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**Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts Workshop  
Future of e-Learning in Lebanon: Launching the Debate**

**28 May 2015, NDU, Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon**

Your Excellency Director General of Higher Education in Lebanon Dr. Ahmad Jammal

Dear Representatives of Higher Education Organizations

Dear Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me first to **welcome** you all at Notre Dame University - Louaize. It is my great pleasure to be among you today marking the launch of the debate on e-learning and reflecting on how to cooperate and build together a new digital era in Lebanon.

It is as well an honor for NDU to **host** this important event in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNESCO, AUF ('Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie'), and EU Tempus programs.

Without any doubt, the role of technology and the internet is widely spreading day after day and exercising a major impact on our daily life. I would limit myself today to list four facts:

- First: The number of internet users in the world is constantly increasing. In 1995, it was less than 1% of the globe population. Nowadays, we have more than three billion users. It means around 40% of our world population has internet connection.

- Second: A common belief that the internet services speed up the retrieval and dissemination of information.
- Third: After reading the report published last week by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, we still find today and in Canada, that there is **no clear definition** of what ‘technology’ means or refers to. Moreover, there is a lack of consensus on key terms often used in the context of research on technology-enhanced learning – among them blended and hybrid learning. However, at the same time, discovering what the National Research Council of Canada is exploring, we find some directions for the **next era of learning**.
- Fourth: Good practices are identified in Higher Education Institutions integrating Information Technology, whether at the Administrative level or at the Academic level. We find indeed education **management** tools (from the candidate application document to enrollment and grading), as well as, **resources** enhancement tools (such as in the library and in the labs). In addition to the technology-enhanced teaching and the technology-enhanced learning.

After listing the aforementioned four facts, and looking at our Lebanese experience, I allow myself to invite all of us today to take into consideration this technological **momentum** and seriously start an open debate for the enhancement of Higher Education in Lebanon. We cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world when it comes to the development of modalities in the teaching-learning approach. After all, the whole world has become a global village, a global community, which the University of Today is called to serve. Technology is not a threat; it is rather an **opportunity**. Let us “learn *with* technology rather than *from* technology”.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to conclude with *The Idea of a University* of Cardinal John Henry Newman. For him, the University is the place where ideas are created and shared. This role of the University never changes. What in reality does continuously change is the **modality** of delivering that role. Like the wheel and the tires!

Thank you all for being here and my best wishes for a successful debate.