

Under the patronage of
The Syrian Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs
HE. Abdullah Dardari,

The “Excellence in Business Education” Conference

Opening Remarks
Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh
President of the Arab Quality Assurance and Accreditation Network
Chairman and CEO of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization
Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, UN, Global Compact

Damascus, January 28, 2009

His Excellency Abdullah Dardari
Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs

Prof. Ghiath Barakat
Ministry of Higher Education

Prof. Mohammad Al-Hussein
Ministry of Finance

Dr. Diala Al Haj Aref
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor

Dr. Wael Mualla
President of Damascus University

Dr. Faeqa Said Al Saleh
Advisor for the Secretary General, Director of Education and Scientific Research
Department at the League of Arab States

Dr. Nemah Azouri
President of the Arab Society for Business Administration Faculties

Dear Ambassadors,
Universities’ presidents, deans of faculties, academic and administrative staff from all
Arab universities,

Representatives of professional and international organizations and institutions,
Representatives of business sector,

Dear guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am really happy to be here with you today at the premises of Damascus University known for its great history in educating, qualifying and graduating generations from all of the Arab countries through all the decades.

Hosting this Conference in Damascus University is an evidence of the University's concern to develop an Arab education system, and it is one of the main goals for our event which is held under the theme "Excellence in Business Education".

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to HE. Abdullah Dardari for the patronage and the launch of the Conference. His presence here today adds to the importance of our work in his capacity as a deputy minister for economic affairs who is responsible for the development and modernization. HE is fully aware as we are that the programs, plans, strategies and the changing requirements that any country seeks are all centered on the qualified human potentials that are capable of responding with the current needs and challenges.

The main challenge here for development and change is the quality of business administration to prepare leaders and skilled workforce in the field of business and to create graduates capable to meet the needs of business environment and develop the administrative practices.

At Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization, we are aware, due to our forty-year experience in serving various business sectors in the Arab countries, of the importance of business administration education utilizing non-traditional educational methods. Thus, we launched the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh College of Business; one of the major faculties at the German-Jordanian University under the slogan "Where Gifted Become Leaders".

It was not just a slogan, it was a test and a challenge that we succeeded in through the quality of business administration and the development of effective accreditation systems and standards. These standards were examined and accredited by the international accreditation institutions.

The business administration education plays a vital role in preparing leaders and qualified workforce for business sector, and it enhances the international competitiveness which is the real challenge for developing effective accreditation systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Conference, organized by ARQAANE in cooperation with the Damascus University, and in the presence of the elite in education sector, is a vital contribution in searching means and methods for business and administration education. It is an important forum to facilitate and support dialogue between business institutions, educators and civil society

institutions, and we hope that we will achieve the desired goals represented in the following:

- Organizing an annual meeting to provide professional interaction between Arab business administration instructors and their international counterparts; to exchange expertise and acknowledge concerning the latest practices in respect of international business administration faculties, to discuss the possibility of utilizing these practices in the Arab world and to issue recommendations and assign concerned parties to follow up the implementation in order to achieve development in the business education.

Our vision is to promote business administration education similar to the distinguished international standards taking into consideration the context of history, politics and local culture. Here comes the importance of utilizing educational resources like case studies and statistics.

- Working on establishing partnerships among educational institutions, business sector and specialized institutions in respect of quality education in order to upgrade the level of business education and its practices.
- Establishing business education quality system on the Arab level under the supervision of ARQAANE in cooperation with business education faculties, associations and accreditation commissions in the Arab countries.
- Promoting the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and assisting business faculties in communicating and interacting with the local society. Business administration faculties shall be aware of the role they should play in formulating and steering the future leaders' behavior in respect of the responsibility towards society and sustainability. In this context, and in this framework, focus will be placed on these Principles supported by the United Nations (UN) which aim at promoting social responsibility and sustainability in business education programs. ARQAANE focuses on promoting these Principles, and I would like to mention here the membership of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh College of Business in this initiative. We have prepared a working team to follow up with the PRME initiative and arrangements are under way to convene a specialized conference relating to this initiative.

I would like to mention here in my capacity as the Vice Chair of the UN Global Compact, the biggest initiative for corporate responsibility in the world that includes more than three thousand companies in one hundred countries and more than seven hundreds from the civil society sectors, institutions, organizations and academic bodies. I would also like to state that the Global Compact adopts the PRME and confirms its commitment to the continuous process to improve a number of principles represented in the following:

- Developing the students' capacities to produce future values of sustainability for business institutions in particular and the society as a whole, and to work on finding a comprehensive international sustainable economy.

- Merging the values of international social responsibility in our academic curricula as mentioned in the international initiatives like the UN Global Compact.
- Finding an educational framework and setting up educational processes, environments and materials to assist in acquiring effective expertise in respect of social leadership.
- Participating in conducting experimental researches that contribute to the development of our understanding of the corporate's role and mechanism and their effect on finding social, environmental and sustainable economic values.
- Interacting with corporate managers to expand our knowledge of the challenges encountered to fulfill environmental and social responsibilities and to find out the effective curricula needed to face these challenges.
- Facilitating and supporting dialogue between educators, businesses, governmental institutions, consumers, mass media and civil society institutions and any other concerned organizations in addition to other concerned parties regarding main issues related to international social sustainability and responsibility.

In this occasion, I would like to invite all institutions, higher education commissions that dedicate their efforts to teach leaders in business sector to endorse this process and partnership in an active and effective manner in their international business education programs and to coordinate efforts to achieve more development in these principles through the forces that can create change.

Thank you your Excellency for patronizing this event, thank you Damascus University and its President Wael Al Mula, and special thanks to every one who contributed to this event, and last but not least , thank you honorable guests.