

Visit of the Latin American Ambassador

May 8, 2008

Your Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

It is a notable privilege to address this distinguished gathering. I thank you for your honoring us with your visit.

I want to begin by congratulating the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) for its fifth anniversary, as it has greatly advanced the field of migration studies in general and the Lebanese one in particular.

I want to pay tribute as well to the former President and Vice Presidents of NDU, who had the vision to establish LERC and for their commitment to address the issues related to the Lebanese diaspora in a more academic manner.

Lebanon has a long tradition of international migration which continues to our day.

Your own countries have experienced the inflow of Lebanese migration; some of you might have experienced that on a more personal level, being descendents of Lebanese migrants or acquainted with them.

Your countries have welcomed Lebanese migrants who were seeking a better environment whether politically or economically. Your countries have given our people the opportunity to find a niche for their new lives. In most cases, the Lebanese immigrants paid back this welcome with hard work, success and loyalty.

We are gathered here to acknowledge the people we share, i.e. the Lebanese-Mexicans, the Lebanese-Brazilians, the Lebanese-Venezuelans, the Lebanese-Colombians, so forth and so on; to honor them and to capitalize on their will to strengthen cooperation between our respective countries.

It is for this reason, and to build up on my predecessors' vision, that NDU has recently allocated a piece of its prime land and dedicated it for the World Lebanese Migration Museum to be built on it.

NDU can build this museum and populate it with memories, documents, films, paintings, books and the like only if Your Excellencies and, through you, your respective countries join hands with us in the undertaking of this important endeavor. This pedagogical museum will recreate the history of Lebanese emigration as well as being a place for education about your respective countries and cultures.

This effort should make of this museum a new destination for our people and yours.
Hence

- Your commitment is important
- The commitment of your respective countries and universities is vital
- The commitment of the Lebanese communities in your respective countries is fundamental.

You have a crucial and indispensable role to play. We look to you for partnerships. Let us together build this historical edifice.

Thank you.