

*Commencement 2008  
Haigazian University  
Friday, July 04, 2008*

### President's Word of Welcome

Fifty –three years of fruitful educational endeavors are behind us, and with the renewal of the generations, our university looks forward to its new graduates' future as well as its own.

Day after day, Lebanon and all people in the world realize how important it is to prepare young people who not only have received formal education, but also informally enjoy a positive sense of mission, a dynamic that builds, uplifts, shares, and harmonizes. After all, quality of life and quality of education are inseparable.

Key words in our world include development, advancement, openness, inclusiveness and globalization. And yet, loneliness, stress, lack of trust, racism, violence, disorientation, injustice and dissatisfaction characterize the modern human situation.

The young generations deserve all the chances, all the support, and all the guidance we could give. And is there a time more than ours when dangers of losing one's direction or balance are so evident? But the young are also the talented ones whose potentials society needs to utilize to the maximum.

It is for these reasons and more that Haigazian University and its sister institutions are called upon to play a role that counters the negative tides of our days. We are here to prepare energetic people and instill in them a sense of mission, a mission that takes them beyond their narrow selves into the world of a self-giving God. Indeed they have much to contribute to our world, and I am sure our graduates will be ready to give their best.

In this endeavor, the university is not alone. Haigazian University is part of the heart of Beirut. It is not only mindful of its context, but rather breathes with its context and hopefully beautifies its context. Students and parents and families, faculty and staff, neighbors and strangers, public and private sectors help shape what we do.

Our graduates are certainly proud of this day. If you, graduates, owe more than can readily be said to the Haigazian faculty and staff, you owe as well a debt beyond repaying to your families, supporters, or guardians. Hence, let me ask the parents to stand and be acknowledged and everyone in the Class of 2008 please to rise, face your families, and give to them the ovation they deserve.

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Our speaker today, is Minister of Economy & Trade Sami Haddad. His Excellency's academic journey of early education to doctoral studies has taken him from the IC, to the AUB, and to the University of Wisconsin, majoring in economics.

From years 1982 to 2005, he has been at the International Finance Corporation (World Bank Group) holding the positions of regional representative of many regions in Africa, Asia, and finally Director of the Middle East and North Africa region.

In addition to the World Bank in Washington, DC, his experience includes major responsibilities in a number of reputable banks and universities in Lebanon such as the Societe Generale and the AUB.

He is here with us today with his gracious wife, Hanan.

It is my pleasure to welcome His Excellency Minister Sami Haddad to Haigazian University and to give him the floor.

*Paul Haidostian*  
*President*