

**Ambassador Lübckemeier, Dr. Maha Al-Hendawi,  
Professor Lepper, Mr. Ziad Mikati, Distinguished  
Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Good Evening and Welcome to the United Arab Emirates and its capital city Abu Dhabi. We are delighted that you are here. Although your ambitious agenda tomorrow may exhaust you, I hope it will leave you at least a little time for acquainting yourselves with the remarkable campus of Zayed University. But there is much more in Abu Dhabi for you to enjoy beyond ZU and the Crowne Plaza. I hope that you can save some energy for exploring our city and our country. We are proud of this global crossroads and trust that you will enjoy your time in Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates.

In Abu Dhabi, you will discover a cosmopolitan city in a country dedicated to peace, diversity, and prosperity. We in the UAE are eager to cooperate with countries and institutions around the world. We owe much of our success to our willingness to welcome smart, skilled, and experienced people, like yourselves, to our country. Under our spacious Arab tent, we have listened and learned. We have fully recognized the value of our global society and have become an active participant in it.

Our relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany has been notably rewarding. Both countries have benefited from trade, mutual investment, and technical cooperation. The UAE is the most important export market for Germany in the Arab world. Those of you who traveled from the airport to the hotel saw signs of that truth if you were watching the German cars whizzing by. Exports and investment from the UAE to Germany grow year after year. According to the German Embassy, the overall trade volume has quadrupled in the last ten years.

Of particular value have been the rewards of cooperation among educational, research, and government institutions in the UAE and Germany. Your deliberations during the next two days will surely increase those rewards. The prospect of initiatives in Arab-German Research Cooperation holds great promise for Arab youth and, I trust, for German youth as well. I am delighted that you will be concentrating on the challenges for higher education, the particular issue of STEM education, and the absolute necessity for civilized dialogue.

You know better than anyone else just how good higher education has become in your country. Germany's universities are, of course, legendary. More and more universities in Arab countries are beginning to make their

own strong mark in the educational world. I'm unaware, however, of any studies that compare the achievement of learning outcomes in Germany and in Arab countries. But I am all too aware of the difference in employment outcomes. Germany has the lowest youth unemployment rate in the EU. While that number, seven percent, may worry Germans, the Arab world would be happy with such a rate. The current numbers are alarming. In August the Arab Monetary Fund issued a study showing that youth unemployment in Arab countries is mainly among women and recent graduates. Unemployment among women is estimated to be about 43 percent. The study shows that 40 percent of new graduates in Arab countries are unemployed. The unemployment statistic varies considerably from country to country, and each country can offer a host of reasons for its own unemployment rate. But no country is altogether happy with its statistic. Even low unemployment sends a danger signal that young people are not entering the private sector. One way or another, youth unemployment is one of the major challenges facing Arab countries today. Our colleges and universities must engage the challenge.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Your focus on innovation and young talents is intriguing. It may be that colleges and universities should shift their goal from graduation to creation, that is, the creation of new and remunerative commercial activities that originate in the students' innovative engagement of higher education and scholarly research. The idea is worth pursuing, and I hope that the German experience will greatly inform your discussions.

Likewise, Germany's traditional educational success in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will undoubtedly contribute to conversations about inspiring more young people to study and to persist in their study of those subjects. I am especially attracted to the idea of international competition because it demystifies the subjects and creates a global community mirroring the actual world of science. After all, the entire project of science depends on global communication. A team of scientists in Germany responds to a researcher's finding in Japan. An Arab laboratory expresses doubt, and a South African academic offers a corrective. Each scientist respectfully regards the work of other scientists. Everyone involved learns from the process, and science progresses. When our young people learn that people all over the world can cooperate in

seeking the same truth and knowledge, they will understand the essence of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities. STEM studies may flourish.

Intellectual growth results most often from civilized dialogue. In no better way can our vision expand. The powerful German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer wisely observed that (and I quote) “**Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.**” How right he was! Indeed, we are unlikely to understand even our own cultural heritage if we do not seek knowledge beyond our own dinner table. When we enter into conversation with other people, we begin to realize the limits of our vision. We discover that our understanding of our own ideas is often inadequate. We recognize as well that we know far too little about other people.

Dialogue that leads to knowledge and understanding of one’s self and of other people has supported and enabled the development of a global culture in the United Arab Emirates with its large variety of nationalities, languages, cultures, and personal beliefs. Accepting the view expressed by His Highness the President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, that “**the Federation of the United Arab Emirates has relied, and will continue to rely, on the rich and diverse contributions of its true wealth, its**

**people, to guarantee its prosperity,”** we see each individual who lives and works in the country as a vital component of the country’s true wealth. If we are to function successfully together, we must respect and understand one another. Thus, I vigorously applaud the attention that you will pay to translating one’s cultural heritage to members of other cultural backgrounds. That sort of dialogue is essential to a global culture of peace, pluralism, and prosperity.

I am confident that this effort by AGYA to promote Arab-German Research Cooperation will succeed. Already that cooperation is exceptional. This conference will help to make that cooperation a model for our global society. Thank you for gathering in Abu Dhabi to accomplish such important work.

My best wishes for your success.