

## **Welcoming the Delegation of the Catholic University of Louvain**

March 12, 2008

It is my pleasure to welcome you, dear colleagues from *Universite Catholique de Louvain* at Notre Dame University, Louaize, and to welcome His Excellency, Mr. Ambassador on this special and particular occasion, your first visit to NDU.

Knowing the circumstances of our country, we deeply value your courage and your meaningful initiative to come and visit Lebanon and our institutions of higher education, and be willing to build steady bridges between your institution and ours.

We are also conscious of the similarities between Lebanon and Belgium, in terms of diversity and pluralism, and somehow the “political situation”,

We are really honored to receive you among us and are sincerely thankful for a grand university with a great heritage of over six centuries to consider visiting us, a very young university. It is a coherent implementation of the way UCL understands itself:

*“Monde en soi, l’Universite Catholique de Louvain est aussi ouverte sur le monde. Elle est un espace de memoire et d’initiative, de celebration et d’invention de la culture, d’accomplissement et de depassement”.*

What our two institutions have in common is not only restricted to “being Catholic” but rather it is the human academic concern, and that is our common objective of “serving the human being, body, soul, and mind”.

Dear Friends,

NDU was founded by the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary in 1987. It adopts the American system of education. Nowadays, seven faculties, 180 full-time and 250 part-time faculty members, 200 staff members, 100 contractuels, 5350 students, and 8000 alumni form NDU.

With great pleasure, we at NDU are ready today for the signing of a memorandum of understanding with UCL, aiming at the implementation of future collaboration in different areas.

To conclude, I ask the Holy Virgin Mary, Patroness of this University to protect both Belgium and Lebanon, and keep them countries of civilization, freedom, and openess.

Fr. Walid Moussa  
President