

For Immediate Release



*Supported by RYMCO and Bank Audi*

## **AUB research van to study pollution in a one-year project**

Beirut, Lebanon- 9/12/2010 - A new environmental study which aims to monitor the air pollution caused by traffic near residential areas in Beirut was launched on December 9, 2010, by AUB's Atmospheric and Analytical Laboratory (AAL), with the support of Rasamny Younis Motor Company (RYMCO), and Bank Audi sal-Audi Saradar Group. The launch took place at 11 am in a press conference in West Hall Common Room.

A first of its kind in Lebanon, this project will measure real-time particulate matter pollution in traffic generated by biogenic and anthropogenic sources, among which vehicles are major contributors.

"The initiative will have a direct and beneficial impact on society and it's certain to have public policy implications," said AUB Provost Ahmad Dallal, who welcomed private sector partnership with the University. "What's missing is the connection between policy-making and the study, and that's where AUB can play a major role by informing the public."

"In Beirut, as in many other overpopulated capitals, traffic is the main source of air pollution," said Najat A. Saliba, a specialist in air pollution and associate professor at AUB's chemistry department. "Numerous studies have determined that air pollution caused by traffic near residential areas affects health. We aim throughout the year to study, understand and assess the levels of particulate matter so that the results will benefit the public sector and guide them in their pursuit of new and efficient rules and regulations."

The project will employ a Nissan Urvan van, provide by RYMCO, which will be equipped with a real-time measuring device installed on a special stand. The device will electronically send its measurements to the computers of the project research team. The collected data will be studied to understand and assess air pollution sources in Lebanon.

"Being part of the automobile industry mandates that we take a responsible role in developing strategies to help address air pollution and its consequences, one of the top priorities for environmental issues, in keeping with Nissan's two-pillar strategy for year 2010," said RYMCO CEO Abdo Sweidan. "The project was not a mere coincidence," added Sweidan. "It would not have happened without AUB which is concerned about issues that are important to the general public."

“As the leading bank in Lebanon, we strongly believe we have a civic role to play within the community we operate in,” noted Ibrahim Salibi, assistant general manager and head of corporate and commercial banking at Bank Audi sal. “This specific initiative of measuring the quality of the air and the pollution in Lebanon is key to the blooming of environment-friendly schemes which can only contribute to the well-being of the community.”

The study will monitor and assess 31 different types of air pollution caused by particulate matter, from allergens to irritants to carcinogens. The study will report drivers’ and passengers’ exposure to particulate matter during their travel to and out of Beirut. Results will serve as a basis for studies on the impact of traffic pollution on the population’s health while highlighting to the public sector the imminent need for traffic measurements and regulations.

The van, exclusively offered by Nissan for this project, will travel on both sides of the roadway connecting Beirut to Jounieh for one year starting on Friday December 10, 2010, from 7 am to 10 am and from 5 pm to 8 pm.

An AUB driver has been detailed to this project.

A development of the Nissan Caravan, the Urvan is a multi-purpose transporter vehicle which has proved very popular in fire and emergency departments in various countries. It has evolved through four generations. It is roughly five meters long, two meters wide and two meters high.

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**Note to Editors**

#### **About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of more than 7,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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