

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen

First, I would like to welcome you all at Beirut Arab University. We are delighted to host the third EMUNI Research Souk entitled: “Innovation and Employability: The Universities Challenge”.

Allow me, also, to thank Prof. Joseph Mifsud, the presidents of all participating universities, the EU commissioners, all BAU partners, members of the EMUNI Senate and MB for their attendance. And of course we should not forget the young researchers and all our distinguished guests.

Beirut Arab University is one of the largest private higher education institutions and one of the oldest universities in Lebanon. The University celebrated its 50th Jubilee last year: 50 years full of achievements and success. 50 years providing students with the best knowledge to be innovative. BAU is a Lebanese private institution for higher education, founded by the El-Bir and Ihsan Foundation in 1960 with the support of the Egyptian Government.

BAU has ten faculties at the Beirut, Debbieh & Tripoli campuses; it also has a branch in Alexandria. The number of undergraduate students in the Academic year 2010 - 2011 is 10000 and that of the Postgraduate Students is 1500.

At BAU we have different centers such as the Academic Development & Quality Assurance Center, the Center for Consultation, the Media Center, the Language Center, the Human Rights Center, and the Center for Environmental Researches.

BAU has been committed since its foundation to promoting quality education. We continuously look to improve the academic and administrative services by consistently upgrading these services to conform to international standards. Moreover, BAU - in collaboration with its Alumni - plays an important role in guiding students toward the best employment opportunities and career development.

BAU was and still is a leading university in creating an innovative environment for its students.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: '*Intelligence plus character* - that is the goal of true education.' BAU firmly believes that enhancing the intellectual skills for students is essential. Due to our awareness and realization of the importance of building intelligent and mature characters, BAU took the initiative to host Research Souk 2011 here in Beirut. Research souk is not only a market where young researchers meet, but it is also a gate for cultures, ideas and traditions to interact in one effective day. Research souk is a place where the knowledge of the world is shared through the World Wide Web. It is an extraordinary event that opens borders for the flow of research and expertise from country to country, from university to university, from researcher to researcher.

Ladies and gentlemen, I invite you today to appreciate the essence of Lebanese youth and to be proud of their achievements; to view the innovation of their work and how they are building their career in order to seize promising employability opportunities. We are here today as presidents, scholars, academics, and professors, to cheer their work and give them confidence in their abilities.

On behalf of BAU, I would like to thank EMUNI for its support of the Union for the Mediterranean and would like to thank our partners, the University of Saint Joseph, Notre Dame University and the National Council for Scientific Research, for their efforts and cooperation from the very beginning.

BAU and its partners again have the honour to welcome you and hope that you will enjoy your stay in Lebanon.

Thank you.