

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to speak to you on this special occasion celebrating 23 years of the "**DAAD Third Country Scholarship Program for Postgraduate Studies**," held in Jordan, on the occasion of the visit of Dr. Birgit Klüsener, the Director of DAAD Scholarship Programs worldwide.

Dr. Birgit, We welcome you here in Palestine, and we wish you a wonderful trip!

Dear guests,

In the past almost twenty years, the DAAD and Birzeit University have proudly shared the same values, such as building a better future for the younger generation, and the same to champion those values.

Our relationship is the product of many years of working closely together. The DAAD has been strategically dedicated to strengthening the Palestinian Higher Education system and contributing to the building of a future in which young people are equipped to become leaders of the future. And Birzeit University has been the most important partner for DAAD in Palestine, laying the groundwork for German-Palestinian academic exchange.

And today, not only do we celebrate the DAAD's third country scholarship program, but the growth of the warm friendship and partnership between Birzeit University and the DAAD.

And I would like to highlight a few of our class' accomplishments over the past twenty years of our cooperation:

- In 2016, we launched, for the first time in Palestine, a Bachelor's Program in "Teaching German as a Foreign Language", which is attracting a growing number of students.

- The DAAD has offered a great number of scholarships for masters' students, PhD, and grants for researchers.
- The highest number of former DAAD scholarship holders in Palestine is from Birzeit University, and through the alumni networks various projects with German universities funded by DAAD have been conducted over the years.

I would also like to pay tribute to the long-term guest professor in Political Science Dr. Helga Baumgraten, who has played a central role in our long journey in academia, and most recently in the establishment of the PhD program in social sciences. Your outstanding service and dedication to BZU and the DAAD in Palestine is Priceless.

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is by no mere coincidence that all of these remarkable accomplishments have happened as a result of our fruitful partnership with Germany through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

The DAAD has offered dozens of Palestinian students and professors scholarships to complete their higher education or to take up research projects, and likewise German professors have been working in Palestine, and German scholars or students come to teach and do research in Palestine.

We seek to build long-term bridges in education and research with our international friends. Together we can empower the next generation to reach their potential as leaders committed to the growth and development of their countries

We find ourselves only at the start of the race. We must emphasize the fact that knowledge is a common good. It belongs to all people in all parts of the world and it is what may, in the end, save the foundation our lives are based on.

Again, we are proud to be with you today. We look forward to many more fruitful years of cooperation and exchange.

Thank you very much.