

**Monsieur le Président, Mme la Vice-présidente, Monsieur le Consul général,
Mesdames et messieurs, chers amis,**

C'est pour moi un très grand plaisir d'être parmi vous aujourd'hui, bien qu'à distance depuis le Liban, et je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour souligner la vitalité de la relation de coopération, riche et féconde, qu'entretiennent l'AUF et ses membres en Palestine.

Je vais, pour être compris de tous, poursuivre mon propos en anglais.

The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, AUF, is proud to contribute to the support of many projects in Palestine, in particular with An Najah University. I hope that we will soon be able to develop a specific action concerning research in physics, and we are very opened to future proposals.

First of all, a word about AUF.

We are the first network of higher education and research institutions in the world. Created 60 years ago, AUF brings together more than 1000 universities, university networks and scientific research centers, in about 120 countries.

Its Middle East regional office is located in Beirut. It gathers 89 member institutions throughout the region, including 3 in Palestine.

AUF is at the same time a global network, an agency that supports and funds projects of its members, and it is itself an implementing operator of large scale projects financed by donors, at the service of its members. This is the case, for example, with the Safir program, through which we are financing An Najah University with European funds, to implement an ambitious project in the domain of social entrepreneurship.

The Winter School of High Energy in Palestine, which brings us together today, should be noted for its innovative character. Innovative, because it is Palestine and because it is about physics.

As a former researcher in theoretical physics, I would like to say a few words concerning your discipline.

It is necessary, as you do, to make young people aware of the challenges and career opportunities in physics research and engineering. Physics is rich in entirely new paths, from elementary particles to the ordering of the cosmos. In physics, beauty comes from complexity, order is born from chaos. You must make these concepts intelligible, and share your knowledge.

Physics is an exemplary discipline, because in order to interpret some experimental facts, new ideas have often had to be introduced, breaking the

too narrow frameworks of the classical corpus which imprisoned the mindset. It was for instance necessary to rethink the notions of space and time, to develop a physics of the discontinuous, or to go beyond the certainty of determinism.

Even today, the search for a theory making general relativity and quantum physics fully compatible, this research in progress, this beautiful intellectual and human adventure, is comparable to the exploration of a continent still to be discovered.

But the usefulness of teaching physics as the science of the ordering of the universe that surrounds us, as a descriptor of reality, is above all to educate people to reason, to doubt, to argue logically, on the contrary of docile human beings permeable to unsound speeches.

In short, physics education is the best way to raise critical thinking. Whatever your future career will be, in science or not, your education in physics will have raised these most valuable skills.

These are the few words that I wanted to convey.

Now, I wish you fruitful exchanges, in the spirit of partnership and friendship that is at the heart of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie.

I thank you for your attention./.