

Speech of Fr. Prof. Georges Hobeika, President of USEK

Accreditation for Reshaping Business Education in the MENA Region

BE Mena Beirut 2019

Opening Ceremony - February 27, 2019

His Excellency, Mr. Saad Hariri, President of the Council of Ministers, represented by Professor Dima Jamali, UN Global Compact National Representative

Dr. Timothy Mescon, Executive Vice President and Chief Officer, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa for AACSB International

Mr. Ihsan Zakri, Manager, Accreditation and Member Services for AACSB International

Mr. Andre Cointreau, President of Le Cordon Bleu International, France

Dr. Fouad Zmokhol, President of the Association of Lebanese Business People in the World (RDCL World) and CEO of Zimco Group (Middle East) | SAPDIB (Africa)

Dr. Tony Asher, USEK trustee and Founder of the Asher Center for innovation and entrepreneurship

Prof. Elie Assaf, dean of Usek Business School, Eminent Deans and Representatives of Business Schools from Lebanon and the MENA Region

Reverend Fathers, members of the University Council,
USEK officers, Deans, Faculty, staff, students

Dear Colleagues, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very delighted to welcome you all at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) to mark this unique conference entitled “the Accreditation for Reshaping Business

Education in the MENA Region - BE Mena Beirut 2019” organized in partnership with The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and under the patronage of the President of the Council of Ministers, His Excellency Mr. Saad Hariri.

USEK is honored today to welcome the very distinguished delegations from different countries across the globe: USA, Netherlands, France, Egypt, Morocco, Tunis, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Lebanon, ...

Whether you are a speaker, an entrepreneur, a dean, a faculty, or a student, your presence here means that you are reiterating your dedication to continuously improve higher education and more specifically business education.

USEK has been carried by years of tradition of the Lebanese Maronite Order to best serve the Lebanese community while being agile to respond very actively to every socioeconomic change or challenge. While choosing the road of academic excellence, exemplified by the commitment to international accreditations, USEK is devoted to quality in teaching and learning and to distinction in all its faculties and in all its programs, believing that “Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution.” as stated Aristotle.

The achievement of a three-pillar accreditations (Institutional, programs and student services) came as a result of tremendous efforts, and this, in addition to many other success stories and accomplishments. Again, this year, USEK has been ranked the first Sustainable and Green University in Lebanon by GreenMetric World University and ranked among the top 700 universities by the QS World University Rankings 2019.

If we look back on the history of the USEK Business School, since its foundation in 1966, we notice that the school sits right at the heart of the University mission, striving to prepare future leaders for innovation and professional growth. Till this date, the school graduated a substantial number of elites and talented employees, entrepreneurs or business leaders serving in different business sectors, eminent companies, Banks, educational institutions, etc.

USEK reiterates today its commitment to become an entrepreneurship-oriented institution graduating social entrepreneurs and global responsible leaders. In this regard, in 2016, USEK established the Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship to foster innovative and entrepreneurial mindset among USEK students and to further serve as a go-to center in transferring business and innovative ideas into success.

Today, the world expects that we strive more and more for the future of our students and graduates. In some countries, universities are held accountable of the employability and the success rate of their graduates. An important reason why universities and schools are urged to work closely with eminent international accreditation agencies like AACSB to provide high quality education and to graduate qualified students, entrepreneurs and policy makers who will become successful leaders seizing each opportunity to create a relevant change in their community and society.

We have the responsibility to provide our students not only with the expertise, but also with the complete ability and independence to grow in their professional career and thus to evolve as a human person.

Pope Francis stated once to a group of students from France, at the Vatican:

“If world insists on success, then make life more just, humane”.

Let’s make BE Mena Beirut 2019 an opportunity to dialogue and shed the light on best practices in the participating eminent business schools, associations and businesses.

Many thanks go to His Excellency, Mr. Saad Hariri, for his patronage and constant support to the advancement of all sectors to serve the Lebanese community.

BE Mena Beirut 2019 wouldn’t have been possible without the precious support provided by Dr. Timothy Mescon - Executive Vice President and Chief Officer, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa for AACSB International and Mr. Ihsan Zakri,

Manager, Accreditation and Member Services, EMEA. I am very pleased to welcome both of you today. Deepest appreciation from the heart!

My special thanks go as well for Mr. Andre Cointreau, President of Le Cordon Bleu International France, for your continuous support and for being a strategic partner.

My deep appreciation goes for Dr. Chris Wert, USEK AACSB mentor, present among us today. Thanks for guiding the AACSB accreditation journey of our Business School that officially became AACSB candidate in November 2018.

I would like to Seize this opportunity to thank all the Keynote speakers Prof. Dima Jamali, Dr. Timothy Mescon and Dr. Oussama Hassanein and to all the speakers present among us today for accepting to actively participate in the plenary and panel sessions. Your engagement is a true example of success.

My appreciation goes to USEK Provost, Prof. Georges Yahchouchi and to the Dean of USEK Business School Prof. Elie Assaf. Not to forget the AACSB Accreditation committee and all those who worked hard to organize this conference.

As said the American journalist in the Chicago Sun-Times Sydney Harris, we all know that “the whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows”. And I would like to add “the whole purpose of accreditation is to open the windows of opportunity and success”.

Wishing you a fruitful conference and the achievement of the expected outcomes.

Thank you