

**Word from the H.E. Minister of Information  
Dr. Tarek Mitri  
Representing General Michel Suleiman  
President of the Lebanese Republic**

**Summary**

Dr. Mitri conveyed the sentiments of the President of Lebanon and welcomed the participants, who are assembled to discuss issues related to the role of higher education in fostering a culture of dialogue.

He highlighted the emphasis on the problems related to dialogue from the perspective of curricula and programs which are supposed to stress on dialogue and ways to strengthen it. He emphasized that dialogue is not an intellectual endeavor only nor is it a sporadic one, but a continuous effort to affect ways of thinking, temperaments and feelings to be able to make a change in the troubled world we live in.

All of this is not strange to Lebanon, whose very essence is precisely this. He reminded the audience of due call of the president of the Republic in his address to the UN General Assembly that “the philosophy behind the very existence of Lebanon is dialogue and rapprochements”.

He called for bypassing the divisions, be they political or sectarian, towards mutual recognition while aims at reciprocal enrichment. Dialogue, he stressed, should work for devising means to manage division or competition and bring about a balance among the participants in it. He alluded to the troubles Lebanon faced throughout its history, which further pushed it to be an ideal platform for dialogue between religions and cultures.

Lebanon’s ambition, according to the President, is to become an international center for owing to its specificity and unique experience. We are called to pool our efforts, and thus hope that this conference contribute to fostering the culture of dialogue throughout the university curricula and other activities, especially research. It calls for widening our horizons through more cooperation.