

Dear Dr. Mouin Hamze, Director-General of the National Council for Scientific Research,

Dear Dr. Elise Noujeim, Director of the Grant Research Program,

Dear NDU Vice Presidents, Deans and Colleagues,

Let me begin by welcoming Dr. Mouin Hamze and Dr. Elise Noujeim to our university on this very distinguished occasion, which is to honor 12 faculty members, simultaneously receiving research grants, making this a first at NDU, and I hope there will be many more to come in the future. I understand that most of the proposals submitted were accepted, since 12 out of 15 were approved, following a rigorous and objective evaluation process. The budget set aside for these by both CNRS and NDU amounts to more than \$200,000. In fact, we are also honoring today the fruits of the NDU-CNRS agreement, signed this past May, hoping that this sets the stage for a more fruitful and lasting collaboration.

We all agree that research is an essential activity in any serious university. It is what sets you apart from the, otherwise, ordinary teaching schools. It is what gives you an international dimension and recognition. Only through research, are you able to push the boundary of knowledge still further. This is why we insist on nourishing and supporting this culture of research at our University. This evening's ceremony is a testimony to the fact that such culture indeed exists and is firmly established at NDU. But we want to go even further; we want research not just to parallel teaching but also to complement it, meaning that we want to see research discussed in the classroom. It is good that our faculty members are proving to be good researchers but we want to encourage them to involve their students also in research.

In closing, I would like to thank CNRS, represented by Dr. Hamze. We hope, Dr. Hamze, that the agreement signed between NDU and CNRS will benefit academia and, above all, Lebanon, and will advance research to a level comparable to that existing at any high-caliber research institution.

To our researchers, I say: we are proud of you, keep up the good work.

As I mentioned before, we do hope for a continuous collaboration with CNRS in the future. We certainly want NDU to be at the forefront of research.

Again, congratulations and best of luck to all of you.