

**Your Excellencies,
Ministers,
Distinguished Participants,
Water Directors and Experts,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentleman,**

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to the Opening Ceremony of the “4th Beirut Water Week.”

Following up on the success of the three previous, and similarly themed, Mediterranean multi-events, the 4th Beirut Water Week has become a reference event in the Mediterranean Basin and the Middle East, attracting large-scale stakeholder participation from many countries concerned with water management and water governance.

Under the leadership of the Mediterranean Network Basin Organizations (MENBO) and its esteemed President, Dr. Fadi Comair, our aim is to provide a dynamic platform for dialogue among a wide diversity of perspectives in order to create as many innovative water solutions as possible.

We need a collective effort to contribute to the development of a new “Strategy” for water in the Mediterranean. Such an effort also provides an excellent opportunity for us all to work together toward achieving substantial progress in the fields of human and economic development, social stability, and environmental protection. The consolidation of a water culture in conditions of peace and security is essential for Mediterranean countries, and we invite you to effectively contribute to this mission.

Southeastern Mediterranean countries cannot achieve sustainable development and sound water resources management without adequate governance. This concept, therefore, requires that such an exercise in water management should be based on participation, responsibility, effectiveness, and coherence.

States in the Southeastern part of the Mediterranean Basin must start applying the policy of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) within the framework of the National Water Codes and the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), according to which the following policies must be implemented: hydraulic, environmental, social, and economic. In addition, every effort must be made to encourage cooperation between public authorities and training centers, and university research centers in the field of water resources management.

Let us view the 4th Beirut Water Week as a golden opportunity to achieve these goals.

I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations or debates in the days ahead. I would like to reiterate that I take great pride in having you here today and that I have the utmost confidence in your work and vision for the future.

In closing, let us always remember that the use of water is essential and is a basic human right - a tool for peace rather than a tool for war.

Thank you.

Fr. Walid Moussa
President of NDU

Wednesday February 20, 2013