



The Role of Higher Education in Fostering the Culture of Dialogue and Understanding

4 – 6 November, 2009
Notre Dame University – Louaize, Lebanon

The International Association of Universities (IAU) and Notre Dame University – Louaize are jointly organizing the 2009 IAU International Conference on *The Role of Higher Education in Fostering the Culture of Dialogue and Understanding*. It will be held at and hosted by Notre Dame University – Louaize in Lebanon, on **November 4-6, 2009**.

Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century has witnessed the continuation of serious social, cultural and political unrest and conflict worldwide. The almost unprecedented economic crisis is likely to increase the turmoil and compound the complexity of finding solutions. Today's society seems more fragmented and unstable than ever. Given the diversity of cultural communities in Lebanon which is mirrored in its educational institutions, the country serves as a microcosm for exploring issues of inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

This IAU international conference will bring together higher educational leaders, scholars and others interested in exploring and sharing views, ideas and examples of innovative ways by which higher education, in all aspects of its mission, can foster dialogue and understanding in the context of diverse societies and a globally inter-connected world.

How can higher education institutions (HEIs) maximize the benefits of diversity by creating a culture of appreciation for other perspectives, traditions and points of view? What challenges, or even risks, will universities face when they choose to promote the culture of dialogue and understanding locally and globally? What can HEIs do to prepare their graduates for a culturally diverse world?

The programme

The Keynote Address will be delivered by *Federico Mayor Zaragoza*, President, Culture of Peace Foundation, Former Director-General of UNESCO, Co-Chair of the High Level Group United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

Plenary sessions will focus on:

- Why and How to Develop the Culture of Dialogue?
Challenges from Institutional, Local and Global Perspectives.
- Instilling the Culture of Dialogue in Higher Education

The Conference will also feature **several parallel sessions** on the following themes:

- Shaping the Future Citizen: What competencies should graduates have to be prepared for effective intercultural dialogue?
- Dialogue as a means to conflict prevention, management and resolution: a Lebanese case study
- Comparative Research and Cultural Studies as Means to Enhance Dialogue through Curricular Innovation
- The role of leaders, faculty and students in nurturing a culture of dialogue and understanding on campus
- Internationalization of higher education – cross-border and at home - promoting the culture of dialogue and appreciation for diversity
- ICTs as Facilitators or Obstacles of Inter-Cultural Dialogue in Higher Education

More Information & Registration: www.unesco.org/iau

Contacts: **Hillegje Van't Land, vantland.iau@unesco.org**
Isabelle Devylder, devylder.iau@unesco.org

About IAU

The **International Association of Universities (IAU)**, founded in 1950, is a UNESCO-based international non-governmental organization bringing together more than **630** higher education institutions and associations from some **125 countries** around the world. IAU's **mission** is to strengthen higher education worldwide by providing a **global forum** for institutional and association leaders to **discuss, examine and take action** on issues of common interest. Its services are available **on a priority basis to Members** but also to organizations, institutions and authorities concerned with higher education, as well as to individual policy and decision-makers, specialists, senior higher education administrators, teachers, researchers and students.

More information is available at www.unesco.org/iau/

About Notre Dame University – Louaize

Notre Dame University – Louaize was established in 1987. It is a Lebanese private non-profit Catholic university which adopts the American system of education. Today, the University includes seven Faculties offering 73 undergraduate and 19 graduate degrees, including a new Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.).

NDU's programs draw upon the values engraved in its mission and the rich and diverse cultural context of Lebanon to prepare students for interaction with the complexity of arts and sciences in the twenty-first century.

NDU prides itself for attracting about 5000 students diverse in age, socio-economic background, and educational interests to pursue academic excellence in a range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

More information is available at <http://www.ndu.edu.lb/index.htm>