

Dr. Hourani Promotes LDI in Kuwait

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Under the auspices of the Ambassador of the Republic of Lebanon to Kuwait H.E. Dr. *Khodr Helweh*, the Lebanon Dialogue Initiative (LDI) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) organized a symposium titled, “*Community Diversity and Dialogue of Civilizations, the Lebanese Model.*” The event was held on campus at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) in Kuwait.

A large group of intellectuals, academics, businessmen, Kuwaiti citizens, and members of the Lebanese community attended the event at the invitation of Ms. Lubna Adlouni who represents the LDI in Kuwait.



The attendees of the symposium, GUST University, Kuwait (March, 2015).

In his intervention, Ambassador Helweh, who is no stranger to dialogue given that he is the author of a book titled *The Street of Churches* in which he describes co-existence among the Christians and the Muslims in his town, Tripoli, praised the initiative and called for Lebanese, Arabs, and friends of Lebanon to support it. He said that all efforts should be focused on effective dialogue not only to establish an international dialogue center in Lebanon but also for the center to become a major part of the United Nations mission.



Dr. Helweh, Ambassador of Lebanon in Kuwait, GUST University, Kuwait (March, 2015).

The symposium began with a welcome speech delivered by Ms. Adlouni and was followed by a word from Professor of Islamic Studies at the Gulf University Dr. *Salah Eddine Arkadan*. In his speech, Dr. *Arkadan* noted that H. B. Patriarch Elias Howayek called for the idea of Lebanon the land of the dialogue of civilizations during the Peace Conference of Versailles in 1919. He went on to state that Lebanon remains a model of co-existence between its citizens and residents despite the multiplicity of cultural backgrounds, traditions, and religions.

Following Dr. Eddin's speech, Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of LDI's International Campaign, stated that she was pleased to announce that Kuwait was the first country in the Middle

East to launch the Initiative, because of the special and deep ties that connect the people of Lebanon with the people of Kuwait.



Dr. Guita Hourani, GUST University, Kuwait (March, 2015).

Dr. Hourani pointed out that the Initiative was a passion of the late Ambassador Fouad Turk and that it grew out of a speech delivered to the United Nations General Assembly in 2008 by former Lebanese President Michel Sleiman on behalf of Lebanon. She said that LDI started building on the call of President Sleiman in 2013 with the support of several Lebanese businessmen and academics, as well as a group of Lebanese activists. She also noted the key role that NDU is playing in its support of the Initiative.

Dr. Bilal Sandid concluded the gathering by reciting a poem in the Lebanese dialect in which he highlighted the importance of Lebanon, as a land, as a people, and as a message of conviviality and freedom.