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President, AGHSAN Association

Al-Khiam, 23 October 2014

“Czech Aid for Education in Marjeyoun & Hasbaya, Lebanon 2014”

Your Excellency the ambassador of the Czech Republic Svatopluk Cumba
His excellency the Minister of Education (represented by....)
Members of Parliament
Commander of the Easter Sector General Andres Chapa
Spanish Battalion commander and officers
Lebanese security officers
Mayor, notaries and civil society organisations
Headmasters and teachers
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are here today to honor and thank, in the name of
Aghsan Organisation and in the name of the people of this region the Czech
Republic and foreign ministry represented by H.E. ambassador
Svatopluk Cumba for the generous educational donation from the Czech
government which rehabilitated 6 state schools in the districts of Marjeyoun
and Hasbaya. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Czech government for
kindly contributing 75 tents for Syrian refugees in the area of Marj el Khokh.

As I say this, it brings to my memory distant days, when I was a small boy
from a modest family in South Lebanon. I carried my school bag which was
made from the material from a pair of trousers or a shirt, stitched together
into a rectangular shape by my dearly departed mother. This bag was
precious; I would put its straps around my neck, to go on foot from our house
in Deirmimas to the state school in Kfar Kila, a student as per my father's
wishes. I crossed this distance in all weather conditions, cold or rain, unaware
that as a student of the Kfar Kila state school, I would reach the most
important engineering faculty in Prague, CVUT.

In Prague, I experienced the cold of European winter and the depth of
its snow. But also discovered the depth of European history and geography.
Despite the freezing temperatures of the long winter season, the human
warmth of the Czech people protected us from the cold and spiritually gave
us solidarity, thus compensating our homesickness. The hospitable people of
the Czech Republic received thousands of foreign students in their
universities and institutes; securing job opportunities for us, and helping us
acquire knowledge and reach success.

The Czech people's acceptance of such a large number of foreign students, from different parts of the world is a genuine expression of cultural awareness which goes beyond narrow and direct interests. It embodies a commitment to bring human beings together, particularly people from developing countries, to achieve the highest standards in science and knowledge for the purpose of together building a better world for future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am proud to belong to a generation which fought first and foremost for the sake of knowledge and education, as the path to human achievement; and second for the sake of hard work and diligence as a way for meritocratic social advancement.

I am proud today of the work carried out by the Aghsan Organisation in the implementation of this substantial project to rehabilitate 6 schools, and the first of its kind to serve the education sector in our region.

I thank all those who took part in the implementation of this work, starting with H.E. the Minister of Education Elias Abou Saab, and the former and current director of the regional education board, headmasters and teachers, and the contractors and workers who carried out the work.

Finally, I also thank the Dr. Shukrallah Karam Cultural Centre for welcoming us here today.

We hope that with your efforts, together we will help a generation of aspiring students who seek education and knowledge to build our communities and our nation.

Long live the Czech Republic, Long live Lebanon.