

47th Middle East Medical Assembly Discusses Innovation and Breakthroughs in Oncology

(Thursday May 8, 2014) Beirut, Lebanon – The 47th Middle East Medical Assembly (MEMA), held from May 7 to May 9, 2015 was launched in an inauguration ceremony in the presence of Mrs. Lama Salam, wife of Prime Minister Tamam Salam, Dr. Bassem El Shab, representing ex-prime minister Mr. Saad el Hariri, Dr. Mohammed Khalifeh, representing the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament Mr. Nabih Berri, members of the AUB Board of Trustees, Mrs. Mona El Hrawi, Mrs. Leila Al Solh Hamade, AUB President elect Dr. Fadlo Khuri, Vice President of Medical Affairs and Raja N. Khuri Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB Mohamed H. Sayegh, members of the AUB community, ministers and members of the parliament.

MEMA, taking place at the American University of Beirut's (AUB) Issam Fares Lecture Hall came under the title "Sustained Innovation and Breakthroughs – Updates in Oncology." It brought together physicians and experts in all fields discussing the latest challenges and novelties in oncology.

The ceremony began with two cancer survivors who shared their experience sending a message of faith, acceptance, and determination. Following the patients' testimonials, Dr. Ali Taher, Chairman of MEMA 2014 and 2015, Professor of Medicine, Hematology and Oncology, Associate Chair – Research, Department of Internal Medicine and Director – Fellowship and Residents Research Program at AUB, opened the assembly.

In his welcoming note, Dr. Taher focused on the role MEMA and AUBMC play in the region in the advancement of science and patient care. He added, "Despite all the ongoing tragedies, hunger, poverty, and wars, we committed ourselves as doctors, scientists and researchers to work for a healthier community and more advanced country."

Following Dr. Taher, VP/Dean Mohamed H. Sayegh welcomed the attendees and spoke of the importance of MEMA being an integral part of the academic mission of the Faculty of Medicine and Medical Center and a cornerstone of the heritage in providing medical education to the region and improving the health of our local and regional community.

Sayegh continued, "Cancer is a health issue endemic to our region, and that is why in addition to having it be the focus of MEMA, AUBMC and our adult cancer center of excellence, the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute, are launching a cancer awareness campaign focusing on patients living with cancer and their support network."

MEMA 2015 was honored with keynote speaker, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, and the previous head of the Joint Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations mission for the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria who shared her valuable experiences and knowledge in the medical field and humanitarian issues of

relevance to the region.

“MEMA’s theme this year is something the UN aspires to uphold in all its work streams including conflict prevention, rule of law, humanitarian and development assistance, especially at a time of major geopolitical changes in the Middle East and elsewhere,” added Ms. Kaag. The situation in the region is presenting new challenges for all of us, regardless of our profession. Everyone is facing the pressure of tackling increasing needs, with diminishing resources to save lives, communities and societies. The mantra of doing more with less has gained a new meaning in this environment and innovation is our only answer,” continued Ms. Kaag.

Her speech covered several aspects of her experience in the Middle East and shed light on the current state and trajectory of the region, the humanitarian challenges as a result of the continuing armed conflicts in Syria and elsewhere, some of the key political and security issues, and the role of the UN and other multilateral organizations.

MEMA’s exhibition and the rich program which spread over two days featured state of the art educational sessions and workshops about primary care, nursing, pharmacists’ role in chemotherapy, and nutrition among others.

MEMA coincides with a large scale cancer awareness campaign launched by AUBMC, focusing on empowering patients, their families and friends, and providing a message of positivity and hope.

A special activation has been introduced during the 47th MEMA opening and cancer was transformed into a human figure that communicated with people. Visitors were invited to express their feelings or reactions towards cancer in an attempt to break the fear and create awareness on the importance of prevention, early checkups and optimism that should accompany the disease.

MEMA, focusing on oncology from a multi-disciplinary perspective, offers panoply of high standard educational lectures on four disciplines: head and neck and lung cancer, brain tumor in children, prostate and bladder cancer and last pancreatic and intestinal cancer.

World experts, prestigious institutions, and OVER A 1000 national, regional, and international participants came together and shared expertise placing MEMA on the map of the most global reputable scientific events. MEMA this year features lectures from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer (MSKCC), St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital (SJCRH), Emory University and many other leading and prestigious medical centers and institutions. The event was held in collaboration with the Continuing Medical Education Office (CME) at AUBMC and Cleveland Clinic.

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For more information please visit our website www.aubmc.org or contact:

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Note to Editors

About American University of Beirut Medical Center

Since 1902, the American University of Beirut Medical Center has been the most trusted and respected healthcare provider in Lebanon and the region, handling more than 300,000 patient visits annually. AUB is building on its strong foundations in medical education and health care through the AUBMC 2020 Vision. In addition to improving facilities and capacity, the AUBMC 2020 Vision will establish centers of excellence that will provide new medical options for the treatment of illnesses endemic in the Arab world, and it will expand access to the quality of care that families in Lebanon have depended on for generations.

Launched in 2010, the AUBMC 2020 Vision is an ambitious and comprehensive initiative that affirms AUBMC's position as the leading medical center and healthcare institution in the region. The AUBMC 2020 Vision is transforming medical education, research and practice, and most importantly, medical care in the region, bringing them to new levels of excellence. It consists of major new medical (clinical and academic) facilities, the establishment of clinical and research centers of excellence, investment in state-of-the-art equipment, recruitment of talented physicians and nurses, and regional and international partnerships. Read more at www.aubmc.org/2020