

Professor Maher Natsheh, President of An-Najah National University

Doctor Kherieh Rassas, Vice President for International and External Affairs at An-Najah National University

Docteur Jean-Noël Baleo, directeur régional de l'Agence universitaire de la Francophonie au Moyen-Orient

Dear Members of the International Advisory Committee and organizing committee,

Dear professors and researchers,

Dear students,

I am delighted to be with you this evening for the opening of the Winter School in High Energy Physics in Palestine, thank you President Natsheh for the invitation. I am especially glad to see this fifth edition, one might even say « spring edition », go forward, as it reminds us, if needed be, that academic and research collaborations are still flourishing during these challenging times.

The WISHEPP is one of the most symbolic and successful examples of academic cooperation between France and Palestine. Thanks to the efforts and passion of Dr Ahmed Bassalat, who did his PhD in what used to be Université Paris Sud and is now Paris Saclay, and thanks to his French and Palestinian colleagues, a strong and lasting partnership has been formed.

Not only has this Winter school contributed to advance the research and knowledge dissemination in physics, but it has also had a concrete and direct impact on many people's lives, for students, professors and staff alike : callings have been discovered, professional as well as friendly relationships have been created. Since 2016, almost 100 scholarships and opportunities for mobility between France and Palestine were made possible, and countless of students, including secondary school students, have been introduced to the scientific wonders of high energy physics. I have been told that this partnership has also benefitted students at An-Najah in other fields.

For all these reasons, it has been a pride and a pleasure for the Consulate General of France in Jerusalem to support this winter school from the beginning and we look forward to continuing to do so in the coming years. In addition to that, we strive to encourage and support other collaborative actions so as to structure and strengthen this promising cooperation : last year, a joint research project between An Najah university and the research lab SOLEIL in Saclay was selected as part of our Al-Maqdisi research program. French government scholarships have been offered to students from An-Najah with excellent academic results who wish to

pursue their Master's or PHD in physics at Paris-Saclay : I believe that we will hear later about these students' successful experiences in France.

I understand that many new projects are in preparation, such as a Centre of excellence in High Energy physics in Palestine as well as joint degrees between An Najah and Paris Saclay. We will follow these fruitful initiatives and assist them in any way that we can.

I hope that, for the next edition, I will have the pleasure of attending the opening event in person in Nablus, and in the meantime I wish you an enriching and inspiring fifth edition of the Winter School in High Energy Physics in Palestine.

Thank you.