



The 5th Annual Commencement Ceremony

MBA Valedictory

Martin Zaki Deeb

May 28, 2016

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Barham Salih and Mrs. President, members of the faculty, distinguished guests, families and friends, and above all to my fellow colleagues.

It is such an honor to be standing here today to celebrate our academic achievements. This is proof that success is the result of hard work and dedication. What makes this day so special is sharing it with so many friends. I want to thank you for the great and unforgettable moments we've shared through this journey of ours at AUIS. The laughter, the annoying presentations, the debates that sometimes turned out to be a boxing match, the Thursdays that seemed like they would never end.

We learned in our classes that if we want to increase value, we should maximize benefits. What I can see in each and every one of you is that you are the living representation of augmented benefits that gives great value to this country. You are the foundation of this community and your knowledge and education are the most valuable assets of this country. What this country needs are leaders, leaders like you equipped not with weapons but with ethics, integrity, and compassion. The former South African President and revolutionary Nelson Mandela said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Step forward, take responsibility, and lead by showing the way! Make the sort of change that will impact the lives of our families today and future generations tomorrow. Work to benefit the community so that we can prosper.

Life is the train, the journey, and the destination. We cannot know what the future holds for us, but we are now prepared for what lies ahead. We must continue to invest in ourselves, to widen our perspectives and enrich our lives through knowledge. As graduates, and MBA graduates in particular, we should always look for high returns on our investments and according to Benjamin Franklin, "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest!"

We came to AUIS to advance ourselves. The courses we took here were challenging and took a lot of dedication and determination. We had to be disciplined and responsible; we had to learn to manage our time effectively – we spent our time working, studying, finishing projects on the weekends to meet deadlines. These hours were all an investment in our futures, and now the moment has come when our efforts are rewarded. Well done! I know this was a difficult road to travel but remember that nothing worth having in life comes easy. The harder the battle, the sweeter the victory.

Let's consider this moment not an end, but rather as a beginning, a beginning to a new journey, a journey that can lead to infinite possibilities. Let's consider the next step in our lives, where we can make a difference, invest our knowledge in what we think is right, and in the best interest of our children's future.

At the end of my speech, allow me to quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." And this is us moving forward! We are ready for whatever life has in store. Our next step will not be easy, but we are graduating from AUIS motivated and determined to make a difference, create positive change, and always move forward.

Congratulations Class of 2016! We made it and this is your moment to shine!