**President’s speech**

**LPHA March 23-24 - 2018 Conference**

Professor Fadlo Khouri, President of the American University of Beirut

Professor Iman Nuwayhid, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut

Dr. Richard Horton, Chief Editor of the Lancet

Ladies and gentlemen:

I am very pleased to be with you today on the occasion of the 9th Lancet Palestinian Health Alliance Conference which is being hosted by the Faculty of Health Sciences in collaboration with the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, and the Lancet Palestinian Health Alliance Steering Group.

Here we are gathered once again: Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and from different parts of the world, in addition to distinguished speakers and guests from Lebanon, Jordan, Europe, Japan, the US and Canada, all of whom have helped one way or another in making this conference a success. Indeed, this conference is special because it is also about uniting the voices of Palestinians dispersed all over the globe, and their partners in research and in advocating for Palestinian rights.

We are focusing again this year on the dissemination of research evidence, representing the end result of capacity strengthening activities during the year, which is made possible with the support of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and Medical Aid for Palestinians. Thank you.

I must also thank the World Health Organization, West Bank and Gaza Strip for covering the attendance costs of some of the participants of today’s conference, and for assisting in logistical activities.

Thanks are also due to all those who have participating in making this conference a success, especially Professors Graham Watt, Huda Zureik and Rita Giacaman, members of the LPHA Coordination Committee, and Ms. Shiraz Nasr from the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, without whose support and problem solving skills we would not have been here today. And of course, Dr. Richard Horton, the editor of the Lancet. Without Richard the Lancet Palestinian Health Alliance would not have seen the light, and continued to exist for almost 10 years.

Finally, I must thank the members of the LPHA Steering Group and reviewers who helped in reading, commenting on, and scoring a large number of submitted abstracts in a very short period of time. Thank you all. Enjoy the conference