

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 18-5-2018

AUB to Award 5 Honorary Doctorates to
Isabelle Adjani, Ali Fakhro, George Helou,
Howard Koh and Nemat Shafik

The American University of Beirut (AUB) will confer Honorary Doctorates in Humane Letters during its 149th Commencement Exercises on Friday, June 8, 2018 to five outstanding individuals as per a letter sent by the Office of AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri to the AUB Community stating that: “This year’s honorands capture the essence of humanitarian institutional leadership, scholarship, arts, sciences, and healing. They exemplify our belief in the power of knowledge, insight, and discovery to advance the public good: acclaimed French actress Isabelle Adjani; inspirational physician, writer, and political thinker Ali Fakhro; groundbreaking astrophysicist George Helou; renowned public health policy leader and physician Howard Koh; and erudite scholar and economist Nemat Shafik.”

Khuri concluded by saying that “Each of the distinguished personalities we honor this year daily enables, informs, inspires, and empowers generations to likewise contribute toward a more prosperous and educated global society. We welcome them warmly as they join AUB’s distinguished list of honorary doctoral degree recipients.”

Honorands Bios:

Isabelle Adjani’s decades of exceptional artistic contributions in film and music make her one of the most acclaimed actors of all time. Throughout her work in English, French, and German motion pictures and plays, the five-time winner of the César Award has championed the art of acting as a profession of faith in mankind, imbuing the characters she interprets with passion and authenticity. She has been a vocal champion of human rights, and exemplifies the fundamental role of the arts and humanities in capturing and honoring human life.

Ali Fakhro is a physician, writer, political thinker, and inspirational speaker. He was the minister of health in the first Bahraini government (1971–82), and then minister of education from 1982–95, bringing innovative thinking to the education system and a philosophy on inclusivity and equality. Between 1995 and 2000, he served as Bahrain’s ambassador to France and Belgium. Fakhro has been a staunch proponent of transparency, good governance, Arab unity, democracy, national independence, inclusiveness, sustainable development, human rights, and cultural renewal.

George Helou Lebanese-American astrophysicist and AUB graduate, has made groundbreaking discoveries in the field of infrared astronomy, providing insight into the birth and evolution of stars and galaxies. Recently, Dr. Helou played a key role in the discovery of a new planetary system that may contain water and conditions hospitable to life. He is currently executive director of the IPAC at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, deputy director of the Spitzer Science Center, and a research professor of physics at Caltech.

Howard Koh is a world-renowned public health and policy leader, and a physician who is a staunch advocate for health equity and the power of prevention in improving health for all. As an educator, medical doctor, commissioner of health for the state of Massachusetts, and the longest-serving US assistant secretary of health in the history of the American Republic, Dr. Koh has remained a catalyst for positive and transformational change. Now at Harvard University, he is the Harvey V. Fineberg Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership and co-chair of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative.

Nemat Shafik is a respected economist, erudite scholar, author, and revered international figure who worked directly to positively impact international development. She is a global citizen leader with a richly earned reputation for fairness and courage in fields ranging from emerging markets and international development to the financial sector. Called the “sheriff of the markets” and the most powerful woman in London, Dame Nemat became the first-ever deputy governor of the Bank of England and is the first woman director of the London School of Economics (LSE).

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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 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to 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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