

For Immediate Release



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International conference on efficient building design at AUB

The American University of Beirut (AUB) hosted the Third International ASHRAE Conference on Efficient Building Design. The conference aimed to present leading research on the topics of advanced building and bioclimatic designs for attaining occupant comfort and good environmental quality, addressing systems and technologies adapted to the MENA region in moderate as well as hot and humid climates. This event was organized by the Munib and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources at AUB in partnership with the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), and the ASHRAE Lebanese Chapter.

The opening session

Several key figures attended and spoke at the conference's opening session, including AUB Trustee Emeritus Munib Masri, member of the Masri Institute Advisory Council, as well as his grandson Munib, who delivered a speech on behalf of the Masri family. Also from AUB, there was Provost Dr. Mohamed Harajli; MSFEA Dean Dr. Alan Shihadeh; Dr. Nesreene Ghaddar, director of the Munib and Angela Masri Institute and chair of the conference; and Dr. Kamel Ghali, chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at MSFEA. Also attending and speaking at the opening ceremony was President of the Lebanese ASHRAE Chapter Ahmad El-Bitar; Donald Brandt, certified energy manager and member of ASHRAE's Board of Directors representing ASHRAE President Sheila Hayter; and Dr. Marlene Brax representing Dr. Moin Hamze, secretary general of the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research.

"The Efficient Building Design conference is vital to Lebanon and the region for two reasons," said Ghaddar, "the responsibility towards a sustainable future due to global warming and climate change, and particularly the building practices and building-related professions in the Middle East. Energy consumption of buildings in Lebanon and the region exceeds by far world averages per square meter."

Brandt spoke about ASHRAE's journey towards what he called the future of energy; to discover the hugely important role buildings will play in the new energy future. He explained that the way to get there is via "a bridge that connects buildings, energy, and the environment."

"This conference has brought the world closer to AUB and our students and faculty closer to the world," said Masri. He added, "We cannot overlook the role of professional organizations in advancing standards adapted to Lebanon and the Arab region. These organizations are playing a critical role in changing our standards and codes locally and internationally and are moving faster than our governments in implementing innovative new methods and solutions."

Provost Harajli welcomed the audience and kicked-off the activities of the conference.

Highlights of the event

Bringing together 150 attendees from 80 countries, the international conference presented four keynotes by prominent scholars and experts in the field, and eight panel sessions on issues related to built-in environment, air quality, and the sustainable building sector, that are of critical relevance for Lebanon and the MENA region. Discussions revolved around topics such as alternative energy use in buildings; energy efficiency, comfort, and climate; energy conservation strategies; indoor air quality and thermal comfort; modeling, simulation, and standards; and heat recovery and applications.

Thirty technical peer-reviewed papers, from the region and beyond, were accepted at the conference. The conference also included an industrial session led by the United Nations Development Program in Lebanon addressing issues of refrigerants replacement strategies and energy efficiency.

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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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