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OF BEIRUT**

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AUB GGCO and CIH Lebanon Host Roundtable on Lebanon's Reconstruction and Governance Pathways

The Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory (GGCO) at the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in partnership with the Civic Influence Hub (CIH Lebanon), held a pivotal roundtable discussion titled *Lebanon and the Day After: What Opportunities?*

Hosted at the Asfari Institute's conference hall and streamed online, the event brought together prominent experts, civic leaders, and two Lebanese presidential candidates to explore Lebanon's challenges and opportunities. Discussions focused on key priorities and strategic pathways for re-establishing a sovereign state grounded in the rule of law and inclusive citizenship.

The event featured Dr. Nassif Hitti, former minister of foreign affairs, diplomat, and professor, and Ziad Hayek, president of the World Association of PPP Units and founding member of HyperCycle Ai, who shared their insights on Lebanon's political trajectory, the future of governance, and the steps necessary to achieve sustainable reform and national reconciliation.

Valuable perspectives were provided by discussants Dr. Simon Kachar, lecturer in political studies at AUB and founding director of the GGCO, Ziad El-Sayegh, senior international fellow at the Asfari Institute and executive director of CIH Lebanon, and Loyal Sakr, lawyer and founder of SEEDS for Legal Initiatives.

The session began with welcome remarks from Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB president, who highlighted the university's role and ongoing commitment to fostering informed dialogue on governance and citizenship.

The dialogue addressed a wide range of topics, from governance and the distribution of responsibilities to fostering inclusive, secular leadership. Participants explored the importance of adapting to advancements in technology as a tool for progress, alongside the sociological and ideological factors shaping Lebanon's current reality and future opportunities. The discussion emphasized Lebanon's diversity as a unique source of

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strength, the pivotal role of the global Lebanese diaspora, and the essential contributions of academic institutions in shaping the country's path forward. The discussion further highlighted the importance of including broader segments of society in such conversations through accessible communication platforms. Participants were also asked to share their vision for Lebanon's future over the next century. The session concluded with a lively Q&A segment, allowing both in-person attendees and online participants to pose questions and share insights.

The discussion drew on the findings of the recent policy brief *Lebanon in the Day After: The Last Chance?* co-authored by Dr. Simon Kachar and Ziad El-Sayegh. The brief underscores Lebanon's existential crisis and stresses the urgent need for new leadership that embraces a reformative and sovereign vision. It emphasizes that national resilience can be achieved by building a state of citizenship grounded in freedom, diversity, and democracy, where trust between citizens and institutions is restored. The brief calls for constitutional reforms, institutional rebuilding, and civic engagement as essential steps toward achieving sustainable governance, with education and civil society playing a critical role in promoting shared national values.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 750 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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