Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen (other important titles of dignitaries will be added upon knowing the identities of these guests)

I am honored to be asked to speak briefly, at this historic occasion, on behalf of my colleagues at AUB. To welcome our new President, Professor Peter F. Doorman, is a cherished honor indeed. President Dorman hails from one of the top Universities of the World, the University of Chicago, therefore, he has already earned a mark of academic distinction. His publication record in original articles and books established him as an international scholar in the Old Middle East. As you know well, scholarship is synonymous with a free inquisitive mind. Academic research at AUB will witness new heights of excellence under the leadership of the fine scholar you are.

Mr. President: We welcome you as a renowned scholar.

In this vein, it is often asked: Why is it that despite the sincere efforts of many countries in this Region to emulate AUB, these efforts were met with limited success. I firmly believe that excellence in higher education requires an environment that values freedom of inquiry. Lebanon has nourished, defended and promoted this environment. Thus, AUB cannot flourish without academic freedom.

Mr. President: We welcome you as the guardian of academic freedom at AUB.
The great Daniel Bliss laid down, on December 7, 1871, the guiding principles of this University when he said, ”This College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to color, nationality, race or religion” ‘He added that “it will be impossible for anyone to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and reasons for that belief.” AUB nowadays enjoys the privilege of having a student body from 67 countries in the World.

Mr. President: We are confident that you will oversee that AUB students will get the best education which will enrich their humane character, widen their scope of human knowledge and, diversify their approach to critical thinking all of which will prepare them to become leaders in their respective societies and countries.

This University, fortified by its American-Lebanese heritage, has distinguished itself in having highly credible professional schools and first rate medical services yet the soul of a great university lies in its liberal education. We feel rewarded that the Board of Trustees of AUB has chosen a president steeped in the liberal arts. In addition to being a distinguished Egyptologist, he is a lyric tenor and musician. We thank you Mr. President for taking up this great challenge called AUB:

The American poet, Robert Frost said: “The woods are lovely, dark and deep…..But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.”

(In Arabic): Amma abu attyyib al-Moutanabi fagal:”Ala ghadri ahli ta’ti el-azz’imu”.Wa nahnu nara feeka al-hilma wa ilylma wa hazma al-rasheed.

Wa Issmalee an oudeef: Hoyeeta Sunwann hulla ahla Wa nazelltta Sunneenan wa sehla

Long live AUB, Long Live Lebanon