
**Speech of the Rector of Antonine University Father Michel Jalakh
BMW Visit to UA
18 April 2018**

Excellencies,
Honorable Guests,
Dear all,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you on the main campus of the Antonine University, especially at our prestigious Faculty of Engineering. This event is placed under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Energy and Water which shows our common commitment towards our society.

In fact, one of our missions at the Antonine University is to promote contextualized research. This means research priorities and topics relating to the Middle Eastern societies. However, when it comes to problems relating to Technology and Engineering, all geographical boundaries collapse, and the entire globe becomes our context, otherwise we would not have international research partnerships such as the one we have with BMW for example. Every single step we take locally towards sustainable development counts on the global level. That is why the efforts we make to improve Lebanese economic situation and resource efficiency are, at the same time, our contribution to the global efforts aiming to make our world more sustainable and more equitable.

We are here today to discuss a new economical paradigm where innovation is the major propeller of growth. This is a very precious opportunity for countries like ours where mind capital is the main wealth. I believe that investing in innovation, and relying on the talents of our young, yet outstanding researchers, are our royal path towards economic prosperity and social development.

While doing so, we are invited to keep an eye on the local communities around us. We are called to work seriously on digital literacy, not only to allow all of our citizens to take advantage of the numeric revolution, but more specifically to initiate what we might call, after Bernard Stiegler, contributive research projects, where the university is invited to help its environment in finding creative and know-how friendly ways of using technology.

An innovation-driven economy should be accompanied by an innovation and knowledge-friendly culture to avoid creating – or accentuating – social dyssynchronies we are already witnessing all over the world.

Welcome to our guests from BMW, and all the best for a fruitful stay in Lebanon and a stronger cooperation between you and our Antonine University. Thank you.