive international diplomatic and political experience.

Malone noted that China, which is the World Bank's poster child for successful economic development, boasting a steady 8-11 percent annual economic growth for the past several years, "could not be less democratic." Meanwhile, he described India as a "chaotic, corrupt and exciting democracy," yet no one could question that it leads the way in entrepreneurship and that it also has been growing at 6-9 percent annually. Similarly, violence and conflict do not necessarily paralyze growth, as Sri Lanka and many South American nations have shown, he said.

The IDRC president was on a regional trip to explore new concepts in development and research with the center's regional partners, including AUB, which benefits from over \$1.5 million in ongoing research in the areas of sustainable development, health, food security and safety, environment and others. AUB is also in the process of getting approved for a \$1.5 million project to study the effect of climate change on sea levels and sea water intrusion.

Malone argued that the latest economic and financial crisis, which was a "Made in the West" crisis and more specifically "Made in the USA" crisis, stunted the economies of Western democracies but left most of the developing world unscathed.

"This crisis is a spur for new thinking," he said. "It inspires us to reflect on what we can learn from these [developing] countries."

Malone added that applying a single policy to several countries is a "delusional and dangerous" practice, as the specificities of each country should be dictating these policies.

The IDRC president said he was hopeful about the prospect of policy-relevant research in the region as he believes the current changes will lead to younger and better educated and academically-aware public officials joining the new governments.

He commended AUB's top-quality research teams and proposals, noting that IDRC's funding level at this university is not typical for the region. "But there aren't many AUBs in the Arab world," he said.

IDRC, of AUB's top funders, is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. IDRC's support is directed toward creating a local research community whose work will build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies. It funds applied research by researchers and innovators from developing countries on the problems they identify as crucial to their communities.

ENDS

Photo caption: AUB Professor Mutassem El-Fadel and David Malone

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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 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of more than 7,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the 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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