

**Address of Rev. Fr. Prof. George Hobeika**

**For the Brazil – Lebanon Meeting of University Representatives**

**May 16, 2018**

Distinguished audience,

It is such a great pleasure to be with you today and to be part of this Lebanese Brazilian gathering that I am sure will consolidate even more the linkages between Lebanese and Brazilian universities thanks to the great efforts of the Brazilian Embassy to Lebanon.

Since its founding the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) has been spreading its wings in different parts of the world sowing excellence by sharing its experience and drawing on the best practices in the world of education and higher education.

Today, I would like to tell you a little bit about USEK, a private Catholic higher education institution founded by the Lebanese Maronite Order (LMO) in 1938. USEK is the first university established in Lebanon upon a Lebanese initiative and by Lebanese citizens who are the Lebanese Maronite Order monks. From that moment on, these monks, who had been entrusted with a teaching mission for more than three centuries, have committed to advance USEK and to make it grow in a Catholic and highly diverse environment. Their main concern was, and continues to

be, the provision of university teaching, in conformity with the requirements of the labor market, in close association with scientific research, and most importantly in line with the University mission and identity. Today, USEK is a comprehensive University with 12 schools and 3 different regional centers that aim at ensuring access to higher education to students in different regions of the country.

USEK has a wide array of collaborations in the Arab region, in Europe, in Canada, in the United States of America and in Latin America. The University is also proud of its partnerships with 4 Brazilian Universities (namely the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás, the Pontifical Catholic University of Sao Paulo, the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce and, last but not least, the partnership agreement it has signed with the renowned Coimbra Group).

Through its **signature** partnerships, USEK establishes itself as a hub for continuous efforts and endeavors that aim at combining what would sharpen the skills of its students and what would promote their **EXCELLENCE** when they leave the walls of the University to explore the wonders of the world.

EXCELLENCE, a magical, tempting, yet very realistic word! It becomes realistic when it is our aim and our driving force at the same time! And as it is widely said “excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better”, excellence becomes

the other face of our commitment “to do better”. Here, I cannot but think of the famous saying of Jean Paul Sartre “Commitment is an act, not a word” and our collaboration with the Coimbra Group is not a simple academic exchange, but it is rather **a signature** of our **commitment** to help our students pursue knowledge, personal advancement and cultural diversity that would be later on translated into long-lasting learning, intellectual curiosity and top-notch performance wherever they are.

Finally, I would like to close my remarks by expressing a heartfelt word of thanks to our H.E. Excellency Mr. Gorge Kadri, Ambassador of Brazil to Lebanon and a close friend of USEK for his continuous support to promote Lebanese Brazilian collaboration on different levels.

I wish you a fruitful meeting and I will be looking forward to having you all tomorrow on our green campus at USEK.

Thank you!