

Speech of Prof. Salim Daccache s.j., Rector of the Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ), in the Introductory Session of the first Joint USJ / AUB Research Workshop, January 19, 2018.

It is with great pleasure and pride that I welcome you today to the Campus of innovation and sport for this scientific day of prominent researchers from both AUB and USJ, an event that reflects one of our deepest aspirations: an inter-university dialogue, between our teachers-researchers, addressing biomedical and engineering subjects. When I say dialogue, I don't merely mean a series of conferences, because it is through dialogue, exchange of knowledge and interaction that we can build a strong scientific culture and lead joint scientific research projects.

On Tuesday, earlier this week, President Dr. Fadlo Khuri and I signed a memorandum of understanding. President Khuri said that we should not let this agreement become a decorative and lifeless document, therefore it is up to you, ladies and gentlemen, professors, teachers-researchers to translate it into action. In fact, it is known that agreements between universities remain unfulfilled if teachers from both sides do not work together to turn words into action. This seminar reflects this desire to work and create together for the good of both our universities as well as our societies.

Dear friends,

Since its establishment, our institution has been continuously devoted to scientific research in its various fields, like history, religion, philosophy, kalam, fauna and flora, Arabic and French literature, biology, physics, archeology, paleontology and many other disciplines. This work was carried out thanks to the efforts of teams of teachers - researchers, administrative and technical staff, and students with different backgrounds and aspirations, who all have a common passion for sharing and

enriching their knowledge and skills. Along this path, the Jesuit fathers were always present, with, as living proof, a wide series of books published throughout one hundred years and even more. Today, even though the scientific presence of the Jesuits is much more modest than before, they will certainly remain for us a source of inspiration for many years to come.

Dear friends

Over the past years, and despite our limited means, we've been devoting, with the "Hôtel Dieu de France", more time, energy and human resources to enhance research which is a key element in our academic educational project. A health and technology division was in fact created on this particular campus in order to promote various researches in many disciplines. This furtherance of research is like a risky challenge we all carry together. With other researchers from different universities, especially in France, and today with our AUB colleagues, it is becoming increasingly possible to succeed in this challenge and reap its fruits. The complexity approaches that you are going to debate today, over health, environment, food products, chronic diseases, concern us in many ways: as researchers, as instructors and as citizens.

This seminar is a crucial and significant first step and I am sure that it will be a great success for those who have prepared it and, also, for those who will host it. This success will pave the way for more collaborative research work and a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches. We shall work together and, together, we shall succeed.