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AUB and Hariri Foundation Sign MoU to Advance Sustainable Development, Evidence-Informed Policy, and Youth Empowerment

From a shared vision and commitment to empower people and institutions to engage more effectively in shaping public policy and advancing sustainable development in Lebanon, the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU establishes a framework for partnership aimed at enhancing institutional and individual capacities, facilitating knowledge sharing, and promoting sustainable development through interdisciplinary collaboration.

The signing ceremony was held at AUB and was attended by President of the Hariri Foundation Bahia Hariri; Dr. Zaher Dawy, AUB provost; Dr. Imad Baalbaki, the university's senior vice president for advancement and business development; senior administrators; academics; and senior representatives from both AUB and the Hariri Foundation.

Welcoming the collaboration, Dr. Fadi El-Jardali, co-lead and managing director of the Government Engagement Platform at AUB, stated, "This collaboration stands as a testament to what can be achieved when academia and civil society work hand in hand—translating knowledge into action, and ideas into impact."

In her remarks, President of the Hariri Foundation Bahia Hariri emphasized the importance of investing in youth and bridging the gap between academia and the community to empower young people in building a better future for Lebanon, especially given the current challenges the country faces. She recalled the words of the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri: "We do not need anything from anyone—we, as Lebanese, can build this country," highlighting how talented, capable, and resilient Lebanese youth are, particularly when provided with political stability and security.

Dr. Zaher Dawy reaffirmed the university's steadfast belief in investing in youth as the changemakers and leaders of tomorrow, noting that signing this MoU is the foundation for activating the various initiatives envisioned under this partnership.

In his remarks, Dr. Imad Baalbaki highlighted the long-standing collaboration between AUB and the Hariri Foundation. He noted the foundation's generosity in providing scholarships and

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donations, including initiatives such as the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing at AUB, which have significantly supported students and the broader academic community.

Professor Abla Sibai, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB, emphasized the impactful work previously done between the Hariri Foundation and the Faculty of Health Sciences, particularly in the NextGen Policy Boot Camp organized by the Knowledge to Policy Center, highlighting the meaningful contributions of students to policy and community initiatives.

Dr. Simon Kachar, founder and current director of the Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory at the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at AUB, introduced the observatory's mission in promoting good governance practices and expanding a culture of citizenship—a key pillar shared with the Hariri Foundation, which will be the basis for the future collaboration.

The partnership will focus on building capacities in policymaking and civic engagement through policy boot camps, structured workshops, and mentorship programs implemented in collaboration with AUB's Knowledge to Policy Center and the Youth of the Rise of Lebanon Forum. It will also foster interdisciplinary research and policy dialogue across AUB's leading research centers, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, the Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory, the Business Practice and Policy Initiative, and the Government Engagement Platform.

In addition, the collaboration will support experiential learning through scholarships, joint training programs, and reciprocal internships, while advancing knowledge exchange through collaborative media and communication initiatives—notably by featuring AUB's academic output on *Enmaeya*, the Hariri Foundation's platform for dialogue and development.

This partnership underscores the shared commitment of both institutions to empowering youth, fostering evidence-informed decision-making, and strengthening Lebanon's sustainable development ecosystem.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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