



Latin America Proves a Great Support for the Global Initiative Titled, “*Lebanon: Land of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures*”

By Dr. Nicholas Kahwaji, Member of the Steering Committee Lebanon Land of Dialogue Initiative (LDC)



Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa, President of Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) dispatched Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at NDU and Director of the LDC International Campaign to Latin America, to promote the University’s Initiative, “*Lebanon: Land of Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures* (LDC).” Her mission was to include Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay to introduce the LDC Initiative primarily to the Lebanese communities in these countries.

Her trip began in Mexico in mid-July 2014 and ended two months later in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. During her tour, she introduced the Initiative not only to the Lebanese communities but also to various parliamentarians, politicians, diplomats, academicians, businessmen, heads of organizations, journalists, and the general public.

The Initiative went global, resulting in more than 3,000 signatures that were generated from the energy and enthusiasm created by this campaign in addition to more than 40 endorsements from Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian organizations. According to Dr. Hourani, the Initiative and its core ideas, i.e. to designate Lebanon as a land of dialogue and to establish an international dialogue center by the United Nations in Lebanon, was not a tough sell to either the public or officials. In fact, Dr. Hourani said she found that the former and the latter were convinced that Lebanon is a land of dialogue and that Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East that can play this important and much needed role.

Dr. Hourani returned with assurances that the Lebanese communities and various officials in these three countries, especially parliamentarians and ambassadors, are willing to lobby their own governments to vote for Lebanon as a land of dialogue and to vote for the establishment of the international center in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In its historical importance, Dr. Hourani’s visit was considered third, following the visit of former President Michel Suleiman and the visit of His Beatitude Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rahi of Lebanon.

The Initiative and its first two instruments, signing the public petition and getting it endorsed by businesses, organizations, companies, associations, and the like continues in various countries where Lebanon has sizable communities. The 18 Liaison Officers in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Panama, the Dominican Republic, France, the USA, Canada, Kuwait, Australia, Chile, Africa, Japan, and Togo continue to promote the Initiative to generate signatures and endorsements.

In addition, Dr. Edward Alam, Director of the Council of Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP) at NDU and the Director of the Initiative, who is currently at an international conference in Greece to introduce the Initiative, will be in Paris from October 11 to 15, 2014, to present the Initiative to various French and Lebanese organizations and institutions, before traveling to Brazil for the same reason.

This Initiative is vital for Lebanon's existence and mission, and needs the support of both Lebanese and non-Lebanese who believe in freedom, dialogue, conviviality, and peace.

http://ulcm.org/wlcu-lebanese-heritage/september-2014-issue?utm_source=test&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=Sept+2014+Issue