

For Immediate Release



## **AUB hosts corporate network that promotes ethics and responsible business among companies**

Beirut, Lebanon- 04/09/2015 - To promote ethics and responsible business in Lebanon, the Olayan School of Business (OSB) at AUB will be hosting a network of corporate participants committed to human and labor rights, protecting the environment and rejecting or alleviating corruption.

This new network, known as the Global Compact Network Lebanon, is part of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) initiative, which works with business and non-business participants to transform the world, aiming to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to all people, communities and markets. The Lebanon Network was launched at the OSB Maamari Auditorium on September 3, 2015, in the presence of a host of business and civil society leaders, human rights advocates, and academics.

The UNGC initiative works in line with the UN to create a more sustainable and equitable world. Signatories to the UN Global Compact commit to align their operations with the [10 principles](#) of pertaining to promoting human rights, labor rights, protecting the environment, and anti-corruption efforts.

“Nowadays, companies are evaluated not only on business performance but also on whether they apply corporate social responsibility (broadly referred to as sustainability) to show that they are accounting for the multiple impacts of their operations and contributing to make the world a better place,” said Dima Jamali, the representative of Global Compact Network Lebanon, OSB management professor and the Kamal Shair Endowed Chair in Leadership. “Making profit is a legitimate goal for companies, but equally important is adopting practices that uphold human and labor rights, protect the environment, and avoid corruption.” Jamali added that companies that abide by such ethical principles have proved to be more successful than others that do not, since they manage to create a work environment and business culture that enhances productivity and staff loyalty and initiative, while expanding their business networks and enhancing their relationships with different stakeholders.

Already, 37 companies (business and non-business) in Lebanon have joined the network, and have become a part of a global group of over 8000 participants from all over the world, making it the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world that seeks to make corporate sustainability a transformative force in achieving a shared, secure and sustainable future.

“We are very excited to steer forward with this effort and help promote the movement in Lebanon and the region through the efforts of the Global Compact Network Lebanon,” said Jamali. “This is ultimately aligned with the mission of OSB in promoting responsible

leadership education and graduating students who are sensitized to the moral aspects of decision making and the symbiotic relationship of business and society.”

During the opening ceremony of the launch event, AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri praised the initiative, considering it to be in good alignment with the AUB mission, and an opportunity to reflect on the different parts, building on what has already been done in the past, to do what has to be done in the future.

“I prefer dreams of the future better than the history of the past,” President Khuri said, quoting Thomas Jefferson. “Our aim is a future society beyond corruption and questions of integrity.”

Keynote speaker Adnan Kassar, chairman and general manager of Fransabank, lauded AUB for this initiative, saying: “AUB remains a key pillar in raising the flag of Lebanon and developing generations of leaders,”

Kassar added, “A company’s role is not just to grow itself but involves a duty to contribute to social development as well.”

In 1999, Kassar, a visionary who was the pioneer in seeing the importance of CSR to demonstrate good citizenship of companies, headed a large business delegation and met with UN secretary general Kofi Annan in Geneva to accept his Global Compact challenge for business to co-promote shared humanitarian values with the UN.

“My deep conviction remains that peace is the best way to develop trade and partnerships, as done by our Phoenician forefathers,” he added.

Dr, Jamali, in her capacity as elected network representative of the Global Compact Network Lebanon’s, gave a presentation, highlighting the realities of the sustainability landscape in the region, and introducing the UNGC and its 10 principles, as well the Global Compact Network Lebanon in terms of priorities and work-plan for the next phase.

Global Compact Network Lebanon’s contact person, Farah Matar outlined the opportunities for learning and engagement, as well as the importance of group participation and collective action in overcoming multiple hurdles.

A panel discussing “How Organizations are Aligning Efforts with UNGC”, composed of MP Ghassan Moukheiber; Marc Audi, General Manager Bank Audi; May Makhzoumi, President Makhzoumi Foundation; Rana Salhab, Regional Talent, and Communications Partner at Deloitte in the Middle East ; and Wael Bitar, General Manager Engineering & Building Co. EBCO, shared their experiences in integrating the 10 principles into daily operations and the challenges and opportunities encountered throughout their journey.

In closing, certificates of joining the UNGC were distributed to all Lebanese participants of the network.

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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 8,000 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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