

The First Arab Healthcare Quality Forum Under the Theme
"Bridging the Gap"
Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt - March 20th,2007

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I start by thanking "Quality Associates" for organizing this Forum, and for giving me the privilege to address the audience in the Opening ceremony.

We are all gathered here for three days, driven by our commitment to promote excellence in work. Everywhere we witness a gigantic drive to implement rules, regulations and standards within a framework that became commonly known as "Quality Systems". This has gained more importance in a world obsessed by the idea of Globalization and the fear of every company, of every individual to be ridiculed if he didn't understand and speak the language of this new culture. I say culture because this is what we all agreed to call this new way of getting things done, and it is fast gaining momentum and becoming a universal science anchored in our everyday life and affecting it.

We in the Arab countries must embrace this new trend if we want to move forward. Unfortunately, this is not going to be easy. Ever since 1948, the year Palestine was taken away and a historic injustice was inflicted on its people, the area lives in a constant turmoil and the Middle East didn't know a single moment of real peace. What happened in that disastrous year has radicalized big segments of the populations here, and unleashed the demons of extremisms. History has proven that Cultures, Sciences and Arts can only blossom in time of peace, and this, we have been denied for a long time now. And because of this, our societies are ruined by illiteracy, virtual democracies, inequalities between men and women, the tyrannical rich abusing the unprotected poor, and most of all, most damaging of it all, our societies are ruined by corruption .

So Mr. President, there are too many gaps to bridge and not just one, as the name you gave to this forum suggest. Nevertheless, we in the health sector shall light a candle in the midst of this darkness.

It is our destiny to treat people and to alleviate their sufferings. Our responsibilities grow bigger in adverse times.

We have learned in Lebanon during the barbaric war Israel waged on us in July of last year, that hospitals are the backbone of resistance. In the midst of the horror, we stuck to our duties and welcomed and treated the population everywhere in the devastated land. *AND THAT WAS AN EXAMPLE IN DEDICATION.*

And despite all the destruction, and against all odds, hospitals amazingly carried out our accreditation program and finished it on schedule. *THIS WAS AN EXAMPLE IN COURAGE AND TENACITY.*

No government could have done what the private hospitals have done in Lebanon during the last year.

And here we are today amongst you, to share with you our unique experience, and to learn from you the ways to go forward. We have a lot to learn about conceiving and implementing Quality Systems, and I am sure that with all the distinguished speakers present here, we shall not be deceived.

Good luck and God bless .

Suleiman Haroun
President
Syndicate of Private Hospitals in Lebanon