

Address at the Social Responsibility Conference for Universities.pdf

Opening address at the Arab World Conference on Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development of Arab Universities

Andalusian Hall – Monday, 16 September 2024

Dr. Amr Ezzat Salama, Secretary-General of the Association of Arab Universities,

Dr. Randa Rizk, Secretary-General of the Arab Council for Social Responsibility and Sustainability,

Representatives of United Nations organisations in the Arab Republic of Egypt,

University presidents,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished attendees,

I am honoured to welcome you all to the League of Arab States for the activities of the "Arab World Day for Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development of Arab Universities." This significant event embodies the fruitful collaboration between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Arab Council for Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

Today's gathering is a testament to our unwavering commitment to achieving sustainable development goals and fostering partnerships that will enhance the welfare of our Arab societies. It is essential that we provide the necessary support to a wide range of our nation's youth, women, and various Arab universities.

Arab universities play a pivotal role in societal development. They are not insular entities focused solely on the educational process; rather, they are dynamic institutions that engage with a multitude of community development challenges. Through their scientific services and awareness campaigns, they actively contribute to the advancement of society. Therefore, discussing the social responsibility of universities extends

beyond their external interactions; it encompasses their internal environment as well, where fostering a culture of social responsibility among all members of the university community—regardless of their differences—is paramount.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we discuss sustainable development, we must recognise the integral role of education. A well-educated generation is essential for truly advancing the concept of sustainable development. It is with unwavering confidence that I express my optimism for the future, particularly as we witness the increasing contributions of youth towards building a sustainable world. Their commitment to ambitious learning and a comprehensive understanding of the challenges we face together is crucial.

In our belief in the significance of promoting awareness around sustainable development and social responsibility within Arab universities, our administration has actively engaged in numerous initiatives across various institutions. We have facilitated awareness lectures for youth and established simulation models. Since 2022, we have also launched the Arab Digital Platform for Sustainable Development, alongside regional working groups dedicated to enhancing skills and building capacities in vital areas such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, innovation, and entrepreneurship. We are honoured to have the Association of Arab Universities as a member of this platform, contributing meaningfully to its endeavours.

You may have noticed the rapid transformations in our lives due to the extraordinary technological revolution, which has profoundly influenced how we work, learn, and coexist. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is experiencing remarkable growth, with new applications emerging across various sectors, including security, environment, research, education, health, culture, and commerce. The sophisticated use of big data is also on the rise. AI has the potential to usher in a new era of human civilisation, creating vast opportunities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Its applications can lead to innovative solutions, enhanced risk assessment, improved planning, and accelerated knowledge sharing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Arab Sustainable Development Week stands as the most significant regional event in the Arab world dedicated to addressing sustainable development issues. Its importance lies in providing an annual platform for decision-makers and stakeholders in sustainable development to engage in meaningful discussions on how to expedite the achievement of our goals, all within the context of the Arab political and economic landscape, along with its unique opportunities and challenges.

In this spirit, the League of Arab States, in collaboration with partners from the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Bank, and with the generous hosting of the Arab Republic of Egypt, is proud to announce the fifth edition of Arab Sustainable Development Week. This year's theme, "Sustainable Solutions for a Better Future: Resilience and Adaptability in a Developing Arab World," will take place from 24 to 27 November 2024 in Cairo. We are honoured to have you join us for the upcoming edition of this pivotal event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The partnerships we strive to forge today represent a cornerstone for achieving sustainable development and transforming community initiatives into sustainable and impactful activities, particularly in the realms of education, digital transformation, and community entrepreneurship projects. Our gathering here today aims to bolster our collective efforts and collaborate in establishing effective partnerships that will expedite the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals across the Arab region.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in organising this event. I look forward to a productive day filled with constructive discussions and meaningful collaboration. Thank you all for your presence and participation.