**Summary of the lecture given by Dr Henri Awit**

**Should we make more of an effort to focus universities on the job market?**

Dr Henri Awit introduced his lecture by noting that in fact one of the main missions of a university is the professional training of students, with the immediate goal to enable them to find a job - which is why every university worthy of the name periodically adapts its curriculum to how society is evolving and the consequent changing needs of the labour market. He then sought to answer three of the many questions raised within the framework of the relationship between the university and the labour market.

In the first part of his lecture, Dr Awit identified a number of criteria that are useful in measuring how adequately university education is meeting the expectations of society and the employment sector. He went on to voice his regrets at the absence in the Arab world of comprehensive studies and reliable statistics that assess this problem. He was, however, able to report on two studies conducted by Saint Joseph University in Beirut on the future of its graduates and their integration into the labour market. He called for such investigations to be broadened and their results to be taken into consideration with a focus on applying them to adjusting and improving academic curricula.

In the second part of his lecture, Dr Awit discussed some aspects of how university education has adapted to the evolution of society and the labour market. He particularly stressed, on the one hand, the competences and skills that students need to develop in order to empower themselves to be able to construct their own points of reference in a world with unlimited reference points, and, on the other, the need to introduce new training and lifelong learning in order to take account of social transformation and the increasing pace of change in the world of employment.

In the third part of his lecture, Dr Awit summarized that a university should not be limited to just preparing students for the labour market, but should equally prepare them for serving the community, to enable them to measure the transformation of socioeconomic and political realities and become actors in the process of social renewal. This dimension could well be covered by developing interdisciplinary, critical thinking, along with cultural development and active citizenship. A university's mission is the comprehensive moulding of its students. It is thus incumbent upon it to promote humanistic education attentive to all dimensions of society and all aspects of a human being.