

The organization of the Fifth International Seminar of *Forum UNESCO - University and Heritage* in Lebanon has more than one point of strength. Lebanon is centrally located between East and West and therefore convenient to participants from all over the world. Also due to this central geographical location, Lebanon has developed throughout history as a depository of many civilizations and their great heritage. In addition, hosting this conference at the *Lebanese American University* in its continuing expansion and development of international relations brings for us additional reasons to welcome you in our two campuses in Beirut and Byblos.

Being at the crossroads of civilizations, cultures and religions, Lebanon continues to play a role as a focal point of historic, political, economic and social developments. As a result, this small country has become famous as a place of cultural exchange and tolerance, and as a museum of various pieces of world heritage. After the Fourth International Seminar at the Al Akhawayn University of Ifrane, Morocco, which worked to develop the North-South exchange, this meeting will complement it by also developing the East-West exchange. The *Lebanese American University* shall do its best to strengthen the international links that were created in the previous forums, from the particularly well suited historic cities of Beirut and Byblos. We hope that such links will improve human relations through the appreciation and acceptance of the differences in others and thus contribute greatly to global understanding and the preservation of the different heritages and cultures.

On behalf of the *Lebanese American University*, I would like to welcome all participants and hope that the lessons we learn from history will help us in developing a better future.

**Riyad F. Nassar**  
**President Lebanese American University**