

*Commencement 2009 Haigazian University
Beirut
July 4, 2009*

President's Word of Welcome

Having completed 54 academic years, our university celebrates today the harvest of 2009 as Beirut carries the title of Book Capital of the World. Beirut has been and continues to be one of the capitals of education in the world.

While books and schools, universities and homes, web space and portals act as agents and media of education in general, **good education** is where *values, relationships, ideas, needs, and technique* will meet. Some of these independently lead to wider knowledge, but all of these together lead into deeper knowledge. All university education, therefore, is a challenge to balance these ingredients of good education.

Lebanon continues to pride itself in a well-rounded and well-equipped human capital. Now is the time to see how we can invest that capital better. In that effort, both the private sector and the public sector have to meet, to meet in standards, professionalism, ethics, and accountability.

We have often said, the Lebanese human capital shines wherever it flies and wherever it lands. We know that the private sector in Lebanon easily finds its way into professionalism and creativity, but people continue to ask why what is readily possible for the private, cannot be feasible on the public front.

Since Haigazian University continues to celebrate the Lebanese human capital, we feel privileged that the commencement speaker this year, Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Ziad Baroud, is already a symbol of what we mean by the right investment of human capital.

The fact that the Ministry of Interior is geographically near, the fact that the youthful energy of the Minister is close to the hearts of the new generation, the fact that people have come to appreciate his remarkable official performance, have made His Excellency the right man for our celebration. He has given people hope that the good that is possible in private, can also be a reality in public.

Minister Baroud's academic journey has taken him from the St. Joseph College (Aintoura), to St. Joseph University, to ongoing doctoral work at Paris University. A lawyer by profession, he has been an influential member of various legal commissions and committees, in the Lawyers' Syndicate, with Professor Ibrahim Najjar, and later in his private firm, representing various international and national NGOs and organizations. He has been a member of the National Committee of Electoral Law, where our own Dean Arda Ekmekji was the only female member. He is an author and a lecturer on various legal topics.

Today he joins us with his wife, Linda. I invite the Minister to address us.

*Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.
President*