

Dear distinguished international guests, colleagues and students,

I am pleased to welcome you at Birzeit University to this eighth annual symposium of the Palestinian Forum for Medical Research. This gathering, which has a strong tradition of hosting renowned Palestinian and international experts in the fields of basic and medical sciences, is an excellent opportunity for cooperation among academics and scientists for the benefit of the world. I extend my gratitude to the board of directors of the Forum who decided to bring the annual meeting back to Birzeit University, after the fifth symposium which was held here in 2015. I also thank the dean of the faculty of pharmacy, nursing and health professions, Dr. Rania Abu Hamdah, for her diligent work to provide all the support that made this conference possible.

I personally welcome all students who are attending this workshop seeking knowledge. Hopefully they will be the ones to organize such events in the future. The students, who are coming from all over Palestine, are representing their own universities and I am sure they will reflect the excellence of higher education in Palestine. I also welcome the members of the teaching staff of our local universities in their second home, Birzeit University.

Moreover, it is a great pleasure to host this important group of scientists from one of the best institutions for cancer research in the world, City of Hope in the USA, who are coming to initiate dialogue and collaborations between Palestinian and international scientists. The guests are also trying to recruit local students to be part of their cancer-combating scientific crew. Thank you for your interest in our country and we welcome you wholeheartedly.

In conclusion, I reiterate my thanks to the Organizing Committee and the organizers of this symposium for their efforts to show Birzeit University in the best possible way despite all the difficulties experienced by the Palestinian people. I also thank the students of the faculty of pharmacy, nursing and health professions and the students of the faculty of science who have contributed to the logistical and organizational support to make this conference a success.

I wish you all a very pleasant stay and a productive meeting.